“OUR GREAT CAPTAIN’S CAPTAIN”: SHAKESPEARE’S MILITARY SPOUSES AND THE WAR ON TERROR

By

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This thesis examines the military spouses in Shakespeare's *Othello*, *1 Henry IV*, *Julius Caesar*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Macbeth*, and *Coriolanus* through a post-9/11 presentist and feminist critical framework. Its aim is to understand what these plays have to say about the role of military families and cultural constructions of masculinity within the plays and within modern culture. It also highlights modern issues relevant to military families, such as domestic violence, PTSD, infertility, war crimes, the treatment of queer servicemembers, and the civil-military divide. To situate these plays in an American War on Terror context, this research relies on memoirs written by modern day military spouses and Department of Defense issuances and reports. It underlines its arguments using close reading and performance history, including statements by artists. This thesis argues that these characters are vital to understanding the plays, and by understanding these plays we can better understand issues still present in our culture and military. Read together across the plays, Shakespeare's military spouses create a discourse that recognizes the role of military culture in national defense but criticizes components of the hegemonic masculinity, promoting the idea of a martial identity that permits military defense without the dangers of toxic masculinity.

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"Our **General's** Wife is Now the General"**: An Introduction**

This thesis stems, in large part, from a fixation on Kate Percy. Reading Kate's words about her husband in 1.3 reframed how I saw the entirety of *1 Henry IV*. I followed Kate to Portia and Volumnia, and from there a relationship became clear. These women, and several other Shakespeare characters, filled a social role now colloquially referred to as "army wives."[1] That understanding led to the question: what is the role of military spouses in Shakespeare? *Othello*, *1 Henry IV*, *Julius Caesar*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Macbeth*, and *Coriolanus*, each contain two military spouses – Emilia and Desdemona, Lady Percy and Lady Mortimer, Portia and Calpurnia, Patroclus and Andromache, Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff, and Volumnia and Virgilia. Although not all of these characters are married, all the subjects engage in or have been in significant romantic relationships with military men and are themselves tied closely to the military culture, and most of these partners construct some or all of their identity through those relationships. These partners are not civilians but are attached to the military community. As such, they can be examined through their participation in that social role. The characters in this social role in Shakespeare provide an examination of their own role, but also of the role of their male partners, and in so doing they criticize the dangerous elements of their culture's construction of manhood and of the role of soldier.

It is easy to see why one would take an interest in Shakespeare's warriors. They are often shown at the center of his dramas. They perform incredible feats with sweeping

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[1]Current United States military documents and websites use the term "military spouse." Angela Ricketts claims "spouse" was substituted for "wife" in the 1990s in an effort of political correctness to address the fact that some servicewomen had married men (11). This examination will employ the term spouse as it has been accepted by the military and the research examines a pair wherein the warrior's significant other is neither a wife nor a woman.
While the military tends to rely on legal recognitions, as this research focuses on a constructed social role, this research will move beyond legalities. The distinction between the law and the role of military spouse will be discussed later in this introduction.

ramifications, from putting down invasions to leading rebellions. Standing beside them, the spouses are easily ignored.[2] The contemporary treatment of modern military spouses facilitates this ignoring, as we convince ourselves these people, usually women, are too external to the situations that matter to have anything to contribute. Kristin Henderson, a marine chaplain's wife who writes about military spouses, was once asked by a civilian reporter, "Does it ever bother your husband that […] you're writing about the wives instead of the real story?" As she notes, "The question itself speaks volumes" (*While* 4). This thesis will challenge the conception that the spouses are external to the conversation and that the comments of these spouses are immaterial to the important issues at work.

This thesis will read Shakespeare's military spouses against a background of the post-9/11 US military. Military spouses, in the United States, are part of a cohesive military culture, which influences their own sense of identity as well as how they relate to the soldiers, the military, and civilians; that cultural difference appears in Shakespeare's military spouses and is part of the reason they should be read against each other – read strictly in isolation, the effects of military culture are obscured. Angela Ricketts insists the spouses form a "sisterhood," linked by the shared experience of losing their spouse to deployment, of trying to keep their lives and families together in the face of a spouse's absence, of fearing that the spouse will never return and the aftermath when they do. The bond they form is vital to their mutual survival and stronger than ordinary friendship (Ricketts 38). That shared experience and relationship explains the importance of reading the military spouses inside the plays, and between the plays, with and against each other. The wives also engage in the process of inculcating the new military spouses into the fold, judging their performance as military spouses, and encouraging them to perform a certain kind of support and gender performance.

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[2] Bruce Smith's *Shakespeare and Masculinity*. Robin H. Well's *Shakespeare on Masculinity*. Jan Kott's *Shakespeare our Contemporary*.

Wives from that culture will engage with combat and with cultures of hyper-masculinity differently than non-military individuals. These elements of contemporary Western military culture will bear on the readings of Shakespeare's military spouses.

Examining these characters through their shared role, military spouse, exposes connections that are otherwise readily missed. Psychoanalytic critics like Janet Adelman and Coppélia Kahn see a "bad mother" connection between Lady Macbeth and Volumnia but ignore the links those women have to other military spouses or even to their army wife counterpart in their own play. Judith Cook compared the women of *Coriolanus* and of *Julius Caesar* as "historical women" but did not then match them against other military spouses, nor did she use "army wives" as one of her categories of women. In "Anti-Historians: Women's Roles in Shakespeare's Histories," Rackin examines several women from histories, but she does not reference military spouses. The similarities between Kate Percy and Portia are discussed occasionally, such as by David Bevington (173 note 34), while comparisons to Calpurnia are not. No critics probe the connections that exist between Kate Percy and Volumnia, and none question possible connections between Virgilia and Lady Mortimer. None of these women are discussed in comparison to Patroclus, partly because he would rarely be listed with the spouses and partly because the spouses are not read against each other. These links between these characters only become visible in light of their shared vocation and social role. With those connections overlooked, the dialogue perceivable and examinable between their plays disappears as well.

This research relies on a military-focused presentist framework (more on that later) focused on unsettling paradigms about these narratives, characters, and plays. My approach may best be summarized by borrowing the words of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) psychiatrist Johnathan Shay, describing his work on *The Iliad*: it is not my intention here to make Shakespeare "sexy, exciting, modern, or 'relevant,'"; rather, I have coupled

Shakespeare and the narratives of these spouses "not to tame, appropriate, or co-opt them but to promote a deeper understanding of both, increasing the reader's capacity to be disturbed by [Shakespeare] rather than softening the blow of the [spouses'] stories" (xx-xxi).[3] This approach will introduce new information about the lives of military families to hopefully unsettle preconceptions about these characters and thereby the plays in which they exist. In order to align the textual readings with the modern experience, this thesis relies on the statements of modern military spouses and documents from the modern military as evidence, such as official military policies and records on domestic violence. This evidence will be used to enhance and support textual analyses to examine the issues raised by the characters. The endeavor is to apply the knowledge to the text and thereby come away with a different reading of the plays, which should provide a more nuanced engagement with the world, enriched by an understanding of its inhabitants. By reading these plays against the modern US military context, I have unsettled some of my own preconceptions about modern American culture and its relationship with its military, and this research will do the same for readers.

This thesis will not present the plays in chronological order. There is, instead, a thematic clustering. *Othello*, which involves a new military spouse and deals with acculturation, comes first. *1 Henry IV* and *Julius Caesar*, which have some similarities of language and themes, also appear together. *Troilus and Cressida*, *Macbeth*, and *Coriolanus*, all of which involve spouses whose own gender performance is called into question, appear together. *Coriolanus*, which involves one of Shakespeare's most senior military independents, comes at the end. The individual issues of these chapters are examined below.

[3] As an artist aiming to find the modern relevancies of classic plays, Polly Findlay described a desire to "defibrillate" texts for audiences mired in familiar expectations, although she herself described the term as crude ("Director Talk"). Though the language differs, the intent seems similar.

This analysis begins with *Othello*. It seeks to dismantle the victim-blaming that appears in some critical interpretations of the play.[4] It will unpack the way in which the men, through their toxic masculinity, bring this negative outcome onto themselves and inflict it on the victimized women. Desdemona and Emilia's stories open up the struggle of women experiencing domestic violence. Indeed, Emilia makes most sense when one sees her as a person with Battered Person Syndrome. When understood in its military context, one can see that this story of domestic murder is someone's nightmare scenario.[5] Horrors like those shown in *Othello* actually happen to people. The military has policies in place to respond to domestic violence concerns and hopefully to prevent further harm; such policies need to be understood and supported. Taking this information into account enhances one's understanding of the play.

For *1 Henry IV*, this thesis aims to challenge the erasure and minimization of certain characters. In particular, it will oppose the consistent erasure of Lady Mortimer, particularly by bringing forward what she contributes to the play (both in terms of thematic content and plot) which is sacrificed by manufacturing her absence, and the cutting down of Kate Percy by emphasizing how she deepens the characterization of Hotspur. In particular, this reading will consider the modern parallels between the Mortimers and military couples composed of a citizen and a foreign national, an issue tied up with questions of loyalty and trust, which run through other plays in this thesis, like *Julius Caesar*. What does it say about a man and a soldier that he married someone from the "other" side? This reading will also counter the practice of presenting Hotspur as a buffoon or war-machine, particularly by understanding

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[4] Bruce Smith, for example, argues that "Without Desdemona, Othello would still be a respected military hero. Tragedy portrays the female other as a destructive force," completely bypassing the role Iago plays in the outcome of the situation (*Shakespeare* 113). Bradley makes reference to contemporary victim-blaming attitudes towards the treatment of Desdemona (202n1,208n1).

[5] After four domestic murders at Fort Bragg, Tanya Biank, the reporter who broke the story in the *Fayetteville Observer*, "started getting phone calls at home from Army wives concerned for their own safety. [… She] began to keep a women's hotline number in [her] Rolodex at work as well as on [her] nightstand" to give to callers (prologue).

him through his relationship with Kate Percy. Akin to the discussion of Battered Person Syndrome, the examination will bring forward that Hotspur suffers from PTSD, which is an important concern for the US military. In that sense, Hotspur's uncle and father resemble military and civilian leaders (like Donald Trump) who have a non-medical understanding of mental illness and encourage action without regard for consequences, whom the spouses in their support of mental health are opposing. Reading *1 Henry IV* against a modern context enables one to better understand the struggles of the characters, their modern-day counterparts, and the cultural and policy systems that contribute to their struggles.

For *Julius Caesar*, this research foregrounds that these men are not just politicians but also military leaders who fought in the civil wars. It will also push back against the consistent minimization of Andromache and Calpurnia.[6] This research will demonstrate the importance of these women to the text, emphasizing their knowledge as military spouses, Portia's insistence on her own stoic power and military lineage, a quality she shares with other military spouses, and the struggles of being infertile, given a military spouse's role in the military's self-perpetuating culture. Understanding these women as partners and as members of the military culture will better illuminate their contributions and push back against the sense that they are weak, secondary, or trivial.

Troilus and Cressida is unique among these plays for including a male military spouse. The treatment of Patroclus as Achilles' partner already counters the insistence of some that he is just Achilles' 'very close friend.'[7] Understanding Patroclus as Achilles' partner, the text opens up when examined against a modern background of Don't Ask Don't

[6] Even directors like Nicholas Hytner have encouraged not taking these women seriously, including mocking Caesar for listening to Calpurnia's dreams when Calpurnia is demonstrably *right* ("Nicholas Hytner").
[7] David Bevington refers to Achilles and Patroclus as sharing a "deep and eroticisized friendship" ("Introduction" 28). While some might choose to interpret their relationship, at least in the *Iliad*, as a queerplatonic bond, Bevington downgrades it to "another response to the need for human closeness in an anarchic world" ("Introduction" 28).

Tell (DADT)[8] and queer[9] servicemembers and military spouses. Examining Patroclus in this light brings forward the relationship between military service and recognized status as citizens and the struggle of queer servicemembers and their partners to be fully appreciated as contributors to the wellbeing of the nation-state. Also, Andromache, who like Calpurnia experiences prophetic dreams, mirrors the stress military spouses experience due to their soldier's service, which can manifest in disquiet, mental illness, or in other ways. While critics may feel inclined to dismiss the anxiety and the prophetic dreams of Shakespeare's military spouses,[10] the fact that dreaming like Andromache and Calpurnia's persists indicates that it ought to be more fully examined as part of the lived experience of the characters and military spouses, rather than being written off as a peculiarity. Each of these spouses can be understood more clearly when understood as a spouse having experiences common to other servicemembers and spouses.

The reading of *Macbeth* examines actions characters take but also how they are seen. Lady Macbeth is not a creature of unbridled or random ambition. Lady Macbeth's ambition becomes more comprehensible in a military world of rankism and a woman's status being

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[8] DADT was a compromise instead of repealing the prior ban on queer servicemembers. Under this policy, the military was not supposed to ask if people were queer, but a servicemember would be fired for a statement, act, or marriage that demonstrated that the servicemember was queer.

[9] This discussion employs the term 'queer' as an encompassing term for non-cisgender-heterosexual people. The term appears to have its origins for queer people in its definition as 'strange.' Early uses for queer people can be found in 1894, and it picked up usage in the early 20th century. Although this term was originally used as a slur against non-heterosexual individuals, during the queer rights movements of the late 20th century, the language was reclaimed as an identifier by members of the LGBT community. Who the first to suggest reclaiming the term was and when that occurred is likely lost to history, but by the 21st century the reclamation, at least in the US, has been quite thorough.
Though 'queer' is a reclaimed slur, there are not necessarily a host of preferable options for queer people. While 'homosexual' may be considered more palatable in some circles, it has its own origins in the late 19th century with the invention of heterosexuality and still for some carries the unseemly quality of medicalization. That language is also considered by many to reflect a white and western sensibility to sex and gender that queer can bypass. Further, because of their late invention, 'homosexual' and 'heterosexual' may not adequately address a time when one's sexual behavior was not a central aspect of one's personal identity. While a modern audience may think they understand the term 'sodomite,' they are often imagining a more narrowly confined term than that was. It is therefore harder to use in a modern setting. The broadness of queer allows it to apply more readily.

[10] "Women are relegated to the margins of the male world, as they generally are in *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*, for example, exhorting their men to be prudent and observant of prophecy. Andromache, like Calpurnia in *Julius Caesar*, has a limited role in a scene of futile pleading as immediate prelude to the disaster that women best foresee" (Bevington 32). Also, see above references to Hytner.

tied to her soldier's. Her condition also throws light on un(der)employment in military spouses and the relationship between un(der)employment and rankism – prejudice based on rank – which can feed her personal ambition. In this respect, bringing forward the performance history or the views of actresses improves the understanding of the character, because actresses understand that a person rarely wakes up and says, "I think I'm gonna be evil today," and they therefore tend to offer a more nuanced reading of the character. However, the theatre has its own issue with female diminishment: Lady Macduff has historically been removed from playscripts. This thesis will examine what she brings to the play in terms of emotional depth and nuance in the story arc of Macduff, particularly in his contemplations on violent revenge and possible war crimes. By reading these women against a background of the US military, one can see their engagement with status in their culture and the ways in which they can encourage certain kinds of behavior in soldiers and comment on the violence of their culture.

Much like Lady Macbeth, Volumnia is also more than a "bad mother." Virgilia, likewise, is more than the absent cipher often described. This analysis will bring out the depth and complexity of both characters. In understanding these women as military spouses, one can better appreciate their criticism of the civilians who control their community but do not understand their lives or share in their sacrifices. My continued examination of *Coriolanus* caused me to question America's growing civil-military divide. It became increasingly clear to me that the divide, coupled with the self-perpetuating culture of the all-volunteer military, had resulted in the creation of a military caste that bore most of the responsibility of defending the country while being, in some cases, looked down on by the rest of it. As this has disturbed me, I hope to bring some of this disturbance to the reader through a presentist reading.

Taken together, Shakespeare's military spouses create a discourse that recognizes the role of military culture in national defense but criticizes the ideals of hegemonic masculinity, promoting the idea of a martial identity that permits military defense without the dangers of hyper-masculinity. Attention should be paid to the issues these characters raise.

Conceptual Framework

This research pursues a military-focused presentism. It employs a presentism grounded in the text with a particular focus on the modern US military as an interpretive context. Interest in the present, focus on anachronistic materials relevant to a modern audience, makes sense for works that came from theatre, an art form that of necessity exists in the present.

The term presentism originated as a pejorative description meaning a person (usually a historian) who applied a modern concept to the analysis of historical material. However, the epithet has been "reclaimed" as a self-descriptor (Egan 39).[11] Critics have come to embrace this perspective. Not all presentists have been bold anachronists. Hugh Grady, an originator of critical presentism, in *Shakespeare's Universal Wolf* argued that "although the concepts [he is] working with are […] products of nineteenth- and twentieth-century thinking, applying them to the early modern period is not 'anachronistic' if the social forms which recent theories have described in our time already existed, or were coming into existence, in a period before theoretical discourse provided clear concepts to describe them" (54-55). Grady, then, justifies his position by presenting his work as having not strayed too far from the historicist fold. As Ewan Fernie notes, "Grady's definition and practice of presentism are essentially historical," even as it is "enabled by his crucial recognitions that the past can be

[11] DiPietro and Grady argue that Presentism, "was not intended as a term designating only one specific critical methodology. It was meant instead to be a 'big tent' under which a number of different contemporary critical tendencies could be grouped — tendencies with the shared view that a wholly historicist approach to literary criticism is reductive of the complexities of reading in the present" (*Urgency* 3-4). Under that view, any number of things can be considered presentism. Conversely, though, such broadness prevents a discipline from really being fine-tuned. After all, if everything is presentism, then any change is at most a lateral move under the same heading.

seen only from the perspective of the present," and it relies on a belief that "Shakespeare's position at one end of modernity is structurally similar to our own equally transitional situation at the other" (171). However, modern presentism moved beyond historicist self-justification. Instead, it embraced modern concerns, like 20th-century feminist theory and evolving environmental consciousness, and acknowledged that "the questions we ask of a literary text will always be shaped by our own concerns" (Hawkes 118).

I am not the only writer looking to renew presentism. Katherine Steele Brokaw, in 2018, said that "after New Historicism, we need a new presentism that is socially engaged, that is looking for the marginal and the neglected." Presumably she means a new presentism beyond the "new presentism" of Fernie and Gajowski that in 2013 John D. Staines argued emerged to counter the hegemony of historicism.

Despite the many contributions to critical history produced by previous presentism, much modern presentism relies heavily on analogy.[12] DiPietro's and Grady's analysis of *Titus Andronicus*, for example, reads the play through the lens of western islamophobia and anti-Arab sentiment by treating Aaron as analogous to Arab Muslims. Post-colonial criticism, which relies on modern conceptions of race and identity, often treats Caliban as a representative of all subaltern peoples, which requires analogous reasoning, as the character is, in the text, the son of an Algerian colonizer. Jan Kott's equation of Titania and Bottom with interracial couples in Paris walks a line between analogizing and projecting (81-2). While DiPietro and Grady suggest that "forging analogies between the felt immediacies of our world now and the historically situated texts of Shakespeare's plays, […] will help to forestall a deradicalized historicism by emphasizing, rather than the facts of the past, the ever-shifting nature of historical context and, rather than the inevitable inescapability of our

[12] Not all presentists favor analogies. Others, like Evelyn Gajowski, use the term more in the sense of applying modern concepts. Gajowski's "The Presence of the Past" suggests that any application of modern feminist or race theory is *inherently* presentist.

presentness, its necessity," I propose that a focus on analogy undercuts the idea that the texts themselves are already relevant (5). One does not have to bend the text to see how it matters; when placed in an appropriate modern context, the relevancy appears on its own.

Furthermore, if one finds relevance largely in analogy, one risks the audience missing the analogy and thus missing the meaning of a production. Critic Robert Reid, when discussing a production of *Julius Caesar* argued that, given the relevance of the themes, "it's unnecessary to hit playgoers over their collective head with the play's continued relevance." The unfortunate reality is that anything short of putting the players in appropriate dress and setting, which some might term "hitting the audience over the head," risks being misunderstood as separate from the time of performance. That, arguably, was a stumbling block for the political commentary of the RSC's 2017 *Julius Caesar*. *Telegraph* reviewer Dominic Cavendish argued that while audiences "don't necessarily need the flashily contemporary" to grasp the relevance, the aesthetic "creates a distancing effect" wherein "You can draw parallels, if you're minded to, with the modern-day, but there's so little insistence you do so that it's as if the RSC is turning its back on the daunting political upheavals of our age: the return of autocracy, the savage, chaotic aftermath of civil uprisings." Unless one *chose* to see the production as political, one would see a profoundly apolitical production. Mark Shenton, writing for *The Stage*, described it as "a throwback" and a "resolutely old-fashioned production." That is the inevitable result of failing to bring one's view to the audience. The analogy did not carry through.

To avoid the problems of analogy, this research focuses not on analogizing but on grounding each argument in the text. Instead of battling the text by attempting to distort it out of all right meaning (or pretend the words one says have no meaning),[13] the analysis in

[13] Daniel Kramer's production of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* at the Globe sought to comment on 21st-century culture not through modern dress or grounding in the present but through a fantasticalized alternate reality best recognized by those who spent adolescence fetishizing *Nightmare Before Christmas*, circuses/harlequinades, and Panic! At the Disco. In that production, the poison was replaced by a gun, but they

this thesis will engage in close-reading and endeavor to be in close relationship with the text. As an example of battling the text, Julie Taymor's *Tempest* tries to position Caliban as a version of all subaltern people, but she casts a Beninese actor and she leaves in the line stating Caliban was the descendent of an Algerian colonizer, both of which are specific in the way her analogy does not wish to be. Another battle against the text was the 2017 Sam Wanamaker *Othello*, which included backbends around any reference to the Barbary coast. They changed any line or word that could *possibly* refer to that place or suggest a North African Othello, not because the text does not support a North African Othello but because they were afraid it might. Grounding analyses within the text enables the readings to be even more politically engaged, by bringing out instead of glossing over, or treating as something one must manufacture, the relevance of Shakespeare.

In this discussion, when modern concepts, such as PTSD or Battered Person Syndrome, are referred to the terms are not invoked as analogies or a suggestion that the character experiences something alike unto these conditions. The reading is that these are literal depictions of those conditions.[14] It is easy to make statements about the continuity of

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refused to acknowledge this with their words. Juliet talks about how Romeo has left her not a drop of the gun she is now holding. Matt Trueman, writing for *What's on Stage*, acknowledges that despite a potential interestingness of Romeo wielding a gun in the finale "it makes no sense at all that Juliet still tries to lick the poison from her lover's lips – moments after he's shot himself," and remarks that these poor choices are "symptomatic of a production that gives up on truth for the sake of effect." Further, Trueman remarked that "It's not that Kramer doesn't trust the text. It's that he's actively p**sing all over it." Despite having used Shakespeare's words, there was a refusal to engage with the text. The production pursues ideas but largely at expense of (if not with contempt for) the play they purported to be staging. In contrast, consider Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*, which consistently endeavored to ground its modernizations in the words. The poison was poison, and the guns were labeled with names like 'longsword' that could explain how the language was accurate to what the audience saw.

[14] On a related note, these characters are treated here not as figures but as fully complex beings with their own complete psychology. The discussion of modern psychological practices involves an acceptance of a full personhood for characters. This manner of viewing Shakespeare characters as full beings whose lives must be fully examined appears also in the analyses put forward by actresses Ellen Terry and Helen Faucit. (Some may compare their works to the character criticism present in the period, such as the works of A.C. Bradley and Anna Jameson). However, unlike the more novelistic – and perhaps imaginative – approach associated therewith, Terry and Faucit, as women who had played many of the roles they discuss, grounded their discussion more closely in textual details. For example, when Faucit states that Brabantio must have been an uninvolved parent, she does not imagine so much as extrapolate from his profound misunderstanding of his daughter's interior life and his insistence when they converse on her obedience as opposed to affection (54-8). She discusses a whole life, but she relies on the text. These full lives will be examined with awareness of a full context.

love and jealousy throughout human history, but even for more complex situations, like intersecting webs of power or human illness, there has been significant continuity, and we cheapen situations and diminish our history by ignoring that. In generating a historical understanding of mental illness, these literal readings are significant. The presence of PTSD in *1 Henry IV*, for example, indicates that PTSD is not a new disease and that humans have experienced trauma symptoms of this kind before. It has been invoked in this manner in medical circles (Friedman). By claiming that our connections to this past are apparent through analogy, we do not move closer to the world shown to us in these plays – we move farther away. The language of analogy denies how many of these subjects are still real and present. This presentist reading will, through its dedication to closely reading the text, engage with these non-anachronistic elements.

This research employs thespian John Barton's textually oriented approach to performing Shakespeare's text as a tool for close-reading. This text approach, among other things, underlines monosyllables and polysyllables, antitheses in sentences, and line breaks as performative cues. One can also consider the breathing and pausing points in a sentence and how difficult lines would be for an actor to say. Little, if any, weight is given to punctuation. This research will not cleave entirely to Barton's approach. It will not make metrical arguments based on shared verse lines or short initial or final lines of speeches, because Abigail Rokison has raised conclusive objections over interpreting short lines (18-20,101-106). This research will, though, consider Barton-influenced actor/director Diego Arciniegas's concept of speaking from the 'bottom of your gas tanks' when beginning a new thought after a caesura without taking a new breath (116). These emendations to Barton's approach will allow for a fine-tuning of the critical interpretation that bears in mind that these texts were originally playscripts and meant to be spoken and performed. Barton argued that "the text *is* the character" (64). This research will endeavor to pursue meaning in the text and

be consistently substantiated by the words of the characters, aligning it with modern experiences, while trying to avoid talking over the characters.

Presentist approaches make sense when discussing theatrical works, as the theatre is invariably shaped by present concerns and interests. As Ewan Fernie noted about presentism: "There is an obvious but nonetheless compelling reason for favouring the present over the past: *it's happening now*. The present is where we live, and we still may intervene and alter it. It matters precisely that much more than history" (178). The theatre has the same interest in what is happening now. Academic analysis of theatrical materials, including Shakespeare, should be enriched by that now-ness and the audience's present understandings.

Masculinity

This examination also employs the critical discourse of feminist and gender theory to examine the role of the performance of masculinity in Shakespeare's plays. Coppélia Kahn noted that Shakespeare's "male characters are engaged in a continuous struggle, first to form a masculine identity, then to be secure and productive in it" (1). Kahn's work can be a starting point in reading the role of gender and conceptions of masculinity in Shakespeare. However, ideas on the construction of masculinity have evolved since Kahn's *Man's Estate*. For example, the Freudianism that underpins her work has lost currency,[15] and it will not be used in this research. This work will exploit the developments, like notions of performed gender identity,[16] including masculinities studies, which owes its existence to modern feminism.

[15] Freud evidently buried evidence of sexual abuse in his patients before using their cases to formulate his Oedipus complex (Masson). Furthermore, these theories have not been substantiated with empirical evidence (Chatard 23).

[16] The theory of gender performativity owes something to Judith Butler. The sociological research of Connell and her followers demonstrates performativity.

Each culture has a manner in which members perform and discuss masculinity. The cultural ideal, "hegemonic masculinity,"[17] must be considered through the lens of its present time, because it is not a fixed or constant social construct (Connell 76). There are some positive elements to modern American hegemonic masculinity which one can see in Shakespeare's plays, as there are positive elements of non-hegemonic masculinities also present. Most of Shakespeare's warriors, whatever their faults, love their wives. Macduff demonstrates great care for his children and a protective drive. These plays often show the importance of valor and martial prowess to protecting these societies. Macbeth, Hotspur, and Coriolanus are all at the start of their plays protecting their nations from foreign enemies. Modern Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity, though, also "includes a high degree of ruthless competition, an inability to express emotions other than anger, an unwillingness to admit weakness or dependency, devaluation of women and all feminine attributes in men, homophobia" (Kupers 716), phallocentricism, "the domination of weaker individuals," and an emphasis on "heroic achievement" (Higate and Hopton 433). Those behaviors appear in Shakespeare's career soldiers and their communities. They are discussed, encouraged, and debated by both the military men and their spouses.[18] Ruthless competition exists in *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar* and homophobia[19] in *Troilus and Cressida*, when Thersites calls Patroclus

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[17] This term was coined by R.W. Connell and popularized in Connell's *Masculinities* in 1995. The term appears in an article by Connell and Tim Carrigan and John Lee in 1985, but *Masculinities* is the seminal work on the subject. Although those works predate the War on Terror, Connell's work has influenced other discussions of masculinities, such as Elizabeth A Foyster's 1999 *Manhood in early modern England: honour, sex, and marriage*, C.J. Pascoe's 2005 "'Dude, You're a Fag': Adolescent Masculinity and the Fag Discourse," Marisa M. Smith's "Reconstructing the War Veteran in PTSD Therapy," and James Joseph Dean's *Straights: Heterosexuality In Post-Closeted Culture.* In literary criticism, it is used briefly in Natalie Wilson's *Seduced by Twilight*. While the research into hegemonic masculinities may have started prior to 2001, that line of inquiry continues valid.

[18] There are also distinctions that occur between early modern hegemonic masculinity and modern American hegemonic masculinity, such as the changing views on same-sex sexual behavior from the classical period Shakespeare used as sources to the time in which Shakespeare wrote to now. These differences will be acknowledged as relevant.

[19] While one could consider homophobia a modern invention, since the homosexual and heterosexual are 19th-century inventions, in light of modern concerns, that facet of a toxic masculinity will be examined. While this introduction will later detail at some length strides that have been made for LGBTQ equality in the United States, the hegemonic form of masculinity continues to rely on homophobia and the repression of homosexuals as members of a subordinated masculinity.

a "masculine whore" (5.1.18).[20] An unwillingness to seek help and a difficulty expressing emotions appear in Hotspur. Feminist critics, like Lisa Jardine, have noted distaste for females and the feminine in many of Shakespeare's characters though without linking it to toxic or hegemonic masculinity; Iago, for example, expresses contempt for women (2.1.163-175, 4.1.112-118, 5.1.92,137). Alex Waldmann, who played Brutus at the RSC, tied the character's struggles implicitly to the performance of masculinity: "What does it cost as a person to try to be the perfect Roman. [...] it's exhausting" (Corrigan, Waldmann, and Woodall). Trying to perform such an onerous standard of masculinity is, indeed, exhausting. Obviously, no human conforms perfectly to its culture's ideal of masculinity or femininity: "Hegemonic masculinity is conceptual and stereotypic in the sense that most men veer far from the hegemonic norm in their actual idiosyncratic ways, [though] even as they do so, they tend to worry lest others will view them as unmanly for their deviations from the hegemonic ideal of the real man" (Kupers 716). For example, the homophobia present in some characters in *Troilus and Cressida* is not overtly present in Shakespeare's other warriors, which is a good thing. Shakespeare's warriors struggle with the ideals of manhood; the military spouses also struggle with understanding that performance, their relationship to it, and how to help or hinder their spouses' performance of it.

This thesis will also employ the term "toxic masculinity,"[21] which demarcates those elements of the hegemonic masculinity that are dangerous or "socially destructive," such as excessive violence, homophobia, and misogyny – an important distinction, as not all aspects of "masculine" behavior are necessarily unhealthy (Kupers 716). "Masculine" behaviors that present no inherent harm include participation in homosocial friend groups and a desire to protect and provide for one's family. While toxic behaviors are not necessarily more

[20] All line numbers drawn from the Folger editions edited by Mowat and Wernstine.
[21] In literary criticism, toxic masculinity has been discussed in Tracy L. Bealer's "Of Monsters and Men: Toxic Masculinity and the Twenty-First Century Vampire in the *Twilight* Saga."

prevalent in the US military than in other areas of the US culture wherein the hegemonic form of masculinity appears or predominates, the behavior exists there as well. Although associated with the feminist movement, the term "toxic masculinity" was actually coined by a man, Shepherd Bliss, "to describe that part of the male psyche that is abusive" (Gross 14). Bliss says that he "use[s] a medical term because [he] believe[s] that like every sickness, toxic masculinity has an antidote" (Gross 14). While Daniel Gross maintained, in opposition to Bliss's comments, that "[t]here's no cure. Masculinity is a terminal condition," Shakespeare's plays do not support that view (14). The military spouses in Shakespeare's plays engage in a conversation about what it means to be a warrior and what it means to be a man; together, these exchanges point instead to a masculinity that could allow one to honor and defend one's family without tremendous emotional cost and loss of life.

One must remember, when discussing the ideas and ideals of masculinity with which Shakespeare's military spouses engage, that these characters did not invent these notions. Critics like D.W. Harding have shown that one may confuse the dancers and the dance, especially when it comes to women like Lady Macbeth and Volumnia. Harding treats the masculinity practiced in this play as the creation of the women he depicts as having destroyed their men with it. He disregards their surrounding cultures. However, Shakespeare's military spouses enact a conversation about a culture they are part of – not a culture they themselves designed.[22] These romantic partners did not create the toxic masculinity that pervades their cultures; instead, their presence in the plays enables the critique of those cultural values. Shakespeare's military spouses acknowledge that the martial role is necessary, that their

[22] Kahn herself noticed this issue in the work of critics like Harding: "I distinguish between my conception of Shakespeare as a self-conscious (though also sympathetic) critic of ideals of masculinity emanating from patriarchal society, and the Shakespeare of Harding and others. The women Shakespeare portrays in these plays did not contrive their ideas of manliness out of whole cloth; they took them from a world managed by men" (152 note 1). Irene Dash also commented on the failings of Harding's work, noting that the "manliness" that Harding describes is not so much "a fantasy of women" but "the creation of a patriarchal society" and that Harding overlooks that females might be attracted to that kind of "manliness" because in their culture that is where power is allowed to rest while females are kept powerless (253).

societies cannot exist without warriors, while simultaneously raising the question of whether their culture needs to enforce masculinity to such an extent or in such a manner.

In a general sense, modern American hegemonic masculinity is linked with the US Armed Forces: "militarism is the major means by which the values and beliefs associated with ideologies of hegemonic masculinity are eroticized and institutionalized" (Higate and Hopton 436). These cultural institutions are bound up together. Some men joined because they thought it would make them real men (Eckhart *Homefront* 20; Hegar 160) or prove their heterosexuality (Seefried 113-115). This intertwining, though, is where a danger can come in. MJ Hegar, who challenged the military's combat exclusion policy, states that "Ultramasculine guys who fly the same way they live their lives—too hard, too fast, too careless—are often depicted as the perfect combat warriors. Instead, they usually end up undermining the mission, as their teams cannot depend on them to make the best decisions under pressure" (167). The fetishized violent version of manhood actually damages force readiness and endangers lives and missions. Furthermore, people will sanction wrongdoing by these men as they assume this toxicity is inherent in manhood and soldiering: "There are people who think that this [predator] culture is fine given the ugly nature of war. But I and so many of my fellow servicemen and servicewomen had *proven* that you could be a tough combat warrior without being a sociopath" (Hegar 286). These systems need to be deconstructed to support health, safety, and readiness, and exploring Shakespeare through the lens of the modern military's engagement with hegemonic masculinity can be a part of this process.

The US Military and a Post-9/11 Context

The present concerns of critics and performers include the War on Terror and should include the lived experience of the spouses of career soldiers during war. By 2018, the US spent over sixteen years at war in Afghanistan and almost a decade in Iraq. This investigation of

military spouses and hegemonic masculinity in Shakespeare will limit its field of examination to the state of military life and military families in the United States since October 2001, the start of the War on Terror. Desperate as a reasonable person would be to avoid aping Senator Ted Cruz's much-derided comment that his "music tastes changed on 9/11," since then, there has been a change in how people interact with, interpret, and produce Shakespeare, even outside the United States ("Ted Cruz"). The large-scale changes in law, cultural values, and military presence can be felt in both criticism[23] and productions. It is perhaps unsurprising that these changes have gained prominence in the theatre, considering the fact that, given these dates, the world is increasingly full of people with only distant memories of a pre-9/11 world or, indeed, no memories of a pre-9/11 world.[24]

The influence of 9/11 on theatre and theatrical criticism should be news to no one. Both the 2013 National Theatre (Hytner) and 2015 Royal Shakespeare Company (Khan) productions of *Othello*, for example, unabashedly referred to those conflicts. (Not all productions from this era reference the war. The BBC *Hollow Crown* films (Eyre) and the 2014 RSC *1 Henry IV* (Doran) show no influence of the conflicts. Their simplification of Hotspur and the army wives may be linked not to their historical context but to their tetralogy-based interest in positioning Hal as the protagonist.) Graham Abbey's *Breath of Kings: Rebellion*, which blended *Richard II* and *1 Henry IV*, was acknowledged by him to have been influenced by the fact that he was in New York state during 9/11, heard about the attack on the car radio, and with several key members of his Canadian company's production

[23] Criticism influenced by the Iraq war includes Evelyn Gajowski's "'Mirror[s] of all Christian kings': Hank Cinq and George Deux," Kay Stanton's "A Presentist Analysis of Joan, la Pucelle," Farah Karim-Cooper's "Shakespeare's War on Terror: Critical Review of Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus (Directed by Lucy Bailey) at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, London, 2006," and Cary DiPietro and Hugh Grady's "Presentism, Anachronism and the Case of *Titus Andronicus*."

[24] Fernie argued that presentism has a relevance historicism does not, because "[t]he present is where we live," (178). Terri Barnes, writing for *Stars and Stripes*, acknowledged that "My children are all teenagers now. They don't remember much about life before that bright and sunny, but terrible Tuesday, when terrorism, war, and deployment became household words for us" (1616). In the interest of full disclosure, I acknowledge that this research also favored the US military as a research subject, because I am from the US. Relatedly, the War on Terror has been occurring for the majority of my life.

of *1 Henry IV* essentially raced to get across the Canadian border before being locked in the US so they could make it to call on time (5-6). Abbey wrote, "I remember watching the sky intently as we drove north through what felt like an active war zone, and realizing that the world as I had known it had changed in an instant" (5). The opening lines, "So shaken as we are, so wan with care,/Find we a time for frighted peace to pant," took on a different spirit for a cast and audience that had made the decision "to turn off CNN and come and listen to Shakespeare" (6). The 2014 *King Lear* at the National Theatre likely would not have featured a scene of waterboarding had the public's focus not been turned to the nature of torture by the war, such as the events at Abu Ghraib (Mendes). While those productions were British productions, the war they referenced is often treated as a US war, despite British involvement. The British government has also maintained that torture, referenced in two of those productions, was an entirely American practice, and although those claims may be untrue, the British position on the use of torture in the War on Terror ties the portrayals of it to the United States (Hanning). Furthermore, the US military has its own minor relationship with Shakespeare in the post-9/11 era. Shortly, after the beginning of the War on Terror, the DoD resumed the WWII era Armed Services Editions (ASE) program, producing uniform pocket-sized editions for soldiers of texts such as Shakespeare's *Henry V* and SunZi's *Art of War* (Rhem). It should not surprise any Shakespearean that the military would give soldiers *Henry V* to read. Lieutenant Commander Lowell claims he recited the St. Crispin's Day speech at his interview for Annapolis, explaining to the interviewer that the speech expressed why he wanted to join the military (Buckholtz 134). (There is a potentially sinister connection to *Henry V* as well. In November 2002, prior to the invasion of Iraq, Mackubuin T. Owens, professor of strategy and force planning at the Naval War College, suggested Henry V's speech threatening Harfleur "should be printed in Arabic on leaflets and dropped on Baghdad, Basra, and especially Tikrit," adding "I realize we don't talk like this anymore,

but in light of 9/11 and Islamic terrorism, maybe we should" ("Shakespeare"). Although that idea was never acted on, one should be unnerved that he suggested distributing intentionally to nationals of a foreign nation a speech where Henry V threatens a series of war crimes.) In 2003, the DoD and the NEA cosponsored a production of *Macbeth* that toured to American military bases for the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps (National Endowment of the Arts). That production was mounted by the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, which also gives ticket discounts during its regular season to Blue Star Families. Shakespeare, the War on Terror, and the military are all bound up together in the post-9/11 world.

Those wars and other clashes changed the lives of the military and their families. In the United States in 2013, of the 1,370,329 Active Duty service members, 55.2% were married, compared to 51.6% of the general population (United States *Demographics* 40-41). The expanded understanding of the concept "army wife" as pursued in this thesis – something which moves beyond being the wife of a soldier – includes a wider population of men and women in committed relationships with enlisted personnel. The statistics do not include girlfriends, boyfriends, partners, or fiancé(e)s; those people also fill the social role of the military spouse, including psychological aid and emotional support. Servicemembers could not serve their countries without the support of their partners, enlisted or at home (Williams "Dear"). This thesis will examine the works of Shakespeare in the light of the changed culture of the United States since the beginning of the war, and for its examinations of Shakespearean productions, it will be limited largely to productions from within that timeframe or prior productions used for comparison.

Furthermore, these constraints are necessary in order to limit the scope of the military and masculine cultures under consideration. These parameters allow us to limit the scope to a single culture within a period of time when the change in the hegemonic masculinity has been limited. Hegemonic masculinity *must* be considered through the lens of its time, because it,

as a social construct, is not fixed but "rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable" by other masculinities (Connell 76). To include other armies would involve the hegemonic masculinity of their cultures. Were this thesis to take a broader field, it would need to incorporate the hegemonic masculinity of multiple countries or eras, in which case the hegemonic masculinities could differ wildly. While there are points of overlap in English and American hegemonic masculinities, it would be presumptuous to assume they are inherently the same,[25] and it would over-extend this research to attempt to incorporate both or to invoke other nations and their related cultures.[26] Similarly, because the hegemonic masculinity of a culture is simply the masculinity that has gained power at that point in time, even considering too broad a history involves different masculinities holding that power. One example of historical shifts in hegemonic masculinities would be how homosexual practices have been regarded differently in different countries or even within a single country's history, especially in regards to what constitutes a "real man." In Ancient Greece, homosexual practices were a component of the hegemonic masculinity. The Etoro tribe in New Guinean believed that being born of women is so emasculating that males must consume the semen of older males to remasculinize (Rubin 181). However, those are not the models used in the modern US. Comparably, as the hegemonic masculinity changes, the masculinities that have been subordinated to it also change. Therefore, in order to examine a singular hegemonic masculinity in conflict with readily identifiable subordinated masculinities,[27] constraints must be applied. For the purpose of this work, the focus will be

[25] The weaknesses that result from eliding American and British cultures appear in Eric Anderson's *Inclusive Masculinities*, wherein his limited datasets rely on behavior present in Britain but not the US, such as same-sex kissing in rugby.

[26] That is not to say that one culture will not comment on another culture or another culture's masculinities. Therefore, this thesis will include non-American interpretations of the US presence in Iraq and Afghanistan.

[27] Carrigan, Connell, and Lee noted that hegemonic masculinity is "a particular variety of masculinity to which others – among them young and effeminate as well as homosexual men – are subordinated" (587). The subordinated masculinities are those that have lost out to the hegemonic masculinity and must then be repressed as part of its maintenance. As a result of that repression, they state that "[i]t is particular groups of men, not

narrowed to the modern American Armed Forces and modern American hegemonic masculinity.

The War on Terror marks a turning point in US military history. In the aftermath of 9/11, the US experienced many cultural shifts that affected how Americans perceived the military, as well as how Americans felt about nationalism and patriotism, emotions central to the commitment to a military lifestyle. For example, Gallup polling data suggests that between October 1991 and June 2001, only between 60-68% of Americans said they possessed a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the US military; however, since the start of the war, that number has not fallen below the 70s ("Military and National Defense"). Ricketts in her memoir about her family's service notes that when the war in Afghanistan began, the situation in Kosovo was forgotten by the media and the public as attention turned to Afghanistan, and women whose husbands were in Afghanistan were treated differently than wives whose husbands were stationed elsewhere, receiving more social support and recognition (63). "On September 11, 2001," Terri Barnes recalls, "[an Air Force wife] and I pondered the tragedies over the phone, hours after the attacks. We wondered together that day how such terrible things could happen and when—not if—our military husbands would be summoned to the conflict" (1078). That wife's son eventually grew up and shipped out to the same war his father had joined when the war started (Barnes 1078). Things continued to change for the military community, including the spouses: "[Our family] learned a new way of life after the events of September 11, 2001, and the wars that followed. We lived with the fallout of war in big and small ways. In all these things, we were not unique. We were like practically everyone else we knew" (Barnes 2747). In discussion of how the military has

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men in general, who are oppressed within patriarchal sexual relations, and whose situations are related in different ways to the overall logic of the subordination of women to men" (587). Just as patriarchal modes oppress women in order to bolster the hegemonic masculinity and status of conforming males, the patriarchal structure also oppresses groups of men that subscribe to subordinated masculinities instead of the hegemonic one.

changed over time, one soldier reported that "[y]our reference point for when the world changed is 9/11[…]. It's our common point of denominator if you were on active duty. That's the day the world for the military started anew" (Crooks, Henderson, Hightower, and Scherer 324). Between 2001 and 2006, the number of soldiers deployed quintupled (Henderson *While* 180). These changes indicate that people, both those on-post and civilians, felt a shift when that war began. The military is not a passive organization. It responds proactively to the world around it; however, some things happen to a body to change it that are not questions of passive or active response. They simply happen. The post-9/11 cultural shifts will bear on the military's internal culture; therefore analyses of that culture done prior to 2001 will not bear on this research.[28] Given the shift in American cultural values and behavior, as well as in military action and presence, since 9/11, this examination will limit itself to the War on Terror for its timeframe.

One reason to focus on the American military, as opposed to any other, is its relative size and coherence. For contrast, in 2013 there were 1,370,329 Active Duty members of the US military (United States *2013 Demographics*) and 170,710 in UK Regular Forces (United Kingdom). The US population, then, was 316.2 million, and the UK's 64.13 million. In more human terms, not only is the US Armed Forces eight times that of the British Armed Forces, but it is the size of the combined populations of Birmingham and Fife ("The UK's

[28] One such dated cultural study is Pamela R. Frese and Margaret C. Harrell's *Anthropology and the United States Military: Coming of Age in the Twenty-First Century*, which utilizes research done in the 90s and reflects a past version of military culture and structuring. Harrell's argument, for example, that enlisted men enlisted because they could not get a real job after high school does not pass muster during a hot war when the military job puts one at risk of being killed. While the US had engaged in peacekeeping efforts prior to 9/11, the US was not involved in the same capacity. By 2005, there had been a slight dip in recruitment numbers for the Corps, interpreted by some as a sign that a decreasing "peacetime mentality" that would lead to less "recruiting folks who will abandon shipmates about to deploy into harm's way, who will call those who willingly go into harm's way losers, who will join the military because they are led to believe or choose to believe that the military is just a job, who will view their military uniform as something shameful, and who would knowingly shirk their specific military duties" and instead "a very good possibility that we will see the peacetime mentality being replaced by a more pure warrior mentality necessary to sustain the prolonged fight against our most-determined foe" (Dodd). (Of course, there were some who enlisted not out of patriotism but for good work after 9/11 (Buckholtz 242). The DoD is the biggest employer in the US, and for some, especially as the economy changed in the 21st century or industries changed after 9/11, the DoD offered the best employment options).

200 Largest Towns, Cities and Districts"). The British regular force is smaller than the Self-Defense Force of Japan ("Factbox: Japan's Military: Well-armed but Untested in Battle"), a nation currently banned by their own constitution from waging war, though they will engage in international peacekeeping ("The Constitution of Japan"). President Obama in March 2016 criticized the British government for failing to meet NATO commitments to maintain military spending at 2% GDP and instead "free riding" on the US military strength, thereby keeping their military smaller by sheltering under the umbrella of American military strength (Goldberg).

In addition to its size, the US's armed forces are a volunteer military which possesses a self-perpetuating culture. Ricketts, herself an army brat[29] who became an army wife, notes that "[a]rmy brats grow up to be soldiers or army wives. We are a culture that perpetuates" (51).[30] Alison Bucholtz, who came from a civilian family, described the position of military spouse as a heritage, one she learned about from reading the texts of other military spouses (Buckholtz xv). In that sense, the military spouses who spring from the existing military culture enable it to persist, especially as they facilitate their partners' participation in it, raise children to be a part of it – either by enlisting or marrying soldiers – and inculcate former civilians into it. Children born to military families will grow up to serve or to marry members of the service. That self-perpetuating quality means that the cultural values and traditions of the military can be passed down to subsequent generations of soldiers and their families. It can also mean that changes in how masculinity and femininity are performed by the members of the service can be passed on to the next generation of servicemembers through the culture of military families and whether or not that culture changes. In that vein,

[29] A term of art used for the child of an enlisted person or persons.
[30] That self-perpetuating nature would have been familiar to early modern standing armies: in Portuguese India, the government provided dowries to some soldiers' widows to facilitate their marriage to another soldier or to a man who would enlist; in the Netherlands soldiers' widows and daughters married enlisted men so frequently Geoffrey Parker described the Spanish Army of Flanders as "a self-contained, inward-looking, almost inbred military society" (Hacker 652).

Higate and Hopton argued that "[t]he links between hegemonic forms of masculinity and the military are surprisingly tenacious, and in tracing many practices to the level of the state and more globally, it is clear that militarist values continue to have disproportionate influence on the ways in which hegemonic masculinity is both created and reproduced" (444).

Part of this self-perpetuating culture is that military spouses have to make a commitment to the military, often at a young age, just as their servicemember does, and marriages can become inextricably tied to their shared military identity. Pushing away from the military, then, would undermine the marriage itself. It is common for military couples to marry at a young age and to commit themselves strongly to their unions, and those relations rest on a foundation of shared commitment to the military. The average age for enlisted married individuals is 30 years old, suggesting that a number of them have married at a younger age (United States *2013 Demographics*). Jacey Eckhart reported that the "average age of first marriage of those in this study was 22. That's young. That's about four years younger than the national average at the time these couples married" (Eckhart). She references the time at which the couples wed, because she surveyed couples who had been married a long time. However, even at the present time, that is six years below the average. Eckhart suggests that marriage at a young age "may just go along with being the kind of person who is more ready to commit to an organization (like the military) at a young age" or that "young marriage is such an ingrained part of military life that there are still institutional supports for marriage." In her research, Eckhart found that one of the strongest indicators for successful military marriage is that the spouse shares the servicemember's commitment to the military lifestyle. Considering the strains on marriage that may come from deployments and permanent changes of station these couples would have to go through, that fact does not surprise. Eckhart notes that marital satisfaction "was significantly lower" among couples who regarded the military as a "job" as opposed to those who regarded it as a "calling" or a

"career." In the long marriages that she studied, many spouses reported that the struggles of military life were worth it, because their partner loved their military career or could not imagine holding a different job; these spouses shared their significant other's attachment to that role. As Jacey Eckhart notes, "long military marriages do not happen by accident." They are the result of choice and of commitment. The decision to marry a career soldier comes with an awareness that it will be your lifestyle as well. After all, when you are married to a servicemember, you are married to the military, and the military calls the shots (Gross 17). These marriages could not have been strong if the military spouses were not just as committed as their husbands were. Examining couples in light of this commitment lends a fuller understanding to their relationship. When reading Shakespeare's military couples, one ought to consider that their marriage would be bound up with their military experiences.

The American government supports its military not only with large spending but with organizations such as the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, which runs the National Center for PTSD, and Military OneSource[31], all of which are valuable tools for researching and understanding the state of the military in the 21st century. The National Center for PTSD appears to be the best source available for information on that subject, and the Department of Defense's and the Department of Veterans Affairs' publicly available documents can speak to military policy and, relatedly, the regulations affecting the lived experiences of soldiers and their families. The military as a culture can be difficult to understand for those external to that culture,[32] and utilizing these resources will allow this

[31] A 24/7 service run by the military to support servicemembers and their families.

[32] At least, it is difficult to find others who have studied military culture from the outside. Firstly, it can be difficult to infiltrate. Margaret C. Harell noted that researchers hoping to study the military must get several levels of permission: "Besides the need to obtain access to enter an installation (at the installation commander's discretion), military subjects are loath to interact with a researcher who has not exhibited the appropriate authorizations. In my experience, I've had to keep unit commanders informed because spouses whom I've called for interviews will have their service member check my credentials with the unit command" (Frese and Harell). Those degrees of permissions would need to be recreated at every base and post. That level of difficulty will deter anthropologists and cause those who do study the military to limit their sample sizes. However, the military is not the only limiting factor making it difficult to find people who have studied the military. Since the beginning of the War on Terror, much of the anthropological discussion of the US military is not focused on the

research to examine the culture more deeply. The military culture has also spawned volunteer and community groups related to military service and supporting those who serve and whose families serve, such as Blue Star Families, Blue Star Wives, Gold Star Mothers, etc, which are useful to understanding the military culture and the lives of military families. The Blue Star Families organization, for example, does annual surveys that they publish about the current lifestyle and lived experiences of American military families. As a result, the US military is easier to study, which facilitates reading the Shakespeare plays against it.

Definitions

Analyzing military spouses, even in a limited context, requires accepting a particular definition of a spouse. Although the term spouse is often associated with legally sanctioned monogamous unions, for reasons that will be examined below, this thesis will move beyond strict legal definition to focus on the domestic partners of a career soldier. Military spouses support their partners through their national service, and they can do so outside the covenant of marriage. Socially there is an acceptance of non-marital relationships filling the role colloquially called "Army wife." Crooks, Henderson, Hightower, and Scherer, military spouses themselves, noted that "you know you are a military spouse when [… y]ou refer to everyone not in the military, married to the military, or dating someone in the military as a civilian" (135). Not only can those who are not married to soldiers meet that criterion, but the criterion also draws a distinction between civilians and those in committed, though non-marital, romantic relationships with servicemembers. That definition emphasizes that those

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nature and culture of the military but instead on debating the involvement of anthropologists with the military. At the start of the war, the US military made an effort to recruit anthropologists, in order to better understand the region, which many anthropologists have condemned. Catherine Lutz in "Anthropology in an Era of Permanent War," based on a keynote lecture she gave at a conference in Canada, argued that anthropologists should be studying the military to oppose the war, because there was no possible benefit from anthropologists working for or with the Armed Forces. Lutz actually went so far as to compare anthropologists working for the Armed Forces during the War on Terror to physicists working on the atom bomb during World War II. In light of that kind of climate, perhaps the absence of studies is less surprising.

dating or married to servicemembers are part of the culture and community in a way that civilians are not. Similarly, Blue Star Families[33] included boyfriends, girlfriends, and domestic partners in its 2015 survey about the situation of military families, including military spouses (*Annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey*). Although laws can provide a basis for examination of military spouses, a complete examination of the lives of military spouses would involve more partners, reflecting the more complex nature of relationships in the 21st century. Perhaps the simplest explanation that embraces this complexity would be to say that the military spouse is the partner in that Blue Star Family.

Even from an official military perspective, privileging the law in the definition can be seen to be complicated. In selecting a spouse, the military encourages servicemembers to choose partners based on affection, good communication, mutual respect and appreciation, who can bring out the best in each other, though they also advise that a spouse will need to be able to embrace military culture ("How to Decide If It's Time to Get Married"). While historically people may have married for reasons other than mutual affection, such as financial gain, the modern military discourages such practices. They advise against marrying simply because "[y]ou want your girlfriend or boyfriend to be eligible for your military benefits. While this is certainly tempting, by itself it's not enough reason to enter into a legally binding contract with another person." Affection and shared cultural values are prioritized.

In that quote marriage is described as a "legally binding contract." In a strictly legal sense, that is accurate, despite the place that marriage has otherwise held as a religious,

[33] The expression Blue Star in the US refers to having a family member in the service. A Blue Star Mother, for example, has an enlisted child. In this case, a Blue Star Family is a family in which a member is in the service. A Gold Star refers to having lost a family member in active service or as a result of active service, and in more recent years a Silver Star has come to signify someone becoming injured or disabled in the service. The stars themselves referred to service flags that families displayed in their homes with symbolic stars sewn on. As organizations, Gold Star Mothers was created in 1928, Blue Star Mothers in 1942. They are now recognized by Congress, and 36 US Code 901 governs the display of service flags and related symbols (36 USC 901, 1998). Blue Star Families, as an organization, began in April 2009.

familial, or social ritual. However, in terms of filling the role of the military spouse in military culture, such as supporting the servicemember in his or her service and performance of the hegemonic masculinity, law is not the best criterion. The laws will, of course, be emphasized in the parts of the military structure as criteria for becoming a military spouse, because accessing the benefits available to the spouse – such as housing benefits or insurance – through the government would require a legal recognition. However, laws have a flexibility, even since 2001, which makes them questionable as the single foundation for this research.

In the 21st century, the most important legal changes concerning spousehood are those that impact queer people, and those changes will be discussed here to outline the shifts in law that undermine the importance of legalities in defining a military spouse. Between 1994 and 2011, DADT supposedly prevented the harassment of closeted soldiers while barring openly queer servicemembers from continuing to serve. The Uniform Code of Military Justice between 1956 and 2014 (70A Stat. 74, 128 Stat. 3364), deemed consensual sodomy a crime,[34] and homosexuals were for a long time believed to be a security risk, because they might be blackmailed ("Gay Soldiers, Good Soldiers").[35] Therefore, practice prior to DADT had been to fire all homosexuals found in the service. Purportedly, under DADT, no one would actively seek to identify homosexuals, and individuals would not be harassed for their sexual orientation so long as they could keep it secret; however, they would continue to fire homosexuals whose orientation became known. According to former Under Secretary of the

[34] For contrast, in civilian law, sodomy between consenting adults was decriminalized throughout all of the US in 2003 under *Lawrence v. Texas* (539 U.S. 558).

[35] The Navy's 1957 Crittenden Report, which was suppressed because of its findings, "stated that alcoholics and adulterous heterosexuals were more of a security risk than homosexuals" (Sinclair 706). The report found that the belief that queer people could not serve honorably was "without visible supporting data" and that "there have been many known instances of individuals who have served honorably and well, despite being exclusively homosexual" (Cammermeyer 309). These findings were affirmed more recently by "the 1988 Defense Personnel Security Research and Education Center (PERSEREC) report, commissioned by the Defense Department," which concluded that the policy and the idea that gays were a security risk "was based upon stereotypical and outdated notions about gay people" (Cammermeyer 309-310).

Army Patrick Murphy, "We kicked out in a time of war – since the time it was implemented until the end of it, but even after 9/11 happened – we kicked out over 13,000 troops just because they were gay, because of a statement, act, or marriage" (Hirway and Malina). These firings cost an estimated $600 million (Witt and Connor 204). Even after the repeal of DADT, because same-sex marriage was not legal throughout the US, servicemembers in same-sex partnerships would not have been legally married in the eyes of the federal government nor would they have been eligible for military spousal benefits. After June 26, 2013, *United States v. Windsor* overturned the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), affording same-sex couples equal recognition under federal law, though same-sex unions were not legal in all US states. Thus, some same-sex couples were legally recognized and eligible for benefits, but those who lived in places that did not allow same-sex marriage faced the difficulty of arranging an out-of-state union. On June 26, 2015, the *Obergefell v. Hodges* ruling ensured that same-sex couples could be legally married anywhere in the US. Department of Defense spokesman Navy Lt. Cmdr. Nate Christensen maintained that the *Obergefell v. Hodges* ruling did not change the situation for LGBTQ couples in terms of recognition and benefits within the military, because DOMA had already been repealed: "The [DoD] has made the same benefits available to all military spouses, regardless of sexual orientation, as long as service member-sponsors provide a valid marriage certificate" (Jordan). However, that assessment disregarded the fact that those benefits were only available to those who could get a valid marriage license, which depending on where you lived might require leaving the state – or, depending on where you were stationed, going to a different country. However, things have since changed. Under present US law, homosexuals, so long as they are entered into a valid union, have full access to military recognition and partnerships. Given how much the laws have changed for LGBTQ Americans in the service, one must understand the difficulties in relying only on US laws.

LGBTQ servicemembers were still actively serving their country, even when DADT barred them from doing so openly or fired them for doing so. Their partners were still their partners even as a shifting number of states afforded them the benefits of state-sanctioned monogamy. Those relationships were defined by their affection and social relations, even when they were not legally recognized, and thus they confirm that the legal definition used by the government cannot be the limiting factor.

Additionally, while the military requires a legally valid marriage license to access spousal benefits, it does not necessarily require one to access spousal protections. The Department of Defense issuance on domestic violence, *Domestic Abuse Involving DoD Military and Certain Affiliated Personnel*, for example, defines possible victims of domestic abuse or domestic violence as "A current or former spouse," "A person with whom the abuser shares a child in common," or "A current or former intimate partner with whom the abuser shares or has shared a common domicile" (United States). Though earlier versions of the issuance prior to the repeal of DOMA contained heterosexist language presuming the relationship partner was always of a different sex, that language has notably been expunged. What remains, though, is an understanding that the domestic abuse victim to be protected is not necessarily a soldier's legal spouse.[36] These regulations protect any cohabitating significant other, regardless of legal recognition. All of the military spouses discussed in this thesis fall into one of these aforementioned categories of person. In this issuance, the Department recognized nuances beyond marital status in defining significant interpersonal relationships. The presence or absence of a marriage license cannot be a limiting factor. This thesis will therefore eschew legal niceties to employ a definition attached to performing the

[36] The Uniform Code of Military Justice only allows DoD to charge the soldier committing the abuse. If they have reason to believe a soldier is being abused by a civilian partner, they must turn the case over to the civil authorities.

role of spouse, adopting a definition more like that of Blue Star Families and military spouses.

Necessary Violence and the Modern Military

These plays do not, as a whole, produce an aggregate response either in favor of or opposed to war, nor will this thesis. Indeed, in the world of these plays, pacifism is an almost untenable position. The violence in their cultures is needful. Without an army for self-defense, a nation risks being overrun by enemies, foreign and domestic. Macbeth has been important in putting down an internal rebellion and a concomitant foreign invasion. In contrast, the king is behind the lines and the princeling Malcolm has almost been taken prisoner. What is defending the kingdom is the ability of Macbeth, Banquo, and those like them to do violence on its behalf. As Kastan notes, "Duncan's rule depends upon – indeed demands – Macbeth's violence. The unexplained revolt that begins the play is put down by Macbeth's ferocious defense of Duncan's authority" (17). Pure pacifism would have seen the royal family overthrown by rebels and the country taken over by invasion. The violence kept citizens safe. "When they are under pressure, it is not Malcolm's 'king-becoming graces,' but heroic manhood that is of paramount concern to the actors in this drama of usurpation and rebellion," Wells notes (139). Instead, they must rely on their men when being a man is to be "bloody, bold and resolute" (Wells 139). The modern world is much the same. Antoni Cimolino noted, when discussing the timeliness of *Macbeth*, "Shakespeare's time, like our own, was filled with violence fuelled by religious clashes and political ambition. It seems that to be human is to know violence" and suggested that, given the realities of the world, "Shakespeare's dark gem will fascinate us for years to come" (9). Duncan's peace comes from Macbeth and Banquo's violence. Hector, as well, defends Troy from invaders. Coriolanus takes the violence of war to the enemy city of Corioles. Even the not-bloodthirsty Lady Macduff acknowledges the possible need of violence to defend one's family from

external attackers (4.2.10-14), and a similar metaphor could be applied to Macbeth and the army repelling a foreign invasion. Sometimes, safety requires violence. Peace requires the existence of armies. It is why Japan, which does not wage war, maintains a Self-Defense Force. The bane of pacifism in these plays, and indeed in most places in the 21st century, is, as George Orwell noted, "Those who 'abjure' violence can only do so because others are committing violence on their behalf." That is the role of the military now. The women of these plays rarely take the unproductive stance of pure pacifism. As Navy officer's wife Alison Buckholtz noted, "terms like 'pro-war' and 'antiwar' don't apply anymore because the complexity of the situation we find ourselves in as a country transcends pat positions" (xxvi). One must eschew such over-simplifications of their world. However, Shakespeare's women who critique the unhealthy behaviors and effects of their martial culture, tend to be more successful at saving their husbands. Thus, the plays instead favor a masculinity that encourages the men to defend their country but does not result in reducing them to weapons or limiting them to unhealthy positions of hyper-masculinity. Across the plays, the aggregate result of the conversation had by the military spouses favors this healthier ethos, while many of the spouses do not, individually, advance that ideal.

Lending Your Ears

The most important point is that we need to listen. We must follow the feminist impulse to listen to those who have been ignored. We must follow the theatre's guidance to listen to the text to find the meaning and to speak to the moment in which we live. These spouses, Kristin Henderson has pointed out, have important stories to tell that are being overlooked in people's understanding of history and the war: "I've never heard a boring story from anybody … There is always something interesting there if you are just willing to sit and listen" (Barnes 1700). We need to listen. There is a need in people to be heard: "Troops on dark mountaintops and spouses struggling at home want to know their sacrifice has value,

that their story has listeners" (Barnes 1712). The people who live this life are the most qualified to speak to its experiences, and they have the most at stake in the civilian world better understanding and relating those experiences. If Terence Hawkes is right and "there are few more significant pointers to the character of any society than the kind of Shakespearean criticism it writes, or fails to write" (118), if Johnathan Shay is right and "healing from trauma depends upon communalization of the trauma—being able safely to tell the story to someone who is listening and who can be trusted to retell it truthfully to others in the community" (4), then in this time of war it matters very deeply to listen and to show that we are listening.[37] Who we are shapes the stories we tell, but the stories we tell and how we tell them also shape who we are. The text has not necessarily changed, but what we see in it and what we wish to discuss have changed. By disturbing the old stories, we can use them to grow anew. Shakespeare and the theatre become sites where these issues are articulated and trauma can be brought forth for communalization, and that must be respected. This research will attempt to listen to the military spouses of 21st-century America and to listen to their textual counterparts in Shakespeare, and then it will attempt to speak of their concerns in light of the world in which we live.

[37] Shay has argued that, unlike most modern American theatre, Athenian theatre functioned as a site of ritual purification, catharsis, and reintegration for returned warriors (*Odysseus* 151-3).

Chapter 1: "With So Good A Woman": Desdemona and Emilia

In a post-9/11 military context, one must understand that *Othello* is not just a compelling play; *Othello* is a nightmare scenario. In the summer of 2002, there were five domestic murders near Fort Bragg in North Carolina (Henderson *While* 201). One of these involved a man strangling his wife; two were murder-suicides (Starr). Although "All the marriages apparently had been troubled beforehand, and none of the soldiers or their wives had reached out to any of the support programs the Army had available at the time," and although there is no evidence that the servicemembers' deployments to Afghanistan were related to the killings, the murders jumpstarted the military's Deployment Cycle Support program in an effort to avert further disastrous events (Henderson *While* 201).[1] The military has built support systems to try to ensure these tragedies never reoccur. When one looks at the jealousy, the abuse, and the violence in Shakespeare's text, one looks at a nightmare the likes of which the military continues to actively try to avert, because it is not something that one can pretend could never happen. Instead, in the tragedy, we see the dangers we must remember to avoid.

Although other chapters of this thesis examine the military spouses and their reactions to hegemonic masculinity in juxtaposition, reading two responses against each other, Emilia and Desdemona are different from the other military spouses. They do not take diverging views on their situations as much as they have diverging backgrounds and levels of experience and therefore present a different connectedness to their roles as spouses and to the

[1] Alison Buckholtz lists concerning findings about rates of abuse and "a series of wife-murders perpetrated by Army soldiers based at Fort Bragg in 2002" among reasons "the military has placed a high priority on reporting abuse within families" (192). The news about the Fort Bragg murders was particularly concerning for military spouses. Tanya Biank, the reporter who broke the story in the *Fayetteville Observer*, "started getting phone calls at home from Army wives concerned for their own safety. [… She] began to keep a women's hotline number in [her] Rolodex at work as well as on [her] nightstand" to give to callers (prologue). Those murders, while specifically motivating for the DoD, are, sadly, not isolated concerns. In her memoir, Kayla Williams reveals that during one of the lowest points of her husband's mental health, the only thing that stood between him and killing her was the most basic level of gun safety – the weapon was stored unloaded, and he had not thought to put bullets in before pulling the trigger (*Plenty* 125-6).

military culture. Desdemona is new to the lifestyle, and she experiences problems of adjustment and culture shock. Emilia, on the other hand, has lived in this culture and suffered its systemic problems longer. However, they both face, from their different vantages, the issues of jealousy and domestic abuse, reflections of toxic masculinity in modern culture. Their parallel has not gone unnoticed. Irene Dash noted that in *Othello*, "Shakespeare takes not one, but two marriages – one new and fresh, one old and worn – to give us a double vision of the experience" (104). These marriages are specifically military marriages, alike unto other marriages but unique as well. So, when Dash notes that "[b]y examining not one, but two marriages, Shakespeare records the effect of 'adjustment,' of being a 'proper wife,' on a woman," one should remember that in this case Shakespeare specifically depicts the need for adjustment to being a military spouse when one steps outside of civilian life into the military culture (129).

Desdemona and Emilia experience jealousy and domestic violence. Neither issue is unique to a military environment, though the military creates added pressure. Both are byproducts of hegemonic masculinity: jealousy because a man's respect and power become tied to his ability to secure his female partner's sexual fidelity; domestic violence because toxic masculinity lauds violence, the unhealthy expression or suppression of emotion, and the subordination of women. Shakespeare depicts these aspects of the toxic masculinity and demonstrates how the culture allows and encourages these behaviors. The obligation to control these toxic behaviors must fall to the men who engage in them, not the women who fall victim to them. Allowing these behaviors and the gender system that creates them to continue to exist, *Othello* demonstrates, can lead to a breakdown in military performance and, worse, body counts, even in domestic life.

In light of the similarity of Desdemona and Emilia's experiences, instead of reading the women separately, this chapter will read them concurrently through their shared

experiences and concerns. Discussion of modern productions will be folded in to consider how the War on Terror and military contexts have been brought to bear on *Othello*. It will begin by situating Desdemona and Emilia in the military culture. It will then consider their shared experiences as victims of toxic masculinity, which manifests as spousal jealousy and domestic abuse, especially interpreting Emilia's behavior through a modern understanding of Battered Person Syndrome. Looking at Emilia through this modern lens enables us to understand her behavior with respect to Iago and Desdemona. We can also see how modern communities, particularly in the military, are trying, and sometimes tragically failing, to respond to these problems. While from a marital perspective, *Othello* is a play about jealousy, from a military perspective, *Othello* is a depiction of soldiers who betrayed their own military obligations in their unhealthy focus on their wives and their own masculinity.

Desdemona and Emilia as Military Spouses

Both Desdemona and Emilia are military spouses. However, they have different relationships to the military, given their ages and the lengths of their marriages. Desdemona is likely younger, and she is newly married to her soldier, meaning she is newer to the military culture and the role of military spouse. Emilia, on the other hand, appears older, or at least seems so in light of her cynicism and military experience, and she has been a military spouse for longer, as can be seen when she tells Desdemona "'Tis not a year or two shows us a man" (3.4.120).

It is almost certain that Desdemona was not raised as an army brat. The modern American term is anachronistic, but not overly so. Although England did not, Venice maintained in the 16th and early 17th centuries a standing army, which means the Venetians would have understood the concept of military children (Hale and Mallett 213-214). There would have been a distinction between Brabantio and a member of that army. Her father is a counselor to the Duke, and his advice is sought on military matters; however, his advice is

not military leadership– there is no suggestion of actually putting him in charge of the troops – but instead in responding to reported intelligence. While he could conceivably have a military past, it is never referred to, so it cannot be confirmed. There are important offices, such as Secretary of Defense, that advise the President on the military but are civilian positions. He might be more in that vein. If he is a civilian, Brabantio's daughter would not have been raised in a military culture. Although that fact may or may not distinguish her from Emilia – the audience hears little of Emilia's backstory – it does distinguish her from several of Shakespeare's army brats who grew into military spouses. Lady Mortimer is daughter to Owen Glendower, who led the Welsh in rebellion against Henry IV. In Rome, power, politics, and military service were inextricably bound, so it is unsurprising in Shakespeare's Roman plays to see military spouses grown from soldiers' daughters. Portia boasts that she is Cato's daughter and therefore deserving of trust and respect (2.1.318-319). Military brats cum military wives exist, but Desdemona is not one of them. She marries into the culture instead of being born into it.

However, Desdemona displays willingness to accept that she is marrying into a military culture. One sees this in her desire to follow Othello to Cyprus, even though she had heard his stories of battles and hairs-breadth escapes from danger:

> OTHELLO. I […] do undertake
> These present wars against the Ottomites.
> Most humbly therefore bending to your state,
> I crave fit disposition for my wife.
> Due reference of place and exhibition,
> With such accommodation and besort
> As levels with her breeding.[…]
> DESDEMONA. [D]ear lords, if I be left behind,
> A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
> The rites for which I love him are bereft me,
> And I a heavy interim shall support
> By his dear absence. Let me go with him. (1.3.266-272,290-294)

He meant to leave her behind. Perhaps he feared to take her with him into a war zone. Perhaps he thought that she, only newly married, was not ready for the blunt and brutal

introduction to this kind of life. He may also have worried that requesting he be allowed to bring his wife with him would lead the Senate to assume he would scant his serious business – when she asks to go, he promises the Senate he will not, suggesting he is aware one might make this assumption. However, Desdemona does not allow herself to be shut out of the military life he leads. She is no Penelope to wait at home.[2] She intends to follow him. Following a military spouse can lead to isolation of a new spouse on the order that Desdemona experiences. Joanne Stanley, a civilian social worker at the Robinson Health Clinic at Fort Bragg, reported that "she had these young spouses come in who had left their families many states away and were here in Fayetteville doing things on their own for the very first time, with no family or friends to fall back on, with no life experience to go on, in this wartime situation that was not normal" (Henderson *While* 199). Desdemona finds herself in a new place surrounded by new people, and she must struggle to adapt to married life and her new culture at the same time, while utterly cut off from any support systems she had in Venice. (Her situation is not helped by the fact that she seems to have no mother, has no siblings, and her father disowns her when she marries. Iago says she has kinsmen, and she calls Lodovico 'cousin,' but she does not seem to know him at all well. For much of the play, her only social network seems to be Emilia, who she may not have known well before they were stationed together in the spousely 'band of sisters.') There is another military spouse who follows in Shakespeare – Patroclus. However, Patroclus follows also because he, like his partner, is a soldier, and therefore his position at the front is rendered less questionable, although it is not without question from the other soldiers. Emilia also follows to the front at Othello's request due to his decision to bring Desdemona:

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[2] Desdemona refuses to be a "moth of peace." The phrasing recalls Volumnia's teasing words for Virgilia, the wife who wishes to wait in the house for her husband: "You would be another Penelope: yet, they say, all the yarn she spun in Ulysses' absence did but fill Ithaca full of moths" (1.3.85-87). Penelope references continue to be common in discussing the military spouse experience. Jehanne DuBrow in her poem "Stateside" builds in recurring comparisons to Penelope. Henderson also articulates comparisons (*While* 149).

> Honest Iago,
> My Desdemona must I leave to thee:
> I prithee, let thy wife attend on her:
> And bring them after in the best advantage. (1.3.336-340)

However, her following is motivated differently than Desdemona's. While Desdemona asks to go to accompany her spouse, Emilia's presence is more at request. In theory, she follows because Othello desires someone to accompany his wife.[3] The fact that Desdemona chooses to follow Othello indicates that she intends to dive into the culture in which he lives, the military, and assume the role of military spouse immediately, now they have wed, and her decision brings Emilia with her. Her willingness puts her in the space she will occupy for the rest of the play, trying to help Cassio, trying to support her husband and making endless excuses for Othello.

Aware of her position as outsider to the culture, Desdemona spends the play trying to understand her role as a wife and specifically a soldier's wife. When Othello's behavior becomes erratic, she and others attempt to frame it as comprehensible in a military context. After Othello rails at her about the handkerchief, Desdemona tries to understand his temper in light of his military service (3.4.154-178). Desdemona, for her part, makes excuses for Othello, assuming that his behavior has to do with his military service, duties, and responsibilities, "Something, sure, of state,/[…]Hath puddled his clear spirit" (3.4.161,164). That puddling might suggest ordinary distemperture, or PTSD or, possibly a Traumatic Brain injury (TBI), a common concern in post-9/11 military contexts– the Wounded Warrior project estimate that there are 400,000 vets living with PTSD and 320,000 with TBIs ("Who We Serve"). Desdemona prioritizes the military issues above herself, calling them the "great" issues that concern him and cause him to "wrangle" with "inferior things" (3.4.165). In that

[3] The National Theatre – a War on Terror concept production which relied on imagery of a modern desert war – chose to cast Emilia as one of Othello's soldiers, which made her following more logical, more like Patroclus', and it explains how Othello could blithely command her presence at the front. That decision places Emilia as more involved in military culture, further substantiating her ability to initiate Desdemona into military culture.

light, she is the inferior thing. She is learning to place her world, the domestic one, beneath the mission, to know that the military must come first. In this passage, Desdemona refers to herself as "unhandsome warrior," suggesting she is coming to think of herself in relationship to the military (3.4.172). Furthermore, it balances against Othello's greeting her as "fair warrior" when he met her in Cyprus, when he first invoked the military language about her (2.1.197). She has switched from 'fair,' though, to unhandsome. That shift may indicate that she thinks of herself as less suitable in the military context than he praised her for being, that she faults herself for his having "wrangled" with her just now, or perhaps that Desdemona attaches her sense of her fairness and un-fairness to how Othello seems to see her and thus feels she has become "unhandsome" where once she was "fair." She has attached herself to his military life, military values, and military standards. Desdemona has made an effort to think of her situation in a military light, and others, including Othello and Iago, have made an effort to encourage her in that direction.

Emilia, for her part, would be the more experienced military spouse. As discussed, the text does not state that she has habitually been a camp follower. Although camp followers may seem like a historical artifact, modern military culture has parallels. The US military has posted civilian families with soldiers in peaceful situations. A family might, for example, now live at a base in Okinawa or in LA. Living on base, even on US soil, can keep military families immersed in the military culture and community. However, one would regard it as less likely that a man would be allowed to bring his wife to an active warzone, such as Iraq. Dual-military couples, like Iago and Emilia in the National Theatre production, have sometimes deployed together (Thorpe 163). Generally, the military will make some effort to station married dual-military couples together.[4] Otherwise, in the War on Terror era,

[4] Dual-military couples are not uncommon. "There are 50,000 women in the Navy[…]. Nearly half the women in the military are married to other service members" (Buckholtz 224). Roughly 80% of military couples will get posted together (Powers). That figure probably refers, though, to individuals serving in the same branch. In 2016, there were no formal agreements between services to arrange for dual military couple co-location, though

it becomes more difficult to imagine that Emilia would have had a history following her husband to battles, though she may have moved with him as he moved in the service in other respects, for example were he posted in Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany. Shakespeare attaches her as a companion to Desdemona, which makes as much sense as having Desdemona follow her husband to an active warzone. Experience following her husband would lend Emilia's life a military shape and structure, and it would further embed her in the military culture. Either following him or remaining at home, Emilia must have been around the block as a military spouse. Her husband has served under Othello "At Rhodes, at Cyprus and on other grounds/ Christian and heathen" (1.1.30-1). She has lived through deployments and perhaps followed to posts. She has the experience that Desdemona, had she lived, may have grown to have. Better understanding their relationship with the military illuminates the effects the military culture has on them. Not all elements of that culture are positive.

Negative Impacts of Toxic Masculinity

Desdemona and Emilia experience jealousy and domestic violence. Neither issue is unique to a military environment, though they can be experienced differently within such settings, as will be discussed in the subsequent sections. Both are byproducts of hegemonic masculinity. Jealousy can be a consequence of hegemonic masculinity, because a man's respect and power become tied to his ability to secure his partner's sexual fidelity, or, more threateningly, the ability to secure sexual access to another man's woman (Wilson 90). Domestic violence can be read as a result of a culture of toxic masculinity that lauds violence, the suppression and unhealthy expression of emotion, and the subordination and control of women. The unfortunate relationship between domestic violence and masculinity can be seen in the DoD's admission that higher rates of domestic violence will be seen in communities with more men,

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efforts would be made on case basis (Faram). One should note that there is a distinction between being posted together and service together. The Navy has precluded married couples being in the same squadron or deploying on the same boat (Buckholtz 224).

which does describe the US military (*Family Advocacy Program Fiscal Year 2014*). These aspects of the toxic masculinity embraced by the wider culture and practiced within the military, demonstrating that the culture allows and potentially encourages these behaviors, appear in both Othello and Iago. Permitting these behaviors and the gender system that creates them can lead to a breakdown in military performance and, worse, casualties, even in non-combat situations.

Jealousy

Jealousy within military relationships can be viewed as a predictable potential difficulty. The word predictable can be used advisedly, as the military predicts it: Military OneSource describes jealousy as a possible problem in marriages that can become very destructive. Its account of the possible negative ramifications of jealousy very accurately describes *Othello*:

> Jealousy is unhealthy when it starts to define a relationship. You might become preoccupied with jealous thoughts and constantly worry about losing the relationship. This kind of intense jealousy can lead to controlling or violent behavior as you try to get control of these feelings and become confident in the relationship. Some negative things you might do include:
> - Trying to keep your partner from spending time with others
> - Spying on your partner
> - Looking through your partner's belongings
> - Insisting on knowing every detail of your partner's activities
> - Constantly asking questions about past relationships
> - Threatening or intimidating your partner
> - Becoming physically violent ("Understanding Jealousy")

Almost all of those behaviors occur in some form in *Othello*. Othello becomes angered when his wife spends time with Cassio, with whom he believes she is having an affair, and becomes increasingly angry at requests he dine with them, taking it as a sign of her affection for Cassio (3.3). Moreover, he interrogates Emilia about with whom Desdemona has spent time, especially Cassio (4.2.1-19). Othello demands Desdemona produce the handkerchief for him and, in the National Theatre production, searches their room for it (3.4). The Abraham production at the Stratford Festival also showed such searching. Othello spies on

Cassio (4.1). He physically abuses Desdemona (4.1), verbally abuses her (4.2), and then murders her (5.2). This behavior does happen in military couples. Angela Ricketts recorded in her memoir that her husband returned from a tour in Afghanistan convinced she had never loved him: "Maybe the dream messed him up. Would this just fix itself? [...]Nightmares about Afghanistan, that's what I can handle. That's a nice and normal reaction to combat. Not this. Not at all" (117). After her husband "confess[ed] his assumptions and delusions" to an Army chaplain and the therapist the chaplain recommended, they warned him that he needed to get control of his behavior, lest his accusations destroy his marriage (117-118).[5] In an *Othello*-esque note, Ricketts' husband before he deployed had warned her to be careful about "safeguarding [their] image," wary of rumors starting about her friendship with his rear detachment commander (an officer tasked with staying behind when the unit deploys), because "Your reputation is all you have" (238). When the rumors started anyway, the rear detachment commander responded with anger motivated in large part, it seems, by the awareness that a belief that he has seduced his commanding officer's wife could ruin his career (238).[6] His anger was directed at the wives of the unit for participating in that kind of damaging talk (238). In that instance, the rumors were circulated not by a jealous fellow officer but an officer's wife. That wife, acting out of line and creating the impression that the rear detachment commander had behaved inappropriately with a wife, risked endangering the cohesiveness of the unit. The instance also demonstrates that jealousy- and reputation-based concerns persist in modern military couples – and the wife is expected to prevent these

[5] When their marriage started to collapse, Rachel Starnes' husband's CO encouraged him to make space in his schedule for counseling to preserve the marriage (228-9).

[6] Kayla Williams notes that before she met her soldier husband, rumors had circulated that he was having sex with another soldier's wife (*Plenty* 14). As a result, he "was constantly getting called into the commander's office and getting chewed out" (*Plenty* 14). The military hierarchy was responding to the supposed-affair, attempting to police the behavior. Unfortunately, in that case, the soldier and spouse in question decided that if they were to be constantly accused of adultery, they should at least have the fun of committing it.

problems to bolster unit performance. Iago, himself a jealous servicemember, is able to exploit these anxieties within the modern military.

Modern military spouses live with the realities of jealousy and the pressures of managing it. Jacey Eckhart's advice for military spouses stresses the importance of marital fidelity (22, 63) and suggests modulating behavior to prevent cheating (190), including, for male and female spouses, "Avoid [infidelity] by not hanging out with that attractive (or semi-attractive or even passable) member of the opposite sex" (173). A male military spouse admitted that not only had he worried that military wives might have issues with him attending Family Readiness Group (FRG) meetings – "he wondered if a few of them didn't have an issue with someone like him attending the wives' coffees, someone unusual, someone not like themselves" – but that he worried what their servicemember spouses would think of a man being in the FRG with their wives while they were away; the men "downrange" it transpired "didn't seem to see him as a threat" (Henderson *While* 142). Despite that, eventually, "among the women […] a rumor briefly made the rounds about him and Patricia, his coleader. It was nothing all that interesting, just speculation, just someone's imagination run amok because he was a man and they were women" (Henderson *While* 142). The speculation presents because social norms under hegemonic masculinity presume that men will hit on all women. That presumption supports innuendo and jealousy among absent men. Spouses find themselves in the position of policing the situation and managing the jealousy:

> As for Marissa [Bootes], whenever the wives were at a bar, if a guy so much as asked directions, Marissa would bark, "We're married!" The other wives would tease her, "How do you know the guy's hitting on you if you don't even let him talk to you?"
>
> Marissa didn't care. Because guys did talk. And what were the chances of a rumor starting? (Henderson *While* 153).

Taking a 'Caesar's wife must be above reproach' attitude would be important considering that what that wife feared was not that she herself might be unfaithful but that rumors might

start and her husband become jealous.[7] This attitude, for that wife, extended to the military spouses with whom she would keep company: "As [the woman and her lover] sat down she shouted over the music, 'Look, if you're going to cheat on your husband while he's gone, that's your business. But get the hell away from me, 'cause guys talk, and I don't want anybody saying I'm hanging out with you.'" (Henderson *While* 152). Even knowing an adulteress was, apparently, sufficient to fuel the rumor mill, though in that case the loose-lipped individuals of concern were always men.[8] The spouses, then, managed their behavior in the hopes of reducing rumors and innuendo they knew might fuel jealousy, even if they themselves were faithful. Women would be spared this tremendous labor if men could be trusted to trust their wives and not lose their minds in jealousy,[9] but that is often not what happens.

Both Iago and Othello experience irrational jealousy over their wives, and both of them begin, as a result of their jealousy, to function less effectively as soldiers. Iago, by the start of the play, has lost his ability to function properly as a soldier because he merely *suspects* his wife was unfaithful with his leader and his colleague (2.1.316-334).[10] Iago

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[7] The presumption that a civilian may try to sleep with your wife is recorded in certain military cadences called "Jody calls." The recurring character Jody is a civilian man who lives a lavish lifestyle and hits on the servicemember's girlfriend, Suzy. These fears are not wholly unfounded. Jenn Marner and Angela, who founded a group called Hooah Wives, noted that men, presumably civilians, would attempt to join their groups with the stated intention of trying to pick up a soldier's wife; because they knew these women would not leave their husbands or their families, these men figured they could take up with a soldier's wife as "a little lay on the side" (Henderson *While* 141).

[8] In one unit, a female sergeant engaged in social conversation with a male commando in his room with the door open. The 29 other men in the unit circulated a rumor she was sleeping with him. This information was recounted as part of an explanation as to how female servicemembers should act to diminish innuendo in the men (Brye and Satter 60-65). Perhaps, instead, these men should have kept their mouths shut.

[9] The military phrases it as a matter of trust, telling servicemembers contemplating marriage "Military marriage requires more blind trust than your average marriage" and encouraging them to consider "Are you confident that both of you will be faithful during separations?" (That phrasing applies to both the deployment servicemember and the spouse.) They note that "you are more likely to enjoy a strong and healthy relationship" if you prepared for the unique challenges of military life and have duly considered issues like trust beforehand. ("Your Checklist")

[10] Iago, when speaking to Roderigo, suggests his anger stems from a lack of promotion (1.1.8-41). In the US military, promotions are done by performance and not by affection or favoritism – a reason that POC and women are often better able to advance in the military than in civilian fields. In that case, Iago would have less grounds to complain of his lack of promotion, though the civilian Roderigo may fall for that line. Another telling detail about that claim is Roderigo's presence. Iago often reframes his yarns based on the listener.

presents no evidence for his suppositions, but he reports a belief that Othello "Hath leap'd into [his] seat" and that he "fear[s] Cassio with [his] night-cap too" (2.1.318,329). He is suspicious of her contact with two men for no reason. However, despite his lack of evidence, he appears to be slowly losing his mind over the suspicion, which "like a poisonous mineral, gnaw[s his] inwards" (2.1.319). Notably, Iago believes that Othello has "done [Iago's] office" (1.3.431). Iago, like Othello, displays a conflation between his ability to control and access his wife sexually and his performance as a soldier. He has also resolved, because of this jealousy, to similarly destroy the sanity of his commander. This is crucial: his jealousy is leading him to do his best to undermine the mental health of his country's best warrior and the man charged with maintaining the peace and safety in Cyprus. He also intends to "have our Michael Cassio on the hip," undermining the position of the lieutenant who must second his leader (2.1.327). He is taking out the military hierarchy and undermining the regional security in his jealousy.

Like Iago, Othello loses his ability to function as a military leader as he becomes jealous. Even before he has turned to violence against Desdemona, he admits that his anger at her supposed infidelity has damaged his martial function:

> I had been happy, if the general camp,
> Pioners and all, had tasted her sweet body,
> So I had nothing known. O, now, for ever
> Farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell content!
> Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,
> That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
> Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
> The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
> The royal banner, and all quality,
> Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war!
> And, O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
> The immortal Jove's dead clamours counterfeit,
> Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone! (3.3.397-410)

However, Iago's statements about his wife are made to the audience alone, which suggests that they have greater veracity, since there is little reason to believe he lies in soliloquy.

He feels that he would have been able to function as a soldier while she was unfaithful so long as he knew *nothing* of it. The double-syllabic nature of that word in the clause renders it prominent. The other double-syllabic word in that line, which is also in an otherwise monosyllabic clause – *for ever* – suggests that now that he knows this so-called information, he is convinced that he will never be able to unknow it or move beyond it to regain his sense of self or martial power. The importance he had placed on the identity he believes she has stripped from him – which, in fact, his jealousy strips from him – shows in his listing of the elements of soldiering that he cannot enjoy or partake of now that he believes her unfaithful. The jealousy takes not only his "tranquil mind" and his "content" but the "Pride, pomp and circumstances of glorious war" and "the plumed troop, and the big wars/ That make ambition virtue." As he notes, now that he has become jealous of a woman, "Othello's occupation's gone." He cannot be a soldier now.

This anger towards a supposed-unfaithful woman does not exist only in *Othello*. Tanya Biank discovered while covering the murders near Fort Bragg that, unlike the servicemember, "It was harder, in this town at least, for me to find people who had compassion for the wife he had just murdered" (2). The general attitude among servicemembers, she discovered, was that an unfaithful wife deserved no sympathy:

> More than a few soldiers who either knew the Wrights or had heard about the case later told me, "She got what she deserved." Or "She had it comin'." These quick-trigger outbursts (they were never said casually) always caught me off guard. To understand the root of such venom, I had to take a step back and realize that these men identified more with Bill Wright the patriot, Bill Wright the war vet and family man, than they did with his supposedly cheating wife. An unfaithful Army wife might as well be a terrorist, soldiers hate them that much. Soldiers tend to consider infidelity as a personal slight on their own manhood. When a woman cheats on a buddy, she is desecrating not only her husband but also the flag and all those in uniform. Of course none of this applies when soldiers cheat on their wives. (2)

Infidelity in a woman is compared to *terrorism*. They mirror Othello's propensity for saying infidelity undermines a soldier's sense of himself as a man and his ability to serve his country. Jennifer Wright was trapped in the same bind as Desdemona:

> Rumors of Jennifer Wright's alleged affairs had been flowing through her husband's unit for a long time before her death. And in the Army rumors are as good as reality; here perceptions are reality. Sadly Jennifer Wright was never able to defend her reputation. In the end the "great" father had orphaned his three boys. (Biank 2-3)

As Ricketts was warned, a spouse's reputation is vital, and it is something over which a wife can have almost no control or defense. This is the culture that haunts Desdemona and Emilia, and it leads them into the same dangers faced by the wives at Fort Bragg.

The symptoms of the jealousy are visible to others. When Desdemona presumes the problem in her marriage must be her husband's job stress, Emilia realizes, probably based on her own experiences, that the problem might be more personal:

> EMILIA. Pray heaven it be state-matters, as you think,
> And no conception nor no jealous toy
> Concerning you.
> DESDEMONA. Alas the day! I never gave him cause.
> EMILIA. But jealous souls will not be answer'd so;
> They are not ever jealous for the cause,
> But jealous for they are jealous (3.4.176-182).

She knows that it is foolish to presume there is a cause, that jealousy can happen without reason or with reasons that have nothing to do with the wife. Others may notice these signs as well.

Emilia likely recognizes the signs well, because she shares this history. Emilia, recognizing the similarities between Othello and Desdemona's problems and what she has had to endure with her husband, remarks on a possible origin:

> EMILIA. Some such squire he was
> That turn'd your wit the seamy side without,
> And made you to suspect me with the Moor.
> IAGO. You are a fool; go to. (4.2.171-4)

Emilia remarks to Desdemona that jealous men are never jealous for cause, and perhaps like Desdemona, she feels she never gave her husband cause; so, Emilia presumes that there was a man who convinced her husband – perhaps it is what he told her when he blamed her – and presumes there must be one in this case – as the audience knows there is, Iago. Iago responds with a verbal insult and a denial that such a person – in this case, himself – exists. However, in her relationship with Iago, the audience may wonder, was there ever such a squire, or did the jealousy just appear in Iago's head one day? Considering he suspects her with Othello *and* Cassio, it seems less likely that some squire turned his mind and more likely he did that to himself. Emilia may be trying to rationalize Iago's behavior by pretending he was lied to and is less to blame. In abusive relationships (the abusive nature of their relationship will be discussed later), the abused partner often rationalizes the behavior of the abuser. Andrea Carlile, discussing her former state of denial about her husband's abuse, remarked, "Like the typical battered woman, I created a world of self-talk that minimized the situation I was facing" (496). Emilia's version of history here, which does not necessarily square with what she admits to Desdemona when she says that men are never jealous for cause but jealous for they are jealous, may reflect that. Emilia has her own history with spousal jealousy.

The jealousy these women live with is a manifestation of an unhealthy masculinity that, when it comes to women, keeps score. The military recognizes the dangers this jealousy, as an offshoot of toxic masculinity, can pose to the servicemembers and their families and makes an effort to avoid or ameliorate the situation should it result.[11] Importantly, Desdemona and Emilia have done nothing to earn their husbands' distrust, indicating that they have not intentionally damaged their husbands' martial performance. However, as a result of the men's brand of masculinity, it has happened nonetheless. Had

[11] See their warnings about jealousy referenced here and their anti-domestic violence protocols and systems described below.

they not been distracted by their jealousy, these men could have continued their masculine and martial performance as good soldiers. The key in a military situation would be for the men to prioritize their service above their suspicions. Part of the problem, in *Othello*, is that the men do not.

Domestic Violence

Beyond *Othello*'s infamous jealousy lies the even more dangerous depiction of violence from toxic masculinity. Intimate partner violence (IPV) occurs in military *and* civilian relationships.[12] In 2012, Alysha Jones attempted to study the rates of intimate partner violence in military couples, however what that study reveals most is that there is not a good sense in the research as to what these rates are.[13] The military likely has more valid statistics, since military policy requires abuse cases to be investigated and reported, including to the DoD for statistical analysis (Instruction 6400.01 2). In 2014, the Family Advocacy Program (FAP)[14] reported 7,464 incidents that met their criteria of spousal abuse and 969 incidents of intimate partner violence (*Family Advocacy Program Fiscal Year 2014* 18,21-22). The military notes there is little benefit trying to compare military rates to civilian rates.[15] Once

[12] Domestic abuse can occur in any kind of relationship, and anyone can be a victim. Women are more likely to be victims of such violence (Truman and Morgan 5; "Statistics"), and in *Othello*, those abused are female; however, that should not be viewed as an erasure of other instances. Military issuances about protecting abuse victims use gender-neutral phrasing, such as the gender-neutral "victim" or using "he or she" when pronouns are needed.

[13] The military, as has been noted, is hard to study from the outside, since these couples may not be interested in being open with outsiders. The populations can also be difficult to sample in a representative way, and are often convenience sampled instead. Furthermore, the age of the individuals sampled may also have skewed these studies. The Vietnam War involved a draft, pulling in men who were not part of military culture, which means sampling those vets and their history of intimate partner violence may shift the data in comparison to civilian populations and military culture.

[14] The FAP is a DoD program that "works to prevent abuse by offering programs to put a stop to domestic abuse before it starts. When abuse does occur, the FAP works to ensure the safety of victims and helps military families overcome the effects of violence and change destructive behavior patterns. FAP staff members are trained to respond to incidents of abuse and neglect, support victims, and offer prevention and treatment."

[15] They use different definitions, so "DoD FAP data includes incidents of emotional abuse that occurred without any physical or sexual abuse, while most civilian studies include only physical or sexual abuse," which will make incidence appear higher. Furthermore, demographics differ too much: "Family violence occurs more frequently in young couples, which are overrepresented in the military population" (Frequently Asked Questions). Moreover, psychopathologies like PTSD, which would be present in higher rates in the military, may skew the data, if uncontrolled for.

demographic differences and injuries more common in the military than in civilian life are controlled for, though, "While combat vets have a somewhat higher chance of being involved in domestic violence, there's no hard evidence that military families overall are any more violent than civilian families" (Henderson *While* 269). However, the military creates extra pressures surrounding domestic abuse:

> the military lifestyle is also of special concern due to the potential negative consequences of the accumulation of the isolation, secretiveness, and dependability on his or her partner to both the victim and the individual belonging to the military. For example, for many military members, being in the military is more than just a career; it is their identity (Stamm, 2009). If it is found out that the military member has committed an act of violence against a family member, the member may face a dishonorable discharge from the military — consequently losing his military title, employment, and family. The loss of this identity can lead to higher risks of violence, because the abuser may feel as though he has nothing left to lose now that he has lost his identity and career. (Jones 148).

As discussed, jealousy can undermine the relationship with the masculine and martial ideals, but when a male feels that his identity has been undercut in this way he may become even more dangerous to his partner. That reaction appears in *Othello*. The fact that Othello later commits suicide can be interpreted as an extension of the violence he committed against his wife. The person who destroyed their relationship and his martial function must pay, even when the person is himself. Interestingly, though, Jones notes that individuals are at risk of losing their martial role for domestic abuse, because they are subject to arrest and prosecution in military as well as civilian courts, and if they are found guilty, they face dishonorable discharge. For murder, Othello would also be subject to discharge, incarceration, and possibly execution. However, Othello, before his suicide, notes that he has done the state some service. He may instead fear that they would attempt to return him to his position, so he enforces the law against himself. In reality, though, "fear that a domestic violence incident is an automatic career-ender is common in the military community," and in the case of one couple Kristin Henderson interviewed, this fear did lead to a woman sheltering her

violent husband from arrest by civilian law enforcement (*While* 268). In reality, "like the fear surrounding combat trauma and PTSD, this fear, too, is mostly unfounded" (Henderson *While* 268). Although they do not have a higher rate of abuse than civilians, the military has "a higher rate of treatment. In the civilian world, families often don't receive help until things get so bad the police are at the door. In the military, if a commanding officer suspects trouble at home, the CO can order a service member to get help early on—the military system is focused on treatment rather than punishment" (Henderson *While* 268). In that case, where possible, the military acts to intervene to prevent abuse and to treat the causes of it. Indeed, the fact that domestic abuse may be more treatable in the military than in civilian contexts may stem from the same causes as its occurrence:

> "The bulk of our cases," Lieutenant Colonel Pecko explains, "are young, impulsive, immature, fairly newlywed couples. They're just learning how to live together, and so they haven't established these longstanding patterns of power and control." Those patterns, well entrenched, are what you tend to find in civilian cases by the time they get help. In contrast, less than 5 percent of Fort Bragg's spouse maltreatment cases are estimated to involve couples with a long history of battering, a behavior that is very hard to change once it becomes ingrained. In those cases, Lieutenant Colonel Pecko says they might recommend that the batterer be considered for separation from the Army. Discharge. (Henderson *While* 269).

Othello and Desdemona, the newly-married couple, are among those who have not yet fallen into an unrecoverable pattern of abuse. Their relationship could have been saved. (Indeed, the fact that Othello's behavior towards his wife deteriorates over a short period, as opposed to being a consistent behavior, may explain why Desdemona does not realize quickly that she needs help.) It is Iago and Emilia, by contrast, who demonstrate a long-running pattern that defines their relationship. Andrea Carlile, for example, noted that in her relationship with her husband, "The reconciliation with Wes went well for about six months as we applied the anger-management skills and communication techniques that we had learned during the [PTSD] seminar. However, eventually our marriage fell back to similar patterns. We both began to ignore the tools, and things progressed from destructive to abusive to dangerous"

(1383). It is possible for relationships built around an abusive paradigm to fall back into it. Iago would be in the population that should be discharged and probably jailed. Emilia would have benefited from the networks the military has built to protect abuse victims that exist now but have not always been available. Othello raises these complex issues of intimate partner violence and the challenges in keeping people safe.

Desdemona is the most obvious victim of domestic abuse. Her husband verbally abuses her, calling her "whore" and "strumpet," physically abuses her, and eventually murders her. She mirrors a military spouse who reported

> That first night [back from the deployment] was great. Until she woke up and found him asleep on the floor. The bed was too soft, he explained, he could not sleep in the bed.
> Within a few months, he called her a whore and she found herself on the ground in front of their house with his hands around her neck. (Henderson *While* 263).

Othello, the soldier whose experience had made the couch of war his thrice-driven bed of down, performs a similar turn on his own wife. However, Desdemona has not assimilated a belief common in abusive relationships that she is somehow at fault or deserves this treatment. After the brothel scene, she notes:

> 'Tis meet I should be used so, very meet.
> How have I been behaved, that he might stick
> The small'st opinion on my least misuse? (4.2.125-128)

Othello is not present to hear, but she sarcastically notes that his behavior is "very meet." She knows that nothing she has done merited such language. She holds to that belief when he strikes her:

> OTHELLO. Devil!
> DESDEMONA. I have not deserved this.
> LODOVICO. My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,
> Though I should swear I saw't: 'tis very much:
> Make her amends; she weeps. (4.1.269-272)

She calls out his treatment of her as undeserved. What is also notable about that moment is that his behavior is not regarded as acceptable by the males around him. In fact, Lodovico,

who, having been sent by the Duke and Senate to convey the change in governors, comes the closest to being a male who outranks Othello, specifically objects to the abuse, because in the modern military someone can pull rank to intervene in suspected abuse cases (more will be said on this later). Lodovico also notes that Othello's behavior would have been considered unbelievable in Venice, and he demands Othello apologize to his wife. Eventually, at dinner, Desdemona seems to cover for her husband, putting a good face on their relationship before the Venetians, encouraging the men to accept him again. However, Othello does not curtail his behavior towards his wife.

Although less visibly, Emilia is also a victim of spousal violence, and she is the play's most likely candidate for Battered Person Syndrome.[16] Consider Emilia's chilling monosyllables while detailing for Desdemona the abuses men can direct at women: "or say they strike us" (4.3.101). Perhaps she is telling Desdemona that she is aware that Othello has hurt her. However, it seems likely that Emilia is instead opening up a truth that is otherwise silent – she too knows what it is to have a man she trusted hurt her.[17] Emilia shows other signs of past abuse in the way she seems to have been conditioned to do whatever Iago demands, despite his behavior or her moral compass. Most 21st-century theories "accept that [intimate partner violence] is a disorder of power and control; the abuser uses these for the purpose of controlling the victim" as Iago's abuse has allowed him to gain control of his wife (Walker 145). For example, she steals the handkerchief:

> I'll have the work ta'en out,
> And give't Iago: what he will do with it

[16] Battered Person Syndrome does not appear in *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) but can be considered a subset of PTSD (Walker 144). There are some, though, who argue that as the abuse tends to be ongoing, the post part of post-traumatic stress disorder does not apply in the same way (Walker 144).
[17] This is another instance in which the decision at the National to play Emilia as a soldier takes on added meaning. As someone trained to defend herself and her countrymen, Emilia will feel added shame on top of the shame that comes with feeling like you let someone hurt you. In addition to shame, positioning her as a servicemember may explain why Emilia stayed after he hurt her. Kayla Williams remarked that after her husband's behavior became abusive, her friends suggested she leave, but she would not leave a soldier spouse: "My friend's continued protests fell on deaf ears. How could I explain it to a civilian, that commitment to never leave a fallen comrade? Was there any way to make someone else see? Outsiders wouldn't get it" (*Plenty* 81). If Iago were also her brother-in-arms, it might motivate Emilia further to stay.

> Heaven knows, not I;
> I nothing but to please his fantasy. (3.3.340-343)

Her husband entreated her to steal the handkerchief, so she takes the opportunity to do so. Note in her rationalization the shortened line "Heaven knows, not I." She builds in a juxtaposition where heaven understands her husband's motivations, but she does not. Heaven, then, is responsible for what he does, not her. The shortened nature of the line creates a space before or after the words for her to consider her actions but then decide to comply with his wish while she stands in the moment when he does not know she has the handkerchief and cannot force her compliance. She knows he wants it for something and the something is probably not good. Yet, she does it anyway, because he asks her to. This behavior fits a pattern in abuse victims of trying to please abusers to avert future harm: In the first phase of the abuse cycle, the tension-building phase, "where the perception of danger from the batterer kept escalating at different rates for different people," the abused partner "tried to please the man during this period and her behavior could slow down or speed up movement into the second phase, or the *acute battering incident*" (Walker "Battered Woman Syndrome" 145-6).[18] Emilia must, as she and Walker both termed it, please him. Consider as well Emilia's words, "I nothing but to please his fantasy." "I nothing." She makes herself sound as though she is nothing, nothing without him, nothing without serving him. The phrasing, as well, makes it sound like there is a verb that ought to be there. What could that verb be? 'I *am* nothing but to please his fantasy'? 'I *do* nothing'? 'I *know* nothing'? 'I *desire* nothing'? Some of those cases sound more like she likes him more, wishes more to please him. However, in any of those cases, it sounds as though she feels she must. One can see in this moment, even when Iago is not present, that he maintains a power to control her, to

[18] Walker's phrasing always suggests a female victim and a male abuser. Walker "conduct[ed] one of the first large scale empirical studies of violence against women" in the US, sampling hundreds of women (143). While there can be other abusive paradigms, Walker's research focused exclusively on women all of whom were in heterosexual abusive relationships.

enforce his will on her. He has eaten her life, in a sense, taken control of it. Those who experience abuse can come to view their abusers as omniscient and omnipotent.[19] In abusive relationships, "[p]sychological coercion is acknowledged as part of the power dynamic and often is the glue that holds these relationships together" (Walker "Battered Woman Syndrome" 145). Iago does not need to be present for her to feel she must do as he would wish. That power over her may also explain why Emilia never volunteers for anyone that she has stolen the handkerchief, not until Iago crosses a line and she can break herself away from his control. Considering that in such relationships, "[a]pplying aversive psychological tactics in a random and variable manner together with some periods of withdrawal of the aversive stimuli and substitution of pleasurable or loving behavior is known to create psychological dependency, learned helplessness, or other deleterious conditions for victims," it is not surprising that Iago's relationship style, which seems to alternate between vaguely decent treatment and some form of abuse, verbal or physical, could have conditioned her to do as he bid her, until eventually she feels pushed too far (Walker "Battered Woman Syndrome" 145). Walker's research has also "demonstrated that phase three could also be characterized by an absence of tension or violence, with no observable loving-contrition behavior, and still be reinforcing for the woman. Sometimes the perception of tension and danger remains very high and does not return to the baseline or loving-contrition level. This is a sign that the risk of a lethal incident is very high" (Walker *The Battered Woman Syndrome* 95). Iago would not have to be kind or loving really to achieve the effect; he could just momentarily cease abusing her. Moreover, as displays of contrition become less frequent as the abuse continues, Iago likely would not do more than what the audience sees – momentary cessation of abuse

[19] This idea appears in much literature on domestic violence, though without a clinical attribution. It is often attributed to Walker but does not appear in Walker's work. Andrea Carlie in *The War That Came Home* discussed it (138). Donald E. Shelton's *Forensic Science in Court* notes this symptom, even as it notes the science underlying it may be shaky (83-5). Michael McGrath notes that the symptom is commonly reported and often attributed to Walker without appearing in her work (Turvey 219).

(Walker *The Battered Woman Syndrome* 95). Some productions have shown Iago's treatment of his wife walking a line between violence and more gentle persuasions. In David Latham's 2003 Stratford, Ontario production, for example, when Emilia refused to surrender the handkerchief to Iago, Iago responded by removing his sword from the scabbard with an audible *shing* before putting it, audibly, aside. He then asked "What's that to you?" in a flirtatious tone and kissed her on the neck. They kissed. Then he stole the handkerchief. Promptly, he went cold again. When he said "Leave me" he would not even look at her. There was, in the interaction, a threat of violence should she not comply, followed by proffers of affection should she follow his will, followed by emotional rejection when he no longer has use for her. His treatment encourages her compliance by manipulating her in this manner. That production also suggests Iago's violence in other scenes. When Emilia says Iago suspected her with Othello, Iago lunges at her like he would strike her in the face, but the blow does not land. She lurches back and holds still like she is waiting for the blow to fall. That suggests he beats her regularly. The force of will the abused Emilia would need to break through Iago's past control of her makes her eventual repudiation of him and her defense of Desdemona even more compelling. Emilia calls out her husband for his betrayals knowing that a likely outcome is her death, that she will never go home again. After a particularly violent incident, Williams found herself on a hotel bed, "star[ing] at the ceiling as the tears dried and salt crusted on my face, wondering if I'd ever go home" (*Plenty* 126). Andrea Carlile reports a confrontation with her husband shortly before she finally left him, though she survived it:

> In his eyes, I saw the devil within. My husband was no longer a person. He was evil, and I was championing against the dark. No longer fighting Wes, I was regaining my dignity, warring to retrieve my self-respect! I no longer loved him, no longer wanted to be married, and I demanded that he leave. The words were piercing, and I cared nothing of how it would agitate him or escalate the situation. In a trancelike state, I felt no concern if he killed me; I almost wished he would. Unable to kill myself, I wanted to escape the hell I had come to know. (476).

Emilia's situation has its real-life counterparts, women who need to be helped. This quality in Emilia has not gone unobserved. Irene Dash noted in passing that "In many ways, she presents the syndrome of the battered wife" (123). Lyndsey Marshal, who played Emilia at the National Theatre, believes that "Emilia and Iago's relationship is an abusive relationship" (Marshall and Vinall). She notes in particular that before Emilia ever speaks, "there's a massive put down from Iago in front of everybody." She exploited the implications of domestic abuse to explain some of Emilia's behavior: she gives her husband the handkerchief, because "she just believes that if she gives him this handkerchief, it will be a good night. […]She'd never believe what that would lead to," and she believes Emilia is too frightened to admit what she had done (Marshall and Vinall). However, as an actress who gave an interview, it is difficult to understand the fullness of Marshall's analysis. The domestic abuse (potentially long-term) Emilia suffers under her toxic spouse, Iago, defines Emilia's character and impacts her behavior throughout the course of the play.

As the American military predicts the risk of jealousy in military relationships, the military is prepared to respond to intimate partner violence in military couples. The military advises people who are in abusive situations to seek help at the installation's FAP or find a domestic abuse victim advocate by contacting Military OneSource. Policies exist to protect victims from abusers both civilian and military, though the military courts cannot themselves prosecute civilians – they will, nonetheless, report abusers to the civilian authorities (*Domestic Abuse* 16-17, 20-21). In a military setting, a man can be court martialed for domestic abuse. Potential charges include assault, failure to follow an order, and misuse or damage of government property, among others and depending on the circumstances ("Uniform Code of Military Justice Articles Relating to Domestic Violence"). However, the implementation of these military policies relies on the abuser being found out and on the abuse being reported to someone. Iago appears to have gotten away with abusing his wife,

because it has likely been done privately. While his verbal abuse occasionally occurs publicly, his physical abuse is not shown. One gets the sense from her monosyllables – "or say they strike us" – to Desdemona that this might be the first time she has told anyone. She might keep his secret because he has a hold over her. She could also be influenced by fear of him or, as Jones noted, the awareness that he might lose his job if discovered. While one of his commanding officers could have intervened to protect Emilia, that would require them to know what he has done.[20] In the case of Othello, Emilia is the chief witness of the verbal abuse, and she tells no one. The physical violence seems the first instance the other soldiers witness. However, Othello is the highest ranked officer, which makes things more difficult. Current military policy for reporting domestic abuse involves the instances being reported by the closest higher officer and, occasionally, referred higher up later.[21] Who would report Othello? One of the ways domestic violence can be punished in the military is failure to follow an order, but until Lodovico arrives, who could *order* Othello not to harm his wife? Even after, it is not clear that Lodovico outranks him. In a modern circumstance, a wife like Desdemona would benefit from contacting FAP or Military OneSource, but they can only help her if they know. Nothing in the text suggests that Emilia or Desdemona would be likely to do so. One can see in both women's cases how abuse cases might fall through the cracks of systems designed to protect victims.

Othello also includes an example of why the military would concern itself highly with domestic violence in its ranks (above and beyond the obvious point that abusing one's spouse

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[20] Relatedly, in the military, a spouse may choose to report the incident under Restricted Reporting, which would allow her to seek medical care for abuse injuries without having the abuse investigated or reporting to the victim's or the abuser's commanding officer(s) (United States *Domestic* 38). The military would then only violate the restrictions – thereby treating it as unrestricted reporting, notifying law enforcement and commanders – "if, based on the assessment, there is a good faith belief that there is a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of the victim or another person" (United States *Domestic* 19).

[21] Some spouses resent the involvement of the military in suspected abuse cases. The involvement of the CO is meant to help: "the service member's boss acts as an advocate on the sailor's behalf, especially because a junior sailor usually has relatively little power or resources" (Buckholtz 57). In cases where no actual abuse is present, the involvement of the CO can get things back on track.

is wrong). At an initial level, the abuse may suggest that the servicemember may not be reintegrating as well as one hopes to civilian life: "There had been a surge of problems after the division got back: drunk driving, bar fights, spousal abuse. Reintegration was hard. Behaviors that made sense when we were deployed—driving aggressively, constantly monitoring the environment for threats, being prepared to respond with immediate violence if necessary—were inappropriate in a civilian setting" (Williams *Plenty* 60-61). They may be directing their training in self-defense in a way that makes them a danger to others, and that behavior must be checked. The DoD has raised this issue with servicemembers. In 2006, "Before we came home, our chaplain gave us a presentation about reintegration in which he told us not to beat our wives (I felt like saying, "Hey, 'Don't ask, don't tell!' sir!" but figured he wouldn't think it was funny for me to mock how poorly suited the stupid video was for an Army that was 15 percent female)" (Williams *Plenty* 72). They tried, even if they were not successful, to effectively raise and address the issue.[22] Soldiers who abuse their partners should not be trusted as soldiers. One veteran, diagnosed with PTSD, posted online that he was "Trying to figure out what [he was] doing to [his] wife" because, based on what the wives of veterans were posting, "I think I do all the things you guys say except cheat or hit my wife" (Barnes 2168). Domestic abuse showed up as a common symptom of concern in these discussions. Johnathan Shay's patients told him things like, "in another way I'm real good to [my partner], compared to what I was like to other women before. […] I was one mean motherfucker. She didn't want to know me. You didn't want to know me. You don't want to know the number of people I fucked up [pauses], or how I fucked them up" (xvi). After seeing Othello abuse Desdemona, Lodovico asks, "Are his wits safe?" (4.1.304) before asking "Is it his use?" (4.1.311), stressing the concern that this behavior might be persistent.

[22] It is worth noting that there is no specific scene of reintegration in *Othello*. The situation in Cyprus should be transitioning to peace-time, given the destruction of the Turkish fleet; however, the real reintegration into the civilian culture would happen during their return to Venice, but that is prevented by murder-suicide.

The question ties the idea of domestic violence to mental illness. Though Othello's abuse stems from Iago's manipulations, in a broader military context, domestic violence could be an indicator the soldier suffers from PTSD. Lodovico's question would be shared by military superiors. *Othello*, then, both presents a problem currently extant in the military and demonstrates the pitfalls defensive protective endeavors must avoid, such as the isolation of the women.

The masculinity that contributed to Othello and Iago's success as soldiers apparently collapsed under jealousy and turned them into abusers; in this play, these negatives of masculinity produce a body count. Some critics find a way to blame the women, as though this behavior were not dangerous except that the women exist – "Without Desdemona, Othello would still be a respected military hero. Tragedy portrays the female other as a destructive force" (Smith *Shakespeare* 113) – but that interpretation misreads the situation. At the time of his suicide, Othello attempts to regain his sense of himself as a man and as a soldier. Unfortunately, after he realizes his crimes, he is alive only briefly, as a result of his relationship with a toxic masculinity that contributed to the abuse and death of his wife and Iago's wife, as well as the attempted murder of a brother-in-arms. This masculinity also contributes then to his own death. (Iago, in his own toxic masculinity, has inadvertently arranged for his own death by torture to follow the play.) Therefore, it is difficult to tell if either Othello or Iago question the brand of masculinity that led them to suspect and harm their wives, that will lead to their deaths as well. Othello appears to have made progress in understanding, as he has recognized that Iago twisted his mind (5.2.404-406), yet one cannot be entirely sure. It is unclear also if the surrounding males have come to question that brand of masculinity either, as they hide the laden bed from sight (5.2.426-8). Instead, they appear to choose to think less about the bloody end to which this masculinity has brought them. The awareness of the dangers of this toxic masculinity must then abide in the audience.

These men, very much so, did this to themselves. Desdemona and even Emilia attempt to support their husbands in the performance of their martial role. However, the men engage in toxic behaviors, such as jealousy and intimate partner violence. One sees in *Othello* the danger the toxic masculinity presents for women and for men, as well as the need to deconstruct toxic masculinity and to promote safety nets and networks, like the FAP and reporting mechanisms, to protect military spouses. One also sees the danger the toxic elements of the hegemonic masculinity pose to the military in this nightmare scenario.

Chapter 2: **"But** Yet A W**oman": Lady Percy and Lady** Mortimer

In a modern military context, *1 Henry IV* reveals issues faced by military couples. Lady Mortimer, a military brat, and her husband mirror experiences of military couples who have married across national boundaries, particularly when the foreign national could be construed as part of the other side, examining how men's martial identity and perceived trustworthiness can be impacted by this decision. Lady Percy, who details Hotspur's post-war changes, which suggest he has developed post-traumatic stress disorder,[1] represents the military spouses who notice the symptoms of their spouses' PTSD and underlines the importance of creating a culture that encourages mental health and seeking treatment. Although the characters have experiences attendant on their 16th-century origins, examining these characters in a 21st-century context helps bring out new relevant subjects, particularly the costs of military service borne by military families.

Kate Percy and Lady Mortimer, unlike Desdemona, are both experienced with military culture in their own way. Lady Percy, although her family history is only glanced at, has been married to the soldier Hotspur so long the subject is past comment. Lady Mortimer, Kate Percy's sister-in-law, is a new military wife, but she has been brought up the daughter of a well-known military leader, Owen Glendower.[2] These wives present different relationships to their husbands' martial performance. However, they do not display the clear divide of one supporting and one opposing. Lady Mortimer, the closest this thesis may come to including a pacifist, opposes the possibility of her husband going to the front, despite the fact that it could make him king. However, Lady Mortimer improves the quality of her husband's life when

[1] Jonathan Shay in *Achilles in Vietnam* suggests that defining PTSD as a disorder obscures the fact that it is a war injury and that that nomenclature may hinder vets' willingness to seek treatment. While the argument is interesting, this examination will continue to use the generally accepted terminology.

[2] The warrior was historically named Owain Glyndŵr, which Shakespeare anglicizes to Owen Glendower. When discussing the character, this text will use the anglicized form. When discussing the historical figure, Glyndŵr.

she encourages saving his life over the glory attainable by performing hegemonic masculinity. Lady Percy under the present circumstances – especially her mounting concern about her husband's mental health – has come to doubt the wisdom of her husband's continued military service and especially to question this particular military action. However, despite Lady Percy's determination, only Lady Mortimer succeeds in saving her husband – a feat that makes Lady Mortimer truly singular in this thesis.

There has been a long history of ignoring, excising, and trivializing Lady Mortimer and Lady Percy. The scenes in which these women appear are usually shortened or deleted entirely.[3] Even feminist critics Jean Howard and Phyllis Rackin contributed to the marginalization of Lady Percy and Lady Mortimer. The female characters, according to Howard and Rackin, "have less to say in *Henry IV, Part I* than in any of Shakespeare's other English history plays" (23-24). Perhaps the issue is not whether these characters have anything to say but if we as audiences are willing to listen. These directors and critics have found the scenes at best sweet and at worst irrelevant; both opinions have facilitated their decisions to either trivialize these roles or to remove the scenes and speeches almost entirely. Of the two, Lady Mortimer's lines are the more frequently cut, possibly because critics and directors find her easiest to lift out. Technically, she has no scripted lines. Lady Mortimer is a stage direction: *the lady speaks in Welsh*. Consequently, one could mistake her words for lacking value. She also appears in only one half of one scene, making cutting her easier to do than cutting a character in multiple scenes. However, to cut her actually reduces the clarity of the plot, given the role her marriage plays in bringing the rebels together and in keeping

[3] Betterton's 1680s edition cut much of Kate's speeches in 2.3 and all of 3.1 (Bevington *1 Henry IV* 71). Bell's 1774 edition also abbreviated her speech in 2.3, and it excised 3.1 as a "strange unmeaning, wild scene" (43). In 1808, Kemble cut 3.1 entirely and severely trimmed Kate's speech. Not until a 1864 revival at the Drury Lane theatre did the audience, for the first time since before Betterton, hear all of 3.1 (Bevington *1 Henry IV* 76). The BBC Hollow Crown adaptation, as well, cut liberally from Kate's words. Phyllida Lloyd's 2014 *Henry IV* at the Donmar Warehouse removed Lady Mortimer entirely. The 2016 *Breath of Kings: Rebellion* adaptation shortened Kate and completely removed Lady Mortimer.

Mortimer from Shrewsbury. Productions may erase her rather than face the difficulty of acquiring a Welsh-speaking actor or teaching an actor to speak Welsh. Even late 19th-century reviewer William Archer, who argued that "it was [the actors'] business to interpret the eloquence of Shakespeare's words, not to omit as many of them as they dared and trust to the eloquence of their own pauses" (143-4), when discussing Beerbohm Tree's 1896 production, freely argued that 3.1 should only be retained if "doing so does not involve the sacrifice of some more vital scene or passage" and that, though he was happier to have it stay, he was "content to see it dropped, because it is clearly an inessential interlude, designed to afford an opportunity for the singing boy-comedian who played Lady Mortimer" (Archer 103). Graham Abbey's 2016 *Breath of Kings: Rebellion* that joined *Richard II* and *1 Henry IV*, despite its interest in rebellion, cut 3.1 in its entirety, thereby erasing Lady Mortimer, among others, from the narrative (Abbey). Where Archer may have felt one should preserve 3.1 only if one must not cut anything else, that production cut 3.1 but preserved 2.4, arguably sacrificing thematic development to the interest of Falstaff. Falstaff may be a man and may be amusing to some audiences, but that does not in itself indicate that his contribution to the text exceeds that of the women. The willingness of directors and critics to overlook or excise these characters becomes increasingly worrying when one reflects on what these characters bring to the play and the issues these characters raise.

When examined in a modern context, the wives in *1 Henry IV* make apparent the costs of military service borne by soldiers and their families. To examine these women and the issues they raise, this chapter will rely on critical analyses, theatrical commentaries and productions, memoirs of military spouses, and medical texts. Kate Percy discusses the trauma of combat and the psychological wounds that may remain after the servicemember has returned home. Lady Mortimer, a wife of a different nationality than her soldier-husband, pulls her husband back from a martial world that would have him risk his life for

ambition, challenges fidelity to toxic components of modern masculinity, and achieves the singular feat of getting her husband out alive. Though some may question the merit of that choice, to do so underrates the comparative benefit of living. Kate Percy would have saved her husband if she could.

Lady Mortimer

Although often cut from productions, Lady Mortimer serves many functions. On the level of plot, she explains her husband's absence from the crucial battle of Shrewsbury.[4] On an emotional level, she pulls her husband into a more affective frame of mind, and on a physical level, she eventually keeps him from the dangers of serving in an unnecessary war.

From a historical perspective, Lady Mortimer fills a role that women have for centuries and one crucial to this play, though it is a role less common for contemporary Western army wives – she cements the homosocial alliances between men through her marriage. Without this marital alliance, the rebel force could not have united as it does. Thus, her character must be referenced by other characters, even if one wishes to excise her character's appearance. Historically, Owain Glyndŵr, Megan Lloyd notes, may well have wed his daughter, Catrin, to Mortimer for political and military gain (23). Mortimer's defection from Henry IV to Glyndŵr gave Glyndŵr access to the warrior Henry Percy, Mortimer's brother-in-law, and to Mortimer's nephew, the Earl of March, whose claim to the throne was better than Henry IV's – though Shakespeare transfers that claim to the Mortimer shown on stage (Lloyd *Speak* 23). Mortimer's marriage to Catrin cemented the alliance between Glyndŵr, Percy, and Mortimer (Lloyd *Speak* 23). In light of the bond she represents, references to Lady Mortimer – whether she appears or not – and to her marriage cannot be simply stripped from the play without impairing understanding of the alliances

[4] While J.L. Simmons argues that Shakespeare "offers no rationalization of Mortimer's absence," when one considers his wife, one finds a reason (453).

between the characters. Thus, this army wife serves an important, if relatively silent, role in this text.[5] A similar habit of cementing cultural, military, and homosocial bonds through the exchange of a woman occurs in *Antony and Cleopatra* when Octavius and Antony endeavor to make peace through Antony's marriage to Octavius' beloved sister – a union Octavius rightly predicts will make or break their unity, depending on Antony's loyalty to his new wife. In a more modern instance, when a group of soldiers discovered that their interpreter was going to be arrange married, the senior man and woman in the unit encouraged him to instead marry a servicewoman in the group who was his age (Thorpe 227). She said she would marry him if it helped him, but he did not want to be married for pity, so they did not wed (Thorpe 228). At no point did the older man and woman notice a similarity between their actions, arranging things with an American girl, and his mother's, arranging things with an Afghan one. Although that role is far removed from the lived experience of most modern Americans, it is important to the outcome of the play's historical narrative and plot. From a 21st-century perspective, Lady Mortimer, though, in her marriage to Mortimer, represents a common position of military spouses, a military brat who grew into a military spouse. Owain Glyndŵr led rebellions against Henry IV. Lady Mortimer is marrying a soldier expected to fight in the rebellion. In theory, she will continue her life inside the military culture in which she was raised. As will be discussed in later chapters, the army brats who marry servicemembers are common among modern military spouses. Portia is another such military spouse, and indeed, given the nature of Roman government, Virgilia and Volumnia are probably in this category as well. Military children who grow up to enlist or to marry enlisted individuals and who grow up to sire and raise future servicemembers enable the furthering of the military's self-perpetuating culture.[6] Lady Mortimer provides an initial

[5] To know more about the cultural implications of exchanging women to cement social ties, read Gayle Rubin's "The Traffic in Women" and Eve Sedgwick's *Between Men*.
[6] For more discussion of the military as a self-perpetuating culture, see the chapter on *Julius Caesar*.

example of this aspect of military life that one sees in other military spouses like Portia. She also brings forward the issues faced in citizen/non-national military couples. Lady Mortimer, then, becomes a nexus of plot interests, historical relevance, and modern relationships.

In a modern context, Mortimer's marriage to the Welsh Catrin, Glendower's daughter, presents another reality: marriage to a foreign national. Between 2008-2017, US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has naturalized 3,167 military spouses during ceremonies in over 35 countries, including Afghanistan and Iraq (Rabe; "Naturalization Fact Sheet"). They did not give statistics on non-naturalized spouses. About 7.4% of married couples in the general population are mixed native-born/foreign-born, like Mortimer and Lady Mortimer (US Census Bureau). However, elements of the military culture may cause higher rates. Servicemembers are more likely than civilians to have lived abroad for extended periods, which alters their dating pool. An actual statistic is harder to confirm, as the DoD and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) do not collect data on military and immigration status with the families. Some of the issues faced by the characters and modern couples will be different. In a society with dating and without arranged marriage, a servicemember is unlikely to marry someone with whom he cannot carry on a conversation. Many of the issues raised about such a union in the text are, though, the same. Bolingbroke suggests that a man who has leagued himself with the enemy and married a woman from the other side is a traitor and untrustworthy (1.3.82-90). Modern versions of trust tend to present as security clearance, and "Many jobs at the top of the military career ladder require a secret or top-secret security clearance," and "the government takes your spouse's nationality into consideration when deciding on security clearances," including "any interaction you might have with your spouse's family," and "The government may decide to deny you a clearance or your clearance may be revoked" based on the marriage ("Foreign-Born Spouses, Planning and Support"). A servicemember wishing to marry a foreign national is expected to get the

marriage cleared by their CO or area commander before they wed, including a written application ("MILPERSMAN5352-030").[7] This, Mortimer did not do. The most time-consuming process of getting one's marriage blessed by the government is the background check, "including a criminal and subversive record check," which the servicemembers can request in advance "to determine the eligibility of their prospective spouse's entry into the United States" ("MILPERSMAN5352-030"). Mortimer has not consulted with his superiors about his marriage, one can conclude, as the king describes his marriage as something the king has only heard of, apparently after the fact (1.3.85-7). Further, considering his wife's relationship with the noted rebel leader Glendower, there is no chance she could pass a check for relationship to subversives. Although Mortimer does not state that he would bring her back to England, that will come if he becomes king. Furthermore, a modern soldier cannot refuse a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) because of a marriage to a foreigner. Because Mortimer married into a rebel family, he cannot bring her home under the current government. So, in a sense, he requires the rebellion to make this marriage work in England. These complications of a modern military marriage and the capacity of a marriage to impact military identity and performance are all at play here.

Lady Mortimer's closest parallel among the military spouses may be Virgilia of *Coriolanus*. Where Lady Mortimer speaks unintelligible Welsh, Virgilia speaks English, but much less than the other characters. Coriolanus calls her his "gracious silence" (2.1.184). Both women weep in conversation with their husbands, Lady Mortimer when she pleads with her husband not to part with her (3.1.200) and Virgilia in joy when her husband returns from Corioli (2.1.187). Both women suffer a similar disregard at the hands of critics,[8] though Virgilia does not apparently share Lady Mortimer's history of being completely excised. A

[7] Although the example documents I am citing here are Navy documents, according to a Judge Advocate General, the Army and Air Force have similar regulations ("Military Naturalization").
[8] Judith Cook (64-75), Lisa Lowe, and Phyllis Rackin overlook Virgilia in their readings of *Coriolanus*.

production can choose to make the women stronger forces. The 2011 Ralph Fiennes' *Coriolanus* endows Virgilia with emotional, silent scenes and, in the end, considerable vim. The 2001 Stratford Festival production played Lady Mortimer as a determined pacifist attempting through her Welsh dialogue with her father to prevent her husband from wasting his life in war (Wentworth). However, they are frequently overlooked. By reading these women together and examining them as army wives, focus can be given to them that they seldom receive.

Lady Mortimer also shares qualities with Desdemona. Both have only recently married into the role of military spouse, though Lady Mortimer, as Glendower's daughter, probably grew up in the culture. (Of course, although Othello was taken by the insolent foe, by the time Desdemona meets him, he has been enfranchised, and they are on the same side of the war.) Glendower says Lady Mortimer will "be a soldier too" (3.1.201), and Othello addresses his bride as "fair warrior" (2.1.197). Neither term describes the women as possessing martial prowess, rather they describe their positions as devoted army wives. Both choose to follow their husbands instead of being left behind, Lady Mortimer saying, "she'll too the wars" (3.1.202), and Desdemona begging the Senate to "[l]et [her] go with him" to Cyprus (1.3.294). When Othello insists he will not "scant" his "serious and great business" of war if she follows him (1.3.302) and later insists that her supposed infidelity has destroyed his "occupation," Othello reflects the idea that a relationship with a woman can destroy a man's martial performance (3.3.309). Othello's performance buckles under a false idea about Desdemona; Mortimer's collapses under the positive influence of his wife. Both are, in their ways, parallel 'un-manning' spouses. Their marriages change how these soldiers relate to their duties. This idea will be returned to in later chapters.

Despite Lady Mortimer's inability to speak English, through her presence, she develops the character of her husband. Most of what audiences know about Mortimer,

championed by the rebels as the rightful king, comes from his appearance with his wife. He, like her, only appears in 3.1, though he has been less frequently cut. Without 3.1, all the audience would know of Mortimer is that he was Richard's heir-presumptive, captured, not ransomed, married, and not present at Shrewsbury. Through 3.1, the audience also sees a charmed newlywed in love with his wife. She "doteth" on him (3.1.150). He calls her "love" (3.1.213). He has something to live for instead of dying to become king. She also creates her husband as a more complex figure, different from the other men. This is an important quality in Shakespeare's military spouses. While it is easy for civilians to stereotype soldiers as professional killers – the kind of rhetoric one can readily see attaching to figures like Coriolanus – these men are also husbands and fathers and sons. Showing women like Lady Mortimer means the audience must confront the idea of these servicemembers as their spouses know them.

Lady Mortimer physically defies but metaphorically recalls the notion of the castrating Welshwomen, presenting the power that women have to interfere with the performance of hegemonic masculinity, and perhaps the risk that a military spouse could distract her or his servicemember from military obligations. In Act 1, the Welshwomen are described as performing on dead bodies acts too unseemly to mention (1.1.41-46). Holinshed reports that they castrated the corpses, among other desecrations (1134). Arthur Hughes maintains that no actual historical evidence supports the belief that the Welshwomen desecrated bodies at the battle of Pilleth and that it is calumny that Shakespeare only included because it was part of the English conception of the Welsh and the Welsh rebels (13). Although Hughes believes that "this alleged inhumanity of Welshwomen has no bearing upon the action of the play" and reflects only on Glendower, that belief disregards the fact that an actual Welshwoman appears on stage (13). Hughes also overlooks that the women who followed wars "sometimes […] were used to finish off any enemy left lying on the field, as

happened for example after the battle of Little Bighorn (1876) when the Indian women pounded the faces of dead and wounded US soldiers into pulp" (Van Creveld 17). According to Holinshed, the Scottish women were themselves fierce fighters:

> In these daies also the women of our countrie were of no lesse courage than the men, for all stout maidens & wiues (if they were not with child) marched as well in the field as did the men, and so soone as the armie did set forward, they slue the first liuing creature that they found, in whose bloud they not onelie bathed their swords, but also tasted therof with their mouthes, with no lesse religion and assurance conceiued, than if they had alreadie béene sure of some notable and fortunate victorie. When they saw their owne bloud run from them in the fight, they waxed neuer a whit astonished with the matter, but rather doubling their courages, with more egernesse they assailed their enimies. (21)

Wahida Muhammad, who fought ISIS with Iraqi Special Forces, not only beheaded the ISIS fighters she killed, she posted photos of her with the severed heads on her Facebook (McDonell). Though Shakespeare does not regularly engage with the idea of military spouses as servicemembers themselves, to characterize the stories of the Welshwomen strictly as fictions and slanders disregards the occasionally violent position that women have held in warzones. When Lady Mortimer arrives, one does not sense that she would do such violence.

It hardly makes sense to characterize Lady Mortimer as intentionally gelding her husband. She seems the opposite of the martial sort, which helps her prevent her husband from pursuing the warrior aspects of hegemonic masculinity. However, one could, instead, say that Lady Mortimer unmans her husband by causing him not to follow his promise to engage in combat, thereby damaging his position as a warrior. Hence the old advice, "If the Corps wanted you to have a wife, they'd have issued you one." Women can present a risk of causing a man to eschew his martial role. In 3.1, she does not want her husband to depart, but she does not indicate that she has a plan to keep him or even seem to think that she could. While she appears on stage, one does not know whether her efforts have succeeded. She first arrives, delivered by her father, while the men prepare to sign their indentures and treaty for the war. She vociferously pleads against a separation:

> My daughter weeps: she will not part with you;
> She'll be a soldier too, she'll to the wars.[…]
> She is desperate here; a peevish self-willed harlotry, one that no persuasion can do good upon. (3.1.200-1, 204-5).

Glendower describes his daughter in belligerent terms: peevish, willful, unpersuadable. He reports that she will rather fight by her husband's side than part from him. However, she does not demonstrate that she could actually handle fighting beside her husband. He does not refer to her as possessing combat skills, just an emotional refusal not to be separated from her husband. Her weeping does not appear soldierly. She also does not espouse terminology of glory, violence, or military action, as seen in pro-martial women, such as Volumnia and Lady Macbeth. She certainly does not encourage masculine performance as Patroclus does. While one might wish to interpret "she'll be a soldier too" as a literal promise, more likely the words are a metaphor to demonstrate her dedication. Her husband's reassurance that she can follow with Lady Percy indicates not a conviction in her soldiering but an assurance that she can be among the camp followers, insofar as a military situation would allow for followers. A 2001 (and thus prior to the War on Terror) production from Stratford Canada played Lady Mortimer as a pacifist who believed the rebellion a waste of lives, and while her father promised she would be a soldier too, in her Welsh she not only refused to follow but did everything she could to keep her husband from going (Wentworth). In that production, Lady Mortimer desperately wanted to prevent Mortimer from performing a martial role. Textually, Mortimer, speaking no Welsh, must interpret his wife's emotions and tears and trust to her father for her words. She must work on him thus. As they converse, Mortimer almost begins to cry as she does, "melting" as he tries to communicate with his wife. He tells her that he is "too perfect" in tears (3.1.209). Hegemonic masculinity requires that men suppress emotion (Connell 123).[9] They are also limited in the emotions they can express (Anderson 41).

[9] Some PTSD treatment protocols involved pushing back against hegemonic masculinity and reconstructing emotional expression as masculine (Smith "Reconstructing" 195, 203).

James Joseph Dean positions "emotional intelligence" among "nonhegemonic masculine practices" that "are often laden with anxiety for straight men" as they "imperil straight masculine standing" (99). Mortimer recognizes that his obligation to perform masculinity obliges him not to show emotions: "but for shame/In such a parley should I answer thee" (3.1.209-210). The line-break after "shame," and the inhalation that break implies, could indicate an awareness of the act's shamefulness and a sudden effort to master himself. It could also indicate that he has to take a moment to regain control over his emotions. His own father-in-law reminds him again in direct monosyllables – "Nay, if you melt, then will she run mad" (3.1.218) – that as a man he cannot weep, especially since he must model martial strength for his wife. She undermines his participation in masculine-martial culture by causing him to experience and display such emotions.[10]

Eventually, she persuades him, through her father, to "on the wanton rushes lay [him] down/And rest [his] gentle head upon her lap" so she can "sing the song that pleaseth" him (3.1.220-23). The use of words like "wanton" and "pleaseth," as well as the idea of his head in her lap, connote sexuality and sexual pleasure. Combined with the idea that women's "singing was supposedly an incitement to lust," the phrasings suggests that female sexuality may be one of the lures that can and does pull Mortimer away from his martial duty (Lloyd *Speak* 18 note 59). Desdemona was also imagined, through sexuality, as a possible distraction from her husband's martial responsibilities. Lady Mortimer calls Mortimer's head "gentle," as though she will evoke his gentleness to keep him home. Yet, her words do not indicate that this is part of an actionable plan to keep him from leaving her on a permanent basis, though perhaps her intention to "on [his] eyelids crown the god of sleep" and "charm[his] blood with pleasing heaviness" indicate a Calypso-like intent to stay him (3.1.223-4). Her song at least defers his departure a few minutes: "With all my heart I'll sit

[10] For more on the struggles to express emotion, see the *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth* chapters.

and hear her sing:/By that time will our book, I think, be drawn" (3.1. 228-30). He states an intention to listen to her, and then after a line break, he states that he intends to leave. That break may indicate a pause, a momentary loss in concentration on his martial role. In that case, her actions, the crying, kissing, and causing him to lie in her lap, have been successful blocks to his focus on a fatal performance of masculinity. However, he redirects back to the rebellion. The last the audience hears, Mortimer intends to leave despite her song:

> GLENDOWER. Come, come, Lord Mortimer; you are as slow
> As hot Lord Percy is on fire to go.
> By this our book is drawn; we'll but seal,
> And then to horse immediately.
> MORTIMER. With all my heart. (3.1.272-276)

Glendower's "come, come," indicates that Glendower must remind Mortimer of his mission. His wife has recaptured his attention. Nevertheless, Mortimer announces he remains as committed as before to joining the rebellion: "With all my heart." That phrasing he repeats from before. Perhaps the echo indicates that his heart remains with the wife to whom he wished to listen. Perhaps he must retrieve it before he can perform his masculine function. He states his intention to go to war. Lady Mortimer interfered with her husband's performance of martial masculinity, but the audience does not yet know that she has blocked it. The responsibility to show when she wins her husband away from the war may be a challenge for the actors playing Mortimer and Lady Mortimer. For instance, the 2001 production by the Stratford Festival excised the repetition of "With all my heart" (Wentworth). Instead, after Glendower says that Percy is on fire to go, Lady Mortimer sings her husband a reprise of her earlier Welsh song, thereby indicating that she won him then, defeating a martial desire to follow Percy to the wars. Alternatively, the phrase-repetition may indicate that the values that teach a man to prove his honor in the field and to show his merit in violence are not vanquished in a moment. Lady Mortimer saves her husband when he makes his own decision not to fight, not when she obstructs him. Under toxic masculinity,

such an act metaphorically castrates the man; under a healthier masculinity, she saves him. One can understand in Shakespeare's plays the deadliness of conforming to this toxic brand of masculinity when one considers how few spouses achieve what Lady Mortimer does and save their husbands.

In the end, although the audience does not personally observe her success, Lady Mortimer saves her husband from the death the warrior ideal would have brought him to, by convincing him there is something more important than performing his martial role and keeping his honor: love for her or his life, it remains unclear which. While audiences know not how she prevailed on him, she succeeds in keeping him from the wars, thus preserving his life. The audience learns this not only by his absence from the stage but by the Archbishop's assurance, "No, Mortimer is not there" in discussion of Shrewsbury (4.4.23). Kastan notes that "Glendower's magic may be all bluster, but his daughter's language, even though it is unintelligible to her husband, […] keeps Mortimer from exerting his claim to the throne" (75). Glendower's magic that Kastan dismisses as bluster – Holinshed reports that Glendower could control the weather (1134) – contrasts then with Lady Mortimer's effective "charms." Kastan attributes the success in preventing Mortimer from joining the failed rebellion entirely to Lady Mortimer, noting as well the cost to males who eschew warrior masculinity in this context: "His notable absence (4.4.21-2) from Shrewsbury perhaps saves his life but costs him his place in history" (75). This relates to patriarchal notions that the "masculine" sphere of politics is inherently more valuable than the "domestic" sphere of home and family life, contributing to the erasure of women from historical narratives. Some 20th-century critics regard a woman who turns a man from the masculine ideal as having damaged him. Terence Hawkes maintains a reasonably calm tone when he suggests that, in comparison to Holinshed's Catrin, Shakespeare "create[s] a far more disturbing figure who, Circe-like, seems easily able to subvert Mortimer's English manhood" – though he also

considers Hotspur's interest in martial honor "absurdly leaping" (30). Howard and Rackin, though, comment that, "when there is a kingdom to be won, the sexual warfare of the bedroom can only be a distraction" (163). They view his wife's success with him as pure loss: "Mortimer stays home with his wife, but the home he stays in is hers, and it is located in the alien world of Wales; once Mortimer decides to stay there he loses his claim to royal authority and his place in English history" (Howard and Rackin 163). By those standards, having abdicated the traditional position of the male and the leader, Mortimer has lost the parts of himself worth valuing and put himself in the position of the oppressed. Howard and Rackin never examine the possibility that shifting away from a masculine ideal with fatal consequences may have been the decidedly preferable outcome or that a place in history can be worth less than a place at home. Sheldon Zitner is among the rare critics who feel that when 3.1 was so heavily redacted, "one of Shakespeare's happiest pictures of love in marriages went unobserved" (138). Zitner also felt that cutting 3.1 meant "the suggestion – so important to the second tetralogy – that the capacity for rule and the capacity for human intimacy are perhaps mutually exclusive was lost to the theatre" (138). Perhaps a more reasonable interpretation, particularly in light of the conversations had by Shakespeare's military spouses, is that the scene instead allows for the possibility that masculinity and human intimacy can co-exist but that healthy human personalities and relationships can only develop when the toxic elements of masculinity are questioned and rejected.

The extent to which Lady Mortimer is blamed for the destruction of Mortimer's martial performance may be unfair. Perhaps Mortimer did not have much of a martial identity for Lady Mortimer to strip from him; in that case, it would prove easier for her to separate him from the unhealthy aspects of performed masculinity. Mortimer came to be married to Catrin after having been taken as a prisoner in the war. While the king alleges that Mortimer gave himself up to the enemy as a traitor, possibly Mortimer simply could not fight

his way out (1.3.82-88, 116-119). Furthermore, Mortimer is never revered, as Hotspur is, as either a fighter or a leader of men. Hotspur maintains Mortimer fought hardily against Glendower on Severn's banks (1.3.95-115). Such words, though, pale in comparison to the descriptions given of both Hotspur and Hal. Bolingbroke may fear Mortimer more as a rallying point than as a leader. It remains unclear to what extent these are inborn or learned differences. If one subscribes to the idea of innate perfect masculinity, perhaps Mortimer could never have equaled Hotspur as a martial leader. Inborn martial prowess may also explain why Hal, never shown to be a strong warrior, can leap fully armed onto a horse, show in the preparations and war a proper martial self, and defeat Hotspur. Inborn military prowess or lifelong training both appear equally likely explanations for Hotspur's military leadership. He leads by power of victory and also by power of charisma, convincing others to follow where he leads. However, ideas of inborn masculinity are not proved in *1 Henry IV*, where masculine ideals appear equally performable. Hal chooses when and where to demonstrate soldierly prowess. Mortimer could simply be less skilled in the military world, demonstrated by his having performed some aspects well but not conformed sufficiently in others. He appears less linked to martial culture, or at least less successful at performing its ideals – he is no Hotspur, Othello, or Coriolanus. Because Mortimer seems less linked to the masculine pro-military culture, it may have been easier to separate him from the toxic masculinity. There may, though, be another interpretation of Mortimer's lack of martial performance in the end. If Mortimer is a fair warrior, then he engaged in honorable service but did fall off from the chance of war, and when that happened, his king abandoned him to the enemy. Would it be inherently shocking, then, to see such a man defect to the enemy, marry a woman from that side? If he has reached that point of disaffection, then Lady Mortimer and their union may represent his break with the dangerous culture that risked and betrayed his life. She represents his life-saving abandonment of that culture.

One must not mistake Lady Mortimer's seeming silence and small number of lines for inconsequence. In the plot, she keeps Mortimer from the battle, thereby contributing to Hotspur's loss. Thematically, she foils Kate and enhances the domestic world of the rebel cause. She reflects a different kind of modern lived experience, as a foreigner marrying a military man. Lady Mortimer enriches the audience's understanding of Mortimer. She becomes also the first military wife we see obstruct the performance of martial manhood, suggesting that hunting honor and power for their own sake may be dangerous and that those ideas should be eschewed rather than embraced.

Kate Percy

Despite having few lines, Kate Percy has substantial character and provides substantial information. Unfortunately, in a play with so few women, audiences see so little of Kate as she tries to draw her husband away from the toxic masculinity that will later kill him. Nevertheless, this section will demonstrate that although her scenes are small compared to those of the men, they convey much. She represents the military spouses who notice the symptoms of their spouses' PTSD and war trauma, perhaps especially the spouses whose servicemember spouses (and their commanding officers) do not recognize these symptoms or allow/seek treatment for them. Her presence, her awareness of her husband's suffering, which she shares with the audience, and her attempts to save her husband create a tremendous pathos in the play. Her efforts are significant and emotional, even as they are unsuccessful.

Kate engages more aggressively with her spouse's martial masculinity than Lady Mortimer does; however, her relationship with it is not simple. Initially Kate Percy must have accepted, or possibly even supported, Hotspur's warrior ethos. Otherwise, their marriage would never have worked, and it appears to have been strong. It is a mistake to presume that warrior honor and love are inherently antithetical. Soldier and son of a soldier Richard Lovelace recorded in "To Lucasta, Going to the Wars" the sentiment "I could not

love thee (Dear) so much,/ Lov'd I not Honour more." As Alison Buckholtz's husband noted when he quoted the poem to explain to his wife why a man would feel such a strong impulse to reenlist: "He basically says he wouldn't be a good husband if he weren't a good and loyal soldier first. I don't feel that way, but I know a lot of people who do[...] Tons of people" (249). The poem was also invoked in full in *1001 Things to Love About Military Life* (Crooks, Henderson, Hightower, and Scherer 281). One can be a soldier, believe in honor, and love. Those things can become intimately bound together. Howard and Rackin argue that "Hotspur, unlike Mortimer, affirms his masculinity by rejecting his wife, and his only concession to her repeated demands for a declaration of love is a jocular promise that if she comes to see him ride, 'when I am a' horseback, I will swear/I love thee infinitely'" (189). They make that argument despite no evidence that he has actually previously affirmed his masculinity by pushing her away. The promise that "when [he is] on horseback, [he] will swear/[He] love[s her] infinitely" (2.3.106) suggests that Kate has previously enjoyed such moments, taken pride in watching him arm and mount, and been gladdened by such demonstrations of affection. Perhaps she never achieved a Lady Macbeth-like semi-sexual interest in her husband as a soldier, but she likely approved or applauded. It is not an uncommon sentiment. Lily Burana noted that when a wife sees "her love decked out in full battle rattle (camo, body armour, helmet, boots, weapon), she feels her stomach flip and her heart race as she's reminded why she fell in love with him in the first place" (109).[11] Later in *1 Henry IV*, Hotspur acts as though he expects her to support his martial actions. He suggests bringing her with him to the site of meeting with Mortimer and Glendower, asks her to sing for him before he departs, and intends for her to follow him to the front. None of these suggests rejection. It demonstrates, rather, tremendous, if unmartial, emotions that Hotspur must reject to serve as he must – the emotions to which Mortimer, by contrast, succumbed.

[11] Burana notes that queer military spouses she knew also enjoyed the sight of a spouse in uniform (319).

Jameson believes "nothing can be more natural than the utter dejection and brokenness of heart which follow her husband's death," which is certainly true; however, Jameson misreads Kate Percy entirely when she maintains that Kate "is no heroine for war or tragedy: she has no thought of revenging her loss; and even her grief has something soft and quiet in its pathos" (283). From her attention to her husband's post-war mental state to her use of military language with him to her acknowledgement of physical force and acts of violence, Kate often demonstrates an awareness of war and a facility for surviving it. She is, though, as we will see, coming to question its merits. As for the suggestion that Kate would never avenge her husband's death, one could more accurately say that Kate, in the sequel, gets her revenge against the men she holds responsible. Kate may never attack Hal personally, but she undermines and thus destroys the rebellion that took her husband away from her after she begged him not to go; by persuading her father-in-law to abandon the rebellion in *2 Henry IV*, she revenges herself on the war she knew would kill him (2.4.8-90). William Archer understood her as a woman acclimatized to a military culture: "She is not the woman to sentimentalize over the incidents of war. It is evident from her whole relation to her husband, that she is not only Lady Percy but Lady Hotspur, as proud and resolute as he. She wants to be his comrade and is hurt by his distrust of her in that capacity. Surely, a clinging, wheedling tenderness is not the tone for her to adopt" (148-149). Perhaps Archer, born at the end of the Crimean War and the start of the Second Opium War, who published this review during the Anglo-Zanzibar War, knew the mettle a soldier's wife needed to prevail under such circumstances. He does not say. Regardless, he understands Lady Percy. She is Lady Hotspur. She could never have made it as his wife if she were not. Asserting her view against his, Kate suggests that Hotspur question the martial life that he leads and encourages him to reject the toxic components of their culture's masculinity.

Kate's disenchantment with the martial ethos seems based not on inherent pacifism but on her husband's changed behavior since his return from the last war and an augmented fear that he will not survive the next one. In her first scene, she describes what a 21st-century audience recognizes as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Concern about that trauma explains readily why she has come to question her husband's continued combat participation.[12] By introducing the subject of Hotspur's post-war state, Kate also complicates the typical perception of her husband and questions the merits of a system that requires servicemembers to engage in such damaging behavior without counting the cost. Her first speech is both a plea for her husband's honesty and a description of how her husband has changed since his last war; many of the changes she mentions, which include silence, sleeplessness, and night terrors, are symptoms of PTSD (2.3.39-67). A modern audience should recognize those symptoms and Kate's reason for concern – up to one in five US veterans of Iraq suffer from PTSD ("How common"). The relationship between the symptoms Kate describes and modern understandings of trauma remains so pronounced that the former Executive Director of the National Center for PTSD cited *Henry IV* as a literary work depicting traumatic experiences and the symptoms they cause (Friedman). Kate's concern for her husband presents an understanding that a military spouse would have had about the suffering the war and performing his martial role had caused her husband.

Kate's speech is a thorough list of reasons to be concerned. First, she asks her husband "O, my good lord, why are you thus alone?" (2.3.39). The meter focuses the listener's attention on the isolation: "alone" is the only multisyllabic word in an otherwise monosyllabic sentence, so the stress falls on that word in particular – he is *alone*. Military psychiatrist Colonel Stephen Cozza has noted that "The service members may not even be

[12] Hotspur's PTSD may first have been noticed in 1995 by Johnathon Shay, who mentions it briefly, listing Hotspur as an example of a vet who experiences mania and depression and therefore may be misdiagnosed as bipolar (*Achilles* 168-9). Kate's discussion of PTSD received a cursory treatment in *The British Journal of Psychiatry* in 2011 (Bennet 255). It merits deeper consideration than either afforded it.

aware that they're withdrawing […] And the spouses may not recognize that it's the result of combat exposure. So they think it's them and take it personally" (Henderson *While* 263). Kate at least apparently understands that Hotspur's behavior is a cause for concern and not a comment on her or their relationship.[13] Were there any doubt that he has withdrawn in his pain, Kate says that Hotspur has "given [her] treasures and [her] rights of [him]/To thick-eyed musing and cursed melancholy?" (2.3.47-8). While Wilson interprets "treasures" and "rights" as the right of a wife to some of her husband's time and attention (142), one could also interpret these, as well as the "pleasure" (2.3.43) that Kate mentions, as a reference to sexual intercourse, which, along with Kate's statement that she has "this fortnight been/A banished woman from [her] Harry's bed," indicates that he has not slept with her since his return (2.3.40-1). Given that she feels the need to ask, presumably that abstinence represents a shift in his behavior towards her.[14] Such abstinence could be a symptom. Andrea Carlile lists as one of the earliest symptoms of her husband's PTSD, that "He showed little interest in lovemaking" (1326). The VA's disability assessment of Kayla Williams' husband, among the symptoms of PTSD, includes "decreased libido" (*Plenty* 139). Johnathan Shay notes that his patients report abstinence lasting even *years* (*Achilles* xvii). In either case, Hotspur may be experiencing trouble feeling positive feelings towards her, a symptom of PTSD ("Understanding PTSD" 3). Her next question reveals several concerns: "Tell me, sweet

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[13] It can be hard to predict the likelihood that marital estrangement will occur related to a deployment. Kristin Henderson, when she pondered the issue, could not find a clear answer:

> I asked around for a statistical study on homecomings, some data to compare why some go well and some don't. But both Frank and the social workers at the base shook their heads. As far as they knew, no such study existed. All they knew was what experience had taught them, that couples tend to pick up where they leave off, that if they had trouble before, they'll have trouble after.
>
> But Frank and I didn't have trouble before Afghanistan. (*While* 296).

Even strong marriages can suffer under the stress of a deployment. That Kate and Hotspur struggle now that he has returned should not be considered sole proof that their marriage was always rocky or is inherently doomed.

[14] Mollie Gross notes enforced abstinence while your spouse is deployed among the many sacrifices of military spouses (157). One Navy wife joked, "You have Costco sex before deployment, stocking up for six months. Then during the deployment you have Home Depot sex. That's doing it yourself" (Buckholtz 244). Continued abstinence after he returned would have been notable.

lord, what is't that takes from thee/Thy stomach, pleasure and thy golden sleep?" (2.3.42-3). This passage references three indicators: loss of appetite, depression, and trouble sleeping (Harel, Kahana, and Wilson 83).[15] Andrea Carlile said that after her husband's return, she initially "had no explanation for her husband's moodiness, withdrawal, depression, anger, nightmares, insomnia," she "just knew [her] husband was not himself at all"; eventually, learning about PTSD helped her identify those as symptoms (Barnes 2114). Kate gets no answer and poses another question: "Why dost thou bend thine eyes upon the earth,/And start so often when thou sit'st alone?" (2.3.44-45). Not only has she returned to his aloneness, she has introduced another common symptom: heightened startle response (Harel, Kahana, and Wilson 83). As a symptom, the startle response is one with a predictable and understandable cause. That list does not end the symptomology.

The most compelling reasons for Kate's concerns – and the greatest indicator of post-war trauma discussed – she has witnessed herself: Hotspur has nightmares. She reports that when he does sleep, he relives the combat: "In thy faint slumbers I by thee have watch'd,/And heard thee murmur tales of iron wars" (2.3.59-60). In the dreams, he speaks "terms of manage to [his] bounding steed" (2.3.61), cries "Courage, to the field" (2.3.62), and speaks of the weapons and defenses of war (2.3.64-66). Just as a modern army wife recognizes nightmares as a normal, or at least common, reaction to violent trauma (Ricketts 118), Kate knows them for what they are and names their cause:

> Thy spirit within thee hath been so at war
> And thus hath so bestirr'd thee in thy sleep,
> That beads of sweat have stood upon thy brow
> Like bubbles in a late-disturbed stream;
> And in thy face strange motions have appear'd,
> Such as we see when men restrain their breath
> On some great sudden hest. (2.3.58-65).

[15] One of Johnathan Shay's patients reported that he had not slept really since Vietnam – he might lie down, but he did not really sleep (*Achilles* xiv). Another told him, "I haven't spent a complete night in bed with my wife for at least ten years. I always end up on the sofa. It's safer for her, and I don't have to worry about waking her when I get up to walk the perimeter" (xvii). Kate could notice that absence from their room.

Kate says his *spirit* is at *war*. Perhaps she signifies internal struggle. More likely, the meaning is more literal: his mind cannot leave the war behind – externally he appears at home, internally he remains still at the field. That his spirit is at war weighs more heavily when underlined by his murmuring tales of "iron wars" – wars, in the plural. Veterans are more likely to develop PTSD if they have already experienced prior life-threatening circumstances, such as the war Hotspur fought in to put Bolingbroke on the throne ("Understanding PTSD" 5). Hotspur has many traumatic memories to relive each night. Kate traces these nightmares to the war he is reliving and recounts the physical toll they take on his body. His face shows "strange motions" that could be either emotions, such as fear or pain, or they could be physical movement associated with his dreams, his sweating, or his struggle to breathe. Howard and Rackin interpret these dreams as "heroic battles," despite being refracted through the "distinctly unheroic form of his wife's report of what she overheard when he talked in his sleep," and they emphasize that these are not dreams of "erotic conquest" (189). Such a reading overlooks the chilling implication of the dream's actual content. Persistent nightmares, like those experienced by Hotspur, have been recognized since World War II as a sign of war-related post-traumatic suffering (Harel, Kahana, and Wilson 83-4). It may be relevant to a characterization of Hotspur that he does not dream of his wife, but it is much more relevant that he *does* dream of battle.

Kate's description of her husband's dreams provides the greatest link to the source of the trauma. He does not just dream of being back on the field or managing his horse. He dreams "of prisoners' ransom and of soldiers slain" (2.3.51). The speech does not state – Kate probably does not know – who these men are. They could be the men that Hotspur himself killed in the war. The men ransomed could be the men Hotspur himself captured, the prisoners he quarreled over with the king or the mighty Douglas that Hotspur also discomfited (3.2.114). The men could have also been his brothers-in-arms killed and

captured. His brother-in-law Mortimer, for example, was taken near Severn, and the king refused to ransom him home.[16] Perhaps Hotspur blames himself for that fact. It would fall to an individual actor and director to make a determination of which, if either, Hotspur sees. The nightmare alone tells the interpreter plenty about the trauma. Men who experienced more "war-related social losses (i.e., friends captured, injured, or killed)" were more likely to experience post-war problems (Harel, Kahana, and Wilson 146). Similarly, Wilson and Krauss found in 1985 "that the best predictor of a post-traumatic stress disorder in Vietnam veterans is the extent of combat involvement, subjectively experienced exposure to injury and death, and psychological isolation upon returning home from war" (Harel, Kahana, and Wilson 84). Andrea Carlile's husband Wes told her, discussing his PTSD, "I could not control my dreams. And the only dreams I had were with my comrades dying or asking me why God would let this happen" (1656). Kate's speech reveals that when Hotspur finally sleeps, he sees the war he cannot leave behind and the likely reasons why – even if only Kate and the audiences see them as the true cause.

Despite some interpretations of Hotspur as a buffoon, a war-obsessed callow youth, or a source of amusement,[17] there remains a serious issue underlying the character's actions. Although 2.3 and Kate's speech in that scene are easy to shorten, ignore, or act around, the information that Kate exposes shows a man quite the opposite of the easy generalizations, "Mars in swaddling clothes" (3.2.111) and "gunpowder Percy" (5.4.120), a man who struggles with what he has done – and what he will have to do again before the play is done. At the start of the War on Terror, the situation in the military regarding PTSD was not all that

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[16] If Shay is correct and "moral injury is an essential part of any combat trauma that leads to lifelong psychological injury," then the realization that the government he supported – Bolingbroke's kingship – refused to rescue a captured prisoner may have been central to Hotspur's experience of trauma and contributed to the PTSD (*Achilles* 20).

[17] Arthur E. Hughes argued that Hotspur is a "plain blunt brave warrior, but coarse in fibre and feeling, unintellectual and over-bearing" (15-16) and that "His wife hears him in his sleep 'murmur tales of iron wars'" because "awake, he has no other interest" (11).
The RSC's 2014 Doran production cleared space for Hal to be the protagonist by steering into the idea of Hotspur as an overemotional hot-head.

it could have been: “both DoD and VA were not prepared for the influx of troops that came home with severe physical wounds or what came to be known as the ‘signature wounds’ of these conflicts, [Traumatic Brain Injury] and PTSD” (Williams *Plenty* 241). Williams’ *Plenty of Time When We Get Home* reads like a detailing of the DoD’s shocking failures in the beginning of the War on Terror to respond to the struggles of wounded veterans and its limping progress towards effective treatment protocols and accessible care. She notes that when they returned, she and her husband (also a servicemember) had not “just ‘slipped through the cracks,’ [they] had fallen through gaping holes in the safety net that should have been there to ease [their] readjustment and reintegration” (165). She also acknowledges that now the VA provides the best care for veterans available in the US. Moreover, “Army culture made it all worse. The assumption that seeking help was a sign of weakness had been inculcated in both Brian and me. We had grown up as soldiers hearing catchphrases like ‘Pain is just weakness leaving the body’” (Williams *Plenty* 61-62). That attitude does not support a healthy approach among servicemembers to mental health. However, the military is beginning to make progress on this issue. By 2006 “The Army was starting to send officers who were mental health professionals out into combat zones with the soldiers, [...]going to other countries and helping people through war trauma” (Henderson *While* 198). In the same period, Kayla Williams reports being given a questionnaire upon her return to the States clearly designed to look for PTSD, asking about the traumas people had encountered, including seeing death, or the symptoms people experienced, including nightmares, startle response, and emotional detachment (*Plenty* 34-5). Still, the military spouses find themselves on the frontlines of this issue. PTSD, as a complex problem, cannot be tackled by individual servicemembers alone. It must be responded to by the whole military system and culture; as VA psychiatrist Jonathan Shay has noted, “Recovery happens only in community” (*Odysseus* 4). The impact of PTSD is not just experienced by the individual servicemembers and their

families. Its costs on society at large is massive. Dr. Evan Kanter, staff psychiatrist in a VA PTSD outpatient clinic, estimates there are at least 300,000 psychiatric casualties of Operation Iraqi Freedom, which will result in an estimated lifetime cost of treatment of $660 billion – more than the cost of the war itself, $500 billion (Roehr). The military must be proactive about dealing with these issues. It has begun to be so, despite a very rocky beginning to the 21st century. The DoD and VA are on the forefront in America for responding to PTSD as a disorder. However, the problems have not been entirely addressed. Servicemembers who fear that giving "the 'wrong' answers" on a mental health questionnaire "might prevent you from being released for block leave," may not give honest answers, which will impede their access to necessary healthcare; indeed, Williams noted that during screening upon re-entry to the US, she "could hear people around [her] joking about it, telling each other they were lying as they filled in their answers" (*Plenty* 35-36). People with a non-medical understanding of illness, or those who mistake PTSD as a sign of personal weakness[18], will not encourage seeking help, which the spouses can, should, and do encourage. When those around the servicemember fail to support seeking help, the servicemembers cannot access the benefits of improved mental health treatment and protocols:

> In almost ten years of war, Kristin [Henderson] has seen advances in the way the military cares for its own.
> "I think there have been huge improvements in military culture and the systems they have in place," she said, particularly for handling combat stress. "Even as the system changes, the reality is that one individual who is unenlightened can bring it all to a screeching halt. For the subordinates under their command, life is no different than it was before." (Barnes 1722).

One can see the similarity between commanders who do not believe in PTSD or its medical treatments and Hotspur's father and uncle, who disregard his symptoms so that they can

[18] When asked about veterans' support and treatment for PTSD, presidential candidate Donald Trump said, "you're strong and you can handle it, but a lot of people can't handle it" (Kelsey and Stracqualursi). His statement suggests a worldview in which soldiers develop PTSD from personal weakness and not from its verified medical causes.

continue to use him in their wars. Kate pushes back against that problem. Acknowledgement of PTSD as a problem from spouses, from the community, and from the military itself is tremendously important in creating a system wherein people get the help they need. Kayla Williams, a veteran as well as a spouse, considered a veteran admitting "Oh yeah, I totally have PTSD. I take meds for it, see a shrink. It's starting to help" to be "a conversational bombshell" (*Plenty* 72). That servicemember told her he acknowledged his PTSD in public, because "Why the fuck not? […]We're all going through it.[…] We shouldn't all be hiding it, that's fucking stupid. I talk about it on purpose, so other guys know they can get help, too. It's not a big deal. I went through this after Afghanistan, too—but this time I'm not trying to 'suck it up and drive on' by myself. I got some help" (Williams *Plenty* 72).[19] Since untreated PTSD can be construed as the result of a servicemember's participation in hegemonic masculinity, Kate in pointing out Hotspur's suffering furthers the questioning of those values and demonstrates to the audience the cost of those values.

Kate's scenes reveal the situation of soldiers suffering with PTSD, but also of their spouses who are trying to support them in their service and in their mental health. Kate, in recognizing her husband's PTSD, performs a duty army wives frequently face in modern military culture.[20] Contemporary army spouses are among those advocating most for increased support for returning veterans' mental health, such as the Battling Bare initiative

[19] While the statement "we're all going through it," may seem like an exaggeration – after all, statistics suggest that 11-20% of Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans experience PTSD – in a conversation of 29 Iraq war vets "*every single one of us* admitted to having at least a couple of problems with sleeping, nightmares, anger, irritability, jumpiness, heightened startle response, intrusive memories, numbness, or feeling disconnected from others" (Williams *Plenty* 71). Williams took comfort in the fact that others experienced these symptoms as well (*Plenty* 71). Without dates on these instances, it is hard to diagnose PTSD, but acknowledging that these symptoms occur, can be treated, and can be recovered from is socially important.

[20] Wives would need to keep their eyes open for a long time. Barnes notes that "The transition back to family life after deployment can last as long as the deployment," comparing the struggle to regain normalcy to the seemingly endless struggle to rid one's home of sand trekked back from the desert (1662). "Colonel Cozza, chief of psychiatry at Walter Reed [a military hospital], has noted that the rates of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder do go up after discharge, which is why his consultation liaison teams follow up for three to six months or longer," and similarly, considering that time lapse, military spouses must remain vigilant long after the initial return and reintegration (Henderson *While* 244).

(Dicker).[21] The spouses are, in some cases, the most invested in determining what has happened to their servicemembers. Kate fills that role in her struggles with her husband. Her desperate pleas mirror the concern of a military spouse who wondered, "Does it ever get better? I have faith that my husband will one day open his heart to me, but sometimes it's so hard to keep positive when I feel like I am dying inside" (Barnes 2102). Kate, asking her husband about the ways he has changed after his service, recalls a wife who feels as though her husband has been taken away: "I see so much hatred and anger in his eyes, the same eyes where I before saw laughter. ... That's my story. I am now left with letters, emails, and videos of a man who no longer exists" (Barnes 2154). Kate, on stage, embodies the experiences of the spouses who have seen their servicemember spouse changed by the experience of military service, the same spouses who are part of the effort to reform the treatment of PTSD in the United States and to push back against the idea that mental illness is weakness or that these reactions to trauma should be absorbed or ignored. They are the wives who suffer with their spouses.

Kate Percy's speech also reveals more evidence that she understands her husband's martial life and lifestyle. Kate accurately predicts the reason for her husband's present mental state: she determines without being told that a rebellion is being fought to place her brother on the throne and that her husband will be needed for that war. Also, her repeated use of military language in her conversation with him, such as basilisk, canon, culverin (2.3.50) – three classes of canonry – as well as palisadoes and parapets (2.3.49), indicates that she has at least some knowledge of the military world in which he exists. Possibly, she gained this

[21] Battling Bare started in 2012. Ashley Wise, frustrated that she "seemingly had no place to go for help with [her] husband's undiagnosed PTSD," joked to a friend that perhaps she "should streak the 101st Airborne Division Command Building because maybe a naked woman running across the lawn would get their attention and they would hear what [she] had to say." She posted a picture online of herself bare-backed with promises to support her husband written in eyeliner. The photo was widely shared and generated some controversy, but it has also been met with support and similar photos from other military spouses in an effort to raise awareness and support for veterans with PTSD.

knowledge from him; possibly, she acquired it from other people, considering her brother obviously fought in Wales. Maybe she gained it from the other soldiers of the rebellion, in which her husband and father-in-law fought, which put Bolingbroke on the throne. She could have learned them following her husband to posts throughout his career. Hotspur is not the only soldier Kate knows, and, by virtue of her experience, she is well placed to note and understand the changes the war has wrought in him.

Although critics such as Howard and Rackin have found it possible to read the relationship as unloving, Hotspur's own words and actions reveal he does care for his wife. If Hotspur does not love or regard his wife, then one can readily disregard their discussion and relationship; however, the text does not support that view. When Kate first asks her husband about his intention to join the rebellion, Hotspur twice addresses her as "love," demonstrating affection even as he answers sarcastically (2.1. 81, 89). Hotspur's reactions to his wife's questions – and threats of finger-breaking – are initially hostile; however, in the face of their invoked love, he yields more than he had originally intended (2.3.94-124). Hotspur knows that he cannot submit to his wife's entreaties and maintain his martial ethos. He may already sense that if he lets her she could pull him from that life. However, in the face of her statement that should he no longer love her she will not love herself, he promises that he will bring her after him to his meeting and promises that he will not deny their love: "I will swear/I love thee infinitely" (2.3.107-8). His emotions are running high here. Strictly observing the verse, breathing on the verse lines, by the time the actor says, "God's me, my horse!" he would struggle to breathe. The strict monosyllables that follow that, as well, indicate the emotional strain on Hotspur. The line break in "I will swear/I love thee infinitely" may indicate his voice breaks or that he needs a breath to brace himself, as though such emotional honesty is difficult for him. He has become emotional, despite the demands that adherents of martial masculinity eschew such emotion. Some productions have

undermined Hotspur's statements that he does not love Kate: in the 19th century, stage custom called for Hotspur to demonstrate his love for his wife by, even as he says, "I care not for thee, Kate," kissing her (Sprague 85). That choice defeats Hotspur's efforts to eschew emotion in another way. Performative indicators can be employed to support their emotional connection.

Despite his angry words, Hotspur knows that their love matters, that it is the ground on which Kate builds her right to know his secrets. When he says, "I love thee not," he is returning to Kate's determined, monosyllabic "and I must know it else he loves me not," attempting to deny the basis on which she makes her claim (Bevington 176 note 86). Possibly, Hotspur only denies it as a result of his aforementioned war trauma; after all, he attacks their bond most harshly when she introduces the idea of physical harm, suggesting that she break his little finger. It may also reflect an issue of reintegration. As "part of the standard reintegration process at Fort Polk for every married returning soldier" – spouses could not be required to attend, though they were encouraged to do so – "They practiced communication skills, saying things like, 'I still love you,' and 'I understand'" (Henderson *While* 147). Hotspur may be struggling to reacclimate emotionally to the situation and to communicate positively with his wife, though he later does so. Alternatively, he may be trying to maintain the bulwark of his performed masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity defines itself in part by opposition to the feminine. Hotspur may instinctually respond to Kate's questioning his intention to fight in this conflict as he would respond to an attempt to undermine his masculinity – by pushing away the person who makes him question his martial role. Hegemonic masculinity would also encourage him to pull back from showing a lot of emotion. Williams' husband's "PTSD intersected with alcohol and [his] notion of manliness to prevent him from showing softness—what he construed to be weakness," which presented problems for his relationship with his wife (*Plenty* 159). However, in the end, Hotspur

cannot deny his and Kate's love. Alternatively, Hotspur may engage in such abrasive behavior not from callousness towards his wife but from concern for her and about the war. Hotspur may wish to spare his wife the burden of knowledge, which Portia feels as quite a weight in *Julius Caesar*, when she knows her husband is participating in a coup (2.4.5-10). Hotspur may also sense that Kate, if she has too much information too soon about this rebellion that she does not support, may try to destroy it from within rather than risk his well-being. That possibility accords with his statement that she cannot utter what she does not know (2.3.117).[22] Any of those options is possible, and none precludes his real love and affections for her; productions of *1 Henry IV* should consider each of them. Kate presses back against Hotspur's assertion that he does not love her, and it crumbles. Kate's monosyllabic demand that he tell her if he has truly rejected their love – "Nay, tell me if you speak in jest or no" (2.3.105) – shows her own emotion, and her plea affects Hotspur, who succumbs to the threat that she will no longer love herself if she loses him. After her threat that his actions will damage their love, he offers that she may see him ride and will certainly follow him to the negotiations. Later Ladies Percy and Mortimer are promised they will follow to the front. Kate and Hotspur's mutual love works on Hotspur.

He does not, though, allow her free reign. Neither hegemonic masculinity nor, arguably, safety allows that. He calls her "gentle Kate" twice (2.3.112,118), possibly signaling a false cue to the performer to begin speaking too soon, giving Hotspur an opportunity to interrupt and to remind Kate that even she cannot know all that he knows (2.3.117). Still, he promises to bring her anyway. Their conversation does not end there, though. As Leggatt notes, Kate's phrase "[i]t must of force," indicates that in this *moment* she must submit, "but she does not have to like it," and she never promises not to raise the

[22] While that comment from Hotspur can sound hurtful, Wilson describes it as an "ancient jest based on Seneca" (144 note 113). Under such a reading, the words may then be a return to Hotspur's bantering style with his wife seen both earlier in 2.3 and in 3.1

subject again tomorrow (255). As the notion that Hotspur does not love his wife has been used to disavow their relationship and the information Kate presents about his life, the fact that Kate and Hotspur do, in fact, have a loving relationship permits and even incentivizes Kate's efforts to cause her husband to question toxic masculinity.

In 3.1, the audience again sees Kate withdraw from her husband's martial life and refuse to participate in martial norms, sensing the cost that will be paid if he goes to war again. Deployments are always hard, and it is impossible to find the 'right' way to part:

> Each time Jack and I plan the good-bye scenario for a deployment, we think we've come up with a magical way to make the process of good-bye anything less than brutal and horrific. Even if we keep the brutal and horrific under the guise of a scripted scene, with firm hugs and confident words, the wailing agony is right under the surface. Every single time. (Ricketts 25)

For Kate, it will be doubly hard, because she has begged him not to go and been refused. Spouses who discovered that "their husbands had volunteered for overseas duty at times the family needed them most" sometimes "struggled to tamp down their anger" as Kate seems to (Buckholtz 240). In the end, Kate refuses to conform to the role of martial wife; she will not proudly send her husband off to war as Volumnia would. Hotspur demands she sing as Lady Mortimer does; she refuses (3.1.254-271). Kate has no reason to believe that Lady Mortimer and her song will eventually keep Mortimer from the wars. Mortimer's stated intention is still to leave. Perhaps, if she had known, she might have bent that far. For Hotspur to ask Kate to sing is to ask her to rejoice in his departure, as Volumnia rejoices in her son's leaving to go and win honor. Where Volumnia sees the possibility of honor as better than sex (1.3.2-5) or a living son (1.3.19-27) though, Kate sees only the risk that her husband will die. She refuses to glory in that risk. Kate's "I will not sing," tight monosyllables, is the end of their verse conversation (3.1.267). She does not end the verse line but instead leaves a pause taut between them before he bursts into prose. Perhaps, because both expected Kate to follow Hotspur and arrive with Glendower's troops, they both thought there would be a chance to

mend this rift caused by her refusal to send him proudly into combat, but that time never comes.[23] Her refusal need not be meek. In a 2006 production in Stratford, Onatrio, when Hotspur told Kate to "come in when you will" and stalked away, she chased him offstage, whence the audience could hear a slap and the sound of her husband's "ow" (Monette). The BBC *Hollow Crown* series depicts the last exchange as an extension of the teasing in the earlier part of 3.1, and it leads the scene into a sexual encounter that the text does not actually imply. Leggatt likewise presumes Hotspur, in telling his wife to come in when she will, is brashly inviting her in for sex (255). That view remains unsubstantiable from the text. More likely, based on the text, that fight becomes the last conversation they ever have. She rejects the role of the supportive wife, refusing to bless his decision to leave her. The 2010 Globe production ended 3.1 on that note, closing the scene with Kate, alone, stealing herself to accept his departure as a good military spouse must (Dromgoole). Performing the role of army wife to the extent that she supports his desire to be in combat and to risk his life for honor as the hegemonic masculinity demands would require Kate Percy to accept his participation and death in this war; this she cannot do. By rejecting her expected role in this case, she refuses to endorse these societal ideals.

Despite Kate Percy's efforts, she cannot persuade her husband to eschew the martial situations and martial ethos; she cannot save him. Kehler, whose chapter on war widows comes the closest to criticism acknowledging the military wives of Shakespeare's plays, recognizes that "Hotspur's high-handedness and secrecy deprive Kate of an opportunity to avert the rebellion; she has no voice in determining her fate but can only take her place

[23] Alison Buckholtz's friend Martina warned her not to leave fights unresolved: "You need to talk through everything with Scott before his deployment[….] McGowan and I didn't do the work before he left for his IA [Individual Augmentee assignment], and we're paying for it now. *Big-time*" (119). They do not have time though, since in a sense the fight is about the deployment. Fights like these can be difficult to resolve with a spouse deployed, where letters and sporadic phone calls may be the only form of contact: "With six thousand miles or more between you, you can't just reach across the cold space in the middle of the bed and take the other's hand" (Henderson *While* 109).

among the wives who became war widows, wives 'called upon – like it or not – to bear the consequences of their men's foolishness'" (107). Kate tries to save Hotspur from the hegemonic masculinity that encourages participation in the war and glorifies honor over life – a culture she may have participated in but comes to question and to challenge – but she does not prevail. Kastan acknowledges that Kate, had she succeeded in her persuasions, "perhaps might have saved him from his death or at least made his life less 'brittle'" (75). However, he attributes Hotspur's rejection of her advice to misogyny in Hotspur, claiming Hotspur rejects her words because they come from a woman. He does not consider that Kate, in her suggestion that Hotspur eschew this conflict, must pull Hotspur away from a cultural definition of masculinity that is martial and violent and, eventually, fatal. Not all definitions of masculinity and femininity must involve death or weakness, only the ones endorsed by the men of *1 Henry IV*. Hotspur, in a healthier conception of manhood, could have retained the honor he merited in defending his country from invading Scots without feeling compelled to fight in a questionable rebellion defending the rights of a man who does not want to be king. Kate, it seems, is beginning to recognize this, and she introduces this new masculinity to her husband, and by extension the audience. Mortimer's wife causes him to reject or at least ignore his culture's taught notions of manhood and honor; Kate cannot persuade her husband to do the same.

Thematically, Kate challenges the ideal of martial masculinity and prevents Hotspur from just being, if only in the eyes of the audience, the weapon so many regard him as. The characters, other than his wife, regard Hotspur purely as a martial figure, calling him "Mars in swaddling clothes" (3.2.115), "gunpowder Percy" (5.4.124), and "hare-brained Hotspur governed by a spleen" (5.2.21). Even his uncle and father exploit those qualities, misusing his emotions so that he will fight this battle for them. Howard and Rackin, accept such a view of him. Hughes considers Hotspur strictly "the man of action, fiery and impulsive, who

loves fighting because it is the only thing that makes his whole nature pulsate harmoniously – the English Philistine at his best" (11). It is an uncomplicated picture. Examining Kate's character, her words, her actions, and her presence, though, complicates that easy picture of the warrior. Kate shows that this man has a wife who loves him and that he was affected by his last, successful campaign. In that respect, her appearance on stage fulfills a comparable role to the 'fatal family photo' in a 20th-century war film: any man can survive any war unless he shows a comrade a picture of his girl back home. When Hotspur fights Hal at the end of the play, the audience feels more sorrow at Hotspur's death knowing he leaves behind a wife who will mourn him. She personifies a human cost to the wars. Kate also raises the possibility that her husband suffers from PTSD as a result of his past military service, which brings into question the benefits of further battles. Are the costs to the individual worth the benefits of these battles? Kate tries to question the idea that her husband should fight in these wars; yet, she cannot save him. Kate, in filling these roles in the play, also raises for the audience the awareness of the costs borne by military families.

Notably, while Kate Percy objects to her husband's participation in this rebellion, she never alleges that all wars are wrong or to be avoided. She understands that in their world such a pacifist position would be untenable. In Northumberland, her husband must defend the northern border from invading Scots.[24] In England's other wars, soldiers would be needed to defend their nation. Kate does not condemn all wars or the entire code of warrior values, both of which may prove vital to her nation and saving English lives. However, she questions and encourages a critique of a martial code that allows and even encourages men to seek honor and glory irrespective of cost.

[24] The ability to defend England from the Scots was part of Northumberland's negotiating power against the monarch in the early modern period (James 112-3).

Lady Mortimer and Lady Percy occupy and address common roles filled by military spouses, comparisons made clearer by viewing them as army wives. Reading these characters against each other, through their shared vocation, allows a nuanced understanding of the characters and a concomitant understanding of hegemonic masculinity. Lady Mortimer raises the issue of loyalty and the complexity of marrying a non-native spouse met during military service. Lady Percy raises the concern of PTSD and the psychological cost of military service. To expurgate the military spouses from performance ignores the contributions women make to their countries' struggles in war, the impact women have on the military structure, and the role these women have in their plays.

Neither of these wives can be aligned with extremes of pacifism or militarism that a spouse could occupy. Virgilia espouses anti-war views more vehemently than Lady Mortimer does, just as Volumnia values war and glory more than Lady Percy does. Both Patroclus and Lady Macbeth, as we will see in later chapters, also take much more pro-martial stances than either spouse discussed here. Patroclus, in particular, urges his partner to enter dangerous combat to avoid censure for failing to perform masculinity to the community standard, and Patroclus himself dies trying to perform it.

Though these women do not interact as the wives in *Othello* do, *1 Henry IV* creates conversation about what it means to be a warrior through consideration of what it means and has meant to be married to a soldier. It also opens a discussion about what it means to be a man and to participate in a particular masculinity, as well as its adverse ramifications. The choices have already been presented in *1 Henry IV*: life, dishonor, and anonymity, versus death, honor and fame. Mortimer chooses the first, while Hotspur the second. Lady Mortimer is the wife who represents the first choice, Lady Percy the one who once admired the second choice but now prefers the first, having grown to appreciate the price that is paid. Of course, *1 Henry IV* does not pretend that the choices are always equal. While the women

may agree that honor and fame are less valuable than life, neither can pretend that war is never necessary. Hotspur may have not been essential to this rebellion, but Kate Percy never denies that he and Mortimer needed to go to war against the Scots. This struggle, between the necessity of some wars, the toxic masculinity that teaches men and women to revere death in battle and the pursuit of honor, and the value of love and family, is an important part of *1 Henry IV* and of the other Shakespeare plays involving "army wives." These military spouses challenge their culture and our culture to find another way and to script a masculinity that defends and honors, that fights when necessary but proves manhood through other means than needless death and the cycles of pain in the pursuit of glory.

Chapter 3: "Think You I Am No Stronger Than My Sex": Portia and Calpurnia

Among Shakespeare's military plays, *Julius Caesar* has been regarded as unpleasantly germane to global politics. Director James MacDonald argued that "*Julius Caesar* has great relevance to our world," for "since the events of 9/11/2001, our society has been shadowed by feelings of foreboding about uncertain enemies and has faced a crisis of leadership" (6). It also questions, in "extraordinary parallel to today's political environment," "whether assassination and wars are justified to maintain a certain balance of power and to protect one's society at any cost" (MacDonald 6). Several 21st-century theatre reviewers also noted the relationship. Robert Crew argued that as its "Lofty notions of honour, nobility and friendship clash jarringly with pragmatism and political necessity,[…] directors are tempted to drag the play, kicking and screaming, into the 21st century." Indeed, Robyn Godfrey argued that "As Shakespeare plays go, Julius Caesar is dull fare by today's media standards. Political intrigue, blood spilled in the capital, civil war: we see it nightly on the news." One could find in *Julius Caesar* many points of potential comparison to the modern political climate, such as the deposing and execution of Saddam Hussein (Kelly) or the prevalence of violent political interventions and political spin doctoring (Reid). One need not drag the play into relevance. The relevance asserts itself. We should embrace that.

It is easy to forget in the political first half of *Julius Caesar* that these are martial men and that the civil war at the end of the play is not the first war any of these men have fought. Their wives are military spouses. While the United States has a civilian-led military and the President, as Commander-in-Chief, is the highest ranked official, but not himself a soldier, in Rome, "high ranks in the military and political office [were] the same thing" (Roth 16). One could not achieve high office without being a high-ranked officer. The powers of the consuls "included supreme command of the army," in addition to the juridical powers exercised in

Coriolanus (Miller 272). Caesar and Brutus appear in the highest office, consul, for which the usual starting point, even for a nobleman, would have been military service (Roth 62). For all these men are politicians, they are still military commanders. At the start of the play, Caesar returns in triumph, having defeated Pompey. "Only a commander of troops who held *imperium*," – *imperium* referred to the right to assemble an army and command in war – "and whose army had killed over five thousand foreign enemies, could celebrate a triumph" (Roth 67). That Caesar can do this means that he has commanded a large army and has won a great military victory. Even Brutus' own military service was historically recent. Although the text does not delve into it, Junius Brutus fought on Pompey's side in the civil war and was granted clemency by Caesar (Roth 118). Since the play opens with Pompey being led in triumph, this has quite recently occurred. In addition to their obvious politicking, these men are still soldiers of Rome and leaders of its military. Their wives are soldiers' wives.

While not underrating the relevance of *Julius Caesar* to contemporary politics, one should also avoid underrating the importance of the women to the play. Portia and Calpurnia's contributions to *Julius Caesar* have gone largely unnoticed in the past. Phyllis Rackin actually argued that "In *Julius Caesar*, there are no important women's parts," and that when they do appear "women do not even manage to influence the action" (76). Rackin does not appreciate the power women do bring to the text. Bevington specifically calls Calpurnia's role "limited," seemingly because she does not succeed in curtailing Caesar's behavior (32). This reading also overlooks some of what Calpurnia does. Portia does not change the plot, but it mistakes her position quite to suggest she must. Calpurnia tries to change the plot, but the fact that she is blocked from doing so is meaningful. Margaret Jane Kidnie argues that

> It might seem tempting to wonder if this disproportionate gender balance somehow gives rise to the issues of state that the play dramatizes. If somehow, impossibly, this Roman world could find room for more women – for more mothers and daughters and wives, Rosalinds and Violas, possibly even a Kate

> Percy or a Hermione – then perhaps alternative perspectives could be entertained, and priorities might shift. But the couple of female characters Shakespeare does choose to stage in fact offer little suggestion of such a possibility. Portia and Calpurnia, wives to Brutus and Caesar, respectively, seem as invested as any other character in the play's culture of heroic sacrifice, personal excellence, and competitive individuality. Gender is not a shaping or defining force in *Julius Caesar*. What drives this play is an idea of "Romanness" that is extolled, even fetishized, by both male and female characters in public and private discourse. (11).

Despite bringing Kate and Portia into conversation with each other, Kidnie does not acknowledge the differences in their personalities and motivations that would affect how they affect things. The statement also overlooks how the construction of Romanness is, itself, gendered and tied to the cultural ideals of masculinity. When examining gender, one must avoid essentializing people along gender lines. These roles still have value to *Julius Caesar*.

Even when the women's presence is acknowledged, their strength is undercut by allusions to secret weakness or unwellness, as though these qualities devalue their actions. Rackin, by moving Portia out of a martial culture, divorces her actions from their meaning: "Apparently fearful that even these identifications with noble men will not suffice to raise her above the other members of her weak and despised sex, Portia then offers further proof of her constancy – a 'voluntary wound here, in the thigh,' symbolically attacking her sexuality in order to prove her Roman *virtus*" (76). Although she understands the incision as related to a cultural ideal of awesomeness that is masculine and martial, not unlike modern masculinity,[1] Rackin treats it as unreasonable Portia would wish to participate in that sort of power. One should consider that in order to gain office, Coriolanus is also expected to show his own wounds, as Portia shows a wound here. One should also consider that, even in *Julius Caesar*,

[1] *Virtus* referred to a Roman idea of valiantness and masculinity (Rackin 69). *Virtus* "is, in fact, a complex of traits and behaviours proper to men, making 'Roman' virtue almost synonymous with masculinity. (Lucrece and Portia aspire to this virtue only through symbolic enactments of masculinity.) In fact, the very etymology of *virtus* is gender-specific" (Kahn *Roman* 14). According to Kahn, virtus "isn't a moral abstraction but rather a marker of sexual difference crucial to construction of the male subject— the Roman hero" (*Roman* 14). It is tied essentially to gender performance and is part of the hegemonic masculinity. However, the fact "that this virtue might be imitated by a woman [like Portia] de-naturalizes it and suggests that it isn't native to the male gender; it is learned behavior" (Kahn *Roman* 101). Virtus is as performative as any hegemonic masculinity.

Cassius judges Caesar for physical weakness (1.2.105-138). Would that not suggest, then, that Portia could claim respect by demonstrating stoicism and strength? Why is Portia's interest in such strength treated differently than that of males? Even Anna Jameson, who accords Portia some respect, seems to view her as a failed stoic, one whose suicide must indicate a descent into madness, as opposed to a commitment to Roman values and strength (284-6). The text does not underrate the women, so why does the criticism?

In the text itself, the women counterpoise each other. They, in their inclusion, enhance the presence of the other, coming, as they do, in a pair. They appear in back-to-back scenes, "concerned about the consequences of [their] husband[s'] behavior, [and assume] the position of suppliant," appealing to their husbands on their knees (Rabkin 241-242). An audience sees counterweighted ways women respond to risky behavior and worrying signs in a spouse. In this way, the characters drag their husbands into the balance as well, for not only do they enhance an audience's understanding of their husbands, but both the military and political leaders can now be judged against each other also as husbands. An audience can read the significance of Brutus' heeding his wife while Caesar disregards his, for instance. On stage, there was the difference of a Brutus who kneels to his kneeling Portia to a Caesar who, always Caesar, never kneels. In the MacDonald production, Brutus, when he said, "kneel not, gentle Portia," knelt to his wife. Their Caesar, though he kissed his wife and treated her kindly, did not do the same. When he told her, "Antony shall say I am not well" his blocking noted "Caesar x to her gets her up, kiss hug." He raised her to his level at will, but he did not fall to her level. That these scenes read against each other means each wife suffers if the other vanishes from the text or interpretation. They both suffer from being ignored. They are both, as military wives, relevant when read against their shared military background, against each other, and against the other military wives of Shakespeare.

In a 21st-century context, these women evoke elements of the modern military experience. Women continue to be central to the perpetuation of the military culture, a quality emphasized as Portia, more than any of Shakespeare's military spouses, trades on her lineage to establish her credibility, and as Calpurnia, like Lady Macbeth, bears the obligation to produce an heir but struggles with infertility. For Calpurnia, the struggle to have a child may have a strong bearing on her relationship with her husband, and he may be treating the question of whether they can have children as a comment on his manhood. Understanding this burden, particularly for Calpurnia, opens up new facets of their marital relationships. Furthermore, the women in *Julius Caesar* raise the question of whether they can be trusted, as interpreters of a situation, and as possessors of information. Although the phrase "loose lips sink ships" is an old one, the risk it describes never went away. These women possess knowledge, often secrets that it might be easier if they did not have, and the women and the military must grapple with that reality. Looking at Calpurnia and Portia as military spouses highlights their relationships to the burdens of knowledge, and by understanding this burden we can better understand how these women do and do not shape events. In Portia, we see a challenge to a conception of masculinity that shuns even healthy and normal emotions, particular as Brutus' reaction to her death reveals the unhealthy nature of excessive stoicism. In Calpurnia, one sees that what these men do, their women must live with; the men's actions have effects not confined to the battlefield. By better understanding these elements of their experiences, exposed by comparing these women to modern counterparts, we can better understand their contributions to a play on which they have been deemed to have little impact.

Julius Caesar is enriched with this awareness. These women have been undervalued by productions, like David Farr's 2004 RSC production,[2] that rush through them or a wide critical history that underrates them, or they have been underrealized onstage, like in Angus Jackson's 2017 RSC production.[3] However, by reading these women against the background of their military culture, from a military lineage and a pressure to have children, to an increased awareness of military secrets spouses encounter from their proximity and the importance of spouses' being trustworthy, one can better understand their contributions to the text, as figures who can impact events, are affected by them, and have their own opinions on them. Thereby, one can consider elements of the play relevant to modern life, like the dispersal of information and the self-perpetuating nature of the modern military community (both biologically and ideologically), beyond the usual answers of political spin and blood spilled.

Portia

Portia, like Kate Percy, is justifiably concerned about what her husband's position is doing to him. However, unlike Kate, she pushes less to stop his actions and more to be allowed to give, Lady Macbeth-like, more support. Enhancing one's understanding of contemporary military spouses deepens one's understanding of Portia, who strikes many familiar notes for a military spouse.

Of the two wives here, Portia is the most tied to her culture's valiant manliness and macho performance. She weighs herself as the men weigh themselves, according to lineage

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[2] Reviewer Steve Orme felt that "Farr draws parallels with modern-day dictators such as Putin and Berlusconi," in the production, while Orme himself, "couldn't help thinking of Caesar as Saddam Hussein; and the honourable Brutus and Cassius as Blair and Bush, the archetypal spin doctors whose motives don't stand up." However, with the exception of depicting the Poet as an obnoxious anti-war protester, little in that production deserves to be called socially relevant, and it will not feature in this discussion.

[3] Alex Waldmann, who played Brutus at the RSC, noted "If only Brutus and Caesar had listened to their wives," but since the men do not, "we just end up with a lot of idiot men ruining [everything]" (Corrigan, Waldmann, and Woodall). For the 2017 RSC production, Angus Jackson said, of his cast, "We love Portia in *Julius Caesar*," and during rehearsals, "We're just screaming, 'listen to her. Tell her what's going on.'" These sentiments appear positive and interested in the women, but they do not appear on-stage for the audience.

and stoicism. That is part of how she justifies her inclusion in Brutus' plans, by demonstrating that the qualities that credential him are present, as well, in her:

> I grant I am a woman, but withal
> A woman that Lord Brutus took to wife.
> I grant I am a woman, but withal
> A woman well-reputed, Cato's daughter.
> Think you I am no stronger than my sex,
> Being so fathered and so husbanded?
> Tell me your counsels; I will not disclose 'em:
> I have made strong proof of my constancy,
> Giving myself a voluntary wound
> Here, in the thigh. Can I bear that with patience,
> And not my husband's secrets? (2.1.315-325).

One of the first credentials she displays is that she has a martial pedigree like the men do – she is Cato's daughter. Cato fought on Pompey's side and killed himself rather than be captured; the Republicans considered him a martyr (Mowat and Werstine 70). She has the lineage of soldiering and determination. Similarly, at Philippi, a man identifies himself as the son of Marcus Cato (5.4.1-6). Portia had a brother. It is another sign she comes from a military family that is proud of its martial lineage. Even in the modern American military, coming from a military lineage is not uncommon: "Compared to the average American, those in the military are more likely to be following in the footsteps of a close relative who also served" (Henderson *While* 23). Gen. Ann E. Dunwoody, the first female four-star general in the US military, said of her family "I grew up in the Army and came from a family who, since 1862, has defended our nation. My great-grandfather, my grandfather, my father, my brother, my sister, my niece, and my husband are all veterans of this country's wars" (Crooks, Henderson, Hightower, Scherer 326). Note the phrase "grew up in the Army." Without a hometown to return to "It makes sense that some military families […] identify so closely with their service branch. […O]ne military-wife author urges her children to say they're 'from the Navy' when others ask where they grew up. […T]he military itself has become their home" (Buckholtz 36). Terri Barnes, whose husband served in Desert Storm,

Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom, is the daughter of a Vietnam vet – indeed, her earliest memory is her father returning from war (102, 196). Angela Ricketts went from being the daughter of an infantryman to the wife of one (7). Rep. Tammy Duckworth, herself an Iraq vet whose husband is a major in the Army National Guard, is the daughter of a WWII veteran, and she can trace her military lineage back to the American Revolution (Weinstein). The same holds true for male military spouses. "Every generation of Ken's family had served in the military all the way back to the Civil War, with the exception of Ken," whose wife was a servicemember (Henderson *While* 144). Eric Fanning, former Secretary of the Army and a male military spouse, was an Army brat (Henderson *While* 141). It is unsurprising that military spouses, including Portia, would come from military families. Indeed, military brats turned military spouses are as much a part of the military's self-perpetuating culture as the military brats who grow up to be military personnel. Through marrying soldiers and raising future military servicemembers (and future military spouses), the military spouses share the culture they were raised in with their spouses and pass on that culture to their children.[4] By emphasizing her hereditary relationship to the military, Portia emphasizes her relationship to its culture, which underlines her fitness to know of her husband's schemes and concerns. She also attaches herself to the idea of valiant, martial masculinity by demonstrating that she can bear injury with the requisite stoicism, giving herself a wound in the thigh. (One can conclude from the fact that she has to point out her injury to her husband that she has not showed signs of weakening from pain during the earlier parts of the scene.)[5] Her ability to bear pain aligns her with the values the men would

[4] One Navy pilot Alison Buckholtz knew, Hallie, was the daughter of an Air Force pilot from Vietnam, and she grew up around his post-retirement civilian job at Pearl Harbor, and "Her mother, an old-school Navy wife […] urged Hallie to marry a naval officer." The only difference was that Hallie did not want to just marry an officer – she wanted to be one (223-224).

[5] In the 2017 RSC production, Portia wounds herself onstage. She expresses no sounds of pain, demonstrating stoicism. However, in the case of that particular Portia, the only suggestion the audience sees that she has enough steel to later swallow fire is that she is apparently the kind of woman who wears hairpins that could double as edged weapons.

respect; she even models stoicism for Brutus who has been suffering under the burden of an act he has convinced himself is needed.[6] Indeed, while Brutus suggests that any conspirator who loses resolution must have "The melting spirits of women," she appears much more solid than he does, even in the face of injury (2.1.133). If she can bear this pain, she can bear his secrets. She leads her argument, as well, with an argument she returns to persistently as a credential for meriting his trust: "I grant I am a woman, but withal/A woman that Lord Brutus took to wife." Essentially, the argument is that he *chose* her. If she is the woman he took to wife, then he should trust her. She has the credentials he should respect, having chosen her, knowing her lineage, seeing her stoicism. Brutus, for his part, accepts her argument that she deserves this respect and should be rated as his equal: "Render me worthy of this noble wife!" (2.1.327). He calls her Noble Portia, a balance with the fact that he is considered the Honorable Brutus. Even when Portia displays less than complete martial confidence, she does manage to maintain moderate composure and does not disclose her husband's secrets:

> O constancy, be strong upon my side;
> Set a huge mountain 'tween my heart and tongue.
> I have a man's mind, but a woman's might.
> How hard it is for women to keep counsel! (2.4.7-10)

She may have internalized the persistent cultural idea that women cannot hold their tongues, but there is no actual betrayal.[7] Like Lady Macbeth, Portia wishes to offer her husband support in his pursuits, even if they are violent.[8] Instead of speaking to others of his secrets, Portia prays, "O Brutus,/The heavens speed thee in thine enterprise!" (2.4.46-47). Even when feeling weak, she holds to her determination and conviction. For some modern spouses, the question of knowledge is this unselfish one: "'I can't tell you.' It's a guilty feeling, this thing

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[6] Her ability to model masculinity reappears later in the play when, understanding that their side will lose the war, Portia commits suicide. Where Brutus struggles to fall on his own sword, Portia *swallows fire* (4.3.173).
[7] Angus Jackson noted that the "woman's might" line does not inherently reflect weakness in Portia. Perhaps it is how she reflects on the weak position into which her society forces women. Alternatively, it may reflect the public vs. private position of women like Portia. In private with Brutus, Angus Jackson suggests, she can say, "I'm at least as smart as you, so give it," but in public she may feel an obligation to pretend to be weak.
[8] Considering her husband's recent participation in a civil war, which her father also participated in, it should be unsurprising that she supports him even in risk and violence if she believes, as he does, that his cause is just.

that sits between us when he's had to say that. How do I support him when I don't know what's happening to him?" (Starnes 44). Offering support and aid is more difficult to do if one must be kept outside. Military spouses deal themselves with the question of whether they can handle being trusted with knowledge:

> "Why haven't you called?" [National Guard wife Lynn Sinclair] asked in her no-nonsense way.
>
> He was quiet for a moment. "Well, how much can I tell you?"
>
> "I have support here," she assured him. "I'm fine, you can tell me anything."
>
> Danny, it turned out, hadn't called because he'd been upset and didn't want to upset her, but she told him he might as well tell her because she'd eventually hear it from the other wives anyway, but only after it had been twisted out of shape from being passed from their husbands to them to her. So he told her (Henderson *While* 106).

In that case, as one might associate also with Hotspur's disclosures with Kate, the issue the husband had to balance was, at least in part, what his spouse could handle being told. Lynn insisted that she had the requisite support system, likely other wives, to handle his news. Her husband, like Brutus to Portia, trusted her with the knowledge. While Portia interprets her husband's secrecy as a sign of mistrust, there are other reasons a husband may wish to conceal something as awful as treason. Navy chaplains Bryan Weaver and Richard Saul advise servicemembers who are returning from a deployment, "**Thou shalt confess to a chaplain and not to a spouse.** While honesty is always the best policy, timing and discretion are essential . . . If something is weighing heavy on your heart or mind, see a chaplain, civilian clergy, or a counselor" (Henderson *While* 230, bolding in the original). There are some things that, for the sake of one's marriage, one may wish to keep to oneself, and in some cases, the military advises doing so. Jonathan Shay noted that some veterans "see themselves as toxic because they expect to harm others with their knowledge of the hideousness of war— 'if you knew what I know, it would fuck you up.' […]These veterans shun closeness with others, because they are certain that others will be harmed by the contact" (*Odysseus* 83). Furthermore, because "veterans know about 'secondary trauma,'

psychological injury to mental health professionals working with them[…], they keep silent about their worst demons, until they have observed the therapist and his or her setting long enough to know that it is safe—for themselves and for the therapist" (Shay *Odysseus* 273). Army wife Lily Burana referred to secondary traumatization as post-traumatic spouse disorder (287). Though Portia is not a mental health professional, the knowledge of secondary trauma and the burden of knowledge could explain why Brutus does not feel ready to disclose until after she has again proved her mettle to him. Portia rates herself as the men rate themselves, and throughout her presence, her actions show that self-evaluation to be merited. Indeed, even her husband accepts it as evidence she deserves his trust.

Portia, like Calpurnia later and other army wives in Shakespeare, is not hysterical. Her concerns are real and justified. She raises clear and pointed concerns to her husband:

> It will not let you eat nor talk nor sleep,
> And could it work so much upon your shape
> As it hath much prevailed on your condition,
> I should not know you Brutus. Dear my lord,
> Make me acquainted with your cause of grief. (2.1.272-276)

Her initial points of concern are listed in monosyllables, underlining them. Her concern about the insomnia is well-founded. Brutus refers to it twice. First, he tells the audience, "Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar,/I have not slept" (2.1.64-65), and again when Cassius remarks, "I think we are too bold upon your rest," and Brutus replies "I have been up this hour, awake all night" (2.1.94-96). She has been paying attention. She also notes that he has not been talking to her, not communicating, and it is communication she desires. She wants his trust. The polysyllabic quality of how she puts it – "acquainted with [his] cause of grief" – demonstrates that she wants to know his secrets, not hinder his performance. Consider the line ending "Dear my lord." It is a monosyllabic clause after a caesura. An actress performing those lines will be running out of breath. Portia will need to draw deep breath before asking "Make me acquainted with your cause of grief," as though

this were a hard demand for her to make, one she must brace herself for, but one she makes anyway, because it is important. There are similarities in Portia's speech to that of Kate Percy. She asks about sleeplessness, loss of appetite, and mood swings, evidently concerned for what these might signal.[9] Like Kate Percy, Portia's husband has just returned from a war. She may, indeed, ask what Kate asks: are these the results of war trauma? What kind of help does her husband need? While the source of his pain is different than Hotspur's, Portia does not misunderstand these symptoms when she deems them cause for concern. She is right to worry and to ask. Portia raises serious concerns that have pressed on her and merit her attention.

As mentioned before, Portia founds her argument that she deserves his trust on the fact that she is his wife. First, she invokes the value of that status to suggest he should inform her:

> You have some sick offence within your mind,
> Which, by the right and virtue of my place
> I ought to know of. And, upon my knees
> I charm you, by my once-commended beauty,
> By all your vows of love, and that great vow
> Which did incorporate and make us one,
> That you unfold to me, your self, your half,
> Why you are heavy. (2.1.288-296)

She invokes the reality of their affective bond: "By all your vows of love." Their union may have political ramifications, and she supports his career, but their union is one of love. Indeed, they are as one. She refers to their marriage vows as "that great vow/Which did incorporate and make us one," and describes herself as his self, his half. He is part of her, and she of him. She considers it the right of a wife to know such secrets. She argues it is a derogation of her wifely status that he withholds this knowledge:

> Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus,
> Is it excepted I should know no secrets
> That appertain to you? Am I yourself

[9] Sleeplessness does not, in itself, indicate PTSD. Angela Ricketts reports that after his deployments, "Still to this day, Jack doesn't sleep for more than a few hours at a time and can't get comfortable in a bed" (284).

> But, as it were, in sort or limitation,
> To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,
> And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the suburbs
> Of your good pleasure? If it be no more,
> Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife. (2.1.302-310)

This is a return to the invoking of their marriage. Again, she refers to herself as "yourself." Importantly, she draws a distinction between her position as his wife and that of a woman who occasionally shares his meals or bed. As his wife, the argument follows, she deserves the truth and his trust. Brutus, for his part, accepts these arguments:

> You are my true and honorable wife,
> As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
> That visit my sad heart. (2.1.311-313)

She is not merely his harlot. The MacDonald production emphasized her feelings on that sentiment by having her, when she says "Brutus' harlot, not his wife," cross downstage away from him, underlining how she feels the harlot status represents distance between them. Such distancing also mirrors the geographic language of dwelling in the suburbs, as opposed to the center, of spousal affection. He then tells her what she has asked, because she was correct:

> by and by thy bosom shall partake
> The secrets of my heart.
> All my engagements I will construe to thee,
> All the charactery of my sad brows. (2.1.330-333)

Her argument that she should, as his wife, be trusted, has prevailed. She has not though, one should note, sued to stop his performance. Instead, she shall, as his wife, support him in it.[10]

Trust is an objectively desirable quality in any marriage. However, in a military couple, trust becomes even more important. Military spouses are keepers of surprising quantities of knowledge. Therefore, that they are trustworthy and can handle close hold information becomes quite important. In Portia, one sees both the desire for information and its weight.

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[10] One might wish to read Portia in light of a sentiment made by her ancestor, Cato the Elder, who maintained that in Rome, "All mankind rules its women, and we rule all mankind, but our women rule us." Portia seeks not power over her husband or to rule him. She need not. She seeks to support him where his cause is just.

Military spouses often have knowledge that one might not expect a civilian to have. There will, of course, be plenty that they do not know. Terri Barnes noted that early in the war, "Like plenty of other military spouses, I didn't know exactly where my husband was. I couldn't reassure myself that he was away from the hostilities that were datelined Basrah, Nasiriyah, and other locations on the march northward" (1969). Yet, at the same time, she had more information than civilians did: "I knew where I thought he was—information I was not supposed to have and could not discuss with anyone" (Barnes 1969). The wives often report knowing things some would say they should not, or at least information they could not tell others. This ranges from information that has been intentionally shared – "Jack shares certain tidbits of data with me in phone calls and emails, but sometimes says, 'This is just between us. Close hold'" (Ricketts 215)[11] – to information they have figured out from the information they are given – "The transition to the new mission is supposed to be a secret, but I'm not stupid. Nothing is a secret" (Ricketts 203). Mollie Gross' Marine husband joked that the wives who served on the Key Volunteer Network (since replaced by Family Readiness Programs) "knew more about what was going on than the Marines," which she acknowledged, "was true most of the time" (143). Some of these instances are more negative than others. One of the reasons Gross was so well informed was that, as a Key Volunteer Coordinator (KVC), she gave the "all-clear" on base when all the death notifications had been made for the day (142-3). Angela Ricketts reports that after a Chinook crash that might have killed a battalion commander – he had not manifested before boarding but was believed to be on the flight – her husband, who would have to sub in for him in command, was instructed to call her and, during a communications blackout, alert her that he would be in the field and thus out of touch (109-113). When he revealed that the commander was believed dead, Ricketts informed her husband that an Army wife who knew the commander personally

[11] Close hold, Ricketts notes, means "shut the fuck up with this information" (110).

was in their kitchen, to which he replied, "Oh, Jesus, Ang. Cover it up. She can't know yet. I wish you told me she was there before I started talking," before saying he would call when he had more information, and hanging up. Unlike Portia, Ricketts did not succeed in keeping this secret – in the process of assuring the wife in the kitchen that her husband was not dead, she revealed the close hold information about the commander's death before military notifications had been made (114). The mechanism by which Ricketts came by that information would not necessarily be surprising. Martha Brown, the deployment and mobilization manager on Fort Bragg, acknowledged that "Some families are getting information before the rear detachment or anybody else," because although information in the military is supposed to move from in-theater personnel to rear detachment commanders to Family Readiness Group (FRG) leader to key callers who disseminate the information to unit families, "Soldiers calling back here [on satellite phones] and letting their spouse know, 'I'm OK, but so and so has just been killed'" can with their phones or emails get ahead of the usual flow of information (Henderson *While* 109). Indeed, many military couples go so far as to design codes so that servicemembers can convey information that might otherwise be close hold, such as "I'll be on assignment for a few weeks," without having to explicitly state things they should not state (Henderson *While* 274).[12] These wives often have information that is otherwise secret or close hold. They are trusted as spouses and informed in their capacity as spouses. Sometimes they are informed by their servicemember; sometimes they are more informed than their servicemember. For Portia to demand that, as his wife, she should be informed, mirrors the reality of many modern military spouses. It can be better that spouses get their information from their servicemember. Getting intel from other sources can prove dubious. Lynn Sinclair told her husband "he might as well tell her because she'd

[12] This situation was amplified for queer spouses under DADT. Some devised code words so they could communicate without disclosing the nature of their relationship (Seefried 72).

eventually hear it from the other wives anyway, but only after it had been twisted out of shape from being passed from their husbands to them to her" (Henderson *While* 106). Furthermore, the desire to know can lead wives to share information that perhaps they ought not: "During a deployment, we all want information. […] We Want to Know Now. However, we must remember that what we want to know, what we insist on knowing, may put another person or an entire unit in a compromising position. We're aware of that. And still we find ourselves passing on information without even thinking about the consequences. Even when we know better. We Have to Know" (Eckhart 178). Portia's stresses, when she has been entrusted with this information, do not speak ill of her but instead reflect a struggle common to women in her position, trusted with weighty but secret information.

While critics have argued that Portia is unimportant, because she acts to support her husband's performance,[13] the scenes surrounding her presence and absence do not support this idea. Portia's death is reported twice. Kahn argues that "Since the second revelation doesn't necessarily conflict with the first, and since the scene can be read and acted to make sense with both, with one, or with neither, the question is undecidable and the crux functions as a litmus test of the critics and the cultural norms of heroic masculinity they endorse" (*Roman* 102). This examination will deal with both reports of her demise. Neither reveal diminishes Portia's importance; they instead demonstrate her significance differently. Cassius knows that she, as Brutus' wife, is significant to him.

> CASSIUS. Of your philosophy you make no use
> If you give place to accidental evils.
> BRUTUS. No man bears sorrow better. Portia is dead.
> CASSIUS. Ha? Portia?

[13] Shakespeare does not show his audience the scene in which Brutus gives her his reasons and earns her support. Instead, audiences see him promise "thy bosom shall partake/The secrets of my heart" (2.1.329-330). The metrical deficiency in l.330 suggests space for an embrace of some kind, perhaps a kiss, which would further underline their closeness. The most important part, though, is that he has promised to unfold all to her, and the audience presumes he does. However, considering the somewhat torturous reasoning that leads Brutus to the civil war, Portia, it is likely, acts on faith. She trusts Brutus to be doing the right thing for the right reasons. The conspirators, after all, want Brutus attached to their actions for that very reason, his name brings with it honor and respect. One may presume the same holds with his wife.

> BRUTUS. She is dead.
> CASSIUS. How 'scaped I killing when I crossed you so?
> O insupportable and touching loss!

Brutus misses Portia, classes her death as a cause for sorrow. Her death affects his emotions, changes how he engages with his primary military ally. How can that not be an impact on his performance as a soldier and a leader, and how is the woman at the center of that impact meaningless to the play? Furthermore, his ally accepts that this loss should affect his emotions.[14] Cassius, for his part, takes the relationship seriously, recognizing it as something that would matter intensely to Brutus. He calls her death an "insupportable and touching loss!" Furthermore, "killing" is the only polysyllable in Cassius' sentence, really stressing that Cassius could imagine Brutus *attacking* him as a possible, even understandable, outcome of their interaction. Portia is important to the play, as she is important to her husband and her husband's mental wellbeing, as military spouses are to their servicemembers. Waldmann, who played Brutus at the RSC in 2017, suggests that, after Caesar is dead and Portia is dead, Brutus feels all the blood is on his hands. He blames himself for the death of his wife. Brutus is so upset that he must struggle to conceal it. Brutus seems unable to bear discussion of her death:

> CASSIUS. Portia, art thou gone?
> BRUTUS. No more, I pray you. (4.3.191-192)

Between those two lines, there are 10 syllables. In terms of pace, Brutus is almost cutting Cassius off. He cannot hear more. Brutus is curt when Messala mentions Portia:

> MESSALA. Had you your letters from your wife, my lord?
> BRUTUS. No, Messala.
> MESSALA. Nor nothing in your letters writ of her?
> BRUTUS. Nothing, Messala. (4.3.208-211)

[14] In the 2017 RSC production, the rather laddish Brutus gave the line about Portia's death lightly, not gravely, and Cassius' 'Ha? Portia?' reflected his processing offhandedly what he'd heard. It took him and the audience a moment to process what had just been revealed.

He does not encourage Messala to talk on the subject of his wife. Likely, he cannot. Indeed, because emotions are considered unmanly or unbecoming, he attempts to conceal his:

> BRUTUS. Now, as you are a Roman, tell me true.
> MESSALA. Then like a Roman bear the truth I tell,
> For certain she is dead, and by strange manner.
> BRUTUS. Why, farewell, Portia. We must die, Messala.
> With meditating that she must die once,
> I have the patience to endure it now.
> MESSALA. Even so great men great losses should endure. (4.3.215-221)

By pretending not to know already that she was dead, Brutus can act manly, stoic, and unemotional, even when he wants to *lose it*. The ability to appear unfeeling in this moment is important to the respect of others. Messala tells him to "like a Roman bear the truth," which is to say respond stoically. Messala gives such advice though he knows his is to tell Brutus his wife is dead. Under hegemonic masculinity, "men are limited in […] the emotions they can express" (Anderson 41). Hegemonic masculinity "is physically tough, emotionally stoic, […] and self-reliant" (Smith "Reconstructing the War Veteran" 184). There is not space there for a man to mourn his wife, and he will lose respect if he feels he cannot perform under the burden of the loss, so he obscures his pain. However, the pain is present. She matters to him, and the love he has for her and the pain he feels at her loss matter to the character. Therefore, she cannot be readily dismissed as unimportant in the play.

One should consider, also, the danger to a culture shown in the enforced stoicism. While in a military situation, one can see benefits to being tough, stoic, and self-reliant, when extended beyond a martial context, it is damaging to hide all emotion. Clinging to such ideals cuts men off from healthy emotions, like loving one's spouse or concern for the well-being of others. Brutus feels he must obscure not only love for his wife but even his pain at the loss of his dearest remaining friend, Cassius, telling his men,

> Friends, I owe more
> tears
> To this dead man than you shall see me pay.—
> I shall find time, Cassius; I shall find time (5.3.113-116).

Again, emotion must be controlled and constrained to be shown at a different point. Later, when he finally cries, his men suggest that it might be a sign of profound emotion: "Now is that noble vessel full of grief,/That it runs over even at his eyes." (5.5.15-6). Indeed, saying it "runs over" rather suggests that the emotion is overwhelming and has overwhelmed him. It is a mistake to allow, let alone endorse, dragging stoicism from the field into one's entire life. As Angela Ricketts describes it, "Years devoted to a black-and-white, non-nuanced infantry life slowly bleed the personality and color from a weathered soldier and steal his ability to relate to others—a common trait of senior officers. Stoic, a transparent mask of exuberant friendliness that barely covers a desperate desire to be anywhere but in a conversation with a civilian or wife, and always with his immaculately ironed shirt tucked in" (84). Being that stoic all the time cuts one off from those around one. It will cut one off from life.

Portia fulfils another important role of military spouses in Shakespeare: she gives the audience a different facet of her martial spouse. As Kate shows the audience another side of Hotspur, Portia enhances the perception of Brutus. Gordon Smith, who reviles Brutus, feels that "The happiest thing about Brutus is his relationship with his wife. Except for the curious second report of her death (IV. iii. 181-195), this relationship is in all respects commendable and illustrates the best side of his character" (377). Smith argues that "This equality between man and wife which allows no differences not peculiar to physiology or the accidents of vocation is psychologically and ethically the most admirable marital relationship" (378). They do have such an equal marriage normally, as evidenced by the fact that, when she shows her mettle and invokes her title as his wife, he reveals his secrets to her as a partner in his life. Moreover, "his love for his wife and quickly repressed sorrow over her death" becomes one of the "precious few moments in the play for Brutus to establish his humanity" (Crew). Brutus is so often described by others as exceptionally virtuous. Showing his and Portia's love for each other humanizes him, which is important for allowing the audience to

empathize with him. Ben Carlson, who played Brutus in MacDonald's 2009 production, felt that "He's very hard to nail down, isn't he? He's very slow to reveal himself to an audience. Hamlet is very quick to reveal himself – but Brutus is very guarded and cautious" (Portman). While Brutus may be slow to reveal himself to the audience, he cannot keep so much from his wife, and his wife contributes to revealing him to the audience. One can see a comparable quality in Kate Percy and Hotspur's relationship. The audience, prior to their scenes, sees a version of Hotspur, especially presented by other characters, that focuses on his valor. One sees his softer side, his humanity, and his struggles when he is with his wife. The military spouses give the audience these other sides of the husbands.

In the end, Brutus discloses his plans and his concerns to his wife. She does not change his actions, but that fact does not mean she is insignificant. Instead, she continues to be valiant in her own way and supportive of her husband's performance. Her abilities in this regard are enhanced by the qualities she shares with modern military wives, a military lineage and a history of sharing in her husband's martial concerns. Through her, we see the importance of lineage in a self-perpetuating culture and can gain a greater sense of the weight of knowledge borne by these women and the responsibility therein entailed. She is not complicit in the unhealthy outcome of obscured emotion. Indeed, she is the cause of emotional display in him, a challenge to toxic masculinity that encourages men to disregard and suppress even normal emotions. She encourages him to be strong and valiant, even when she cannot keep him safe and healthy.

Calpurnia

Calpurnia and her husband have a different relationship. They appear to care for each other, but their relationship is not characterized by the committed in a die-for-each-other style that one sees in Portia and Brutus (or especially in Lady Macbeth and her husband). The distinctions between the couple are clear in certain ways. For example, when Calpurnia

desires that Caesar stay at home, she says, “You shall not stir out of your house today” (2.2.9). She calls it ‘your house’ not ‘our house.’ It positions her as beneath Caesar. Lady Macbeth, in contrast, calls the house she shares with Macbeth her house (1.5.47). Gordon Smith called their relationship style “the lord-and-master one of Caesar and Calpurnia” in contrast to the more emotionally open one of Brutus and Portia (“Brutus, Virtue, and Will” 378). The distinction of these relationships can be seen also in how thespians have handled the scene. In the promptbook for the 2009 production, Scene 4C at Brutus’ home was called “Brutus + Portia.” In contrast, the Calpurnia/Caesar scene, 5A, was called “Caesar At Home,” which, although their relationship was not depicted as uncaring or without affection, puts the emphasis on Caesar over his wife or their bond (MacDonald). Their relationship is meaningful, but it is different.

Calpurnia raises another quality present in many military spouses: she has valid concerns and need to be listened to. David Bevington refers to this as the role of “exhorting their men to be prudent” (32). Calpurnia shares with Kate the urge to save her husband from the dangerous honor-seeking plan he is pursuing. Both get overruled. Calpurnia also, in her prophecy reporting, aligns with another military spouse, Andromache. They share a role “of futile pleading as immediate prelude to the disaster that women best foresee” (Bevington 32). They have a Cassandra-like quality of knowing what is to come but being unable to convince their men to heed them. (This quality will be examined more in the chapter on *Troilus and Cressida*). These women are attempting to pull their husbands away from the hazardous pursuit of honor in order to preserve their lives. They do not succeed.

Calpurnia, unlike Portia, is not interested in supporting her husband in overly risky behavior. While she likely supported his performance as a soldier – he served as consul during their marriage, itself an act bound up with military service – she does not support his

impulse to risk himself for power by going to the Capital. She joins spouses like Kate Percy who note that, despite past successes, there are some risks not worth taking.

Like Kate Percy and Portia, Calpurnia makes her argument that Caesar should heed her based on her own credentials. She notes to Caesar her history of being calm and reasonable:

> Caesar, I never stood on ceremonies,
> Yet now they fright me.[…]
> O Caesar, these things are beyond all use,
> And I do fear them. (2.2.13-4, 25-6)

She is not given to superstition or meaningless starts of fear. She holds forth as evidence her present fear, because it is remarkable. Consider her monosyllabic half-lines, "Yet now they fright me" and "And I do fear them." She stresses her fear so he will understand why he needs to listen to her.[15] One sees here that she speaks to him on this subject from a place of understanding:

> Fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds
> In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,
> Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol.
> The noise of battle hurtled in the air,
> Horses did neigh, and dying men did groan. (2.2.19-23)

She understands symbols, but her reading also involves noteworthy language: "warriors," "ranks," "squadrons." She recognizes "The noise of battle" in the air, and the "right form of war." At the very least, when it comes to military matters, she has been paying attention. Her familiarity with military language recalls other knowledgeable military spouses, like Kate Percy, who know the words of their husbands' profession. Her husband should trust her, because she understands his world, and her opinions are reasonable.

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[15] The 2009 production made strong use of her fear. Those words, "these things are beyond all use,/And I do fear them," she whispers, almost plaintively. This fear returned when the omen showed no heart in the beast. At that news, she looks at him, hoping he will listen. When Davies' Caesar searches the beast himself for the heart, McIntosh's Calpurnia becomes even more distressed, covers her face and turns away. She knows none of this bodes well.

Calpurnia also demonstrates a spousely quality of self-sacrifice. She encourages him to prioritize safety over his pride, telling him, "Your wisdom is consumed in confidence" (2.2.53). When she realizes he will not sacrifice his pride for safety, she tells him she will give up her pride: "Do not go forth today. Call it my fear/That keeps you in the house, and not your own" (2.2.54-55). She is willing to fall on the sword.

Although the critics have painted these wives as powerless, Calpurnia, like Portia, can prevail on her husband, even if only for a short term. When she has asked him to remain at home and presented her evidence, she does initially convince him:

> CALPURNIA. We'll send Mark Antony to the Senate House,
> And he shall say you are not well today:
> Let me, upon my knee, prevail in this.
> CAESAR. Mark Antony shall say I am not well,
> And for thy humor I will stay at home. (2.2.56-60).

Because she has asked him – on her knees in her desperation – he will stay at home. He emphasizes that he remains at home only because she asked him to in stating that he stays "for thy humour." In the MacDonald production, Geraint Wyn Davies' Caesar kissed Yanna McIntosh's Calpurnia then; he stays as a kindness to her and for his affection. Caesar emphasizes that he stays for her, as well, when he tells Decius, "Calpurnia here, my wife, stays me at home" (2.2.80). In that 2009 production, Caesar's "I will not come," although the words are for Decius, was said facing Calpurnia, as though he is giving this action, a concession, to her. She has succeeded, if only temporarily. She, as his wife, asks and receives.

Unfortunately, for Calpurnia and for Caesar, Caesar will happily overrule Calpurnia at the word of others and for pride. He does not prioritize her highly enough, does not follow her wisdom enough. He takes a risk she warned against. As a result, he dies. Some critics mistake this for the entirety of what happens with Calpurnia: "Calpurnia dreams her prophetic dream and begs Caesar not to go to the Capitol, but he dismisses her fears as

'foolish' and strides forth to make her terrible dream come true" (Rackin 76). However, that reading oversimplifies the situation. He did, briefly, heed her advice. He has to be turned away from her life-saving. Decius tempts Caesar, as he knew he could, to danger, by offering him a crown. Decius also makes a jab at Caesar's masculinity:

> Besides, it were a mock
> Apt to be rendered, for someone to say
> "Break up the Senate till another time,
> When Caesar's wife shall meet with better dreams." (2.2.101-104)

The suggestion is that a real man would not heed his wife on such matters. Nicholas Hytner's Bridge Theatre production gave their female Decius a teasing flirting tone for this moment, suggesting Caesar also falls to the flattering of a younger woman, underlining the idea that his issue is masculine ego. A female Decius does not undercut the misogyny of Decius' comments about Calpurnia's dreams. Decius suggests it would shame him before the men of the Senate. Hytner suggests it is a sign of Caesar's weakness that Caesar "wanders around in his night clothes worrying about his wife's dreams." In the MacDonald production, Calpurnia, who had looked upset rather than pleased when Decius offered her husband the crown, evidently took offence at Decius' comment about her dreams, hearing it as the slight to her it is. Caesar buys into Decius' line of reasoning: "How foolish do your fears seem now, Calpurnia!/I am ashamèd I did yield to them" (2.2.110-111). The alliterative 'f's underline the mocking of her concerns. Ashamed is the only polysyllable, emphasizing it, as though listening to her is embarrassing, as opposed to a fantastic idea. He has been talked out of heeding her counsel: "He turns against her advice, and the wheel of tragedy is set in motion" (Cook 65). Had he not been turned from her advice, advice he had been set to follow, he could have survived.

Calpurnia, like Portia and other military spouses, fleshes out the character of Caesar; however, she may do so in a manner less positive than Portia does. The spouses, as has been discussed, show more sides of these epically big men, turning them into humans. Calpurnia's

effect before the audience, though, may be different. Andrew Woodall, who played Caesar in Angus Jackson's 2017 production, noted that "Caesar, apart from that scene with Calpurnia, his wife, doesn't really have an emotional journey" (Corrigan, Waldmann, and Woodall). That comment underlines the importance of her presence in enhancing the character of Caesar. However, in that production, according to Jackson, "We make a big deal of him humiliating his wife on stage. Because we think it's very recognizable" in certain egoistic modern political figures. One sees this in some of Caesar's dismissive personal behavior in their private scenes, but the public proclamations of her inability to conceive could also achieve this (more on infertility below). How Caesar relates to his wife enhances how the audience understands Caesar, well or ill.

Calpurnia, unlike Portia, does not endeavor to place herself inside a military lineage, as a perpetuation and perpetuator of the culture.[16] Instead, she finds herself seemingly unable to perpetuate the military culture beyond her relationship with her husband. Calpurnia and Caesar's relationship demonstrates one of the concerns that haunts another Shakespearean military couple: infertility. It is one of the first things stated about their relationship:

> Forget not, in your speed, Antonius,
> To touch Calpurnia, for our elders say
> The barren, touchèd in this holy chase,
> Shake off their sterile curse. (1.2.8-11)

How Caesar delivers those lines and how Calpurnia reacts will shape how the audience sees their relationship. Textually, Caesar, like Macbeth, appears interested in the idea of lineal heirs. Like Lady Macbeth, Calpurnia seems less focused on this subject than her husband – he brings it up, but Calpurnia never does – however, both apparently intend to have children in the fullness of time. Neither, for example, contradicts her spouse's evinced wishes for heirs. Indeed, Calpurnia may feel added pressure to provide Caesar's heir, since she is his

[16] This may be influenced by the fact that Calpurnia's father, a consul, served as a mediator during the civil wars that bookend this play, rather than a partisan on either side.

third wife, and he divorced one simply because another man had *attempted* to seduce her (Plutarch 768). Perhaps she worries that, as Josephine was by Napoleon, she might be set aside if she cannot give him what he wants.[17] From a historical perspective, Caesar already had a daughter from his first marriage (Plutarch 765), he was reputed to have had a child with Cleopatra (Plutarch 787), and he suspected that Brutus might be his son – explaining why he forgave him after the civil war (Plutarch 1057). Shakespeare, however, has omitted those children. In Shakespeare's version, we only have Caesar's word for it that Calpurnia is the source of the infertility. One could read these public pronouncements as an effort by the partially deaf, aging Caesar to assign his childlessness not to a lack of virility but to some failure to conceive in his wife. Men can value their fertility as a sign of virility. Kristen Henderson refers to her husband's sperm test results as "proof of his manliness" (*Driving* 105). Her husband appears to have been "slightly cheered" by the results as they proved "it's not [his] fault" (*Driving* 105). Veterans like Caesar may have reason to worry about virility. Rates of infertility can be increased by military service both for men and women (Jackson, Bowen). In the run-up to the Iraq War, some soldiers, worried about the risk that injury could pose to fertility, stored sperm before deploying (Henderson *While* 51-2).[18] Caesar may indeed worry it is him who cannot conceive. Furthermore, as discussed with Portia, the military spouses, in siring/bearing and raising the next generations of servicemembers, are contributing to the continuation of their country's military. The timing of this discussion may not be accidental. Lily Burana notes that there is usually a post-deployment baby boom, perhaps as a result of an awareness that life is precious so you should make more of it, or perhaps as the biological byproduct of reunion "festivities" (202). They have just returned from a civil war. Caesar may seek to capitalize on this post-war energy. (The 2017 RSC

[17] Shakespeare's audience could also recall that Henry VIII had both divorced and killed wives who did not provide sons on schedule.

[18] Such injuries would not be a byproduct of only modern wars. However, they may have been inspired by stories of Gulf War Syndrome, which may or may not have caused sterility (Henderson *While* 51-2).

production, according to Angus Jackson, played their Portia as pregnant.) Jacey Eckhart notes that, "We don't discuss infertility in the military very much. […] We don't have the words. Or we do have words, but they're always the wrong ones" (198). She reasons, "We tend to be a remarkably young, and therefore remarkably fertile (sometimes overly fertile), group," so babies usually abound (Eckhart 198). How does one discuss, then, being unable to have them? Sallie Bailey, an Army major's wife, said that "struggling with infertility as a military spouse is a special kind of hell" (Shane). As children proliferate, Bailey notes, "many of the Army wives I've met seem to have no idea how to relate to me because I'm not a mom," and so childless women end up shut out (Shane). The pressure to "shake off their sterile curse" persists for wives like Calpurnia. In that light, bringing it up in public as Caesar does seems even more unkind. The role of raising a child and continuing the lineage is a position from which Calpurnia recognizes herself to have been excluded, despite what she might wish.

The 2009 MacDonald production did not obscure that Calpurnia is, in her attempts to save her husband's life, in conflict with the behaviors of the men and, indeed, with groups of her community's men. When Caesar declared "Give me my robe, for I will go," she did not meekly submit to his wishes but rather crossed to him to beg again for him to stay. The production also cut Brutus' last lines from the scene and instead ended with Brutus and Calpurnia on opposite sides of the stage. He looks at her long, then exits stage right. She moves to center, stares after her husband, then exits up center. The scene ended not on Caesar or on Brutus but with an awareness of the way that the women have struggled with the men and what the men's actions will do to the women. As Jacey Eckhart notes, while soldiers may be asked to die for their country, spouses "are asked to *live* for their country, to live *with* their loss" (209). What these men do, the women have to live with. Calpurnia

should not be erased from the narrative, and indeed that production made space to put her at its center, if only for a moment.

Calpurnia tries to save her husband. She wishes to save him from assassins. She wishes to save him from the poor judgment of his pride. However, he shunts her aside, and so she cannot save him.

Portia and Calpurnia articulate the struggles of women who perpetuate their military culture and are constantly aware of the place they hold in it. Portia, in particular, leans on her military pedigree; Calpurnia, in contrast, struggles with infertility. They also show yet again the struggles of Shakespeare's military spouses to balance their commitment to the values of their culture with their inclination to protect their spouses from harm. In addition to commitment, they show how knowledgeable women can be about the martial world, from using its language to knowing of its doings, even though they are not enlisted. They also represent the burden this knowledge can be for military spouses. Tragically for these women, neither saves her husband from the worser parts of himself or their shared culture. Instead, Portia, committed as she is to that culture, dies with him in it.

Chapter 4: **"In Time of Action": Andromache and** Patroclus

Troilus and Cressida is well-known as a play about war and even a play about relationships in war-time. Despite that awareness, both Patroclus and Andromache remain underappreciated as examples of partners whose relationship is heavily shaped by war, as people who are in committed relationships with soldiers.[1] As couples, they reflect certain components of modern military concerns. Andromache demonstrates some of the emotional struggles of modern military spouses, as she balances an understanding of her husband's martial identity and commitment to the war-effort with her own growing concerns for his physical safety and the potential costs of his continued service. We also see in Andromache some of the lived experience of anxiety, and prophetic dreams, which we have also seen in Calpurnia. Stress and its symptoms in spouses have demonstrable negative impacts in force readiness and retention. The relationship of Patroclus (and his relationship with Achilles) and the military context changes shape in light of the developing position of queer people in American culture and the US military. The struggle to disentangle homophobia from masculinity and performance and sexuality from service is continually fought by queer people, and centering Patroclus can allow one to better understand and centralize that struggle. As participation in the military matters in demonstrating a group's position in the nation-state, acknowledging queer servicemembers and their families in this respect becomes important. Although they are on opposite sides of the war, Andromache and Patroclus contribute to a commentary on the performed masculinity of their communities.

[1] In Richard Monette's 2003 production – which he had decided to mount before the War on Terror started but acknowledged can be read interestingly in relation to the war – before the interval, three couples were lit up: Troilus and Cressida, Helen and Paris, and Achilles and Patroclus. That choice positions Patroclus as a romantic partner on the order of Cressida or Paris. That may not be the most positive company, considering the dubious nature of those other relationships, but it is romantic company. A better question may be why Hector and Andromache were not included in the set, but perhaps they were deemed less significant to the plot.

Andromache, for her part, is married to a soldier who prizes honor and martial valor, who epitomizes warrior masculinity in his people. She, though, now questions the price that might be paid for these pursuits, urging him to follow a path of more moderation. However, she is unsuccessful, and her husband dies. Patroclus, on the other hand, is generally blamed by his society for the failure of warrior performance in his significant other. As a result, he urges his partner to pursue a violent and aggressive form of manhood. In the end, Patroclus succeeds in driving his partner to martial performance by dying in his own attempt at it. He becomes the cause of warrior spirit in another man, but it is at the cost of absorbing that danger himself.

Patroclus and Andromache present different concerns about the military culture. Andromache raises questions about hyper-performance and balancing risk as she watches her husband prepare to risk himself not for national security but for masculine pride. Patroclus, as a queer man, presents a subordinated masculinity but also the danger of a subordinated masculinity struggling to meet a hazardous hegemonic standard hostile to it.[2] Both spouses' situations will be here examined against Department of Defense policies and statements in spousal memoirs. Recognizing the contributions of these spouses to the play aligns with recognizing the contributions of partners like them who have contributed to military service, to the military culture, and to the country.

Andromache

Andromache is an easy fit in a discussion about military spouses. She and Hector are married, and Hector and other characters afford her the pride of place in his affections. Andromache, among those who have committed themselves to their military life with their

[2] The subordinated masculinities are those that have lost out to the hegemonic masculinity and must then be repressed as part of its maintenance. Just as patriarchal modes that oppress women, they also oppress groups of men that subscribe to subordinated masculinities instead of the hegemonic one (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 587).

military spouses, is well-placed, as military spouses are, to comment on the military culture and to offer suggestions for how problems can best be addressed. Andromache voices opposition to Hector's desire to perform the hegemonic version of masculinity. Although she does not condemn martial masculinity, she questions Hector's unnecessary and dangerous risk-taking. Her concerns deepen as she experiences prophetic dreams. Though such behavior might be easy to dismiss, it mirrors both anxieties and lived experiences of some military spouses. Therefore, these components of Andromache's story are best understood in a military context.

Military spouses, knowledgeable as they are, have often been the ones to point out problems in military practices and protocols, having an underappreciated positive effect on the armed forces. For example, the utter shambles the extant family notification process was became apparent in 1965 after fighting in Ia Drang when the US military enlisted taxi drivers to deliver to wives telegrams beginning "The Secretary of the Army regrets to inform you." Within two weeks, Julia Moore, a Lieutenant Colonel's wife, forced the military to create a better system (Henderson *While* 67-8). As discussed with Kate Percy, military spouses have been among those pressing most for the military to improve its mental health systems and its support for servicemembers with PTSD. Military spouses have more information and experience, and they have been forces for improvement within the military culture. That history should be honored and their contributions should be acknowledged, but we should also continue to heed them.

Military spouses like Andromache, and Kate Percy and Calpurnia before her, rarely challenge the entire military as a concept. Instead, they express concern about an initiative, risk, or operation. Modern spouses are similar. Frank Schaeffer, a Marine's father, reports that a reporter asked him to put her in touch with a military family who was negative about the military "for balance," but the mother "having trouble with the medical benefits due her

wounded son—[who] had written to Frank blasting the Department of Veterans Affairs" that Schaeffer put the reporter in contact with had replied that "in spite of her problems with the paperwork, she's proud of her son's service and won't make the sort of statement [the reporter's] looking for" – and Frank had had to struggle to find even that displeasure among the military (52). A family member may object to the VA's paperwork without rejecting the entire military. In the same way, Kate Percy raises concerns about PTSD in veterans without objecting to the existence of a military. Spouses may attend peace vigils or publicly oppose certain military operations (Henderson *While* 123-4), but these do not appear affiliated with a stated desire to dismantle the military. Instead, the goal appears to be to address specific problems. Andromache does not raise doubts about her husband's entire military career or his position on national defense. Indeed, she needs her husband and men like him to defend Troy from invading Greeks. However, she raises an objection to a particular plan, urging him to delay a day in order to increase his safety.

Hector believes, based on her commitment to their marriage and his commitment to the military, that his wife will continue to understand his course of action and endorse it. Hector expects his wife to accept his honor-based reason for fighting:

> Mine honor keeps the weather of my fate.
> Life every man holds dear, but the dear man
> Holds honor far more precious-dear than life. (5.3.29-31).

The willingness to die to win the respect of other men, instead of living to serve his country and his family, demonstrates the dangers of following that hegemonic masculinity. However, he expects that argument to make sense to her, suggesting this scene might be her first overt challenge to his performance of this masculinity. Andromache calls to mind wives who disagree with their husbands' willingness to take risks with their safety that may be unnecessary, some of which are grounded in a macho culture that accepts risk. When Kimberley Huff told her husband, a reservist stationed in Iraq, that she did not want him to

re-enlist, “He said the other guys were calling him a pussy for not standing up to her”; she retorted that maybe those men’s wives did not care if their husbands came home, but she did (Henderson *While* 107). His decision was influenced by his preference for military service, his interest in the military benefits, and, yes, the cultural belief that giving up his career because his wife was worried would be emasculating. It is a similar belief that makes Caesar disregard Calpurnia, because

> it were a mock
> Apt to be rendered, for someone to say
> “Break up the Senate till another time,
> When Caesar’s wife shall meet with better dreams.” (2.2.101-104).

The women want to save their husbands from the dangers of their behavior, but to do so women like Andromache must push back first against a culture that encourages taking risks and disregarding women.

Andromache, for her part, expects to be able to appeal to him with reason and logic, suggesting she has reasoned with him in the past and he has listened. That her opinion has been accorded weight by him suggests that he values her and her input. Andromache points out the risk of this behavior and even suggests that his clinging to the performance in spite of reason is out of his usual behavior:

> ANDROMACHE. When was my lord so much ungently tempered
> To stop his ears against admonishment?
> Unarm, unarm, and do not fight today.
> HECTOR. You train me to offend you. Get you in.
> By all the everlasting gods, I’ll go!
> ANDROMACHE. My dreams will sure prove ominous to the day.
> HECTOR. No more, I say. (5.3.1-7)

This time her husband proves unheeding of her advice. She asks when he has previously been so disregarding, suggesting he normally listens to her and takes her opinions into consideration and is not normally so foolhardy. Hector’s repetition of his avowal to leave after he has told her “get you in,” suggests not only that she has not left but that she has pursued some non-verbal effort to stay him. She does not mean to give up without a fight.

His swearing by the gods adds weight to his intention above his previous oath, indicating increased intensity. Hector's abrupt, monosyllabic clauses also suggest heightened emotions. Perhaps he suspects the truth of her words and the validity of her argument. However, he will rather risk his life than lose face and he will die to keep a promise the gods have heard him make.

Despite his abruptness with her in this dispute, Hector argues with his wife, in the end, based on their shared love. That becomes the argument that she cannot refute:

> PRIAM. Ay, but thou shalt not go.
> HECTOR. I must not break my faith.
> You know me dutiful; therefore, dear sir,
> Let me not shame respect, but give me leave
> To take that course by your consent and voice,
> Which you do here forbid me, royal Priam.
> CASSANDRA. O Priam, yield not to him!
> ANDROMACHE. Do not, dear father.
> HECTOR. Andromache, I am offended with you.
> Upon the love you bear me, get you in. (5.3.80-88)

When he challenges her by her love for him to stop undermining the code that has underpinned his life, she does, because she loves him. In this, Hector, like Kate and Portia, makes challenges to a spouse based on love. Bevington in his Arden edition interprets Hector's speech as indicative of a "code of male possessiveness," which can belong to hegemonic masculinity; but Hector does not argue with his wife like she is a possession. The audience can see him disregard her views this time, but she also has suggested that this is not usually the case. Furthermore, Bevington finds Hector's comments to his wife "brief to the point of being curt," but he fails to examine the emotional roots of short, sharp phrasing and the intensity conveyed by the monosyllables (31). In a sense, he does "order her away from him" as Bevington puts it; however, her acquiescence does not mean that their relationship is based on "the unquestioning obedience that a wife owes to her husband" (32). If it had been built on that, she would have turned away the first time he told her "get you in," but instead she stayed and fought with him in the hopes that she could save him. She begged him on her

knees to change his mind, like Calpurnia begged Caesar (5.3.11). She did not turn away until she realized she had lost. Their relationship has hit the rock of his devotion to the toxic elements of the hegemonic masculinity. In this scene, Hector's fidelity to this code of masculinity puts him at odds not only with his wife but also his father and brother and sister, and, in the end, it will kill him, as Cassandra predicts. However, he will not be forsworn.[3] The last time the audience sees Andromache, her husband tells her that if she loves him she will let him follow the code, be a man the only way he knows how, and she lets him.

Hector and Andromache's complex relationship with each other and hegemonic masculinity can be seen in the challenge that Hector sends to the Trojan camp. That challenge is predicated on relationships with women and honor/masculinity, especially the element of competition. The hegemonic masculinity is "aggressive, competitive, physical, and perhaps most importantly, heterosexual" (Michael 913). Toxic masculinity favors the "extreme competition," "domination of others," and "a readiness to resort to violence," and is "thus, socially destructive" (Kupers 717). Importantly, "[a]ny kind of powerlessness, or refusal to compete, among men readily becomes involved with the imagery of homosexuality" (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 587). In the challenge, Hector says complimentary things about his wife:

> Hector, in view of Trojans and of Greeks,
> Shall make it good, or do his best to do it,
> He hath a lady wiser, fairer, truer
> Than ever Greek did couple in his arms (1.3.281-284)

He publicly esteems his wife for her wisdom and her beauty, as well as, because this is *Troilus and Cressida*, her sexual fidelity.[4] However, the audience should remember that, because these compliments are phrased in a challenge, there is a strong element of masculine

[3] In the 2003 Monette production, Hector kisses her long and slow, kisses their babe in her arms, then bids her to go, which suggests he knows what he is risking in this fight and that he does not disdain her.
[4] Considering the other two prominent female partners in *Troilus and Cressida* are Helen and Cressida, noted for their sexual infidelity, the faithfulness of Andromache gains prominence.

performance behind the words. He is boasting of her in a form of one-upmanship against other males, wherein the ability to have sexual access to a more desirable female is a form of winning. The contest will be affirmed through violence in which a man's life will be lost. Moreover, as will be discussed later, he may have chosen his wife not to boast of her but to insult Patroclus and Achilles. Additionally, one should note, the audience of the play never learns what Andromache thinks of this challenge. Perhaps she does not mind that he risks his life in an effort to assert his masculinity; however, she might also have noted it as a foolish risk undertaken for a foolish reason. Hector's challenge and public boast evidence esteem for his wife, but they also evidence an adherence to toxic components of hegemonic masculinity.

Andromache brings forward the issue of emotional and mental health in a particular way, through a power shared among other Shakespearean army wives: predicting the future, specifically the death of her spouse. Andromache, like Calpurnia of *Julius Caesar*, has had ill dreams. "My dreams will, sure, prove ominous to the day" (5.3.6), she tells her husband, presaging the kind of "disaster that women best foresee" (Bevington 32).[5] She, like Calpurnia, has had dreams of violence and blood that have caused her to lose a wonted calm:

> I have dreamt
> Of bloody turbulence, and this whole night
> Hath nothing been but shapes and forms of slaughter. (5.3.11-13)

Her words remind the audience of Calpurnia's dream of "Fierce fiery warriors" that "fought upon the clouds," (2.2.19) and "drizzled blood upon the Capitol" (2.2.21). Unfortunately, like Calpurnia, her dreams and pleadings go unheeded, and she cannot save her husband. Modern readings often treat this as an irrationality on the part of the women. Nicholas Hytner, who directed a modern-dress production in 2018, suggests that it is a sign of Caesar's weakness that Caesar "wanders around in his night clothes worrying about his wife's

[5] Not all premonitions are dreams. One woman stated that when her son was deploying, she *knew* he would die. It was not positive for her: "that day I found out, I became furious at God. How dare he take my child? And how dare he give me the 'gift' of knowing about it before it ever happened?" (Brye and Satter 230)

dreams." While Cook treats it as women's intuition (65), Rackin treats it as a component of her irrelevance (76). However, in neither play is the woman wrong; therefore, perhaps one ought not mock her. Furthermore, humans have not 'outgrown' the idea of prophetic dreaming. Angela Ricketts reports that before he redeployed, she woke up to find her husband packing gear in their garage. Apparently, he had had a detailed dream about one of the Cav commanders dying, and he had realized that if that man died, he would have to take the command (80). Months later, the man died in a Chinook crash, and her husband was ordered to call her and tell her he would not be home that month, as he had to take command (109-110). "Jack," she told him, "That dream. It was a premonition" (113). Jen McDonald reports that while her husband was in Kandahar, she dreamed that he was home, and when she woke she prayed for him. Later that day, she learned that Kandahar Air Field was under attack. At the time, she wondered if the dream had been God preparing her for the worst. Later, when her husband, safe, confirmed that the attack had occurred at the same time as her dream, she took the dream as God moving her to pray for her husband when he most needed it (115-6). It can be easy to ignore dreams like Calpurnia and Andromache's, to write belief off as a peculiarity of the past that modern society has outgrown, but these stories of prophetic dreams are part of these military families' lived experiences, not something trivial to be ignored.

Even in Shakespeare's age, though some considered dreams divine knowledge, dreams were also often seen as the mind's way of processing stress from daily life: "A dreame is nothing els but a bubling scum or froath of the fancie, which the day hath left vndigested; or an after feast made of the fragments of idle imaginations. […] Dreaming is no other than groaning, while sleepe our surgeon hath vs in cure" (Nashe C4r-v). In the 21st century, spouses tend to view ominous dreams as signs of anxiety and stress in the spouse,

rather than as omens. Kristin Henderson felt tremendous worry while her husband was overseas:

> When the war started, now and then a vague, monstrous cloud of worry would descend on me and I'd have trouble breathing—anticipatory grief, though I had no name for it at the time. The only way to get a deep breath was to imagine The Worst That Could Happen, walk myself through every detail, make it real, and ordinary, and manageable. (*While* 301-2).

Like Andromache, she felt she could feel her husband's death, grieving before she ever got such news. For her, the only way to see her way through it was to completely imagine his death and its ramifications. Cassandra and Andromache already seem there, but without the small comfort Henderson found in that realization. Lily Burana's anxiety also caused intrusive thoughts about her husband experiencing tremendous injury or death (85), which she interpreted as a dark version of anticipatory grief (86).[6] She wondered if this happens to the other wives (86). It does. Mollie Gross experienced stress and anxiety that resulted in persistent teeth grinding. Her Navy dentist told her "I can fit you with a $600 mouth guard[…] Or like all the military wives I have seen this deployment, I can give you a prescription for Xanax to help you calm down" (Gross 183). Her dentist did not view her as mentally ill, she felt. Instead, because he had been with the Navy for more than 20 years, he recognized the real root of her problems, explained to her about anxiety and panic attacks, and gave her medication for the physical side effects of her current emotional and mental situation (Gross 183). These anxiety issues must be rather common, as when Angela Ricketts had a heart attack, she found herself remembering the advice the Army had given spouses about managing stress and about panic attacks (3). That information is important, even if spouses find themselves having trouble acting on it. Of course, the advice that Ricketts had received was not necessarily given years before, and it may not be accessible to all military spouses. Henderson notes that while certain mental health screenings and briefings are

[6] She also recounts what she calls "exaggerated sympathy" feeling as though she were physically with him in the desert (86).

mandatory for servicemembers, "there are no mandatory mental health surveys for the families" (*While* 202). Indeed, because many of the spouses are civilians, they are not within the military's purview to command, and this can create its own problems:

> Unlike soldiers, they can't be ordered to fill out surveys or attend predeployment briefings or any of those Military 101 programs that, among other things, educate spouses about the services available to them. As a result many, like Beth [Pratt who suffered from depression and suicidal ideation], literally don't know what they're missing. (Henderson *While* 202).

As much effort as the military makes to prevent suffering, trauma, or worst-case scenarios, if spouses are unaware of the resources available to them or refuse to access those resources, the military can do little to help. Andromache reflects some of the abilities seen in Shakespeare's other military spouses and presents struggles of modern military spouses, who often bear unrecognized burdens of stress:

> During deployments, families must also contend with a fear of what may happen to their loved ones while deployed for often lengthy and extended periods. The stress experienced by military spouses during their deployments manifests as physical symptoms, such as headaches and unwanted loss/added weight. Military spouses who experience extended deployments report significantly higher levels of loneliness, anxiety, and depression than those who do not experience such separations. Research has also found higher clinical diagnoses of depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, and adjustment disorders for military wives of deployed members compared to wives of non-deployed members. (Van Winkle and Lipari 396-7).

This stress comes in part from a burden of knowledge. They know the risk their servicemembers face, and this affects their lives. The military cannot risk continuing to ignore the knowledge and stresses of military spouses: "Although military wives do not serve directly, their health and well-being can have direct consequences for the military. Research has shown that military spouses who experience high levels of stress have a negative impact on military readiness and retention" (Van Winkle and Lipari 396-7). If the military enlists families, they must ensure the family unit is healthy to maintain readiness and to ensure the trained servicemembers continue to reenlist. The families cannot be ignored.

However, as much as Andromache would prevent her husband from fighting on this day, the audience does not hear her oppose the war entirely. Arguably, Andromache cannot. Unlike Patroclus of the Greek camp, who has little stomach for the war but in the end pushes his partner to fight in it, Andromache never has the chance to choose pacifism. The Trojans' enemies are almost literally at their gates. If the city falls, Troy will face rape, enslavement, and death. The Greeks still have the option of leaving, so Patroclus could have advocated he and his partner leave with their Myrmidons. Andromache does not have that option. Instead, she can try to delay Hector on days when the combat is dangerous and prevent him from making stupid decisions based on pride. Andromache cannot prevent her husband's fidelity to a brand of masculinity that asserts itself through winning contests and violent combat, and in the end she does lose her husband. While modern American military spouses do not face enemies at the gate as Andromache does, military spouses generally do not have the luxury of pretending the country could safely dismantle its entire military infrastructure and must acknowledge that global security in the post-9/11 age calls for a position more nuanced than just saying "end all wars." They also, like Andromache, bear heavy emotional costs for the defense of their country, whether they interpret their responses as simple anxiety or as prophecy, and they contribute to the betterment of the military culture and infrastructure in which they live. They should be heeded rather than ignored.

Patroclus

Patroclus, who is in a committed relationship with Achilles, is the other prominent significant other in *Troilus and Cressida*. Both Achilles and Patroclus are soldiers. Therefore, both could also be considered the partner of a soldier. Such relationships occur in the US military, and spouses can be based together. Achilles and Patroclus are occasionally discussed together militarily. In 1.3, Ulysses complains that both Achilles and Patroclus dismiss the policy and scheming of the war effort as "mappery" and "closet-war," valuing martial acts

over strategy. They each perform primarily one function, Achilles the soldier and Patroclus the spouse, though they have both functions. Thus, that primary function is the light in which they will be here examined. Patroclus, as a queer man in a same-sex relationship with Achilles, challenges the prevailing conception of what it means to be a man and to be a soldier. His and his lover's ability to serve are questioned on the ground of their same-sex relationship, though their sexuality is not itself a detriment to service and should not be invoked as such. Patroclus' relationship to the military and his lover take on new shapes in the evolving position of queer men and queer soldiers in the 21st century. Unlike Andromache, who questions the masculine standards of their culture, Patroclus, without performing the hegemonic masculinity, becomes one of the strongest proponents of toxic masculinity, even to his own detriment. He dies, not because Shakespeare's narrative punishes homosexuality, but because his culture's homophobia creates problems for queer men through its own and the men's enforcement of hegemonic standards. An audience sees in Patroclus that the hegemonic masculinity can be endorsed even by members of a subjugated social group and a member of a subordinated masculinity; and Patroclus becomes one of Shakespeare's military spouses who dies from that pursuit.

This couple's relationship is romantic and sexual, and it is recognized by other characters. One indicator of their romantic affection is that the men use the same term of endearment for each other. In 3.3, Patroclus calls Achilles "sweet." In both 3.3 and 5.1, Achilles calls his beloved "sweet Patroclus." In 2.3, when the Trojan leaders come to speak to Achilles, he leaves Patroclus to send them away (2.3.74). Not only does he empower Patroclus to make such statements for him, he expects others to accept answers from him. The leaders reject the news, but not the teller: "In second voice we'll not be satisfied; /We come to speak with him" (2.3.146-149). They call Patroclus Achilles' second voice, a

recognized intimate, even as they decline to speak with him. They acknowledge this intimacy, as well, after Patroclus' death:

> AGAMEMNON. Patroclus ta'en or slain […]
> NESTOR. Go, bear Patroclus' body to Achilles (5.5.14,18)

Note that their first impulse is to inform Achilles what has happened. In the military, a spouse is generally considered the primary next-of-kin and receives the formal notification. That designation presumes legal marriage, as the military needs a "legally defensible" place to draw the line – for obvious reasons, information cannot be dispensed haphazardly or indiscriminately (Henderson *While* 50). However, a servicemember can on their official paperwork designate a primary next-of-kin, including a boyfriend, girlfriend, or fiancé(e) as the person to receive the death or injury notification (Henderson *While* 50). These men position Achilles as Patroclus' primary.[7] The importance of notifications will be discussed later. The fact that they are sexual partners is clearer. The Trojan leaders discuss that they are tentmates. However, their sexual union is more clearly invoked by Theristes:

> THERSITES. Prithee, be silent, boy. I profit not by thy talk. Thou art said to be Achilles' male varlet.
> PATROCLUS. "Male varlet," you rogue! What's that?
> THERSITES. Why, his masculine whore (5.1.15-18)

Thersites calls him 'boy,' suggesting that Patroclus was the unbearded and younger partner in the relationship. In *The Symposium*, Plato deems that view a myth and a mistake of history (40). History could not accept the warrior Achilles in the role of the penetrated sexual partner. This preference for the penetrative as opposed to penetrated sexual partner persists in modern American hegemonic masculinity (see Pascoe, Fair). Thersites also calls Patroclus Achilles' "masculine whore." The term "whore" connotes wanton sexuality and promiscuousness, even though Patroclus' only apparent sexual partner in Shakespeare's

[7] The 2003 Monette production created a subliminal spousal parallel between deaths. Just as Patroclus' body was brought to Achilles after his death, when Hector died, Andromache and Cassandra were shown upstage weeping.

version is Achilles. Despite Thersites' disparagement, the language invokes the sexual relationship. Bevington reads the couple as possessing a "deep and eroticisized friendship" to fulfill their "need for human closeness in an anarchic world," motivated in part by the "close and dependent relationship with one another" created by war (28). Bevington juxtaposes their "friendship" with Ulysses' sexual repression, which creates an implication that same-sex relationships are motivated or defined largely by sexual behavior without homoromantic inclination (28). However, a modern audience can appreciate that the romantic and sexual nature of their relationship demonstrates what would now be considered a homosexual union.

Shakespeare's adaptation arguably increased the same-sex incidence. Shakespeare's text does not include Patroclus's past female partners that the *Iliad* implies. In the *Iliad*, the women Patroclus and Achilles had taken from Troy heard Achilles mourning Patroclus and mourned him as well, wailing, falling to their knees, and beating their breasts (Homer 468). That reaction suggests an emotional attachment to Patroclus, and, given the fact that the women were given to Patroclus and Achilles as prizes in the war, one can assume that these women may have been sexual partners. Homer specifically names the woman Iphis as Patroclus' bed partner, where Achilles has a different bedmate (274). However, Shakespeare's version of the story includes no such reaction to the news of Patroclus' death. The only reaction the audience see there is Achilles'. The women are erased entirely. Therefore, Shakespeare's Patroclus occupies a homosexual role, while Shakespeare's Achilles occupies a bisexual one. The monosexism and heterosexism of the hegemonic masculinity does not have a space for either of them. Shakespeare strips out many people to consolidate their romantic and sexual lives around, primarily, each other.

What does it mean for a queer man to serve? Participation in the military is, in American history, deeply tied to the idea of citizenship. To declare a segment of the population unfit to defend the nation-state is, in effect, to designate them unfit to be members

of the nation-state. This reality has been recognized by those who fought for their right to serve, including women and people of color (Roth-Douquet and Schaeffer 112). Queer Americans followed in that history, working to end the regulations like Don't Ask Don't Tell that barred their open service.[8] Who serves – or rather, who is admitted to have served – controls in American culture who gets considered a full citizen. One of the problems of a segregated military is that it creates the illusion that only those like oneself have ever contributed to the nation-state. One must permit citizens to serve. We must also acknowledge in our depiction and discussion of history that those individuals are present and served. The permission, acknowledgment, and depiction of queer Americans is crucial to acknowledging the contribution of queer citizens and supporting their continued ability to serve their country.

In contemporary American culture, same-sex relationships among men challenge men's relationship to and performance of masculinity, at least in how others interpret a man's performance. The fact that they are in a same-sex relationship specifically calls attention to the performance. Carrigan, Connell, and Lee note that hegemonic masculinity subordinates masculinities perceived as young, effeminate, and homosexual (587). The fact that this is a same-sex relationship affects the relationship of these men to hegemonic masculinity,

[8] The most recent iteration of this struggle for recognized service and citizenship is being articulated by trans Americans. July 26, 2017, Donald Trump attempted to *via tweet* bar all trans Americans from service and to fire all trans servicemembers. He encountered push back from the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and servicemembers. Staff Sgt. Logan Ireland said in an interview with *Air Force Times*, "I would like to see them try to kick me out of my military. You are not going to deny me my right to serve my country when I am fully qualified and able and willing to give my life" (Losey). Service is articulated as a right. A corporal in the military police summed the issue up nicely: "I have never described myself as trans; I'm a mother----ing Marine. That's all that matters. Don't tarnish my title with your bigotry and fear of the unknown" (Losey). The statement recalls others, like "the only color in the Army is green," and Commandant Gen Thomas Holcomb's comment in March 1944 when he was asked if there would be a cute nickname for female Marines, "They are Marines. They don't have a nickname and they don't need one. They get their basic training in a Marine atmosphere at a Marine post. They inherit the traditions of Marines. They are Marines." Race, sexuality, gender, those parts are not supposed to matter. What matters is the capacity and willingness to serve. Trump, a civilian non-veteran, chose to make an issue of gender where these servicemembers did not. Veteran Senator Tammy Duckworth specifically invoked Trump's efforts to avoid the Vietnam draft when she publicly criticized his stance and further articulated her belief that the race, gender, or sexuality of her comrades-in-arms had not mattered to her when she served ("ATTN:VIDEO").

particularly in warrior culture: “It is particular groups of men, not men in general, who are oppressed within patriarchal sexual relations, and whose situations are related in different ways to the overall logic of the subordination of women to men” (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 587). Queer masculinity is a subordinated masculinity that, at present, loses out in comparison to the aggressively heterosexual hegemonic masculinity. The subordination of homosexual masculinity also appears in US military history. Queer Americans were debarred from service not only as potential security risks – they might be susceptible to blackmail – but as a supposed threat to unit cohesion. It was believed, among other things, that heterosexual soldiers could not bond with queer soldiers, because the heterosexual soldiers would fear that the queer soldier might hit on them or in some way challenge their heterosexual masculinity. Perhaps a comparable fear exists in the Greek leaders’ belief that Achilles and Patroclus’ attitudes has “infected” other soldiers in their unit (1.3.191). Their relationship and their behavior are depicted as helping break their unit apart. The repeal of DADT did not magically erase these attitudes from the military community or end the fraught debate on these issues. In the wake of the repeal and the appointment of Brig. Gen. Tammy S. Smith as the first openly lesbian general, a former Navy officer working at the Pentagon wrote to a military advice columnist, saying, “I cannot adjust to the repeal of ‘don’t ask, don’t tell.’ […] Surely, our forefathers are turning over in their graves about this. I did 10 years in the Navy, and we didn’t have any gay people on my ship. Homosexuality would have corrupted our mission and ruined the cohesion on our ship” (Ms. Vicki). His comments demonstrate a persistent belief that a unit would be damaged by a known homosexual being present. On the other hand, Ms. Vicki rejected that position: “Am I the only person who knew that gay people were already serving in the armed forces? They have already been serving beside others in combat and other places very valiantly and with honor.” Her response demonstrates the position that valor and service are considerably more important

than sexual orientation to the quality of the soldier. These views are subject to contest and change. Former Under Secretary of the Army Patrick Murphy, who pushed for a repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell while he served in Congress, states that he was once accosted in the gym by a Republican Congressman who told him, "You're going to have blood on your hands if this repeal law goes into effect. There's going to be people that are killed out there in the formations because of what you're doing" (Hirway and Malina). The presumption was that allowing queer people to serve would decrease force readiness. Murphy replied that, "This is a generational thing. The men and women I served with in Baghdad could [*sic*] care less if you're gay or straight. They only care if you can carry and fire your M4 assault rifle and can you kick down a door. So maybe your generation would have a problem with this, but my generation sure as hell doesn't" (Hirway and Malina). Murphy was noting that as soldierhood relied less on heterosexism and was less associated with an idea of masculinity that relied on homophobia, there needed be no concern about sexual orientation, only the quality of the soldier. The presence of an acknowledged same-sex relationship is, both inside and outside the play, challenging to the hegemonic masculinity.

The presence of a male military spouse, even in the context of the US military, presents a challenge to hegemonic masculine ideals. Angela Ricketts, Army brat and military spouse, claims the term 'spouse' was substituted for 'wife' in the 1990s in an effort at political correctness to address the fact that many servicewomen married men (11). Her reaction to the term inherently ignores the existence of servicemen who married men or servicewomen who married women, though those could not have officially existed when the language changed.[9] Crooks, Henderson, Hightower, and Scherer noted that, "When it comes

[9] This latent heterosexism appears in other military spouse texts. Terri Barnes, attempting to express how military spouses support each other regardless of sexual orientation, refuses to consider that a queer individual in an exclusively heterosexual space – indeed, a space that until quite recently had aggressively opposed allowing queer people – might feel uncomfortable (987). That Barnes positions the queer woman as a plot twist in her narrative of military spouses in itself suggests the heterosexism of the culture.

to the term 'military spouse,' there's an immediate assumption that you're talking about women. You'd be hard-pressed to find support services catering to military husbands compared with those that support military wives," because males make up a low percentage of military spouses (113). They estimated "only 6 to 8 percent of military spouses are male," which meant that male military spouses felt isolated and had difficulty bonding with their female counterparts (113).[10] These "honorary sisters in the sisterhood of war" may, for example, find themselves almost the only male spouse in their Family Readiness Group (Henderson *While* 139-140). Even "honorary sister" may be stretching it for some. Jacey Eckhart felt that the men's experience married to servicewomen was quite different; men were welcome to the "club," but they would have their own secrets and need their own advice books (8). This isolation can be even more pronounced when that maleness intersects with queerness. Scott Konzem, a captain and C-17 pilot in the U.S. Air Force, noted

> The second challenge is on the home front for my partner. The Air Force has a great spouse network (or "spouse mafia," as we call them) that provides support and encouragement during the hard times. It's important for a person to feel like they're not alone, and the spouse mafia does a great job at providing that support. Unfortunately, because our relationship has been forbidden, my partner has had no support. He has had to deal with everything a military spouse has to deal with, from loneliness to prolonged periods with no contact, alone. The way my partner handles this situation is a testament to his strength and inner fortitude. It's not the sort of thing anyone should ever have to face alone—yet he does. No matter how miserable my situation is overseas, I always tell myself, "I chose this career." Although my partner chose to be with a military man, his choice was not quite the same as mine. (Seefried 135)

It makes it harder to lean on other spouses, which the wives all acknowledge is important, especially if a statement, act, or marriage, can get your servicemember fired. Patroclus was not left behind, but he was still without an external support network. (Many queer servicemembers in Seefried's book acknowledge that DADT cut them off from their units, as

[10] Crooks, Scherer, Hightower, and Henderson's figures appear attached to 2005. In 2006, Kristin Henderson estimated 7% of military spouses were men (*While* 140). Exact numbers can be difficult to acquire, as the DoD data does not differentiate gender when tracking servicemember marriages. It is unclear if tracking this information would help spouses.

they were compelled to lie to their brothers-in-arms.) Patroclus was isolated in the camp as a queer man not fighting, aware this made him 'less than' in the eyes of the men around him.

Male spouses can also feel emasculated – or be regarded as emasculated – by the way society views the role they fill. Most of the support goes to the women who do the same work for the military and in their marriages. Crooks, Henderson, Hightower, and Scherer also estimated "fully 60 to 80 percent are former military themselves," though this thesis has been unable to substantiate that claim (113). Because most military spouses are not regarded also as service members, their service does not bolster their perceived masculinity. As will be apparent later, even when they are discussed by military services, they are presumed civilians. Military OneSource warns men married to servicemembers (they assume those men will be married to servicewomen) that "**Other people assume you're the service member**. You may find yourself explaining to people over and over again that you're a civilian and your spouse is a service member" ("Life As a Male Military Spouse" bolding in the original). A male is expected to perform the role of the soldier and not that of military spouse. That assumption leads to the other assumption that affects male partners: "**Your role in the marriage may clash with your identity as a male**. Role reversals can be difficult for any couple and can be especially challenging in the military setting, which emphasizes traditional ideas of masculinity" ("Life As a Male Military Spouse" bolding in the original). The military is generally a hyper-masculine culture, characterized by "grittiness," "adrenaline," and in some cases, "an almost pornographic amount of testosterone," which can complicate the situation for those not following so-called traditional gender roles (Ricketts 21). Being the male spouse challenges the hegemonic masculinity. The position of queer male military spouses like Patroclus is still contested, even after the end of DADT and the service ban. In April 2018, a Colonel successfully convinced the Air Force it was not discriminatory to refuse to acknowledge the contributions of a retiring airmen's husband, though he would

have acknowledged the contributions of a wife, because he felt to extend appreciation to the queer man would endorse the same-sex relationship (Svan). An unwillingness to acknowledge queer servicemembers and male military spouses compounds in these instances, and their contributions get ignored or denied. DADT contributed to this erasure by ensuring that partners had to hide, as their existence alone could cause firing. They could not publicly do any spousing (Burana 317-9) and were frequently reminded that not only did they not belong, they were actively not wanted (Burana 320). Patroclus, of course, is a servicemember as well; however, because he does not appear to be fighting, having "little stomach" (3.3.239) for this conflict, he appears subject to the treatment and experiences of civilian male military spouses rather than a serving spouse.

Patroclus suffers under the awareness that his inability to commit to the hegemonic version of masculinity in his culture causes him to be considered less of a man and, possibly worse, his failure causes him to be viewed as un-manning his significant other. The Trojan leaders explain at the start of the play that Achilles does not fight but rather lounges in bed with Patroclus (1.3.189-214).[11] Neither performs their role as soldiers by engaging in combat. Patroclus admits that he does not have the stomach for the violence (3.3.229). He also knows that his failure to fight in a manly fashion is considered the root of Achilles' failure as well: "They think my little stomach to the war/And your great love to me restrains you thus" (3.3.229-230). He knows the Trojan leadership think his failing contagious and would accept him more if Patroclus were more the soldier. However, even if both performed as soldiers, their performed masculinity would still be suspect given their attachment to a subordinated masculinity. Among the Trojans, the fool Theresites in particular demonstrates a contempt for the homosexual male. Thersites calls Patroclus a "masculine whore," placing

[11] In the *Iliad*, the conflict that causes Achilles's abstention is over a woman. Having Patroclus accept the blame – be considered that cause by the other men – shifts the blame and prioritizes Patroclus. It could also be construed as feminizing him.

him in an effeminate position[12] because he is presumably penetrated sexually by another male.[13] To be effeminate and/or penetrated is, in the hegemonic masculinity, considered humiliating.[14] Penetrated males are presumed powerless, and worse, they are presumed powerless by choice:

> Faggots represent a penetrated masculinity in which 'to be penetrated is to abdicate power' (Bersani, 1987: 212). Penetrated men symbolize a masculinity devoid of power, which, in its contradiction, threatens both psychic and social chaos. It is precisely this specter of penetrated masculinity that functions as a regulatory mechanism of gender for contemporary American adolescent boys. (Pascoe 329).

To properly perform hegemonic masculinity, the males must continue to perform a strong and aggressive masculinity, which is not considered compatible with being penetrated, which is the position of the women and the weak. Hegemonic masculinity, which defines itself in opposition to the female, finds being effeminized humiliating: "[Thersites] sees [this coupling of two males] as a matter of one man's power over another. A 'varlet' is primarily a social, not a moral, inferior. Patroclus deserves insults, not because he is morally wrong, but because he accepts an unmanly, passive role: he is Achilles' 'masculine whore'" (Smith *Homosexual Desire* 198). Thersites at other moments insults Patroclus' status based on his relationship:

> PATROCLUS. No more words, Thersites. Peace.
> THERSITES. I will hold my peace when Achilles' brach bids me, shall I?
> ACHILLES. There's for you, Patroclus. (2.1.117-120)

"Brach" means "bitch," and for a modern audience the notion of someone being someone else's bitch needs no translation. Patroclus sleeps with Achilles, and therefore he deserves

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[12] The word 'whore' has a feminine connotation inescapable even for males. The Oxford English dictionary entry for 'whore' lists catamites – male sex workers – not with the female sex workers but with sexually promiscuous females, and it uses this quote from *Troilus and Cressida* as an example. Moreover, many editions of the text do not specifically mention catamites in that sub-definition, and therefore Patroclus is lumped in with loose women.

[13] Being consistently bewhored may change how he relates to women. Thersites says, discussing Cressida, "Patroclus will give me anything for the intelligence of this whore. The parrot will not do more for an almond than he for a commodious drab" (5.3.223-5). Perhaps Patroclus feels an innate sympathy for the victims of the rampant misogyny that also fuels the homophobia he endures.

[14] This distaste for the anally penetrated male can be seen in military culture in the use of the expression BOHICA – Bend over, here it comes again – as a reference to getting screwed over. This expression, which Williams deems as common as SNAFU, equates non-vaginal penetration with pain and humiliation (*Plenty* 152).

none of Thersites' respect. The more ambiguous part of that exchange is Achilles' "There's for you." It could mean that Achilles' finds Thersites' insult amusing. That could align with Thersites' status as a "privileged man" (2.3.60). However, in light of the nature of the insult, that could be hard to stomach. Possibly that line is attached to a gesture or movement indicating Achilles' interceding on Patroclus' behalf, such as punching Thersites. In the 2012 RSC/Wooster Group production,[15] when Thersites calls Patroclus bitch, Achilles goes to drag Thersites from his chair by his throat, choking him, and it is Patroclus who stops him, helping Thersites (LeCompte and Ravenhill). Achilles points at Thersites and says, "there's for you, Patroclus," as if to say, "I was avenging you" and believing it should have pleased Patroclus to be avenged. The way Thersites speaks to and about Patroclus indicates that the relationship between Patroclus and Achilles is acknowledged by others, but it also demonstrates that the relationship causes Patroclus to be perceived as unmanned and unmanning, in line with the heteronormativity of hegemonic masculinity. Patroclus' masculine performances are considered undermining to Achilles' performance.

It is this idea that Patroclus emasculates Achilles that begins their tragic ending. It spawns Hector's challenge. The challenge causes Patroclus' encouragement to perform violence to prove their queerness has not damaged their manhood. When those exhortations fail, Patroclus takes it upon himself to fight, and that eventually kills him.[16] Everything comes back to that view of manhood.

The entire challenge Hector sends to the Trojan camp can be interpreted as a directed insult to Achilles on the basis of his "unmanning" same-sex relationship with Patroclus,

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[15] That particular production bears an unusual relationship to the post-9/11 context in which it was produced. While the RSC dressed their Greeks in modern desert-warfare garb, the almost entirely white Wooster Group styled their Trojans in redface, giving their characters heavy Scandinavian accents and, in their promptbook, eliding the Apache and the Inuit. Therefore, it is difficult to consider in its entirety.

[16] In Gregory Doran's 2018 RSC production, Patroclus does not choose to fight. Instead, inside the camp, he is shot by Ulysses so that the Greek leaders can exploit Patroclus' death, convincing Achilles Hector killed his lover, a non-combatant. As, in that case, Patroclus was unarmed and unarmored, the murder relates strongly to the idea of the killer as 'boy-queller' and the issues of harming non-combatants, both issues raised in this thesis.

which Patroclus is quick to understand. The challenge is predicated on honor – a central component to their practiced hegemonic masculinity – but it also relies on men's relationship with their female romantic and sexual partners (1.3.273-291). The official Grecian response to Hector's challenge suggests a relationship between soldiering and romance and sexual behavior:

> This shall be told our lovers, Lord Aeneas.
> If none of them have soul in such a kind,
> We left them all at home. But we are soldiers,
> And may that soldier a mere recreant prove
> That means not, hath not, or is not in love! (1.3.292-296).

The suggestion, then, is that any soldier worth his salt is a lover, or at least has a woman whose honor he would defend. The suggestion of leaving the lovers behind, though, also raises the possibility that men who love but have little stomach for the fighting – like Patroclus – should have been left at home with the womenfolk. The Greek leaders, though, recognize that the challenge is intended specifically from Hector to Achilles, who is the only male in their cohort characterized by a relationship with a man:

> This challenge that the gallant Hector sends,
> However it is spread in general name,
> Relates in purpose only to Achilles. (1.3.330-332)

Indeed, they appear to find the challenge pointed (1.3.333-340). They even go so far as to assure Aeneas that they will inform Achilles of the challenge, naming him specifically while referring to other hearers more generally (1.3.314-5). Achilles interprets the challenge as similarly pointed:

> ACHILLES. Marry, this, sir, is proclaimed through all our host:
> That Hector, by the fifth hour of the sun,
> Will with a trumpet 'twixt our tents and Troy
> To-morrow morning call some knight to arms
> That hath a stomach; and such a one that dare
> Maintain – I know not what: 'tis trash. Farewell.
> AJAX. Farewell. Who shall answer him?
> ACHILLES. I know not. 'Tis put to lott'ry. Otherwise
> He knew his man. (2.1.125-133).

The statement that Hector "knew his man," suggests that he knows Hector meant it for him, even if the challenge is put to lottery. Other elements in his reaction indicate he feels Hector meant the challenge for him as an insult. When he reads through the challenge, Achilles suddenly breaks off, saying "I know not what: 'tis trash," before he can reach the part about defending the honor of one's female sexual partner. Why would he break off except that his *male* lover is the one present? The text also contains two 'farewells' not attached to a command exit. However, after that line, Patroclus never speaks again. Maybe Achilles is turning to leave when he says 'farewell' but stays when Ajax asks a question. Perhaps, though, the farewells indicate that Patroclus just stalked out of the conversation, having figured the implied insults out himself. The last line of Achilles' reaction to the challenge are four crisp monosyllables, suggesting a determined and negative response to Hector's challenge, likely anger. Others and Achilles sense in the challenge a latent insult to Achilles based on his homosexual relationship with Patroclus.

In response to these implications that they have failed to adequately perform masculinity, Patroclus encourages his partner to perform the more accepted, and highly dangerous, warrior masculinity. Ulysses initially suggests that Achilles has been undermined through a relationship with a woman, Polyxena:

> ULYSSES. But 'gainst your privacy
> The reasons are more potent and heroical
> 'Tis known, Achilles, that you are in love
> With one of Priam's daughters.
> ACHILLES. Ha? Known?
> ULYSSES. […] better would it fit Achilles much
> To throw down Hector than Polyxena.
> But it must grieve young Pyrrhus now at home,
> When Fame shall in our islands sound her trump,
> And all the Greekish girls shall tripping sing,
> "Great Hector's sister did Achilles win,["] (3.3.199-203, 216-221)

In such an interpretation – differing slightly from the *Iliad* – the fault for his unmanning would then belong to the female partner. It is not an uncommon view in hegemonic

masculinity, that contact with women is destructive to masculinity. The phrasing "throw down" invokes violence and sex, eliding the two while also indicating that sex with women can damage masculinity. One should note, though, that Achilles brushes by the implication that his behavior is related to Polyxena – "Ha? Known?" – scorning the implication that his relationship with her could control him in that way. However, despite Ulysses's blaming the heterosexual/heteroromantic behavior, Patroclus takes on himself the blame for Achilles' change, non-participation, and emasculation:

> PATROCLUS. To this effect, Achilles, have I moved you.
> A woman impudent and mannish grown
> Is not more loathed than an effeminate man
> In time of action. I stand condemned for this.
> They think my little stomach to the war,
> And your great love to me, restrains you thus.
> Sweet, rouse yourself, and the weak wanton Cupid
> Shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold
> And, like a dewdrop from the lion's mane,
> Be shook to air.
> ACHILLES. Shall Ajax fight with Hector?
> PATROCLUS. Ay, and perhaps receive much honor by him.
> ACHILLES. I see my reputation is at stake;
> My fame is shrewdly gored.
> PATROCLUS. O, then, beware!
> Those wounds heal ill that men do give themselves (3.3.225-240)

In l.225, the metrical stress falls on "this," specifically having Patroclus take the blame for Achilles' lack of heroic achievement and feats of arms. He recognizes that he is regarded as womanish and therefore contemptible. Against the meter, the stress in "I stand condemned for this" falls on "I," recognizing himself specifically, not Polyxena, as the one widely considered at fault. The metrical shift on "condemned" underlines the social blame he suffers for the relationship and its perceived results. Consequently, he encourages his partner to shake off "weak, wanton Cupid," and be more lion-like in his masculine performance. Through their conversation, Achilles comes better to understand that his reputation has been damaged by their behavior and the consequences they bear for failing to observe the cultural standards of masculinity.

Unfortunately, Achilles is not the only one endangered by their efforts to assert masculinity in the proscribed manner; Patroclus dies attempting to perform that masculinity. There is an intricate binding together of masculinity and heterosexuality that can encourage risk-taking or worse to escape homophobic stigma. The fear that a man might call another man queer (and thus not a real man) pervades much of the discourse associated with becoming and being a soldier. As Rob Smith details, during basic training, failure led to being called "faggot," and one drill sergeant stated the purpose of basic was to "turn this group of pussies and faggots into infantrymen" (12-14). There is a built-in suggestion that any man still queer at the end of this process is not a real soldier, not a real man, not to be respected, and not to be trusted. This problem was made worse under DADT, when coming out meant you could not deploy. One servicemember said, "My decision to come out marked me as a quitter, the worst label within the military community" (Seefried 152). Another perceived some people as choosing to come out to escape deploying, which he resented, as he felt that it contributed to straight soldiers who had never met a queer person believing all gays were cowards (Seefried 77). Threatening men with the epithet was meant to inspire masculine performance that proved their heterosexuality. Some of this performance, particularly for soldiers, can be dangerous. Talk can readily escalate to threats. First Lieutenant Karl Johnson recounts that when asked why he was not dating a woman, he contemplated coming out, despite DADT: "It was no sooner than the words 'It's because I'm gay' were on my lips that Ken interrupted me, saying, 'If I find out you're a fag, I'm going to beat the living shit out of you right here and now.'" (Seefried 90). However, there remains worse danger. Rob Smith recounts being haunted by the story of PFC Barry Winchell (93-4). The stigma attached to homosexuality is so strong that perhaps the most infamous gaybashing in US military history happened to a straight man. In 1999, PFC Winchell was murdered by a fellow soldier. PFC Winchell was in a relationship with Calpurnia Addams, a transwoman,

so PFC Winchell's straight bona fides were called into question. A soldier he had beaten in a physical altercation beat PFC Winchell to death in his sleep. It can matter very much what other servicemembers think of you. Perhaps it is unsurprising that Patroclus dares a great deal to prove Achilles and he are still men by the standards of their culture.

Patroclus' death in battle leads to Achilles' acting like a warrior but not in an honorable fashion. Achilles hunts Hector to punish him for killing Patroclus, and in so-doing, Achilles can win fame and honor through the "heroic" behavior.[17] The Trojan leaders recognize that Patroclus' death will enrage Achilles into valorous action:

> AGAMEMNON. Patroclus ta'en or slain […]
> NESTOR. Go, bear Patroclus' body to Achilles […]
> ULYSSES. O, courage, courage, princes! Great Achilles
> Is arming, weeping, cursing, vowing vengeance.
> Patroclus' wounds have roused his drowsy blood,
> Together with his mangled Myrmidons,
> That noseless, handless, hacked and chipped, come to him,
> Crying on Hector. (5.5.14,18,31-37)

Death notification appears a lot in discussions of life under DADT, a special fear on top of the idea of the worst happening. Tania Dunbar, a warrant officer in the U.S. Army, feared that if she were killed or injured in Iraq, "my girlfriend [would] not be notified. She wouldn't even be able to visit me in the hospital" (Seefried 123). Tim Walker, who had already experienced deployments before the war, said,

> It wasn't until after September 11, 2001, when I was deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq and realized there was a very real possibility I could die, that 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' truly became a reality to me. I could not list my partner as a dependent on any forms. What were my rights—what were his rights—if I was hurt or incapacitated or killed? He would not even get notification if the worst happened. He was not eligible for my pension, benefits, visitation rights, counseling, or even the flag from my coffin if I died. (Seefried 45-46).

[17] Interestingly, the script does not call for demonstrations of Patroclus' performed masculinity. Shakespeare may have chosen to eschew this to center on Patroclus' position as the spouse and Achilles' grief or to decenter Patroclus' soldierhood. Some productions, such as Monette's 2003 production, do show the fight, and the RSC 2006 production showed a little of it (Stein). However, the text itself does not require this scene, and these fighters were added by these productions.

He had to worry his partner would not even be permitted to mourn as a spouse under these regulations. Jonathan Cagle, a combat medic in the Illinois Army National Guard, said DADT made things "incredibly difficult for my home life. Before I left for Afghanistan, I had to sit down with my mother and boyfriend to develop an alert plan in case anything happened to me during the deployment, because my boyfriend would obviously not be notified" (Seefried 50). There is a lot at stake here. These commanders may encourage bringing the body to Achilles to inspire such aggressive action from him. Patroclus' death not only spurs on Achilles but all of his men as well. They are "noseless, handless, hacked and chipped," suggesting that they are battle-hardened but also battle-damaged, but for Achilles' partner and their friend, they will perform this action, and, "crying on Hector," encourage Achilles as his partner had done. Achilles comes out of his vowed abstention to hunt his partner's killer:

> Where is this Hector?–
> Come, come, thou boy-queller, show thy face!
> Know what it is to meet Achilles angry.
> Hector? Where's Hector? I will none but Hector. (5.548-51)

Achilles' motives are not random honor-seeking. He intentionally seeks the enemy leader not because he is the enemy leader but because he is the one who killed Achilles' partner.[18] Some see the action as related to the performance of an honor-culture masculinity, even without understanding the full implications:

> Achilles' behaviour, though brutal, is characteristic. His commitment to honour, under Ulysses' tutelage, is commitment to a commodity which is necessary to have; the means by which one obtains that commodity are no concern of his. Killing Hector buys honour for him. (Council 85-6).

This interpretation recognizes the benefits in terms of performed masculinity of having killed Hector, but Council neglects the revenge motive that might cause him to dishonorably attack an unarmed man with his gang and claim credit for the kill. Removing the revenge motive

[18] That Achilles calls Hector "boy-queller" recalls the idea of Patroclus as the younger sexual partner. It runs the risk of emasculating Patroclus. It might also imply that Patroclus, who had little stomach for the war, was so removed from it that killing him was more in line with the dishonorable killing of a civilian or an untrained youth.

falsely implies that Achilles would have acted the same with or without his partner and his partner's death.[19] Achilles has Hector killed to avenge the murder of his partner, the partner who had entered the combat himself to ensure that one of them performed the standard hegemonic masculinity.

In his discussion with Achilles of their perceived emasculation, Patroclus also brings up an issue that will haunt Shakespearean military spouses:

> A woman impudent and mannish grown
> Is not more loathed than an effeminate man
> In time of action (3.3.226-228)

His words recall soon to follow army wives, the "mankind" (4.2.24) Volumnia and Lady Macbeth, whose "undaunted mettle should compose / Nothing but males" (1.7.84-5). Military spouses have the capacity to reinforce or to challenge the hegemonic gender systems. All three of those characters endorse performance of their hegemonic masculinity in their men, all three to some cost. Two die. However, even as they endorse the system, in their own way, they challenge it, discomforting those around them with their own gender performance. Lady Macbeth feels she must eschew any feminine presentation if she wants to support her husband in a regicide to gain power. Volumnia's own strength and devotion to performed honor and masculinity terrify the Tribunes, who cannot conceive of a woman with that strength. Patroclus, who is tied to a subordinated masculinity, raises the issue of subordinated gender performances that will attach to both of those military spouses.

The depiction of Patroclus and his relationship with Achilles, though, continues to be significant in the War on Terror context, because it endorses the depiction of queer

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[19] While some might suspect Shakespeare's Achilles of acting less honorably than Homer's, by this point in Homer's narrative, the revenge motive has driven a lot of honor out of the situation. After the death of Patroclus in the *Iliad*, acting on grief induced rage, Achilles abandons his previous practice of taking prisoners alive and of respecting the dead, including killing a man who in previous combat he had spared (Shay 28-30). When he brings Hector's body back to the beaches, the other Greeks stab the corpse (Homer 553). Having his Myrmidons partake in the slaughter of Hector is not an extreme extension of dishonorable action on Shakespeare's part.

servicemembers and the acknowledgement of the contribution of queer citizens to the nation-state. Furthermore, Patroclus' relationship with his partner calls both of their performance of masculinity into question, as it links them openly with a subordinated masculinity. However, Patroclus' insistence that at least one of them should perform this action, although it eventually spurs Achilles' on to greater masculine achievement, results in Patroclus' own death. Patroclus' death demonstrates that devotion to a dangerous hegemonic masculinity is hazardous to all those who subscribe to it and enforce it on others, just as it is dangerous to those on whom it is enforced, even among the spouses.

Patroclus and Andromache comment on their culture. They present different concerns about the military performance of their society. Andromache raises questions about balancing risks and the dangerous competitiveness and posturing of toxic masculinity, as well as the way we deny or demean women's experience. Patroclus represents a subordinated masculinity but also the danger of a subordinated masculinity struggling to meet a dangerous hegemonic standard. This particularly brings to light the struggles of queer servicemembers and their families. Recognizing the contributions of these spouses to the play aligns with recognizing the contributions of partners like them who have contributed both to military service, to the military culture, and to the country.

Chapter 5: "Of A Woman Born": Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff

In the 21st century, as in the 20th, *Macbeth* has an almost staggering relevance to modern life. Des McAnuff said of the play in 2009, "it's not only the themes of the play but it's very subjects that are startlingly familiar: unsolved assassination leading to civil war, military invasion, regime change, moral cowardice, inbred corruption, unchecked dictatorial powers and the diseased politics of terror. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is contemporary indeed, proof of the adage that 'things don't change, they just get more so'" (7). It also raises questions about women, the military, and the role of families and power in military communities.

The central couple in *Macbeth* will always be the Macbeths. However, they have a counterpart in the Macduffs. Both Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff have soldier husbands. Both influence the political decisions their husbands make, though occasionally in absentia or posthumously. Neither is inherently good or evil, though they have different connections to their husbands' martial performance, and to their husbands' willingness to cross lines that maybe no man should. Lady Macbeth supports her husband in an aggressive pursuit of glory and power, an ultimate form of masculinity. When read against a military culture that attaches women's status to their husbands' military prowess, one can better understand Lady Macbeth's deep investment in his martial performance. The abysmal un(der)employment of military spouses hinders spouses' abilities to have independent status and identity outside of their marriage. It also contributes to spouse's wearing a servicemember's rank and relatedly to pervasive rankism in the culture. These factors, in turn, encourage Lady Macbeth's investment in Macbeth's success, and her ambition makes more sense when understood in this light. Macbeth, though, takes the pursuit farther than she does, into a truly toxic masculinity, and he escapes her efforts to constrain him from further violence. Eventually, that pursuit leads to both of their downfalls. Lady Macduff, conversely, advocates a more

conservative approach that emphasizes positive aspects of masculinity, such as the protection of one's family. Unfortunately, Lady Macduff also becomes a victim of the toxic masculinity in her culture. Her husband shows the influence of that toxic culture when he contemplates crossing unforgivable lines and, in vengeance, committing war crimes. Military spouses must grapple with the reality of violence and the questions of the appropriate use of force. However, even through her death, Lady Macduff inspires her husband to a new brand of masculinity that is less toxic, more open to the experience and expression of emotion, more constrained in its violence, and hopefully will lead to a healthier community. In *Macbeth*, perhaps more so than any of Shakespeare's martial plays, the wives represent the desire and need to control aggressive masculinity, to prevent men from crossing lines from which there is no returning.

Lady Macbeth

To mention Lady Macbeth is to summon with her a long history, much of which depends on viewing her as a demon who ruined her husband. She, in some cases, receives more of the blame for Macbeth's actions than the witches, to say nothing of Macbeth himself. The scorn for her appears in much of the criticism. Matthew Proser called her "the fourth 'witch'" (57). Coppélia Kahn presents Lady Macbeth as a horror who enjoys killing kids. After noting the similarities between Volumnia and Lady Macbeth with breast-feeding language, she says,

> It is just when the babe is smiling in her face that Lady Macbeth envisions killing it. If the mutual gaze of mother and child constitutes the emotional nurture corresponding to the physical nurture of suckling, then in this image and the idea of the mother that looms behind it, Shakespeare portrays a radical mistrust of women in a male subject, which the male projects onto woman as her aggression toward him ("Magic of Bounty" 52-3).

She neglects that Lady Macbeth does not express a desire to kill children. Indeed, Lady Macbeth's comments about dashing a child's brains out present it as the worst thing that she could imagine doing. Jan Kott argued that, "Everything in her, except craving for power, has

been burnt out. She is empty, and goes on burning. She is taking her revenge for her failure as lover and mother. Lady Macbeth has no imagination; and for that reason she accepts herself from the outset, and later cannot escape from herself" (96). He reduces her to a violence impulse, as opposed to someone who does something horrible in pursuit of a goal. He also reduces her from a full person to the functional roles to which women are often limited by implying that the reason she might crave status and power is because she is, by his standards, a "failure" as a wife and mother. D.W. Harding's vehemence against Lady Macbeth follows a similar line, maintaining "the whole action of the play is the outcome of her insistence on his playing to the full the role of a man as she imagines it to be" (Harding 245). Harding divorces the standards of masculinity from the culture that created them to imply that Lady Macbeth made up the standard. He also ignores any agency Macbeth possesses in order to blame Lady Macbeth entirely for actions, many of which are solely her husband's. Indeed, these interpretations often rely on shifting all blame off of Macbeth onto Lady Macbeth, usually to exculpate Macbeth.[1] The desire to absolve Macbeth or understand him should not be assuaged by blaming others for his actions. Those responding to *Macbeth* must "resist the temptation to romanticize Macbeth, and, worse still, demonize his Lady" (Dash 165). Macbeth, as will be discussed later, engages in many of his horrors alone, without the guidance of his wife. She participated in one horror, but she did not do it alone.[2] Despite the critical representation, she did not single-handedly turn him into what he is. If one wishes to

[1] For other discussions of shifting responsibility to women, see the responsibility placed on women to prevent men's gossiping and men's jealousy in the *Othello* chapter.

[2]Some of the issues people have with Lady Macbeth's behavior may stem from a cultural desire to view violence as a male prerogative. As Kahn noted, "in Coriolanus' Rome, Macbeth's Scotland, and to some extent in our own culture, violent aggression so long as it is sanctioned by the political order, is approved behaviour only for men" (*Man's* 155). Recall Holinshed's account of the fierceness of the Scottish woman in wartime (21). By that description, Lady Macbeth's behavior makes more sense. Shakespeare creates a more gendered text, not showing women in the armed forces. That gendering makes Lady Macbeth's behavior seem extreme in a way that, in other contexts, it does not. The US military allows women to serve in combat roles. As of January 2016, so long as women qualified and met job standards, women were able to serve in all military occupations and positions, no exceptions ("History"). On the other hand, the modern military also positions the military spouses into stay-at-home roles or, as will be discussed, underemployment.

curb dangerous behavior, potentially deadly behavior, from men and cultural expectations of masculinity, one must realize that this is not 'boys will be boys.' Men are made this way by their culture, and they behave this way by choice. The only way to respond to toxic behavior is to acknowledge its origins, to hold perpetuators accountable, but also to hold accountable the men who engage in that behavior. Lady Macbeth did not drag Macbeth across the line, or really even lead him there.

Lady Macbeth has not been wholly lacking in defenders. Bruce Smith notes, "*Macbeth* figures as the first in a sequence of scripts by Shakespeare that feature strong female protagonists" (26). Productions have sometimes been more charitable to the character than criticism has been, perhaps because an actress, recognizing that few people wake up and say "I shall be evil today," must find the humanity present in the character. Where critics focus on her discussing the murder of children as though it is something she desires, performers accept the internal horror of this discussion and play that. In the Des McAnuff Stratford Festival production in 2009, set in mid-century Africa, when Lady Macbeth said, "I have given suck, and know/ How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me," the promptbook notes that "This is the card that is never played." The suggestion is not a pleasurable one but a demarcation of the farthest edge of their reality, the thing so painful they never discuss it. The 2004 John Wood production in Stratford, Ontario, using a medieval aesthetic, seriously positioned that moment as one of shared horror. After she exclaimed that she would have killed their child "had [she] so sworn as [he]/Have done to this," Macbeth crossed to her and hugged her. The blocking noted this was "saving her life, pull her from in front of a bus." He is pulling her back from the line, from this point of 'too far.' This discussion of hypothetical violence is not something she enjoys. For them, it was a low-point, where she raises the possibility of the worst thing that could have ever happened to them. These ways

of handling the moment, in their mindfulness of the pain behind the line, show an awareness of Lady Macbeth's *non*-monstrousness. She is not the fourth witch.

In order to understand the Macbeths, one must first accept that they love each other. It may be obscured, as theirs is an aggressive, power-fed love, but it is love. Antoni Cimolino, who directed the play in 2016 in Stratford, Ontario, felt that *Macbeth* "is perhaps [Shakespeare's] greatest love story – one in which a couple destroy themselves, each for the sake of the other. A love story soaked in blood" (9). If one cannot see the love, it can damage one's understanding of the characters, leaving behind only violence and blood, altering their motivations. Marion Cotillard, who played Lady Macbeth in the 2015 Kurzel film, said of the Macbeths, "There's a lot of love between these two characters but they're just too damaged to allow in anything luminous," as though what they achieve is the best they could have done (Barnes). She also dubbed Lady Macbeth "a bit of a monster" (Barnes). Others have seen their love as tinged and tainted as well. Tyrone Guthrie thought Macbeth and Lady Macbeth were tragic because they were ruined by the qualities that made them great (Howard 141-2). In a sense, it is the nature of their love, fierce and aggressive, that destroys them. Their love is central to their motivations and their predicaments.

One sees their love in the fact that at the start of the play the Macbeths are a team: they rise together and fall together. On Military OneSource, the military encourages couples to function as teams and support each other intensely, suggesting that to foster their relationship the couples should "Help each other toward life goals or dreams," because "Relationships grow stronger when teamwork toward a common goal is involved." The advice comes with a descriptor the Macbeths would doubtless appreciate: "Work as a team, just the two of you against the world" ("Making Relationships Work"). That they, as a team, will rise together appears in the letter Macbeth sends his wife: "This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing,

by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee" (1.5.10-13). He addresses her as his "dearest partner of greatness." His greatness is hers, and he recognizes that she helps him achieve his greatness. He informs her of what the witches have promised *him*, eager to inform her of "what greatness is promised [her]." The witches have made promises to him, but because she is his partner, he already knows that any greatness he achieves will be her greatness as well. As actress and critic Ellen Terry noted, Macbeth's letter to his wife "is one of those rare tributes that a man sometimes pays to the share his wife has had in the making of his career" (192). The phrase, "partners in greatness," mirrors Alison Bucholtz's statement that it makes her husband happy "to know that we are partners in the toughest job he's ever had" (xxii). Macbeth and his wife begin the play partners who rise together, fall together. Their partnership continues in the murder of Duncan:

> MACBETH. If we should fail?
> LADY MACBETH. We fail!
> But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
> And we'll not fail. (1.7.68-71).

He says "we." She says "we." They are in this together. One also sees here a quality of their relationship that appears elsewhere. He worries they will fail, and she bucks him up. She encourages him in his aggression and fearlessness, qualities of hegemonic masculinity that can become toxic. She also has his back. This quality of their relationship has not gone unnoticed. As Terry notes, Lady Macbeth "has never failed her husband yet. The relation between them is not that of master and subject. They are on the terms of equals. She has always been fully cognizant of his plans, and helped him carry them out. Macbeth calls her 'my dearest partner in greatness', and it is as partners they engage in crime" (162). Because his advances elevate them both, their focus as a team is on what allows him to move forward in his career: "In her famous soliloquy, after reading her husband's letter, she does not once refer to herself. It is of him she thinks: she wishes to see her husband on the throne, and to place the sceptre within his grasp. The strength of her affections adds strength to

her ambition" (Jameson 328). Her interest in advancing him merges her love and her self-interest. In a similar vein, Judi Dench notes that "Lady Macbeth is driven on by the most tremendous ambition, *not* for herself but for her husband" (Cook 129). In advancing him, she does advance herself, but while he points out the opportunity for her advancement, she emphasizes his. For military spouses, the soldier's greatness de facto extends to the spouse. This is in part an artefact of the un(der)employment spouses experience. Military spouses are 30% more likely than civilian counterparts to be unemployed, and 90% report being underemployed (Hicks). Less than 10% of military spouses are self-employed (Eckhart 60). Military spouses earn, on average, three dollars less per hour than civilian counterparts (Buckholtz 94). Terri Barnes reported wives working in cafés, since making espresso was the only job in their skillset available where they got posted (989), involuntarily transitioned to homemaking when they are not employable where they were posted (1273), or being shoved to the bottom of the hierarchy, because thanks to constant PCSing they never gain seniority at a firm or institution (1273). One of those wives said, "I try and remind myself it is not about me and my career," because as military spouses the military takes precedence, "yet I had one and I miss it terribly" (1273). These spouses are forcibly un(der)employed as they bolster the soldiers' careers. This chronic underemployment of military spouses adds pressures to military families, especially since during deployments "Spouses left behind who work outside the home may have to cut back or quit altogether so they can handle the increase in family responsibilities, further reducing the family's income" (Henderson *While* 143). It therefore contributes to the lowered incomes of military families, which should concern the public and the military itself. The military must further concern itself with this un(der)employment, because studies suggest people are leaving the service as a result of its effects limiting their spouses' careers (Buckholtz 95; Eckhart 50). Rachel Starnes' memoir details at length her struggles to find or rebuild a career while frequently PCSing; her chances at an identity

outside the military and her marriage were regularly gutted by the moves (189). Many spouses have had to sacrifice their own careers as part of their silent service, so their main prestige is bolstering their soldier's career. Angela Ricketts, for example, calls her husband's career "*our* career" (98, emphasis *hers*). From a historical sense, as the wife of a thane, Lady Macbeth would not have been concerned with "employment," per se. Her society already circumscribed her options. In her husband's absence, she would have been engaged in tasks pursuant to running the estate, and if she had children raising them. Her condition more closely mirrors spouses relegated involuntarily to homemaking. Still, she cannot pursue her own ambitions by herself, and her ability to have an independent identity and status are curtailed, as modern spouses' are when they lose or sacrifice their own careers to their servicemembers'. Even the fact that we call her Lady Macbeth emphasizes that her status and rank all comes from him. If you tell a bright, ambitious woman like Lady Macbeth that the best thing she will ever be is someone's wife, is it any wonder she becomes quite invested in how his career progresses?

The military comes with an obvious indicator of status and power: rank. While officially the spouses do not have rank, and there are military urban legends mocking wives for thinking they do (Eckhart 37), rank has a tremendous impact on their lives: "The rank system is part of the military's core structure" (Gross 70). Memoirs of military spouses contain frequent references to wives who are interested in rank and status, especially as it extends to them:

> His brass ring is a battalion command in combat. It's me who covets the big house that Mrs. Stewart occupies.
>
> But only the most obnoxious wives dare say this aloud, and many of them do, which is just tacky. Showing visible ambition only makes that woman a target. Best to stay nonthreatening and do the best in one's current position. The plotting ambition is left for each couple behind closed doors, and it is obvious that many couples do plot and plan their future climb of the ranks. (Ricketts 98)

Relevant here is that they both covet rank for the husband, as it would lead to advancement for both. The husband wishes to advance his career. The wife desires the status and perks that go with a higher-ranking husband. She also notes that other couples have these desires and plot to ensure these outcomes, as the Macbeths do, though it would be unseemly to do so in public – "I talked to no one about Scott's career plans. Among the more seasoned officers and their spouses, discussing one's aspirations is just Not Done. It's considered immodest, just as talking about salaries is taboo in other professions" (Buckholtz 164) – perhaps explaining why some critics disapprove of the Macbeths' ambition, which appears nakedly on-stage. The ambition of the spouses also makes sense in light of the fact that many privileges on base are tied to rank, so rank does matter even in how the women are treated. For example, housing on base will be assigned by rank, with higher rank providing better housing. (Notably, Lady Macbeth refers to their estate as "my battlements," suggesting that it is her house as much as it is his (1.5.47).) Furthermore, because of the rank-based housing, "Neighborhoods on base are divided up by rank. As a result, certain people always socialize together" (Gross 70). Certain people, on the other hand, will be impeded from socializing. "Clubs are also set up by rank to avoid fraternization," with officers going to one and enlisted to another (Gross 70). Such barriers may be socially perpetuated by soldiers and spouses. Ricketts comments, "We judge each other by what our husbands do" (122). Lily Burana recounts seeing a woman with an Army camo handbag with patches on it to match the husband's uniform patches – "[s]o I guess now a wife can wear her husband's rank, literally" (329). Status even among the women is tied to the husband's status. Terri Barnes notes the possibility that people may "reject" someone or fail to accept that person on the basis that "her husband is enlisted. Or she's an officer's wife" (975). Burana regularly felt spousal jockeying for status affected her relationships with other spouses (131,142). Rank creates division between people in such a respect. These distinctions can manifest in "rankism" –

"discrimination against someone based upon their own or their spouse's rank" – and "tension about rank between dependents" going both up and down the ranks (Gross 70). Tanya Biank has argued that "Stereotyping people, often based solely on rank and position, is already too ingrained within Army culture" (xvii). As a wife, Lady Macbeth's status depends entirely on her husband's. Empowering him empowers her. The un(der)employment of spouses only feeds this behavior. In that kind of culture, one can understand why Lady Macbeth would perceive her husband's rank as her own status and why they, as a team, would actively pursue that advancement.

A corollary to their aggressive love and their interest in rank is that, as a couple, they are turned on by status and power. Macbeth knows this about his wife. When he sends the letter, it is not just information. He wants her to know, as soon as possible, "what greatness is promised thee." He also included the new title the king had gilded him with, a new honor for them to enjoy. One hears their interest in how she greets her returning husband: "Great Glamis, worthy Cawdor,/ Greater than both by the all-hail hereafter!" (1.5.62-3). She glories in these addresses, his old title, his new title, and the one to which they can aspire. She calls him, by way of endearment, "my thane" (1.5.73). Status is tied to their sexual interest and expressions of love. Macbeth's accordance with his culture's ideals of masculinity are, at the start of the play, making his marriage stronger, not weaker. Kurzel, in his adaptation, attempted to decrease the emphasis on ambition and rank in the couple. He tried to position their mutual desire as part of "how you replace something you've lost" – presumably referring to their lost child – and "how desparate [*sic*] you can be to fill a hole left by grief" (Barnes). Such a choice deemphasizes a quality many find unseemly – ambition – but it also disregards how much a part of their relationship the *wanting* is, and the wanting is not inherently wrong. The Macbeths care about rank and power. It feeds their relationship.

While it will later spur them on to do wrong, one can also see there the seeds of their initial successes. They have pursued greatness, and he has been great.

Lady Macbeth supports her husband's martial performance, encouraging him to be more macho and aggressive. It is in her interest to do so, since her status is his status. This may happen in military couples: "Anna is her husband's greatest asset, which was not an atypical occurrence with army couples. It's shocking how often the wife is the stronger of the two. Scary, really" (Ricketts 195). When fearing that Macbeth may be "too full o' the milk of human kindness" despite the fact that he is "not without ambition" to "catch the nearest way" to his greatness, she hopes that he will come to her:

> Hie thee hither,
> That I may pour my spirits in thine ear
> And chastise with the valor of my tongue
> All that impedes thee from the golden round (1.5.28-33).

She knows this is a question of stomach, and she believes she is the cure, though some may see her as the "illness" Lady Macbeth thinks he lacks. That suggests that she has, in the past, helped him "man up" as it were. One should consider the possibility that he wants her in this role, that he *wants* her to buck him up for killing. After all, he has volunteered to the king to go in advance to alert his wife of the king's visit, running home to her before the king. Beyond that, he sends a letter in advance even of himself to excite her with the news. He is preparing for the meeting they have when she gives him her support of the regicide. The promptbook for the 2009 McAnuff production includes a note next to "The raven himself is hoarse" that reads "The news that Duncan is coming causes the conjuration <u>NOT</u> Macbeth's letter." Given the order of Shakespeare's text, that interpretation is quite reasonable. Lady Macbeth in that light appears inspired by fate seemingly lining things up. That moment is not simply a profound ambition seizing any available chance to get what it wants. Consider, after they contemplate the regicide, the closest Macbeth comes to stepping on the breaks – "We will speak further" (1.5.83) – does not truly stop the plan. (The promptbook for McAnuff's

2009 Stratford production translated that line as "you'll still be right but we'll speak further." In such a reading, he stops her not at all.) She gives him the support, then, for which he hoped. Her support for his masculine performance also appears in the fact that she – as his partner – intends not to leave him in this treason alone. She tells him to put "This night's great business into [her] dispatch" (1.6.80). She will make a plan for them, and she will help execute it. She also reveals, in her prayer, "pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,/That my keen knife see not the wound it makes," that she intends to participate in the killing (1.5.58-59). She will talk him into masculine performance and violence, and she will personally support it, even participating should the occasion call for it.

Macbeth's violence and machismo are balanced and entwined with their love and sex. In that respect, his performance of the hegemonic masculinity has been holding their relationship together. It is his shift to toxic masculinity that accords with the deconstruction of their union. Because he cements his status and power by violence, in their legitimate forms, and their love is tied to power and status, there are ties between their sexuality and his violent acts. Lady Macbeth specifically outlines this correlation when she urges Macbeth to kill the king:

> Was the hope drunk
> Wherein you dress'd yourself? Hath it slept since?
> And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
> At what it did so freely? From this time
> Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
> To be the same in thine own act and valor
> As thou art in desire? (1.7.39-45).

She attaches the idea of a failure of his manly action to a failure of his love. She equates inability to perform acts of valour with an inability to perform acts of desire, such as sex. Cimonlino notes that "When the word *love* is spoken, it is usually connected to murder" (9). Ian Lake, who played Macbeth in 2016 at the Stratford Festival, remarked, "I think Macbeth's biggest weakness is his love for his wife. And also his lack of conviction in

standing up for what he believes is right, in order to not disappoint her or lose her love. But this is also his strength: his love for her gives him the courage and the will to go through with the most difficult actions" ("Meet the Macbeths"). Critics, as well, have noted the intermingling of violence and sex. Kahn recognizes the sexualization of violence, at least in the Macbeth/Lady Macbeth relationship (*Man's* 178-9 note 24). Kott notes that they, as a couple, "are sexually obsessed with each other," even as he imagines that being childless proves they "have suffered a great erotic defeat" (93). Kott also comments that Lady Macbeth "demands that Macbeth commit murder as a confirmation of his manhood, almost as an act of love. In all Lady Macbeth's speeches there returns the same obsessive theme" (93). Their relationship is strong at the beginning, based on love and, yes, sex, but that bond is also tied up in his performance of a masculine ideal that is violent and interested in status and power. An awareness of that is central to how their relationship unfolds.

Throughout the play, one sees that they, as a team, had been quite close. However, as he turns to the toxic and becomes more violent, he pulls away from her, severing their connections and their honest communication that had previously characterized their relationship. One sees their closeness in the fact that she asks him questions like, "How now, my lord! Why do you keep alone?" (3.2.10). She evidently expects an answer. She has noticed that he has pulled away from her after his coronation. That she asks suggests that they have been close, even as the situation begins to change as he moves towards unregulated violence. Remember that this is the man who rushed to send a messenger ahead of him so that she would know of the prophecy. He has moved from open communication to having to be asked. She reaches for a closeness she thought she could rely on that he has started to deny.[3] Judi Dench noted that "The hairline crack widens as she is more and more

[3] The promptbook for the 2009 McAnuff production prefaces this scene, 3.2, with the note, "THIS IS A LOVE SCENE BETWEEN 2 PEOPLE THAT HAVE MURDER(E[D]) TogETHER"

excluded. He wants to go on and she wants to withdraw" (Cook 129). Lady Macbeth's struggle recalls that of some military wives who feel their husbands pull away, sometimes from trauma and sometimes from being changed by what they have seen. One wife, whose husband had returned a different person, wrote, "Does it ever get better? I have faith that my husband will one day open his heart to me, but sometimes it's so hard to keep positive when I feel like I am dying inside" (Barnes 2102). That wife desperately wanted honesty from her husband and was not getting it. When Starnes' husband went through traumatic but classified training, he could not discuss it: "'I can't tell you.' It's a guilty feeling, this thing that sits between us when he's had to say that. How do I support him when I don't know what's happening to him?" (44). Even innocuous silence can create painful distance, especially for spouses who, like Lady Macbeth, are used to knowing and supporting. Unfortunately, as Macbeth begins to move alone along the paths of violence, he pulls away from her, the closeness they used to possess, and her efforts at moderation:

> LADY MACBETH. You must leave this. […]
> MACBETH. Ere the bat hath flown
> His cloistered flight, […]
> there shall be done
> A deed of dreadful note.
> LADY MACBETH. What's to be done?
> MACBETH. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
> Till thou applaud the deed. (3.2.40,45-46,48-51).

She expects him to explain his scheming, suggesting that he would have in the past. However, he does not. He suggests that he is keeping her "innocent" by leaving her out of his plans. Yet, given his use of the word "applaud," he also seems to imagine she will be pleased by what he has done. However, given that she has attempted to avert his thoughts away from suspicions and aggression toward Banquo, telling him he must leave such thoughts, she will not applaud it. Indeed, one could argue that he actively misleads her as to his intentions, because he tells her that they must flatter Banquo when he returns in order to maintain him as an ally (3.2.34-39). He leads her to believe Banquo will make it home alive

and will be brought onside, not be murdered on the highway. That deceit suggests he knew she would not have been complicit had she known beforehand what he intended, even if he holds a hope she would afterwards approve. She did not spur him into that violence, and she would have done what she could to persuade against it, had he maintained their earlier closeness and trusted her. His abandoning of emotional intimacy, his move towards toxic masculinity, makes it harder for her to help him or to restrain him. That pattern continues,

> MACBETH. How say'st thou, that Macduff denies his person
> At our great bidding?
> LADY MACBETH. Did you send to him, sir?
> MACBETH. I hear it by the way; but I will send.
> There's not a one of them but in his house
> I keep a servant fee'd. (3.4.159-164)

One can see in Lady Macbeth's response the monosyllables of slow realization. She is realizing he is keeping secrets from her. Again, his aggression against Macduff happened without her awareness, and it would likely have happened over her objections. That he mentions his spies now, by way of an explanation, suggests that he has not told her of them before. She expects him to confide in her, because they were close. However, he stops. She does not spur him on. He engages in his crimes alone. Indeed, Macbeth's pulling away from his wife ties so strongly with his moral decay that it seems that his abandoning the partnership is part of and facilitates his wrongs.

Despite the obsession of some in blaming her, she is opposed to him going over the edge and committing much of the violence he later commits. After the murder of Duncan, she apparently anticipates a peaceful rule. When they plan the banquet, she is not party to plans to murder Banquo. When she says, "Gentle my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks;/Be bright and jovial among your guests to-night," she means it kindly, not like the deception he intends when he says,

> we
> Must lave our honours in these flattering streams,

> And make our faces vizards to our hearts,
> Disguising what they are. (3.2.30-32,36-39)

His thoughts then are of violence – hers are not. As mentioned, she tells him, "You must leave this" (3.2.40). She wants him to *stop*. He presses on without her. When he obsesses on the fact that Banquo and Fleance live, she notes that that is no obstruction to their place, but it is *Macbeth* acting alone who decides the pair must die (3.2.41-45). Even though he has suggested she will applaud his actions, he knows he does not have her hearty endorsement. After he expounds dark thoughts in his plan to murder Banquo, he remarks, "Thou marvell'st at my words" (3.2.61). She does not know the murder he is planning, but his spiraling dark words are not meeting with her approval. He dives into this darkness fully without her urging on. Macbeth is the one who says

> I am in blood
> Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more,
> Returning were as tedious as go o'er. (3.4.368-370)

He has crossed the line. He went without her, over her warnings and pleadings, and he is the one who refuses to come back. Surprisingly, given the paucity of critical support, Lady Macbeth is not, within the text, entirely without those who acknowledge she is not wholly at fault for her husband's misdeeds. Malcolm, of all people, makes a distinction, referring to the couple as "this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen" (5.8.82).[4] Malcolm achieves the singular feat of remembering that she was ever there. Basically no one else mentions her post-mortem. His word-choice, though, is relevant. Macbeth is a butcher, and she is a fiend. It associates her with wrongdoing but not with the slaughter of innocents the way 'butcher' would have done. Macbeth did the slaughtering, for the most part, on his own. His violence did not come from his military spouse.

[4] The 2004 Wood *Macbeth* at the Stratford Festival drops the reference to Lady Macbeth's suicide, thereby leaving Macbeth alone in the posthumous description of horrors.

Lady Macbeth spurred her husband on in his martial career, which earned them both honor and power in their society. This behavior makes sense in a military culture where a husband's rank so strongly correlates to a wife's position and prestige, particularly if she has had to sacrifice her own ambitions in the service of the mission. However, his further descent into toxic masculinity and murder was done on his own, even over her wishes. In the end, the result costs her her sanity and both of their lives, demonstrating the costs of pursuing that form of masculinity.

Lady Macduff

Lady Macduff and her husband, a military couple, become an important counterpoint to Lady Macbeth and Macbeth. It would be a mistake to, as some do, assume that the only reason for the counterbalance is to oppose a version of good and evil: "Just as Emilia and Iago provides a marital pattern against which Desdemona and Othello may be more sharply drawn, in this play Lady Macduff illustrates those qualities that highlight Lady Macbeth's deficiencies" (Dash 193). The balances between military spouses in Shakespeare hardly divide that simply. Lady Macbeth initially supported an aggressive masculinity that Lady Macduff is not shown to endorse. However, her "deficiencies" belong in part to the husband who put himself beyond her influence. They both, as military spouses, attempt to support their husbands as appropriate, and they share some values and struggles. For example, despite her awareness of his failings, Lady Macduff defends her husband, as one sees Lady Macbeth do. When threatened by the murderers, Lady Macduff does not give up her husband:

> FIRST MURDERER. Where is your husband?
> LADY MACDUFF. I hope, in no place so unsanctified
> Where such as thou mayst find him. (4.2.89-91)

She does not bargain his whereabouts for her safety. Lady Macduff, like Lady Macbeth, experiences trust issues in her marriage. Her husband has not brought her to England with him, nor has he informed her of his plans. Like Lady Macbeth, she has been shut out.

Kenneth Muir suggests that perhaps Macduff kept his wife ill-informed lest he implicate her in his schemes (117 note 1). Even in that forgiving interpretation, she joins Lady Macbeth, kept innocent until she can applaud the deed. Both of their husbands contemplate crossing lines their wives would consider uncrossable – especially in the form of war crimes, like the murder of children and non-combatant women – though only Lady Macbeth's husband actually does; both wives struggle, as modern wives do, with their husbands' choices and with encouraging their husbands in performing a certain kind of masculinity. They must grapple with the reality of violence and questions of the appropriate use of military force. Ladies Macbeth and Macduff are more alike than they are different, even as the outcomes of their initial desires are so dissimilar.

Lady Macduff is vocally critical of her husband's choice to flee. Irene Dash, who imagines that Lady Macbeth has allowed her will and intention to be overtaken by her husband, classes Lady Macduff as one of those "women characters who most win our sympathy and respect [as they] insist on reasoning for themselves," and lauds her as one who "questions her husband's value system, unwilling to accept his power of reasoning over her own" (192). Lady Macduff recognizes that he has taken a risk with her family. She does not, however, question his choice to be a soldier, only his decision to abandon his children and her to danger. She, like Lady Macbeth, makes assertions based on an ideal of a man's role: "Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff both appeal to an heroic conception of manhood; yet one is urging the ultimate act of treachery, the other regretting her husband's failure to defend wife and children as nature commands" (Wells 140). She expects him to have fulfilled a positive aspect of male socialization, defending his family, and she is displeased that he has not. That defense, though, does not preclude violence; indeed, it could often require it. Lady Macduff questions her husband's actions and criticizes his performance of masculinity. She does not, though, criticize the entire institution, just the absence of positive performance.

Macduff, in his flight to England, risks his family's safety. Everyone sees it. Even before he left, Macduff risked their security:

> LENNOX. Sent he to Macduff?
> LORD. He did, and with an absolute "Sir, not I,"
> The cloudy messenger turns me his back,
> And hums, as who should say "You'll rue the time
> That clogs me with this answer." (3.6.44-48)

An abrupt answer like that, to a violent tyrant, risks angering him and endangering the family. Even the messenger knew Macduff would rue that decision. Lady Macduff sees his flight, in addition to his answer, as abandoning the obligation to protect the family:

> He loves us not;
> He wants the natural touch; for the poor wren
> (The most diminutive of birds) will fight,
> Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.
> All is the fear, and nothing is the love,
> As little is the wisdom, where the flight
> So runs against all reason. (4.2.10-16)

Even a small bird would defend her offspring – Lady Macduff expects at least as much from a soldier. Robin Wells argues that "Lady Macduff uses the image of nesting birds to suggest that fighting too is natural" (138). Lady Macduff's focus is on the possible need of violence to defend one's family from external attackers, but a similar metaphor could be applied to Macbeth and the army repelling a foreign invasion. Sometimes, safety requires violence. She thinks he is motivated by cowardly self-interest, neglecting his responsibilities to his family: *all* is the fear, the all carrying the weight of its antithetical opposite, *nothing*, but *nothing* is also the only polysyllabic word in that line, lending it extra weight. He has forgotten what he owes in love. 19th-century character critic A. C. Bradley objects to Lady Macduff's objections: "It does not even occur to her that he has acted from public spirit, or that there is such a thing" (Bradley 392). The presumption behind that comment is that a man could have no important responsibilities but his political ones. He should, as his wife notes, have considered the danger into which he brought his family. He should not prioritize his

family's status to the point of committing treason, but he has done wrong. Bradley also ignores the fact that remarkably *no one* voices a belief his was a good plan. She feels betrayed by him:

> SON. What is a traitor?
> LADY MACDUFF. Why, one that swears and lies. (4.2.53-54)

Though this is a play about political traitors – which Macduff is and is not – she could argue that he is a traitor to their marriage vows, abandoning as he has his role as father and husband. Malcolm as well acknowledges that Macduff has endangered others in his flight:

> MACDUFF. I have lost my hopes.
> MALCOLM. Perchance even there where I did find my doubts.
> Why in that rawness left you wife and child,
> Those precious motives, those strong knots of love,
> Without leave-taking? (4.3.31-35)

Malcolm does not pretend the women and children were left safe, and he calls out Macduff for abandoning his family to the risk. Either Macduff has leagued himself with the tyrant and that is why he feels confident in the safety of his family, or he carelessly risked them. In a sense, in saying that he found his doubts in Macduff's leaving his family, Malcolm is saying one cannot trust a man who would do that. One who has abandoned that positive responsibility as a man cannot be presumed to have strong homosocial principles or honor.[5] Even Macduff himself recognizes that he has endangered his family in his choice:

> MACDUFF. How does my wife?
> ROSS. Why, well.
> MACDUFF. And all my children?
> ROSS. Well too.
> MACDUFF. The tyrant has not battered at their peace? (4.3.203-208).

He asks about the wellness of his family, because he knew it was endangered. He knew there was a possibility Macbeth would attack them. He may not have intended the harm they suffer – Linda Bamber argues, "he has precisely *mis*judged the season; he never meant to

[5] There is a perverse parallel in Eckhart's argument that a soldier cannot trust another soldier who has had an affair, because a man who will betray his marriage vows clearly has no problem betraying people (22).

sacrifice his family for his country" (94) – but judging by his questions, he knew he risked them. Bamber is correct in her assertion that "The claims of the feminine Other are perfectly valid in this play," as Lady Macduff correctly identified her husband's error. What Bamber misjudges is her claim that "the claims of the feminine Other […] are simply ignored by the entire cast" (94). Her claims appear to be understood by the entire cast. Macduff, as his wife noted, abdicated his responsibility to defend his family.

Macduff's culpability in his family's death becomes uncomfortable when one wants Macduff to be the hero, so productions will endeavor to remove it. The Kurzel *Macbeth* undercuts Malcolm's concerns about Macduff by introducing a silent leave-taking. The 2016 *Macbeth* at the Stratford Festival cut the messenger's awareness that Macduff will rue his blunt rebuff to Macbeth (Cimolino). Similarly, their 2004 production cut Macduff's "sir, not I," response, removing some of the suggestion that Macduff took a risk with his family in denying a tyrant (Wood). Khan's 2016 Globe production did likewise, cutting the references to Malcolm's doubts, Macduff's risky "Sir, not I," and changing Macduff's "he has no children" to "you have no children," shifting a contemplated war crime into a rebuff to Malcolm. Exculpating Macduff in this way perpetuates the system where men are never required to learn from their mistakes, where their actions are never their own fault, and where men never contemplate crossing the line or admit the men have gone too far.[6] These efforts diminish his responsibility, but it also reduces the impact of Lady Macduff's death, because in lessening the consequences of his actions it diminishes the lesson he must learn.

However, after the loss of his wife, for which he can blame himself, Macduff does not follow Macbeth into toxic masculinity. Instead, from this relationship, even her death, Macduff demonstrates that men can have feelings and that showing feelings is better than

[6] This attitude that men are never at fault also appeared in Elaine Brye's discussion of sexism in the military (referenced in the *Othello* chapter). Brye describes pressure on women to overcome sexism, and pressures her daughter to tough it out, but describes no pressure on men not to be sexist and does not suggest she ever taught her servicemember sons not to be sexist (Brye and Satter 60-65)

not.[7] Malcolm, himself a supposedly pristine example of masculinity, allows for a certain amount of emotion, but only when it can be turned into manly action:

> Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak
> Whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break […]
> Be comforted:
> Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge
> To cure this deadly grief. (4.3.246-7,252-254)

He acknowledges the grief and encourages Macduff to give voice to it. However, he also ties it back to the idea of masculine performance and revenge. Grief is to be experienced, he counsels, but also it is to be cured through violence. Macduff, on the other hand, is willing to embrace his emotions more fully, even at the risk of appearing less macho before his compatriots, because he recognizes that his pain results from profound loss of a significant relationship:

> MALCOLM. Dispute it like a man.
> MACDUFF. I shall do so,
> But I must also feel it as a man:
> I cannot but remember such things were
> That were most precious to me. (4.3.259-263)

He recognizes that emotions can be reasonable and that performance of hegemonic masculinity is not always the priority. Indeed, not feeling these feelings would be more deleterious than feeling them is. He can recognize that his ability to feel is not inherently emasculating but that, as a man, there is a place for these emotions. Contrast his reaction with Brutus' performed stoicism when Messala tells him of Portia's death. Marisa Smith notes that some VA therapy groups endeavor "to reinforce a new, posttraumatic masculinity, emphasizing self-disclosure, empathy, and emotional expression," to counter the damage the hegemonic masculinity does (185). However, his embrace of an emotionally healthier form of masculinity is not self-motivated. It stems from his wife's death. Of course, the natural quality of these emotions is not always recognized. Wells presumes that, despite "the

[7] For some more sources about the struggle between emotions and hegemonic masculinity and in healthcare, see the discussion in *1 Henry IV* and *Julius Caesar*.

personal motive for tyrannicide" Macduff feels after "the murder of his wife and children," Macduff is too "gentle and unwarlike" to kill (120). Considering the role the thanes would have had in battle – and the power Macduff would need to be able to fight Macbeth in the end – it is unreasonable to assume that Macduff could not engage in the requisite violence, unless he is motivated by the fact that Macduff is tied to his family and weeps. However, despite Wells' assertion that "without Malcolm's incitement to vengeance it is doubtful whether this gentle and unwarlike noble would have had the resolution to kill his country's enemy," the audience never sees Macduff deny that goal (120). He will "Dispute it like a man," and soon he will revenge. He will also feel, as a man. That Macduff finds space for emotions in his masculine performance challenges the emotionless stoicism expected of 21st-century men, particularly soldiers. These emotions are deeply tied to his wife.

Although Macduff never arrives at the toxic masculinity that characterizes Macbeth by the end, he does, in his grief, flirt with the line, almost following emotion and bloodlust too far. Consider his reaction to Malcolm's suggestion of revenge:

> MALCOLM. Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge,
> To cure this deadly grief.
> MACDUFF. He has no children. (4.3.253-255)

Some have suggested Macduff means that a man with children would never do what Macbeth has done – order the slaughter of children. Yet, Lady Macbeth says she has had a child, so Macbeth did have a child who, if he has now no children, he has lost. Then, Macbeth would know and did do it. Could there, then, be another meaning? Macduff may mean that, as Macbeth has no children, there is nothing Macduff can do in revenge, as there is nothing he can do to Macbeth that would hurt as much as what Macbeth has done to him. His statement raises the chilling possibility that Macduff is considering a war crime. The Geneva Convention, to which American soldiers are subject, states that "Persons taking no active part in the hostilities […] shall in all circumstances be treated humanely." Murdering the family

members of the enemy is no such thing.[8] Is Macduff saying he *would* murder Macbeth's children if he could, as that is the only kind of vengeance there could be for this? That would be crossing a line that, for Macduff or for a modern soldier, would be beyond the pale. By looking at Macduff's comment in light of a modern understanding of war, international law, and military policy, one can more fully understand the nature of what Macduff describes when he links children and vengeance, and one can see more clearly the line he considers crossing. In that stark moment, one fears that no one, now that his wife is gone, will be present to talk Macduff down. Military spouses must be aware of the risk attached to military violence: "The ramifications of vowing 'for better or for worse' in a military marriage are heightened – I'm attached, by law and in spirit, to my husband, and by association to the institution and national populace he serves" (Burana 296). After Abu Ghraib, Burana felt betrayed by all of those soldiers and the institution (296-7). She had to grapple with that as a wife: "Even though I knew better, I was forced to wonder: Was my husband capable of such evil? I was familiar with his relaxed, fair-minded, at-home persona, but his combat-self was unknowable. The shock had rendered me paranoid. Everyone was suspect" (297). Her husband was capable of violence – everyone is – so she had to ask herself how likely she thought it was he would commit it, would go too far. Fortunately, Macduff does not go on to commit a series of war crimes – for example, he never appears to hunt Lady Macbeth in revenge for Lady Macduff's murder. Instead, he experiences his emotions, processes them in a healthy way, and directs them into overthrowing a violent dictator.

[8] In the 2016 political primaries, Republican candidate Donald Trump suggested that the US was "fighting a very politically correct war" and should respond to the threat of ISIS by killing civilians: "The other thing with the terrorists is you have to take out their families, when you get these terrorists, you have to take out their families" (LoBianco). Retaliatory executions are war crimes under international law, and in the US military, an order to commit a war crime is not a legal order (Morton). General Michael Hayden, former Director of the National Security Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency, rejected Trump's assertion that the President could require such actions: "The armed forces of the United States will not carry out orders that are so obviously illegal and in violation of the laws of armed conflict" (Stigall).

One struggle for military spouses is awareness of the violence attendant on military service. Violence makes people uncomfortable. One Special Forces mother "mused, 'How do I respond to someone who asks me what my son does when I know he's a trained killer who steps into harm's way regularly? It's not easy to strike up a conversation about that.'" To avoid discomfort and preserve operation security, when strangers ask what he does, she says he works in "Security" (Brye and Satter 121). She also noted that "Other longtime friends and acquaintances who have a sense of what he does simply don't ask about him. It makes them too uncomfortable, almost as if he had a terrible disease. Still others tell me, 'I would never let my son do something like that.' Is that supposed to be comforting? As if I had any control over it!" (Brye and Satter 121). As her husband hoped for assignment to fighter jets, Rachel Starnes worried "that Ross might one day be responsible for taking lives" – in contrast, Ross told her "I could be the guy protecting Marines on the ground who call in air support. I could be saving lives too" (34). Violence, when used appropriately, can be defensive.[9] *Macbeth* commands this issue be addressed. Lady Macduff's language stresses the defensive uses of violence. That is not a pacifist position, but it favors life in general. Macduff, though, when he contemplates war crimes, like the slaughter of children, contemplates crossing the line from acceptable violence into unacceptable. For Lady Macbeth, violence becomes a heavy burden, as it is really awareness of and occasional complicity in her husband's wrongs. Lady Macbeth appears to buckle under her awareness of her husband's war crimes. Lady Macbeth's infamous hand-washing has a modern parallel in a combat veteran Angela Ricketts mentions, who eventually went insane: "now he can't touch his daughters because he thinks he sees blood on his hands" (195). That was before he shot himself, potentially began hallucinating, and went to the psych ward. Macbeth has

[9] Many spouses avoid talking about the actual violence. Even pacifist spouses like Kristin Henderson and Marissa Bootes seem to focus more on the destructiveness of war or war as a broad concept, rather than specifically the violence (Henderson *While* 133,250).

crossed a horrible line. In her sleepwalking scene, she reveals what haunts her: "the thane of Fife had a wife. Where is she now?" (5.1.44-45). That line is often not given enough weight in performance and critical commentary, where it often seems glossed over as a subsidiary comment on her madness. She is sane when seen after the murders of Duncan and Banquo, and after the slaughter of the woman and children, she is not. Remember, she is a wife, and she lost a child. Dash recognizes that horror, noting that "Lady Macbeth's query might also be one about herself. 'The Thane of Cawdor had a wife; where is she now?'" (200). Lady Macbeth's madness, caused by her husband's actions, show how Macbeth has destroyed Glamis' wife, as well as Fife's. Claiming that the madness of Lady Macbeth is purely a slow boil from the killing of Duncan reduces the importance of all of Macbeth's other crimes, especially the slaughter of Lady Macduff, as if they could not themselves cause the harm. "It is the last and perhaps the worst of Macbeth's crimes – this brutal murder of Lady Macduff and her innocent babes" and it is fitting that it be recognized as a horror for Lady Macbeth to have experienced as well (Terry 63). Some productions have noticed the horror. The 2004 Stratford production underlined Lady Macbeth's feelings about Lady Macduff, playing under the line "The thane of Fife had a wife" the desperate sentiment "please tell me where she is" (Wood). The 2009 *Macbeth* expressed it in its handling of the letter Lady Macbeth writes while sleepwalking: "WHAT IS THIS LETTER -- A WARNing TO LADy MACDUFF her fantasy?" (McAnuff). The play provides no answer to the nature of the letter, but that production saw it as Lady Macbeth's desperate wish that she had been able to warn Macduff's family. In contrast, in the Kurzel *Macbeth*, although Lady Macbeth tells her husband "What's done cannot be undone" when she psychically divines that he is about to murder Macduff's family, she sits silently by as he burns them alive – the thanes inexplicably also do nothing to prevent the atrocity that in this version they are fully cognizant of – and then goes insane, perhaps from the murder but perhaps for other reasons. Although by 5.1

Macbeth had begun to act independently – she never told him to murder Banquo, let alone to slaughter children – Lady Macbeth feels horribly responsible for the fact that he has killed their friends. The balance of acceptable and unacceptable violence is important, and the wives must bear this consciousness of their husbands' role in it.

Eventually, with respect to violence and emotion, Macduff finds a balance, the sort that has been absent in Macbeth. He finds he can pursue his feelings and his obligations as a man:

> MALCOLM. Be this the whetstone of your sword. Let grief
> Convert to anger. Blunt not the heart, enrage it.
> MACDUFF. O, I could play the woman with mine eyes
> And braggart with my tongue! But, gentle heavens,
> Cut short all intermission! Front to front
> Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself.
> Within my sword's length set him. If he 'scape,
> Heaven forgive him too!
> MALCOLM. This tune goes manly. (4.3.268-276)

Although he continues to accept a gendered notion of weeping, Macduff eventually manages to balance his grief with his impulse for vengeance to convert both into an acceptable behavior. Notably, his balance has not inspired a comparable shift in the other male. Malcolm continues to prioritize aggressive behavior, preferring that to displays of emotion and asserting that such violence is manly. Asserting some sort of healthy emotional life throughout the kingdom is a ways off.

Some productions have recognized the importance of Lady Macduff, choosing to highlight her where criticism and performance history have tended to obscure her.[10] The 2004 John Wood production of *Macbeth* at the Stratford Festival chose to have Malcolm's

[10] Like some of the other wives, Lady Macduff has been underappreciated by directors and critics despite her counterweight to the Macbeths. Like Lady Mortimer, she often vanishes from productions: "Unfortunately, audiences have seldom seen Lady Macduff; even fewer have witnessed her murder" (Dash 195). Indeed, "not until well into the twentieth century was Lady Macduff restored to stage versions" (Dash 195). As is the case with Lady Mortimer, there are ramifications for the text in removing the second military spouse. When these wives are cut, their effects on the play are cut, their effects on the audience are denied, and the parallels between the women and the world they describe and the world we live in are obscured entirely.

coronation happen off side while the center stage went to Lady Macduff and her two sons. Macduff sees them, looks, then turns downstage and falls to his knees. She sings the lullaby she had earlier sung to their child, and he weeps. Revenge, then, does not take away the pain of his wife's murder. It did not take away his awareness of his culpability. There are some spots that never wash off. Moreover, while she sings, according to the promptbook, "enter [upstage center] Macbeth to look at her." To have Macbeth looking at her as well foregrounds Lady Macduff's centrality and highlights the murder of the family as a central sin, perhaps bearing in mind a modern awareness, like the Geneva Convention, that murdering civilians and families is a war crime. It is not just the regicide that is wrong. The production positioned the murder of the family not as incidental to the situation but central to it, unforgettable. The thing that never washes off.

In the end, although they are not shown together, Lady Macduff has a large impact on her husband's moral, ethical, and emotional position throughout the play. Linda Bamber called Macduff "a glimpse of sanity from the horrid fascination of our madness" in *Macbeth*, and that position stems from his wife (13). Lady Macduff provides a strong call for the performance of a masculinity that defends the weak instead of abandoning them, that protects the family. It is also through processing the news of his wife's murder that Macduff must confront the constraints masculinity places on emotion. He begins, because of her, to move towards a version of masculinity that is more productive than that he has practiced.

Lady Macbeth and Macbeth confront a version of masculinity that is violent. It can be used for positive ends, such as, in their violent world, protection. Lady Macbeth, driven by the way her husband's rank shapes her life, encourages his martial valor also for the status it brings them. However, the violent masculinity can also be used for treason and oppression. Both women, in the end, suffer tragically for how the men who run their world choose to use their power and for how the men refuse to listen to women who question those decisions.

Lady Macbeth is driven insane by her husband's murders, and while Lady Macduff's husband may not actually commit the war crimes he contemplates, she finds herself and her children the victim of one. Notably, neither woman calls for pure pacifism, which would be wholly untenable in the state of their world; yet, both demonstrate the need for a manhood more forgiving and more emotionally concerned than the one they must live in.

Chapter 6: **"Thy valiantness was mine": Virgilia and Volumnia** as Military (In)Dependents

Coriolanus contains fascinating female characters, often underappreciated by criticism and productions. Volumnia is strong and martial, determined to teach her son to be a man by her society's exacting standards and rejoicing in his success and military honors.[1] Virgilia is more understated, admiring her husband but expressing much more worry for his safety than Volumnia does. Virgilia, overtly characterized by her silences and her tears, is the more overlooked.[2] These women, their developing similarities, and their relationship to their martial culture merit a more military-context-based examination. In modern military culture, the term "dependent" was replaced years ago with "family member," "when the Army realized wives could have a lot of responsibilities[…]. Even so, the old term is still used" (Biank 71). When an older military spouse told her that a specific guidebook could teach her to be "a proper dependent," Mollie Gross remarked that "With [her] husband gone all the time and [her] having to do everything by [herself, she was] anything but 'dependent!' [She was her] husband's 'Independent!'" (36). This remark seems to have gained some traction among military spouses, as it was later referenced in *1001 Things To Love About Military Life*. It is in that spirit that this chapter considers Virgilia and Volumnia as military (in)dependents. Although these women can present a startling dichotomy, this chapter will focus on analyzing elements that they share within their military culture, rather than their divergent personalities or responses to cultural standards, in order to examine the components

[1] Redgrave noted Volumnia is "a woman who was prepared for her son to be killed rather than for him to lose his honour or his country. It's a concept that I think is very unfamiliar today except in military families" ("Ralph Fiennes").

[2] She is not wholly unacknowledged. Unhae Langis remarks, "Scholarship has virtually ignored the extent of Virgilia's courageous forbearance in resisting hegemonic masculinity and enduring Coriolanus's times away at battle" and "Soft-spoken Virgilia is often interpreted in criticism as the cipher character of the silent, submissive wife" but argues Virgilia's "insistent femininity and protection of the domestic sphere represent Shakespeare's particular critique against Rome's hyper masculine ideology" (19). James Corrigan, who performed in *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus* in the RSC 2017 season, noted that "In *Coriolanus*, the most powerful people in that play are the women" (Corrigan, Waldmann, and Woodall).

of their behavior illuminated by understanding their military background. Therefore, instead of analyzing them in respective sections, this chapter will resume a point-by-point analysis like that seen in the *Othello* chapter, focusing on assimilation to the military culture, hegemonic masculinity, and relationship with civilians.

Volumnia and Virgilia, and their relationships with others, are better understood when one reads them as (in)dependents living in a military culture.[3] Volumnia endeavors to enmesh her daughter-in-law more thoroughly into their martial culture. As Volumnia has seniority, within the culture of military spouses, it is almost expected that Volumnia will act as her mentor and supporter, and that is the role she plays here. Volumnia, herself a byproduct of that martial culture, has educated her son in the aggressive hegemonic masculinity and turned him into a great warrior, something in which Volumnia takes great pride. While Volumnia's role here is almost invariably painted as negative, as though she damaged her son, he did that on his own – Volumnia raised him to be a man in his culture; she did not herself cause him to embrace toxic masculinity. It is imperative to realize the risks of blaming women for their men's failings. As long as a culture refuses to hold men accountable for their actions, those toxic behaviors and practices cannot be amended. Volumnia's pride in her achievement, in comparison, is fitting, as wives and mothers continue to play an important role in the perpetuation of the military culture and its values into the next generation of servicemembers. As a result of their shared relationship with masculinity and the military, Volumnia begins the play with a disdain for civilians who do not understand their world yet profit by its sacrifices, and Virgilia, though more soft-spoken,

[3] It is difficult to speak firmly to Volumnia's relationship to the military outside of her status as a Blue Star Mother. Though Plutarch and Livy say little of Coriolanus' mother, they say even less of her husband. What one knows for sure is that he is deceased and that he was of the house of the Marcii, which had produced a king, a man who had been censor twice, and other illustrious Romans (Plutarch 237). They were a patrician line (Plutarch 237). Because for much of Roman history many officer positions were only open to patricians (Roth 14), patricians made up most of the army's officer corps (Roth 16). Therefore, there is some likelihood she was, in her days, a Blue Star Wife. However, in this play, her function seems mostly to be that of Blue Star Mother teaching Virgilia how to be a Blue Star Wife.

begins to share this contempt. In 21st-century America, where only 1% of American families are Blue Star Families, such a divide between military families and civilians remains quite common and increasingly worrying. After all, civilians are empowered in the US to vote on the Commander-in-Chief and the DoD and VA budgets, and they pass judgments on the value of past military service and the merit of military benefits, and civilians are empowered to do all these things without necessarily having any understanding at all of the military, its culture, or its sacrifices. While Kathy Roth-Douquet and Frank Schaeffer, in their discussion of the class issues underlying the civil-military divide, imagine multiple unrealistic futures based on an expanding American civil-military divide – up to and including Turkey invading France – Shakespeare's text itself clarifies the risks and damage of a cultural split between the civilians and the military. In *Coriolanus*, audiences see the way in which the women of the martial culture contribute to its perpetuation, both as the mothers and wives of soldiers and as the instillers and maintainers of its values, even against opposition from culturally-empowered civilians who do not understand the military world. Reading these women as (in)dependents allows for a more empathetic reading that appreciates that their behavior is not based on inherent character flaws but rather from their place in a broader culture wherein their choices make sense.

The Mis-evaluation of the Women

Critics often underrate Virgilia. Dorothea Kehler, for example, maintains that Volumnia "is the only major female character who survives in Shakespeare's tragedies" (207 note 47). Virgilia, in fact, also holds this distinction, so long as you choose to regard her as an important figure as opposed to a minor one. Coppélia Kahn notes that in *Coriolanus*, "Shakespeare moves the feminine from the margins where he placed it in *Julius Caesar* to the center, making Volumnia a major character," somehow also managing to ignore Virgilia (*Roman* 147). Other critics are more bluntly dismissive: "The Rome of *Coriolanus* is a

fiercely masculine world. Only four female characters have speaking parts in the play. Of these four, only Volumnia makes any impression whatsoever, and she behaves with a thoroughly man-like directness" (Smith *Homosexual Desire* 33). By that standard, Volumnia is notable and impressive only for her "man-like" qualities, as opposed to, say, her patriotism or her language. Furthermore, it relegates Virgilia to the rank of the utterly forgettable for simply being more delicate in behavior; her quietness is mistaken for meekness. Of course, she has her silences. Her husband, returning from war, greets her as "My gracious silence" (2.1.184).[4] In that moment, she also weeps. Volumnia later advises her that she should weep less and talk more, "Daughter, speak you./He cares not for your weeping" (5.3.177-178). Virgilia, who does have her moments of speaking, presents a challenge for an actress, given the weight she must convey whilst silent onstage. However, one should not mistake *silence* for *absence*. She matters even in her mute moments. Among other things, she is *present*.[5] For example, she too sues for Rome's safety and is among those who shame Coriolanus with their knees (5.3.191). The characters, for all they speak of her silence, do not disregard her, listing her presence among the Romans as one of Coriolanus' most significant ties there. Virgilia's silence and tears relate her to other military spouses in Shakespeare who are often overlooked, such as Lady Mortimer, discussed in the chapter on *1 Henry IV*. Virgilia, as this chapter will demonstrate, brings more to the play than these claims would have one believe.

Much of the earlier criticism of this play hinged on psychoanalytic readings, specifically readings of the Coriolanus and Volumnia relationship. Despite recognizing her contribution to her son's martial greatness, these critical commentaries tend to blame Volumnia unfairly for the cultural perpetuation and the negative outcomes, much in the same way that Lady Macbeth is deemed to have destroyed her husband. Furthermore, these

[4] In the Lepage production, although he calls her silence, he greets her loudly, exclaiming, lifting her, spinning her around, and kissing her long. In some ways, it recalled Othello hailing Desdemona as his fair warrior.
[5] The Fiennes film in particular insists on her presence, including her in the background of such official and significant events as the signing of the peace treaty between the Volsces and Rome.

discussions rarely acknowledge the roles of culture in their situations. In doing so, these critical readings perpetuate the system wherein men are not accountable for their actions, thereby ensuring the men and their culture can never be made to change. Janet Adelman, a psychoanalytic critic, admits that "even more insistently than *Macbeth*, *Coriolanus* problematizes the construction of heroic masculinity," but she locates the point of true damage "in the deprivation that is the maternal signature in both plays" (147). Coppélia Kahn feels that Coriolanus and Macbeth, "The two virile heroes of these plays[,] are really unfinished men – boys, who fight or murder because they have been convinced by women that violence will make them manly" (*Man's Estate* 19). She recognizes that Volumnia has had a hand in creating her son as a man: "Volumnia's first speech is a straightforward account of how she made her son a man" (Kahn *Man's Estate* 155-6). She further argues that "The more the heroes try to surpass or destroy their rivals and thus prove their masculinity, the greater their fusion with the willful women who drive them on" (Kahn *Man's Estate* 19). Kahn would later move beyond these more psychoanalytically-motivated views and acknowledge that "Using psychoanalytic paradigms, several critics have focussed [*sic*] on Volumnia's role in her son's intra-psychic contradictions, without exploring the social construction of that role" (*Roman* 155). One can see in that statement a pervasive sense that these women have made the men this way and, by extension, that the men cannot be held accountable for their behavior. Perhaps the definitive suggestion that the women are at fault for the men's actions occurs in D.W. Harding's analysis:

> The ultimate view of the man as victim of the woman's ideal of manhood is given in *Coriolanus*. Wives and mistresses may have great influence, but it is nothing like the shaping control that the dominating mother can have over the son she has brought up; and Volumnia provides Shakespeare's most blood-chilling study of the destructive consequences of a woman's living out at someone else's expense her fantasy of what manhood should be. Once again, as in *Macbeth*, a man has to abide in the real world of men the bargain made

> for him by a woman who has played with the idea of manhood but retreats from its final implications. (Harding 252)[6]

There is an emphasis there on the idea of the bad mother who destroys men, even more than in his eyes wives can do. He blames the women, especially in *Coriolanus*, claiming they are living out a standard of masculinity – one that he imagines they created single-handedly – at the expense of the men. The statement that Volumnia does this at Coriolanus' expense suggests that the violence he performs can contain no value, despite the fact that his violence, such as at Corioles, defends his country, and suggests that she takes these actions knowing they could be damaging to her son. Although she knows the war risks his life, she does not seem inclined to risk his well-being, at least not without gain of glory, honor, and national well-being. Coriolanus has become a man under the guidance of his mother, but he does act, as a man, alone.[7] Why is her willingness to see him to war for the good of his country unreasonable but his statement that a man should love his country more than himself not (1.6.91)? They are motivated by the same patriotic impulse. Of course, not all critics have been so unfairly disdainful of Volumnia:

> The psychoanalytic critics have argued that Coriolanus inherits his violence from his mother's lessons. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to venture that both the son and the mother, as well as the patricians and plebians and other members of the play's community, assume, perform, and develop the violent warrior ethos which already circulates within the language of the play. Volumnia's speech is not significantly more violent than that of other characters in the play, but as Coriolanus's mother, her words are overestimated. (Lowe 90).

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[6] Though Volumnia is mother and not wife, Harding, Kahn, and Adelman align Volumnia with the wife Lady Macbeth.

[7] Harding's views on the parental relationship become decidedly more generous when it involves no mothers:

> In handling this theme in its most fundamental form, that of the relation between the mother and the man-child she has created (for Coriolanus might as well have had no father for all the play tells us), Shakespeare evidently finished with it. He passed on to the last plays; and there, especially in the repeated handling of a father-daughter relation, he offers a very different view of the possible sharing of human experience between the sexes. (253).

Evidently, in Harding's conception, Lady Macbeth and Volumnia ruin men, but the fathers who followed Volumnia chronologically are guilty of no such wrongs. Considering that the fathers who follow Volumnia include the manipulative Prospero, the explosively violent Cymbeline, and the incestuous Antiochus, perhaps Harding should have been a little less sure of the manifold benefits of Shakespearean fatherhood.

Lowe recognizes the tendency of certain critical schools to condemn the mother. Lowe notes also what the psychoanalytic analysis leaves out, the effect of the cultural milieu and the community structure that could contribute to a man's performance of masculinity. Volumnia, as Lowe notes, is not more violent or more interested in the martial culture than those that surround her. Critics should widen their scope of analyzing the women beyond simply blaming Volumnia entirely. This thesis will move beyond blaming the mother and engage heavily with the social construction of the roles of spouse, man, and soldier.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Masculinity here is enforced to a standard of Coriolanus' community. That is the risky component: "we are watching the indictment of a way of life, the perverting Roman emphasis on *virtue*, where 'valour is the chiefest virtue,' not just one man's weakness" (Parker 7). The risk is the manner in which the masculinity is performed, without regard to cost or potential damage, prioritized as a pinnacle virtue. Cominius, speaking before the patricians, avows that

> The deeds of Coriolanus
> Should not be uttered feebly. It is held
> That valor is the chiefest virtue and
> Most dignifies the haver. (2.2.98-101).

Nevertheless, he makes no reference to the cost borne. The scars Coriolanus received doing these deeds and displaying this valor will be shown as trophies in this moment, not as a sign of pain and cost. There is a sense even among the characters that the masculinity is not innate but is indeed performed. Consider Volumnia's words to her son: "You might have been enough the man you are/ With striving less to be so" (3.2.23-24). She is aware that the standard of manhood is something one can strive towards, and indeed she seems to tell her son that he can achieve the mark with less determined effort. His danger arises from his obsessive impulse to perform even toxic elements of his culture's masculinity. Even in her

glorying in his performance, Volumnia demonstrates awareness that that masculinity must be performed, that it is *not* innate: "To a cruel war I sent him, from whence he returned, his brows bound with oak. I tell thee, daughter, I sprang not more in joy at first hearing he was a man-child than now in first seeing he had proved himself a man" (1.3.14-18). There is, then, more to being a man than being born a boy. A male proves his manhood, then, through valor and success in the field. She feels more joy in his successful performance of masculinity than in the mere fact of his maleness. Modern military spouses demonstrate a similar belief:

> Linny said she realized her days as her son's protector were over the day he left to join the Army.
>
> "He had to go off and be a man," she said. "I felt like my heart was being yanked out of me."
>
> When she first saw her son after boot camp, she recognized the transformation from little boy to confident young man. (Barnes 1080).

When her son enlisted, that military spouse recognized her son had become a man. His manhood is tied to his service, not simply to a fact of his birth. While Volumnia might say that she sent her son to war and seems blamed by some, like Adelman,[8] for that, a mother could not necessarily stop a son from enlisting. The spouse, Linny, that Barnes cites feels she had to allow her son to serve as she had to allow him to grow up. It hurts, but it must be done. Even sending Coriolanus to become consul does not exclude him from performing a brand of masculinity: "However differently they are played, both soldier and consul are cultural scripts for maleness. Though Volumnia has not written them, she associates her role as mother in 'making' her son with coaching him in those roles, and thus exerts a powerful pull on him" (Kahn 154). Volumnia must teach her son to perform manhood, and she uses the standard of manhood in their culture.

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[8] Adelman includes Volumnia's willingness to send her son to a "cruel war" as a sign that she is a withholding mother who denies her son mother's milk and who feels that "To be noble is to die; to live is to be ignoble and to eat too much" (148). Rackin, who Adelman cites and considers Volumnia "almost a caricature of the stern virtues of a Roman matron," feels Volumnia has "contempt for motherly feelings and values" and taught Coriolanus "a morbid horror of everything associated with femininity" (72-73).

Volumnia, for her part, encourages her son to be strong and martial, and apparently, she succeeds and has habitually succeeded at that. Research on hegemonic masculinity suggests that "Fathers tend to enforce gender stereotypes more than mothers, especially in sons. This tendency extends across activities and domains, including toy preferences, play styles, chores, discipline, interaction, and personality assessments" (Adams and Coltrane 234). However, Plutarch suggests that after the early death of his father, Coriolanus transferred all esteem he would have owed a male parent onto his mother,[9] thereby empowering her with the kind of gender-enforcement ability and status that American culture invests in the male parent. In the American military, Volumnia's situation would not have been remarkable: "My children live in a land without dads; many of their friends' fathers are deployed too" (Buckholtz). It should not shock that Volumnia would, as a result, have a large impact on her child's life. The citizens who surround Coriolanus, even those who do not know him personally, trace his valor to his mother: "I say unto you, what he hath done famously he did it to that end. Though soft-conscienced men can be content to say it was for his country, he did it to please his mother and to be partly proud, which he is, even till the altitude of his virtue" (1.3.36-40). Just as First Citizen believes Coriolanus regards his mother before his country, his relationship with his mother is positioned before his own pride, which is deemed only part of a factor in his decisions, though he is said to be as proud as his virtue – his *virtus*, his masculine valor – will allow.[10] Coriolanus himself acknowledges he

[9] "as for other, the only respect that made them valliant, was they hoped to haue honour: but touching *Martius*, the only thing that made him to loue honour, was the ioye he sawe his mother dyd take of him. For he thought nothing made him so happie and honorable, as that his mother might heare euery bodie praise and commend him, that she might allwayes see him returne with a crowne vpon his head, and that she might still embrace him with teares running downe her cheeks for ioye. […] *Martius* thinking all due to his mother, that had been also due to his father if he had liued: dyd not only content himselse to reioyce and honour her, but at her desire tooke a wife also, by whome he had two children, and yet neuer left his mothers house therefore" (Plutarch 239). Coriolanus pursues honor, as the citizens noted, because it would please his mother to see him successful as a soldier, and her pleasure is part of what pleases him in his own career. He gives her the honor and respect he would otherwise have awarded a father, in addition to (though not instead of) that due to a mother.

[10] This feeling towards performed patriotism may itself be a reflection of the different world experiences of Blue Star Families and civilians. Henderson notes that while on a Fourth of July celebration, she found herself moved

learned his valor-seeking ways from his mother: "My mother, you wot well/My hazards still have been your solace" (4.1.32-33). The phrasing builds in an antithetical relationship between 'hazards' and 'solace.' They are the weighted points in the sentence. His danger, where he won honor, has been the soothing pleasure of her time. She taught him to pursue those risks and that glory to win her esteem and that of their culture. He even refers to her, when speaking to others, as "My mother/ Who has a charter to extol her blood" (1.9.16-17). He knows his honor is hers. He, as the bearer of her blood, gives her cause to brag. Even Volumnia acknowledges that she made him a soldier. She reminds him that he has admitted her role there: "sweet son, as thou hast said/My praises made thee first a soldier" (3.2.133-134). When she pleads for Rome, she reminds him of this making again, "Thou art my warrior;/I holp to frame thee" (5.3.72-73). That sense that mothers make warriors persists. Elaine Brye described the pride felt by "those of us who gave birth to these magnificent beings and helped prepare them to achieve what they're achieving today" (Brye and Satter 213). This is a component of the self-perpetuating culture. When she greets her kneeling, returning son, Volumnia praises him for his soldiering, almost as Lady Macbeth lauds her husband with his titles:

> Nay, my good soldier, up.
> My gentle Martius, worthy Caius, and
> By deed-achieving honor newly named—
> What is it? Coriolanus must I call thee? (2.1.179-182).

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by her family's relationship to the long history of service (*While* 299). However, her husband raised a different point:

> "I love my country. But . . . […] All the patriotism feels a little bit alienating, coming from people who did nothing but wave a flag." He didn't resent them. He was just experiencing that Different Planets feeling I had sometimes felt around people with no one in the fight. He went on, "We weren't patriotic over there. We never knew what was going on, it was just one big slog. We wanted to get it over with and get out. We weren't allowed to wave flags anyway." (Henderson *While* 299).

The families served, and that is patriotic without requiring further performance. It was civilians who had an opinion on what patriotism should look like. It is the Citizens who want Coriolanus' service to look different (or feel different to them). He served, and that should be enough.

She calls him, as an endearment, “my good soldier,” as in a later scene she calls him, “my warrior” (5.3.72). It contains the same possessive quality as calling him “my son,” with the emphasis on the link between them. Moreover, soldier is the only polysyllabic line in her first phrase, which places the stress on that quality. She lists his names, building the weight on them, until she reaches the ‘and’ – the last syllable of the line and therefore stressed, with an enjambment – and invoking his newly-earned cognomen. Everything there stresses that she leads him to focus on his martial standing. Furthermore, not only did she teach him this perspective and extol this quality in her blood, but one comes to understand that he entirely got this quality from her, perhaps in training and perhaps, a little, in blood:

> I mock at death
> With as big heart as thou. Do as thou list.
> Thy valiantness was mine; thou suck’st it from me,
> But owe thy pride thyself. (3.2.155-158)

Saying “thy valiantness was mine” makes it sound as though, Lady Macbeth-like, she draws her pride from Coriolanus, related to how his success there pleases her. However, Volumnia also says he sucked his valiantness from her. *His* valiantness came from *her* valiantness. In the Fiennes film, she, speaking these words, thrusts a flag into his hands, as though to remind him that she had served with honor and been valiant before he had even been born, that the family honor had been hers first. Coriolanus, in that film, shows a teary-eyed emotion, as though recognizing the profound significance of her recalled valor. Coriolanus gets his ‘man-up’ quality from her as well, as Macbeth draws some of his valor and will from his wife. In the Fiennes *Coriolanus*, during the intercutting of the Corioles scenes and Volumnia and Virgilia’s dialogue, Volumnia’s discussion saying she could see Coriolanus in her mind lecturing his men is played as a voiceover of Coriolanus pulling himself to his feet and lecturing his men, suggesting that she is the voice in his head now and that voice gets him on his feet to serve again. Volumnia, it is widely acknowledged in *Coriolanus*, taught her son how to perform masculinity and turned him into a great warrior.

Despite how much the critics blame Volumnia for her son's toxic behaviors, even Volumnia notices how self-destructive his performance of masculinity is and tries to drag him from it, demonstrating a narrative critique of the toxic components of the masculinity Volumnia had lauded. Volumnia can see that her son's efforts to cling to his conception of what a man is are undermining his success. Recall Volumnia's recognition that masculinity is in part performance:

> You might have been enough the man you are
> With striving less to be so. Lesser had been
> The thwartings of your dispositions if
> You had not showed them how you were disposed
> Ere they lacked power to cross you (3.2.23-27).

She notes that his focus on pride, on refusing to give ground to an enemy, has impeded his receipt of that which he wants. She even notes that, in a martial context, this would be unbelievably foolish and the costs tremendously greater (3.2.51-57). She wants him to get it together, to give up his aggressive stances at least a little to actually get something done:

> CORIOLANUS Let them hang!
> VOLUMNIA Ay, and burn too. […]
> Pray be counseled.
> I have a heart as little apt as yours,
> But yet a brain that leads my use of anger
> To better vantage. (3.2.28-29,36-39)

Volumnia is no pacifist, but she has self-control and would like him to join her in that. In contradistinction to many of Volumnia's detractors, director Robert Lepage states that Volumnia "represents compromise," and he suggests that the problem in the play is that, "Coriolanus doesn't understand compromise" (13). Self-control in the face of rage is not a feature of toxic masculinity, but it is of boundless importance in a warrior and in a man. Volumnia tries to rein him in and return him to a more healthful and productive mode of masculinity that would, indeed, contribute to his being a better leader and a better soldier. He, though, pushes away from her and ignores that counsel.

Volumnia taught her son how to be a man according to the tenets of her culture. He, she, and their community acknowledge that she contributed to his success as a military leader. For them, being a man and being a soldier are entwined, learnable identities. (We will examine below how she teaches Virgilia about a wife's role in this culture.) However, he pushed beyond her teachings into an unhealthy and unproductive form of masculinity, and he resists her efforts to restrain him. As a result, he dies, Rome loses a soldier, and she loses a son.

Assimilation to the Military Culture

Coriolanus returns to a subject matter Shakespeare had examined before in *Othello*: the need of military spouses to adjust to life in a military culture. *Coriolanus* depicts an older military spouse, Volumnia, acculturating a newer military spouse, Virgilia, into the military world and teaching her what is expected of women in their position. She must learn to control her fear and to glory in her husband's successes. Military spouses must find their way in the new culture so that they can fulfil their duties as a spouse and so that they can rely on the support of other military spouses. By assimilating into the culture, Virgilia will better be able to endorse and support her husband's performance, mother her son in the culture, and survive in the culture herself. Volumnia's relationship with her daughter-in-law and her community may be better and more justly understood when one looks at them from this angle. Examining them in the light of their relationship to the military allows one to better understand the development of Virgilia's character and the nature of Volumnia's, aspects of the women that may be obscured in a civilian-centered analysis.

Whereas Volumnia is a veteran military (in)dependent, Virgilia is new and must be inducted into the culture. Her terror at the danger to her husband in 1.3 shows that "poor Virgilia is not made of the stuff of Roman matrons" (Terry 108-9). She will have to learn that strength, as she does over the course of the play. Plutarch suggests that Coriolanus took

a wife to please his mother (239). If that is so, then he would have taken what she thought of a woman into account. From that alone, one should imagine that the wife of Coriolanus and the daughter-in-law of Volumnia was no meek thing incapable of becoming a proper soldier's wife. As opposed to her brassy and valiant mother-in-law, Virgilia is associated more with fear for her husband than glorying in his triumph. She fears, for example, that he might be wounded, instead of regarding potential wounds as points of valor (2.1.123-125). These wounds, of course, represent risk, which she must appreciate. At night, after learning that her husband had been injured by but survived a roadside bomb, "Patricia [Bahl, an Army wife] closed her eyes and let herself see her husband lying on a road in Iraq, his head covered in blood. Trick. Or treat. It could have been so much worse. It could have been The Worst That Could Happen, but it wasn't, he was all right. He was all right. One day he'd be coming home to her. He was all right. That was when she finally cried" (Henderson *While* 106). Virgilia must struggle to balance the valor and the honor with the fact that the worst might happen. Coriolanus himself remarks on her surprising tendency to tears in spite of convention:

> Wouldst thou have laughed had I come coffined
> home,
> That weep'st to see me triumph? Ah, my dear,
> Such eyes the widows in Corioles wear
> And mothers that lack sons. (2.1.185-189)

Virgilia's son and husband are alive and well; she should swell with pride. Rachel Starnes notes that the pressure to recreate the VJ Day kiss at every homecoming is too much for any spouse, and that pressure is mostly for the viewing pleasure of civilian spectators (122-3). The sense that there is any one right way for a deployment or homecoming to go is a civilian-oriented pressure. In the Fiennes film, Virgilia quickly wipes away her tears before she will be photographed by her husband's side, indicating that she has already absorbed some of Volumnia's teachings about when and where it is acceptable for a soldier's wife to be seen weeping. She will learn.

Volumnia, in particular, encourages Virgilia to partake in a military culture that lauds participation and risk. Their first scene together opens with Volumnia telling her daughter that she has been sad for too long a term: "I pray you, daughter, sing, or express yourself in a more comfortable sort. If my son were my husband, I should freelier rejoice in that absence wherein he won honor than in the embracements of his bed where he would show most love" (1.2.1-5).[11] Singing and joy are more appropriate past-times, in Volumnia's eyes, than mourning or handwringing.[12] Honor, the byproduct of laudable service, should be more interesting and exciting for a soldier's wife, Volumnia suggests, than sex. From a modern perspective, one might recall marine spouse Mollie Gross's comments about being sexually deprived for the cause of freedom (157). From a purely Shakespearean perspective, Volumnia's advice recalls Lady Macbeth's semi-sexual interest in her husband's success. Volumnia may suggest that Virgilia should have such an interest in his valor. Volumnia's advice also suggests an awareness that Virgilia will need to accept these risks and this sacrifice if she is going to make it as Coriolanus' wife: "Acceptance is the key for all military wives. You have to accept and be satisfied that this is your life. This is your sacrifice and your cross to bear. If you want a life with the man you love, then recognize you are being called to serve alongside him" (Gross 204). A military spouse sacrifices time with her spouse, her peace of mind, her good night's sleep, for the time she gets with her spouse; that is her service to and sacrifice for the country that matches her servicemember's. Volumnia has assimilated the possibility that the worst might happen:

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[11] Rather too much has been made by psychoanalytic critics of the fact that Volumnia compares her soldier-son to her soldier-husband. As Roz Riley, Army brat, Army veteran, Army wife, and Army mom, noted, "A different emotion swells and dwells in a mother's heart when it is her son who marches off to battle than if it were her husband" (Crooks, Henderson, Hightower, and Scherer 170). A mother feels pride and fear, but it is distinct from that felt by a wife.

[12] In the Fiennes film, Virgilia silently watches her son practice shooting cans, then turns back to the living room, where her mother-in-law watches news footage of Corioles, where her son is. The future Blue Star Mother watches her son practice being a soldier, as her husband is off being one. It is when Virgilia switches off the news that Volumnia tells her to sing.

> VIRGILIA. But had he died in the business, madam, how then?
> VOLUMNIA. Then his good report should have been my son; I therein would have found issue. (1.3.19-22)

Critics may find that cold, but such acceptance has its place. One Gold Star Mother, whose younger son had enlisted after her eldest died, said "Today I don't dwell on the sadness or heartache of losing my older son[….] I rejoice that out of all of the millions of people, I was chosen to bring such an amazing, awe-inspiring young man into this world. […] He left this earth not only a hero, he left it having served a purpose, I am convinced of that" (Brye and Satter 238). It is a life of risk and sacrifice, but she believes it is worth it.

There may be, in Virgilia's fear, an insecurity in Coriolanus that one does not see in Volumnia:

> VIRGILIA. Heavens bless my lord from fell Aufidius!
> VOLUMNIA. He'll beat Aufidius' head below his knee
> And tread upon his neck. (1.3.48-50).

She seems to suggest that Virgilia should have more confidence (and interest) in Coriolanus' valor. These experiences can strongly influence the wives' sense of themselves:

> If your man is "light on the right" – that is, if the right sleeve of his uniform is absent a combat patch – you might as well be married to the janitor who sweeps up after the elephants at a clown college. Inevitably, some peacemaker type enters the fray to say that every soldier, sailor, airman, and Marine makes a meaningful contribution (which is true), but the stubborn divide remains – those who believe that deployed troops are the real troops (and therefore, that they themselves are the *real* wives) will not be persuaded otherwise. (Burana 288)

Some may suggest that wives should think of themselves as civilians and should not engage in such talk, but that talk persists (Burana 288). That interest in valor keeps military spouses strong during deployments: "The cold truth is, we wouldn't have traded our deployments for anything; we love them. We love the thrill of our place in history, the thrill of having something bigger than us to steal our focus. When I say *we*, I mean Jack *and* me. The deployments are my bragging rights, too. I can play the role of the exhausted martyr when need be" (Ricketts 15-16, emphases in the original). That sense of bragging rights should not

come as a surprise, considering how Volumnia tells her son, “your valiantness was mine” (3.2.157). Playing the ‘exhausted martyr’ is a mode of bragging, in the sense that performing exhaustion reminds others what one has endured and overcome. Virgilia seems too stuck in the martyr role for Volumnia’s taste. One sees Volumnia’s sense of Virgilia’s failings in this regard in that Volumnia seems to find Virgilia depressing: “Let her alone, lady. As she is now, she will but disease our better mirth” (1.3.108-9). As unfair as that sounds, perhaps Volumnia felt the need to break from a wife who feared so much and so consistently. One marine spouse said of her husband’s deployment period, “I hated to do it, but I distanced myself from the weak during those months. I didn’t need anyone bringing me down farther than I already was” (Gross 203). Volumnia does not seem “down,” but she may stay “up” by avoiding the moods Virgilia indulges.

One should bear in mind, when Ricketts says, “I can play the role of the exhausted martyr,” that that is something people do: they play roles. Volumnia is in the role of ‘happy warrior.’ She is overtly and publicly proud of her son and his service, and she will gladly go out and engage with the world. It is not to say that her feelings are disingenuous, but Volumnia may also feel and perpetuate a cultural pressure to stay “up.” Allison Buckholtz admitted that for a time, she “had been too shy to tell the truth of our situation. Fellow military wives insisted they were doing fine, and [she] wasn’t going to be the one to interrupt a winning streak” (Buckholtz 240). Volumnia certainly seems to be batting a thousand. Virgilia, on the other hand, overtly shuns the idea that everything is ok. She is anxious about her husband and will not pretend otherwise, nor will she go visit other women and smile like she is pleased. By refusing to play ball, Virgilia gains control over herself and power to define her own experiences, despite her culture’s insistence on certain performances. Ricketts herself condemns spouses who put themselves too forward, just as she condemns those who speak without appropriate degree of experience. There are times and places to

perform roles, and they are generally earned by experience. Volumnia's role choice may be the result of her own seniority. Virgilia's may be a result of her newness. After all, her role-performance changes over the course of the play. The roles they choose matter, but they also evolve.

Virgilia may have her reasons for staying indoors apart from role-playing. It may savour slightly of superstition:

> Most people I know make deals with God when their kids are deployed, or deals with the universe at large, something along the lines of: "If I do this (or don't do that) you'll keep him safe, God, right?" Personally, I've been known to walk three miles every day a child was deployed, no matter how crummy the weather, in one of those "If I do this, maybe you'll do that" deals. (Brye and Satter 195)

However unreasonable it sounds, Virgilia's behavior smacks of a woman clinging to a ritual to get her through the anguish. In the 2018 production at the Stratford Festival, Alexis Gordon's Virgilia silently suggests to Valeria that the reason she will not go out drinking with the ladies is that she is, unbeknownst to most around her, pregnant (Lepage). Considering how this quality would relate to the issues of lineage, such as Virgilia's suggestion of Coriolanus making an end of a tribune's posterity and statement about giving Coriolanus a son to keep his name alive, it is an interesting note to add and the production could have done more with it. She has her reasons.

It would be a mistake for civilian critics to find Volumnia here to demonstrate coldness either to her daughter-in-law or to her son. After all, "no matter how calm and unflappable the mother of a deployed child may appear on the outside, her mind is always focused on that part of the world where her child finds him or herself, whether on the ground, in the air, or on or under the high seas" (Brye and Satter 195). She needs to keep her spirits up. Mollie Gross remarked that civilian relatives seemed to find her unfeeling for living a life during her husband's deployment: "they were trying to make me feel guilty because I wasn't at home watching the news. It didn't mean I didn't care about my husband's safety. I

just knew that other than praying there was nothing I could do to change the situation. It was also important for me to take care of my stress levels so I could remain strong for Jon" (Gross 140). She tried to have empathy for them, but she seriously questioned whether their presuming that she must grieve or worry according to their civilian standard admitted a similar empathy for her (Gross 141). Volumnia encourages her daughter-in-law to stay strong for her husband and for her family, and viewing this negatively may demonstrate a lack of understanding for Volumnia's experience. Virgilia does not yet have Volumnia's experience. Even that, though, is not inherent disrespect, since she clearly believes that Virgilia can and should learn. If one understands that Volumnia must teach Virgilia to get along in a certain kind of life, she makes a different kind of sense.

Furthermore, Volumnia, a product of her culture, is not alone in the views she presents or her assessment of Virgilia's performance of her role. Valeria apparently shares Volumnia's belief: "You would be another Penelope. Yet they say all the yarn she spun in Ulysses' absence did but fill Ithaca full of moths" (1.3.85-87). Valeria evidently thinks that there are better uses of Virgilia's time than sitting home and sewing tapestries or knitting socks.[13] These assumptions have a mirror in modern military culture wherein wives can be assessed, based on their actions, as less than supportive. One spouse said people make assumptions about officers' wives who do not help run the Family Support Group: "You can step back, but then people speculate, you know, make up other reasons as to why you're not doing it. Like you don't support your husband. You don't support the military" (Frese and Harrell 81). Valeria and Volumnia may think happiness more supportive-seeming. Jacey Eckhart encourages wives to attend functions as a way of joining the wife support networks

[13] Shakespeare says they enter sewing. The Donmar Warehouse production had them sewing a Roman flag. The Lepage production showed them sewing a tapestry depicting a battle scene, presumably depicting Coriolanus' past victories. Knitting socks was a common initiative to support the war effort for American women in WWI and WWII. A 21st-century equivalent might be assembling care packages.

and meeting your husband's colleagues and their families (*Homefront* 50). Furthermore, interest in Coriolanus' valor is not unique to Volumnia:

> MENENIUS. Is he not wounded? He was wont to come home wounded.
> VIRGILIA. O no, no, no!
> VOLUMNIA. O, he is wounded, I thank the gods for 't.
> MENENIUS. So do I too, if it be not too much. Brings he victory in his pocket, the wounds become him.
> VOLUMNIA On 's brows, Menenius. He comes the third time home with the oaken garland. (2.1.122-129)

Virgilia might not be enthusiastic about the possibility of Coriolanus coming home wounded, but Volumnia certainly is not alone in the pride or interest, her respect for the honors he has won.[14] Indeed, where Virgilia is concerned about the dangers, Menenius is quite flippant about them:

> VOLUMNIA. He had, before this last expedition, twenty-five wounds upon him.
> MENENIUS. Now it's twenty-seven (2.1.158-160).

Both know that these scars will matter when he stands for consul,[15] and both consider the scars a mark of pride. Scars continue to be a sign of military service. Kayla Williams' husband, after being seriously injured by an explosion, emailed her: "I am doing good. I got some nasty scars but Oh well. I dont [*sic*] much care if people dig em or not. Some scars are made to be worn with pride" (*Plenty* 28). However, he also experienced civilians who did not connect his injuries with his military career: "When Brian had first gotten Purple Heart

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[14] As the first soldier over the walls in a siege, Coriolanus would have earned the golden *corona muralis* (Roth 67). However, his mother specifically speaks of his brows being bound in oak. The *coronoa civica*, the garland made of oak leaves, was awarded for saving the life of a fellow soldier (Roth 67, Plutarch 238). Coriolanus' actions at Corioles then must have earned him much in honors. There are modern awards, such as the Bronze Star, Soldier's Medal, or Medal of Honor, that have been awarded to servicemembers who saved the lives of comrades.
Coriolanus has also been wounded in his service. In America, the Purple Heart is awarded to wounded servicemembers. Coriolanus' wounds would merit such an award. (The highest number of Purple Hearts awarded to an American servicemember is 9. Coriolanus could potentially exceed that number.)

[15] It is interesting that Coriolanus is expected to show his wounds to the civilian voters in exchange for their voices. In America, despite the history of veterans in high public office, there is no such requirement. However, it has been known that past presidential candidates were veterans, and both John Kerry and John McCain were Purple Heart recipients, something that did factor into public opinion of them. Donald Trump, who spoke slightingly of John McCain's suffering as a prisoner of war, remarked, after being given a Purple Heart by a supporter, "I've always wanted to get the Purple Heart. This was... much easier." Perhaps he is, instead, one of the Tribunes.

plates on his car, he'd gotten deeply offended when a few people had asked him if it was his dad's car—shoving in his face the realization that most people didn't truly realize we were a nation at war, with injured troops coming home" (Williams *Plenty* 204). Visible and invisible wounds come from and signify the 21st-century wars, as they did Roman ones. At least in more military, as opposed to civilian, surroundings, the sacrifice they indicate will be less trivialized or overlooked. Volumnia reflects their culture, especially it seems the military ethos into which she wishes to inculcate Virgilia.

Despite being less 'into it' than Volumnia, one should notice that Virgilia is not entirely uninterested in her husband's martialness, as critics who find her tremendously timid[16] might imagine. She has the interest the others have, if not their confidence:

> VALERIA. In troth, there's wondrous things spoke of him.
> MENENIUS. Wondrous? Ay, I warrant you, and not without his true purchasing.
> VIRGILIA. The gods grant them true.
> VOLUMNIA. True? Pow waw!
> MENENIUS. True? I'll be sworn they are true. (2.1.142-148)

Her lesser faith, noted before, finds further evidence here, where Volumnia and Menenius are more convinced than she that he will have won glory. However, she is evidently intrigued and pleased by the reports of her husband's valor.[17]

There are benefits a veteran military spouse could identify to associating with other military wives and participating in the community, which Virgilia can access if she allows herself to embrace this worldview. Military spouses are drawn close: "My closest friends are

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[16] Ellen Terry (*Four Lectures* 50-1) and Judith Cook (66) both call her timid, while Anna Jameson favors descriptions like fond and tender (250).

[17] The Fiennes film gave her more confidence, as though the reports were already believed and 'gods grant' were mostly a colloquial expression. She smiles more, speaking of the wondrous things spoke of him, than she has yet in the film.
The Fiennes film attached another significance, as well, to a relationship with the wounds. When she walks in on Volumnia dressing her son's wounds, Virgilia abruptly backs away, as though she has interrupted something important. However, she reacts then by going to the room of her own sleeping son. After tidying his toy gun off the floor, she leans over him in his bed and presses her forehead to his. This added silent scene suggests not a rejection of their military culture but instead an awareness that she will one day be a military mother like Volumnia who tends to her own soldier son.

often from military families because we don't have to explain these things to each other" (Barnes 1461). Military friends may be particularly important for spouses from civilian families. Buckholtz's memoir consistently details the cultural distinction between her civilian experience and her military experience, especially the fact that civilians did not think well of or understand the military. Indeed, when she told her mother she was dating a Navy man, her mother advised her to update her JDate profile (270).[18] Virgilia will not need to explain her fears to Volumnia, though Volumnia may wish she presented her fears differently. Virgilia can draw strength from that shared knowledge and understanding:

> I did welcome a yearly visit from my mother. Since she had been an Air Force brat growing up on bases all over the world, she was familiar with the military lifestyle. She also knew why I didn't want to cook or get dressed. She understood why I got upset and cried over the smallest things. She would just hold me while I cried and never asked uncomfortable questions. (Gross 196).

Volumnia can be such a resource for Virgilia, though she would likely prefer Virgilia cry less. It is this network of other spouses that enables spouses to be strong (in)dependents in servicemembers' absence. Ricketts seems to make that point when she cites, "I've got my sisters; keep your ass over there" (33). After her heart attack, spouses rushed to her side, while she insisted to her husband she would be fine, and he stayed in Afghanistan (42). When Virgilia grows in that culture and in that family, she can draw strength from such a relationship; as Virgilia grows closer to Volumnia over the course of the play, she gains her strength, among her other qualities.

Volumnia, the veteran (in)dependent, also keeps her hand in with the military, keeping abreast of information, as other military spouses in Shakespeare are seen to do. When Menenius, an important Roman official, wants information about the war, he asks it of Volumnia, rather than reporting the news to her:

[18] JDate is a dating site specifically for Jews.

> MENENIUS. Has he disciplined Aufidius soundly?
> VOLUMNIA. Titus Lartius writes they fought together, but Aufidius got off. (2.1.131-132)

Volumnia did not need to contact her son for this intelligence. She receives it from another servicemember, Titus Lartius. She is in contact with other servicemembers then and joins other Roman matrons as more knowledgeable than some civilians might expect and perhaps more well-informed than some high-ranking Roman men. In this, she recalls the knowledgeable wives of *Julius Caesar*.

Volumnia and Virgilia can be better understood by viewing them respectively as those more and less experienced with the military culture in which they both now live, especially when one understands Volumnia as educating Virgilia in that culture. One can see that Volumnia, though she may seem overbearing to a civilian, is, in fact, helping and guiding Virgilia, who will profit from this education. One sees Volumnia teaching Virgilia to participate in the culture, which Virgilia and Volumnia also teach Martius, Coriolanus' son, who they will educate in manly and martial virtues, enabling the self-perpetuation of a military culture. When one better understands Volumnia's efforts to inculcate Virgilia, it illuminates part of their experience this chapter will examine later, Virgilia's sharing Volumnia's distaste for ill-informed civilians, which mirrors the issues of the modern civil-military divide, which will be discussed below. Seeing their relationship to the military and how it changes illuminates these women and the relationship of the military community and civil society.

Civilians

This struggle between military spouses and the civilians continues to play out in the 21st century, especially in arenas where, like the plebeians of the Roman mob, the civilian population can be seen as not understanding the military and its attendant sacrifices. This growing distinction between those who are militarily aware and those who are civilian can

have negative consequences, as it does in *Coriolanus*, when, as in *Coriolanus*, voters are empowered to control the lives of military servicemembers and their families, despite ignorance or inappropriate reactions. America has an all-volunteer military, and "The Persian Gulf War and the Iraq and Afghan Wars a decade later are the first major wars in America's history that have been fought without broad-based conscription to mobilize all levels of American society," which means that, "Despite the fact that America is once again engaged in major combat operations overseas, most Americans have only a limited grasp of what it means to go to war, and no wonder" (Henderson *While* 4). Some military spouses have reported that, as an inevitable byproduct of only 1% of American families being Blue Star Families, many Americans (and consequently American voters, who elect the Commander-in-Chief and the legislature) do not know any servicemembers or people who are affected by Department of Defense goals or policies:

> I thought about the civilian neighbor who, when she found out my husband was in a war zone, exclaimed, "Wow, what is that like? Having him in harm's way?" I was the only person she knew with someone in the fight. It hit me then that most Americans no longer personally know what it's like to send someone you love to war. Since civilians are the ones who send us to war, that could be a dangerous development. (Henderson *While* "Acknowledgments")

As in *Coriolanus*, power is given to civilians who have, often, a more limited sense of the sacrifice of military families and of the impact on people of the change in military policy. For some military spouses, this engenders, beyond concern, a distaste towards certain groups of civilians. For Marissa Bootes, "On the subject of the war, she had no patience for Americans protesting in the streets; it killed morale, she said, made life harder for soldiers and their families" (Henderson *While* 3). The civilians who oppose the war, she feels, do not understand the war in the same way she and her family will, and their actions, while they make the civilians feel more engaged or righteous, undermine the military actually doing the fighting and making the sacrifices. Kayla Williams specifically exhorts civilian readers to exercise their right to vote, which soldiers have fought for, mindfully, as the civilian voters

have a heavy effect not only on active duty troops but retired veterans as well: "We as a nation elected politicians who chose to send troops off to war—now we as a nation must hold elected officials accountable for ensuring that the systems are in place to care for veterans when they get home" (*Plenty* 249). The line between military and civilian has a meaningful impact on the lives of military spouses, something of which military spouses are profoundly aware.

The divide between military and civilian culture was not always as stark as it is in 21st-century America. During WWII, for example, everyone knew someone who served (Henderson *While* 68). However, during the unpopular war in Vietnam, individuals with money could avoid service, since college deferments allowed one to escape the draft, and, in the end, "Vietnam created an entire generation among the privileged that still mistrusts anything to do with the military" (Henderson *While* 23-4). The children of those individuals continue to avoid enlistment, while lower-income individuals are more likely to enlist (Henderson *While* 24). Still, the divide between civilians and the military continues during the unpopular wars in Afghanistan[19] and Iraq.[20] Military families do not have the luxury that civilian families do of disagreeing with the war or commenting on it from the outside. The War on Terror has always affected the military families too intimately to allow for distance: "On September 11, 2001, [a fellow Air Force spouse] and I pondered the tragedies over the phone, hours after the attacks. We wondered together that day how such terrible things could happen and when—not if—our military husbands would be summoned to the conflict" (Barnes 1067). In the military, they always knew this war would affect them, a sentiment the civilians were not forced to share. Beth Pratt, who became a pacifist during the war, found that her husband's deployment "forced her to think about war, in a way that watching from

[19] In 2014, 49% of Americans felt the war in Afghanistan was a mistake ("War on Terrorism")
[20] In 2014, 57% of Americans felt the war in Iraq was a mistake. In 2015, 51% believed that. ("Iraq")

the sidelines never had" (Henderson *While* 250). As Ricketts noted of antiwar sentiments, for military spouses, "These are the things we don't say, and if we do, we don't do it in an open forum. We say them drunk and to our trusted confidantes. We earn the right to say those things" (Ricketts 250). The civilians who vote on military conflicts do not feel they need to earn that right to speak or comment, just as the tribunes in *Coriolanus* do not feel the need to earn the judgments they pass over Coriolanus, Volumnia, and their lives.[21] Volumnia and Virgilia earn their right to comment through their experience, and with that right comes a judgment on those who comment without their experience.

Volumnia knows that she has created a warrior. She knows that her daughter-in-law is married to a warrior and will raise another. It is a different lived experience than that of civilians insulated from the realities of the military world. What comes with that experience, for these women, is scorn for civilians who do not understand their world yet presume to comment on it. This contempt appears most strongly in Volumnia, yet Virgilia, as she grows in the ethos, develops this quality as well.

Volumnia really shows this anger the most, perhaps stemming from the longest awareness of civilians who do not understand the world in which she lives but are allowed by their culture to impact it. She shares this disdain with her son, the soldier who would not show his wounds to seek high office, when he says the civilians can hang and she agrees (3.2.28-29).[22] She will tolerate those civilians while she needs their voices, but she shares his contempt for their desire to touch wounds they do not understand and comment on lives they could never live. One sees this anger come to fruition later as she confronts civilian politicians who helped banish her son from Rome:

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[21] From a pacifist perspective, it may actually help to have more veterans in the governing body: "since the earliest years of our republic, the fewer the number of veterans among our leaders, the more likely we have been to go to war" (Henderson *While* 284). That may be because civilian leaders do not understand war, its costs, and its ramifications the way that veterans do.

[22] The Fiennes film replaces the Noble of the script with Virgilia (though the line allotted the character is different). In that production, then, Virgilia watches Volumnia manage Coriolanus.

> BRUTUS. Here comes his mother.
> SICINIUS Let's not meet her.
> BRUTUS Why?
> SICINIUS They say she's mad.
> BRUTUS. They have ta'en note of us. (4.2.12-15)

These men are scared not only of Coriolanus but of his mother:

> SICINIUS. Are you mankind?
> VOLUMNIA. Ay, fool, is that a shame? Note but this, fool.
> Was not a man my father? Hadst thou foxship
> To banish him that struck more blows for Rome
> Than thou hast spoken words? (4.2.224-228).

Volumnia hits the daughter note, like Portia does, and given the nature of the Roman military, she likely, as Portia does, nods at a military lineage. (Plutarch tells nothing of her specific lineage.) Likely, she finds it a point of superiority to this tribune. At the very least, she refuses to be insulted by being called mannish and does not disdain her parentage. Moreover, she calls what Sicinius possesses not a will to serve nor wisdom but instead "foxship," suggesting what he has is cunning. She specifically notes as a sign of his inadequacy that the man he banished "struck more blows for Rome/ Than [he has] spoken words." This man is all talk, and Coriolanus' fight is, to her eyes, worth much more. She scorns this man and all he represents. Volumnia underlines her point:

> Now, pray, sir, get you gone.
> You have done a brave deed. Ere you go, hear this:
> As far as doth the Capitol exceed
> The meanest house in Rome, so far my son—
> This lady's husband here, this, do you see?—
> Whom you have banished, does exceed you all.(4.2.50-55)

She stresses the position of Coriolanus as both her son and as Virgilia's husband. She also stresses again through architectural comparison that Coriolanus' service has far exceeded anything Sicinius and Brutus have done. She disdains the civilians in the mob and in the senate who are permitted a say over their lives, who vote on their lives and status, but who could never do what they do, who do not serve like they do.

Virgilia, despite her reputation as a milder creature, having acculturated into their shared lifestyle, develops her mother-in-law's disdain for civilians who just do not get it. In the same scene where Volumnia tears into the tribunes, Virgilia, in fact, does the same. When the men try to flee Volumnia, Virgilia continues the fight:

> VOLUMNIA. If that I could for weeping, you should hear—
> Nay, and you shall hear some. Will you be gone?
> VIRGILIA. You shall stay too. I would I had the power
> To say so to my husband. (4.2.19-23).

These men have evidently tried to flee and been blocked by Virgilia. An actress would have to push through those monosyllables and an enjambment. Virgilia must be riding a lot of emotion in this scene. Virgilia has the gumption to stand up to the tribunes, and she is just beginning. Sicinius follows her words with his comment "are you mankind?" which, while most known for being answered by Volumnia, could reply to either Volumnia or Virgilia. They both have the tenacity and fight to earn that remark from him. Virgilia joins Volumnia in a belief that he should suffer for his actions:

> VOLUMNIA. I would my son
> Were in Arabia and thy tribe before him,
> His good sword in his hand.
> SICINIUS. What then?
> VIRGILIA. What then?
> He'd make an end of thy posterity.
> VOLUMNIA. Bastards and all.
> Good man, the wounds that he does bear for Rome! (4.2.32-39)

The 'mild-mannered' Virgilia is now out for blood. She will see the end of the bloodline of the men who had her husband banished.[23] Again, Volumnia stresses the wounds. This time, Virgilia seems to have no qualms about them. In the Fiennes version, the Virgilia of so many silent moments is high-voiced and as spitting mad as her mother-in-law, joining in manhandling the tribunes who banished her husband, and the two women leave, arms around each other, alike in their rage and pain. Virgilia has joined Volumnia in a distaste for these

[23] The 2018 Lepage production cut Volumnia's line about bastards. Instead, Virgilia gestured to Sicinius' genitals, suggesting castration.

tribunes, underlining the divide between their civilian leadership and the women's martial culture.

Volumnia and Virgilia have just cause to be suspicious of those who cannot or will not understand what soldiers do. After all, they know that their world is kept safe by the martial prowess of the soldiers. As discussed, Volumnia knows that she created her son as a warrior. She also knows that he has fought for Rome, been injured for Rome. She knows what she has and what his wife will sacrifice for that service. The civilians have an incentive to devalue a servicemember's decision to serve or redefine the decision as a self-oriented choice in order to justify their own choices. Saying someone signed up because they "love that shit" or because their mama would like the idea takes the onus off the civilian (Roth-Douquet and Schaeffer 130). Spouses can experience a similar dismissal: "'You knew what you signed up for' was a phrase I heard often and it infuriated me. It was a callous denial of empathy, a distancing move that drew a clear line between the people who made up the majority of the country and the people who did its fighting" (Starnes 51). Presenting the sacrifice as a choice voluntarily made takes the duty off the civilian and blames the spouse for problems instead of empathizing or expressing a willingness to resolve the challenges we have discussed that exist in military culture. Volumnia and Virgilia would rightly resent the devaluing of their sacrifice and Coriolanus's. Some modern critics oppose Volumnia's decision to allow a young son to go to war, but Volumnia believed it necessary. While critics like Adelman may scorn Volumnia's willingness to send her son to a "cruel war," the war Volumnia referred to created their society. Coriolanus was part of the civil war against the Tarquins. Indeed, since the war against the Tarquins has in the narrative of history been ascribed to Tarquin raping Lucrece, Brutus' wife, Volumnia could be said to have a vested interest in her son's participating in such conflict. Throughout *Coriolanus*, there lurks the threat of Volsce attacks. Coriolanus won his honor in fighting that great enemy of the nation.

The military wives here understand, as some civilians neglect, that their society was created and is kept safe through military actions and interventions.

The world needs no new play or fantastical future imaginings à la Kathy Roth-Douquet and Frank Schaeffer's *AWOL: The Unexcused Absence of America's Upper Classes from Military Service – and How It Hurts Our Country* to examine or realize the dangers of a strong and growing civil military divide. One need only examine Shakespeare's centuries-old *Coriolanus* to see the damages of thus fracturing one's society. Volumnia taught her son to be among those who serve, and she has endeavored to bring Virgilia into that culture. In both respects, she has succeeded. Coriolanus brings himself into danger by disregarding her advice to temper the dangerous elements of his culture's masculinity. However, despite the great cost, Virgilia and Volumnia succeed, as military (in)dependents, in serving their culture and saving their country.

"My story being done": A Conclusion

The stories humans tell and perpetuate are tremendously important to them. These stories shape our sense of ourselves in the world. They shape our sense of ourselves in our history, which is itself a story we tell ourselves. They shape our sense of what and who matters. They drive us. As Jonathan Shay noted, "No soldier ever threw himself on a grenade for the laws of thermodynamics or even the categorical imperative, but has done so for a story" (*Odysseus* 242). While that can appear destructive, it also demonstrates how stories can move us to sacrifice for something outside of ourselves.

Perhaps it is no surprise that military spouses both recognize their place in the greater story of American history and wonder if anyone will ever know or consider the part they played. Alison Buckholtz reports that during her husband's deployment, "reading other women's accounts of their lives as military spouses allowed me to place myself in a historical continuum that gave context and meaning to my experience" (181). The stories helped her be a part of her community and understand her place in it. That sense of history was described remarkably by Angela Ricketts: "There's a tangible beauty in that period—a beauty that will never leave me. In those moments, I wonder how or if, we, the wives, would be written into the history of this war. If anyone cared about the vivid colors I once saw" (194). These women have for so long been excluded from the narrative of the history of which they were such a vital part. Their contributions, to say nothing of their experiences in that history, have been ignored. Yet we must care about those experiences, about the world they saw.

I will be the first to acknowledge these experiences can be difficult for people to understand from the outside. The military presents a distinct culture in some ways separate from mainstream US culture. It is fond of acronyms. Increasingly, civilian outsiders may not know any servicemember at all. The storyteller and the listener, then, will have different frames of reference that may impede or even halt communications. Alison Buckholtz, who

married into the military, admitted that after a while she "stopped telling nonmilitary folks the tales [she] knew they wouldn't, or couldn't, understand" (126). She felt the divide very deeply. However, it is deeply important that we overcome these barriers to communications. This thesis has endeavored to address this difficulty by consulting military documents, DoD issuances, and the published statements (including memoirs) of military spouses, thereby bringing the relevant information and voices to bear.

One can hardly have a conversation about shared American myth or significant stories in modern western literature without mentioning Shakespeare. (Shakespeare may have been born in Warwickshire, but the Yanks have thoroughly staked their claim.) We spout platitudes about Shakespeare's universality. Really, Shakespeare is a known quantity that can be adjusted contextually in the service of an agenda: it is a franchise, like the *Purge* movies. One does not need to commit to either full anachronistic approaches or pure historical continuity when re-envisioning Shakespeare in different eras or surrounding new issues, glocalizing[1] each piece to a new context. The question, then, really becomes which stories we choose to include as we reimagine again our major myths. As we continually update our readings of Shakespeare or revise our sense of what plays, scenes, and characters are significant or relevant, we must include the military spouses. The subjects that these women (and their fictional counterparts) concern themselves with are serious and meaningful. In order to acknowledge their concerns and their place in the story of history, they must be listened to, not talked over or around. When we do, these plays can be the site for examining important social realities. When we try to see their world, when we try to see the vivid colors they saw, we can find new issues of importance in these plays and bring elements of the text forward that we have overlooked that can be significant.

[1] Glocalization refers to "the simultaneous occurrence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies in contemporary social, political, and economic systems," which can manifest as the recreation "of products or services for the global market by adapting them to local cultures" (Blatter).

Part of what this thesis has aimed to address is the widespread erasure of these women from the discussion of these plays and, indeed, often from productions of the plays themselves. Lady Mortimer and Lady Macduff, in particular, have often been excised wholesale. Portia and Kate Percy get cut down. Volumnia, Virgilia, and Lady Macbeth are, if not cut, often misunderstood. That erasure of the characters, their words, and their experiences, presents a theatrical counterpart to the erasure of the lives and experiences of these women in our discussions of military history, particularly the War on Terror, and it must be addressed.

Each of these plays highlights important issues, both inside the military as an institution and in wider culture. *Othello* forces us to grapple with the dangers of jealousy and toxic masculinity and the potential they have shown to instigate intimate partner violence and domestic murder. It also examines Emilia's character and behavior in terms of Battered Person Syndrome. *1 Henry IV* addresses PTSD, a pressing danger for the military, and the need for the culture around mental illness (both inside and outside the military) to change to bring about real progress. It also raises the perennial question of soldiers forming relationships with non-nationals and our evolving ways of balancing trust and emotion. *Julius Caesar* opens up the women's positions in a self-perpetuating culture, including the struggle of being infertile in a culture of families and military lineage, and the way infertility can create social and emotional stresses on spouses. It raises the concept of distributions of knowledge and how knowledgeable about the military and its issues spouses can be. Understanding the burden of knowledge placed on the spouses allows us to understand that Shakespeare's spouses are strong where they can be misread as weak.[2] *Troilus and Cressida* considers mental health for military spouses and engages with the idea of prophecy,

[2] Peter Lake considers her suicide the result of "her 'woman's might' win[ning] its unequal struggle with 'her man's mind'" (446)

challenging artists' and critics' practice of ignoring these women or acting as though their behavior is irrational. It also discusses the experiences of queer servicemembers and their spouses, acknowledging the relationship between service and citizenship, highlights the failings of a conception of a soldier and a man that is purely heterosexual, and brings attention to the contributions queer people have made to the nation. *Macbeth* throws light on un(der)employment in military spouses, the relationship between loss of external employment and identity and rankism (prejudice based on rank), and how these matters can feed personal ambition. When these topics are brought into discussion, one can better understand what motivates Lady Macbeth, countering the idea of her as unreasonably ambitious or pure evil. It further, during its discussion of Lady Macduff and her husband, raises the subject of war crimes and the appropriate use of force. There must be a way of defending our communities without allowing excessive violence, a crime that cannot be undone. *Coriolanus* exposes the problems with America's great and growing civil-military divide, which prevents civilians from making informed decisions about policies that affect the military and military families and can leave military families feeling separated from civilians. Such a divide must be repaired to address those issues. Taken together, Shakespeare's military spouses create a discourse that recognizes the role of military culture in national defense but criticizes components of the hegemonic masculinity, promoting the idea of a martial identity that permits military defense without the dangers of hyper-masculinity.

It is tremendously important to share these issues with the broader community, civil and military, as it is through the communal sharing of these concerns that we can best come to respond to the problems and heal various social wounds. Recall Shay's assertion that "healing from trauma depends upon communalization of the trauma—being able safely to tell the story to someone who is listening and who can be trusted to retell it truthfully to others in

the community" (4). We know that stories have the power to change and shape us. Josh Seefried, who co-founded OutServe, recounts, "[Servicemembers] told me that there was a certain vindication in writing their story on paper and knowing it was going to be read. The human narrative is a powerful tool. It was the courage of previous gay service members' stories that motivated the nation to change this policy and it's these stories that will help the pain of the last few decades of discrimination heal" (4). For many reasons, these stories matter so much. As spouses lean on stories of other spouses to understand themselves, their strengths, and their struggles, presenting them with historical models who shared their feelings can be useful, and it can create an opening for civilians to try to understand the spouses' positions, and the military culture in which the spouses live, about which, we have seen, civilians often harbor ignorance and prejudices.

In this time of war, the stories we tell matter profoundly. It matters just as deeply that we listen and that we show that we are listening. We, as audience members, must grapple with the subjects these spouses struggle with and heed their critiques in order to fulfill our obligations as engaged citizens of a democracy. Hopefully, Shakespeare and the theatre can become sites where these issues are articulated and trauma can be brought forth for communalization and healing, which can allow personal and societal growth and greater understanding.

Appendix 1

Acronyms

The US military likes acronyms the way some academics like discursive footnotes. It can make it difficult for outsiders to understand. In part for clarity and in part because this is specialized language, this thesis has often employed military terminology and acronyms. It favored Army terminology, where other branches may have used a different acronym or name; however, this list aims to be more inclusive. As not all programs and positions have the same names across branches of the military, where possible, this list will endeavor to provide all acronyms and appropriate cross-listing.

AUMF Authorization for Use of Military Force. Laws passed in the 21st-century to define the scope of authorized military action by US forces.

BOHICA Bend over, here it comes again. A slang phrase suggesting an unpleasant situation is about to reoccur.

CACO Casualty Assistance Calls Officer. The CACO is the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard role. (See CAO and CAR)

CAO Casualty Assistance Officer. The Casualty Assistance Officer is "responsible for notifying family members when a service member has died. A CAO will provide as much information as available regarding the circumstances of the member's death and will answer any questions" (Military.com). The name of this role is different for each branch. The CAO is the Army role. (See CACO and CAR.)

CAR Casualty Assistance Representative. The CAR is the Air Force role. (See CAO and CACO)

DADT Don't Ask Don't Tell. DADT was a compromise instead of repealing the prior ban on queer servicemembers. Under this 1994-2011 policy the military was not supposed to ask if people were queer, but a servicemember would be fired for a statement, act, or marriage that demonstrated that the servicemember was queer.

DoD Department of Defense

FAP Family Advocacy Program. A DoD program that "works to prevent abuse by offering programs to put a stop to domestic abuse before it starts. When abuse does occur, the FAP works to ensure the safety of victims and helps military families overcome the effects of violence and change destructive behavior patterns. FAP staff members are trained to respond to incidents of abuse and neglect, support victims, and offer prevention and treatment" ("The Family Advocacy Program").

FOB Forward Operating Base

FRG Family Readiness Group. The Army and Navy "officially command-sponsored organization of Family members, volunteers, and Soldiers belonging to a unit, that together provide an avenue of mutual support and assistance, and a network of communications among the Family members, the chain of command, and community resources. FRGs help create a climate of mutual support within the unit and community. Basic FRG goals include supporting the military mission through provision

of support, outreach, and information to Family members. FRGs play an integral part in the unit, Family and Soldier's Readiness" ("Family Readiness Group"). (See Family Readiness System)

FRP Family Readiness Program. A commander's program that provides support to individual service members and their families. The goal is to help "Marines and Sailors focus on their missions knowing that their families are well-supported and informed in their absence. Marines, sailors, and families can depend on the FRP to pass on important information and serve as a support and feedback system for families in the unit" ("Information for the Families"). (See Family Readiness System)

IA Individual Augmentee. A servicemember being attached to a unit as part of a temporary duty assignment (TDY).

KVC Key Volunteer Coordinator, the Executive Officer's spouse (or spouse of another senior officer).

KVN Key Volunteer Network. A former official United States Marine Corps family readiness program. The network consisted of Marine spouses called Key Volunteers (KV). The program has since been disbanded and replaced.

MRE Meal, Ready-to-Eat. A field ration provided by the DoD for servicemembers. They are intended for situations in which food preparation systems are not available, such as in the field. As such, MREs do not need to be refrigerated. Each MRE has a minimum shelf life of three years. As the MREs are sometimes considered unpalatable, the abbreviations have earned it occasional parodies, such as Meals Rejected by Everyone.

PCA Permanent Change of Assignment. The reassignment of active duty personnel within the same military posting.

PCS Permanent Change of Station. The official relocation of a servicemember, along with his or her family members, to a different duty location. This should not be confused with a Permanent Change of Assignment (PCA) or a temporary duty assignment (TDY). Is used as both a noun and a verb.

PTSD Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

REMF Rear Echelon Motherfucker. A term prevalent in the Vietnam-era, it refers to commanders who led from behind the lines without experiencing or understanding the suffering of front-line troops. An example sometimes given was commanders who flew over fights in helicopters, as opposed to being on the ground.

ROTC Reserve Officer Training Corps. A college-based program to train commissioned officers for the United States Armed Forces. The "program is designed to prepare selected students (cadets and midshipmen) for appointment as commissioned officers in the Military Services. Such ROTC programs must include a conceptual awareness of war and armed conflict, an introduction to Service roles and missions, and a basic understanding of joint and combined operations" (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness).

SNAFU Situation Normal, All Fucked Up. Although commonly used by civilians to refer to a surprising error, as the spelled out form suggests, it refers to a perpetual state of chaos

and trouble that exists at an unchanged level. It dates to the 1940s. A synonymous phrasing was Situation Unchanged, All Fucked Up.

TDY Temporary Duty Assignment. An assignment to a location other than the servicemembers permanent duty station, generally for under six months.

VA Department of Veteran's Affairs. A federal agency that provides services to eligible military veterans. It provides healthcare at VA medical centers and outpatient clinics. It also offers disability compensation, vocational rehabilitation, education assistance, home loans, and life insurance.

Supplementary Vocabulary

As the military is a microculture with skilled professions, it is unsurprising there is specialized and distinct vocabulary. This can also be harder for outsiders to track.

Blue Star Family The expression Blue Star in the US refers to having a family member in the service. A Blue Star Family is a family in which a member is in the service. The stars themselves referred to service flags that families displayed in their homes with symbolic stars sewn on. Blue Star Families, as an organization, began in April 2009. 36 US Code 901 governs the display of service flags and related symbols (36 USC 901, 1998)

Downrange A slang term. A soldier deployed downrange has been deployed to a warzone. The phrasing is suggestive of being shot at.

Family Readiness System "The network of agencies, programs, services, and individuals, and the collaboration among them, that promotes the readiness and quality of life of servicemembers and their families." ("Family Readiness System")

Fleet and Family Readiness Programs A Navy program is "responsible for policy development, resourcing and oversight of quality of life programs for Sailors and their families. The mission of the Fleet and Family Readiness team is to maximize the physical, emotional and social development of the Navy family. […]The Fleet and Family Support Program provides services through Fleet and Family Support Centers, such as relocation assistance, new parent support, deployment services, clinical counseling services, financial management counseling, family employment services, family advocacy and the transition assistance programs" ("Fleet and Family Readiness"). (See Family Readiness System)

Fobbit A soldier who serves entirely within the Forward Operating Base. The saying 'A fobbit never leaves the wire' recalls Tolkein's 'A Hobbit never leaves the Shire.' (Thorpe 277)

Forward Operating Base A secured forward operational military position used to support a mission's tactical objectives. An FOB may contain various facilities, such as a hospital. A basic FOB may be surrounded by a ring of barbed wire.

Gold Star Family A Gold Star refers to having lost a family member in active service or as a result of active service. The stars themselves referred to service flags that families displayed in their homes with symbolic stars sewn on. 36 US Code 901 governs the

display of service flags and related symbols (36 USC 901, 1998). (See Blue Star Family).

Grunt A member of the infantry, though the term is sometimes employed colloquially to all soldiers.

Key Spouse Program "An official unit/family program designed to enhance readiness and establish a sense of Air Force community" ("Key Spouse"). (See Family Readiness System)

Military brat A term of art used for the child of military personnel.

Pogue Pejorative military slang for non-combat staff and other rear-echelon or support units. The etymological origins are lost. Some suggest it refers to Persons Other than Grunts or, more likely, Persons of Greater Use Elsewhere. Others have suggested that, as pogue was a pejorative for penetrated male homosexuals, it was meant to imply that pogues, as opposed to grunts, were not real men.

Rear Detachment Commander A servicemember tasked with remaining stateside when the unit is deployed, performing the duties of the unit commander, maintaining regular contact with the deployed unit commander, and serving as a contact point for the FRG leader and spouses, particularly with respect to official military policies and programs. (Mancini 4).

Work-Life Program Coast Guard program that supports "personnel and their families by providing programs and services that help them to manage the challenges of both work and personal life. Work-Life strategies, principles and programs enable Coast Guard personnel to achieve organizational effectiveness and sustain superior mission execution by helping to manage organizational, individual, and family issues that distract them from their duties" ("Sea Legs"). (See Family Readiness System)

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