STUDIA UBB PHILOLOGIA, LXX, 1, 2025, p. 199 - 220
(RECOMMENDED CITATION)
DOI:10.24193/subbphilo.2025.1.12

CHASTITY AS SPECTACLE IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *CYMBELINE* AND THOMAS MIDDLETON'S *HENGIST*[1]

Gabriela CHEAPTANARU[2]

Article history: Received 15 December 2024; Revised 26 February 2025; Accepted 06 March 2025; Available online 25 March 2025; Available print 30 April 2025.

ABSTRACT. Chastity as Spectacle in William Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and Thomas Middleton's *Hengist*. This paper is concerned with the depiction of female chastity in Thomas Middleton's *Hengist* and William Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*. It employs Lacanian and Foucauldian perspectives on the concept of the gaze, combining feminist and psychoanalytical approaches in order to illuminate divergent perspectives on chastity, which serve as crucial contrasts between Middleton's and Shakespeare's art. *Hengist*'s Castiza and *Cymbeline*'s Innogen are both portrayed as paragons of chastity, but this moral feature is perceived differently in the two plays. Unbeknownst to her, Castiza becomes the victim of rape by her husband and subsequently faces public judgment for her supposed dishonour. This analysis demonstrates that this represents the jarring effect of politicizing chastity in the play, of stripping it of its moral valences and instead transforming it into a social currency. The main assumption is that chastity becomes a panoptical spectacle in *Hengist*, due to the male gaze by which women are kept under societal control. Conversely, although Innogen also experiences the intrusive gaze of Iachimo, her virtue empowers her to confront her wrongdoer by assuming a male disguise. The analysis identifies a

[1] An earlier version of this article was part of the author's MA dissertation. In an earlier format, the research undertaken in this article was presented at the National Student Colloquium "Teorii şi practici emergente în studiile literare şi lingvistice" (25-26 April 2024, Faculty of Letters, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca).

[2] **Gabriela CHEAPTANARU** is a PhD student at the Faculty of Letters of "Babeş-Bolyai" University (Cluj-Napoca). Her research centres on Renaissance Drama, Shakespeare Studies and Early Modern English Studies. She is interested in the relationship between Shakespeare and other playwrights of the age, particularly Thomas Middleton. She has presented papers on Shakespeare and Middleton at student conferences organised by the West University of Timişoara, the University of Bucharest, "Babeş-Bolyai" University and the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Jassy. e-mail: cg.gabriela31@gmail.com.

fundamental contrast in the treatment of chastity between the two plays: in *Cymbeline*, it remains a personal conviction impervious to external scrutiny, whereas in *Hengist*, it devolves into a social commodity that diminishes Castiza's ability to retaliate.

Keywords: *agency, chastity, commodification, the gaze, spectacle*

REZUMAT. Castitatea ca spectacol în *Cymbeline* de William Shakespeare şi *Hengist* de Thomas Middleton. Articolul de faţă are în vedere reprezentarea castităţii feminine în *Hengist* de Thomas Middleton şi *Cymbeline* de William Shakespeare. Articolul utilizează perspective lacaniene şi foucauldiene asupra conceptului de privire (*regard)*, combinând abordări feministe şi psihanaliste pentru a pune în lumină perspective divergente asupra castităţii, ce servesc drept contraste cruciale între arta lui Middleton şi cea a lui Shakespeare. Castiza din *Hengist* şi Innogen din *Cymbeline* sunt ambele portretizate ca modele de castitate, dar această trăsătură morală este percepută diferit în cele două piese. Fără ştirea ei, Castiza devine victima violului conjugal şi se confruntă ulterior cu judecata publică a presupusei sale dezonorări. Această analiză demonstrează că o asemenea consecinţă reprezintă efectul zguduitor al politizării castităţii în piesă, al golirii castităţii de orice valenţe morale, transformând-o într-o valută socială. Principala premisă este că, în *Hengist*, castitatea devine un spectacol panoptic, din cauza privirii masculine prin care femeile sunt ţinute sub control. Prin comparaţie, deşi Innogen se confruntă de asemenea cu privirea intruzivă a lui Iachimo, tocmai virtutea îi permite să îşi înfrunte calomniatorul, recurgând la o deghizare masculină. Analiza identifică un contrast fundamental în tratamentul castităţii între cele două piese discutate: în *Cymbeline*, ea rămâne o convingere personală imună la controlul extern, pe când în *Hengist*, castitatea involuează, devenind o comoditate socială ce limitează abilitatea Castizei de a reacţiona.

Cuvinte-cheie: *agentivitate, castitate, comodificare, privire, spectacol*

1. Introduction

A comparative study of Thomas Middleton's *Hengist, King of Kent; Or, the Mayor of Queenborough* and William Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* is bound to raise a number of questions related to their compatibility in terms of genre, style, and overall structure, as this is the first study that attempts such a parallel reading of the texts. *Cymbeline* is often compared to other Shakespearean romances, particularly *Pericles* and *The Tempest* (Papahagi 2023), while *Hengist* has been read as a precursor of Middleton's *Women Beware Women* in terms of style and thematic interests (Bald 1938, xliii). To some, setting a bloody tragedy / history play and a spiritually uplifting romance side by side might appear peculiar and

contradictory. Although genre considerations inevitably shape each play's inner logic and construction, oppositions of genre should not constitute barriers in a comparative endeavour, but pathways to discovery. Both plays are concerned with Britain's heroic past, and with the country's engagement with foreign forces: the Saxons and the Romans respectively. At first glance, little brings these plays together. However, both *Hengist* and *Cymbeline* fictionalise Britain's Celtic past, personal and political unrest, and family relations. There is another element, thematically common, but perceptually different between the two texts, which has much to do with the social and spiritual forces that drive the two plays. *Cymbeline* and *Hengist* can be considered meditations on female chastity, explored in the characters of Innogen and Castiza. The two women go through similar situations of being slandered and falsely accused of promiscuity, but they have vastly different destinies. Innogen's honour is restored and she is reunited with her loved ones, whilst Castiza is abandoned after her seeming dishonour and her innocence is proven only at the end of the play, when all is lost. The contrast between the two can be explained by connecting genre conventions with the construction of female characters. This article proposes that the main difference between the two plays, which determines women's status in *Cymbeline* and *Hengist*, is the playwrights' treatment of female chastity. This paper aims to provide insight into the ways in which Middleton and Shakespeare envision female chastity, and to examine how and why the two perspectives diverge.

This comparative endeavour posits that, in *Hengist*, compared to *Cymbeline*, there is a devolution as far as chastity and female agency are concerned. While at first an expression of women's freedom of thought and action in a world that constricts them, chastity becomes later on associated with the idea of spectacle, of being secretly watched or put on display. The reactions of the two women against this type of control and containment and the social customs presented in each play are essential in deciphering the dramatists' distinctive views of female chastity and honour and of the relationships between men and women. The two plays under scrutiny explore themes of watching and being watched, as seen in *Cymbeline*, and the forced display of female chastity, as exemplified by the chastity test in *Hengist*. These themes connect to the broader issue of the reliability of the senses in representing female subjects. Thus, the aim of this paper is to investigate to what extent the concept of the gaze, in its Lacanian and Foucauldian definitions can be correlated with the predicaments of the two female characters. Between the two dramatists, as this analysis ventures to demonstrate, Shakespeare has a much more open conception of chastity, and a much more critical stance towards the male gaze. By contrast, in Middleton's play there is a moral deprecation when it comes to female virtue, which is largely due to the patriarchal commodification of female honour. Middleton enforces the spectacle

of chastity as a means of attaining the personal ambition of *Hengist*'s villainous protagonist, Vortiger. The loss of honour depicted by the play, which is heavily associated with sight, language, as well as the lack of both, may be read as the fatal imposition of the dominant male gaze on women.

2. Chastity and Control

Before delving into an in-depth analysis of the two plays, this paper attempts to establish a general conceptual framework. Jacques Lacan states that the subject is not conscious of the gaze, that "he operates by remote control" (1981, 115). Lacan correlates the gaze with the superstition of the evil eye, which enforces the idea that the Other disposes with an invisible, unquestionable power over the subject (1981, 115). Thus, the objectified subject of the gaze is not aware of the structures and systems of control presupposed by it (Lacan 1981, 115). This further links Lacan's theory of the gaze to Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish.* Foucault asserts that, for the maintenance of control, "no crime committed must escape the gaze of those whose task it is to dispense justice" (1991, 96). Foucault theorises that the gaze acts as a panopticon, since the ultimate aim of total surveillance is to "make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly" (1991, 173). The gaze is an instrument of power, in which the objectified subject must conform to the desires of the Other at all times (Foucault 1991, 173).

Viewed from a feminist viewpoint, the issue of chastity as a kind of spectacle instituted by the male gaze becomes even more poignant. Laura Mulvey combines psychoanalysis with feminist theory in order to give rise to a new understanding of the male gaze (1989). From her perspective, visual culture that is produced for the male gaze presents the female body as an object of "consumption", created to satisfy the desires of the patriarchal Other (Mulvey 1989, 54). Thus, in the visual arts pervaded by the male gaze, the female body is instituted as a "commodity", a mere image to be consumed, fetishized and objectified by the patriarchy (Mulvey 1989, xii). Under the male gaze, the female subject is deprived of individuality and autonomy, becoming merely an image designed to provide visual pleasure (Mulvey 1989, xii). The woman is thus rendered into a passive image meant to be eroticised, consumed and admired, while the man is the active "bearer of the look" (Mulvey 1975, 11). The "consumption" and objectification of the female body in an androcentric world (Mulvey 1989, 54) acquire converging dimensions in the two plays by Shakespeare and Middleton, which will be shown in the course of the ensuing analysis.

Although the analysis at hand will largely follow these theoretical considerations, this study will be an exercise in what has recently been termed

in literary studies as "weak theory" (Di Leo and Moraru 2023, 13; Stewart 2008, 71-82). According to Kathleen Stewart, weak theory is

> Theory that comes unstuck from its own line of thought to follow the objects it encounters, or becomes undone by its attention to things that don't just add up but take on a life of their own as problems for thought (2008, 72).

In other words, weak theory recognizes that sometimes a theoretical framework which dictates each step of the proposed analysis may not be enough in uncovering the text's innate contradictions, and may at times even limit our understanding of the text (Stewart 2008, 72).

Especially with regards to Renaissance literature, one should be aware that the authors' perceptions of certain aspects related to chastity may not align with the Foucauldian, Lacanian or the feminist approaches undertaken by this paper, or with our contemporary understanding of these issues. It should be stressed, though, that Renaissance thinkers were conscious of certain dynamics related to the representation of the female body, even if they did not have a so-called theory of the gaze. To make up for the gaps between theory and text, it is important to appeal to Renaissance perspectives on the relationship between the eroticised female body and the gaze. In his book *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance*, Ioan P. Couliano emphasizes the fact that, to the Renaissance male observer, the image of the female body "enters[s] the [male] spirit through the eyes" (1987, 21). Thus, the female body becomes an object "converted into [an] obsessing phantasm" (Couliano 1987, 21), fashioned according to male desires. The image of the female body invites seduction, and becomes rooted in the imagination of the male lover (Couliano 1987, 22). The eroticised female body becomes an "object of covetous desire [...] transformed into a subject whence Love emanates, but emanates without being aware of it" (Couliano 1987, 22). Couliano therefore implies a certain degree of passivity with regards to the woman's status in the representation of female body by visual imagination of the "faithful lover" (1987, 22). Thus, the filtering of the female body in the male imagination is a key aspect of the dynamics of seduction, with the male gaze acting as the primary drive in this process (Couliano 1987, 22). However, an insistence purely on the visual aspects of the female body is frowned upon by religious thinkers of the Renaissance (Couliano 1987, 209). Hence, to the Renaissance mind, femininity should not be exclusively associated with the outer beauty of the body, but with an "ideal beauty" represented by the moral virtues, which transcends the physicality of the flesh and the realm of the visible, in line with the principles of Neo-Platonist philosophy (Couliano 1987, 209). This observation is crucial in analysing both *Cymbeline* and *Hengist*, as both plays explore the tension between the fantasised image of the female body

as captured by the male gaze and the inner virtues of female protagonists that tragically elude the male gaze. In light of these considerations, the analysis will attempt to critically assess the validity of the psychoanalytical and feminist theories proposed in uncovering certain contradictions presented by the two plays, while also keeping in mind the Renaissance context in which the two plays were written.

In order to proceed with the analysis, it is necessary to establish whether chastity is first inoculated by the male gaze or whether it is a response against the control of women. In *Cymbeline*, Innogen marries Posthumus Leonatus against her father's will and is framed by Iachimo for infidelity. In *Hengist*, things are much more convoluted, which is why a short overview of Castiza's fate would be appropriate. *Hengist* revolves around Vortiger's rise to power through deceit and manipulation, his failed attempts to have his fiancée Castiza seduce King Constantius (formerly a monk, and still abiding by the principles of monastic life as a king), and his eventual marriage to Castiza. When the Saxons arrive, Roxena, daughter of the Saxon captain, seduces Vortiger, now king of the Britons. Driven by lust, Vortiger proceeds to sexually assault Castiza while she is blindfolded, with the intention of later slandering her publicly for infidelity and promiscuity in order to marry Roxena. Castiza, unaware of her husband's betrayal, is imprisoned after a forced confession of what she truly believes to be her loss of honour, even if it was her husband who violated her.

With reference to *Cymbeline*, Ellen Spolsky maintains that "Women's work is to be chaste" (2004, 50), in order to ensure the smooth running of society. Chastity is conceived as a means of patriarchal control in the play, according to Spolsky (2004, 70-71). Such interpretations might view chastity as an example of Foucauldian biopolitics, as the state may be said to control women's reproductive function (Foucault 2008, 21-22). Valerie Wayne argues that Posthumus' act of placing a "manacle of love" (Shakespeare 2017, 1.1.123) on Innogen is a way of controlling her chastity (2002, 290-292). However, Wayne (2002, 290-292) overlooks the fact that Innogen, too, exhibits a tendency of possessive control towards Posthumus, in her wish that "I could make him swear / The shes of Italy should not betray / Mine interest and his honour" (Shakespeare 2017, 1.3.28-30). It is not so much a system of control that shapes Innogen's chaste behavior, as Wayne (2002, 290-292) and Spolsky (2004, 70-71) put it, but rather her own expectations about the responsibilities of marriage. In Shakespeare's play, chastity goes both ways: both Posthumus and Innogen expect chaste behaviour from each other. The control of chastity has to do more with a reciprocity of duties between spouses rather than with societal control over women's chastity. At first, there is no unilateral hegemony of power, which would place Posthumus above Innogen.

Posthumus even believes that he is unworthy of Innogen: "As I my poor self-did exchange for you / To your so infinite loss" (Shakespeare 2017, 1.1.140-141). First, this inferiority is felt socially, as Innogen is a princess, and Posthumus a mere commoner. Gradually, the reader realizes that Innogen is also morally superior to Posthumus. When he wrongly suspects her of infidelity based on Iachimo's slandering report, Innogen remains unwavering in her devotion, and decides to disguise herself as a man in order to find her husband, putting her very life at risk. Outwardly, Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* may display a patriarchal society, in which husbands and fathers assume a superior position and wish to control women, but it is Innogen who ultimately holds moral superiority, and who brings about the final reconciliation of the play. Moreover, Innogen's chastity, when coupled with her rebellion against her father, even becomes reactionary, an instance of female agency in a carceral world. By marrying Posthumus despite her father's objections and rejecting Cloten's advances afterwards, Innogen's fidelity to the man she loves, her marital chastity, becomes a form of defiance against her father. Cymbeline's wish that Innogen marry Cloten, his stepson, suggests that her father too is concerned with controlling Innogen's chastity, perhaps more than Posthumus, especially considering her position as heir to the throne. Cymbeline has stronger political motivations than Posthumus in containing Innogen's chastity. Innogen, on the other hand, "always reserved [her] holy duty" (Shakespeare 2017, 1.1.88) towards her father. Her marriage to Posthumus is her sole instance of filial disobedience. One might think that a loss of chastity ensues from the act of rebellion in the form of a marriage without the parents' blessing, but to Protestants it was not necessarily so. Contrary to Catholic thinkers, Protestant theologians believed that chastity could be preserved through marriage. In *A Commentary vpon the Fourth Booke of Moses, called NVMBERS*, minister William Attersoll supports the Protestant idea that chastity could be observed through marriage, criticizing Catholic doctrine, which considered marriage an inferior form of virtue, compared to celibacy:

> Damnable then is the decree of Pope Syricius, that marriage it selfe is the pollution of the flesh, & that the married cannot please God. Diuellish also is the law of forced chastity, restraining some orders and degrees from it: whereas to auoid fornication, euery man is commāded to haue his owne wife, and euery woman her owne husband (1618, ch. V).

Attersoll warns of the dangers of "forced chastity" (1618, ch. V). According to Protestant thought, such dangers are averted by means of a virtuous marriage,

in which both spouses observe the law of chastity. Attersoll even speaks of how in *The Book of Numbers*, the daughters of Zelophehad, heiresses of their parents' fortune, are each given the option to choose their husbands according to their own liking:

> they are directed *to marry to whom they thinke best,* we see that none are to be denyed marriage which is the ordi|nance of God. It entred into none of theyr hearts, to remedy the alienation of inheri|tance by restrayning any from marriage when daughters fell to be inheritrixes, but it was left free to them, according to the precept of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 7, 2. *Againe, it teacheth that marriage is not to be enforced vpon any, eyther by the Magistrate, or by the parents, or by any gouernours, Gen. 24, 57. 1 Corinth. 7, 39. For this were to exercise tyranny ouer our children.* (1618, ch. XXXVI, my emphasis).

According to Attersoll, parents who force their children to marry against their preferences are tyrannical (1618, ch. XXXVI), and Cymbeline does exhibit the same tyrannical wish to control his daughter. Thus, in the play, Innogen's chastity within marriage is her response to an abusive family environment, to Cymbeline's parental tyranny and to her stepmother's political schemes. Cristina León-Alfar also agrees that Innogen "rejects the edicts of […] obedience" in that "she marries where she pleases, defies her father, and speaks richly and passionately in her own defense when accused of adultery, holding Posthumus accountable for his faithlessness" (2017, 186). Innogen goes against the very fundament of Renaissance and Medieval societies, filial obedience, in keeping her loyalty towards Posthumus. Hence, it cannot be said that, in *Cymbeline*, chastity is enforced by the male gaze, or by an overarching, all-seeing system of power. Both husband and wife expect chaste behaviour from each other, which makes their marriage contract equitable. Moreover, if Innogen's chastity is paired with filial disobedience, it is clear that it dismantles parental authority over daughters. However, the play does engage with male expectations of the chaste female body as captured by the male gaze, which will be considered later on in this study.

In *Hengist* as well, chastity is at first a response to patriarchal control and a voluntary life option, perhaps to an even greater extent than in *Cymbeline*. Castiza is betrothed to the villain Vortiger, who wishes for her to seduce Constantius so that he may seize power more efficiently. Vortiger tries to convince his fiancée that she is obliged to conform to his wish and commit an unchaste act, as she is "mine by contract" (Middleton 2007, 2.1.7), his future wife and property, clearly commodified. Castiza is constant in her commitment to marry Vortiger: "My lord, I am resolved, tempt me no further, / 'Tis all to fruitless purpose" (Middleton 2007, 2.1.1-2). She adds that her refusal to behave

unchastely makes her "Never so perfect in the truth of health / As at this instant" (Middleton 2007, 2.1.3-4). Earlier, when she was sent to Constantius by Vortiger, the monk-king urged her to

> Keep that holy and immaculate fire,
> Your chaste lamp of eternity, tis a treasure
> Too precious for death's moment to partake
> This twinkling of short life; disdain as much
> To let mortality know you as stars
> To kiss the pavements. You've a substance
> As excellent as theirs; holding your pureness,
> They look upon corruption as you do
> But are stars still. Be you a virgin too (Middleton 2007, 1.3.170-178).

The constancy presupposed by chastity is here likened to the immobility and incorruptibility of stars. In the religious view expressed by Constantius, chastity bestows on women (and on men, too, since Constantius is determined to guard his chastity as a monk) an almost celestial nature. This allows Castiza to extricate herself from the vile realities of life in Britain. Indeed, the world of *Hengist* is one of constant change, of political turmoil, corruption, of broken alliances and broken trust. In a world where the mutual affection between a young woman and her fiancé is replaced with unilateral control and deceit, chastity becomes, in Constantius' speech, a force meant to counteract the very *ethos* of Vortiger's society. Constantius thus strengthens Castiza's resolution never to marry, "forsaking al the world" (Middleton 2007, 1.3.180), following the example of the Apostles, who "have forsaken all, and followed [Christ]" (*The Bible, King James Version*, Matthew 19:27). For Castiza, this is a moment of personal epiphany when, emboldened by her faith, she dares to rebel against Vortiger, against the systems of power that he represents. While the beginning stresses the importance of personal volition and chastity as defiance of patriarchal control, as the play progresses, chastity will gradually lose its association with Castiza's agency, and will be manipulated through the imposition of the male gaze, in order to ensure the success of men on the political scene.

Furthermore, Castiza appears as a singularity in the world of *Hengist*. She may be considered the female counterpart of Constantius, as she is the only woman of the play who still holds idealised notions of Christian virtue and honour – and, in this respect, she may share in his naivety. Even as she comes to terms with her marriage to Vortiger, Castiza still exhibits a hermit-like devotion to her religious ideals. She becomes a hermit-queen, cut off from society, as she confesses "how well I loved [her ladies'-in-waiting] absence" (Middleton 2007,

3.2.3), which would allow her to concentrate on prayer, rather than on her public duties. Castiza is cynically criticised by one of her ladies: "She that has the green-sickness and should follow her counsel [of choosing chastity over marriage] / Would die like an ass and go to th' worms like a salad" (Middleton 2007, 3.2.11-12). Grace Ioppolo, editor of the Oxford edition of *Hengist*, explains in a footnote that the green-sickness is an "anemic disease of young girls, implying innocence about sexuality" (2007, 1466n11). The same lady-in-waiting adds that "She's a fool that will not know what [man]'s good for" (Middleton 2007, 3.2.14). In the world of *Hengist*, dominated by lust at all levels of society, Castiza's chaste ideals are an anomaly. Vortiger himself, through his rape of her, will show that, in the play, men actually want women to be unchaste for their own benefit. In his plan to secretly rape Castiza, Vortiger is assisted by Hersus. Hersus is Roxena's lover, who took away her "cracked virginity" (Middleton 2007, 3.1.235), forcing her to give up "All that we have to men" (Middleton 2007, 3.1.44-52), as Roxena rightly points out. Hersus pushes her further towards her downfall, by urging her to become Vortiger's mistress in order to ensure the Saxons' (and his own) advancement in Britain. There is a clear power imbalance, and the hegemonic structures of Middleton's Britain clearly incline towards men, subjugating women. If in *Cymbeline* men want women to be chaste, in *Hengist*, the opposite is the case: men actively turn their lovers into whores for their own advancement. As Roxena's relationship with Vortiger becomes a very real possibility, Hersus is seized by jealous fits and threatens to expose Roxena as "a whore impost'rous" (Middleton 2007, 3.1.239). This clearly shows that he does not recognise his personal responsibility in Roxena's fall from grace. At Hersus' advice, Vortiger will soon repeat Hersus's pattern of dishonouring the woman who loves him and then abandoning her, by raping a blindfolded Castiza. Grace Ioppolo rightly concludes that, in *Hengist*, "a woman is defined by the status of her sexuality; if she is sexually active, she is already a whore, and if she is not, she will be a whore soon enough" (2007, 1450). There is no room for reconciliation or any sort of spiritual transformation, as in *Cymbeline*. Innogen will be able to disguise herself as a young man, Fidelio, in order to seek Posthumus and keep her chastity at the same time. She even prompts Posthumus' *metanoia* regarding his lack of faith (Cristina León-Alfar 2017, 186). On the contrary, in *Hengist*, whether women are chaste or not, they are doomed to ruin, and are given no means of salvation.

3. A Rape with(out) Words. The Power Dynamics of Seeing and Being Seen

In *Cymbeline* and in *Hengist*, women are depicted in a voyeuristic manner. They are spied on, denied their vision at key moments of their undoing, or are publicly exhibited and chastised. In *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare reimagines the formal conventions of a cuckoldry play (León - Alfar 2017, 186). In *Hengist*, Middleton works with chronicle material. Samuel Schoenbaum points out that "The intrigue involving Vortiger, Horsus, Roxena, and Castiza seems to be entirely Middleton's invention" (1970, 85). Therefore, the rape scene and chastity test in *Hengist* hold Middleton's own conceptions regarding female honour and abuse.

The two plays are primarily concerned with how the female body appears under the male gaze. According to Nancy Simpson-Younger, in *Cymbeline*,

> the bodies of sleeping and dead characters come to exemplify the process of social identity construction, acting as surfaces to be described, blazoned and repeatedly reinscribed by the observations of the characters around them (2013, 177).

With reference to Innogen's body, it is important, however, to differentiate between what Simpson-Younger calls "identity construction" (2013, 177) and identity projection, which is closely associated with the gaze and with the mirror stage (Lacan 1981, 159). Lacan's observation that the subject must "accommodate his own image around what appears" in the mirror (1981, 159), reveals that the bodies of women are envisioned in such a way that they respond to the projected desires which drive the male gaze. In order for his deception to work, Iachimo knows that his description of Innogen's sleeping body is more conclusive than the particulars of her room: "Ah, but some natural notes about her body, / Above ten thousand meaner moveables, / Would testify t'enrich mine inventory" (Shakespeare 2017, 2.2.28-31). The description of the body will "witness outwardly, / As strongly as the conscience does within, / To the maddening of her lord" (Shakespeare 2017, 2.2.36-37). The visual force of the body is connected with Posthumus' psychological turmoil, as the image of the body is constructed according to the male gaze, tailored to male desires. Iachimo's description of Innogen's "cinque-spotted" mole (Shakespeare 2017, 2.2.38) on her breast insists on the function of the breast as an "*objet a* cause of desire" (Lacan 1981, 168), framing Innogen as an object of desire captured by the gaze. This visual testimony, in effect a visual spectacle, becomes "stronger than ever law could make" (Shakespeare 2017, 2.2.40), since it constructs

Innogen's body in such a way that it tacitly implies the fulfilment of desire. However, Shakespeare makes clear the artificiality of the gaze. The playwright makes a similar distinction to Lacan's differentiation between the eye and the gaze, noting that they are entirely separate (1981, 73, 84). What Iachimo sees is the objective reality of Innogen sleeping, but the image he conjures through the instrument of the gaze greatly embellishes this reality, making it conform to Iachimo's deceptive goal. In Patricia Wareh's interpretation, "*Cymbeline* emphasizes its fictionality most of all [...], in how it employs conventional literary tokens of recognition—bodily marks, clothing, and jewelry—that prove the character or identity of Imogen" (2014, 131). Iachimo's slander of Innogen is rhetorically constructed. This is in line with Lacan's idea that "If the subject is what I say it is, namely the subject determined by language and speech, it follows that the subject, *in initio*, begins in the *locus* of the Other, in so far as it is there that the first signifier emerges" (1981, 198). Thus, Innogen, as the subject, is constructed through the language that the Other (Iachimo) chooses to describe her. Literally and symbolically, Iachimo's fictitious rape of Innogen is founded entirely on language. Iachimo is a classic voyeur in Lacanian terms, since "What the voyeur is looking for and finds is merely a shadow, a shadow behind the curtain" (1981, 182). He will substantiate this shadow by adding elements of his own desire. The Innogen envisioned by Iachimo's gaze is therefore an artificial construct, a projection that will be manipulated by the Italian deceiver in order to win the wager.

There is, however, more than one way in which Innogen is constructed by the male gaze. After listening to Iachimo's description of Innogen, implying her loss of honour, Posthumus laments his initial mental image of Innogen – "the non-pareil" (Shakespeare 2017, 2.5.8) of Dian, a woman of "a prudency so rosy, the sweet view on't / Might well have warmed old Saturn, that I thought her / As chaste as unsunned snow" (Shakespeare 2017, 2.5.11-13). Posthumus' gaze imagines Innogen even above mythical standards of chastity – and associates her with the purity of snow. Iachimo only verbally challenges this chaste image of Innogen, which immediately comes to nothing in Posthumus' mind. Iachimo's gaze of Innogen challenges Posthumus' gaze so much that he immediately sways from his previous view of her and associates her (and all womankind) with "Lust and rank thoughts, […] revenges" (Shakespeare 2017, 2.5.24), and with every negative quality imaginable. In his misogynistic speech about women, Posthumus wishes to uncover the mutability and vicious nature of women: "there's no motion / that tends to vice in man but I affirm / It is the woman's part" (Shakespeare 2017, 2.5.20-22). Shakespeare's great irony here lies in the fact that Posthumus only succeeds in unveiling the changeability of the gaze itself, and his own *naiveté* in blindly believing Iachimo's slandering

account. Thus, the gaze does not only subjugate women – it also greatly limits men's perception of reality, since they become entangled in the fiction of their own projections. Posthumus' grasp on reality weakens at this moment and it can be inferred that his response is an unconscious reaction. Shakespeare is thus critical of the projections that the gaze allows, showing that the construct of the gaze reveals more about the Other (the male observers) than the subject (Innogen). In the end, Posthumus realises that he was a "most credulous fool" (Shakespeare 2017, 5.2.210) and changes his unfair views on women. If, at the moment of his deceit, Posthumus associates all types of villainies with women, at the very end of the romance, he has a moment of introspection, in which he recognises his failings: "Every villain / Be called Posthumus Leonatus" (Shakespeare 2017, 5.2.224).

In *Hengist*, however, things are much grimmer. Castiza's rape is not as voyeuristic as Innogen's (and it is not fictionalised, but very much real), stressing instead the power dynamics of seeing and being seen. During her rape by Vortiger, Castiza is blindfolded, so that she will not suspect that her husband is her aggressor. While the gaze cannot be reduced to the act of seeing (Lacan 1981, 84), the optics of *Hengist*'s rape scene are important, since they are closely connected to the conditions of the chastity test, the spectacle of chastity later imposed by Vortiger. Blindfolded, Castiza equates the impeding loss of her honour with the loss of sight, preferring the latter to the former:

> Be content to take only
> My sight as ransom for mine honour,
> And where you have but mocked mine eyes with darkness
> Pluck 'em out quite. All outward light of body
> I'll spare most willingly, but take not from me
> That which must guide me to another world
> And leave me dark forever (Middleton 2007, 3.3.85-91).

In raping her without her knowledge, Vortiger denies Castiza perception of her abuser and even of herself. Vortiger, on the other hand, is awarded the privilege of sight in ravishing his wife. Castiza's blindfolding could be connected to a symbolic *locus* in which the subject is ontologically situated, which Lacan calls "an immense display, a special spectre, situated between perception and consciousness" (1981, 45). In Lacan's estimation, the gap between perception and consciousness is where the Other is located and where the subject takes shape (1981, 45). By denying her sight, Vortiger denies her any sort of consciousness over the event of her rape: of himself as the Other / the aggressor, and even of Castiza herself, as a subject / victim with which she cannot psychologically / morally self-identify. She is not even given the option to be ontologically

situated in relation to the Other, because she is denied visual perception. In the rape scheme, Vortiger is concealed by Hersus, who speaks in his stead, posing as Castiza's abuser. Vortiger will later ravish her without any suspicions on Castiza's part. Castiza is in a state of nothingness, where she feels alienated from the world: "take not from me / That which must guide me to another world / And leave me dark forever" (Middleton 2007, 3.3.89-91). Through her rape *à l'aveugle*,

> Castiza becomes a metonym for the ontological ambiguity that is at the heart of the play. Castiza was ontologically ambiguous to early modern audiences because as a wife, she could be raped by her husband and thus was not a victim, yet that is clearly belied by the scene of violation. She is both victim and not-victim (Bretz 2012, 189-190).

As Andrew Bretz points out, she is "victim and not-victim" (2012, 190), being and non-being. Although her status as a victim of marital rape does render her into a moral conundrum for Renaissance audiences (Bretz 2012, 189), the dynamic of power prefigured by sight and the lack thereof, and the mechanics of the gaze clearly accentuate Vortiger's / Hersus' cruelty and Castiza's helplessness, instituting Castiza as the victim and Vortiger as the abuser. Moreover, Castiza will suffer a "rape of honour without words" (Middleton 2007, 3.1.72), being further denied access to the Other, the alterity presupposed by language in communication. Iachimo will "rape" Innogen with fictitious words, and he will also repair her honour through the verbal testimony of his deceit in the end. In *Cymbeline*, ruin and reparation both rely on words: confessions, realisations, reconciliations. Conversely, Castiza's rape "without words" (Middleton 2007, 3.1.72) as opposed to Innogen's fictionalised violation with words, stresses the material act of sexual aggression, the action as opposed to the framing of the action, which cannot be undone or erased psychologically.

Later on, Vortiger organises a chastity test for his wife, her ladies-in-waiting and Roxena. The song that prefaces the ensuing spectacle of chastity is ominous in its references to rape: "This should be the *ravishing* hour / To vent her *spirit's treasure* forth" (Middleton 2007, 4.2.45-46, my emphases). The "ravishing hour" (Middleton 2007, 4.2.45) is an analepsis of Castiza's ravishment in the previous act, while "her spirit's treasure" (Middleton 2007, 4.2.45), though it refers to music, inevitably brings to mind the idea of chastity as spiritual treasure, popular in the Renaissance. In this song, Middleton exhibits bitter irony, as he couples the distressing event of rape with Roxena's deceitful assumption of chastity, making her into a counterfeit treasure. When it is Castiza's turn to swear her chastity, Vortiger gives a lengthy speech on the ideal

of a chaste woman, referring to Castiza's "over-holy fearful chastity" (Middleton 2007, 4.2.117) even before she speaks. He even "swear[s] for thee myself" (Middleton 2007, 4.2.119), painting her to be "as pure as sanctity's best shrine / From all man's mixture, but what's lawful mine" (Middleton 2007, 4.2.126). Vortiger has constricted Castiza in two ways. First, in exhibiting her to the world, making Castiza subject to what Lacan called "the spectacle of the world, [which] appears to us as all-seeing" (1981, 75); this is connected to a form of unwilling exhibitionism, bringing no satisfaction, but rather, a heightened sense of vulnerability (Lacan 1981, 75). Secondly, in forcing Castiza to conform to a pre-established image of her imagined by Vortiger in the above lines, carefully chosen by the villain so as to make her confess her dishonour out of her sense of conscience. Castiza is not able to conform to Vortiger's projection of her, and thus will feel inherently guilty, inadequate as a wife, unable to conform to the male gaze. Rather than showing her in the position of a victim, such manipulation places her publicly in the position of the offender, and the chastity test becomes a sort of public flagellation. In Vortiger's shrewd staging of the spectacle of chastity, female honour is thus not the "spirit's treasure" (Middleton 2007, 4.2.46), but a mockery of its original connotations. Vortiger is completely aware of this masquerade of appearances, although he fails to see Roxena's dissimulation, who merely plays the part of the chaste woman, following Hersus' advice. Vortiger compares Roxena to "a fountain / To spring forth princes and the seed of kingdoms" (Middleton 2007, 4.2.216-217), which adds a mythological dimension to Roxena's virtue, likewise sustained by the male gaze.

4. Chastity, Politics and Commodification

Now that we have shown how the gaze operates in the two plays, it remains to analyse the political effects of the male gaze in relation to female chastity, and the way in which the gaze contributes to the social and economic objectification of women. In *Cymbeline*, chastity becomes an avowal of one's loyalty towards their partner, of a deeply personal nature. Posthumus' grave mistake, as Shakespeare frames it, is agreeing to wager on his wife's virtue, succumbing to Iachimo's temptation – thus, making his wife's chastity a public matter rather than a private one, having to do with domestic life and partnership. His wager on Innogen's chastity shows an "economic logic of love", according to Gillen (2017, 17), implying that Innogen's chastity could be "lost, stolen, rated, sold, or wagered in a bet" (2017, 17). In Gillen's words, the wager implies a "commoditization of Innogen's chastity" (2017, 20). This article, however wishes to contend that chastity acquires less of an economic dimension than in *Hengist*. Posthumus' wager relies on the social value of chastity rather than on exchanging

it for material gain. A man with a chaste wife would be more respected by his peers than one with an unfaithful wife. However, socially, there is no need to wager such a bet in order for Posthumus to gain his peers' respect. He is already vouched for by Philario as a "worthy" gentleman (Shakespeare 2017, 1.4.32). The account given by the Frenchman, of how Posthumus "vouch[ed] – and upon warrant of bloody affirmation – his [mistress] to be more fair, virtuous, wise, chaste, constant, qualified and less attemptable than any the rarest of our ladies in France" (Shakespeare 2017, 1.4.59-63), prefigures the wager that Posthumus and Iachimo will soon agree to. It is interesting that in the wager, Posthumus repeats the same rash behaviour he exhibited in France, as he himself professes, "rather shunned to go even with what I heard than in my every action to be guided by others' experiences" (Shakespeare 2017, 1.4.45-49). It is clear that Posthumus is an impulsive young man, incautious in his dealings with others. Swayed by emotion, he will recklessly fight with strangers to convince them of Innogen's chastity and moral superiority. Such a reaction reveals Posthumus' immaturity, even if his quarrels stem from what he perceives to be good intentions. Posthumus mistakenly equates social recognition with chastity, and Shakespeare wishes readers and spectators to be aware of this lapse of judgment, framed as his *hamartia*. Thus, rather than stress the commodification of chastity in the wager scene, Shakespeare wishes to draw our attention to Posthumus' character. The discussion centres around Innogen, but what Posthumus says and does is more important in the delineation of his character rather than in hers. The wager itself does not hold economic, but moral value, in Posthumus' eyes. Shakespeare makes it clear, through Posthumus' guiling, that testing something which holds spiritual value, like chastity, can ruin a perfectly loving relationship. In *Hengist*, the chastity test orchestrated by Vortiger serves precisely this purpose, and it is clear that the king is not concerned with the moral value of virtue, but rather, with its political implications. The queen of Britain cannot be unchaste, as this invalidates the paternity of any heirs that she may produce. Vortiger's test, however, does not have considerations of royal succession in mind. Vortiger's *spectacle of chastity* is a political and personal manoeuvre to ensure his free access to Roxena. The spectacle subsumes moral considerations to political and personal objectives.

In *Cymbeline*, chastity acquires an entirely different value. Gillen maintains that the association between female chastity and Posthumus' ring, wagered in the bet, is a symptom of the objectification and commodification of chastity (2017, 17). Even if he does wager material valuables for Innogen's chastity – his ring, which holds symbolic, rather than material value, as the symbol of eternal love – Posthumus is aware of the fact that a woman's chastity is not to be viewed in economic terms: "the [ring] may be sold and given, or if there were wealth

enough for the purchase or merit of the gift; the other [a chaste wife] is not a thing for sale, and only the gift of the gods" (Shakespeare 2017, 1.4.85-88). Chastity here holds spiritual rather than material value, so Gillen's argument of commodification (2017, 17) may be read as a naïve error of judgement, by which Posthumus wrongly associates spiritual worth with material value. This, however, does not mean that he wilfully exchanges his wife's chastity for financial gain; Posthumus wants to prove a matter of principle, not gain a profit, although his methods are highly unorthodox. By contrast, in *Hengist* chastity is an object, almost entirely viewed by the immoral society of the play as a material thing in the possession of husbands. Chastity is weaponized against Castiza for political reasons, and is used in the interest of the male characters. Moreover, women are equated with the material possessions they bring their husbands through their dowries, and this even happens in the lower classes of the society, as Simon, the play's comic buffoon, confesses: "I took a widow, my lord, to be the best piece of ground to thrive on" (Middleton 2007, 3.3.139-140), which enables him to become mayor. Thus, Simon's widow is, in Mulvey's terms (1987, 54) just another commodity meant to be enjoyed by a patriarchal, consumerist and bourgeois society preoccupied with pleasure or gain. A woman is thus a means of social advancement, and her honour is equated with the legitimacy of her husband's social status. As women become property, so chastity becomes in *Hengist* a symbol of the husband's property rights over the wife. The image of the chaste woman emerges thus as a means of social control in the latter part of the play. Chastity is neither a domestic affair nor a spiritual value, but a palpable reality that needs to be proven publicly, as Castiza is forced to do. Innogen refuses to prove anything to Iachimo, and rejects his advances. It is Iachimo who will fabricate the proof of Innogen's infidelity, much like Vortiger orchestrates Castiza's fall with Hersus' assistance.

The gaze in *Hengist* may on the surface enforce the societal principle that chastity is desirable morally. However, in practice, chastity appears through the male gaze as a thing that is necessary from a pragmatic point of view, as it enables the husband to come into riches (as Simon) or political power (as Vortiger). Bonnie Lander points out that Victorians associated Innogen's chastity with a "domestic ideal" (2008, 161). The reconciliation between Innogen and Posthumus, or the revival of domestic bliss, is made possible because Posthumus realises his mistake of mixing the public and the private. By contrast, *Hengist* perverts the domesticity of chastity, and instead exhibits it to the gaze of the world in order to achieve a political goal – the change of queen – driven by Vortiger's personal motives of lust and greed. Chastity becomes a matter of political intrigue. There is a confusion between the private and the public in *Hengist* – a woman's chastity, understood in *Cymbeline* as a matter of privacy, is

used as criterion for a political role (queen of Britain). The cynicism of Middleton is that the truly chaste woman, Castiza, cannot be queen, while Roxena, the deceitful woman, is preferred in this role. Chastity becomes a matter of political shrewdness, as Roxena's false testimony of her virtue proves. Hersus urges her to swear to her chastity, since he assures her that, even if she is not chaste, she would not commit perjury, because "[the British] swear by that we worship not, / So you may swear your heart out, and ne'er hurt yourself" (Middleton 2007, 4.2.173-174). In Roxena's vow, chastity is now stripped of its social and spiritual implications, and becomes "a rape of honour" (Middleton 2007, 3.1.72) with words, a rape of chastity itself. Politically, this is in tune with the chaos that dominates Vortiger's Britain. Gillen states that, during Queen Elizabeth's reign, the chaste body of the queen was connected to the political integrity of the country (2017, 4-5). In *Hengist*, Britain is a realm of usurpation, division, personal and political betrayal and social and economic unrest. Thus, Castiza's dishonour and fall from grace, her loss of chastity, and the arrival of Roxena as the new queen can be connected to the symbolic fall from grace of the country. Chastity has become an integral part of politics in *Hengist*, as it does in Middleton's other history play, *A Game at Chess*. In this play, Mark Kaethler argues, the preservation of the White Queen's Pawn chastity rests on her ability to "manoeuvre politics" (2021, 186). The difference is that, unlike the White Queen's Pawn, Castiza is not attuned to the way of the world and of politics, still holding an idealised vision of her husband, of marriage, and of chastity itself. According to Julia Briggs (1990, 491), "Castiza, [Roxena's] antithesis and rival, is associated with Truth – 'Tis truth and that I know you ever joy'd in'" (Middleton 2007, 5.2.222). Her less chaste but more pragmatic counterpart, Roxena, knows that truth is not an effective political strategy in a rapacious world. She knows how to use the mechanism of the gaze in her favour, how to give the appearance of succumbing to the ideal of chastity as envisioned by the male gaze. She seduces Vortiger at her father's banquet and upholds an image of graciousness and candour. She will profess to outwardly possess all of the qualities envisioned by the gaze, expressed in Vortiger's description of the ideal chaste woman, in order to achieve her own political goal of attaining power. She will play the role of the chaste woman before the King, thus participating in the spectacle of chastity. Roxena realizes that the male gaze is artificial, and that, in order to psychologically satisfy the Other / Vortiger, she need only tailor a personal image based on the female ideal produced by the male imagination. Roxena is thus a shrewd politician, who, unlike the honest Castiza, is hyper-aware of the structures of control which surround her. Castiza's unawareness of the political implications of chastity, her refusal to divorce chastity from morality, will bring about her imprisonment. She will only later be re-instated

by Aurelius, the new king following Vortiger's demise, but she does not get psychological closure. Vortiger ultimately dies at the hands of Hersus, who betrays him. However, there is no moral satisfaction in this, since the villain never atones for his sins.

Conversely, in *Cymbeline*, the very end of the play sees chastity as politically dethroned rather than enforced for the realisation of a political goal. The emphasis is on the reconciliation between husband and wife, on Innogen's relationship with her father, on her removal into domestic life. Once Innogen's long-lost brothers are found, she is no longer heir to the throne, which, in Gillen's view, is a "demolition in [her] political status" (2017, 27). Nevertheless, this distancing of Innogen from political matters re-institutes the domesticity of her chastity, distancing it from any political implications that it may otherwise acquire. Thus, her chastity will not be a matter of state anymore, as it was in the beginning of the play, when Cymbeline tried to arrange her marriage as heiress to Cloten. Unlike in *Hengist,* where chastity is put on display and is expected to conform to the male gaze, in *Cymbeline*, the relationship between Posthumus and Innogen will be sheltered from the public eye through Innogen's exclusion from the line of succession. Innogen presents the triumph of private bliss, while *Hengist* concludes with the terrible consequences of mixing private matters with public issues, of politicizing chastity, which is no longer a personal or family value, but a means of achieving one's political agenda.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the present paper has demonstrated that the spectacle of chastity in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and Middleton's *Hengist* is presented in divergent terms by the two dramatists. Although both plays begin with chastity as a personal choice of the free female agent, the very different destinies of Innogen and Castiza conceal a key difference in the playwrights' conception of female virtue. Using Lacan's notion of the gaze (1981, 75), the present discussion has shown that in *Cymbeline*, the woman is given the possibility to remove herself from the male gaze and pursue her social rehabilitation. By contrast, in *Hengist*, the chaste woman is doomed to conform to the constricting male gaze, which voids her of any individuality and agency, commodifying and objectifying her. Finally, the gaze allows for the commodification of virtue in *Hengist*, as chastity is valued insofar as it serves the political purposes of the male agents. On the other hand, in *Cymbeline*, Iachimo's spectacle of chastity is dispelled through the reconciliation between husband and wife, based on equity and on the mutual recognition of the spouses' shortcomings. Shakespeare takes a much more critical stance towards the relationships between men and women and

the power imbalances between them, and is much more optimistic in his view of female freedom. He is critical of the adverse effects the male gaze has both on female destinies and male psychology and perception of the world. Conversely, the world of *Hengist* is the creation of a cynic, set on uncovering a universe of continuous degradation, where moral values are deserted, and traditional ideals of femininity, such as chastity, are perverted and turned into a masquerade, where appearances reign, and true moral rectitude is banished. Women must conform to the male gaze in order to be politically successful, and may even fabricate a self-image congruent with the projected female identities envisioned by the male gaze. Women must either respond to the gaze or be socially excluded. In summary, this comparative analysis between *Cymbeline* and *Hengist* underscores the fact that Shakespeare and Middleton depict female virtue through distinct lenses, which reflect each playwright's particular stance on gender dynamics and on the impact of the male gaze on female autonomy and on socially endorsed expectations of female morality.

WORKS CITED

Primary Bibliography:

Attersoll, William. 1618. *A Commentarie upon the Fourth Booke of Moses, Called Numbers: Containing the Foundation of the Church and Commonwealth of the Israelites, While They Walked and Wandered in the Wilderness. Laying Before Us the Unchangeable Love of God Promised and Exhibited to This People ... Heerein Also the Reader Shall Finde More Than Five Hundred Theologicall Questions, Decided and Determined by William Attersoll, Minister of the Word.* London: Printed by William Iaggard. Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership, 2011. Accessed March 16, 2024. URL: https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A22507.0001.001/1:4.35.2?amt2=40;amt3=40;c=eebo;c=eebo2;g=eebogroup;rgn=div3;view=toc;xc=1;q1=enforced*;op2=near;q2=marriage*.

Middleton, Thomas. 2007. *Hengist, King of Kent; Or, the Mayor of Queenborough*, edited by Grace Ioppolo. In *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, edited by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino, 1451-1487. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Middleton, Thomas. 2007. *A Game at Chess*, edited by Gary Taylor. In *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, edited by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino, 1825-1885. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Middleton, Thomas. 2007. *Women Beware Women*, edited by John Jowett. In *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, edited by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino, 1488-1541. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shakespeare, William and George Wilkins. 2020. *Pericles*, edited by Suzanne Gossett. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
Shakespeare, William. 2017. *Cymbeline*, edited by Valerie Wayne. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
Shakespeare, William. 2011. *The Tempest*, edited by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
The Bible. 2014. *Authorized King James Version*, edited by Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Secondary Bibliography:

Bald, R.C. 1938. "Introduction". In *Hengist, King of Kent; Or, the Mayor of Queenborough*, by Thomas Middleton, edited by R. C. Bald, xiii-liv. New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons.
Bretz, Andrew. 2012. "Emergent Identity: Masculinity and the Representation of Rape on the Early Modern Stage, 1590-1620". PhD diss., University of Guelph. https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/1044b44a-13f5-4830-95f2-dc181c1d2997/content. Accessed March 18, 2024.
Briggs, Julia. 1990. "Middleton's Forgotten Tragedy 'Hengist, King of Kent'." *The Review of English Studies* 41 (164): 479–95. JSTOR. http://www.jstor.org/stable/516275. Accessed April 20, 2024.
Couliano, Ioan P. 1987. *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance*. Translated by Margaret Cook with a Foreword by Mircea Eliade. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
Di Leo, Jeffrey R., and Christian Moraru. 2023. "Introduction: Weak Theory—A Report on the Contemporary." *American Book Review* 44 (1): 13-21. Project MUSE. https://doi.org/10.1353/abr.2023.a902816.
Foucault, Michel. 1991. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books.
Foucault, Michel. 2008. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–79*, edited by Michel Senellart. Translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Gillen, Katherine. 2017. "Chaste Treasure and National Identity in 'The Rape of Lucrece' and 'Cymbeline'." In *Chaste Value: Economic Crisis, Female Chastity and the Production of Social Difference on Shakespeare's Stage*, edited by Katherine Gillen, 135-157. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Ioppolo, Grace. 2007. Preface to *Hengist, King of Kent; Or, the Mayor of Queenborough*. In *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, edited by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino, 1448-1451. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Kaethler, Mark. 2021. *Thomas Middleton and the Plural Politics of Jacobean Drama*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
Lacan, Jacques. 1981. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XI, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Lander, Bonnie. 2008. "Interpreting the Person: Tradition, Conflict, and 'Cymbeline''s Imogen." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59 (2): 156-184.

León-Alfar, Cristina. 2017. "'Paper Bullets of the Brain': Revising the Cuckoldry Play in 'The Winter's Tale' and 'Cymbeline'." In *Women and Shakespeare's Cuckoldry Plays: Shifting Narratives of Marital Betrayal*, edited by Cristina León-Alfar, 167-206. London: Routledge.

Mulvey, Laura. 1975. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". *Screen*16 (3): 6-18.

Mulvey, Laura. 1989. *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Papahagi, Adrian. 2023. *Shakespeare interpretat de Adrian Papahagi. Pericle. Cymbeline. Furtuna.* Iași: Polirom.

Schoenbaum, Samuel. 1970. *Middleton's Tragedies: A Critical Study*. New York: Gordian Press.

Simpson-Younger, Nancy. 2013. "'The Garments of Posthumus': Identifying the Non-Responsive Body in 'Cymbeline'". In *Staging the Blazon in Early Modern English Theater*, edited by Sara Morrison and Deborah Uman, 177-188. London: Routledge.

Spolsky, Ellen. 2004. "Women's Work is Chastity: Lucretia, Cymbeline, and Cognitive Impenetrability." In *The Work of Fiction: Cognition, Culture, and Complexity*, edited by Alan Richardson and Ellen Spolsky, 50-81. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Stewart, Kathleen. 2008. "Weak Theory in an Unfinished World." *Journal of Folklore Research* 45 (1): 71-82.

Wareh, Patricia. 2014. "Reading Women: Chastity and Fictionality in 'Cymbeline'." In *Renaissance Papers 2013*. Edited by Jim Pearce and Joanna Kucinski, 131-146. Rochester: Boydell & Brewer.

Wayne, Valerie. 2002. "The Woman's Parts of 'Cymbeline'." In *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, edited by Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, 288-315. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.