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## Producing early modern space and the mind in public and closet drama

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PRODUCING EARLY MODERN SPACE  
AND THE MIND IN PUBLIC  
AND CLOSET DRAMA

An Abstract of a Thesis  
Submitted  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

Megan M. Gallagher  
University of Northern Iowa  
May 2012

## ABSTRACT

The construction of space has become such a common process for modernity that its culture would argue spatial experiences as intrinsic in nature. However, it is through the consideration of the experience of space and spatial boundaries one notices the cooperative nature of space. This thesis explores the early modern constructions of space and the development of the modern idea of the mind through the closet dramas of John Milton (*Samson Agonistes*) and Elizabeth Cary (*The Tragedy of Mariam the Fair Queen of the Jewry*), and the public dramas of William Shakespeare (*Measure for Measure* and *Julius Caesar*). Our notions of public and private space require active, imaginative participation with other actors. As one studies the development of the notions of “public” and “private” spaces in Renaissance England, specifically through the genre of drama, the participatory experiences of both space and the mind are revealed.

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This Study by: Megan M. Gallagher

Entitled: Producing Early Modern Space and the Mind in Public and Closet Drama

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the  
Degree of Master of Arts

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This thesis is dedicated to

John and Barb

My loving parents whose support  
has meant more to me than they can know.

And to

Kelly

My favorite sister.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge with gratitude the following persons for their guidance, support, and friendship throughout the process of this program and this thesis.

I would like to thank my family and friends for their phone calls, text messages, skype dates, and other forms of sanity checks throughout these last two years. Surprise packages and notes of encouragement from the Himalayas, Dhaka, Mumbai, and Saint Louis always seem to arrive during the days I needed a pick-me-up the most: thank you Wood family, Ames, and Kathy for the long distance love. I have had the good fortune to align myself with friends who have served as copyeditors, HTML coaches, and surrogate family: thank you Brianna, Dubbert, Dylan, Melissa, and the Martens and Andersen families for being part of my support system. I am so fortunate to have you all in my life.

I cannot begin to name all of the faculty and staff at the University of Northern Iowa who have helped my transition from student to scholar these past two years. I would like to specifically thank Dr. Harry Brod and Dr. Karen Tracey for serving on my thesis committee and for their academic advice and counsel these past two years. I would also like to thank the graduate secretary Kris Knebel for answering countless e-mails, her willingness to be my advocate, and the sincerity of her kindness and willingness to help her graduate students. I could not have finished this program without the dedication and commitment of the faculty and staff to their students.

Finally, and all too briefly, I would like to thank Dr. Jesse Swan. I can never fully nor completely express my gratitude for all that Dr. Swan has done for me these past years. His always affable and often Socratic method of teaching has inspired a love of the



early modern, Elizabeth Cary, and John Milton through the humane teaching that I aspire to emulate within my scholarship. Throughout my time at UNI I have been fortunate enough to call Dr. Swan my advisor, my mentor, and my friend—and for that I am eternally appreciative.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1. IMPOSING CLOSET MONSTERS ON <i>THE TRAGEDY OF MARIAM</i> .....	11
CHAPTER 2. MANIPULATING TRAGIC AND COMEDIC EROTICS THROUGH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACE IN <i>MEASURE FOR MEASURE</i> AND <i>JULIUS CAESAR</i> .....	27
CHAPTER 3. THE PRIVACY OF THE MIND IN <i>SAMSON AGONISTES</i> .....	46
CONCLUSION.....	58
END NOTES.....	66
WORKS CITED.....	70

## INTRODUCTION

Each day one enters, creates, and negotiates within varying degrees of public and private space. These varying levels of publicness have always existed for the modern subject—who, because of this, believes these constructions to be universal. The distrust of the private and secrecy, coupled with the celebration of the publicness and transparency are often deemed natural responses because of modern associations involving these places. The implications of assuming these associations as inherent and universal contradict historical representations of these spaces. When examining early modern texts, one finds that private space has not always inspired fear and distrust, just as the public sphere has not always been the favored and desirable space.

Through considering the changing representations of public and private space in the closet dramas of Elizabeth Cary and John Milton, one notices the shift in attitudes surrounding each space as well as the transition to silent reading, and the mind as the new modern experience of private. I argue that early modern closet drama reflects the awareness of its writer of the potential implications of the polarization between public and private space. Elizabeth Cary's tragedy, *The Tragedy of Mariam*, reflects the associations of the masculine and feminine spheres with the public and private space, and the problematic binary this creates for women in this society. John Milton's closet drama, *Samson Agonistes*, serves as a gauge between the early modern and modern experiences of these spaces through aiding the reader in developing what he would call "the soul," while also aiding his modern reader in developing what it would call "the mind."

Closet drama differs from staged drama through the conventions of its genre. For the purpose of this thesis, the working definition of closet drama will develop from that of Elizabeth Sauer in, “The politics of performance in the inner theater: *Samson Agonistes* as closet Drama,” in *Milton and Heresy*: “Generic features include the trappings of Italianate Senecanism; the primacy of speech and narrative over action; long rhetorical monologues and philosophical and moral discourses; the casting of women as heroes and villains; and the inclusion of nuntius and of a chorus that speaks from a limited rather than an authoritative position” (202). In working with this definition, I have selected one early 17<sup>th</sup>-century and one late 17<sup>th</sup>-century, closet drama—both of which conform to Sauer’s definition, but offer significantly different reading experiences. Through these differences, the development of early modern space and mind can be detected. Elizabeth Tanfield Cary’s *The Tragedy of Mariam, The Fair Queen of Jewry* (printed 1613) and John Milton’s *Samson Agonistes* (printed 1671) will serve as reflections of early modern conceptions of public and private spaces. Because of the under representation of closet texts in modern society, I have chosen to use the more familiar genre of staged drama to further develop the working definitions of public and private place on stage, as well as within the early modern society. The staging conventions of Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* (composed circa 1599) and *Measure for Measure* (composed circa 1604) are used to explore the manipulations of spatial experiences and understandings to produce and relieve anxieties within the audience.

Public and private spaces are in a constant state of creation and participation; this unstable existence is what makes the practice of forming spaces inherently dramatic.

Drama, like public space, exists between those who acknowledge and participate in the experience. “Such a [theatrical] public also has a sense of totality, bounded by the event or by the shared physical space. A performer onstage knows where her public is, how big it is, where its boundaries are, and what the time of its common existence is” (Warner 66). Here, Michael Warner acknowledges the modern concept of public: a quantitative and tangible group and space. This, however, is only part of the necessary exchange for the formation of the public during a theatrical experience. What Warner neglects to consider is the chiasmic exchanges happening between the crowd and the actor as well as within the crowd itself. The formation of the public and private space begins to develop with higher forms of literacy<sup>1</sup> and exchanges of knowledge:

Importantly, while these new forms of knowledge were distinctively public and open to debate, they were concerned with accounts of the person as well as with descriptions of the world; the private, interior lives of people and the connections between private and public were key areas of concern in early modern portraiture, poetry, theater, mathematics, and theology. (Wilson 2)

This emphasis on the network and exchange of ideas further demonstrates how the multiplicity of drama aids in titillating the varying pleasures and experiences of the audience through spatiality. This demonstrates the plurality of public and public making. “Publics, we might say, have the capacity to pass in and out of the state of publicity; it is precisely this shiftiness or hybridity vis-à-vis the realms of the private and public that allows publics to reshape the public sphere” (8). The relationship between public and private space is necessary in the formation and differentiation of both spaces. This is not to say that these spaces are in opposition to one another—but rather that they are in mutual and not linear apposition to one another. The crowd needs to feel a sense of

cohesion within itself to achieve a public, and it is through this realization and experience of collective responses towards the action on stage that the crowd of people can be considered a public.

The audience of *Measure for Measure* experiences a very different relationship to the public sphere than modern audiences and early modern audiences at the Globe. As one of the first plays performed for James I, this play has to take into consideration the relationship of the monarchy to the public and private sphere. This audience would have differed from the audience at the Globe, which may be thought of as a precursor of Habermasian conceptions of private space, and distrust, of the monarch: "Henceforth the Court was the residence of secluded royalty, pointed out from afar, difficult of access save on formal occasions of proverbial dullness" (32). As Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* is a cornerstone in the consideration of the historical generation of the public and private, it is important to discern how this experience of public and private space differentiates from the experience of James I. Habermas' modern celebration of the public sphere and demonization of the private sphere reflects the modern production of these spaces. In early modernity, spaces were equally open to negative and positive actions. Ascribing an evaluative identity to these spaces in association with the availability to differing actions and experiences within those spheres is a social facet distinctive to modernity. This practice of affixing action to identity is one that affects space as well as people.

Closets of seventeenth-century England offered private and reflective space, rather than storage and intentionally forgotten space. Modern representations and uses of

closets skew contemporary society's reception of the historical closet drama. Early modern texts call for the faithful to enter the solitude of their closets for quiet study and reflection of scripture and humanist works. Modern literature perpetuates the fear of this space as one of deviance, insanity, and criminality. Let's consider a familiar, modern representation of a young girl who participated in closet devotions and study. This girl had the means and was fortunate enough to have a prayer closet in her home. She and her mother would often have private devotions in the security and familiarity of the closet. Indeed, before the culminating event of her public education took place she took time to reflect in the intimacy of the prayer closet. We can see that it is through this closet that she grew in her faith and developed spiritually. Unfortunately for her peers, when Stephen King's *Carrie* came out of the closet she took her dirty pillows to prom. This and other associations with the abstract and concrete representations of modern closets further inhibit the reception of early modern closet texts.

Space moves from abstract, fluid constructions negotiated between people to defined places with tangible walls and boundaries. As these definitions become increasingly set, the abstract experience moves into the mind. The mind and thoughts become the last refuge of privacy. As reading moves into a silent experience, the mind takes the place of the closet as the space for contemplation and reflection. Modernity still attempts to police the mind, through evaluative labeling of certain thoughts and ways of thinking, as well as through the continual celebration of a transparent, open public. Thoughts that are made public are open to this scrutiny, while thoughts that remain private are associated with the deviance of that space. The mind, in this way, offers a

space that can be both public and private and is often in a state of liminality between the two.

The movement of interactions from our notions of external space to those of internal space also changes how we participate within these contexts. Lisa Zunshine, drawing upon and developing the “Theory of Mind,” offers what she calls “mind-reading” as a method to describe this experienced movement from the external to the internal space:

... ‘Theory of Mind,’ [sic] describe[s] our ability to explain people’s behavior in terms of their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and desires. Thus we engage in mind-reading when we ascribe to a person a certain mental state on the basis of observable action...when we interpret our own feelings based on our proprioceptive awareness...when we intuit a complex state of mind based on limited verbal description...when we compose an essay, a lecture, a movie, a song, a novel, or an instruction for an electrical appliance and try to imagine how this or that segment of our target audience will respond to it; when we negotiate a multilayered social situations...and so forth. (6)

Zunshine’s work with mind-reading centers this skill as a key to understanding how we read and interpret texts today. “Literature pervasively capitalizes on and stimulates our Theory of Mind adaptations that had evolved to deal with real people, even as on some level readers do remain aware that fictive characters are not real people at all” (Zunshine 278). In this way, Zunshine posits that part of the pleasure in reading literature is the practice of one’s mind-reading ability. Theory of Mind offers a flexible description of negotiations of space between actors within the mind. This form of space begins to develop as reading becomes increasingly silent. This is not to suggest that people did not “think” prior to the shift from reading aloud to reading silently; rather, that people did not construct the notion of thought in the same way that modern subjects do<sup>2</sup>. The mind, as a



space, becomes subjected to the same problematic need of identity within modernity— thoughts must be categorized, labeled, and evaluated in ways in which they were not subjected to in pre-modernity. The signifiers of spatial constructions move from the external place to the internal mind through the development of silent reading.

The closet drama lends itself to both the practices of reading aloud and to silent reading, often within the same text. One must avoid only associating reading aloud with the more public or group reading and reading silently with private reading. This has become the case through modern reading practices but these phenomena have not always been so rigidly linked to one another. When reading aloud, one takes on a performative role, of which there is both audience and actor. “In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the reading style implicit in a text, literary or not, was still often an oralization of the text, and the ‘reader’ was an implicit auditor of a read discourse. The work, which was addressed to the ear as much as to the eye, plays with forms and procedures that subject writing to demands more appropriate to oral ‘performance’” (Chartier 9). The reader needs to negotiate how to stress, pronounce, shorten, and generally voice the words that comprise the text to reflect the manner in which the text is being interpreted. Conversely, a more self-aware reader is able to change the reading intonations to convey a different interpretation for the same text. The reader is therefore performing for the audience of the self. When reading aloud within a group, or in a literary circle, the audience dynamic changes and the reader’s performance will also change. The playful anxiety of audience through readership is part of the enjoyment and pleasure of reading in

this style. Very similar to Zunshine's Theory of Mind, the reader acts as a mind-reader to the other readers within the circle.

Though the act of reading in private has not always been silent, the early modern period marks the beginnings of this transition in experience. As Fischer describes in *A*

*History of Reading:*

Whereupon silent reading, wherever it was practiced, introduced a new dimension to the performance, one that endures to this day. Reading went from a public to a private act. A reader no longer shared the text with others (who would interrupt with questions or comments), or even tied sounds to letters. She or he could read confidentially, unheard, accessing concepts directly, letting thoughts proceed at a higher level of consciousness, cross-referencing and comparing, considering and evaluating." (162)

This form of reading differs from that of the vocalized reading (either with others or individually) and develops an internalized consciousness of reading which can only be done in private. This act of reading is more appropriate for a closet drama like *Samson Agonistes*, which requires the reader to be aware of his or her own private understanding as well as that of the public experience of the drama and of reading. "As a closet drama indebted to the classical tragedy, *Samson Agonistes* creates an elite readership, whose engagement with the text becomes an 'internalized, read-only, version' of the collective experience that the theaters in the ancient republics had once provided" (Sauer 202). The seventeenth century closet was a place for quiet study and reflection on scriptures and literature in one's home. For Milton, this was the ideal setting for the internalized reading meant to develop the soul. The reader reflects on the scriptural passages through a silent, humanistic, form of reading by taking on the experience and the action within one's "soul" or conscious. "In *Samson Agonistes*, Milton offers what I call a 'personal drama':

that is, a version of the Samson story that aims to elaborate the particularities of the biblical account in ways that are plausible and fitting but whose ultimate meaning, as either tragic or redemptive, depends on how readers locate Samson in the larger narrative of divine gift presented in the companion text of *Paradise Regained*” (Donnelly 203). This reader has a personal investment with *Samson Agonistes* that is best experienced internally. For Milton’s reader, part of the action and reception of the text is in the way in which this readership interprets and produces the work. When reading *Samson Agonistes*, one will see how Milton is aware of the implications of the shift in reading style and the advancement of modernity on his readership. Milton uses the stylistic conventions of the closet drama to offer the reader a text that adheres to this modern reading practice while still acknowledging the artifice of the construction of the mind. *Samson Agonistes* operates in the liminal space of the public and private thoughts of the mind in a way which mirrors earlier closet drama’s ability to operate in between the public and private spheres.

The attitudes and reception of public and private experiences of the early seventeenth century differ vastly from those just a few decades later as styles of reading and definitions of space change with modernity. Through reading closet dramas, a drama that is meant to be experienced in the private and reflective space, one begins to understand the effects of these changes within the society. Elizabeth Tanfield Cary’s *The Tragedy of Mariam The Faire Queene of Jewry* reflects a time in which women writers begin to change the position of women in these spheres and challenges the domestic and commercial roles of the private and public space for women and men. The staged

productions of this period highlight the developing spatial boundaries and reflect the playfulness of differing degrees and relationships to public and private space. As the evaluative practices of modernity become more and more common, the need for a positive and negative association to specific spaces arises. As these spaces take on negative and positive roles, those people, actions, and texts associated with each space share the same emotional responses and connotations.

## CHAPTER 1

IMPOSING CLOSET MONSTERS ON *THE TRAGEDY OF MARIAM*

Closets are where modernity keeps its perverse, its criminal, and its insane. This, perhaps, explains the modern reader's under appreciation of the closet drama. In a society that fears the unhinging of the closet, the notion of celebrating its existence is incomprehensible. To understand and, more importantly, to appreciate a closet drama, such as Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam, The Fair Queen of Jewry*, one must first understand the regressions in the notions of "privacy" and "closet" through the advancement of modernity. These regressions, coupled with the distrust of ambiguities and devaluation of femininity, then force this dramatic form into the very structure from which it earns its name.

The etymology of the "closet" shows that the abstract form develops from the physical form. In considering its etymology, one will note the first definition of closet, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is "[a] room for privacy or retirement; a private room; an inner chamber; formerly often = bower" ("Closet," def.1a). The earliest use of the word "closet" in this form is recorded by the *OED* in 1370. Several variations of "closet" are developed as the specifications of the physical structure and its purposes change with time and culture. It was not until the twentieth century that phrases such as "skeleton in the closet," "to come out of the closet," and "closet case," gain a firm association to the word "closet." In considering this, one then realizes that the conventions of the closet, as a structure, are what inspire it as an abstract. Physically, the word becomes the small, cell-like, space in the home where clothing and personal effects

are politely kept from the view of company. Abstractly, the word is used to describe those marginalized facets of existence that are kept from polite society. In both of the closet's states of being, the company and the society recognize that the closet is for their benefit, rather than the benefit of the clothing or the attributes hanging inside, and appreciate being spared the unpleasantness of forced acknowledgement.

The oddity of the term as an abstraction is found in the insistence of the modern culture that those in the closet choose to be secluded, and may rejoin society at any time. This same argument, applied to the physical closet, would insist that the clothing inside was there on its own volition. This relationship is demonstrated by the phrase: "to come out of the closet." *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines this phrase as the following, "to admit (something) openly, to cease to conceal, esp. one's homosexuality" ("Closet," def. 3d). This definition further perpetuates the belief that the person chose to hide from society rather than being forcibly confined by the society. The definition then provides a historicization from the 1979 Joe Gores novel, *Gone, no Forwarding*, which more accurately describes the act of coming out of the closet, "Simson was much straighter-looking...than when his sexual preference had still been in the closet" ("Closet," def. 3d). Clearly, the invitation to "come out of the closet" is to rejoin society by shedding the perversion inside the closet—not by wearing it out. Simson was only allowed outside of the closet because he started to adorn himself with the uniform of the society that forced him inside. For the modern society, this example further bolsters the legitimacy of the practice of closeting. Modern conventions need to separate the perverse, criminal, and insane which threaten to destabilize the stability, emptiness, and rationality it seeks to

promote. This understanding is implied by the cause and effect structure presented to the reader. The reader is to understand that Simson is, somehow, “better” now that he is outside of the closet—which he could only achieve by leaving his “sexual preference” inside. Simson’s example claims that his “sexual preference” is now outside the closet, but the reader (and Simson) knows that the deviance remained in the closet, away from view, because Simson is now “straighter-looking.” This example demonstrates that the society, not the individual, chose to closet the trait. If it was Simson concealing his “true” nature from others—then the others would not have known him to be, or behave like, a homosexual. If Simson had made the decision to hide himself by going into the closet, rather than been forced inside, the sentence would have read: “Simson was much queerer-looking...than when his sexual preferences had still been in the closet.” Instead, he is asked to conceal himself if he wants to come out, thereby emphasizing that the only way out of the closet is through the very concealment that the modern culture claims forced the person into the closet initially.

A word that continuously appears, almost without exception, in the various definitions of closet is “private.” In addition to considering the, now, not-so-simple implications of the “closet” one must also reconsider the experience of “private.” This equally complex word has an emotional connection similar to “closet” for the modern reader, “private” differing from “closet” through its lack of a tangible, structural form. The *OED* defines private as: “Restricted to one person or a few persons as opposed to the wider community; largely in opposition to *public*” (“Private” def. 1). The notion of privacy can only exist if the public participates in it by recognizing its exclusion.

Understanding the private through its chiasmic relationship with the public presents a challenge to the modern reader. The instinct of the modern culture is to group words that are similar and to understand them *vis-à-vis* their apposition rather than opposition. Grouping based on differences fosters the disruption and uniformity modernity seeks to create; therefore, groupings are focused around similarities. A word that appears similar, but in actuality is quite different, to “private” is “alone”. In order to understand the drastic difference one has to consider a situation in which a person is alone but does not have privacy. Adults often laugh at small children when they announce they “need privacy.” The humor is found in the child’s inability to create this space because of the adult’s refusal to acknowledge exclusion. If that same child wanted to be alone all she needs to do is to seek out seclusion. In this way, one can see that privacy is an experience between those participating in it through consented relegation. Though it requires someone else’s acknowledgement to exist, privacy does not happen upon unsuspecting victims. Someone can become enthralled in an activity, look up, and notice he or she is alone; this same person cannot look and notice she is private. An individual, or group, must work to create the environment that causes others to recognize their exclusion. In order to feel excluded, one has to have a desire to be included. So, to effectively create privacy one must create an existence that another either wants to suppress or join and cannot, (either for intrinsic or extrinsic reasons) while recognizing the first person as belonging to this state.

The earliest historicizations of “private” by the *OED* depict the term in its relationship with clergy and nobility. Before the late sixteenth century it is almost



exclusively reserved for these two, literate and educated, groups. The common, low people did not have privacy because neither the clergy nor the nobility wanted to belong or suppress their state of being. Their lack of privacy, coupled with their acknowledgement of the privacy found in the upper-class, perpetuated the hierarchy. After literature became more accessible through the printing press in the mid-fifteenth century, the formation of a middle and upper-middle class began to take shape. This hierarchical upset of increasing social mobility, brought on by mass literacy, begins during the Renaissance. As hard as someone may try to create an environment that will award privacy, advancing modernity works that much harder to suppress privation. Now that the sons and daughters of merchant tailors are able to move into the literate society, the need to develop the distrust of privacy, in order to reclaim it, emerges from the sovereigns that once celebrated it. It is this distrust that that makes privacy all the more desirable in early modern culture. Private becomes a modifier for all sorts of everyday, previously mundane, events: children have private tutors, attend private school, private physicians and hospitals begin to emerge, attending private chapels and prayer closets now denotes the faithful, and people even begin to consider certain bodily organs to be “private parts.” To be afforded privacy is to have the prestige that accompanies higher status.

As a new status symbol, privacy is then used in the entertainment industry. As Straznicky explains, ‘Privacy, understood as a construct rather than a social fact, permeates theatrical discourse in early modern England...’ (*Privacy* 7). Theatres, such as the Blackfriars, begin to use the construct of privacy as a marketing tool. These venues

are marketed as elite, “there ‘A man shall not be choakete/With the stench of Garlicke, nor pasted/To the barmy Jacket of a Beer-brewer’” (Straznický 8). The need to distinguish oneself from the rabble makes patrons willing to pay more to attend the “private” playhouses. This phenomenon can only exist within a mobile class structure; if only birth determined worth, as it had in pre-modernity, there would be no need to create seclusion because it would be understood and implied. The middle-class is mobile within itself, and the upper-middle-class can gain the attention of the nobility; however, the nobility still reigns by birthright. A performance for the king is private because the king is there, the king does not attend the performance because it is private—this is the difference between the newly formed middle-class and the nobility.

It is this context of limited mobility and celebration of privacy that begets the closet drama. Even more private than an exclusive theatre, is the home. The venue is such that the writer knows the ideologies of those invited to participate in the drama. The closet drama provides an opportunity for the dramatist and reader to voice distrust in political rule, question faith, and serve as a critique of the social circumstances surrounding the author. “...Cary’s female protagonists provide a new context for examining the contradictions in late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century political philosophy, which yoked justifications of monarchy to contemporary Protestant views of marriage, household government, and domestic organization...” (Raber 150). It is true, that these same conventions are fairly common to the staged drama, but the number of liberties afforded to the private production is greatly reduced in comparison to what one can say and think within her own home. In Cary’s *Mariam*, the reader is invited to make

comparisons between Cary's characters and the connections they may or may not share in her life. Karen Raber makes this connection in her book, *Dramatic Difference: Gender, Class, and Genre in the Early Modern Closet Drama*:

Salome, Mariam's rival and opposite, who by no stretch of the imagination could be called "proper" constructs the scaffold on which Mariam dies through insinuating speeches to her brother Herod....Because they also clearly reflect on Cary's early experience of legal and political authority at her father's side, as well as her later experience of domesticity and marriage....(150)

The intimate, private nature of the closet drama opens the text to such interpretations that the staged, public, drama cannot. The privacy of the closet allows for the reflection of circumstances that affect the public and private spheres alike. In this way, one will see how the act of playreading is able to operate in a liminal existence between both public and private space. This shift of making the public private is the beginning of the modern practice of separating and categorizing. The ideas of self and self-control, so important to the modern subject, begin to develop as constraining methods and start to become ingrained in the public. As Straznicky discusses in her article, "Reading the stage: Margaret Cavendish and Commonwealth closet drama":

In this group of plays, the intersection between genre and politics takes place primarily in the prefatory materials where stoic ethic of self-restraint is either urged upon the recipient or is offered as a cure for depositions, murders, intrigues, and wars which constitute the subject matter of the plays with which the reader is expected to draw contemporary parallels. Although these plays never appeared at any of the commercial theaters, they were anything but detached from the stage of public affairs.

The reader of the closet drama is meant to understand the value of personal restraint—which in hypermodern practices becomes the constraint to keep members from deviating

from norms. As the genre promotes individual reflection, the reader is prompted to look for the representations of the dramatist and self within the text.

The intimate circle of the closet drama allows the writer to give voice to those often silenced in the public sphere. Elizabeth Cary's *Tragedy of Mariam* draws upon the earlier Thomas Lodge translation of Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*, while adding an additional character. The inclusion of Graphina gives voice to Cary, as a female dramatist, within the literary circle for which she writes. Graphina is the object of Pheroras' affections, but it is Pheroras who speaks for the two. Graphina has the fewest lines of the drama and one could argue that the lines from this mutable character could be easily removed; however, the presence of the only additional character to Josephus' drama must be important, and with so few lines, each word must count:

If I be silent, 'tis no more but fear

That I should say too little when I speak:

But since you will my imperfections bear,

In spite of doubt I will my silence break:

Yet might amazement tie my moving tongue, (Cary 2.2.49-53)

Graphina's 27 lines can be read as the breaking of the dramatist's silence. Short, yet poignant, Graphina speaks to Pheroras, as Cary speaks to her audience: "And fast obedience may your mind delight,/I will not promise more than I can prove/" (Cary 2.2.71-72). The private space of the closet drama allows both the dramatist and the playreader to write and read characters and experiences that do not have a place, or voice, in the public sphere.

While providing a voice to those often silenced, the closet drama also enables the dramatist and reader to engage in an open, public form dramatic criticism, in the privacy of the salon or closet. The criticism of Herod, a royal, is at the center of the conflicts within the drama. Herod is a king who cannot effectively rule his subjects. Before he leaves for Rome, he commands Sohemus to kill Mariam if he should receive word of Herod's death. Herod's return to the kingdom is his return to his unfaithful subjects. Herod does not even question that Mariam would love his servant:

Your love, Sohemus, mov'd by his affection,  
 Though he have ever heretofore been true,  
 Did blab forsooth, that did give direction,  
 If we were put to death to slaughter you.  
 And you in black revenge attended now

To add a murder to your breach of vow. (Cary 4.4.21-26)

He believes Sohemus and Mariam have made a cuckold of him, when it is his rule that has been made a cuckold. His siblings easily con him into doing their biddings, and because of his failure to command respect from his servants, he must have Mariam killed. Throughout his rule, Herod is almost as much a fool as he is cruel. The shortcomings of this royal could suggest discontent with the monarchy or England by the dramatist, or by the reader. The staging of this performance, through reading and imagination, could make the parallels to the Crown more or less apparent, depending on the audience. The public space does not allow such open, political liberties to take place, these sorts of criticisms

of the public, can only happen within the secluded private sphere; specifically, within the confines of one's own closet.

To better understand the relationship of the early modern reader to closet texts, one must also consider the significance of the closet devotion and prayer closet to the early modern culture. Richard Rambuss highlights the significance of the prayer closet in the following passage from his book, *Closet Devotions*:

Over the course of the seventeenth century, Christian devotion, especially in its most affectively amplified registers, comes to be an increasingly closeted expression. The devotional literature of this period...abounds in injunctions sending Christians to the closet, to the intensified experiences of the individual encountering God in this private, hence deemed more intimate, place. (103)

God, like privacy, has become newly accessible to the individual through literacy. Private study and devotion was thought to create and foster the intimate relationship with God that Protestant culture emphasizes. Attending public mass was still important to the early modern culture, but the true understanding and faith came from what the individual studied and prayed upon in the privacy of the prayer closet. God is invited, and honored, into the most intimate space in the home of the early modern. This is an intimate place in the home for advancement, reflection, and contemplation, the public is the place for deviants and criminals. One notices the very different attitude surrounding the early modern closet God is resides in versus the modern closet that keeps taboos. It is through the understanding of the early modern closet and the relationship of the culture with their closet that one can appreciate the closet drama.

The shame of the modern closet has forced itself upon the closet drama. Modern readers have long associated closet drama as the lesser when compared to the staged

drama. “For much of the twentieth century, these [closet dramas] plays were considered a failed experiment in dramatic writing, a misguided attempt inspired by Philip Sidney’s criticisms of the commercial stage...to re-route English drama in the direction of French neo-classicism” (Straznicky, *Privacy* 49). This ethnocentric approach to understanding the genre is further perpetuated by modernity’s devaluation of the feminine sphere and celebration of the masculine sphere. These spheres consist of the domestic setting as belonging to the feminine and female and the commercial setting to be the male and masculine sphere. This idea of space belonging to femininity and masculinity emerges during this period; prior to this experience, masculinity concerned itself with intellectual endeavors and femininity with the spiritual and emotional and a complementary pursuit of both was valued in early modern culture. Unfortunately for the closet drama, this move to a physical notion of space aligns it within the feminine sphere, which loses agency with the advancement of modernity.

Closet drama is pushed further into the modernized feminine sphere through its association with female writers, such as Elizabeth Cary. A particularly well-known quote from Clarendon in 1641 describes Cary as “a lady of most masculine understanding, allayed with the passions and infirmities of her own sex” (Beilin 167). One should note, however, that modernized conception of masculinity is not analogous to its early modern conception. For this construction to form, it is important to recognize that, “both men and women have participated in the construction of modern masculinity...” (Halberstam 48). Clarendon’s quote suggests that Cary’s “masculine understanding” compliments the features of her femininity—one might understand this as a balanced mode of existing.

Cary, herself, might share the ideals that would think of this statement as complementary “her [Cary] belief in a practical union of domestic and public spheres” (Raber 150). An “allayed” metal, as would have been commonly known during this period, is an amalgamation of a hard metal for strength and a soft metal for malleability—each metal, on its own, is either too brittle or too soft for use—but the combination creates an element that emphasizes the desirable qualities and mutes the faults of the original, separate, metals. The watery, emotional nature of the feminine is tempered with the intellectual, stoic nature of masculinity; conversely, the hard nature of masculinity is muted with the soft nature of the femininity. Beilin, however, unpacks the meaning of this quotation as a mark on Cary’s identity:

The attribution of masculinity that has haunted Elizabeth Cary’s intellectual achievements may explain why women so carefully guarded or apologized for their abilities. For many reasons, Cary – a scholar, dramatist, poet, religious polemicist, wife, and mother – encountered difficulties in practically every aspect of her life; a source of continual conflict was her attempt to live the ‘masculine’ life of the mind while devotedly carrying out the role and duties of a woman. (167)

Here the reader is led to understand the association of a female body with masculinity is the cause that underlies any and all malcontent in Cary’s life. The reader is meant to understand a shared burden with Cary when reading her “haunted” intellectual achievements and in contemplation of her “continual conflict” as a masculine woman. The difference between possible interpretations of Clarendon’s quote is the difference between appreciating a compliment and feeling the sting of an insult.

The devaluation of women and femininity did not have the same grasp on the early modern culture as it does in modern culture. When one considers the historical



conditions and culture, alongside the lack of female playwrights and writers during the early modern era, the 17th-century becomes less misogynistic and more circumstantial. Literacy had recently, within a few generations, become accessible to the masses from the printing press. Prior to this, sons took up the trade of their fathers or became clergy and daughters learned domestic skills. The value of the son was that he was going to carry on the family name and trade and the value of a daughter is in the alliance gained through marriage. Both of these existences use the exploitation of children for the overall benefit of the family. These different roles were a mode of existence that would not have compared the daughter to the son in the same, evaluative, way that modern culture experiences—because neither one could feasibly take the role of the other in the family.

The modern convention criticizes what it considers the devaluation of women by the early modern's limitations on occupations outside the home for women. The modern reader does not recognize that through this practice it interprets the domestic, female sphere as of lesser importance than the public, male, sphere. It can be argued that it is the modern society, not early modern English society, which devalues women by forcing the belief that traditional occupations and roles of women are to be considered trivial when compared those of men. This reality is actually more oppressive to women, as it insists that women must simultaneously exist in both spheres and that men should only exist in the public sphere. As Halberstam discusses in *Female Masculinities*, "Debates about the history of sexuality and the history of gender deviance have also very often reproduced this split [between untheoretical and ahistorical theoretical interpretation], rendering historical sexual forms as either universal or completely bound by and to their historical

moment” (46). This “universal” belief of modernity convinces those within its culture that gender and sexuality must exist and must also be comparative to the modern conception. Within this culture, women are expected to gain competence in both masculine and feminine spheres, and men are to remain solely in the masculine sphere. One will notice that the practice of exploiting children for the betterment of the family structure has not dissipated as modernity would insist, but has moved into a subversive role that polarizes the exploitation in favor of the masculine male. It is the modern culture that devalues women and femininity, but it uses the nuances of its phallogentrism to insist that a culture that gave men and women separate roles must be sexist because it does not demand that women learn to act as men.

Elizabeth Cary’s *The Tragedy of Mariam, The Fair Queen of Jewry*, begins to blur the boundaries of the public and private sphere in regards to the roles of women. Though the modern society demands that women join the masculine sphere, Cary’s dramatic characters operate in both spheres, and in varying degrees. Cary writes women who are both the bully and victim. The weeping and emotional Mariam<sup>3</sup> shares a sex, if little else, with Cary’s Salome. Salome uses the public sphere’s value of reason and stoicism to manipulate her brother, Herod. Salome’s call to reason in speaking with Herod:

*Sal.* Your thoughts do rave with doting on the Queen.

Her eyes are ebon-hew’d, and you’ll confess

A sable star hath been but seldom seen.

Then speak of reason more, of Mariam less. (Cary 4. 7. 97-100)

Both of these women operate in the extremes of the feminine and masculine spheres and both are women being written by Cary. Cary's character Graphina is a woman who is in both spheres, but in a society that wishes to confine her to one. Cary's women reflect the beginnings of set polarizations in the public and private spheres, and the value of moderation within each. Though the modern association with this drama places it into a feminine sphere, for Cary and her contemporaries, she is one of the first women to enter this predominately male writing sphere. Cary's characters depict the extremes of either sex being fully immersed in the public and private and masculine and feminine spheres.

Through the understanding of modern culture and the hidden biases it places on words such as "closet" and "privacy," and its separation of feminine and masculine spheres, it becomes apparent that those participating exclusively in modernity cannot appreciate the early modern closet drama. The relationship of the modern critic to the text conveys the ideals of the modern society towards women, privacy, and, what it would consider, non-normative behaviors. The closet drama, a dramatic form that by definition and name includes both the notions of "privacy" and "closet," solicits a negative response from the modern reader. This reaction is further complicated by the reader's relationship with the female body, masculinity and femininity, and the ambiguity surrounding the text. These fluctuating concepts are unsettling to the modern society, and what that culture finds disturbing it immediately distrusts and begins to devalue. As modernity advances, this distrust of uncertainties and irregularities within a culture that cannot be explained through its set definitions are moved from the public to the private sphere. This practice becomes known as closeting. The fear of the private space is simple enough to

foster by using the conventions of privacy against itself—that is—the notion that to be excluded is wrong. The exclusion is thought to be hiding something from the society, rather than refusing society the opportunity to participate. By assigning criminality, deviance, and perversion to the experience that is kept private—those things done in private or labeled private are now met with suspicion. The conventions that earlier developed the dramatic form are then used to deconstruct it, as the closet drama has been tucked away with the other closet monsters of modernity.

## CHAPTER 2

MANIPULATING TRAGIC AND COMEDIC EROTICS THROUGH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACE IN *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* AND *JULIUS CAESAR*

The construction of space has become such a common process for modernity that its culture believes spatial experiences as intrinsic in nature. However, through considering the experience of these places and their spatial boundaries, one notices the participatory nature of space. Physical borders are only the necessary representations of the already socially constructed boundaries as defined between people. Walls are constructed to physically convey the understood separating and framing necessary for the modern experience. Early modern English spaces did not have the same authority of this commonplace, modern convention. As one studies the development of the notions of “public” and “private” in Renaissance England, specifically through the genre of drama, the participatory nature of space is revealed. William Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* and *Measure for Measure* exemplify the purposeful and playful creations of public and private<sup>4</sup> space within early modern theatre. Through manipulating boundaries and place in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, Shakespeare creates and manipulates the tensions within the audiences of both tragedy and comedy.

Through this participation in construction, the audience is able to understand that Julius Caesar is a tyrant, rather than a benevolent leader. Modern readers may miss this relationship with Caesar, established early on, if they do not consider the spatial exchanges between Caesar and the audience. During act 1, scene 2 the audience experiences its first interactions with Caesar and through these actions the distrust of his

authority becomes established. Caesar enters the street—presumably center stage and nearest to the audience, who experience this as public space—surrounded by a throng of Roman citizens. Andrew Gurr and Mariko Ichikawa discuss the importance of staging choices and explains to the modern reader that “Elizabethan staging was symbolic rather than realistic. Audiences had to work at visualizing the spectacles the words described” (Introduction 1). Caesar’s physical closeness to the audience would have presented the leader as the center of the public space. The audience feels the thrill and excitement of the crowd, perhaps even joining them in the celebratory reaction to Caesar’s presence. As Bronwen Wilson and Paul Yachnin attest, this shared experience is key to “the phenomenon that we call ‘making publics’—the active creation of new forms of association that allowed people to connect with others in ways not rooted in family, rank, or vocation, but rather founded in voluntary groupings built on the shared interests, tastes, commitments, and desires of individuals” (1). The performance would need to be so loud that it would be difficult for Caesar to hear the soothsayer address him.

CAESAR. Ha? Who calls?

CASCA. Bid every noise be still. Peace yet again!

[The music ceases]

CEASAR. Who is it in the press that calls on me?

I hear a tongue shriller than all the music

Cry “Caesar!” Speak. Caesar is turned to hear. (1.2.13-17)

The crowd on stage, and the crowd that had been created within the audience, would need to be quieted to hear the proclamation of the soothsayer. At this point of the production, the crowd feels included in the action and Caesar is a public figure:

In part, to be sure, the audience becomes a public merely by imagining itself as one. That act of imagining publicity is of a piece with its active creation. However, the audience's pleasure in the unfolding of the dramatic action and its collective thinking through of the matter of concern in solidarity with the protagonist is able to gain a greater degree of publicness because of the pleasure and the thinking borne of the play...are disseminated beyond the walls of the playhouse into a space seemingly without boundaries, that is, the space of the public. (Yachnin "*Hamlet*" 87)

This inclusion creates a momentary kinship with the actors celebrating Caesar, as well as a sense of inclusion with Caesar as a ruler. The audience needs to feel included when first meeting Julius Caesar so that it can later feel the betrayal of his faux public persona.

Just as the staging and excitement within the crowd is used to create a sense of inclusion, these same elements are later used to create the exclusion and a sense of betrayal through the manipulation of the spatial experience. This is seen within the scene of Caesar's denial of the crown. When Caesar first appears to the audience, they are made to feel included in the celebration and part of the public of Rome. Caesar then exits the stage with the Roman crowd, but leaves the presence of the audience. Here is when the audience begins to feel the betrayal of Caesar—after celebrating his victory and praising his leadership with the Romans why has he denied the audience the thrill of being present during his rousing speech before Rome? This action of exclusion builds the tension and distrust between the audience and Caesar which increases the audience's sympathies with Brutus. As Hanna Arendt discusses in *The Human Condition*, "Only where things can be

seen by many in a variety of aspects without changing their identity, so that those who are gathered around them know they see sameness in utter diversity, can worldly reality truly and reliably appear” (57). This public abandonment of the audience becomes the shared sentiments of Brutus. Both the audience and Brutus miss the action of Caesar denying the crown. This staging choice to have the public space of the monologue off-stage in a private space creates the faux public persona of Caesar—thus making him a tyrant. Caesar’s denial of the crown would have been a great spectacle for the Elizabethan audience at the Globe—it is the denial of this pleasure separates Caesar from the public and fosters the sympathy and shared distrust with Brutus.

The physical staging of the actions and actors bodies would further distance Caesar from the audience through the jarring withdrawal from the audience with which he had just established a relationship. As this scene begins in a public street the actors would be positioned closest to the audience. Caesar enters the street scene, perhaps interacting with the audience and further encouraging their raucous celebrations, but after a few short lines he departs from the public. The way in which one imagines Caesar’s exit is important in considering the relationship of this departure and the audience. This action expresses Caesar’s relationship with the audience. As Yachnin describes, “...rather they [Elizabethan playwrights] developed the relationship between irony and the placement of bodies on stage, so that the outward look tended to become the sign of the inward personhood, one which invited the members of the audience to rethink their own personhood and their experience watching the players” (“Eye” 80). This scene would have been particularly poignant if the separation between Julius Caesar from the audience



and the public involved him ascending a flight of stairs and/or turning his back to the audience to make his exit from the people. As he has just returned triumphantly to Rome, his ascension into the balcony would have been apropos: "...[F]or Elizabethans the stage balcony was also associated with more general breaches of social order, and with conquest..." (Gurr and Ichikawa 2). As Caesar raises himself above the audience he is both celebrating his military victory and asserting his importance over the crowd and other senators. Bradbrook states in *Elizabethan Stage Conditions* "Caesar goes through the streets to the senate house (placed, as usual, above)" (45). If Caesar were to physically raise himself above the audience and/or turn his back to them this would have further stressed the false sense of public he creates through his tyranny. It is through Caesar's interaction and participation, or lack thereof, with the public that Shakespeare's audience establishes the character and nature of Julius Caesar.

The audience further distrusts Caesar's government through the portrayal and actions of the senators. Cicero, Publius, and Popilius Lena are the people's representation in the government but have the least heard voices of officials in the play. These characters and their actions are directly associated with the notion of "publics."<sup>5</sup> During the beginning of act 3, scene 1, that the audience witnesses Caesar's first and only interaction with Popilius Lena. As Popilius Lena speaks to Caesar privately the audience interprets the interaction through their shared experience with Brutus.

BRUTUS.

Cassius, be constant.

Popilius Lena speaks not of our purposes;

For look, he smiles, and Caesar doth not change. (3.1.23-25)

Here the audience learns that “public mitigation” affects neither conspirators nor Julius Caesar through the action in the private sphere of conversation with Caesar. The mitigation that does prove affective is that which takes place between the conspirators in the presence of the audience. After Caesar’s death there is no further mention of Popilius Lena throughout the play; however, immediately following the death, the attention of the conspirators and the audience is focused on Publius:

BRUTUS. Where’s Publius?

CINNA. Here, quite confounded with this mutiny.

METELLUS. Stand fast together, lest some friend of Caesar’s

Should chance—

BRUTUS. Talk not of standing. Publius, good cheer.

There is no harm intended to your person,

Nor to no Roman else. So tell them, Publius.

CASSIUS. And leave us, Publius, lest that the people,

Rushing on us, should do your age some mischief. (3.1.86-94)

These characters physically embody publics on stage—and their actions and interactions show the relationship of the public to Caesar’s Rome. From these actions one learns that the conspirators have executed their plot, and their tyrant, in front of—but without consulting—the three named senators clearly associated with the public. During this exchange the audience sees Publius as a befuddled, frail, elderly man. Brutus, believing that he speaks and acts upon the will of the Roman people tries to reassure the public through Publius that this rebellion was not meant to threaten the public. Cassius then tells

Publius to leave the scene to avoid injury and molestation from “the people.” Just 18 lines after the death of the Caesar, whose separation from the public labeled him tyrant, the new regime begins by sending the public away in order to protect it from itself. The tyranny is perpetuated through both Brutus’ belief that he speaks at the public’s behest and the further distancing between the public and the conspirators. This action supports Wilson and Yachnin’s assertion “That public life opens up possibilities for political action as well as the potential for repressing this, through, say, acting in the name of the public....” (Introduction 10). By following Julius Caesar’s death in this manner, the audience learns that those who would claim they were protecting the public are now continuing the tyranny.

In considering *Julius Caesar* as a tragedy, the relationship between the public and private experiences becomes even more important during the climactic moments<sup>6</sup> of the performance. *Julius Caesar*’s multiple climaxes throughout the play draw upon the audience’s tensions and experiences of the public and private spaces. One of the potential climactic scenes is the death of Caesar. For modern audiences death, especially of the title character, is a recognizable irrevocable action. Though his death is for the benefit of the public, it is done in the private space of the Capitol. This is not to suggest that this is offstage or out of the audience’s view, rather, the audience knows via the staging and action that the assassination does not happen in front of the people of Rome. This experience allows the audience to view and participate in the private space of the conspiracy and the climax. The Roman people only learn of Caesar’s death from the different orations given during 3.2 in the forum. The forum, as a space, would develop

the Classical interpretation of public space. “Traditionally the space of the public has been characterized as unified and uniform—an open, visible, inclusive space in which people engage in what Jürgen Habermas calls ‘rational-critical debate’” (5). The orations that follow are meant to sway the opinion of the public. This climax mirrors the audience’s earlier exclusion from Caesar’s denial of the crown—now that the audience is privy to the events of the private space they begin to distrust the reactions of the staged-public. In this experience, part of the irrevocable action is the inclusion of the audience in the private action. A similar climactic experience is created for the Renaissance humanist in 2.1.10-34 during Brutus’ soliloquy in his private garden:

Still, the early terminology of ‘withdrawal’ in royal and noble domestic arrangements warrants speculative generalization. The common element of ‘privacy’ in these early [Elizabethan England] plans is a function of withdrawing from the ceremonial display of magnificence in the dining ritual, a privation of the public ‘presence’.... (McKeon 228)

Brutus’ private garden becomes a public through his involvement of the audience in his contemplation of participating in the conspiracy against Caesar. This invitation to participate within the walls of Brutus’ private garden serves as a mirror to 3.3.245-50, during which Antony reads Caesar’s will bequeathing his private gardens and walks to the public. Only through Caesar’s death could the public gain access to both Brutus’ and Caesar’s private gardens and walks. In both of these climactic examples, the audience experiences the private space and then begins to associate itself with the actions and activities of the private rather than the public<sup>7</sup>. Indeed, the audience that celebrated with the Roman public in act 1, scene 1 finds itself in opposition to the same crowd during act 3, scene 2. In both of these climaxes Shakespeare appeases the audience’s desires to feel

both included in the action and privy to an intimate exchange. For the audiences at the Globe, these climactic scenes build upon their own tensions, fears, and desires associated with the private sphere.

Shakespeare's plays were designed with the erotics of the audience in mind. For *Julius Caesar*, the audience would have been Elizabethan playgoers at the Globe theatre. Shakespeare's awareness of the lack of heterogeneous audience members at this performance lends to the multiplicity of experiences throughout the play. As Yachnin further explains, "Meta-topicality also captures an essential and familiar feature of Shakespeare's art, which is that his plays are not theatricalized essays on particular topics but are instead imitations of actions that comprehend and are able to speak to a great range of interests and able to do so with a high degree of self-awareness" ("*Hamlet*" 82). These performances develop both individual and cohesive experiences within the audience members. "The playhouse audience begins to change into a theatrical public when the audience conceives of itself and makes itself into something more expansive, more productive, and more long-lasting than itself" (Yachnin "*Hamlet*" 87). The audience was able to feel the excitement and participation of the crowd as a whole as well as differentiate their own experience from that of others in the crowd.<sup>8</sup> This experience would be very different from the singular audience's experience of *Measure for Measure*. Jürgen Habermas' criticism of the bourgeois and its relationship to the creation of public and private spheres<sup>9</sup> is not an accurate representation of the experience of the public and private spheres of James I.

In contrast to the audience of the Globe, the audience of Whitehall would have experienced the tension of the private becoming public alongside the public becoming private differently. The performance was both for and about James I. “The king himself was positioned centrally to the front so that he formed part of the view of every other playgoer” (Kinney 11). James would have been a focal point of the other audience members, who would be studying the monarch’s reactions and mannerisms throughout the performance. Shakespeare recognizes that the stage forms around the attention of the audience and by placing James near the action of the drama, the play will not have to compete with the king for the stage. This is done for the benefit of both the performance and James. As the newly crowned king, James wants to be the center of attention—and to be upstaged by a lowly acting troop would be disastrous. By recognizing and staging James in this way, Shakespeare acknowledges that James is the focal point through which the play is experienced. Part of the pleasure for James would have been in knowing he was being watched and his own actions then become a dramatic performance. *Measure for Measure*, performed at Whitehall, would have been considered a private performance because it was for the Court, but through utilizing the spectacle of the king’s presence it is simultaneously developing a public experience.

The primary source of tension, and pleasure, for James is in the Duke’s private experience of the public. As the Duke, Vincentio could not participate in the public without being the object of the public’s attention. Vincentio uses disguise to operate amongst those of the public realm. Part of the tension is found in the hilarity of mistreatment of the Friar and the anxiety of considering the outcome of the Duke’s

mistreatment. Thinking he is speaking with a lowly friar in private, Lucio takes liberties he could not take publically make:

LUCIO.       Some report a sea-maid spawned him [Duke], some that he  
                   was begot between two stockfishes. But it is certain that  
                   when he makes water, his urine is congealed ice; that I know  
                   to be true. And he is a motion generative, that's infallible. (3.2.96-100)

Lucio speaking in this manner as a member of the Duke's court would have played on the suspicions James I had of his own court. Shakespeare used much of James' own musings from his *Basilkon Doron*<sup>10</sup>:

Delight to haunt your (public court) Session and spie carefullie their proceedings; take good heed, if any briberie may be tried among them, which cannot over-severly be punished. Spare not to goe there, for gracing that farre any that ye favour, by your presence procure them expedition of Justice.' Above all, such court sessions allow the ruler to let 'everie partie tell his owne tale himself and wearie not to hear the complaints of the oppressed. (Ioppolo xi)

The actions of the Duke would further bolster the wisdom of James' advice to his eldest son on effectively ruling the kingdom.

This tension is further complicated by the relationship of James' church with the Puritan and Catholic churches. The Duke, though a sovereign, is a weak ruler and has to revert to disguise and deceit to regain his subject's respect. The Duke, depicted as a Puritan, would be a sensational spectacle for the audience who, knowing of the Puritan dissention of the crown, relishes witnessing an incompetent ruler dressed as a Puritan on stage. To further degrade the Puritans, he then takes on the disguise of a Catholic, and uses this disguise to become a member of the lowliest members of society. As the Friar,

he would be able to participate in the creation of the public experience that he cannot have as the Duke. His demeanor and actions as the Friar differ drastically when compared to his actions as the duke. As a protestant, the Duke uses the privacy afforded by his disguise to publically mock the papists:

The Duke's costume as Friar in *Measure for Measure* must have been unusually significant on the Jacobean stage when the King's Men staged the play, because the two costumes embodied by a single character combined state and church as James I... insisted was a cornerstone of his own rule; in a way, the play tests the efficacy of state rule without church support. That Angelo, probably dressed like a Puritan, is moralistic but ineffective suggests, however, that the Church of England, with its tolerant understanding of the people, was a far better choice.... (Kinney 103)

Conversely, just as the Duke is able to mock the Catholics through his disguise he is no longer spared the scorn of his subjects to his person. Again, Lucio demonstrates his disregard for the Friar:

LUCIO. Sir, my name is Lucio, well known to the Duke.

DUKE. He shall know you better, sir, if I may live to report you.

LUCIO. I fear you not.

DUKE. O, you hope the Duke will return no more, or you imagine me too unhurtful an opposite. But, indeed, I can do you little harm. You'll forswear this again? (3.2.141-46)

This scene serves as a mirror to the earlier scene between Angelo and Isabella.

ANGELO. Who will believe thee, Isabel? (2.4.157)

The Duke knows, as a Friar, his word cannot compete with that of his social superior Lucio. This mirrors the exchanges between Isabella and Angelo, both of whom know that



Angelo's position will keep him from being punished for propositioning her. These ironic, private abuses of power create tension within the audience who recognizes Isabella as the morally superior and the Friar as politically superior. This tension is relieved in the final scene when both of these offenses are made public and reconciled by the Duke/Friar. James would have enjoyed watching this unfold as both audience and spectacle of the performance. As the newly crowned King, James must work to set the tone of his authority amongst his court. If the court understands the Duke to represent James then they may identify themselves, or other members of court, with the members of the Duke's court: Lucio and Angelo. James would have had immense pleasure in the message of the play to his court: just as Lucio and Angelo learn, there is nothing members of the court can do or say that James will not discover and act upon.

The movement from the private disguise of the Duke to his public persona occurs within the ambiguously public and private *mise-en-scène*. Ioppolo's textual notes set the *mise-en-scène* for the final act and scene as, "Location: outdoors, near the city gate of Vienna" (74). The relationship of the audience with the city gate changes the type of space of the performance. Are the audience and actors within the walls of the city, looking out into the open space beyond the walls or are they meant to be in the wild space outside of the city with civility out of reach but in view? As mentioned earlier, walls and physical boundaries exist to convey the socially constructed concepts of separation and partition; in this way, the public space within the confines of the city walls becomes a private space to those outside the gate. If one is to assume that the audience and actors are outside the city, the chaos that follows the exposure of the Duke may have the effect of

being less sensational—even expected. The untamed and uncivilized space lacks the relationship necessary for people to form publics and/or privations as the space is both open to all and fully accessible to none. The audience knows the space to be a public through the interactions happening on stage, the physical closeness with the audience, and from Lucio’s reaction to Escalus’ request to question Isabella:

LUCIO. Marry, sir, I think, if you handled her privately, she

Would sooner confess; perchance publicly she’ll be ashamed. (5.1.275-76)

The order and function, prided by the Viennese, could not take place outside the gates of the city. Further considering James’ love of spectacle and the jarring reaction on stage and in the audience of the Friar becoming the Duke, one can come to the conclusion that the final scene takes place within the walls of Vienna, rather than in the wild space outside of the city. The orderly and linear city would be in contrast to the view of the chaos outside the gate which would reflect the experience of the actions on stage. The walls of the city are all that stand between the definitions of early modernity and chaotic feudal existence just as the delineation of private and public space is what maintains the social status quo.

During the climactic “defrocking” of the Friar part of the tension that is relieved for James I is knowing that the Duke will now get to punish Lucio for the liberties he took with the Duke when he was disguised as the Friar.

LUCIO. “*Cucullus non facit monachum*<sup>11</sup>”: honest in nothing

But in his clothes, and one that hath spoke most villainous

Speeches of the duke. (5.1.262-64)

Lucio's admonishment of the Catholic friar would not have been a punishable offense if the Friar had really been a simple friar. Part of the pleasure of the exchange between Lucio and the Friar for the protestant audience is the public abuse of Catholics. It is not the public molestation of the Friar that Lucio is guilty of but, rather, the private criticism of the Duke. James would enjoy the experience and sensation of defrocking the Catholic Church in public as a statement bolstering his own rule. "...for the king as absolute ruler of his people, given the divine right of rule by God, was a political principle King James was arguing in his handbook of rule, the *Basilicon Doron*..." (Kinney 151). When Lucio removes the hood, however, he is not only defrocking a papist and reaffirming the position of the protestant duke, but also publically exposing his private transgressions against the Duke.

Further tension is created when, at the moment the hood is pulled off, the space instantly changes. The sense of confusion, both within the audience and on stage develops from the queering of the imaginative boundaries as the character moves from lowly Friar to head of state. This confusion emphasizes that "...public making is a process by which social and material relations are reassembled, so that a public space, as it were, is created where one did not exist before" (Wilson and Yachnin, Introduction 7). The focus and attention of the public has shifted to the Duke. The schema used by the actors interacting with this body on stage changes as the relationship to this character changes. It shifts from the privacy afforded to the Duke through disguise to the immediate reorganization of the public space. This movement between the Duke to the Friar to the Duke again upsets and calls attention to the artificiality of the spatial

constructions of private and public space. The relief of the tension created by this momentary, unbalanced chaos through the restoration of hierarchical order provides the audience with a comedic climax.

Shakespeare uses spatial tension and the comedic conventions to develop a performance for the specific audience of *Measure for Measure*. This performance manipulates the king's experiences of privation and publics in a way that audiences at the Globe would not have appreciated. To common playgoers, such as those who frequented the Globe, the Duke's actions would have depicted him as a Machiavelli character. He, like *Henry V's* Prince Hal uses disguise for his own pleasures<sup>12</sup>. From a common perspective the idea of someone in power using disguise and manipulating his subjects is horrifying. Conversely, both James I and Prince Hal would have appreciated the pleasure of the manipulation of the masses and benefited from the instilment of fear and uncertainty that would manifest in the people<sup>13</sup>. The tension that builds within the audience throughout the play, and these interactions, is that the audience knows that the Duke cannot be part of the public and that this role upsets that boundary. This confusion would have led to an uproarious laughter from the audience:

What audiences tend most basically to laugh at in comedy is the stubborn insistence of characters on acting predictably in unpredictable, constantly changing situations. Thus, while tragedy develops by introducing types of situations that require characters to behave a certain way, comedy tends more to introduce types of characters that make certain types of situations imminent. (Lopez 172)

To achieve this audience's laughter the joke is made at the expense of those characters who would be in opposition to the crown. For the Protestant, King James I who promoted

spying on members of the court to protect his authority this would include Catholics and disloyal courtiers. This audience finds it hilarious when discovering the Duke will marry the strict Catholic Isabella. James would have enjoyed this playful parody of his Catholic queen, Anna, as well as the further subjugation of the Catholic Church under his rule. This same scenario, for early modern Catholics<sup>14</sup> would have been a tragic element of the performance. James would have laughed uproariously at Anna's expense if her reaction reflected her inner horror—thus making the performance even funnier for its intended audience.

Both *Measure for Measure* and *Julius Caesar*'s audiences experience the movement between public and private space as stressful. The manipulation of private space enhances the tragedy experienced by the audiences at the Globe's production of *Julius Caesar*. For James I, manipulating his experience of the lack of private space functioned as a humorous catalyst. Conversely, it is the public's exclusion from certain spaces and the distrust of private action that further develops the multiple tragic climaxes. As king, James would not have had the experience of limitations, restrictions, or exclusion from space in the same way as the common playgoer. James did not attend private theatres; theatres were private because James was in attendance. The audience had to feel the loss, associated with exclusion, for the space to be an effective tragic element. "The most successful tragedies of the [Renaissance] period convey a sense of loss greater than we can comprehend, and make us feel that that loss is never truly compensated for by the noises of closure and resolution that are inevitably made in the final scenes" (Lopez 135). The loss of the Roman Republic is the loss represented

through the loss of the public formed between the audience and the Roman people within the first two acts. During the third act, the audience begins to associate themselves with the private realm of the conspirators and is then distanced from the public. By its association with the audience, the former private sphere of the conspirators (and of Caesar) is created into a new public. "In tragedy, characters and audience alike are put into a position of constantly feeling this inadequacy by having constantly to revise and adapt modes of response to series of events which, while perhaps unpredictable, always seem to be logical and inexorable" (Lopez 135). The audience almost seamlessly changed and adapted from its original identification with Caesar and the Roman public to its new identification with the conspirators in an adversarial role towards the Roman public.

By considering the relationships of both *Julius Caesar*, a tragedy performed for Elizabethan English commoners at the Globe Theatre, and *Measure for Measure*, a comedy performed for James I and his court at Whitehall, one will see how two incredibly different performances are able to draw upon the spatial tensions of their audiences. When imagining how conceptions of public and private space affect the audience's reactions to the performance it is worth noting that the responses to these ideas are able to cross dramatic genres as well as audiences. The comedic element is in the sense of power and pleasure of this audience in exercising the playful manipulation of the relationships developing between actors, characters, and audience. The tragic experience of space occurs within those audiences who feel its limitations. Audiences that could be excluded feel the distrust of the unseen<sup>15</sup> actions. Shakespeare considers both the individual and collective erotics of his audiences and creates and relieves

climactic tensions through his manipulation of the relationships between these pleasures and the public and private spaces.

## CHAPTER 3

THE PRIVACY OF THE MIND IN *SAMSON AGONISTES*

The “newness” of the early seventeenth-century public, as experienced in *Julius Caesar* and *Measure for Measure*, shifts into an established experience at the time John Milton creates *Samson Agonistes*. Playreading enables the individual to create the public within the private sphere of the closet or salon. As reading moves into an increasingly silent expression, the construction of the mind begins to become an abstract state, developing as the private spatial boundaries no longer suffice as the place for thought and contemplation. As *Julius Caesar* suggests, the physical exclusion from the public that demarks the tyranny of Caesar, *Samson Agonistes* suggests that complete inclusion of the mind into the public is a tyranny against one’s self. Through examining John Milton’s negotiation of the varying abstract constructions of spaces, both public and private, *Samson Agonistes*, one will note how the celebration of public in *Julius Caesar* is mirrored by the caution of public found in *Samson Agonistes* and the celebration of the abstract construction of the mind.

The closet drama relies on the private space, traditionally provided by the structure of a closet, for its readership to interpret the text. These closets and privacy that were once celebrated begin to succumb to the modern preference for the open, public experience. Milton understands the attack on the private sphere as it becomes associated with deviance, perversion, and criminality, and offers *Samson Agonistes* as a closet drama that is meant for the privacy afforded through the mind. The mind has become the last refuge of privacy. Public and private spaces become physical places rather than states



of being with the progression of time. Once associated with physical places with tangible and set boundaries, they are then fully ingrained into modernity. Milton offers the mind as a state to the reader in an effort to escape the modern constraints on place.

The *mise-en-scène* of *Samson Agonistes* manipulates the reader's conceptions of public and private place, while offering the mind as a transcending state for both. The drama begins with Samson in the privacy of his prison. Here, one can see how Milton uses this space to play with the modern idea of criminality. Samson is a criminal to the Philistine society, but is a tragic hero in the Judeo-Christian tradition. This demonstrates the flexible rather than permanent definitions of criminality. As a sympathizer, the reader is placed into the role of societal pervert; however, if one aligns with the Philistine society, the reader is a Christian societal pervert. In either context, the reader is unable to escape the demonization of modernity. How one reads the soliloquy offered by Samson further develops and manipulates the private space and mind. This soliloquy is meant to be read silently, in the mind of the reader and Samson. Readers know this from the reaction of the Chorus to Samson:

CHOR. This, this is he; softly a while,  
 Let us not break in upon him;  
 O change beyond report, thought, or belief!  
 See how he lies at random, carelessly diffus'd,  
 With languish't head unpropt,  
 As one past hope, abandon'd,  
 And by himself given over;

In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds (115-22)

Line 115 marks the moment the chorus comes upon Samson. The Chorus then engages in a discussion of Samson's fate. At line 175, Samson then engages the Chorus. Waiting to engage the Chorus serves as a cue to the way in which the reader is to imagine the scene. Samson's thoughts are interrupted by the Chorus' arrival; he listens as the chorus discusses how they "see" and interpret Samson. The reader engages in the chorus through the mind of Samson. This reader is invited into Samson's mind through the silent reading of the soliloquy, rather than the private cell through the vocalized reading of the soliloquy.

The private cell or individual reading aloud is open to the public in a way that the mind is not. Had Samson been speaking aloud to himself, the Chorus would not have had the later startle when they hear Samson:

SAM. I hear the sound of words, thir sense the air

Dissolves unjointed e're it reach my ear.

CHOR. Hee speaks, let us draw nigh. Matchless in might,

The glory late of *Israel*, now the grief;

We come thy friends and neighbours not unknown (Milton, 175-179).

Line 178 marks the first line the reader is meant to hear, or speak aloud. If the reader breaks the silence of the reading, and says line 178 and 179 aloud, the reader leaves the shared state of mind with Samson and emerges to the private place shared between Samson and Chorus. The Chorus is composed of Samson's "friends and neighbours" and is still an intimate space, removed from the public. This space, however, is not open to

the same level of contemplation as the state of mind in lines 1-177. The argument could be made that the lines of the Chorus must be spoken aloud, so that Samson could hear them. I suggest that the reader does not “hear” these lines from the chorus, but rather reads Samson’s interpretation of these lines, as spoken by the Chorus. Knowing when one is “hearing” and when one is “reading silently” in *Samson Agonistes* is open to different interpretations. In order to share the jarring interruption of silence with the Chorus, the reader needs to break the silence of reading.

Milton’s use of parentheses further supports the silent reading of *Samson Agonistes*. These thoughtful disruptions often provide a further contemplative point for the reader. Milton’s parentheses in *Samson Agonistes* serve as a guide to the silent reader. He is providing the private, literary circle or salon experience within the mind of the reader. If one were to read this play aloud, in a literary circle with John Milton—these would most likely be the comments, or interruptions, Milton would make during the reading. No parenthetical texts appear within the first 114 lines of the drama. These lines are Samson’s soliloquy, and already being experienced silently, there is no need for further disruption. Samson’s thoughts are aligned with Milton’s in these opening lines, and provide the reflective response within the reader. Milton provides further insight into the interpretation of the Chorus through his use of parenthesis:

Which shall I first bewail,  
 They Bondage or lost Sight,  
 Prison within Prison  
 Inseparably dark?

Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)

The Dungeon of thy self; thy Soul

(Which Men enjoying sight oft without cause complain)

Imprison'd now indeed, (Milton 151-58)

Whereas Samson reflects on the insight and wisdom he has gained since losing his strength and sight, the Chorus can only bemoan the loss of vision. This further supports the idea that the Chorus had not heard Samson's opening lines, or if they had—that they are not able to share any understanding with Samson. The reader is meant to reflect on these contradictory readings of this imprisonment. For Samson, he is freed from the worldly prison that the Chorus and other characters still dwell within—he has lost the public and private space, but has gained a state of mind. For the Chorus the loss of place and space is the imprisonment, and to only exist within the mind is the tragedy. Samson tries to explain this to the Chorus:

...Yee see, O friends,

How many evils have enclos'd me round;

Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,

Blindness for had I sight, confus'd with shame,

How could I once look up, or heave the head, (Milton 193-97)

Samson still laments the loss of his sight, but even more so, he laments that he had to lose his sight in order to begin to see. These parenthesis, or thoughtful disruptions, throughout the text are designed to help the reader “see” in the way in which Samson and Milton are able to see.

The reader attempts to understand the soul and mind as Samson and Milton, but the reader often struggles along with the Chorus. Milton's Chorus offers the reader an experience of public and private space more closely akin to the earliest formations of these spaces. The Chorus appears to be a "desirable" public and private space for the reader—much like the audience of *Julius Caesar*. The audience joins the Crowd in the celebration of Caesar's return to Rome, as well as having a private audience with Brutus in the garden. The Chorus is the audience of *Samson Agonistes* who interprets the actions of the characters in the drama. Milton's reader is meant to achieve a deeper level of understanding, than Milton's "audience" or Chorus. Here, one will notice how Milton manipulates the conventions of the closet drama in order to develop the literacy of his reader. If the reader was meant only to imagine the actions of the play, the silent moments would have to be minimal, or nonexistent. The Chorus interprets Samson's actions as he is lying; thinking to himself—and the chorus misinterprets these actions. Samson's actions are interpreted by the Chorus as someone devoid of hope; however, the reader knows that Samson is lamenting his foolishness and celebrates the advancement of mind brought on by the weakening of the body:

Whom have I to complain of but my self?  
 Who this high gift of strength committed to me,  
 In what part lodg'd, how easily bereft me,  
 Under the Seal of silence could not keep,  
 But weakly to a woman must reveal it,  
 O'rcome with importunity and tears.

O impotence of mind, in body strong!  
 But what is strength without a double share  
 Of wisdom, vast, unwieldy, burdensome,  
 Proudly secure, yet liable to fall  
 By Weakest subtleties, not made to rule,  
 But to subserve where wisdom bears command. (46-57)

By sharing a mind with Samson, the reader begins to reflect Samson's righteous state with those of the Chorus, or audience, and those of the representation of public, or Philistines. These misinterpretations of Samson's actions by the Chorus, as well as those of the Philistine public, enable his tragic success in toppling the temple.

Of the characters with Milton's parenthetical thoughts, a representation of the public is not among them. The public is represented by the Publick Messenger, much like the roles of Publius and Populus Lena *Julius Caesar*. The public sphere is without mind, it has achieved the vacuous state in modernity. This public is immediately recognizable as it begins to encroach on the private sphere of Samson and the Chorus:

And yet perhaps more trouble is behind.  
 For I descry this way  
 Some other tending, in his hand  
 A Scepter or quaint staff he bears,  
 Comes on amain, speed in his look.  
 By his habit I discern him now  
 A Public Officer, and now at hand.

His message will be short and voluble. (Milton 1300-07)

The Chorus recognizes the representation of public from a distance. The social boundaries achieved through negotiating space have become represented by the physical dress, habit, and props of the space. The individuals are no longer reacting to one another to create the space each time; rather, they are noticing the signifiers of these boundary negotiations. What is the Chorus' (and the reader's) relationship to the scepter or staff? As members of the private space, these characters see the staff as a symbol of the order, through violence. The Publick Messenger has "speed in his look," suggesting the public space is not a place for deep, reflective contemplations. This has become a place for unattached, business transactions. As the Chorus suggests, "His message will be short and voluble;" the messenger is not approaching to engage in the private sphere—but rather, is bringing them out of this sphere and into the public.

The *mise-en-scène* immediately changes with the arrival of the Publick Officer. The characters, and reader, have been thrust into the public sphere; or rather, they have been interrupted by the public sphere. Not only are the Publick Officer's lines "short and voluble" so are those of the Chorus and Samson. This exchange between Samson, Publick Officer, and Chorus could all take place aloud. These lines of dialogue transform the space into a public. Though the drama has no set, separate scenes, the arrival (circa line 1300) and departure (circa line 1413) of the Publick Officer marks changes in spatial experiences in reading. Prior to the officer's arrival, Samson and the Chorus share an exchange with Harapha of Gath. The significance between the Harapha preceding the entrance into public is in the loss of the spiritual state of mind shared between the Chorus

and Samson. During the scene with Harapha, Samson leaves the state of mindful thought, and engages in a conversation of physical strength. The Chorus and reader take on the role of spectators, as Samson engages with Harapha, and later with the Publick Messenger. During these scenes the reader leaves the space of the private and the mind, and enters the public and physical spaces—all through the construction of imaginative spaces within the mind. Harapha and Publick Messenger are the only two characters of this closet drama that do not have a parenthetical interruption from Milton. After the final moments with the Publick Messenger, Milton comments on the public sphere through Samson:

Like a wild Beast, I am content to go.

Masters commands come with a power resistless

To such as owe them absolute subjection;

And for a life who will not change his purpose?

(So mutable are all the ways of men). (Milton 1403-07)

Samson and reader participate in a state of mind that enables them to transcend the public and private spheres. Through the lack of parenthesis and participation with the Chorus, Milton helps the reader create the public and private space within the closet drama as well as develop the concept of the mind as separate from the spatial constraints.

Samson leaves the private sphere with the Publick Officer, and the Chorus; Manoa and reader remain in the privacy of thought and space. The remainder of the play reminds the reader of the pleasure of the liminal space of the closet drama. As the Chorus and Manoa interact within the privacy of the prison, the Messenger arrives with news of



the public. The climax of *Samson Agonistes* takes place in the reader's mind—rather than in a defined space. *Julius Caesar*'s off-stage climax is used to promote a sense of distrust in the audience. The audience is purposely denied the spectacle and the interpretation of the bodies of the actors as texts. Though Milton's climax also happens “off-stage,” the climactic moment occurs within the mind of the reader. The Messenger relays the off-stage events, and then provides the details for the reader to develop the climax:

Between the pillars; he his guide requested  
 (For so from such as nearer stood we heard)  
 As over-tir'd o let him lean a while  
 With both his arms on those two massive Pillars  
 That to the arched roof gave main support. (Milton 1630-34)

Milton uses the off-stage climax to further develop the notion of mind. The reader must imagine the public destruction of the temple and Samson, being told to the private audience of the Chorus and Manoa, through the perspective of the Messenger (who also gains some of his information second-hand). As the Messenger relays the story, the reader is able to imagine all of the layers of these experiences within the mind.

The mind, like public and private space, is an abstract construction. Lisa Zunshine's “Theory of Mind” draws upon the experience of the mind as one of the pleasures of reading:

To return to my earlier speculations of why we read fiction, I can say that by imagining the hidden mental states of fictional characters, by following the readily available representations of such states throughout the narrative, and by comparing our interpretation of what the given character must be feeling at a given moment with what we assume could be the author's own interpretation, we

deliver a rich stimulation to the cognitive adaptations constituting our Theory of Mind. (Zunshine, 24-24)

The cognitive processes, as described by Zunshine, aptly describe the reader's engagement with *Samson Agonistes*. Milton's use of the genre of closet drama, which is meant to solicit an imaginative participation from the reader, moves the experience of the drama into the mind. Unlike external spatiality, this space does not develop tangible boundaries and walls to signify the space. The mind, which was once free in the closeted, private space, becomes increasingly excluded from both the public and private spheres. Milton reminds the reader that thoughts are the last experience of true privacy for the reader. Samson's lamentations take place within the thoughts, and the reader, through silent reading, is able to "enter" Samson's mind and participate in his grief in a way in which the Chorus and others are unable. Though in a private place, the Chorus' connection with Samson is still not as intimate as the connection between Samson and the reader.

As the public and private spheres become more definable and concrete with the advancement of modernity by the late seventeenth century, John Milton uses his closet drama, *Samson Agonistes*, to remind the reader of the multiplicities of space and place and develop the concept of the mind. The public sphere is devoid of privacy of thought in *Samson Agonistes*; this sphere that was the celebrated sphere of *Julius Caesar*'s audience is now a place in which conformity and uniformity have taken on the role of normative and the individual and private space begin to be seen as deviance. Milton witnesses the beginning shift away from fluidity and multiplicity into the solid and singular existence;

he uses *Samson Agonistes* to serve as a guide for the reader to experience the silent, private devotion, once available through the closet drama and salon readings, through the mind.

## CONCLUSION

The public and private spaces of early modernity shift with time and an increasing demand for uniformity and linearity. The change in reception of these spaces is reflected through the change in attitudes surrounding objects associated with these spaces. The staged performances of *Julius Caesar* and *Measure for Measure* both construct and deconstruct public and private experiences, and change the associations and expectations of those places with the audience. The gain and loss of the differing levels of publicness are not wholly negative or positive—it is the events and actions that determine the audience’s reaction. Elizabeth Cary uses the early modern instability of spatial boundaries to challenge the traditional associations of the domestic and commercial roles of men and women through her closet drama, *The Tragedy of Mariam, The Fair Queen of Jewry*. Cary’s text is able to operate within the traditional spaces while simultaneously challenging them—depending on the reader’s interpretations. John Milton uses his closet drama, *Samson Agonistes*, to aid the reader in the early efforts of what Lisa Zunshine refers to as, “mind-reading” or “Theory of Mind.” Milton foresees the increasing linearity and polarization of modernity, and uses the practice of silent reading in *Samson Agonistes* to guide the reader in simultaneous public and private experiences within the mind. Theory of Mind becomes the modern explanation of chiasmic relationships, such as public and private space, and it is through this understanding that modern readers are better able to read early modern texts.

The closet is an early modern space that becomes a modern object. Through understanding the objectification of this space, the increasing objectification of spaces is

revealed. Elizabeth Cary's closet drama, *The Tragedy of Mariam, The Fair Queen of Jewry*, functions best within the early modern constructions of space. This drama manipulates the notions of public and private space and masculine and feminine space, through the conventions of the closet drama and its characters. Act 1, scene 1 of this drama presents the reader with a soliloquy by Mariam:

*Mar.* How oft have I with public voice run on,  
 To censure Rome's last hero for deceit,  
 Because he wept when Pompey's life was gone,  
 Yet when he liv'd, he thought his name too great.  
 But I do recant, and Roman Lord,  
 Excuse too rash a judgment in a woman:  
 My sex pleads pardon, pardon then afford,  
 Mistaking is with us, but too common. (Cary 1.1.1-8)

Because of the fluidity of public and private space within the closet drama, this speech is and is not a soliloquy. The closet drama is meant to be read alone or within a close circle, as salon reading may offer. There is no stage and no actor to whom the reader or audience is listening. If this speech is being read aloud, within a literary circle, multiple people may be reading simultaneously. Perhaps the speech is broken up within the group—giving more than one voice to this character and to these lines of text. Or, maybe the reader is not with a group and is reading alone, imagining Mariam giving a soliloquy staged in the mind. The production of this text by the reader(s) reflects the function of space before and after its objectification.

Cary further manipulates spaces through her drama's restructuring of masculine and feminine spheres as well as public and private spheres. Cary uses female characters to unapologetically represent the entrance of Cary's work into the masculine sphere of writing. Mariam's first lines are a reflection of her public display of malcontent against the Roman authority. She retells her complaint, "To censure Rome's last hero for deceit,/Because he wept when Pompey's life was gone,/ Yet when he liv'd, he thought his name too great" (Cary 1.1.2-4) and in this retelling, the reader can change the tone of the speech to have the criticism be remorseful or unremorseful. Here, in private, Cary is able to criticize the monarchy and court through Mariam. If Mariam, or Cary, should receive any harsh retribution for these criticisms, the reader is reminded that both Mariam and Cary suffer, "...too rash a judgment in a woman" and that the reader should remember that for women, "My sex pleads pardon, pardon then afford,/ Mistaking is with us, but too common" (Cary 1.1.6-8). This drama enables the reader to participate in the public and private sphere and the masculine and feminine spheres without full emersion into any one particular space.

The staging conventions of the Shakespearean dramas *Measure for Measure* and *Julius Caesar* also participate and celebrate multiple spaces through production. These spaces often overlap and coexist with one another in a way that a linear representation fails to convey to the reader. When the reader actively imagines the production of this drama and how these spaces might interact with one another and the audience, the spatial relationship of the text changes. Through the physical choices of *mise-en-scène* and

participation with the audience, public and private space is created with differing audience affects.

The question of Julius Caesar as a benevolent ruler or cruel tyrant can be answered through the spatial constructions within the theatrical space. As Caesar enters the theatre, the audience is invited to join the crowd in cheering his return. The reader knows this through Casca's address of the crowd, "Bid every noise be still. Peace yet again!" (1.2.13). Before delivering these lines, the actors would have to build the noise level within the audience in order to create the sensation of being silenced as part of the performance. This interaction and audience participation forms a public within the crowd. Just as the experience of being silenced by Casca acts as a catalyst of inclusion, the actions of Caesar promote the audience's exclusion. The off-stage delivery of Caesar's speech and his denial of the crown, a seemingly inclusive act, becomes an exclusive act through refusing the crowd access to the action. In this way, the audience both constructs and deconstructs a public with Caesar. Later, the spectators are invited in to Brutus' private garden:

It must be by his death: and for my part,

I know no personal cause to spurn at him,

But for the general. He would be crown'd:

How that might change his nature, there's the question (2.1.10-13)

The *mise-en-scène* of the private orchard and the soliloquy of Brutus further remove the audience from the public and into the private sphere. The audience takes pleasure in both the public and private space during the performance of *Julius Caesar* and this audience

understands Julius Caesar to be a tyrant. The audience that does not feel included in the private sphere of the conspirators would understand Caesar as the public hero, victimized by the private plotting of the senators.

*Measure for Measure*'s public and private spaces are formed with a singular audience in mind. As one of the first performances for James I and his court, at Whitehall, this performance requires one to consider the monarchy's relationship to space. James is both a public and private entity. Not all have equal access to James; however, James is representative for all of England. The King is often addressed and addresses others in the plural form of "we" when acting on behalf of the public. As a person who is in a constant flux of public and private space, the thrill of *Measure for Measure* for James I is in the Duke's ability to use disguise to find privacy within the public. This hidden identity allows the Duke to spy upon his subjects and find their loyalties. James would have enjoyed the message that this sent to his own, newly formed court, as they watch Lucio continue to insult the Duke:

LUCIO.       Some report a sea-maid spawned him [Duke], some that he  
                   was begot between two stockfishes. But it is certain that  
                   when he makes water, his urine is congealed ice; that I know  
                   to be true. And he is a motion generative, that's infallible. (3.2.96-100)

The audience anticipates the defrocking of the Friar to reveal the Duke, and as Lucio continues to belittle the Duke the anxiety within the audience grows. The Duke must enter the public sphere as the often ridiculed Catholic Friar, to experience the privacy that



allows him to spy upon his subjects. When the Duke returns to the private sphere of the court, he again becomes the public representation.

As time begins to progress, the objectification of space begins to its evaluation through the polarizing forces of modernity. Once defined as opposing rather than complementary, one space is then preferred over the other. This is seen through the shared fates of those objects associated with privacy of the closet. John Milton reminds the modern reader of the complementary nature of space by providing the mind as an alternative to the either/or construction. *Samson Agonistes*' is meant to be read silently to better enable the reader to develop these constructions, equally, within the mind.

*Samson Agonistes* is a closet drama that is meant to be staged in the mind and promotes the beginnings of mind-reading. Milton aids his early modern readership in developing this form of reading, while simultaneously enabling his modern reader to access the physical spatial experience of early modernity. The public sphere of the Philistines, and the private sphere of Samson and the Chorus, are both experienced by the reader through the mind of Samson. The Chorus understands the loss of access to the public space through the confinement of the cell and the loss of sight to be the true punishment. Samson tries to explain his punishment to the Chorus:

...Yee see, O friends,

How many evils have enclos'd me round;

Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,

Blindness for had I sight, confus'd with shame,

How could I once look up, or heave the head, (Milton 193-97)

Samson's loss of sight, the key sense in objectification<sup>16</sup>, allows him to function in a liminal space between modernity and early modernity. Samson serves as a guide in developing both public and private spaces within the mind.

Samson leaves the private space of the Chorus and the reader, entering the public sphere with the Publick Messenger. The reader, who has been privy to Samson's thoughts and mind throughout his private interactions, must "stage" the climax of the tragedy within the mind. The reader and Chorus hear of the collapse of the temple and must imagine the action of the scene. For the modern reader, the difficulty of the exercise is in the layering of the spaces within the mind. The reader must imagine the very public climax being told in a very private sphere of Manoa, the Chorus, and the reader. The public event is within the private space, and both of these are happening within the reader's mind, simultaneously. For the early modern reader, their blindness of the climax enables them to experience the catastrophe within the mind. The climax and catastrophe of *Samson Agonistes* are both the event of the Samson destroying the temple. The reader and other characters are not present for the climax, but through the staging of the climax in the mind they are able to experience the play's catastrophe and climax at the same time.

Through understanding the relationship of the reader to the text, one's conception of space mirrors that of their reading practice. The reader that actively imagines the text and spatial experiences within the text is better able to understand the participatory, early modern interpretations and constructions of space. The text is not an object to this reader, just as space is not an object to the early modern audience. Through the increasing

objectification of modernity, the reader begins to associate positive and negative identities to specific, definable spaces. John Milton's *Samson Agonistes* serves as a guide to modern readers to redirect them to the changing and chiastic nature of public and private space. The reader is able to experience the public and private venues of *Samson Agonistes* with as much excitement and action as the audiences of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* and *Julius Caesar*. Rather than the physical staging and creation of space between people, the reader must create both spaces within the mind, often creating a public within a private space and vice versa. The simultaneous multiplicities available in the mind cannot exist in the linear and perspectival modern culture. Milton uses the beginnings of mind reading to guide the reader in recreating the early modern experience of spatiality.

## END NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> As McKeon explores in *The Secret History of Domesticity* the link between literacy and privatization, specifically the modern private act of ‘sex’, “The evidence of book sex argues that so far from being primordially the most ‘intimate of concerns, sex was aided in its modern privatization by, among other things, the technology of print and its solitary consumption. Before the modern period, we might say that sex was either ‘public’ in the sense of serving the great collective ends of perpetuating the family and the species or (more precisely) ‘nonprivate’ in the sense of being coextensive with—not separated out from—these great ends. Under such conditions, the discourse of sex as it appeared in jest books, chap books, broadsides, and the like had the status of shared joke rather than private gratification.” (300).

<sup>2</sup> The awareness of thought and “the mind,” as modern society has come to know it, would have been known as “the soul” for the early modern reader and writer. John Milton’s lack of labeling this space as fully mind or soul enables readers of either culture to read *Samson Agonistes*.

<sup>3</sup> The reader knows Mariam is melodramatically crying from Alexandra’s admonishment of her behavior, “Alex. What means these tears? My Mariam doth mistake” (1.2.1).

<sup>4</sup> “It is important to note that the primary meaning of the word ‘private’ in early modernity (a meaning still current in modern English) had mainly to do with ‘privation’

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rather than with the authority and value of untrammelled inwardness” (Wilson and Yachnin, introduction 8).

<sup>5</sup> Cicero would have been well known to Elizabethan audiences for his oratory skills and for his distrust, and eventual demise brought on by the Second Triumvirate. Publius and Popilius Lena derive from the Latin words describing “the public” (publicus), “the people” (populous) and “mitigation” (lenio).

<sup>6</sup> *Julius Caesar* is a mutli-climactic drama depending on the erotics of the audience. Potential climaxes include, but are not limited to: 2.1.10-34, 2.1.155, 2.2.105, and 3.1.78.

<sup>7</sup> Conversely, the argument could be made that the private space is made public through the audience’s involvement. The difference may be found in the individual and collective responses to public and private spaces. This perception, like that of the climax, depends on the experience of the audience. If the audience distrusts the private space the tension is relieved in its elimination. However, if the audience desires to be included within this space, it is through the inclusion of the audience within this perceived elite space (and the audience’s separation from the Roman public on stage) that relieves the tension associated with this desire.

<sup>8</sup> For instance, the division between Catholic and Protestant experiences during a performance would create different senses of scandal through the performance. When Julius Caesar’s ghost appears it would have horrified Catholics—who would see this soul as a reminder of purgatory—which would cause the Protestants to laugh at the foolish Catholics in the audience who paid attention to ghosts and believed in Purgatory.

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<sup>9</sup> “As soon as privatized individuals in their capacity as human beings ceased to communicate merely about their subjectivity but rather in their capacity as property-owners desired to influence public power in their common interest, the humanity of the literary public sphere served to increase the effectiveness of the public sphere in the political realm. The fully developed bourgeois public sphere was based on the fictitious identity of the two roles assumed by the privatized individuals who came together to form a public: the role of property owners and the role of human beings pure and simple” (Habermas 56).

<sup>10</sup> Also: *Basilicon Doron*. “(Greek; The King’s Gift), first published in 1599 and reissued in 1603. In Book 2 of this conduct manual, written to advise his oldest son and heir, Prince Henry, on the political and moral responsibilities of kingship, James focuses on how to ensure that his people have access to ‘justice and equitie.’” (Ioppolo ix)

<sup>11</sup> Latin: The hood does not make the monk.

<sup>12</sup> This is not to suggest that the audience of the Globe would not appreciate manipulating rank. As Yachnin describes in his essay “The Populuxe Theatre”: “Masquerading as someone of higher rank and playing with the system of rank itself are not exactly separable pleasures, but neither are they the same. The one suggests a degree of allegiance to the hierarchy and belief in the value of rank, the other some skepticism about the idea of a superiority of aristocrats over gentlemen or even gentlemen over commoners. The two positions, though opposed, were closely connected in the thinking of most Elizabethans. Social masquerade therefore normally involved both a form of

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play-acting, especially a recognition of rank as a kind of theatrical artifice, and also a pleasurable submission to the system of rank—a giving over of oneself to the authority and reality of social hierarchy” (44).

<sup>13</sup> This “Panopticon” effect is one that benefits the monarchy by making common people fear any association with political insurrection.

<sup>14</sup> Modern audiences also lose the appreciation of the humor at the expense of the Catholic audience members but for different reasons. For modern audiences religion, as a whole, has moved into the realm of the ridiculous and to separate and consider the Catholic and Protestant dichotomy is no longer a pleasure for this culture. This audience might appreciate the humor of this pairing if Isabella was represented as a vegan PETA member and the Duke was the ruthless owner of the local slaughter house.

<sup>15</sup> This is not to say there is no erotic element to the feeling of exclusion. One of the exciting experiences of *Julius Caesar* within the audience would have been trying to figure out why the crowd was flourishing for Caesar—is he being made king? “...the drama’s emphasis on the pleasures of the unseen was both a response to anti-theatrical propaganda and a source of personal gratification for the spectators” (Yachnin “Eye” 79)

<sup>16</sup> Object: Originally: something placed before or presented to the eyes or other senses. Now (more generally): a material thing that can be seen and touched (“object,” def.1a ).

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