“NUMBED AND MORTIFIED:” LABOR, EMPATHY, AND ACQUIRED DISABILITY IN *KING LEAR* AND *TITUS ANDRONICUS*

BY

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Abstract

Through New Historicist lens of accommodation and the Social Model of Disability (SMD), as well as of labor and worth specified by Karl Marx, I analyze the violent disablings in *King Lear* and *Titus Andronicus*—specifically, the blinding of Gloucester and the rape and dismemberment of Lavinia, respectively. The SMD provides a more contextualized image of the lived experience of disability, especially in understanding the social consequences and implications of disability in these specific texts. As both of these characters are *rendered* disabled through violence, I delineate the ways in which their disablings function less as a narrative symbol than a lived and real trauma of social and physical inability widely impacted by notions of labor. Specifically, I do this in considering the lived experience of disability and labor in early modern England and how other characters' empathy toward disabilities rely on or dismiss priorities of labor, which widely impacts the ways in which Gloucester and Lavinia attempt to adapt to both physical and social disabilities or ultimately fail to do so.

Introduction

"The act of representing (and hence reducing) others, almost always involves violence of some sort to the *subject* of the representation[1]"

As an emerging field in Shakespearean scholarship, literary Disability Studies generally considers both the metaphorical and textual implications of disabilities, but scholars are beginning to consider the ways in which disability as a social concept is applicable, as well. One framework for this type of analysis applies the Social and Medical Models of Disability[2] onto the tangible experiences of disabled characters, rather than only considering disabilities in the metaphorical or narrative sense. This analysis navigates the discrepancy between what Helen Deutsch and Felicity Nussbaum describe as "a cultural trope and a material condition[3] that indelibly affect[s] people's lives" (Deutsch and Nussbaum 1-2). For example, blindness in *King Lear* is repeatedly addressed as a figurative concept of 'knowing' and 'not knowing' wherein newly physically blind Gloucester is simply representative of Lear's and the Earl of Gloucester's inability to 'see' their respective children's deceptions. Scholarship on disability in Shakespeare either hones in on what a disability might *represent* or *symbolize*, wholeheartedly grasps the implications of disability in a single character (such as Richard III), or adds them to the end to footnote of a separate analysis.

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[1] Edward Said, "In the Shadow of Violence" 40

[2] It is worth noting that the SMD does not, and cannot, entirely encompass the "disabled experience" or address it homogeneously, as the disabled community is diverse in condition, identity politics, race, gender, etc. The disabled community is the largest minority and encompasses a wide berth of individuals, some of whom may not even use the term "disabled." The sociologist and advocate who coined this phrase and model, Mike Oliver, was outspoken about the limitations of this model, which is intended only to reframe how we think about society and the ways in which it excludes people with disabilities.

[3] Deutsch and Nussbaum consider this discrepancy in terms of the 17th and 18th century concept of the "defect," which often and especially included physical disabilities. Similarly, literature and literary studies engage disability as a "cultural trope" without always considering the "material condition" of disability as having extratextual effects.

However, recent scholarship refocuses on the social 'accommodation' of disabled characters in the plays and the lived experiences of the disabled through the Social Model of Disabilities (SMD). The SMD delineates how disabilities persist as the result of a societal and institutional lack of access rather than physical impairment, whereas the Medical Model of Disability (MMD) pathologizes the body in terms of how it is able to function with the purpose of managing care or providing treatment. Lennard J. Davis in "Dr. Johnson, Amelia, and the Discourse of Disability" further specifies that disability as a social concept often functions as "the reception and construction of that difference. Contemporary theoreticians of disability distinguish between an impairment and a disability" (Davis 56). Not all impairments are considered disabilities, and most disabilities are also compounded with the experiences of living in societies which do not accommodate them.

The SMD challenges how we define disability against the "norm" of function and corporeal aesthetic and within the cultural context of what the "norm" may be. Davis, in his introduction to the *Disability Studies Reader* explains, "So, with the concept of the norm comes the concept of deviations or extremes. When we think of bodies, in a society where the concept of the norm is operative, then people with disabilities will be thought of as deviants" (Davis "Introduction" *Disability Studies Reader* 3). William Shakespeare's *King Lear* and *Titus Andronicus* are each set in a different geo-temporal context, written by and for the early modern person. Considering these texts in historical-cultural context requires that we understand the respective cultural assertion of that which is a "normal[4]" body. These cultural attitudes far extend beyond "impairment" and

[4] When actually comparing the experiences of the able-bodied and the disabled in these texts, I will use "able-bodied" or "typical" but never "normal," which implies a standard or what *should be* rather

function, and to understand the ways in which they influence, and are influenced by, a text requires the SMD.

Thus, I analyze these Shakespearean plays of varying settings through the lens and language of the SMD and accommodation, as well as theories of prostheses and labor with due respect to the historical and cultural differences between them. Although the language and meanings of these lenses are anachronistic, using them assists in understanding the development of social responsibility for the disabled throughout time.

Christine Gottlieb, in her article, "'Unaccommodated Man': Dismodernism and Disability Justice in *King Lear*," contextualizes disability within social responsibility to the disabled, as well as provides an argument for how the language of Disability Studies functions within the early modern era to highlight the rise of ableism and establishing of later views toward disabilities. She specifically addresses the issue of applying the language of contemporary Disability Studies to these texts as helpful by "consider[ing] both the historically specific and the theoretically resonant" (Gottlieb 4), such as in tracing how ableism emerges in this period, in particular.

She continues, "I use the term 'disability' throughout this article because I argue that *King Lear* not only represents a relationship between what we now call disability and identity, but also aligns this identity with community and a concern for social justice" (Gottlieb 4). Although disabilities like blindness and dismemberment *were* seen differently in this period, there was still a stigma associated with disability and the need for accommodation that justifies considering disabilities as a social concept in this period. Like Gottlieb, I will investigate textual disability in modern terms as we understand them

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than what *is*. Here, I use "normal" to reflect the significance of cultural attitudes toward disability as context for the ways in which it is portrayed and received at a particular moment.

and alongside the historical context through which they emerge and engage.

Likewise, Hobgood and Wood in "Early Modern Literature and Disability Studies" write that "even as we rely on contemporary disability theory for our historical work, we must realize that an easy, backwards importation of contemporary models of disability– the medical, social, and cultural models, for example– is not wholly sufficient for reading disability in the Renaissance" (Hobgood and Wood 34). I do not, by any means, assert that the SMD suffices as theoretical framework for understanding disabilities or "impotence" in early modern England, and yet, as Hobgood and Wood note, the presence of disabilities in literature of the era will "conjure and clarify all kinds of specifically premodern schemas for grasping disability, each one underpinned by an ideology of ability" (34). Thus, this Model, in conjunction with the study of literary representations and purposes of labor, will provide a more contextualized image of the lived experience of disability, especially in understanding the social consequences of disability in these specific texts. Even if we cannot presume how the early modern public perceived disability, we can consider the implications of popular drama's depiction of it and disability laws of the period.

Because I seek to understand the functions of the social concept of disability in a given time period, I generally will not be considering the physical challenges of age as they implicate a different set of social perceptions, and I focus on the implications and social consequences of disability unaffiliated with the 'typical' development of the body with age. To fixate on the idea that all bodies "will" one day become disabled with age dismisses the experience of lived disability in the social context wherein it is not a norm or expectation. Conversely, the stigma of disability and the stigma of age are often

accompanied by the fear of the potential of becoming disabled oneself[5]. Acquired disabilities, however, are marked by a 'before and after' moment of acquiring disability and the transition to adapting to it. As acquisition of disability is both a social and physical experience, both the Social and Medical Models are necessary.

The presence of adaptation to disability has textual implications, as is evident in comparing the narratives of Gloucester in *King Lear* and Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, who acquire disability from the reception of violence later in life, with Lavinia's adaptation to the physical trauma of sexual assault. Reading these two characters together further requires that I consider the effect of setting (temporally and geographically), gender, class, and disability acquisition on the framing of disability for each respective character and their 'ends' in the narrative conclusion. No two experiences of disability are alike, and the intersection of other life experiences and social identities, particularly class and gender, certainly exacerbates these differences. Gloucester's blindness is somewhat accommodated by those who love him and are empathetic to the social conditions under which the disabled[6] and 'impotent poor' live. Lavinia's muteness and amputations are somewhat accommodated so that she may communicate and participate in revenge, but her sexual assault is not accommodated because of social standards of her purpose and contributions as a woman.

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[5] Whereas congenital disabilities are stigmatized by an 'unknown cause' associated with natalism and the "monstrous birth,' a phenomena especially in the 16th century that received a lot of attention and public interest as it was, as Marie Hélène Huet describes, "cause for wonder rather than scandal. But it is also seen as divine punishment" (Huet 22).

[6] Many within the disabled community opt for person-first language so as not to implicate that any person is wholly defined by their disability. While I appreciate this, for the purposes of this analysis of the ways in which being disabled influences all aspects of these characters' lives and the ways in which others interact with and view them, I focus primarily on their identities and experiences as disabled people. Needless to say, disability does not wholly define a person, but it would be remiss to not address the significance of disability in one's experiences.

Thus, through the lens of accommodation via New Historicism and the Social Model of Disability (SMD), as well as notions of labor and worth specified by Karl Marx, I analyze the violent disablings in *King Lear* and *Titus Andronicus*—specifically, the blinding of Gloucester and the rape and dismemberment of Lavinia, respectively. As both of these characters are *rendered* disabled through an act of violence, I consider the ways in which their disablings function less as a narrative symbol or trauma of pain than a lived and real trauma of social and physical inability. Specifically, I do this in considering the lived experience of disability and labor in early modern England, how other characters' empathy toward disabilities rely on or dismiss priorities of labor, which widely impacts the ways in which Gloucester and Lavinia attempt to adapt to both physical and social disabilities or ultimately fail to do so.

These two texts, although vastly different in many ways, supplement one another to produce an understanding of how early modern empathy toward disability includes and excludes individuals in the ways in which they are, or are not, recognized and accommodated. The intersectionality of gender and class between these two plays demonstrate a more holistic image of attitudes toward acquired disability, at least within the scope of Shakespearean drama. Although we cannot know for certain the exact experiences and reactions to disability of early modern people in the day-to-day, reading these plays–popular media which many of these people were consuming– alongside historical context helps contemporary scholars to consider the implications of disability representation in a given context. Shakespearean drama conveys an accommodating and empathetic portrayal of acquired disability, although not of gendered violence, and both of these texts are well-suited to contribute a piece to a wider understanding of disability.

In my discussion in Chapter 1 of *King Lear*, where humanity and accommodation are central themes, Gloucester both receives and hypothetically receives empathy and accommodation of his disability. As he acquires disability through violence, like Lavinia, the trauma and his adaptability to his blindness encourages understanding and empathy toward disability, both on the stage and as watched or read, especially in that his adaptation allows him to continue to contribute an advisory role to Lear. Also like in *Titus Andronicus*, Gloucester is not the only representation of disability in the play. King Lear's descent into "madness" and his own displacement drives the play's discussion of accommodations and social responsibility for the destitute. Gloucester's son Edgar disguises himself as a mentally ill beggar to protect himself from the play's villains.

Edgar, disguised as Poor Tom o'Bedlam, experiences the social conditions and lack of accommodation of the kingdom's disabled without experiencing physical disability, contributing to the understanding of poverty and the disabled in the early modern period. The ending, albeit vague, implies Edgar's future leadership of state, and his experiences of social disability throughout the play implicate his future rule for one of accommodation. As a result of these narrative trajectories and exploration of the human condition, the play ultimately concludes towards a practice of compassion and social responsibility that disregards the modern prioritization of labor as necessary for dignity.

In Chapter 2, I refocus the lens of the SMD, both with and without the physical and medical experience of disability (MMD), onto the dismemberment and rape of Lavinia to argue that she is effectively disabled and disempowered by both her dismemberments *and* her rape. This is not necessarily to label the experience of sexual violence as a disability (although trauma can be disabling) but to argue for the social

implications of sexual violence through the study of human worth as tied to labor and social interpretation of physical difference and trauma. Her experience of physical disability both contrasts and supplements her father's experience of it (Titus) when he, too, becomes disabled. However, the gender and power differences between them sharply demonstrate the social implications of sexual assault in that, in addition to having personal and physical effects and trauma, it is also further exacerbated by social stigma and a prioritization of labor, including feminized domestic labor, rather than of accommodation.

The SMD emphasizes, in particular, "the distinction between disability (social exclusion) and impairment (physical limitation) and the claim that disabled people are an oppressed group" (Tom Shakespeare 215). It will be necessary to consider the physical limitations that Lavinia and Gloucester experience, but the ways in which other characters have disabled them by violence and subjected them to social isolation and change in selfhood demands consideration of the social implications of these physical impairments. To address the distinction between function and social exclusion, Jeffrey Wilson generally avoids the use of "disability" in early modern literary criticism in favor of "stigma," in that "we also and more explicitly encounter stigma: the making of the meaning of disability and other abnormalities whether physical, mental, familial, racial, or ethical" (Wilson "The Trouble with Disability in Shakespeare Studies").

While "stigma" is certainly a useful and perhaps more apt term for understanding the influence of social perceptions on lived experience of disability, my analysis considers both the physical and social implications of disability. "Impairment," although a complicated term in itself for many people, requires both adaptation and

accommodation— this is both personal and social. As I also discuss the ways in which each of these characters adapt to acquired "impairment," to only consider social stigma neglects the reality of lived experience of disability. I, therefore, will utilize both.

As Alison Hobgood and David Wood's introduction to their collection of essays regarding disabilities in early modern England notes, disability in texts has served as both metaphorical and material, "offer[ing] insights into the material, lived experiences of disabled individuals in the distant past" (Hobgood, Wood 7). However, as Gottlieb acknowledges, this must be read within historical context. Disability, as a result of war and living conditions, was "more likely and hence, in certain ways, less exceptional" (Hobgood and Wood "Introduction" 7)[7]. Thus, the New Historicist lens of the value of labor will be useful in understanding disability as a social concept in a particular time and place. The SMD provides a framework for considering the social structures that advertently and inadvertently exclude the disabled, but as early modern society is particularly structured around labor and class, I will especially be utilizing the SMD to analyze these plays in terms of how social structures which value and prioritize labor exclude both women and the disabled.

Staffan Bengtsson notes that, "As reported by Finkelstein (1991, 29), disability has, to a large extent, 'come to mean unable to work' and dependency, a view that was established parallel to the industrial revolution" (Bengtsson 152). Although[8] he places

[7] Although there was a sort of reluctant acceptance of the presence of the disabled, there was certainly limited social integration and accommodation.

[8] The first legal stipulations for the disabled are referenced only by preceding their inability to labor, such as those not "[w]hole and [mighty] in body and able to labor" (22 Henry VIII c.12). In the earliest Poor Laws of the 16th century, there is no other specification for types or severity of disability except that the individuals are "surely impotent" or "poor, aged, and impotent persons," including the recognition that one can be disabled by age or by a specific disability in youth.

this understanding in the context of the industrial revolution, it is historically clear that disability had long before been defined by labor and the inability to perform it.

Labor itself remains an important theme in each of the plays which I analyze, especially in terms of defining disability as is evident in the early modern Poor Laws. Each character, regardless of type of disability, is regarded by others in terms of their labor contributions or lack thereof; the ability to adapt in order to perform a type of service remains essential in these texts, and although each character adapts in his or her own way, it is not enough in the face of stigma, narrative context, or interpersonal relations. Gloucester, for example, adapts to his blindness in order to localize himself and identify others, as well as to continue to provide political guidance to the dethroned Lear, yet is never able to fully realize these adaptations within the narrative structure of the play. However, because the play ultimately argues for vulnerability and interdependence rather than for the contribution of every citizen, Gloucester is accommodated regardless of his ability to labor. Lavinia adapts to her amputations to flip through pages or carry items, and to her muteness by using prosthetics to write, but she cannot substitute or adapt her chastity when it has been violated in order to perform wifely and motherly duties as her family and a public-service-centered society expects.

Each of these characters is defined by the ability and inability to perform the specific types of labor ascribed to them by gender and class, reducing them to contribution rather than human dignity. Marxist analysis of labor-power lies in capability rather than production and demonstrates the dismantling of individual dignity in capitalistic structures. In *Capital* (trans. *Das Kapital*), Karl Marx describes that "We mean by labor-power, or labor-capacity, the aggregate of those mental and physical

capabilities existing in the physical body, the living personality, of a human being, capabilities which he sets in motion whenever he produces a use-value of any kind" (Marx *Capital* 270:2).

The individual contains the potential for labor in the combination of physical and psychological ability which becomes "use-value," or a commodity which the laborer can sell. Without "mental and physical capabilities existing in the physical body" the individual cannot sell labor-power or negotiate in a society which privileges it because, "in order that its possessor may sell it as a commodity, he must have it at his disposal" (Marx 270:3/o). Although he is discussing self-ownership as "disposal" of labor in regards to slavery and human property, we might also consider the disabled as people without commodity of labor at their disposal in a capitalist society.

Further, investigating the ways in which Gloucester and Lavinia[9] navigate disability in their respective historical and cultural context within the early modern stage inevitably calls into question the ways in which they are named, characterized, and dehumanized by their disabilities and intersectional identities.

Ultimately, Shakespeare's representation of disability on the early modern stage have had and continue to have real, lived implications for those with disabilities in the early modern era and those who read the plays today. Each of these characters experience disability within respective historical and cultural contexts that, in some ways, reflect but also challenge early modern and contemporary perceptions of disability. Most importantly, each of these characters experience disability differently, despite some overlap between them. Reading Gloucester and Lavinia together highlights questions of

[9] in addition to relevant secondary characters such as Lear and Poor Tom, and Titus, respectively.

accommodation, responsibility, empathy, and labor, as well as the ways in which other factors like gender and class may influence these questions. The SMD allows us to analyze disability representation beyond the metaphorical and physiomedical experience to challenge the ways in which we as readers or audience members fail to empathize with and accommodate disabilities on and beyond the stage.

"Thou Art the Thing Itself:" Adaptation and Accommodation in *King Lear*

As one of the more prominent disabled figures in early modern and Shakespearean literary studies, the Earl of Gloucester in *King Lear* often centers disability discourse outside of Disability Studies. Non-Disability Studies scholars discuss how his physical blindness represents his previously metaphorical blindness to deception and newfound ability to 'see' his sons for who they are. The old, blind man is always wiser than the old man. This is not necessarily inappropriate to the study of this text; sight (physical and metaphorical) is a frequent motif in the play[1]. However, rather than suggest that this newfound 'ability' is simply metaphorical and symbolic, I demonstrate that Gloucester's adaptability to acquired disability, as well as empathy toward and from Edgar and King Lear, demonstrates a deprioritization of labor and contribution in emphasis of care and accommodation of the disabled and destitute.

Because of both Gloucester's metaphorical prominence in literary studies and *King Lear*'s assertion of social responsibility, I find him useful in comparison to Lavinia when considering the function of empathy and labor in social perceptions of disability. As we shall see in *Titus Andronicus*, the male Andronici are so removed from the experience and fear of sexual assault that they cannot recognize it until it is in its most literal, transcribed form. In *King Lear*, however, audiences[2] can most easily identify with the fear of not knowing, not seeing, and *becoming* disabled when previously able-bodied.

[1] "See better, Lear; and let me still remain/ The true blank of thine eye;" "I stumbled when I saw;" "dearer than eye-sight;" "We'll no more meet, no more see one another;" "You see me here, you gods, a poor old man;" "see what breeds/ about her heart;" "See thyself, devil!"; "When I do stare, see how the subject quakes;" "I see it feelingly;" "O thou side-piercing sight!"; "A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch," and so forth.

[2] His audience may have been familiar with the story, as his most likely source was Holinshed's 1577 *Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande*, although the tale originates from Geoffrey of Monmouth's 1136 *Historie of the Kings of Briton*, which sets "Leir" in 800 BC (Helen Cooper 164).

Further, because *King Lear* is English but taken from a mythical and medieval tale of pre-Roman, ancient Briton, this temporal distance allows Shakespeare enough remoteness for creative control[3] of its narrative and for the radical assertions of the play. Disability in the Medieval[4] period was often associated with demonology and sin, albeit also with the opportunity to provide Christian charity (Hickey 147, Wheatly 18). These ideas are less apparent in *King Lear,* although empathy—genuine compassion rather than the "opportunity" of it—is a primary factor in the text's relationship to disability. It is clear in multiple moments of this play that disability is understood both physically and socially, rather than simply through the lens of religion and charity.

In context of the current social conditions of the disabled, both within the play and within early modern England, the violent disabling of characters in these texts are intentionally disempowering in order to remove potential threats, and this has both physically traumatic and socially oppressive implications. This is particularly evident in the scene in which Gloucester is blinded in a spectacle of violence or "theater of cruelty[5]" without a clear motive, which further exacerbates the villainization of the antagonist[6]. This is also present in the implications of performance of this scene.

It is first worth noting that Gloucester, unlike Lavinia, is assaulted on-stage. The

[3] "The patriarchal society depicted in *King Lear* is not associated with any particular time, but if it has a connection with that of the ancient 'historical' Lear of around BC 800 who figures in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, its addiction to violence links it with that primitive age" (Foakes *Shakespeare and Violence* 144)

[4] The play's "constituent elements – the father and his three daughters; the old man who has outlasted his time; the king and the fool; the triplet of the foolish king, the fool and the madman – all carry associations that chime much more resonantly with the medieval world than the modern, and that Shakespeare's first audience, unlike a modern world, did not have to learn from first principles" (Cooper *Shakespeare and the Medieval World* 166).

[5] Michael O'Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early Modern England*

[6] "But in the course of his career, Shakespeare becomes more interested in the inadequacy of motives to account for murders and acts of violence" (Foakes 15).

actual function of torture and the implementation of pain in this scene, although it is staged as an interrogation, is initially unclear. Initially, it seems that they seek revenge for having "convey'd [Lear] hence" (*King Lear* 3.7.15) from their plot, especially as they had ordered him "neither to speak of him, entreat for/ him, nor any way sustain him" (3.4.5-6). Although Gloucester knowingly disobeyed them, "If I die for't, as no less is/ threatened me, the King my old master must be relieved" (3.4.17-19), he clearly expects death rather than disability. To die nobly for one's king has different implications than to become dependent, weak, and disabled for him.

Then, one suspects that the purpose of this scene is to discover to whom Lear has gone in Dover, as Edmund has warned the antagonists of a letter that "approves him an intelligent party to the advantages/ of France" (3.5.12-13) and telling of "a power already footed" (3.3.13). However, although this scene is staged as an interrogation, and this method of torture (beard-plucking, especially) tends to be a method of extracting information, they already plan to torture him for treason. Gloucester answers the questions to which they already have the answers, particularly the thrice-asked "Wherefore to Dover?" (3.7.55, 56, 68). Regan even tells him, after asking him about the letters from France, "Be simple-answered, for we know the truth" (3.7.44).

Earlier in the scene, however, just when Cornwall, Goneril, and Regan have discovered that Lear has left and the French army arrived, Goneril first responds "Pluck out his eyes" (3.7.5), and Cornwall responds that what he intends to do are "the revenges we are bound to take upon [Edmund's] traitorous father" (3.7.7-8). Because he has made their plot difficult by sending Lear to Dover, Gloucester, therefore, serves as a proxy for Lear in the revenge they are unable to take out on him directly. "This deed is especially

horrid because it is pointless[...] The blinding appears an act of gratuitous cruelty and, since Gloucester is already impotent[7], it defies explanation" (Foakes 13). Gloucester as proxy and further information unnecessary, this assault highlights instead the cruelty of his assaulters as "a court'sy to [their] wrath" (3.7.27) rather than for any actual political purpose. As the play later delves into what it means to be human, this "primal scene" establishes for its audience what human is *not*, by making monstrous its villains.

Although Cornwall seems to torture Gloucester "in cold blood," the scene implies also that it is in reaction and revenge to Gloucester's retort that he "shall see/ The wingèd vengeance overtake such children" (3.7.68-69), to which Cornwall immediately responds "See't shalt thou never" (3.7.70) and thus orders the servants to hold him down. Whether a moment of retributive passion or premediated torture, the ways in which Cornwall, Goneril, Regan, et al. are 'made monstrous' further humanize and make empathetic Gloucester's plight.

The response of others to the horror of this scene further indicates the function of cruelty and disabling, differing between the First Folio (F1, 1623) and the First Quarto (Q1, 1608)[8] of *King Lear*; this is the first demonstration of empathy toward Gloucester, although it is toward the violence and physical pain of assault rather than disability. However, the significance of the Quarto's implications helps to frame the scene emotionally, particularly in demonstrating a reaction to the action on stage, especially as

[7] "Having no power or ability to accomplish anything; powerless, helpless; ineffective" (*OED*). This term is heavily and legally associated with the disabled, primarily used in place of "disabled" in the English Poor Laws.

[8] The First Quarto (Q1) is believed to be drawn from Shakespeare's "foul papers" (drafts) and authorized by him and his company; however, variations between Q1 and F1 are suggested to be the result of the printer, who made edits to compensate for his "inexperience" in underestimating the type and paper necessary for the publication (British Library, "Quarto 1 of *King Lear*, 1608")

the audience may not clearly see the gouging[9]. The Folio and Quarto contain the First Servant's challenge to Cornwall, but the Quarto *also* includes the reactions and accommodations of a Second and Third Servant.

In the Quarto editions (Q1(1608) and Q2(1619)), the Second and Third Servants aid Gloucester and focus their empathy toward Gloucester more directly than the First Servant had. Although the remaining servants do not challenge Cornwall and risk their own lives, they are clearly dismayed by the violence. They condemn Cornwall and Regan and, after the antagonists have left, discuss seeking accommodation for Gloucester in the form of Poor Tom o'Bedlam (Gloucester's son Edgar, in disguise) to "lead him where he would" (3.7.107) and in providing medical assistance to "his bleeding face" (3.7.110).

However, the lack of these demonstrations of empathy in the Folio exacerbate Gloucester's trauma and heightens the narrative anxiety of injustice. The Folio and both Quartos have an Old Man bring Gloucester to Edgar, but without the Second and Third Servants in the Folio, an audience is left with the turmoil of Gloucester's isolation and disorientation. Regan and Cornwall leave Gloucester with the remark, "let him smell/ His way to Dover" (3.7.96-97) mocking his newfound need for adaptation and assistance. Without anyone to guide him to Dover or aid him in the Folio, Gloucester becomes the horrifying image of an old, blind man left to destitution, which contributes to an empathetic fear of blindness. It is relieving when it becomes clear that an Old Man has found him and brought him to Poor Tom, whereas the Folio reassures the audience that he will not be alone after his assault. Both versions engage empathy, but the Quartos do

[9] The stage directions are not specific as to whether or not Gloucester faces the audience during the torture, and so performances stage this scene in many ways. Because the dialogue makes clear what is occurring, the audience is dependent on the witness of other characters.

so through demanding uncertainty and pity, and the Folio does so through enforcing relief at the idea of accommodation, preparing for Lear's later delineation of social responsibility.

Shortly after his blinding, Gloucester describes his vision as "All dark and comfortless"(3.7.88) and calls out to his son Edmund, to which Regan informs him that it was he who "made the overture of [Gloucester's] treasons to [them]" (3.7.91-92). Although Gloucester had been cold to Edmund as an illegitimate child, to whom contemporary audiences might be more sympathetic, illegitimacy was often considered indicative of moral character in early modern culture and drama, and he would have been recognizable as a villain in the first scenes as a result, especially as his deceptions become more clear. Thus, the trauma of this scene[10], with its fear, pain, and disabling, also becomes associated with the betrayal of his son.

In addition to the violence of this scene, the terror of the gouging is further accompanied and exacerbated by perceptions of disability and, in particular, blindness. Robert Pierce, in "'I Stumbled When I Saw:' Interpreting Gloucester's Blindness In King Lear," analyzes Gloucester's blindness to argue that the horror of this scene is heightened by negative preconceptions of blindness and disability in that "[Cornwall's] sadism, like Gloucester's despair and our fears, gains its strength for him and its dramatic power for us from the cluster of associations around vision and blindness that he, Gloucester, and we share deep within us" (Pierce 158). Although many in Disability Studies may be quick to

[10] The spectacle of violence in this scene is horrifying and successfully villainizes its antagonists. However, the off-stage violence of *Titus Andronicus* does not leave to the imagination what has happened to Lavinia. The staging of this scene in *King Lear*, although unclear in early modern context and performance history, is written with enough specificity of dialogue and emptiness of stage directions to leave theatrical discretion to future productions. Certainly, this scene has been staged in many ways with various amounts of grotesqueness and gore, but they all make clear the trauma that Gloucester has experienced.

mark this depiction of blindness as problematic, Pierce disagrees because it represents actual fears and attitudes regarding blindness in the culture within which this text emerged[11].

Pierce documents the implications of Gloucester's physical and social experience of blindness and violent trauma, particularly as it relates to the able-bodied perception of them. Specifically, he argues that the "despair" and sadism associated with the act of blinding Gloucester is heightened by the inherent fear of blindness among the able-bodied population. Preconceptions of blindness, disability[12], and violence all influence the ways in which an audience perceives Gloucester's plight. These fears and preconceptions of blindness and disability generally center around the Medical Model of Disability and Western societies' preoccupations with what one is able to *do* and *contribute*. Thus, considering functions of disability in this text both metaphorically and tangibly reveals social attitudes and reactions to disability within and outside of the text while simultaneously responding to and dismantling it.

As visible in the English Poor Laws of the 16th century, there is a slow development of empathy and charity in response to the disabled, especially with the rise of modern capitalism, but disability was still not seen as a social concept or identity as it is today. Rather, the eventual accommodation of the disabled was in response to concerns about vagrancy and begging, which required distinguishing those who could be allowed to beg, because they could not otherwise work, from those who were believed to bring

[11] And, arguably, within modern culture.

[12] Congenital disability, for example, 'others' a character through the perception of intrinsic difference and experiences that are more difficult with which to identify. However, the fear of acquired blindness that accompanies *King Lear* stems from empathy– if a previously able-bodied person can acquire a disability, and the audience is forced to reconcile with this reality, they too must reconcile the possibility that *they* could *also* acquire a disability.

criminal activity and idleness to towns (Braddock and Parish 29). Whether or not Shakespeare or his audiences were thinking of the Poor Laws during the writing, production, and staging of these plays is not definitively clear, but poverty and social response to it becomes evident in *King Lear* especially.

From a symbolic standpoint, as many have noted, Gloucester's newly-acquired blindness foils Lear's inability to 'see' the deception of his daughters and develops his own ability to 'see' what he had failed to identify of his sons—particularly Edmund's deceptions. In a way, Gloucester gains power with his blindness, so often literarily associated with wisdom that it has become cliché, to utilize a different type of 'seeing,' best represented by his famous line, "I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;/ I stumbled when I saw" (4.1.18-19). This wisdom indicates his post-blinding function— to provide insight to King Lear that he had previously been unable to offer when he was sighted. As a result of what he is able to offer despite his blindness, he receives genuine compassion. Although he does not have the opportunity to provide this to Lear politically, due to the narrative action of the play, he is still met with sympathy, especially as Lear can also identify with patricidal betrayal and 'infirmitivity.'

The line "I stumbled when I saw," as well as Gloucester's later adaptability to his blindness demonstrates the ability to continue to provide political and interpersonal insight as well as to 'contribute' labor in the form of comfort and a receptacle to Lear's ramblings. In Act 4 Scene 6, Lear struggles to recognize Gloucester's disability and identity by repeatedly asking him to read a letter, contrasting his earlier identification of the destitute of the Hovel in Act 3 Scene 4. Gloucester, in turn, although he initially recognizes the King's voice, doubts his ability to aptly do so because Lear's madness has

made him unfamiliar. Lindsey Row-Heyveld, in "'Known and Feeling Sorrows': Disabled Knowledge and *King Lear*"" notes that "Their confused senses — seeing hands and looking ears — perceive the injustice of the world accurately and with physical immediacy, even when they cannot fully make sense of anything else" (Row-Heyveld 163). Neither of them have the opportunity to fully adapt to their disabilities/mental illness, yet together they offer a combined narrative of, and statement on, disability access as a social issue.

When Lear finally recognizes Gloucester's disability (before recognizing his identity), he remarks upon the absence of eyes, in itself indicative, "No eyes in your/ head, nor no money in your purse? Your eyes are in/ a heavy case, your purse in a light; yet you see how this/ world goes" (4.6.145-146). It is especially interesting here that Lear associates Gloucester's blindness with his poverty, consistent with their previous experience of disability in the Hovel, as I shall further analyze. The absence of eyes, jarring to some as with Lavinia's dismemberment[13], is unsettling to Lear, dealing with his own absence of sensibility, "Get thee glass eyes,/ And like a scurvy politician, seem/ To see the things thou dost not" (4.[6[14]].170-172). "Seem[ing]" and the appearance of things, alongside the motif of sight, is frequent in this play. Edmund "seems" to be a good son. Edgar "seems" to be Tom o'Bedlam. Cordelia "seems" to Lear that she does not love him.

The suggestion of prosthetics, here, is also interesting as it functions only for the comfort of those who surround Gloucester rather than aiding *him* in any way. In "Stage Hands: Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and the Agency of the Disabled Body in Text and

[13] Gloucester is often performed with a bloody blindfold or with closed eyes, but the literary theoretics of the "gap" remains significant here.

[14] In order to composite the varying texts, the scene numbers vary slightly in the Bevington edition.

Performance," Nicola Imbracsio writes, "As disability theorists have determined, prosthetics highlight the ways in which we have produced a cultural fantasy of the body as 'whole'[...] The 'body as a whole' is a fantasy—and yet it is a culturally potent one as we still invest in the dominant idea that prosthetics are something that 'fix,' or render useable, a 'deficient' or 'deviant' body, making it whole" (Imbracsio 299). Not only does the able-bodied view of prosthetics, as Lear demonstrates here, often classify the disabled body as "wrong" or "broken," it also fails to recognize the intention of prosthetics to *assist*. Thus, rather than demonstrate empathy by reading the letter to Gloucester or guiding him somewhere, Lear asks him to pretend to be able-bodied and "like a scurvy politician, seem/ To see the things thou dost not" (4.[6].170-172).

However, Lear also acknowledges the strengths of his ears and hands without eyes, saying, "A man may see how this world/ goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears. See how/ yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark in/ thine ear: change places and, handy-dandy, which is/ the justice, which is the thief?" (4.6.150-154). When he finally identifies Gloucester, he identifies with him in the plural first-person[15], "we came crying hither" (4.6.178). Gloucester, in return, identifies with him as well, "Alack, Alack the day!"(4.6.181) and, later, "The king is mad: how stiff is my vile sense,/ That I stand up and have ingenious feeling/ Of my huge sorrows!" (4.6.283-285). Gloucester frames the realization of Lear's state with his own corporeal experience and the trauma that comes with it.

Likewise, Gloucester's perception of his own disability provides a particular lens

[15] Although Lear often uses the plural first person as the 'royal 'we'' to signify the "king's two bodies," he reverts to the singular first person, "I," in this scene when speaking of himself, alone. Thus, it is clear that "we" in this quote includes Gloucester or, possibly, all of humanity.

of difference in experience and trauma as part of a wider, more diverse experience of disability as a whole. "After his blinding," Row-Heyveld notes, "Gloucester regularly keeps his sentences short, letting his silences speak to his exhaustion and pain" (Row-Heyveld 160). Although the witness of his experience and emotional adjustment to disability and physical trauma is limited to his suicidal inclinations, Row-Heyveld finds his voice to be most powerful in conjunction with other 'disabled' voices in the play, in that "Including multiple ways of speaking dis-ability, as well as multiple disabled speakers, resists the demands of coherence and consistency required by early modern authorities in their assessment of disabled supplicants, revealing *King Lear* pushing back against the restrictive performance mode and paradigm demanded of disability" (Row-Heyveld 160-161).

Although much of my analysis centers on the perception of disability, as well as the disabled individual's experience of adaptation, it is worth noting that the individual's self-perception and self-identity as it relates to disability is particularly important in this conversation. Gloucester experiences disability through sensory and familial loss, physical pain, and disorientation through his attempts to reconcile becoming disabled with the experience of previously being abled, especially in context of the social condition of the poor, as Gloucester has seen.

Gloucester, in his own witness of the disabled and destitute of Act 3 Scene 4, and in his later personal experience of disability, develops his own sense of empathy and interpersonal responsibility. In Act 4 Scene 1, when he first meets Poor Tom as a blind man (recognizing him as the same man from the Hovel), he attempts to provide for him. "Here, take this purse," he declares, "thou whom the heaven's plagues/ Have humbled to

all strokes. That I am wretched/ Makes thee the happier. Heavens deal so still! Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man/ That slaves your ordinance, that will not see/ Because he does not feel, feel your pow'r quickly:/ So distribution should undo excess/ And each man have enough" (4.1.63–70). He takes responsibility, now, for Tom's well-being, although it is in part exchange for his sighted guidance, and goes so far as to associate almsgiving with redistribution for the better of "each man." Multiple times throughout the play, Gloucester seeks to clothe him, as well. James Kearney, in "'This is Above All Strangeness': *King Lear*, Ethics, and the Phenomenology of Recognition," notes that, "In contrast with Lear, Gloucester's response is both more empathetic toward the suffering body and less engaged with the alterity of the other person. He will get this creature out of the cold" (Kearney 460). Lear's conjectures are essential to the narrative and philosophical development of the play, but Gloucester remains in touch with the lived reality of the body and accommodation, especially as he personally experiences it.

Row-Heyveld further notes that "Gloucester's speech clearly mirrors Lear's prayer. He too now appreciates the needs of the specifically disabled poor because of his embodied knowledge. Gloucester, like Lear, realizes his complicity in the distress of the disabled poor. And Gloucester also identifies indiscriminate charity as the solution to suffering" (Row-Heyveld 162). Even though Gloucester, too, is now disabled and in need of assistance, he does not disassociate himself from his previous position of privilege and responsibility, much like Lear. This moment in the play, as well as Lear's speech in Act 3 Scene 4, sharply contrasts with a culture that resented the Poor Laws and a state which regulated the disabled identity. Row-Heyveld continues, "In direct opposition to early modern reforms that institutionalized the mistrust of disability under the auspices of

regulating charity, Gloucester imagines the redistribution of wealth, no longer hindered by suspicion, as the means of restoring justice" (Row-Heyveld 162). *King Lear* asserts that responsibility for one another takes the place of valuing people only for their ability to contribute labor.

Because of Gloucester's political and social contributions and responsibility for others, the use of the Medical and Social Models of Disability frame him as a textually 'ideal' disabled character to position against Lavinia, especially as the play as a whole engages disability so intently with the general social condition of the poor. Physically and medically, Gloucester loses significant function, and this should not be overlooked for the social implications of his disability. Gloucester, obviously, loses the physical ability to see, identify others, access his surroundings in order to localize himself, and read, although he eventually adapts to his blindness in a practical way. Although scholars tend to focus on his symbolic blindness and inability to identify others as a parallel to his previous inability to identify the antagonism of his son, Edmund, these other lived implications are also evident in the text in the ways in which he adapts.

Dependence on others and accommodations define Gloucester's post-blinding experience in that he is accommodated without respect to his own adaptation and independence by his son because he still lacks access in that which Edgar keeps from him—his son's actual identity, their location, details of their surroundings, etc. Gloucester's adaptation to his disability is significant to the potential of "contribution" and labor, as well as in consideration of the disabled narrative as a lived experience rather than only metaphorical, but the emphasis on accommodation and the dismissal of adaptation in some moments undermines the need to 'contribute' to society but rather be

accommodated by it.

This is especially evident in Act 4 Scene [6][16], wherein Edgar/Tom o'Bedlam verbally manipulates Gloucester's understanding of their location to trick Gloucester into not committing suicide, thus taking away his agency and furthering his dependence, although with good intentions. Throughout this scene, Gloucester accurately interprets his surroundings through hearing, balance, and touch but is deceptively 'corrected' by Edgar. "Methinks the ground is even," Gloucester notes, and Edgar responds, "Horrible steep" (4.6.3). When Gloucester notes that he does not hear the sea (which does not exist in this scene, as is later evident), Edgar notes "Why then, your other senses grow imperfect by your eyes' anguish" (4.6.5-6). In following moments wherein they meet Lear Gloucester (again) correctly identifies his voice, "I know that voice/[...] The trick of that voice I do well remember:/Is 't not the king?" (4.6.95, 106-107).

The original Folio and Quartos of this scene offer no stage directions for the cliff, and it is not clear that the cliff does not exist until after Gloucester has attempted to jump from it. Emma Smith, in "Reading the First Folio," argues that the text "offers readers no guidance about Gloucester's fall, and, most significantly, none of the interpretative leverage created by the implied contrast between visual and verbal clues on stage [...] Gloucester's bewildered 'But haue I falne, or no?' (rr6[4]) is a real question amid the ontological uncertainty of the page" (Smith 167). It is not until Gloucester jumps off the 'cliff' that Edgar's well-meaning duplicity becomes clear.

This scene offers a form of deception on Edgar's part, and yet we see in it a demonstration of empathy. Edgar's intention is not to undermine his father, dissuade his

[16] In order to composite varying texts, scene numbers vary slightly in the Bevington edition.

abilities, or further his dependence but to save his life. However, the issue of dependence is complicated in the context of disability. Perhaps Gloucester would be less suicidal if it was clear in this scene that he had adapted and correctly identified his location by his other senses. Perhaps he would recognize his capabilities and potential for independence, to an extent. Edgar's limitation of Gloucester's independence is problematic in the face of disability identity, restraining from him the agency to make his own choices regarding his life. However, in this action and in his later lines, "Men must endure/ Their going hence, even as their coming hither;/ Ripeness is all. Come on" (5.2.9-11), Edgar voices that with which the able-bodied have struggled for centuries— the disabled life is still worth living[17]. Further, Edgar's accompaniment of Gloucester, in general, is primarily well-intentioned and supportive. He intends to serve as care-taker, "If ever I return to you again,/ I'll bring you comfort" (5.2.3-4).

However, though Edgar's scenes with his father manipulate Gloucester's dependence and highlights his inability to see, they also demonstrate his adaptability. Sarah Roberts, in "Sightlines: The 'Limits of Illusion' in *Oedipus Tyrannos* and *King Lear,*" further acknowledges that "we are invited to witness the caution required to appreciate that Gloucester has learnt to filter not just the information relayed to him, but to hear and to detect significance in vocal register [...] Deprived of sight, Gloucester has ironically acquired greater independence in probing the veracity of his own judgement" (35). The irony here is metaphorical, yet, considering the lived experience of blindness, Gloucester *has* in fact adapted to his condition in a way that provides him more

[17] Disability representation in both past and contemporary media is often fraught with issues of suicide and quality of life, often implying that quality of life is diminished by disability rather than by the lack of accessibility (Schwartz and Lutfiyya "'What Lay Ahead...': A Media Portrayal of Disability and Assisted Suicide" 36).

independence, even though other characters do not allow him to enact it.

Regarding adaptation and the 'living out' of blindness, however, it is worth acknowledging the difference in experience and functionality of those who are blind by acquisition and those who are blind from birth[18]. Acquisition requires a demanding transition from seeing to not seeing, to adapting one's routine of living, and to being aware of what is not accessible to them. Gloucester's trauma is not limited to the pain and terror of the assault; it also includes the following experience of struggling to adapt and acquire independence, while readjusting his entire way of living[19].

The examination of other types of disabled experiences, particularly within the Social Model of Disability and lack of accommodation, is most clear in earlier scenes wherein Lear, a still-sighted Gloucester, and the Fool react to the homeless and 'unaccommodated' disabled in Act 3 Scene 4. In this scene, Lear explicitly takes responsibility, as the monarch, for the condition of the poor and disabled of his kingdom. "Oh," he exclaims, "I have ta'en too little care of this" (3.4.32-33). His first reaction is not pity, disgust, or ignorance, but shame. From a literary standpoint, this moment is pivotal to Lear's arc of understanding where he has failed in his reign.

From a Disability Studies perspective, however, this is also a radical perspective of social responsibility that was being newly-discussed in the 16th and 17th centuries. While the Poor Laws begin to consider the accommodation of others, they begin by

[18] The born-disabled, those with congenital disabilities, however, may adapt differently, sometimes even subconsciously, as it is not a transition between abilities but instead existing in a society not designed to accommodate them. The stigmatization of congenital disability thus differs from Gloucester's in the ways in which the audience is (un)able to easily identify with the experience of corporeality and disability.

[19] While accommodation is particularly highlighted in this play, it must be reconciled with an internal desire for independence.

distinguishing the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor[20]. Lear does not make this distinction between the "able" and "unable" but instead acknowledges the needs of both the vagrant and the mentally ill alike[21]. Yet, it is also significant that Lear does not dichotomize himself (as a representative of the privileged and currently able, somewhat) against 'them' as "others" but as *another* in his community, even as he begins to struggle with his perception of reality and mental stability.

In her article, "'Unaccommodated Man': Dismodernism and Disability Justice in *King Lear*," Christine Gottlieb writes "After Lear and Gloucester experience disability, they start defining humans as interdependent and link this understanding to social justice by advocating for poor and oppressed people" (Gottlieb 2). Although Gloucester is still sighted at this point of the play, his witness of disability in this scene has implications for his later experience of it. Perhaps his witness of the conditions of the disabled life makes his uncertain future as a blind and disabled man more fearful; perhaps the empathy and social responsibility that Lear demonstrates in this scene will be comforting to Gloucester when he, too, becomes disabled. "Poor and oppressed" does not distinguish between able and unable but between access and lack of access. Lear and Gloucester's own experiences of disability directly correlate with weak social infrastructure and a lack of accommodation in that, "for both Lear and Gloucester, disability coincides with the loss of familial support, social status, and a place to live" (Gottlieb 3).

[20] This is a precarious division; people who were poor, underemployed, or 'vagrant' were severely punished for begging. Due to the discretion of classification, the line between the disabled and unable to work and those who were unable to find employment or were beggars, etc. had concerning consequences. These punishments entailed in the Poor Laws demonstrate a similar issue in Marxist/Disability Studies criticism— the value of personhood being inextricably tied to labor. However, because this text focuses on disabilities in particular, I will not be expanding further upon the issues of 'vagrancy,' labor, and punishment in Elizabethan England.

[21] This is especially radical in context of that which is discussed in Footnote 20. Disability is not a precursor to social assistance.

The residents of the Hovel that they approach are not clearly described in dialogue or stage direction except as "poor naked wretches" (3.4.28). The only person they speak with is Tom o'Bedlam (Edgar in disguise), who presents himself with indications of mental illness through verbal disorganization and "nakedness," or minimal and shabby clothing. They refer to him as "mad" and "a fool" (3.4.78). Without familial support to "relieve & maintain" such individuals, it is not unlikely that disabled people would live in poor communities, such as this one, until local church authorities elected "to erect build & set up in fit and convenient Houses of Dwelling for the said impotent Poor[22]" (39 Eliz. I c. 3) to their own discretion and consent of the citizens (Hindle 159)[23].

Additionally, Row-Heyveld, describes the "epistemological crisis" of identifying and categorizing disabilities[24] for social aid, in that, "for both regular citizens and the magistrates tasked with enacting these policies, disability demanded scrutiny that tested both the beholder's ability to determine the truth and the disabled person's ability to prove the authenticity of their impairment" (Row-Heyveld 158). As Lennard J. Davis argues in "Dr. Johnson, Amelia, and the Discourse of Disability in the Eighteenth Century" that disability is a function of difference observed by one other than the disabled, so too does Row-Heyveld consider the legal and literary implications of the perception of disability rather than the functional or social presence of it.

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[22] All text from the original Acts of the Poor Laws has been transcribed with adjustment to spellings by modern standards for clarity of reading and comprehension, although capitalization matches original texts.

[23] It is unclear how consistently these officials provided housing, diagnosed and categorized (dis)abilities, and how well housing would be maintained, although Steve Hindle notes that the classified deserving poor were "an extremely small proportion of parish populations" (Hindle 49), that local Benches heavily depended on other resources to avoid the "parish rates" (almsgiving to the poor) (156) and that local communities were increasingly resentful and participated in "refusals to accept poor rates" (157).

[24] "Although it was crucially important to distinguish the deserving poor from sturdy rogues, judgments about potential indigence must have been extraordinarily difficult to make" (Hindle 162)

The social services which Lear envisions to be essential for man, rather than function and physical ability, are how he defines humanity. When examining Tom o'Bedlam (Edgar), Lear declares "Thou art the thing itself./ Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor bare, / forked animal as thou art" (3.4.105-107). Tom is not dehumanized by cognitive disability or mental illness but by being "unaccommodated." The passive form of "unaccommodated" implies that Tom must be accommodated by *another* rather than by his own responsibility. Rather than only arguing that Tom is dehumanized *by* a lack of accommodations, Lear posits a much more radical assertion—that "interdependence" and "vulnerability" are, in fact, necessary conditions for humanity rather than issues that must be solved or 'corrected.'

Kearney further writes that Shakespeare's audience "might expect Lear to recognize Edgar not as abject and other but as the same, a figure of the same aristocratic class who has fallen as Lear has" (Kearney 456). The upset of class distinctions, and especially the assertion of recognizable 'internal nobility' prolongs the audience's expectation of reveal and makes uncomfortable the now-blurring lines of class, especially in context of the disenfranchisement of *the* upper class and royalty.

The narrative fact that Edgar is not actually mad nor disabled does not change the implications of his experience, however, but instead "exposes him" and allows access to "the reality of disability" (Row-Heyveld 160). He is not mad, but "his counterfeiting literally exposes him to the reality of disability. His costume consists of near nakedness, leaving him aching in the cold, and he lacerates his 'numbed and mortified bare arms' with sharp objects (2.2.186). His painful disguise blurs the lines between real and feigned disability, and his experience of destitution as Poor Tom further erases that boundary"

(Row-Heyveld 160). His experience is simply that to which disabled people are subjected without the experience of actually having a disability. He does not experience having a disability, but he is treated as if he does. Put more simply, he fits the Social Model of Disability without experiencing the Medical Model of Disability. He does not have access to safe, sheltered, warm, and well-fed society even though he is technically capable of labor.

Edgar[25] is aware of the misfortunes of the disabled when he first decides to disguise himself as "Poor Tom o'Bedlam" in Act 2 Scene 3. The name itself is self-explanatory, as well. "Bedlam" referred to The Hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem, an institution for the mentally ill, and the use of "Tom of Bedlam" was in use throughout, and after, the 16th century (*OED* "Tom"). In Act 1 Scene 2, Edmund deceives Edgar with a "sigh like Tom o' Bedlam" (1.2.143), signifying colloquial use of the term within the fictional sphere of the story. When Edgar begins to disguise himself in Act 2 Scene 3, he says, "Whiles I may 'scape,/ I will preserve myself, and am bethought/ To take the basest and most poorest shape/ That ever penury in contempt of man/ Brought near to beast" (2.3.5-9). It is significant that Edgar considers the mentally ill beggar to be "the basest and most poorest shape," demonstrating already the social lack of care for a particular and vulnerable group of people.

Edgar will disguise himself to fit the condition of the mentally ill and disabled by making himself "grime with filth,/ Blanket my loins, elf all my hairs in knots/ And with

[25] The 1608 Quarto of *King Lear* is titled, "True Chronicle Historie of the life and death of King LEAR and his three Daughters. *With the vnfortunate life of* Edgar, *sonne* and heire to the Earle of Gloster, and his sullen and assumed humor of TOM of Bedlam," drawing particular attention to Edgar's plight and disguise. Further, Kearney writes that Edgar is "imported from romance, specifically from the tale of the Paphlagonian King in Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*" only to subvert Romance tropes of recognition and reveal, especially evident in the play's ending.

presented nakedness outface/ The winds and persecutions of the sky" (2.3.9-12), and this is not a new image. Rather, "The country gives [...] proof and precedent/ Of Bedlam beggars [...] with roaring voices" (2.3.13-14). The poor and ill continue to be unaccommodated, and responsibility is conferred to Lear when he later acknowledges that he had failed them[26]. Edgar further describes the treatment of "Bedlam beggars" as "low farms,/ Poor pelting villages, sheepcotes, and mills,/ Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,/ Enforce their charity" (2.3.17-20). As in the medieval ages, the poor, ill, and disabled are seen in *King Lear* as an opportunity to "enforce their charity" and "prayers," yet Edgar acknowledges that they are also treated "sometime with lunatic bans" to isolate and socially 'other' the mentally ill.

Humanity, to Lear, requires vulnerability and dependence— that which is often misappropriated to exclude the disabled. "Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like," write Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in *The German Ideology*, "They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to *produce* their means of subsistence [*Lebensmitte*], a step which is conditioned by their physical organization. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life" (Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology* 7). This concept in Marxist thinking indicates both the idea of human worth per labor and establishes a criteria for distinguishing the human from the non-human. Capitalism seems to ask, 'what is the worth of a human who cannot labor in

[26] Although the Poor Laws, throughout the transition between allowing people "unable to labor" to beg and providing accommodations to them, acclimates to the concept of social responsibility, it always maintains a distinction and qualification between the "able to labor" and the "impotent[...] not able to labor." Accommodations, once recognized, are attributed only to the latter, whereas Lear finds them necessary for all.

early modern England,' and we must respond, 'what is the danger of devaluing individuals on this basis?' Additionally, in what ways do these dichotomies between man and animal with specific boundaries exclude people from inherent humanity?

Marx and Engels posit, at least in demonstrating German capitalist thinking even if to argue against it, that labor is a significant part of that which distinguishes people from animals[27]. This point is specifically that people are "conditioned" to believe that organized labor is necessary to "material life" and "subsistence," but it also implicates the indirect consequences of a society organized in such a way. In "Karl Marx On Human Nature," Iring Fetscher reaffirms more explicitly the concept that, "whereas the animal is driven by natural impulses, man's specific form of activity is 'conscious life-activity' or work (production). 'Conscious life-activity directly distinguishes man from animal life-activity'" (Fetscher 445). More literally put, capitalist labor supposedly "distinguishes man."

Despite the problems of nomenclature, Fetscher also points out an essential part of Marxist understanding of society in that, "if man can live only in a (partially) transformed nature, adapted to his needs, and if tools are necessary because he is insufficiently outfitted with 'natural tools' such as most animals possess, then it is evident that man cannot survive—as man—in isolation" (Fetscher 448). Like Lear delineates in this scene, Fetscher's description of Marx's definitions for man require inter-human

[27] Social categories are always exclusive, and this is especially true for large, broader categories like the attempt to classify humanity. For example, Tobin Siebers writes in *Disability Theory* that "the ideology of ability is at its simplest the preference for able-bodiedness. At its most radical, it defines the baseline by which humanness is determined" (Siebers 8). Historically, misappropriation of this endeavor has enabled various forms of eugenics and mass genocide, and this is no stranger to the disabled community. I attempt here only to consider the ways in which labor is too often a defining factor of humanity, the ways in which people are too often excluded from definitions as these, and the implications of such dehumanization in these literary texts.

dependence, external material ‘tools,’ and vulnerability for survival define the human as a social being. This definition might be further extrapolated to include prosthetics and other adaptability technology as an ‘acceptable’ form of assistance without excluding the disabled from definitions of "human." Further, although Marx includes the development of language and consciousness in his distinctions between ‘man’ and animal, interpersonal dependence in individuals with cognitive disabilities is still included under the premise that social dependence is a significant part of humanity, as is Lear’s premise.

In some ways, Gloucester practices this interpersonal dependence while also developing his means of independence. However, there is a distinction between interpersonal dependence and social dependence. An accessible society, much like the one which Lear envisions, allows for a degree of independence and respect for the intrinsic dignity of a person, rather than simply ‘allowing’ them to beg, as a form of labor, as in the early Poor Laws.

Consistent with the tragic genre, Gloucester meets an offstage fatal end[28], although not as a result of his disability. Edgar, now out of disguise, tells of his father’s death to Edmund and Albany, that in his reveal as Edgar, "his flawed heart—/ Alack, too weak the conflict to support—/ 'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,/ Burst smilingly" (5.3.200-203). His relationship with Poor Tom is characterized by his "nursing [Gloucester’s ‘miseries’]" (5.3.185), as well as witnessing the social state of the disabled in the Hovel. The reveal of Tom’s true identity, as Edgar, has multifold implications:

[28] However, because so much of Gloucester’s adjustment to disability is contextualized by loss, it is difficult and perhaps neglectful to consider the return of his son and a sense of security as disassociated from his disability. Likewise, it is entirely medically possible that his death could be related to an infection from his gouging. This is speculation in this particular case, but in the lived experience of disability in a given time period, death from injuries, infection, and disease were much more prevalent and worth noting.

with the support and caretaking of family, as he has previously experienced through Tom, he no longer has to expect a future like that of the Hovel, especially as (although this is not known at the time) Edgar will eventually take reign of the kingdom; the emotional return of a sort of 'prodigal son' is laced with forgiveness and joy.

Likewise, it is not only the disabled who die at the end of the play, especially in the tragic genre, and there is no implication otherwise that he *should* die *because* of his disability— especially with the context of his prevented suicide. Gloucester is simply unfortunate to exist within this particular genre. The significance of the value of the disabled characters' lives in this play, although *King Lear* ends with a multitude of deaths, cannot be overstated. In *Titus Andronicus*, suicide is suggested when Lavinia's disability is evident and enforced when her sexual assault comes to light. *King Lear*, however, suggests the value of life, at least for the masculine English. As will be evident in the next chapter, the intersectionality of other identities with disability further influence the ways in which other characters are valued.

Although the end of this play is tragic, it is left, like Shakespeare's other tragedies, with the implication of a semi-hopeful future; Edgar is implied to take reign of a disarrayed kingdom. In the context of disability, because Edgar has 'experienced' disability both first and second-hand as a witness, caretaker, and as a socially-identified "disabled" person, and because there is the narrative suggestion that he may take on the social responsibilities which Lear espoused in Act 3 Scene 4, there is reassurance that the disabled will be properly housed and cared for. Edgar has practiced his empathy toward the disabled, experienced their social plight, and has received empathy as well (such as when Gloucester repeatedly seeks to clothe him). He has found himself responsible for

the disabled in many ways and is prepared to fulfill it, although he "steps out of the precarious social position he occupied as Tom o' Bedlam and returns to his economic and patrilineal privilege" (Row-Heyveld 166). The able-bodied characters of the play shift and accept responsibility for the poor and disabled while simultaneously dismantling a requisite of labor and contribution for humanity and dignity. Rather than asserting that the disabled are a sort of 'burden' on society, *King Lear* reaffirms the purpose of social order and institution as a mutual exchange and responsibility for one another, including and especially the disabled.

"Sure Some Tereus Hath Deflowered Thee:"

Testifying Corporeality, Rape, and Disability in *Titus Andronicus*

In *Titus Andronicus*[1], the "problem" of sexual assault closely mimics the "problem" of disability and accommodation. The narrative's Roman context[2], especially as understood through Marxist analysis of capitalism and labor-driven society, requires *contribution*. Disability more explicitly unsettles the prioritization of labor in early modern and modern societies, but sexual violence[3] (against women, specifically) challenges the prioritization of feminine, domestic labor.

Interpersonally, Lavinia is not as highly valued as Gloucester with respect to her 'inability' to function, not in regard to physical ability but as a wife or daughter who must serve others. Women's labor in many historical, geographical, and cultural contexts intertwine interpersonal and social relations with domestic labor. As a result, her inability to 'perform' these duties render her social functions and reception of empathy, or lack thereof, obsolete. Gloucester's interpersonal relations are not dependent on his political or physical abilities, and he is thus able to maintain these relationships after he is

[1] As one of Shakespeare's earlier plays, *Titus Andronicus* is presumed to have been written between 1588 and 1593, is first recorded in performance in 1594, and published (without Shakespeare's name) in 1594. As Shakespeare was not yet writing with acclaim, it is not atypical that the play was not initially attributed to him (McDonald "Shakespeare, 'Shakespeare,' and the Problem of Authorship" 18).

[2] In like manner as *King Lear*, Shakespeare sets *Titus Andronicus* in a temporally distant era and, perhaps, a similar one. *Titus Andronicus* takes the stage in the latter days of Roman power, presumably after Ovid's lifetime, as the characters often reference and utilize his *Metamorphoses*. Unlike *King Lear*, however, this earlier "historie" play is exceptionally graphic and further plays with the "taboo." R.A. Foakes suggests that the violence of this text may be the result of imitating the fashion of Marlowe, whose staged violence and sensationalism was particularly popular (36). "In his early histories (the *Henry VI* plays) and in *Titus Andronicus* Shakespeare [...] competed in composing plays that invent more and stranger incidents of torture and murder" (Foakes 36). *Titus Andronicus*'s audience is forced to witness dismemberment, cannibalism, torture, state-sanctioned execution, and the aftereffects of rape.

[3] Most likely drawn from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and 'The Rape of Lucrece' in Ovid's *Fasti*. The early modern audience would likely have been familiar with Philomela's tale, and Lavinia's own assault both mimics it and testifies through it. Likewise, Ovid's tale of Lucretia is echoed throughout the play and Shakespeare's later poem, "The Rape of Lucrece."

disabled, whereas Lavinia's inability to enact marital and domestic labor condemns her.

Lavinia thus experiences 'disability' in both her physical function and her sexual assault. However, where she is able to adapt to her physical disabilities—muteness and amputation—, she cannot prosthetize her chastity in the same way, as is required of her by her family and Roman culture. This is evident in the violence[4] of her assault, the function of testimony, examination of her agency (or lack thereof), and the ways in which others respond with, and without, empathy to her dismemberment and rape.

Discussion of Lavinia's assault first requires the context of her relations, as is often necessary in sexual assault cases in early modern England. Her betrothal status is already in question in the first scene of the play. Once Titus deems Saturninus emperor, Saturninus's first act is to choose Lavinia as his queen, and Titus consents[5]. It is then that her status becomes confused, when Saturninus's brother, Bassianus, "[*takes her by the arm*][6]" and exclaims "this maid is mine"(1.1.279) and that he is "resolved withal/ to do [himself] this reason and this right" (1.1.281-2). Titus, however, frames this as "treason" and that Lavinia has been "surprised" (1.1.287). In early modern law, as Lavinia and Saturninus had not been married yet, Bassianus is within his rights, as Marcus reaffirms "*Suum* [*cuique*] is our Roman justice./ This prince in justice seizeth but his own"

[4] The setting of this play allows for such violence because the English public memory of Ancient Rome is colored with ideas of war and barbary. Because it is set in "quasi-historical mythical ancient Rome, one in which all restraints are off, [...] the dramatist is freed to exploit sensational stage violence in ways that go far beyond what he could do in the Henry VI plays" (Foakes 54). In addition, the Roman context provides "precedent" for rites and rituals of sacrifice, as made evident in the first scene of the play, "And for their brethren slain/ Religiously they ask a sacrifice" (*Titus Andronicus* 1.1.123-4)

[5] Although Saturninus and Titus have already agreed upon it, Saturninus asks, "Lavinia, you are not displeased with this? (1.1.273). Her consent is not necessary, as is made clear in this scene, but Saturninus seeks her interest—although it is not possible to know how he would react if she *were* "displeased."

[6] For the sake of clarity in the custom of minimal stage directions in early modern scripts, the *Folger* edition adds directions such as these. This is not original text. Editorial stage directions will be bracketed to indicate this.

(1.1.283-4). Early scenes grapple with the legitimacy of marriage and with bridal theft and possession, as Saturninus and Bassianus debate over their respective 'rights' to claim Lavinia. Although Saturninus ultimately marries Tamora, instead, Lavinia's victimization solves this unresolved problem because her rape (according to Titus's murdering her) now 'defects' her possession by any man. It is made violently clear that she has been the victim of illicit 'consumption,' both in her implied preference of Bassianus when her father prefers Saturninus and in her rape.

Bassianus later defends, "'Rape' call you it, my lord, to seize my own,/ My true betrothèd love and now my wife?" (1.1.413-4). It is first notable that he now specifies her as "wife" and not only "betrothèd," implying ceremony and consummation. Similarly, conflated language makes the language of rape complicated, as well. Bassianus establishes a disconnect between the framing of their marriage as "rape" and the language of "seiz[ure]," or *raptus*[7]. However, this play frames Lavinia almost solely as a daughter-not-yet-wife rather than as wife or widow, arguably because her family does not consistently recognize her marriage to Bassianus until after he has been murdered. Titus treats her marriage as *raptus* in context of 'maidenhood' and a marriage to which he did not consent[8].

Although Titus has already promised her to Saturninus and remains steadfast in it, Lavinia's brothers help to deliver Lavinia and Bassianus away. In anger, Titus kills his

[7] Lorraine Helms, in "'The High Roman Fashion': Sacrifice, Suicide, and the Shakespearean Stage," specifically distinguishes the understandings of "rape" and "abduction" in 16th-century law. Her delineation of the legal use of *raptus* to mean abduction (often used to describe elopement or kidnapping to which a father has not consented, regardless of the woman's consent) and/or adultery in the context of property law and newly-considered interpersonal violence helps to contextualize this confusion.

[8] This contrasts the later response to her assault as an act of violence partially because she uses *stuprum* to identify it, rather than *raptus*, which is specific to cases of virgins and widows and more frequently understood as a bodily assault, especially as this violence is so visible on her body.

son, Mutius in his first act of filicide. Because of this 'betrayal' and Titus stabbing his own son, Saturninus gives up Lavinia for Tamora. Lavinia remains silent throughout all of this. Tamora says to Lavinia "By my advice, all humbled on your knees/ You shall ask pardon of his Majesty" (1.1.482-3) as though it was she who had made the decision between the two men. Likewise, Saturninus says to her "you left me like a churl" (1.1.496) but 'forgives' her.

Demetrius and Chiron, after the assault, are first heard mocking her and her new inability to act physically or vocally. Though her agency prior to the assault is limited, as a woman, she had enacted it through verbal means, particularly in mocking Tamora and Aaron, the Moor, for their (adulterous and treasonous) interracial sexual relationship in Act 2 Scene 3. Tamora then calls upon her sons to avenge Lavinia's "hellish tale" (2.3.105) of Tamora's adultery. Although Lavinia's words pointedly do not have persuasive power, noted when she begs Tamora to prevent her rape, Tamora attributes her assault to her mockery, briefly implying the success of Lavinia's barbs. However, this moment only serves to prevent exposure of the affair.

In the attempt to prevent her rape, Lavinia seeks to appeal to "a woman's pity[9]" (2.3.147), as though being women unites them in some way. When her pleas fail, Lavinia exclaims, "No grace, no womanhood? Ah, beastly creature,/ The blot and enemy to our general name,/[...]" (2.3.182-3), claiming that Tamora has neither grace nor womanhood,

[9] When Demetrius warns Tamora to not be swayed by Lavinia's pleas, Lavinia says, "When did the tiger's young ones teach the dam?/ O, do not learn her wrath; she taught it thee./ The milk thou suck'st from her did turn to marble./ Even at thy teat thou hadst thy tyranny./ Yet every mother breeds not sons alike" (2.3.142-6). Lavinia dehumanizes Tamora and makes her monstrous by referring to her as a "tiger." She then challenges her motherhood by asking when and why Tamora takes instruction from her children instead of teaching them, "when did the tiger's young ones teach the dam?" and by reproaching the most maternal of functions— breastfeeding. "The milk thou suck'st from her did turn to marble" suggests that Tamora has failed as a mother because her "milk" does not provide nutrients, life, or warmth but instead "did turn to marble."

nor even humanity, but is instead a "beastly creature" who has betrayed the "general name" and reputation of women. It is then that Chiron and Demetrius take her away to rape her.

With her failed pleas and, later, the muting of her tongue, Lavinia believes she has lost this power. I specify that Lavinia *believes* she has lost this power because the rape and dismemberment had been premeditated, and her taunts were irrelevant. In Act 2 Scene 1, Aaron speaks with Chiron and Demetrius, suggesting a "speedier course" of wooing Lavinia to Chiron and Demetrius by "strik[ing] her home by force, if not by words" (2.1.117, 123, 125). Further, he premeditates Lavinia's dismemberment and Bassianus's murder when tells Tamora, "this is the day of doom for Bassianus./ His Philomel must lose her tongue today,/ thy sons make pillage of her chastity/ and wash their hands in Bassianus's blood" (2.3.42-5). Titus's sons are framed for Bassianus's murder, and it then becomes clear to the audience that these events are the plot of revenge against the Andronici family. This is briefly indicated when Lavinia is pleading with Tamora before the rape, to which Tamora remarks, "Even for [Titus's] sake I am pitiless./ Remember, boys, I poured forth tears in vain/ to save your brother from the sacrifice,/ But fierce Andronicus would not relent./ Therefore away with her, and use her as you will" (2.3.162-166). The use of the adverb "therefore" directly connects Titus's sacrifice of her son[10] and Lavinia's rape. As Gloucester is proxy for an assault on Lear, so too is Lavinia proxy for an assault on Titus— and Titus certainly interprets it this way. The purpose becomes clear as Chiron and Demetrius drag her offstage.

[10] In revenge for his own sons' deaths in war against the Goths. This narrative of this play essentially follows the trajectory of the law of retaliation: an eye (Titus's 21 dead sons) for an eye (Alarbus) for an eye (Bassianus and Lavinia[rape]) for an eye (Martius and Quintus) for an eye (Demetrius and Chiron, then Tamora, Lavinia[death], etc.) for an eye (Titus, et al.).

Unlike Gloucester, whose assault the audience *witnesses*, Lavinia is raped offstage. This is particularly essential to the functions of testimony in *Titus Andronicus* while still allowing for the presence of gore. While her return to the stage, dismembered and 'ravished,' has been staged in a variety of ways, the text refers to an excess of blood to which the audience is still subject. Although her rape is not depicted, the play itself does not shy from explicit violence, particularly in her onstage death. Lavinia's rape and dismemberment serve a variety of functions— first of which, to initiate revenge against the Goths that the Andronici were previously unable to undertake. As Richard Marienstras writes in *New Perspectives on the Shakespearean World*, violence is not distanced "by the preciosity of the language. That is to underestimate the theatrical force of the murders committed before the very eyes of the spectators" (Marienstras 45). Gloucester's blinding has the "theatrical force" of witness, but, although the assault is offstage and it is clear that Lavinia is about to be raped and possibly murdered, Lavinia's return to the stage post-assault is, in itself, shocking.

As Cassandra Crawford writes in "Body Image, Prostheses, Phantom Limbs," the observation of amputees is often depicted in sociological scholarship as "inciting fear in the 'able-bodied[...] Those who were shamed by fearful or ignorant others came to disparage their own bodies engendering [...] a state that could in turn cause serious degradation of the ego, personality, identity, or self-concept" (Crawford 221). "Othering" creates a feedback loop in which the acquisitionally-disabled person has to adapt to both the changes of the body and means of living and the ways in which perceptions of them influence their own self-perceptions. In later moments with her family, she is emotionally disturbed by their traumatized responses. In this particular moment, however, Lavinia is

not viewed with "fearful[ness]" but with disgust, humor at her expense, and humiliation.

In addition to the trauma of violence and pain, Chiron and Demetrius's mocking following the rape is especially "barbaric[11]," to borrow the language of this play. Act 2 Scene 4 begins with the stage directions[12], "*Enter the Empresse sonnes with* Lauinia, *her handes cut off*, *and her tongue cut out*, *& rauisht*[13]." Demetrius begins, "So, now go tell, an if thy tongue can speak,/ Who 'twas that cut thy tongue and ravished thee" (2.4.1-2). The mutilation of her hands subverts the tale of Philomela, already referenced in anticipation of Lavinia's rape, who had testified through weaving the story of her assault into a tapestry. These first lines mocks her inability to testify but further does so through Chiron's following line, "Write down thy mind; bewray thy meaning so,/ An if thy stumps will let thee play the scribe" (2.4.3-4). Like Philomela, Lavinia cannot tell of her rape; unlike Philomela, Lavinia cannot write it, either.

Their mocks also indicate their expectations of women, telling her to "call for sweet water; wash thy hands" (2.4.6) although "she hath no tongue to call, nor hands to wash;/ And so let's leave her to her silent walks" (2.4.7-8). She now cannot, to their minds, fulfill her 'duties' as a woman and has no purpose. Thus, they finish their mocking with Chiron saying, "An 'twere my cause, I should go hang myself," to which Demetrius responds, "If thou hadst hands to help thee knit the cord" (2.4.9, 10). They promote the message that the disabled (and sexually assaulted) life is not worth living,

[11] Ironically, Chiron exclaimed "Was [n]ever Scythia half so barbarous!" (1.1.131) in response to his brother's dismemberment

[12] This direction is the same in the 1594 Quarto (Q1) and in the 1623 Folio (F1)

[13] Although it is difficult to know how this would have been staged in early modern productions, simply that this is specified in stage directions is, in itself, significant. Stage directions were not generally specific or detailed, as we shall later see in the scene of her murder. Although the dialogue has and will make it clear that she has been raped, the stage directions reinforce this further.

contrasting *King Lear*'s and Edgar's prevention of disability-related suicide. Later, Titus implies and enacts the same devaluing message.

This mocking paints Chiron and Demetrius as especially cruel, although they are already certainly villainized by the previous scenes and the rape itself. As "the tiger's young ones" they are dehumanized (2.3.142), and in many modern adaptations the actors for Chiron and Demetrius behave animalistically and even wear animal print and furs[14]. Almost ironically, Chiron had also posited the act of dismembering as "barbarous" at the beginning of the play. When his brother is dismembered in Titus's sacrifice for his dead sons, he exclaims, "Was [n]ever Scythia half so barbarous!" (1.1.134). This parallel seems to complicate the implication of Lavinia as sacrifice, both in this scene and in her murder. As an act of revenge, however, Chiron and Demetrius's rape and mutilation is not framed as sacrifice but as a misappropriation of Roman traditions of sacrifice, especially as Gothic martial opponents. The cultural appropriation here uses Lavinia as a cruel jest toward the Roman Andronici, again using her as proxy for Titus. However, Titus fails to recognize the *mis*appropriation and continues the narrative of sacrifice as a purification for the "stain" on the family and as a veneer for his emotional self-preservation. Therefore, Lavinia's testimony, through the ways in which the Andronici fail to interpret and empathize with it, is unable to maintain control of her own narrative.

When Marcus first finds Lavinia, "that flies away so fast," presumably in shame[15], he asks, "Where is your husband?" (2.4.11, 12) before he recognizes with alarm

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[14] Julie Taymore's 1999 film adaptation, *Titus*, for example, dresses Demetrius (played by Matthew Rhys) in animal print clothing. In Act 5 Scene 2, when disguised as Rape and Murder, Chiron and Demetrius wear animal heads on their headdresses. In Act 2 Scene 3, Rhys licks Lavinia's (Laura Fraser) hand, and he and Chiron (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) rip off her clothing and nuzzle her.

[15] "The shameful blush may represent one of two opposite responses: dismay and confusion at an undeserved accusation, or admission of guilt" (Bevington *Action is Eloquence: Shakespeare's Eloquence of Gesture* 96). Whether or not actually guilty, which the survivor of sexual assault is not, the experience of

that she is physically hurt, and then he frames her losses in context of her social purpose. His recognition of her physical state begins with her hands— the absence of her hands and the physical inability to *do* things is, as a woman, more immediately recognizable than the absence of her voice. "What stern ungentle hands/ hath lopped and hewed and made thy body bare/ Of her two branches, those sweet ornaments/ Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in[?]" (2.4.16-19), he asks. The use of being "bare" without hands suggests a nakedness and vulnerability specific to the uncovered body. In addition, the purpose of her hands and arms as "circling shadows" for "kings" demonstrates that her desirability is physical. Before he knows that she has been sexually assaulted, he already notes an inability to serve as a wife in the traditionally physical sense. It is then, finally, that he realizes that she does not speak but instead "a crimson river of warm blood,/ Like to a bubbling fountain" (2.4.122-23) streams from her mouth. Marcus's narration of what he witnesses details the gore enough to explicitly demonstrate the violence implied on her body, whether or not it is costumed as such[16].

It is also worth noting that voicelessness is a particularly feminized disability, often reflecting the social lack of power women have, especially in *Titus Andronicus* and in context of sexual violence. The lack of her tongue has more social and theoretical implications than of her limbs. Christina Luckyj in "*'A Moving Rhetoricke'*: Women's

guilt and responsibility, as well as "dismay and confusion," often *do* accompany the aftermath of sexual trauma (Chivers-Wilson 114).

[16] Imbracsio indicates that, "Despite the overt deception of stage violence, the Renaissance theatre frequently used bladders of blood and raw animal flesh for theatrical effect in an attempt to entertain and blur the lines between fantasy and realism on the stage." However, "We do not know how the theatrical acts of dismemberment in Titus Andronicus were originally represented on the Renaissance stage or received by its original audiences" (Imbracsio 293). It is thus possible that the audience would have actually seen this "crimson river" on the (male) actor's lips and chin, although it cannot be confirmed. Visually, this would indeed be alarming and disturbing and is often the case in modern productions of the play.

Silences and Renaissance Texts" describes the ways in which feminine silence can be unsettled, especially within the absence of Lavinia's dissevered tongue as "the sign of retreat from rape—the closed mouth—becomes the sign of rape itself; the trope of silence is radically destabilized. [... Lavinia's] silence utterly disrupts the established relation between signifier and signified; here, feminine silence is monstrously *un*chaste[17]" (Luckyj 42-3). Whereas the image of closed lips is nearly yonic and indicative of the prevention of sexual intercourse, Luckyj argues for the subversion of this in that, with the mutilation of the mouth and its subsequent silence, it now represents violation and the "monstrously *un*chaste."

Further, Marcus's monologue establishes the expectation of the "whole" body, which the play often subverts in its deconstruction of parts linguistically and through dismemberment. For example, in "Stage Hands: Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and the Agency of the Disabled Body in Text and Performance," Nicola Imbracsio argues that "In Shakespeare's text, Marcus's language serves to narrate Lavinia's violation and to re-imagine her body's previously whole state, creating a linguistic substitute for Lavinia's missing parts. Drawing upon elegant Ovidian conceits, Marcus's language attempts to replace Lavinia's limbs with figurative language" (Imbracsio 300). The able-bodied discomfort with physical absence and difference both sympathizes and stigmatizes physical disability. The play must reconcile "wholeness" with agency and identity, although practicing a sort of causalgia (phantom-limb pain) by proxy, desiring bodily completion, as is later evident in the use and relief of prosthetics. The able-made-disabled

[17] Recognizing the lack of agency in sexual assault, I would not argue that the forced experience of sexual assault is unchaste in the sense of personal virtues and priorities. Nor do I make any statement regarding the social value of chastity except where it is context for the perception of other characters.

narrative of both *King Lear* and *Titus Andronicus* forces the view of disability into a frame of "loss" and "absence" rather than bodily difference, as both cases demonstrate transition between the able-bodied and disabled experience and visual absence of body parts[18].

Marcus reflects discomfort at the deconstruction and absences of her body in listing its parts with their respective purposes, as he sees them. "He hath cut those pretty fingers off,/ That could have better sewed than Philomel" and "O, had the monster seen those lily hands/ tremble like aspen leaves upon a lute,/ and make the silken strings delight to kiss them,/ He would not have then touched them for his life" (2.4.44-47) each frame the value of these body parts by their function and capability of *doing* rather than *being*. He suggests that a rapist would not have cut off her hands had he known what they were capable of, or "had he heard the heavenly harmony/ Which that sweet tongue hath made,/ He would have dropped his knife and fell asleep" (2.4.48-50), as if her rape and dismemberment were preventable by performing for her rapists. In addition, he reaffirms the deconstruction of her body in later comparing the Roman body politic to the physically dismembered body, "O let me teach you how to knit again/This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf,/ These broken limbs again into one body" (5.3.69–70) as though he, as a political advisor, is capable of "teach[ing]" her how to heal from the trauma of rape.

The final part of the monologue diverges its focus from Lavinia to then empathize with Titus, instead, "Come, let us go and make thy father blind,/ For such a sight will

[18] "In Shakespeare's text, the handless bodies of Titus and Lavinia refuse to be incorporated into the symbolic discourse of wholeness, rather they actively refute such a possibility and assert an alternative agency to that of the intact body" (Imbracsio 298).

blind a father's eye. One hour's storm will drown the fragrant meads;/ What will whole months of tears thy father's eyes?" (2.4.52-55). Occasionally, Lavinia's family will reference her grief and pain, but it is henceforth that they primarily witness the tragedy through their own suffering, as if it is *they* who had experienced the assault. Titus, too, will frame Lavinia's rape and dismemberment with his own grief. Marcus ends his monologue with "Do not draw back, for we will mourn with thee./ O, could our mourning ease thy misery!" (2.4.56-57), which *does* indicate direct empathy and recognition of her suffering, as well as of their inability to relieve her. However, aside from the impending revenge on her behalf, the Andronici fail to consider helping her in any way. When Gloucester is blinded in *King Lear*, he is assisted in walking and with medical attention (Quartos), but Lavinia is left to her silent presence as motivation for revenge and personal grief.

This revenge, however, both requires and does not require her testimony. Marcus, for example, clearly identifies (and then 'forgets') rape on her body in his monologue, declaring, "But sure some Tereus hath deflowered thee" (2.4.26) and likening her to Philomel(a). "Deflowered" specifically implies the ravishment of a maiden, therefore failing to recognize the consummation of her marriage to Bassianus, although Marcus had just previously referred to him as her "husband" (2.4.12). However, when he brings her to Titus in Act 3 Scene 1, he only remarks upon the dismemberment of her hands and tongue, and the family responds in kind[19]. However, it is not until Act 4 Scene 1, when Lavinia attempts to testify through *Metamorphoses* that rape is again verbalized.

[19] Likewise, at the conclusion of the scene, Lucius soliloquizes that they shall make Saturnine and Tamora "beg at the gates like Tarquin and his queen" (3.1.304) but not necessarily in revenge for rape, although Tarquin had raped Lucretia.

Despite her dismemberment, Lavinia, like Philomel, is able to 'testify' in a different way than is traditional. The purpose of testimony, in general, and in this text is not simply to recount the rape but to recount it to another person for the sake of being heard for a purpose. In Lavinia's case, her testimony is required both because her family has attempted and failed to name her assault and because justice requires a perpetrator. The Andronici can do nothing but grieve, otherwise. Although her testimony is often misread and not correctly interpreted for several acts of the play, the men of her family still require her to name rape and her attackers in order for them to enact revenge[20]. According to Helms, Lavinia's testimony "maps both the residual and emergent ideas of rape" (Helms 557) onto the woman's voice[21]. It is unique that the men require her to 'name rape,' but her body in its dismembered and bloodied form serves as the most acceptable testimony.

Legally speaking, Lavinia is the 'convenient' rape victim. There are no questions of consent or difference in testimony as Lavinia is not required to give testimony beyond names and because her body tells her lack of consent. Thus, "dismemberment provides the evidence required to distinguish rape from *raptus*" (Helms 557), to distinguish her sexual assault from Bassianus's 'abduction.' Her family's response to each of these scenarios are vastly different. Titus responds to his son Mutius's defiance and Bassianus's "abduction" with anger but clearly considers Lavinia's dismemberment and "*stuprum*" with much more grief.

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[20] Emily Detmer-Goebel, in "The Need for Lavinia's Voice: *Titus Andronicus* and the Telling of Rape" argues that the necessity of Lavinia's own testimony suggests female empowerment. However, her death (or, more accurately, her murder) seems to suggest otherwise.

[21] Specifically, sixteenth-century England had begun to consider the definitions of rape as an act of violence rather than a crime of property. "Since the new laws acknowledge a woman's consent without validating her testimony, they escalate the violence of sexual crime. Injuries become the only admissible evidence of denial" (Helms 557).

Although her (entirely male) family responds to her assault with horror, anger, and empathy, their grief is ascribed primarily to an assault on the masculine family body and to their own respective losses. As Katherine Rowe notes, in her article "Dismembering and Forgetting in *Titus Andronicus,*" Lavinia "represents to her family nothing more than their own experience[...] Thus, while these tears appear to signify empathy and shared experience, they in fact become the material for understanding her loss only as a reflection" (Rowe 295). Lavinia lacks access to empathy because what is offered to her is, instead, sympathy and because her family "witnesses" through their own lens without attempting to understand hers. This is also why they fail to interpret her testimony correctly, both verbally and nonverbally[22]. For example, Marcus verbally but not cognitively correctly identifies Lavinia's rape through *the Rape of Lucrece* and *Metamorphoses*.

In one particular moment with her family, in Act 3 Scene 1, Lucius reprimands Titus, "Sweet father, cease your tears, for at your grief/ See how my wretched sister sobs and weeps" (3.1.138-139). Titus exacerbates Lavinia's actual trauma with his appropriation of her grief. In addition, Lucius is also mistranslating her grief; rather than believing that she could be experiencing emotion, dismay, and/or physical pain at her rape and dismemberment, Lucius proposes that she is grieving on behalf of her father, furthering the narrative of the father's ownership of the daughter's body and trauma. Because the Andronici identify her assault as an assault on the masculine Roman 'body

[22] In *Shakespeare and the Medieval World,* Helen Cooper notes the ways in which other characters in a way prosthetize her silence in their discomfort, as "her silence is filled by the laments of the other characters, not left to speak for itself " (Cooper 66). Rather than let her grieve or grieve in solidarity with her, in her way, they appropriate it for their own purposes.

politic[23],' they cannot identify rape as an actual, rather than intertextual and figurative, possibility.

Like Marcus, Titus first attempts to 'read' Lavinia as a text, imposing his own interpretation through the lens of his own experience of disability. As a result, he too fails to identify rape because he focuses primarily on *his* experience rather than hers. When Marcus first brings Lavinia to Titus, they refer to her in all ways but her name. Marcus introduces Lavinia as something that has happened to Titus and not as her own person, "I bring consuming sorrow to thine age" (3.1.62). She is first "consuming sorrow." Titus responds "Let me see it, then" (3.1.63). Titus, not immediately recognizing that Marcus means Lavinia, refers to her as "it" dehumanizing her into a pronoun for consuming sorrow. "This was thy daughter" (3.1. 64), he says, next, referring to her in the past tense, as though she is no longer his daughter because of the assault. Titus, however, brings her back into the present tense, "Why, Marcus, so she is" (3.1. 65). Lucius, her brother, then exclaims, "Ay me, this object kills me!" (3.1.66), framing his response around his own grief and experience of witness, and Lavinia has now become "this object" of sorrow.

Titus's next monologue exclaims, "Give me a sword. I'll chop off my hands too" (3.1.74), appropriating her experience to his own political grievances before he even actually becomes disabled. Again, he exclaims, "he that wounded her/ Hath hurt me more than had he killed me dead" (3.1.93-94) as though the assault was intended to hurt him and not her; although the audience knows that the assault *is* in revenge against Titus, he

[23] (Lamb "Physical Trauma and (Adapt)Ability in *Titus Andronicus*" 47). Lennard J. Davis in his introduction to *The Disability Studies Reader* writes that "The emphasis on nation and national fitness obviously plays into the metaphor of the body. If individual citizens are not fit, if they do not fit into the nation, then the national body will not be fit. Of course, such arguments are based on a false idea of the body politic— by that notion a hunchbacked citizenry would make a hunchbacked nation" (Davis "Introduction" *Disability Studies Reader* 6).

assumes it is so without any evidence that her assault has anything to do with him. Lucius is the only one who (briefly) rebukes Titus for exacerbating her grief, "Sweet father, cease your tears, for at your grief/ See how my wretched sister sobs and weeps" (3.1.138-139), and attempts to assist her by wiping her cheeks when she cannot.

Titus reacts out of like-identification and empathy before and via disabled solidarity, but, as a result of framing her experience with his non-intersectional experience of violence, he is unable to appropriately respond. Titus is overly confident about being able to translate for her and thus becomes an unreliable narrator. Before he himself becomes disabled, he declares "Mark, Marcus, Mark. I understand her signs./ Had she a tongue to speak, no would she say/ That to her brother which I said to thee" (3.1.145-147). He assumes that her words would match his own. Titus is not only misinterpreting her signs and appropriating her trauma but is also appropriating *her* as prosthetic for his grief and political goals. Because it is clear that she has been raped, the validity of Titus's narration and translation becomes unreliable.

When Aaron requests on Saturninus's behalf that one of them send a hand in order to save Titus's sons, Titus cuts off his hand. However, once he is disabled, he continues to fail to successfully interpret her. Titus frames his disabling as a 'loss of hand' rather than another person's removal of it, partially because he chooses to lose it (although, it is under duress) on behalf of his family. Lavinia does not have the same choice. He attempts to identify his own sacrificial experience with hers, and this ultimately leads to her death.

By practicing 'empathy' through their own grief and understanding of the assault on the masculine family body, and not genuine empathy for *Lavinia* who has *experienced*

rape, they have no lens through which to understand her testimony and thus fail to accommodate her. The Andronici struggle to abandon the body politic view for a more accurate understanding of what has happened. In both Lavinia's dismemberment and Titus's willing sacrifice of his hand, the family begins, as a whole, to seem to adapt to disability. However, they never clearly resolve the problem of rape, either of Lavinia's body or of the Andronici body politic. Although none of the characters ever actually *ask her* what happened to her without their questions being rhetorical, she *does* attempt to communicate through the movement of arms (which Titus fails to interpret), flipping through *Metamorphoses*, and eventually by successfully using Marcus's idea of writing with her mouth. In finally and successfully labeling her rapists, she shifts the narrative to one of revenge rather than comfort, and what follows, although she participates, ultimately has nothing to do with her.

Lindsey Row-Heyveld in "Antic Dispositions: Mental and Intellectual Disabilities in Early Modern Revenge Tragedy" argues that "The disguise of disability, then, is often how avengers finally establish the proof of guilt that frees them to become vigilantes, even as it resonates with the epistemological uncertainty central to revenge tragedies" (Row-Heyveld 77). As a fictionalized history play framed as a tragedy[24], as well as its "eye-for-an-eye" mentality, the play's ultimate purpose is to enact a 'final' revenge, and the murder and cannibalization of Demetrius and Chiron sparks the final scene of violence and death.

After Lavinia's rape, her agency, though it previously *is* limited, drastically

[24] Although *Titus Andronicus* is written well before Shakespeare's major tragedies, during his Comedies and English Histories, its placement in the tragic genre is self-evident (McDonald 80). The violence of this text is so pervasive that its protagonist, for whom the play is named, straddles the line between protagonist and antagonist.

changes. Whereas disability is defined in the Medical Model as a lack of function, and in the Social Model as a lack of access, Lavinia's 'loss' of chastity is now a social lack of sexual or marital function. This is particularly highlighted by Marcus's initial response to her dismemberment. He first notes her as now unable to "[encircle] kings" and *serve* as a wife, daughter, and mother (2.4.19). Amanda Flather investigates gendered spaces of labor in "Space, Place, and Gender: The Sexual and Spatial Division of Labor in the Early Modern Household" in considering that the boundaries between labors and spaces was often "blurred" (350) by contexts of class and age; it was not uncommon for older or poorer men to engage in domestic labor, although it was often the primary responsibility of women. Women engaged in domestic labor both within the home and in traveling to town markets to barter, depending on the time and space they had access to if other work needed to be done in the house; in times of need, women helped in the fields of the family farm or participated in textile labor. Wealthier women with servants performed less household labor and thus their primary "labor" was reproductive.

Titus Andronicus, however, portrays little domestic labor. Titus and Lucius's wives are not present[25], and Lavinia has no children. Her nephew, Lucius's son, is not implied to be under her responsibility for child-rearing. In Act 4 Scene 1, Young Lucius runs in exclaiming, "Help, grandsire, help! my aunt Lavinia/ Follows me everywhere, I know not why" (4.1.1-2), suggesting that it was not typical for them to spend a lot of time together. It is later suggested that Titus, rather, assisted in child-rearing— "thy grandsire loved thee well:/ Many a time he danced thee on his knee,/ Sung thee asleep, his loving breast thy pillow" (5.3.163-5). Similarly, in Act 5 Scene 3, it is Titus, and not Lavinia,

[25] except that Lucius's wife, "for the love of her that's gone," implying that she is dead, had given Young Lucius Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (4.1.43, 45)

who “play[s] the cook” (5.2.209) and who prepares Demetrius and Chiron’s bodies in pie. In Act 3 Scene 2, the Andronici family enter to sit at “banquet,” which has already been prepared, perhaps by servants, as there are references to “attendants.” However, the only explicit presentation of feminine, domestic labor (aside from that which is verbalized in response to Lavinia) is the nurse and attendants who carry Tamora and Aaron’s baby in the final scenes. If Lavinia performed limited labor, because of the use of servants, it is still left to her to reproduce and rear her own children. As a widow who has been raped, this is no longer an option, either. Her inability to ‘contribute’ becomes a problem which the play must ‘solve.’

Domestic labor provides a challenge to both Marxist ideas and capitalism; when it does not produce or retain monetary value, is often undervalued as a form of labor, cannot easily be quantified, and is yet a necessary and essential form of work, how is ‘contribution’ measured and evaluated? This is especially true of “affective labor” so present in both elective labors and domestic labors like child-rearing. In “Unstable Feminisms: A New Marxian Class Analysis of Domestic Labor,” Drucilla Barker discusses how “Affective labor—that part of domestic labor which produces feelings and emotions as well as social networks and forms of community—is an alternative to the processes of capitalist valorization, and therein lies its potential to resist capitalist social relations” (Barker 432). However, when Marxist criticism is constructed only to understand class relations and not also gender relations, it fails to appropriately reflect and ‘solve’ female subordination within the household.

Friedrich Engels attempted to address this in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, arguing that historical communism was most present in

matrilineal societies as "matriarchal communist institutions" (Engels 169). In some ways, early modern feminine communities practiced this, as Flather writes that, while "childcare was also a female responsibility, [...] for many it was also a shared one. In villages and small towns the local community was an indispensable aid in bringing up children," but this type of community and shared labor was not accessible to rural women (Flather 349). As Lavinia does not have access to matrilineal communism, being the only woman in her family and community, generally, she maintains the responsibility to uphold these duties without support or recognition. In a way, Titus's performance of domestic labor substitutes this lack, but bearing children ('chastely') is the one duty he prioritizes without being able to substitute.

Because women had little other social and economic functions but domestic labor, she is restricted socially both by her physical disability and by her rape. Physically, Lavinia is disabled, but it becomes clear that her physical disabilities can be assisted with prosthetics. However, and more importantly, she cannot prosthetize her reproductive and wifely 'duties' because of her sexual assault. The latter, her sexualized and feminized functions, is more significant to her role in society.

Wherein *King Lear* emphasizes the "unaccommodated man" and the disabled need for assistance, *Titus Andronicus* allows for both Titus and Lavinia to participate in the revenge plot because of prosthetics. Imbracsio argues that Shakespeare's text figures the disabled body as "capable of violent retribution" rather than "in need of assistance" (Imbracsio 292). Titus and Lavinia do utilize assistance, but differences in their individual agencies and participation are stark. Imbracsio further presents the narrative of the revenge plot as accessible to characters of varying abilities, arguing that it empowers

disabled characters by positioning them as able to commit revenge. However, Titus's own interpretation of this changes with his own disabling.

When Titus, initially abled-bodied, is first made aware of his daughter's condition, he proclaims "Let us that have our tongues / Plot some device of further misery / To make us wondered at in time to come" (3.1.135-7), effectively excluding Lavinia, the only one of the group who is, literally, without a tongue. However, when Titus has been duped and loses his own hand, he begins to plot revenge once more and includes Lavinia by employing her to take up his dismembered hand. He is only willing to include her when he, also, has experienced disability.

In one interpretation, Lavinia taking Titus's hand between her teeth and later holding the bowl to collect Demetrius and Chiron's blood frame her as an active part of the revenge plot. Rowe argues that, "Taking up the dead hand as a supplement to her lost tongue, she exemplifies the conversion of a figure of dismemberment into a figure of agency demonstrated by the emblematic tradition[…]" (Rowe 300). However, this also highlights the abled desire for prosthesis, which, according to Imbracsio, " highlight the ways in which we have produced a cultural fantasy of the body as 'whole'[...] The 'body as a whole' is a fantasy—and yet it is a culturally potent one as we still invest in the dominant idea that prosthetics are something that 'fix,' or render useable, a 'deficient' or 'deviant' body, making it whole" (Imbracsio 299). Although the choice to replace Lavinia and Titus's hands with objects or prosthetics is dependent on staging, the taking of Titus's hand between her teeth replaces her tongue, and her later taking of Marcus's staff into her mouth to transcribe her rape prosthetizes her testimony. Whereas prosthetics function in *King Lear* to reassure discomfort in dissonance of absence, Lavinia's

prosthetics *actually* assist function and give her a tool with which to communicate.

In her critique of the ways in which the 'prosthesis trope' is both enabling and harmful in theory and other writings, "The Prosthetic Imagination: Enabling and Disabling the Prosthesis Trope," especially in referring to disabled bodies as subsisting of prosthetic parts, Sarah Jain writes, "Indeed, these absences assert the body's disability—its inability to function within its personal and political regimes of expectations" (Jain 42). While Jain thoroughly engages and responds to the ways in which prosthetics are utilized in theoretical and capitalist discussions, she also acknowledges the lived reality of disability, as is my primary purpose in this thesis. While the able-bodied "observer[26]" imagines the theoretical constructions of 'self' as prosthetized and complicated by prosthetics, the disabled person utilizes the prosthetic as an adaptive, not metaphorical, tool to assist function in a society that requires it. "Replacements are never neat and tidy; they do not simply reiterate the very same body that was before" (Jain 50), just as Gloucester is not assisted in any way by wearing glass eyes, but a still traumatized Lavinia is able to successfully communicate her testimony through prosthetizing Marcus's staff, which she only needs to do because her family cannot interpret her communications otherwise.

Although the absence of stage directions in particular moments of the play leave questions to ponder, *Titus Andronicus* has an abundance of directions not present in Shakespeare's other works. Both the Quarto (Q1, 1594) and Folio (F1, 1623) editions

[26] "For the sake of this argument, I define physical disability as a disruption in the sensory field of the observer. Disability, in this sense, is located in the observer, not the observed, and is therefore more about the viewer than about the person using a cane or a wheelchair. The term *disability* is a categorization tied to the development of discourses that aim to cure, remediate, or catalog variations in bodies. Thus, disability is part of a continuum that includes differences in gender, as well as bodily features indicative of race, sexual preference, and even of class" (Davis, "Dr. Johnson, Amelia, and the Discourse of Disability" 56).

begin Act 4 Scene 1 with "*Enter* L*ucius sonne and* L*auinia running after him*, *and the Boy flies from her with his Bookes vnder his Arme*" as Lucius "know[s] not why"(4.1.2) she chases after him, although it eventually becomes clear that she seeks his copy of *Metamorphoses*. Marcus and Titus spend the next several lines comforting Young Lucius, telling "do not fear thine aunt" (4.1.5). Marcus asks in the eighth line "what means my niece Lavinia by these signs?" but it is not for another 23 lines that Titus asks and answers, "Some book there is that she desires to see" (4.1.31), but still fails to recognize that she intends the book for another purpose. After recognizing the "tragic tale of Philomel," *finally* they ask her what had happened to her, "Lavinia, wert thou thus surprised, sweet girl,/ Ravished and wronged as Philomela was,/ Forced in the ruthless, vast, and gloomy woods/ [...] by nature made for murders and for rapes[?]" (4.1.53-55, 59).

The stage directions (Q1 and F1) then indicate, after Marcus suggests that she write in the ground, that "Shee takes the staffe in her mouth, and guides it with her stumps and writes." It is interesting that her amputated hands are referred to as "stumps," much in line with Marcus's arboreal language when he first finds her, noting the absence of "her two branches," (2.4.17), and Aaron's later confession that Lavinia had been "washed, cut, and trimmed" by his instruction (5.1.96). Lavinia writes her final words, "Stuprum. Chiron, Demetrius" (4.1.79)[27]. Lavinia, at this moment, both attempts to rectify her injustice with testimony and reminds her observers, even unintentionally, that it is she who is suffering.

[27] Kim Solga, in "Rape's Metatheatrical Return: Rehearsing Sexual Violence Among the Early Moderns" delineates this scene in that "It is a performance of writing, an active, painful, full-body gesture that rehearses Lavinia's violation, not by way of any well-worn convention, but by crudely miming the awkward, struggling contortions and oral invasiveness of forced sexual encounter" (Solga 64).

Marcus calls on the family, including Lavinia by name, to kneel as they swear to enact revenge (4.1.84-89). Titus reaffirms Lavinia's testimony by re-inscribing it in a "leaf of brass" so that it, like sand, will not "blow[...] abroad" (4.1.103, 106). While it is affirming and validating of her testimony, her testimony is rendered successfully only because it has been interpreted appropriately and because it is now in Titus's inscription and not only hers. She provides the words, but Titus now is the witness. Lavinia is called on to follow them, but she is not given specific instruction as the others are. Her role in the revenge is now only to serve Titus, and she is absent from the next few scenes.

When Lavinia next appears, it is, according to the stage directions (Q1 and F1), "*with a* B*ason*" in Act 5 Scene 2, when Titus has had Chiron and Demetrius bound. He addresses them, with their mouths, like Lavinia's, "stop[ped]" (5.2.170). He lists off their offenses, including the dismembering of "both her sweet hands, her tongue, and that more dear/ Than hands or tongue, her spotless chastity" (5.2.179-180). Her chastity, here, is listed as a limb removed, "constrained and forced" (5.2.181), "stained with mud" (5.2.174). Her tongue is prosthetized through her adaptation to writing with her mouth, and her hands substituted by the ability to "'tween her stumps [...] hold/ The basin that receives [their] guilty blood" (5.2.186-187). In a way, this prosthetic serves to accommodate her so that she may participate in the revenge plot and demonstrate before her rapists that she can.

However, Titus in this scene frames her only as passive, undermining the purpose of having her there. He declares with an active voice, "I will grind your bones to dust," "I'll make a paste," " a coffin I will rear" (5.2.190-192). However, he only commands her as a passive subject, "Lavinia, come,/ Receive the blood" (5.6.200-1). Lavinia is, in small

ways, accommodated, but she is still not quite an active subject in the family's aims, evident in this scene. In "Amputation, Phantom Limbs, and Spectral Agency in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and Normand Chaurette's *Les Reines*," Shawn Huffman writes, "Lavinia's capacity to act is restricted to the identification of her assailants, while her father develops the capacity to strike down his victims" (Huffman 73). Her limbs and her tongue are 'replaceable' by prosthetics by simply functioning differently, but her chastity, according to her family, is not. In this sense, she regains physical power by adapting and attaining a sense of justice in participating in the revenge but remains 'disabled' by her rape as a social 'problem' that must be eliminated.

Although I attribute their dismemberment[28] more to the mentality of the law of retaliation ("eye for an eye"), the political context of the Andronici-Goth conflict certainly adds a dehumanization effect to this revenge, comparable to the staging traditions of these two characters as previously demonstrated. "Look," Titus boasts to Lavinia, "Thy foes are bound" (5.2.169) and therefore should Lavinia's grievance be alleviated. As Titus has previously failed to recognize her sexual assault, he now fails to recognize the remainder of her trauma, even when revenge has been enacted. He prioritizes his own 'trauma' of witnessing, however, which he identifies as not resolved by this murder but by Lavinia's.

In the final scene of the play, Lavinia follows Titus onstage "*with a vaile ouer her*

[28] It is also interesting that, in response to Demetrius and Chiron dismembering Lavinia and indirectly leading to Titus's dismemberment, Titus dismembers them linguistically, in this speech and in previous references to Lavinia's unknown rapist. "When [Titus] taunts the guilty Goth brothers, Chiron and Demetrius, before he dismembers them," writes Christiansen, "he reduces them to their 'guilty blood' and 'shameful heads,' their mouths, their throats, their bones" (Christiansen 359). Titus maintains the "eye for an eye" quite literally, dismembering them as they have Lavinia, Titus, and the Andronici family.

face[29]." She does nothing nor makes any sound. "Her silent presence onstage in so many scenes shows Shakespeare making the most of the violence done to her, as she emblematizes the way Rome, as Titus says, has become 'a wilderness of tigers' (3.1.54)" (Foakes 55). However, Lavinia is more than emblematic of the nation, she is emblematic also of the failures of interpretation, prosthetization, and gender constructions in this social context.

Lavinia's death is framed by the complement of a narrative of rape and a narrative of sacrifice *because* Titus has framed his own disability in such a way[30]. Titus in Act 3 Scene 2 explains to her how best to "against thy heart make thou a hole" in order to die. Solga interprets this less as a lecture on performing suicide but instead that "he is trying to teach her how she might, despite her limitations, play Lucrece instead of Philomela and bring her performance of the ravished heroine to its inevitable conclusion" (Solga 66). Because she can no longer marry nor serve any household functions, Titus therefore can reconcile only one possibility for Lavinia—like Philomela, she must transform, and like Lucrece, she must commit suicide.

Sacrifice here follows a natural "passage" to which this end is unavoidable; "that Titus and Lavinia do not ultimately survive after the deaths of their enemies indicates the success, not the failure, of their abilities as tragic revengers, and their efforts ensure that Rome's temporarily shattered body continues on where Titus and Lavinia's bodies have left off" (Lamb 54). Lamb attributes their deaths in conjunction with one another as positive and representative of self-sacrifice for politics, ignoring that Lavinia's death is

[29] There is no stage direction nor dialogue to unveil Lavinia, but some productions have her unveil herself or Titus unveil her before her murder. In some, her face is revealed afterward.

[30] However, scholars debate whether her death serves as testimony, sacrifice, suicide, or needless violence.

not suicide nor *self*-sacrifice, although staging heavily changes interpretations such as these[31].

Though Lavinia finds a way to communicate without her tongue and a way to gesticulate and hold items without her hands, she is unable to recover her 'virginal status' and become 'whole' (as Lamb considers the missing body parts in conjunction with the entire body). In both sexual/gender theory and disability theories, of course, this is problematic in our conceptions of wholeness, virginity, and social worth as defined by the body's traumas. The assurance that Rome will be restored under proper leadership is not reflected in Lavinia's slaughter, and the end of the play is dubious at best, only vaguely implying that Lucius may take command.

Considering, instead, Lavinia's rape through the various Models of Disability, the inability of her chastity to be prosthetized and 'made whole' is irredeemable. "That Titus has reduced Lavinia's chastity to the material and considers it a part of her can be seen from the way he lists her virtue among the body parts she has lost: 'Both her sweet hands, her tongue, and that more dear/ Than hands or tongue, her spotless chastity' (V.ii.175-76)" (Christiansen 360). The men throughout the play refer to her as "ravished," "deflowered," "trimmed," "stained with mud" and "stained" (2.4.2, 26, 5.1.94, 5.2.173, 5.3.38). The loss of her hands and tongue she adapts to, but her chastity is no longer "spotless." In context of the prosthesis trope, "that might in some measure account for the technological extension of bodies can also take into account the variety of bodies and the

[31] In some productions, Lavinia offers herself up by tilting her head to expose her neck to Titus's blade; in some, she is surprised. According to Lamb, Lavinia's death was not necessary except that the "death of the revenger" is required by the genre (Lamb 53-54). Thus, her death does attribute to her power as a revenger, but the motive for her death is still lacking. She exists, then, just as a motivator for revenge but serves no other purpose once revenge has been served.

social construction of abilities. Certain bodies–raced, aged, gendered, classed–are often already dubbed as not fully whole" (Jain 32). As the only woman of the Andronici, Lavinia is "already dubbed as not fully whole," but as a raped and disabled widow, she is now prevented from performing even the feminized duties of which she is expected.

In Act 5, Scene 3, wherein Lavinia (and many others) dies, Titus first asks Saturninus whether Lavinia should die under the guise of referencing another text. He asks whether Virginius was right in "[slaying] his daughter with his own right hand/ Because she was enforced, stained, and deflowered?" (5.3.36-38). Saturninus then provides the logic by which Titus slaughters Lavinia, not for Rome nor her own sake, but for himself, "The girl should not survive her shame,/ And by her presence still renew [her father's] sorrows" (5.3.41-2). As in Titus's response to her dismemberment, his primary grievance is that *he* is now sorrowful and grieving, rather than that Lavinia is in immense physical and emotional pain with an (at first) uncertain future.

In addition to appropriating her grief, Titus recognizes the potential for his actions to be 'misinterpreted,' and so he, by discussing mythical narratives of rape with Saturninus, establishes legal precedent through which to protect himself. In responding that "The girl should not survive her shame," Saturninus has unknowingly consented, as emperor, to Titus's murder of Lavinia. Further, Titus reaffirms this by directly connecting Saturninus's "reason" with his act. "A reason mighty, strong, and effectual;/ A pattern, precedent, and lively warrant/ For me, most wretched to perform the like" (5.3.43-45). By specifically referring to this conversation as a "pattern, precedent, and lively warrant," Titus frames his act within legal terms.

Although Saturninus responds with shock, "What hast thou done, unnatural and

unkind?"(5.3.48), this quickly changes to "what, was she ravish'd? Tell who did the deed"(5.3.53) when Titus likens himself to Virginius. He does not explicitly acknowledge that Lavinia has been raped but instead continues to appropriate the assault by likening himself to Virginius, further prompting Saturninus to ask if she had been raped. This transition from "unnatural and unkind" to "what, was she ravish'd?" appears to justify her murder in Saturninus's view, as well. However, because he, again, avoids the reality of her rape, Tamora must again ask "why hast thou slain thine only daughter thus?" (5.3.56). Indeed, that is the question.

Lavinia's death is the natural end to her narrative but not because of a Roman sacrifice nor because of the need for a 'completed' testimony. Rather, her death signifies the necessity of accommodation, much like how *King Lear* calls for social responsibility. Titus fails to demonstrate genuine empathy because his grief is centered on his own experience by misappropriating the assault. Though her physical disabilities are redeemable through adaptation and assistance, her sexual assault remains unaccommodated by the lack of empathy. The object of empathy, compassion, and action shifts from Lavinia to Titus, and he, in turn, shifts responsibility for her death from himself to her rapists. Tamora asks him why he has killed Lavinia, and he responds, "Not I; 'twas Chiron and Demetrius./ They ravished her and cut away her tongue, And they, 'twas they, that did her all this wrong" (5.3.57-8). He does identify, here, that they had done "her all this wrong," demonstrating that she *is* the true victim of these circumstances. However, his combining of his murder and their rape of her is disturbingly evasive of his own responsibility.

In the context of physical abilities, Lavinia's sexual assault does not limit her

function in the ways in which her dismemberments or Gloucester's blindness do. However, it is this that leads to her death. As the Social Model of Disabilities considers disabilities through the lens of social access and attitudes towards them, Lavinia's 'lost chastity,' so to speak, is what restricts her social access and limits others' attitudes towards her. Because she can no longer serve as a wife or daughter, because of both her physical disability and her rape, she serves no 'use' to Roman (and, further, early modern English) patriarchal society. Humanity, as Lear demonstrates in his monologues, is too often defined by what individuals can *contribute* rather than as an inherent quality for which the greater society is responsible. To Titus and the rest of the Andronici, Lavinia's contributions end with revenge against Chiron and Demetrius.

Coda

Disability and corporeal difference occupy attempts to define and enforce humanity through the ways in which individuals are, or are not accommodated and included in social communities and processes. For example, Hobgood and Wood demonstrate that "Early modern medical, philosophical, and literary texts rescripted mental and physical differences previously deemed *unnatural* and *monstrous* as *abnormal* or *imperfect* corporeality, and did so to their own norming ends" (Hobgood and Wood, Early Modern Literature and Disability Studies" 34). Although language and narrative in these plays *certainly* call into question what is "natural" and what is "monstrous," Hobgood and Wood trace the transition into forming a hegemony of corporeality; what bodies and shapes are 'better' and more 'typical' than others? Renaissance art of the period emphasizes specific early Greek ideals of the body and mind, and fitness as it pertains to masculinity is apparent in these plays. However, these texts also straddle the transition into this line of thought in their distant settings, reminiscent of medieval preoccupation with the religious, demonologic, and monstrous causes of bodily difference. These contexts meet on the early modern stage which performs the 'ancient' of medieval England and ancient Rome.

Gloucester, though he becomes physically disabled by his loss of sight, retains his primary advisory function for Lear and hypothetically benefits from Lear and Edgar's newfound responsibility for and humanization of the "unaccommodated" of the kingdom. Although he, like Lavinia, loses his life, it is rarely attributed to his disability but instead is a tragic response to the emotional trauma of Edmund's interpersonal betrayal and simultaneous joy at the discovery of Poor Tom's true identity as his son, Edgar. *King*

Lear establishes disability as social rather than simply physical while making accommodation both normative and essential to social processes and humanization. *Titus Andronicus* also highlights 'deficit' functions both physically *and* socially, ultimately to greater consequence. The Andronici family accommodate Lavinia's physical disabilities only to the extent of accomplishing the family's wider goals, favoring appropriation of her grief for their own rather than demonstrating the empathy that is clear in *King Lear*. Lavinia's sexual assault and her testimony similarly contribute to the family's political goals but depreciate once those goals have been accomplished, and rather than her death demonstrating tragedy, as in the case of Gloucester's death, it fits a narrative end as a source of "sorrows" that must be eliminated.

Historical context demonstrates a growing concern and accommodation for the disabled poor, although not quite as radical as Lear envisions, yet Shakespeare reflects early modern rape laws in Lavinia's objectification as her family's 'property,' source of "shame," and prosthetic tool for their political gains. Both accommodations of disability and sexual trauma had, and continue to have, many centuries to further develop, but certainly a disparity between concern for the two is evident in early modern law and dramatic literature.

In addition to literary analysis of these stories within their genres and narrative settings, we can further examine the implications of disability representation through the role of the early modern audience as "witnesses" to these stories and the ways in which Shakespeare's authorial role engages with these early modern understandings of disability, labor, and sexual violence. Although this is not the traditional manner of reader-response criticism, as these texts were written for the stage and not for reading, the

"reader" I would attempt to understand is the early modern audience. While there is no way to know exactly how most of his audiences would interpret his depiction of disabilities, we know that his plays were popular, written for a particular and diverse audience, and used few visual effects. Understanding early modern stagings and viewings of these performances, such as the lack of sets for a "cliff" in *King Lear*, Act 4 Scene 6[1] or makeup effects that show Lavinia's dismemberment and as "ravished[2]," sets precedent on the textual information and historical context of performance to ascertain what the implications of these representations may have been. The act of "witnessing" becomes essential both within the texts of these plays and the act of watching them performed, as well as the ways in which certain characters and narratives become empathizable.

Each character in these texts engage with the *act* of witnessing, both in terms of watching and experiencing and of testifying their experience to others. These witnesses are primarily of violence, be it eye-gouging and torture or sexual assault and dismemberment. Gloucester and Lavinia's bodies display the violence done to them within their disabilities; but it appears to be, in both cases, senseless violence and disempowerment. Gloucester witnesses to the pain of his torture in the tone of brevity of his speech. Before his torture, he is arrogant and oblivious. After it, however, he is weary and ages before the audience. Lavinia literally testifies to her assault, attempting to convey what had happened to her, although it takes many tries for her family to

[1] There is no cliff in this scene, but a blind Gloucester is duped to believe that there is. If it was typical to not have a set on stage, the audience, like Gloucester, rely on Tom o'Bedlam's duplicitous descriptions of the setting and are led to empathize with the experience of blindness.

[2] This means that the early modern player may have performed Lavinia with a limp, specific body movements and gesticulation, or particular sounds like groans to demonstrate physical pain. Further, early modern and modern productions vary in costuming choices like aesthetic portrayals rather than as grotesque and bloody. Each of these performance choices have particular implications for audience perceptions.

successfully interpret it. They both witness and testify, but witnessing becomes most prevalent in the role of the audience.

Monica Prendergast writes of the early modern audience as aware of being "inscribed as *witnesses* to theatre rituals and storytelling that everyone understood to be a part of a sociocultural (even political and/or religious) practice, not simply an evening's diverting entertainment to be consumed then forgotten" (Prendergast 95). Therefore, in a moment of inaction and horror in the audience, they nevertheless play an "*integral*, not *accidental*" (Prendergast 95) role of *knowing* these events and carrying them into the following narratives. Gloucester's blinding, for example, is accompanied by the neighboring spectator's gasp, perhaps an outcry, or even cheering at the violence which had become familiar to the early modern stage in the Liberties[3].

The audience is expected to know and consolidate the knowledge not available to characters between changes of time, location, and characters. Prendergast further writes that "*Witnessing* is an act of presence and testimony, of authentication and memory-making, of evidence and seeing." (Prendergast 95). For example, the audience's "witness" of Lavinia's assault, although it is not staged, must be carried from the second act to the fourth act, bearing her frustration at her family's lack of understanding until she is finally able to transcribe her rape into the ground. The Andronicus family is unable to interpret her testimony because they cannot relate to it; although the early modern audience also consists of those who have not experienced assault, they are introduced to it quite explicitly and encouraged to empathize with it.

Therefore, "As readers, we are witnesses precisely to these questions we do not

[3] Theatres were outside the city limits in boroughs called "the Liberties" due to religious and governmental restrictions on certain activities and forms of entertainment (Dustagheer 68)

own and do not yet understand, but which summon and beseech us from within the literary texts" (Felman and Laub xiii). Although I extrapolate the act of witness in reading to the witnessing stage performance, literature and drama both expose the audience to other contexts and ideas that may not necessarily reflect their own experiences. However, the audience is asked and challenged as to legal ownership of Lavinia's marital status and to Lear and Titus's responsibilities as leaders and patriarchs. As in his article, "Bearing Witness and Taking Action: Audiences and Morality in Renaissance Tragedy and Activist Street Theater," Horacio Sierra writes, "[...] Drama that ruptures the symbolic and physical distance between actor and audience can make viewers agents for positive moral change in their lives and those of others" (Sierra 39). Live performance collapses the distance between medieval England, Ancient Rome, and the early modern, and further between the fictional and the real.

The feedback loop of witnessing and responding, or being unable to respond is in "An ideal performance [...] where there is a sense of physical and emotional connection between audience and actor; the shape of this connection seems to mimic the physical shape of the theatre itself" (Lopez 32). During Gloucester's gouging, the audience is forced to witness without being able to act, relating themselves to the servant who attempts to stop the violence at the risk of his own life, as "The unnamed servant refuses to be complicit in atrocity but is ultimately ineffective in its prevention. This parallels the potential position of any member of the theatre audience" (Roberts 38).

Witnessing challenges action, forcing the audience into a space of *in*action and even lack of knowledge. *King Lear*'s audience is as 'blind' to the setting as Gloucester in Act 4 Scene 6, waiting to discover Edgar's duplicity alongside Gloucester, and *Titus*

Andronicus's audience cannot testify on Lavinia's behalf. The act of "watching" and not acting encourages an audience to seek to understand the disabled character's plight and further apply it to the ways in which they view and do or do not accommodate the disabled in their own lives.

Further scholarship in Disability and Early Modern Studies will continue to consider these different Models of interpretation and consider the ways in which social disability is not restricted only to the physical, as well as the implications of disability representation in the early modern period and today on the lived experience and perception of the disabled. While the production and reproduction of these plays on the modern stage both reaffirm and subvert these representations, we continue to be attentive to the ways in which performance may both reflect and influence social understandings and concerns. Further, as we continue to teach, write, and discuss sexual violence and disability, we may also consider the ways in which they can be socially disabling without accommodation and responsive empathy.

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Gold Award, Girl Scouts of the USA, 2014

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Hamilton Education
Teach PSAT Reading and Rhetoric
Evaluate student progress via practice exams and essay writing
Engage students in Young Adult Literature of many genres and time periods

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Wake Forest University Writing Center
Assist students in academic writing
Supervise undergraduate tutors
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Research Intern Dayton, OH May—June, 2017
Dr. Jamie Small, Professor of Sociology
Analyze news media representations of sex trafficking before and after 9/11
Analyze intersection of race and sexual orientation in police sexual brutality
Perform data collection (news articles, etc.) and categorization, brief analysis
Present research

Student Intern Dayton, OH August, 2016—May, 2018
Health and Wellness Promotions, University of Dayton
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Develop programming (tabling, presentations, etc.) and executed programs
Perform data input and analysis

Conference Papers

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Presented at "The Freak and its Discontents: An Interdisciplinary Conference"
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Presented at the Southeastern Renaissance Conference
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