A SOURCE STUDY OF PERICLES

A Thesis Presented to the Graduate Faculty
of
California State University, Hayward

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in English

By
Karen Erna Giordano
November, 1975
A SOURCE STUDY OF PERICLES

By

Karen Erna Giordano

Approved:  

Date:

January 28, 1976

February 4, 1976

ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. FROM NARRATIVE TO PLAY</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. APPEARANCE AND REALITY: SHAKESPEARE'S MEANING IN PERICLES</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Characters</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Action</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Value of the Individual</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man's Limited Judgment</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nature of Reality</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF WORKS CITED</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

With the field of Shakespearean criticism producing abundant, though not necessarily good, crops yearly, it is surprising that the advantages of source studies have not been recognized and exploited more widely, especially in criticism of the late plays. Because an author's departures from his sources, or the patterns that emerge from these departures, often reveal something about his purpose, comparing a work and its sources can easily isolate possibly important passages. The hardest task of the critic is to then try to make sense of this raw material--this evidence of the author's intentions (always a very risky business)--without creating a distorted picture.

But the task, risks and all, is not insurmountable; and it is easy to see how the source-study approach might be particularly useful in analyzing the works of a writer such as William Shakespeare, who borrowed quite freely from other writers as he worked. Nonetheless, though one sometimes thinks that there is not very much that some critic has not published an article on, there are Shakespearean plays which have never been studied using this approach. For the late
play Pericles, which is the subject of the present study, there exists no careful and complete source study taking into account themes as well as language. Yet comparing the play to its two principal sources, John Gower's Confessio Amantis (Book VIII) and Laurence Twine's Patterne of Painefull Adventures, will reveal, as we shall see, a great deal about Shakespeare's probable intentions, even though the playwright's departures may seem at first sight minor or irrelevant.

A kind of source study that has frequently been done is the historical study, which examines the relationships of the possible sources to each other and to Shakespeare's play. Though these studies are sometimes inconclusive, the historical information they provide lays the groundwork for a study such as the present one. Thus, it will be useful to survey briefly some of the information, as well as some of the difficulties, that these studies have uncovered.

The romance of Apollonius of Tyre, dating back in its earliest Latin version to the ninth century, was a popular story in medieval and Renaissance times. Allusions to the story go even further back, and there were many adaptations and translations up to Shakespeare's time. Details of the story's history (available in such standard works as The Arden Pericles) are agreed upon by scholars who have studied it, and no one doubts that the two main
into the unsettled authorship controversy, would require a major scholarly discovery for substantiation and thus at this point are not particularly helpful.

There is also continual speculation about the exact sources of minor aspects of Shakespeare's play. An example of this kind of speculation is William Elton's article, "Pericles: A New Source or Analogue," which suggests that the fifty-third tale in Alexander van den Busche's Orator (1596) corresponds to Marina's adventures in Act IV of Pericles. Similarly, others such as Michael Gearin-Tosh and Robert J. Kane, speculate that the origin of Antiochus' punishment may have been 2 Maccabees, 7-10, in which Antiochus Epiphanes was inflicted with the plague. Questioning the origin of other minor parts of the play, such as the tournament scene at Pentapolis or the names of certain characters (including Pericles), some scholars hypothesize the existence of a lost English ballad or lay that Shakespeare may have used. But evidence leading to this idea is inconclusive; and, in any case, many of these

---


5 Robert J. Kane, "A Passage in Pericles," Modern Language Notes, 68 (1953), 483-84.
minor aspects could easily have their origins in extant works--e.g., the name Pericles could have come from Pyrocles in Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590).

Thus, identifying the exact sources of Shakespeare's play is a complex and continuing task and one which is possibly fruitful. But in order to base this study on the most solid ground, I will simply indicate the complexity and concentrate in my comparison on the two most important recognized sources of the play.

This comparison will be of especial value since it will provide a look into *Pericles* from a perspective not fully taken advantage of previously. Until recently, the play has not enjoyed very much popularity among critics. Although it was very often performed on Jacobean and early Carolean stages, it was harshly criticized by Ben Jonson and such eighteenth century critics as Steevens, Pope, and Dr. Johnson. Excluded from the First Folio, *Pericles* was usually excluded from the texts of later editors, who doubted that such a "poorly written" work could be Shakespeare's. Victorians even went as far as finding the play morally distasteful (largely because of the brothel scenes). In the twentieth century, though, there has been some change in critical attitude toward the play. More critics are now seeing a structural and thematic unity in the play, and many now recognize its dramatic force.
But ghosts of the old attitudes still linger. Partly because of the continuing controversy over the authorship of the play, many critics, including those who like the play, settle for a very simplistic view of Pericles. Not convinced that the play is Shakespeare's, they do not expect to find any underlying similarities between Pericles and the other plays. For example, in his Introduction to Pericles' sources in Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare (an essential work for those studying Shakespeare's sources), Geoffrey Bullough points out that "nothing mars the simple antinomies of the play, where all is black or white, the bad very bad, the good very good. Pericles is buffeted by fortune but in the end the goddess rewards his endurance." 6

Superficially, these statements, heard over and over in one form or another in criticism of the play, have some truth, but they are greatly oversimplified. Bullough apparently notices that the play lacks, as do the other tragicomedies, the verisimilitude of many of the other plays. But if this characterization of Shakespeare's view of reality as "black and white, good and bad" is accurate, then Pericles is totally unlike even the other late plays. Certainly the

world of King Lear, in which events are so ambiguous that the characters' welfare and happiness totally depend on faith, is far different from a world of clear-cut opposing values. Certainly the worlds of Cymbeline and The Winter's Tale, in which reality is not always discoverable from appearances and in which a character's belief determines how he perceives reality, cannot be thought clear-cut. Thus, if the world of Pericles is a world of simple opposites, then it is an anomaly among the late plays; but this conclusion is simply incorrect, for a close reading of the play reveals it to be very similar, especially thematically, to the other late plays.

Likewise, if one accepts, unqualified, Bullough's summary statement that "Pericles is buffeted by fortune but in the end the goddess rewards his endurance," then again this is a play which is far different from the others. In what other play does Shakespeare present, uncriticized, a protagonist passively acted upon by outside agents? The Shakespearean hero is typically one who makes choices and who responds to the consequences of those choices. Unless weak, he is not one who simply lets things happen to him—and Pericles is not weak. According to Douglas L. Peterson, even in the section of the drama dominated by
Antiochus, Pericles has a "vital freedom"\(^7\) to choose how he responds to this imminent danger, and the choices he makes reveal his strength of character. Yet this point, so essential to an understanding of the play, had not been noticed before in criticism of the play.

Thus, assuming the play is not entirely Shakespeare's, critics have not been bothered when their interpretations show inconsistencies with Shakespeare's view of the world and of man in the other plays. Furthermore, in view of this assumption, *Pericles* has not had in general the kind of close and serious scrutiny that a carefully written work deserves. No one has as yet compared the play to its sources except in indiscriminate catalogue fashion, and no one has as yet looked at Shakespeare's transformation of the two narrative sources into the play *Pericles* as in any way a meaningful process.

But if one proceeds from the opposite assumption—that Shakespeare is the author—as I shall do in this source study, then looking more seriously beneath the surface strangeness of the play becomes necessary. And if one is to go beyond merely cataloguing Shakespeare's departures from his source material, which is as far as Bullough goes, he

must believe that the playwright intentionally and meaningfully molded this material into a work uniquely his own. Examining Pericles' many departures from Gower's and Twine's narratives with this belief, I find two basic patterns: a pattern of dramaturgical departures, necessary to transform a narrative to be read into a play to be seen and heard; and more importantly, a pattern of essential departures, necessary to transform the meaning of the sources into a totally different meaning in the play.
Chapter 2

FROM NARRATIVE TO PLAY

Countering the more common critical view that the play is loosely episodic, Douglas L. Peterson has been among the first to notice the carefully structured action of Pericles. As we attempt to work our way back in this source study into Shakespeare's creative process, we will also be looking for evidence that the playwright made deliberate and meaningful choices as he created a new work from an old story.

Practically speaking, though, there is no way that Shakespeare, even if he had no meaning of his own to give to the play, could have simply converted his source material to dialogue and presented it on the stage without disastrous results. There are certain practical difficulties that he obviously would have had to contend with. Thus, many of the discrepancies between Shakespeare's play and its two sources originate in the need to make the long narrative into something presentable on the stage. The narrative had of course to be abridged or in some instances expatiated; and, though omissions and additions could indicate thematic

\[8\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 76.\]
significance (as we shall see in the next chapter), many of Shakespeare's changes seem purely pragmatic.

We notice, first of all, that Shakespeare, when he is not departing from both of them, follows Gower more often than he follows Twine. Since, as we shall see later, the two sources are thematically similar, the playwright's preference for Gower must be accounted for in some other way. In view of the fact that Gower's verse narrative is more efficient and economical than Twine's rambling novel, at least a partial explanation of Shakespeare's preference might be that he wanted to keep his play to a dramatically effective length (either by choosing the shortest alternative or by cutting out sections of both narratives entirely).

For example, in writing the scene (II. v) taking place the morning after the banquet at Pentapolis, the playwright more closely follows Gower's version, in which the suitors write letters to the Princess, and she writes to her father that she wants only Apollonius. In this source, the father agrees to her choice and the marriage arrangements begin immediately. The scene in Pericles is very similar, though Shakespeare makes a thematic change by adding Simonides' test of the Prince (see discussion in the next chapter). Had the playwright followed Twine's version, though, his scene would have been more cumbersome and
dramatically clumsy. Thaisa in Chapter 6 of Twine's novel has a sleepless night because of her "desire . . . to learn musicke of Apollonius," so her father agrees to make the Prince her music master. Presumably, days and weeks then go by as Thaisa grows to surpass her master in music and to come to love him more and more. Her love finally causes her to fall ill, at which point three of her old suitors again begin pressuring her to marry. In front of Apollonius, she rips up their letters and only now in this version, she writes a letter to her father declaring her love for Apollonius. And, when the marriage finally takes place, Twine describes the festivities and the bride's and groom's clothing in detail. Shakespeare's handling of the wedding (very close to Gower's) is confined to a few short lines in the Prologue to Act III. Obviously, because of the prose narrative he chose to use, Twine could afford a more leisurely working out of the courtship and marriage of the Prince and Princess—however unnecessary to meaning many of his details and twists of plot may be. His form allowed this kind of freedom but Shakespeare's did not; and thus the playwright understandably chose in most instances to follow more closely the slimmer verse narrative of Gower.

---

On the other hand, it seems that it was not always possible for Shakespeare to simply accept the shorter version as it stood. Though often it was probably easy enough for him to compress a series of events into a few lines in one of his narrator's prologues, many times he found it necessary to take a line from Gower's poem and expatiate on it in a whole scene or Dumbshow and Prologue in Pericles—the play had, after all, to have action as well as narration.

So, for example, Gower's four lines in Confessio Amantis mentioning the famine in Tharsus,

And it befill that citee so
Before tyme, and than also,
Through stronge famyn, which hem lad,
Was none, that any wheate had.¹⁰

become a fifty-five line dialogue between Cleon and Dionyza in Pericles (I.iv). Of course, it is extremely difficult to distinguish clearly between thematic importance and dramatic importance, which are delicately interplayed; thus, it must be admitted that this part of the scene has some thematic importance. When, for example, Cleon, discussing the famine, mentions those mothers who had previously loved their babies but are now ready "to eat those little darlings

whom they loved, he reminds the audience of other major instances in *Pericles* when love has turned destructive (Antiochus' incest is also a kind of "devouring" of his daughter). But, in the main, these lines do not seem to say much more than the few lines in *Confessio*; they seem, rather, to merely "set the scene" for Pericles' arrival with the grain-laden ship.

Similarly, the expository lines in Gower's work concerning Marina's main defense in the brothel,

```
But such a grace god hir sent,
That for the sorowe, which she made,
Was none of hem, which power hade
To done hir any vilanie.
```

(11. 1436-39)

become *Pericles* IV.v. To "stage" Gower's lines, Shakespeare creates a dialogue, not directly suggested in the lines, between anonymous gentlemen leaving the brothel after having been converted to virtue by Marina. This scene, though of course testifying to the girl's strength of character, does not add anything thematically to Gower's lines; but the transformation of the lines into dramatic exposition was obviously necessary because of the literary form Shakespeare was working with.

Along with expatiating on lines from Gower's work.

---

Shakespeare uses another technique to transform his narrative sources into a dramatic work: the Dumbshow. Besides helping to give the play that emblematic, "speaking picture" quality necessary for delivering its moral meaning to the audience, the Dumbshows together with Gower's interpretations of them in his prologues bridge the transition from story to stage. Because the visual becomes as important as the aural when the work is performed, a Dumbshow with interpretation, such as that in Gower's Prologue to Act III, satisfies both requirements. The few lines in Confessio (ll. 1005-1010) telling how Apollonius learns of the death of Antiochus and his daughter are expatiated on in the following Dumbshow and interpretation in Pericles:

Enter Pericles and Simonides at one door, with Attendants; a Messenger meets them, kneels, and gives Pericles a letter; Pericles shows it to Simonides; the Lords kneel to him. Then enter Thaisa with child, with Lychorida, a nurse; the King shows her the letter; she rejoices; she and Pericles take leave of her father and depart with Lychorida and their Attendants. Then exeunt Simonides and the rest.

By many a dern and painful perch
Of Pericles the careful search
By the four opposing coigns
Which the world together joins
Is made with all due diligence
That horse and sail and high expense
Can stead the quest. At last from Tyre,
Fame answering the most strange inquire,
To th' court of King Simonides
Are letters brought, the tenor these:
Antiochus and his daughter dead . . .
(III. prol. 15-25)

Except for the important point that in Gower's work "god"
(rather than justice as in Pericles) cuts down Antiochus and his daughter out of "vengeance," the big change here, as in the other Dumbshows, seems to be in the direction of dramatic effectiveness.

An important point to note, though--beyond all considerations of shortening or expatiating on the source material--is that Shakespeare does not eliminate the narrative form entirely. The playwright frames each major action with the chorus-like prologues of Gower, who serves, of course, the practical purpose of summarizing whole sections of the narrative that would be too cumbersome or awkward to dramatize. But Gower's function is much more complicated, and it is very close to the Brechtian notion of "epic theater." The name Gower obviously refers back to one of the narrative writers of the sources--he is a story-teller. Thus, at the opening and closing of the play, and frequently in between, Shakespeare deliberately reminds the audience that it is listening to a story, to make-believe. Like Brecht's audiences, we are distanced from the play--there is a "break" in the illusion--and, far from losing ourselves in the courageous and fantastic adventures of the hero (as we tend to do in reading a narrative), we are free to think about what is going on. Brecht sees the drama as a means of educating people, and as we shall see shortly, this is not far off from Shakespeare's probable view. As in The Winter's Tale and many other of the comedies, here...
the audience has a role to play; and ultimately each member makes the choice of believing in the essential "truth" of the illusion or not--just as the characters decide whether to believe in some "truth" behind the illusions and appearances in their world. Thus, I disagree in part with Northrup Frye's contention that Gower's function is to remind us that we are watching a play and to put us in as uncritical a state of mind as possible. If we are acutely conscious that we are watching a play and if everything we see is as far-fetched as an old tale, it is impossible for us to remain "uncritical." This does not mean that we criticize the play for its lack of verisimilitude, but we accept the illusion (contrary to Frye's view) with fully active minds nevertheless. Certainly we listen to the play's story, but to appreciate it fully we must actively participate in it--with our reason, and ultimately, because of the play's purpose, with our faith.

Moreover, besides serving as a reminder that we are watching a play, Gower is all the while there to guide the audience, to decide, in John Arthos's words, "how much he will let them take over the play, and how much he wants

them to speak for him."13 His function is not simply the pragmatic one of holding the "ragged plot" together, as Bullough says; at one point Gower comments to the audience:

I do beseech you
To learn of me, who stands i' the gaps to teach you,
The stages of our story.
(IV.14.8-9)

Thus, far from making it uncritical, as Frye believes, the narrator is there to teach the audience and to make moral interpretations.

And we come to see that it is often Gower who helps to underscore aspects of the action that Shakespeare wants to emphasize, as in the epilogue where he shows plainly the main parallels in the action we have just witnessed:

In Antiochus and his daughter you have heard
Of monstrous lust the due and just reward.
In Pericles, his queen and daughter seen,
Although assail'd with fortune fierce and keen,
Virtue preserv'ed from fell destruction's blast,
Led on by heaven, and crown'd with joy at last.
(V.iii.84-89)

In thus emphasizing the parallels between Antiochus and his daughter and Pericles and his daughter, Gower emphasizes the twin legacies of good and evil, which man through his own choice of action can possibly fall heir to. Thus, Gower's function, though certainly practical, is also vital to our understanding of the play's thematic concerns, most

of which were undeveloped in the sources.

But though Shakespeare worked from narrative sources and purposely preserved the suggestion of a narrative, he was still creating a work for the stage, which presented another problem (less pragmatic perhaps than those suggested earlier) that is intimately tied to the playwright's conception of the function of drama. There is evidence to suggest that he shared Sidney's idea of the play as moral instructor; as Gower points out in his first prologue, the "purchase" of the play is to "make men glorious" (I.prol.9). F. D. Hoeniger, in his introduction to the Arden Pericles sees the construction of the play as serving an "explicit didactic end."¹⁴ Pericles, perhaps like the medieval miracle or saint's plays, has a distinctly moral purpose—though, as Frank Kermode cautions in Shakespeare: The Final Plays, we should not overemphasize the play's similarity to allegory. Thus, working from the narratives of writers whose main objective was to tell a good story filled with strange and various adventures, Shakespeare had somehow to change the emphasis to make the narratives into something worthwhile for the stage. Discussing Pericles' adventures, John Arthos observes:

Most of the adventures that follow in his wanderings, in his flight from an assassin and then the strange

happenings in distant parts, become increasingly absorbing but not because they reveal the skill and abilities of some Odysseus-like man escaping monsters. What leads us on is something about the peculiar consequence each adventure has for Pericles' soul. The interest that comes to govern us most is some suspense in the question of Pericles' ability to survive these evils and this suffering, and our interest in the sequences of adventures leads us always into thoughts about his sorrow.15

Thus, as we shall see in the next chapter, Shakespeare's emphasis (unlike the source writers') is upon the moral quality, rather than the quantity or variety of his protagonist's adventures—upon depth of character, rather than mere heroics.

15 Arthos, 258.
Chapter 3

APPEARANCE AND REALITY: SHAKESPEARE'S MEANING IN PERICLES

Though dramatic exigencies account for many of Shakespeare's most noticeable departures from his sources, a pattern of minor but vitally important departures which cannot be explained as dramatically necessary emerges from a close comparison of Pericles with Gower's and Twine's works. Even in following the narrative line of his sources rather carefully, Shakespeare manages to completely change the meaning of the story in his own work.

The most fundamental thematic difference between the play and its sources is a difference in the perception of reality. In the sources, Fortune (pure chance) is the prime mover; and man, riding on the wheel, is by turns the beneficiary and the victim of Fortune's whim (though Twine inconsistently refers to Fortune or to God's Providence when things turn out well). In the play, on the other hand, what appears to be the workings of pure chance in the world is shown to be really design: the gods are in their heaven and through tempests (ostensible "misfortunes"), they are testing man's faith. So the man who acts in good faith, with patient understanding that appearances often hide
reality, will eventually get his just reward. Thus despite the accidental similarity between *Pericles* and its sources, they present diametrically opposed pictures of reality. And at the core of Shakespeare's major departures from his sources (in which there is no hidden "reality"—no universal design) is the idea that reality is not always discoverable from appearances.

**The Characters**

Though Shakespeare retains the names and preserves the functions of many of the characters in his sources, his view of the world dictates that they will respond to the same or similar situations quite differently from their counterparts in the sources. The attributes of character that Marina and Pericles show when tested by the world of deceptive appearances and illusions in the play would not be essential in the world of the sources in which things are (usually as bad) as they seem.

Marina's case is the simplest. She has the qualities it takes to survive in a world where apparent misfortune is really part of the universal design, and thus she moves with confidence through the crises of her life. In the brothel scenes (which we will discuss in more detail later), the very strength of her virtue compels men to change their ways. But in contrast to Shakespeare's character, Marina's counterpart ("Thaisa" in the sources) is weak. Unlike
Marina, whose virtue is her best protection, Thaisa tells the men in the brothel about her bad fortune so that they will take pity on her. In the sources, the strength of character shown by Shakespeare's Marina would be unnecessary—there is no reason why things happen the way they do, and bad fortune can strike anyone at any time regardless of his character or his actions.

For Pericles, things are more complicated; but his strength of character, even in his weakest moments, is always evident. And, as in the case of Marina, Pericles' counterparts in the sources seem weak. When the threat of Antiochus' wrath hangs above him, Apollonius in Gower flees Tyre because he fears for his own safety, and he goes uncriticized by the author:

He knewe so well the kinges herte,  
That deth ne shulde he nought asterte,  
The kyng him wolde so pursewe.  
But he that solde his deth eschewe,  
And knewe all this tofore the honde,  
Forsake He thought his owne londe,  
That there wolde he not abide.  

(Confessio, ll. 462-69)

In Twine, we get no insight one way or another into the reasons for Apollonius' departure—the threat is there, and he simply leaves without telling anyone anything. In Pericles, on the other hand, our attention is focused not on the imminent danger, but on how the character responds to it. We are not so interested in the recurring fact that the Prince bounces back from "misfortune"—which seems to be the
whose fascination of the sources. Here we are concerned
with how well Pericles can maintain his integrity and
princely stature in the face of adversity, for adversity
in this view of the world is a test of virtue. Thus,
pursued by Antiochus, Pericles too makes the choice to flee
Tyre, but for princely, not selfish reasons:

And danger, which I feared, is at Antioch,
Whose arm seems far too short to hit me here;
Yet neither pleasure's art can joy my spirits,
Nor yet the other's distance comfort me.

And what was first but fear what might be done,
Grows elder now and cares it be not done.
And so with me: the great Antiochus,
Since he's so great can make his will his act,
Will think me speaking, though I swear to silence;

With hostile forces he'll o'erspread the land,
And with th' ostent of war will look so huge,
Amazement shall drive courage from the state,
Our men be vanquished ere they do resist,
And subjects punished that ne're thought offense;
Which care of them, not pity of myself,
Who am no more but as the tops of trees
Which fence the roots they grow by and defend them,
Makes both my body pine and soul to languish,
And punish that before he would punish.
(I.ii.8-34)

The true Prince, Pericles is chiefly concerned for his
subjects, not for himself.

Later when Pericles is shipwrecked we see another
example of how Shakespeare emphasizes his protagonist's
response to adversity rather than the "blow of Fortune"
itself. In the sources, the Prince does not take the losses
resulting from his shipwreck very well, as we see in Gower's
summary statement: "Thereof he made mochel mone" (Confessio,
1.641). In Twine, the Prince launches into a tirade the moment he makes it to land: "O most false and untrustie sea! I will choose rather to fall into the handes of the most cruell king Antiochus, than venture by thee into mine owne Countrey: thou has shewed thy spite upon me, and devoured my trustie friends . . . " (Patterne, p. 434).

But often Twine seems to stand in between the "good-luck, bad-luck" world of Gower and the providential world of Shakespeare. That is, God's Providence is responsible for the good things that happen, but it is never responsible for the bad things--that is always Fortune. So Twine's Apollonius will rail against Fortune, as he does above, and then almost as an afterthought he will think to thank Providence that he was not completely devastated. Pericles' attitude is of course quite different from either of his counterparts; he has the qualities necessary to survive in a world in which appearances deceive and in which faith is all important, and a world in which men's actions, not Fortune or even Providence, determine the particular outcome of events. Thus, when Pericles is shipwrecked, he accepts his condition (the human condition), believing that the gods are just:

Yet cease your ire, you angry stars of heaven!
Wind, rain, and thunder, remember, earthly man
Is but a substance that must yield to you;
And I, as fits my nature, do obey you.
Alas, the seas hath cast me on the rocks,
Washed me from shore to shore, and left me breath
Nothing to think on but ensuing death.
Let it suffice the greatness of your powers
To have bereft a prince of all his fortunes;
And having thrown him from your wat'ry grave,
Here to have death in peace is all he'll crave.

(II.i.1-12)

Similarly, later on when his wife dies, Pericles remains patient (after a gentle reminder from the nurse), taking comfort in his hope for the future--Marina. In contrast, Apollonius in Gower nearly despairs:

Was never man that save ne wiste
A sorowe to his sorowe liche,
Was ever amonge upon the liche.
He fill swounynge, as he that thought
His owne deth, which he sought
Unto the goddes all above . . .

(Confessio, 11.1082-87)

And he does not cease his show of grief until the master shipman reminds him of the "practical" necessity of throwing the body into the sea. No one suggests that there is any hope one way or another. Similarly, in Twine, Apollonius' response to the shipwreck is equally impatient--he is "like a mad man distracted" (p. 446), tearing his clothes and hair. And here, too, because of Twine's one-dimensional view of the world, we find no hope, through the younger generation or otherwise.

Furthermore, there is another aspect to Pericles' situation absent from the sources. The character Helicane (Helican in Confessio) is barely noticeable in Gower and does not appear at all in Twine; but in writing his play, Shakespeare makes him very important both dramatically and
thematically. In Gower, Apollonius chooses to leave Tharse of his own accord because of the imminent threat of Antiochus. In this source, Helican appears for the first time in Tharse (not in Tyre as in Pericles), and he informs Apollonius that Antiochus is lying in wait for him. But here his function is that of a casual informant, not an adviser, since he does not make any suggestions to the Prince. In Pericles, on the other hand, Helicane has quite another function—he is that wise and trustworthy counselor so familiar to Shakespearean audiences. Not only does the Prince entrust the governorship of Tyre to Helicanus, but he accepts his advice on a number of critical occasions. Unlike Helican in Gower, Helicanus specifically advises Pericles to leave Tharsus. And this difference in the function of Helican and Helicanus is traceable to the basic thematic difference between the sources and the play. In Pericles, where appearances often belie reality and things are not always as they seem, it becomes necessary that people have faith, not only in the universal design, but in other people as well. Thus, departing thematically from his sources, Shakespeare shows that Pericles, in trusting his adviser, has what it takes to cope in the kind of world depicted in this play.

The Action

Looking at the way the protagonists respond to
situations in *Pericles* and its sources, I have suggested that the theme of appearance and reality seems to have been foremost in Shakespeare's mind as he worked with his source material, and that this theme grows out of the playwright's view of reality. If we now examine the action of the play more carefully, we can begin to see further ramifications of this theme, an understanding of which is essential to fully understanding the play.

From the very beginning of the play, Shakespeare casts doubt, absent from Gower's and Twine's works, on the trustworthiness of appearances. In *Confessio*, for example, Gower is very explicit about the circumstances surrounding the "heades stonding on the gate" (1.377)—As Antiochus indicates, the skulls belong to the unlucky suitors. And Twine is likewise very explicit about them: if any suitor "through skill or learning had found out the solution of the kings question, notwithstanding hee was beheaded as though hee had answered nothing to the purpose: and his head was set up at the gate to terrifie others that should come" (p. 427). Before he ever reads about Apollonius' adventures in Antioch, the reader of the sources is aware of what the heads signify. Shakespeare, on the other hand, by having the narrator Gower return from the dead ("ashes ancient"), makes it appear at first as though the skulls are merely props appropriate to the region from which the narrator
has come. Only at the end of the Prologue to the first act do we find out the truth. In this way, the playwright introduces an ambiguity in the nature of appearances; for, as we finally discover, "yon grim looks" (I.prol.40) really belong to the dead suitors.

Moreover, this idea of the untrustworthy nature of appearances is further reinforced in the opening action of the play. In both sources, the authors emphasize that Antiochus' daughter is a victim, and they dwell upon her suffering. It is Antiochus who is alone the evil one. Gower, for example, makes it very clear that it is only the father who is getting pleasure out of this incestuous relationship:

Thus hat this kynge all that hym liste
Of his likinge and his plesance,
And last in suche a continuance,
And suche delite he toke therin
Him thought that it was no sin.
(Confessio, 11.350-54)

But in Shakespeare's play, though the daughter is initially taken by surprise, she soon becomes an evil participant. In the passage corresponding to Gower's above, we see very clearly that the playwright wants to emphasize a shared guilt:

Bad child, worse father, to entice his own
To evil should be done by none.
But custom what they did begin
Was with long use accounted no sin.
(I.prol.27-30)
Unlike the daughter in the sources, this one is clearly not an innocent victim. And this discrepancy is significant, since it seems to indicate that Shakespeare is making a distinction not made in the sources between the daughter's real evil nature and her appearance to the world. In both sources, the authors have Apollonius apply directly to Antiochus for his daughter's hand without ever seeing her; whereas Shakespeare has the daughter appear before Pericles "apparel'd like the spring" (I.i.12)—a picture of innocence and virtue. Thus, in this way her real lack of innocence and virtue is all the more horrendous—and the trustworthiness of appearances is severely undercut.

The Value of the Individual

The theme of appearance and reality is of further significance in relation to assaying the value of the individual in Shakespeare's view. When Pericles is shipwrecked, his rusty armor (not even mentioned in the sources) is also washed up on the shore. The obvious conclusion one might draw from seeing this rarely used suit might be that its owner is not very skilled at arms—and this is what the spectators at the tournament likely believe. But Pericles' rusty armor, although revealing his ancestral identity, belies it in another way: he is not the "mean Knight" that his armor makes him appear to be. For Shakespeare (and this idea is not at all prominent in the sources), only action is
the proof of a man's worth. Thus, Pericles must eliminate
the discrepancy between appearance and reality by proving
that he is worthy of his nobility (by excelling at the
lists, by showing his skill in the arts, and later by
standing up to Simonides' feigned accusation).

Later in the play, this idea of the relationship
between appearance and reality and the value of the indivi-
dual is called up again in Cerimon's speech about apparent
and real virtue, which also has no analogue in Gower's or
Twine's works:

I held it ever
Virtue and cunning were endowments greater
Than nobleness and riches: careless heirs
May the two latter darken and expend,
But immortality attends the former,
Making a man a god. 'Tis known, I ever
Have studied physic, through which secret art,
By turning o'er authorities, I have,
To me and to my aid the blest infusions
That dwells in vegetives, in metals, stones;
And I can speak of the disturbances
That nature works, and of her cures; which gives me
A more content in course of true delight
Than to be thirsty after tottering honor,
Or tie my treasure up in silken bags,
To please the Fool and Death.

(III.ii.26-42)

Here the doctor is making a distinction between real virtue
and the apparent virtue of wealthy or titled men who do not
prove themselves otherwise. He also stresses here that he
is a doctor who has for long years studied his art. But
his art is a natural one that he cultivates through
experience—and, contrary to Howard Felperin's view in
"Shakespeare's Miracle Play," he cannot perform magic or miracles. We see this to be the case in the opening of this scene in the discussion of the shipwrecked man whom Cerimon could not save. Shakespeare seems to have inserted this rather curious discussion, appearing nowhere in the sources (which rarely make such fine distinctions), in order to show that Cerimon is a man of real virtue and ability but with limited powers, unlike his counterpart in the sources who seems to bring the Prince's wife back from the dead miraculously—it is a "great mervaile" (Confessio, 1. 1166). Thus, while in the sources we are always impressed with the mysterious powers beyond man's control that are at work in the world, in Shakespeare's play it is always men's actions that are important in the particular way that events are worked out.

Similarly, in another scene which is quite unlike its analogues in Twine and Gower, Shakespeare shows how Marina, through her actions, proves her real virtue. In handling the sources, the playwright exploits the unexplored possibilities of the theme of appearance and reality in the

---

16 Howard Felperin, "Shakespeare's Miracle Play," Shakespeare Quarterly, 18 (1967), 363-74: "In a scene strikingly reminiscent of the raising of Lazarus in the Digby Mary Magdalene, Cerimon raises Thaisa, who vows herself to Diana's temple, supposing her husband dead. The entire scene, with its magic and music is otherworldly, and Cerimon is clearly a descendent of the miracle-play Christ." (p. 369).
scene in which the innocent girl maintains her innocence even in a brothel. The theme is especially emphasized in the dialogue between Lysimachus and Marina in which the governor says that the girl must be a "gamester" since the house she is in "proclaims" her to be a "creature of sale" (IV.vi.81-84). Marina's task is to overcome this false appearance in much the same way that her father does--by proving her true nobility (in her case, by preserving her virtue while healing the city and by showing her skill in the arts). Moreover, Shakespeare uses Lysimachus' visiting the brothel to further explore the theme of appearance and reality: Lysimachus is governor of Mytiline (he is supposed to be noble), and yet he acts ignobly by visiting the brothel. Lest we miss it, Marina underscores this discrepancy in her shocked remarks to the governor: "Do you know this to be a place of such resort, and will come into 't? I hear say you're of honorable parts and are the governor of this place." (IV.vi.85-88). And she continues: "If you were born to honor, show it now; If put upon you, make the judgment good / That thought you worthy of it." (IV.vi.99-101). Thus, she asks him to prove his integrity, to prove his appearance of nobility is real by ceasing to practice his vice. In the sources, this scene looks quite different. In Gower, Lysimachus' counterpart does not even visit the brothel. And in Twine, although the counterpart does visit it, no such
conversation ensues, since the governor takes pity on Tharsia (Marina's counterpart), gives her money, and leaves. Thus, in contrast to the play, the possible theme of appearance and reality is never explored. This scene in the play has troubled many critics, some of whom agree with Bullough, that Lysimachus' behavior is "highly ambiguous." 17 But though I agree that we cannot say for certain whether Lysimachus in the play visits the brothel for the usual reason or for some more noble one, the ambiguity itself is meaningful. For again, it is only in the play that we are always brought back to the problem of trusting in the appearances of things.

Man's Limited Judgment

Shakespeare explores another idea inherent in the theme of appearance and reality which is at least equal in importance to the idea that we cannot judge a man by what he appears to be: the idea that we cannot judge events by what they appear to be. In the sources, there is no question the Apollonius, quite undeservingly, is the victim of Fortune's whim (which is at the basis of all events):

Fortune hath ever been mutable
And maie no while stonde stable.
For nowe it hieth, nowe it loweth,
Nowe stant upright, nowe overthroweth,

17 Bullough, p. 366.
Nowe full of blisse, and nowe of bale,
As in the tellynge of my tale.

(Confessio, 11.592-98)

And Fortune's wheel similarly governs events in Twine's novel: "There was never yet any thing certaine or permanent in this mortall life, . . . And when wee thinke ourselves surest in the top of joy, then tilt wee downe soonest into the bottom of sorrow." (p. 477). But Shakespeare, by casting doubt from the very beginning on the trustworthiness of appearances, makes it doubtful that his hero is really an undeserving victim and that bad Fortune, rather than justice and design, is the cause of all events.

Naturally, as perhaps anyone in his circumstances would, Pericles questions the justice of events (Why are Antiochus and his daughter not punished? Why has my wife been taken from me?). But unlike Apollonius', his questions do not lead to the conclusion that all is worthless in a world of chance, but to a reaffirmation of his faith by accepting his condition with equanimity and working from that point on. Thus, whereas the fall of Antiochus and his daughter is seen as the work of indiscriminate Fortune ("nowe it hieth, nowe it loweth") in Gower's work, the same event in Pericles is seen as evidence of universal justice. And whereas Twine's Apollonius is like a "mad man distracted" (p. 446) when his wife dies, and Gower's hero is desperate and wishes to die; Pericles patiently accepts the death and
consoles himself with the hope for renewal which his child promises for him. Thus, we see that Apollonius in the sources accepts the apparent injustice of the world as real and acts on it, while Pericles accepts only his finitude and waits for further proof of the validity of appearances.

In this light, we can begin to understand the significance of one of Shakespeare's major departures from his sources—the omission of the Prince's revenge. In both Gower and Twine, the protagonist, learning what Strangulio and Dionyse have done to his daughter, has them murdered. In Twine, he goes even further, throwing the bawd into a fire and, assisted by his daughter Tharsia, handing out "appropriate" rewards and punishments to the people in Machilenta. But in Pericles, though the Prince intends to take revenge ("My purpose was for Tharsus, there to strike / The inhospitable Cleon"—V.i.255-56), Diana's dream vision intervenes and directs him to Ephesus first. Pericles has come to believe in his daughter and now he believes in Diana, who as Goddess of the Moon has controlled the seas upon which he has suffered through so many tempests. So he trusts and obeys the goddess, and as a result, he is reunited with his wife. Now having recovered all that he has lost, Pericles discovers what appearances have largely concealed: the gods, though working on an unknown timetable, are just. Thus, the reason that the Prince in the sources seeks revenge
and Pericles does not again derives from the fundamental
thematic difference between the sources and the play: a
man who accepts apparent universal injustice as real will
have no scruples about creating a justice of his own, but a
man with a healthy skepticism of appearances will not be so
hasty.

**The Nature of Reality**

At this point, we should examine more closely the
nature of "reality" in *Pericles* and its sources. We have
suggested that in the play there is often a split between
appearance and reality, while in the sources appearance and
reality are one. Hence, there is a level of reality in the
play that is absent from the sources—but what is the nature
of this reality? A possible answer is suggested in the
scenes already mentioned in which Simonides tests Pericles
to see if he is worthy of his daughter's hand. The first
two tests (at the lists and in the dining hall) are in some
ways analogous to incidents in Gower's and Twine's works
(where Apollonius joins in the games and later performs at
dinner), but in these, the hero is not really being tested—
he is merely participating. Moreover, the last test, in
which Simonides accuses Pericles of being a traitor in
order to test the latter's courage, has absolutely no
analogue in either source. Again, we have here an example
of appearances concealing reality. But this departure seems
to suggest something else (not suggested in the sources) about the nature of reality: if Pericles can be tested by his future father-in-law without knowing it, is it not possible that man can be tested by the gods without knowing it? If Simonides can feign wrath ostensibly without cause, is it not possible that the gods can hide their real purpose behind a "tempestuous" exterior—that what appears in life to be adversity is really a test of virtue?

In any case, if a quality necessary for survival in the world of the sources is a thick skin, a quality necessary in Shakespeare's world is a healthy skepticism of appearances. But skepticism is not the only quality necessary—and it may be totally inadequate. With another turn of the screw, Shakespeare further complicates his statement about the nature of the world in Pericles: while appearances can be deceptive, they can also be deceptively undeceptive. In Gower, the arrival of Apollonius' ship with the grain, for example, is seen as simply that by Strangulio and Dionyza. (In Twine, Apollonius arrives unseen.) In Pericles, on the other hand, there is again a possible discrepancy between appearance and reality: the ship may be another "Troyan horse" (I.iv.93). So upon being informed that the ship appears peaceable ("by semblance / Of their white flags display'd, they bring us peace"—I.iv.71-72), the skeptical Cleon doubts the validity of these appearances. But he is
wrong, for this time appearances do not belie reality—Pericles’ ship is really as peaceable as it appears. What the playwright seems to be saying is that the only way one can know what to make of appearances is to wait patiently and, for the moment, to accept them on faith (a faith founded on a belief in the essential rightness of the universal design).

This point is very clear in the important scene in which Pericles and Marina are reunited. Even the casual reader, comparing the play and its sources, cannot fail to notice that Shakespeare eliminates the violence of the sources in rewriting this scene for his own work. In contrast to the scene in the play, where Pericles pushes Marina back, Gower has Apollonius smite his daughter and Twine has him kick her in the face and make her bleed. Whatever else we might say, Shakespeare is obviously toning down the harshness of the scene. And it is important to note here also that, unlike his counterparts in the sources, Pericles never completely loses his civility although his finer qualities are severely tested.

In this scene, Shakespeare seems to be making a more subtle psychological statement than Gower and Twine do. As Peterson points out in *Time, Tide, and Tempest*, the emphasis here is on how Pericles gradually comes to listen to Marina and then to look at her, as he moves toward believing what
she says in the face of its dubious credibility. But just as in the scene with the grain-laden ship, here again appearances do not belie reality; at the moment that Pericles looks at her finally, Marina comments (and there is no analogue for this in either source): "I was mortally brought forth, and am / No other than I appear" (V.i.107-8). Yet why should Pericles believe in Marina any more than he should have believed in Antiochus' daughter or Dionyza, for example, who turn out to be quite different from what they appeared to be? The answer is that there is no reason why Pericles or anyone else should choose to believe in one set of appearances and not another. That is, any rational sorting out of appearances into believable and unbelievable is impossible, since man has only appearances to work with.

What we end up with is an idea that Shakespeare is concerned with in all of the late plays: the importance of finally trusting in something, even though we risk trusting in false appearances. Thus, it is a refusal to trust on the parts of Cymbeline, his father, and Posthumous that sets off the potentially destructive action in Cymbeline, and a similar refusal on the part of Leontes that nearly brings his downfall in The Winter's Tale. Yet, the worlds of these plays are similarly characterized by deceptive appearances. This idea of trust could hardly have concerned Gower or Twine, though, since their characters have only to expect
the worst in order to be "prepared" for what Fortune has to offer. But for Shakespeare's characters, at least those who are patient enough to believe in a Providence behind the apparent randomness of Fortune's blows, being prepared means being ready to trust in events and in people—not indiscriminately, but always with the hope that things might be as good or better than they seem.

Finally we see that the notion of reality in the sources is simple and limited—things are as they seem; while Shakespeare's notion is complicated—things may or may not be as they seem. So, in the latter view, one must be skeptical of appearances and at the same time trust them. And if this notion is paradoxical, it may be because Shakespeare more accurately reflects in his work the way things really are: we, as finite men, must never lose hold of the fact that appearances are often deceptive; and yet, if we are to get along in life, we must everyday accept appearances on faith. Thus, if Shakespeare is more realistically skeptical of appearances than the authors of his sources, he is also more optimistic about the reality of divine justice and the power of man's faith to sustain, and even restore, him throughout his life.
LIST OF WORKS CITED
LIST OF WORKS CITED


Kane, Robert J. "A Passage in Pericles." Modern Language Notes, 68 (1953), 483-84.

