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Gower, the Chorus, as a Fictional Character in *Pericles*

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1. Introduction

Shakespeare uses the convention of a chorus in six of his plays in all, although they differ greatly in importance. It has often been pointed out that the chorus in *Pericles* performs a much more important function than the other Shakespearean choruses, since he appears on the stage more frequently. The feature which in fact distinguishes him from the others, however, is that Shakespeare uses John Gower's 'Apollonius of Tyre,' included in his *Confessio Amantis*, as the main source of the play, and supposes that the poet, Gower, revives from his ashes to tell his own story. It is true that he is entrusted with the symbolic function of embodying one of the main themes of the play, "death and resurrection," but it also become necessary for us to treat him functionally as a dramaturgic device.¹

Northrop Frye explains that Gower's role is to invite the audience into the play without difficulty, but he does not make a clear distinction between the historical poet, John Gower, and Gower the Chorus, a fictional character within a play:

One aspect of Gower's role is like that of the manager at the beginning of *Sakuntala* or *Faust*: he reminds us that this is a play, and the effect of the reminder is to shatter the framework of the play and lead us inside it. [...] Gower is an aged figure recalled from the dead, like Samuel by the Witch of Endor; he stands for the authority of literary tradition; he is himself dependent on still older sources, and he is there to put us in as uncritical a frame of mind as possible.²

Beneath this explanation underlies Frye's idea of "imaginative faith": that is, the audience should believe what is going on on the stage no matter how implausible the incidents seem to be.³

Howard Felperin's view is not altogether different from Frye's. Although he admits the naive and antiquated aspects in Shakespeare's use of Gower, he argues that Gower is entrusted to dissipate the audience's possible contempt of an improbable tale:

Shakespeare is telling us through the shorthand of dramatic convention that the action we are about to witness is a timeless parable for our spiritual recreation [...] and that to learn from it we must first unlearn our sophisticated notions of dramatic story telling. Aware of the difficulties that this request involves, he makes Gower self-consciously humorous in his demand, has him voice (and hopefully dissipate) the audience's own impulse to scoff at such a tale. [...] Gower's speeches are not offered as great dramatic poetry but as dramatically appropriate poetry calculated to persuade us to accept certain impossibilities, to establish on the spur of the moment a convention crucial to our acceptance and understanding of what is to follow.⁴

Simon Palfrey's criticism of Gower as Chorus seems to be unsparing, but his view is too simple-minded to fully explain Gower's unexpectedly refined function:

Gower is from a distant time, and never pretends that his hobbling commentary can do justice to, let alone complete, the story. He ends most of his framing narratives with a humble deferral to the arts of the theatre. He sees his job as a bridging one, filling in the gaps, and begging the audience's patience and acceptance toward the story's patent violations of the unities. This in itself may be an unnecessary posture of apology, one that draws attention less to the play's sweeping freeness with time and place [...] than to Gower's own outmoded conservatism.⁵

This is the way in which Gower as the Chorus has usually been understood, and consequently has sometimes been rejected, as a spouter of naive and unsophisticated rubbish, but we may, on the contrary, consider him to have been assigned a positive function as a dramaturgic device. In this chapter, I shall argue for the significance of the setting in which Gower has been resurrected to tell his own story, and I shall examine what kind of chorus Shakespeare created from his main source, and from its author who is to lead the romance. While other Shakespearian choruses do not have an individual personality, Gower creates his own atmosphere and reveals individual characteristics. The final aim of this paper, therefore, is to consider the significance that Gower, a fictional character, plays in his role as chorus, and to examine its effect on the audience's reception of the play.

2. Choruses in Shakespeare's Plays

In some of Shakespeare's plays a character within the play speaks the epilogue, as do Prospero in *The Tempest*, Rosalind in *As You Like It*, and Pandarus in *Troilus and Cressida*, but the choruses in Shakespeare's plays exist outside the fictional world, and give the audience necessary information from a higher perspective. I shall now look at each of Shakespeare's choruses to grasp roughly its normal function in each of the individual plays. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the Chorus speaks the Prologue in a sonnet form and gives the audience preliminary and preparatory knowledge. He reappears at the beginning of Act 2, and tells us what is happening between the lovers. In *Troilus and Cressida*, the Chorus in armour speaks the Prologue and gives necessary information with which to begin the play, although, strictly speaking, the significance of his being clad in armour must also be considered. In *The Winter's Tale*, Time announces at the beginning of Act 4 that the play will jump sixteen years, and tells what has happened in the meantime. In *2 Henry IV*, Rumour, painted full of tongues, pretends to fill in the gap from *1 Henry IV*, but he deludes the audience with unreliable information with no responsibility, although his explains his information is indeed delusive and that we must understand the truth to be the opposite of what he tells us. The chorus in *Henry V*, in addition to speaking the Prologue and Epilogue, also appears at the beginning of each act. Because the play deals with two large kingdoms and the long space of "historical" time, he apologizes for the deficiency of the performance and entreats the audience to cover it with its imagination. But his information to the audience is always precise and trustworthy, if biased towards an 'official' interpretation.

Although the placing of Rumour in *2 Henry IV* is debatable, Shakespeare's choruses exist outside the dramatic world, and guide the audience to a right understanding from an objective perspective. Such a chorus is considered to be a fictional character, although his level of existence differs from the other characters within the play. He, however, lacks individual personality, and therefore is able to perform the function of a chorus without any ambiguity.

3. Gower: A Chorus for a Romance

3.1 The Promise of Pleasure

As Chorus, Gower in *Pericles*, however, is given a personality, as a reincarnation of a medieval poet, John Gower. In this section, I shall consider what kind of character Shakespeare fashions from the actual poet and the source, *Confessio Amantis*, and shall examine Gower's attitude, as chorus, toward the dramatic world.

At the beginning of the play, Gower appears on the stage as Chorus and speaks the Prologue:

GOWER To sing a song that old was sung
 From ashes ancient Gower is come,
 Assuming man's infirmities
 To glad your ear and please your eyes.
 It hath been sung at festivals,
 On ember-eves and holy-ales,
 And lords and ladies in their lives
 Have read it for restoratives.
 The purchase is to make men glorious,
 Et bonum quo antiquius eo melius.
 If you, born in these latter times

When wit's more ripe, accept my rhymes,
And that to hear an old man sing
May to your wishes pleasure bring,
I life would wish, and that I might
Waste it for you like taper-light. (Prologue, 1-16.)⁶

Here the archaic style, iambic tetrameter in rhyming couplets, and the Latin maxim in line 10 reflect John Gower's manner, but they are newly invented by Shakespeare and his collaborator, whom the Oxford editors take to be George Wilkins.

Before we consider his characteristics, I shall first look at John Gower's attitude in *Confessio Amantis* itself. In this piece of work, the Confessioner, Genius, gives moral lessons to his student, Aman, by telling exempla. In Book VIII, Gower takes up the evil of lechery as his theme, and the main story in the book, "Apollonius of Tyre," is the chief source of *Pericles*. When Genius finishes his tale, he concludes it with a moral lesson:

Lo, what it is to be wel grounded:
For he hath ferst his love founded
Honesteliche as forto wedde,
Honesteliche his love he spedde
And hadde children with his wif,
And as him liste he ladde his lif;
And *in ensample his lif was write*,
That alle lovers myhten wite
How ate laste it schal be sene
Of love what thei wolden mene.
For se now on that other side,
Antiochus with al his Pride,
Which sette his love *unkindely*,

His ende he hadde al sodeinly,
Set ayein kinde upon *vengeance*,
And for his lust hath his *penance*.⁷

(Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, Book VIII, 1993–2008. Emphasis added.)

We see here how incest leads Antiochus and his daughter to death, as opposed to Apollonius' final success, who gains happiness by pursuing honest love. The attitude here is to give a profitable moral lesson to Aman, and to the reader.

In *Pericles*, however, Gower as Chorus takes a completely different attitude to his own tale, although the plot of the play is quite similar to that of its source. Gower's tale in *Pericles* is "a song" which is intended "To glad your ear and please your eyes," and it will "to your wishes pleasure bring." The words, "festivals," "ember-eves" and "holy-ales" suggest the pleasant mood in which it will be sung, and it is quite distinct from the strictly moral atmosphere of *Confessio Amantis*. Gower continues, "Lords and ladies [. . .] have read it for restoratives" and "The purchase is to make men glorious." DelVecchio and Hammond do not think that any literal meaning is implied by "glorious," and interpret 'glory' as "the healthy by-product of a tale taken as a restorative."⁸ Although Hoeniger does not decide whether it is literal or not, he comments "if this word is to be understood literally, the play opens with an immense promise to the audience or the reader."⁹ By either interpretation, however, the Chorus vouches for a happy mood of his tale, and promises in the Prologue that his song will bring the audience pleasure, which could be heavenly one. In spite of the strict mood of the source and the intentions of its author, Shakespeare (or Wilkins) creates a quite different character who is appropriate as a chorus to welcome us into a romantic play.

3.2 The Pursuit of Fictionality

Whereas the choruses in other Shakespeare's plays appear on the stage when they are required, and therefore the dramatic worlds take priority over them as persons, the Chorus in the shape of Gower shows that he governs and controls his characters' world. To do so, he uses several strategies, and in this section, I shall study these strategies and inquire into their significance in the play.

At the very beginning of the play, Gower sets up his position as governor of the play:

GOWER If you, born in these latter times
 When wit's more ripe, accept my rhymes,
 And that to hear an old man sing
 May to your wishes pleasure bring,
 I life would wish, and that I might
 Waste it for you like taper-light.
 This' Antioch, then: Antiochus the Great
 Built up *this* city for his chiefest seat,
 The fairest in all Syria. (Prologue 11-19, emphasis added)

Only if the audience admits him as a presenter of the play who will bring each member pleasure, "then" he announces that he has complete command over the play: he declares that the city of Antioch, where he lays the first scene, is under his control by qualifying it with "this."

He retains this attitude throughout the play. His speech in 4.4 is especially worth noting, because his governing stance is reinforced by minimizing the dramatic world, as if it were a world of toys:

GOWER Thus time we waste, and long leagues make we short,
 Sail seas in cockles, have an wish but for't,
 Making to take imagination
 From bourn to bourn, region to region. (4.4.1-4)

Here Gower shows that the dramatic world is under his control by announcing that he can handle the time and space within the play as he desires (4.4.1). His stance towards the passage of time here is quite different from the one which Time as Chorus shows in *The Winter's Tale*: in the latter case, Time is employed as a chorus only temporarily just to fill the gap of sixteen years, and it is clear that he does not have a total sway over the dramatic world. Furthermore, Gower's rule over the dramatic world is strengthened by his use of metaphors. The supposed large ships which should carry the mighty king among vast seas are mere "cockles." When he says that the protagonists are just like "motes" and "shadows," his minimization reaches the extremity to the point that they lack real existence: "Like motes and shadows see them move a while." (4.4.21)

Another strategy Gower adopts to show his control over the dramatic world is his use of dumb shows. He presents three dumb shows, in 2.0, 3.0 and 4.4. According to Dieter Mehl, there are only six dumb shows in Shakespeare's plays, and in that sense, too, the importance of this device in this play should not be neglected. Mehl comments, "Considering the structure of the play, the dumb shows (in *Pericles*) are an effective means of connecting the separate parts of the plot and making them a whole."¹⁰ But since Gower is able to fill in the gaps through his own explanatory narrative without leaning on such a primitive ploy, there must, therefore, be some positive reason for his use of this device. With regard to "a return to earlier techniques and structural devices," Mehl explains that "these are often employed to new purposes and effects."¹¹ The fabulous tone of the puppet show affects the rest of the play, and that adds to the impression that the whole play is only imaginary and unreal. It could be concluded, therefore, that Gower uses this device on purpose firstly to show that the play is under his control and secondly to emphasize the

play's fictionality.

As I have argued in this section, Shakespeare derived his Chorus, Gower, from the main source of the play and its author, retaining some of their characteristics, but Gower as Chorus is quite a new figure, created to suit the purpose and the atmosphere of a romantic play intended to produce pleasure. Gower shows us that as Chorus he governs the dramatic world by using several strategies, by minimizing the dramatic world through the use of metaphors and by presenting dumb shows. The dumb shows also serve to emphasize the fictionality of the play, and such an emphasis suits the play's supernatural and unearthly atmosphere.

4. The Antithetic Function of Gower as Chorus

As I have said, the choruses in Shakespeare's plays perform the function of providing the audience with necessary and trustworthy information when it is required, with the equivocal exception of Rumour in *Henry IV*. The Chorus, Gower, however, has an individual character as the resurrection of a medieval poet, and that will affect his function as a chorus who sets out to guide the audience's understanding.

It might be helpful to examine the beginning of *Antony and Cleopatra* here for comparison. Philo and Demetrius appear on the stage and Philo, who otherwise plays a minor role, speaks to Demetrius about Antony's dotage and his enslavement to Cleopatra:

PHILO Nay, but this dotage of our general's
 O'erflows the measure. Those his goodly eyes,
 That o'er the files and musters of the war
 Have glowed like plated Mars, now bend, now turn
 The office and devotion of their view

Upon a tawny front. His captain's heart,
Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper
And is become the bellows and the fan
To cool a gipsy's lust. Look where they come!
Take but good note, and you shall see in him
The triple pillar of the world transformed
Into a strumpet's fool. Behold and see. (1.1.1-13)¹²

Philo is one of the characters in the dramatic world, but here actually he works as a choric figure and gives the audience necessary information with which to start the play. He, however, is one of the followers of Antony, and therefore is not happy with his dotting upon Cleopatra. His criticism of Antony is expanded into his contempt for Cleopatra, as is seen in his use of such pejorative terms as "a tawny front," "a gipsy's lust," and "a strumpet's fool." His individual character as one of Antony's followers gives bias to his introductory information, and moreover to his function as a choric figure.

In the same way, the setting of the choric Gower as an individual character and as a revival of a medieval poet will affect his function as a chorus. In this section, I shall juxtapose his moral judgement with the actual events in the dramatic world, and argue that there is a discrepancy between the two. By doing so, I shall consider how Gower's estimation of the events influences the audience's reception of the play.

It is obvious that Gower fills in the gaps between the events and gives the audience necessary information, but the crucial difference between him and his fellow choruses is that he makes moral judgement on the episodes in the dramatic world.¹³ When he appears at the beginning of Act 2, the audience hears his opinion about what has happened in the first act:

GOWER Here have you seen a mighty king

His child, iwis, to incest bring;
A better prince and benign lord
Prove awe-full both in deed and word.
[.]
The good in conversation,
To whom I give my benison,
Is still at Tarsus where each man
Thinks all is writ he speken can,
And to remember what he does
His statue build to make him glorious. (2.0.1-14)

In the first four lines Gower takes over the view maintained in *Confessio Amantis*, criticises the incest of Antiochus and his daughter, and praises Pericles' virtue. But he does not seem to be satisfied with a commonplace admiration, and raises Pericles to a godlike stature by the use of words, "awe-full," "writ," and "glorious." "Writ" is understood as "Holy writ" according to Malone, and Hoeniger also interprets it as "gospel truth": Pericles' conduct comes to bear godlike truth.¹⁴

But if we examine the episodes of the first act, we easily perceive that Pericles' behaviour is far from admirable, and he rather deserves criticism. In this act, his lacks of royal virtue is enlarged from *Confessio Amantis*. In 1.1, knowing the condition of the contract, he answers "death no hazard in this enterprise," (1.1.47) and does not care for the risks involved in this adventure, which entails the possibility of his own death and the consequent lack of an heir in his kingdom. Antiochus warns him that his daughter is a forbidden fruit, and that the skulls of the previous suitors guard her like dragons, hinting that the same destiny may afflict Pericles:

ANTIOCHUS Before thee stands this fair Hesperides,
 With golden fruit, but dangerous to be touched,

For death-like dragons here affright thee hard. (1.1.70-72)

It is a fault from the very first to take part in such an enterprise, and all that follows in the play originates from Pericles' lack of understanding shown in this scene. When he returns to Tyre, he seems to show princely responsibility and emphasizes that his anxiety over the pre-emptive actions of Antiochus is for his subjects and not for himself:

PERICLES Our men be vanquished ere they do resist,
 And subjects punished that ne'er thought offence,
 Which care of them, not pity of myself,
 Who am no more but as the tops of trees
 Which fence the roots they grow by and defend them,
 Makes both my body pine and soul to languish,
 And punish that before that he would punish.¹⁵ (1.2.27-33)

But at the end of the scene, he resigns the rule of his kingdom to Helicanus, and, although he knows that his kingdom lies under the threat of Antiochus' power, he escapes from his country in secret to save his own life, which will give rise to the confusion among the society's noblemen later in 2.4.¹⁶ In this scene, Helicanus' discretion sheds contrastive light on Pericles' lack of royal virtue, and it is symbolically expressed in Pericles' speech as the reversal of their positions:

PERICLES Fit councillor and servant for a prince,
 Who by thy wisdom makes a prince thy servant,
 What wouldst thou have me do? (1.2.67-69)

As is often pointed out, "royal responsibility and misgovernment" is one of the important themes in this play, as I have argued above in the case of Pericles, while in 1.4 Cleon's case of doing nothing for his starving people is depicted at length. DeVecchio and Hammond call Cleon "a self-indulgent idler" and write as follows:

The famine in Tarsus is a metonym for Cleon's impotent governance.

A prince's responsibilities include feeding and protecting his people: Cleon rhapsodises at considerable length about his people's starvation, without ever indicating that it should have been his business to attempt to do something about it.¹⁷

When we consider the question of Cleon's misrule, more important than his idleness, however, must be his total misunderstanding of human life:

CLEON This' Tarsus o'er which I have the government,
 A city o'er whom plenty held full hand,
 For riches strewed herself even in the streets,
 Whose towers bore heads so high they kissed the clouds,
 And strangers ne'er beheld but wondered at,
 Whose men and dames so jettied and adorned
 Like one another's glass to trim them by;
 Their tables were stored full to glad the sight,
 And not so much to feed on as delight.
 All poverty was scorned, and pride so great
 The name of help grew odious to repeat.

DIONYZA O 'tis too true. (1.4.21-32)

The extravagance of former days in Tarsus is in an ordinary person's eyes extraordinary to the point of evil: riches should not be strewed in the streets; clothes are originally intended to keep us warm; food is not for looking at but for sustaining life; and to help others is a kind and admirable deed. Cleon reverses all these normative judgements, and foolishly approves his people's vicious, luxurious lives, which bring about the subsequent famine. Moreover, the towers which "kissed the clouds" imply the Tower of Babylon, as Hoeniger points out, and symbolically expresses the tower's presumptuous challenge to the gods and its consequent fall.¹⁸

After we in this way have examined the behaviour of the characters in the first act, we are now able to juxtapose them to Gower's moral judgement at the beginning of Act II and question his words' validity. Although he appears on the stage just after the scene in which Cleon's ignoble misgovernment is revealed, he takes no heed of Cleon's incapability as a governor, but focuses on the benevolence Pericles has shown to Tarsus. Moreover, Pericles himself is under criticism, having relinquished the rule of his own kingdom to save his own life. Although he brings food to Tarsus and rescues the starving people there, he secures his own safety by abiding in the country. His benevolence is just the apparent outcome of covering up the interests of both parties. Gower's admiration of Pericles, which serves to raise him to a godlike stature, is, altogether too extreme when contrasted to the facts; and so we see that Gower's moral judgement at the beginning of Act II contradicts the behaviour of the characters in Act I. It becomes evident therefore that his function as a chorus to orient the audience to arriving at a right understanding is open to question.

A similar discrepancy between the events in the dramatic world and Gower's evaluation of them is seen in the Epilogue:

GOWER In Antiochus and his daughter you have heard
 Of monstrous lust the due and just reward;
 In Pericles, his queen, and daughter seen,
 Although assailed with fortune fierce and keen,
 Virtue preserved from fell destruction's blast,
 Led on by heaven, and crowned with joy at last.
 In Helicanus may you well descry
 A figure of truth, of faith, of loyalty.
 In reverend Cerimon there well appears
 The worth that learned charity aye wears.

For wicked Cleon and his wife, when fame
Had spread their cursed deed to the honoured name
Of Pericles, to rage the city turn,
That him and his they in his palace burn.
The gods for murder seemed so content
To punish that, although not done, but meant.
So on your patience evermore attending,
New joy wait on you. Here our play has ending.

(Epilogue, 107-24)

An Epilogue serves as a kind of summary of what has been played on the stage, and Wilson Knight seems to be totally satisfied with Gower's conclusion:

Nothing is here forgotten: Antiochus' wickedness, Pericles' relief of the famine, the crime of Dionyza and Cleon, all are exactly remembered long after their purpose in the narrative sequence has been fulfilled; from first to last the Gower speeches have the whole action in mind; the various imagistic correspondences, cutting across divergences of style, knit the narrative into a unity.¹⁹

Hoenerger, however, is critical of Gower's summary:

His summary account of what the action and characters represent even includes a reference to Helicanus, a minor character whom the audience only faintly remembers, since he has had no part in the action since the second act: "A figure of truth, of faith, of loyalty." Nor do we really care about Cleon and Dionysa's fate, but Gower evidently feels that we should know how they are punished for their crimes.²⁰

Hoenerger's argument seems to be more appropriate than Knight's, if we recollect the whole passage of the play. To conclude the play Gower's attitude here is to give moral lessons, and he admires and condemns

according to the characters' virtues and vices, but it is evident that the play is not designed for such a purpose. We see here a similar discrepancy between Gower's moral judgement and the content of the play as I have examined above. His concluding speech, filled with moral lessons, provides an antithetic viewpoint to the significance of the whole play, and promotes the audience to reconsider it at the play's end. At the start of the play, Gower has promised in the Prologue to give the audience "glorious" pleasure, and actually each member has just appreciated heavenly pleasure in 5.1, the rejoicing of Pericles' when he has found his own daughter after a long course of penance.

5. Pleasure Given to the Audience: "Restoratives"

A fundamental feature of a Shakespearean romance is that it pursues fictionality to an almost incredible limit while at the same time containing both truth and pleasure, and is here in 5.1 expressed through the speeches of Pericles and Marina on a metatheatrical level. Marina's own history, which has been acted on the stage and which she is now to reveal to Pericles, is a most unbelievable tale: as she herself says, "If I should tell / My history, it would seem like lies / Disdained in the reporting." (5.1.107-09) Pericles tries to find some truth in her tale, for she seems "a palace / For the crowned truth to dwell in," and he continues, "I will believe thee, / And make my senses credit thy relation / To points that seem impossible." (5.1.111-14) But Pericles cannot easily believe that the maid before him is his own daughter, and she asks of him "Patience." (5.1.134) Marina's own history is "the rarest dream" for Pericles (5.1.150), but he finally accepts her story and expresses his joy:

PERICLES O Helicanus, strike me, honoured sir,
 Give me a gash, put me to present pain,

Lest this great sea of joys rushing upon me
O'erbear the shores of my mortality
And drown me with their sweetness! (5.1.179-183.)

Similarly the audience of a Shakespearean romance is required to believe the most incredible incidents once they are acted on the stage, and each member will gain pleasure and find some truths in it by accepting the story.

In 5.1 of *Pericles* no new information is offered to the audience, but the audience's viewpoint is skillfully manipulated so that it is superimposed on that of Pericles, and each member is forced to follow the process by which he recognizes the maid before him as his own daughter. The audience appreciates this process as if it were his own experience: each will follow Pericles' perception of the fact, from his outburst of tears, when he sees his wife's semblance in the maid, to his last reception that Marina, whose "death" has induced in him such debilitating lethargy, is alive before him. This is the pleasure Gower has promised to the audience in his Prologue as his "restoratives." And this is the pleasure that the audience enjoys after pursuing the whole course of the incredible incidents.

6. Conclusion

Shakespeare created a fictional character, the Chorus Gower, from his main source, *Confessio Amantis*, and its author, John Gower, but the authorial attitude of Gower as chorus is quite different from its original: he promises in the Prologue that his tale will bring pleasure to the audience. He shows that he governs the dramatic world by using several strategies, such as dumb shows and minimizing metaphors. By doing this he expresses the fictionality of the play to its utmost limits.

While other Shakespearean choruses, apart from Rumour in *2 Henry IV*, perform the function of guiding the audience to a right understanding, Gower's moral judgment as chorus shows a discrepancy to the incidents in the dramatic world in spite of his apparently trustworthy demeanour. Especially, his moral judgement works antithetically to the audience's reception of the play, and encourages each member to reconsider the true significance of the play.

Shakespearean romantic plays defy the presupposition that a play should be realistic, and pursue fictionality to a point which strains credibility. Thus Gower as Chorus positively shows that his tale is only a piece of fiction, but he also implies that there is some truth and pleasure in it through the paradoxes of his antithetical moral judgement. He is endowed with a fictional persona, a resurrection of a medieval poet, John Gower, and, therefore, he is allowed a subjective point of view. Although his view lacks objectivity, as it should to square with a chorus' judgement, it eventually gives the audience an opportunity for retrospection.

Notes

- ¹ William Shakespeare, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, ed. Doreen DelVecchio and Antony Hammond, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998) 85.
- ² Northrop Frye, *A Natural Perspective: The Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance* (New York: Columbia UP, 1965) 31-32.
- ³ Frye 13 and 19.
- ⁴ Howard Felperin, *Shakespearean Romance* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1972) 147.
- ⁵ Simon Palfrey, *Late Shakespeare: A New World of Words* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997) 41.
- ⁶ William Shakespeare, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, ed. Roger Warren, The Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003). All the quotations from *Pericles* are from this text. But I follow the usual scene division for convenience' sake.
- ⁷ John Gower, *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. G. C. Macaulay, EETS, ES,

- 81-82 (Oxford: EETS, 1900-01).
- ⁸ Delvecchio and Hammond 85.
- ⁹ William Shakespeare, *Pericles*, ed. F. D. Hoeniger, The Arden Edition of the Works of William Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1963) 6.
- ¹⁰ Dieter Mehl, *The Elizabethan Dumb Show: The History of a Dramatic Convention* (London: Methuen, 1965) 158.
- ¹¹ Mehl 156.
- ¹² William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. John Wilders, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Routledge, 1995).
- ¹³ The first example is seen in the Prologue, when he condemns the incest of Antiochus and his daughter: “Bad child, worse father, to entice his own / To evil should be done by none,” and “The beauty of this sinful dame.”(Prologue, 27-28 and 31)
- ¹⁴ Hoeniger 38.
- ¹⁵ He emphasizes his selfless anguish for his people in his speech to Helicanus in 1.2.97-100. “When all for mine — if I may call — offence / Must feel war’s blow, who spares not innocence; / Which love to all, of which thyself art one, / Who now reproved’st me for’t — .”
- ¹⁶ DelVecchio and Hammond criticise his escape, “since it leaves Tyre without its ruler in time of peril.” He makes the “error of going abroad at a time when there is good reason not to do so.” 67.
- ¹⁷ DelVecchio and Hammond 67. Cleon’s choice to lament for people with doing nothing practical may be similar to Pericles’ behaviour in 1.2:
And finding little comfort to relieve them,
I thought it princely charity to grieve them. (1.2.104-05)
- In Pericles’ speech the rhyme “-ieve” in “relieve” and “grieve” connects the two manners of conduct phonetically, contrasts his actual behaviour with his duty, and expresses his error effectively and ironically at the same time.
- ¹⁸ Hoeniger 32. Dionyza’s approval of his speech, “O’tis too true.” ironically adds to Cleon’s lack of understanding.
- ¹⁹ G. Wilson Knight, *The Crown of Life: Essays in Interpretation of Shakespeare’s Final Plays* (London: Methuen, 1948) 75.
- ²⁰ F. D. Hoeniger, “Gower and Shakespeare in *Pericles*” in *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33.4 (1982), 467.