

Helicanus as ‘a Figure of Truth, Faith and Loyalty’ in Shakespeare’s *Pericles*

Arbaayah Ali Termizi

English Department,
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
43400 UPM, Serdang, Selangor
Malaysia

Florence Toh Haw Ching

English Department
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
43400 Serdang, Selangor
Malaysia

Abstract

Pericles has been the focus of most Shakespearean scholars, discussing issues ranging from the play’s narrative sources to the protagonist’s leadership qualities. But the present paper will center its arguments on Helicanus, the neglected servant character of the play. Although loyalty is assumed in master-servant relationships during the Renaissance, the paper provides evidence that corrupted practices within the Elizabethan ruling class and its subordinates overcomes the need to be loyal. Despite being surrounded by the prevailing temptation for power, Helicanus remained as an epitome of loyalty in his service towards his master, Pericles. The paper extracts examples from relevant scenes in the play depicting portrayals of loyalty displayed by this servant character towards Pericles. In short Helicanus’ loyalty becomes the fundamental drive which elevates Pericles’ status in the play. Therefore, the study aims to heighten the appreciation of Shakespeare’s *Pericles* through the understanding and emphasis of the significance of its dramatic servant characters.

Keywords: William Shakespeare, *Pericles*, Helicanus, loyalty, master-servant relationship

1. Introduction

The play *Pericles* was written in 1607 as a collaborative effort between Shakespeare and his “literary associate” (Nicholl, 2007, p. 198), George Wilkins. Weis (2008) discovered that both Shakespeare and Wilkins “lodged at the Mountjoys”¹ for a while, hence their acquaintance” (p. 324). Attributed by Nicholl (2007) as “a writer of considerable bite” (p. 16), Wilkin’s collaboration with Shakespeare produced a play which focuses on relationships between characters of different hierarchical statuses in the society. However, it has been observed that the relationship shared between the protagonist, Pericles, and his servant, Helicanus, has not been prominently highlighted in the play, and thus not discussed thoroughly by most critics. According to Anderson (2005), “while modern critics have paid some attention to rebellious and resistant servants in Shakespearean plays, they have been generally ‘oblivious’ to virtuous or obedient servant-characters” (as cited in Dowd, p. 644).

This is further explained by Perkins (as cited in Anderson, 2005), who stated that “[a] good servant was merely doing what was expected of him. It was the bad servant that was worth writing about” (p. 27). In the like manner, Robbins (1993) claimed that because servants were “forced into the mold of character, [they] reveal so little worth investigating” (p. 34). Nevertheless, Anderson (2005) asserted that the general neglect towards literary servants meant that readers were “imposing [their] own limitations on the texts and thereby limiting [their] understanding of what these texts can tell [them]” (p. 29). Moreover, Weil (2005) maintained that “[b]ecause they function as mediators, servants often participate in crucial dramatic sequences. If we assume that their actions are always secondary [...] we will miss the full significance of their interventions” (p. 10). For Weinstock (1971),

¹ According to Stanley Wells, Christopher Mountjoy was a “French Huguenot tire-maker, who lived in London in a house at the corner of Silver and Monkwell Streets, in Cripplegate ward” (2005, p. 122). Shakespeare was believed to have rented a place at the Mountjoys between 1602 and 1604.

[t]hroughout his comedies, histories, and tragedies Shakespeare weaves a tight network of key-words current in Elizabethan times to denote obligations of rank and office, such as allegiance, authority, command, duty, oath, priority, privilege, service, and vow (p. 447).

One of the clearest examples of this is found in Shakespeare's King Lear. Even though the servant character, Kent, was banished by the king, he still remained faithful to his master until the end of the play.

In the recent years, there has been an emergence and growing sensitivity towards the idea of servitude in Shakespearean plays. Despite that, there remains a prevalent lack of scholarship focusing on Helicanus as the servant of Pericles, prince and ruler of Tyre, in the selected play. Resulting from that, the understanding and appreciation of the master-servant relationship shared between both the characters is often overlooked. This paper thus analyzes the master-servant relationship shared between Helicanus and Pericles with particular attention given to the portrayals of loyalty displayed by the servant character towards his master. It is hoped that the study will enhance the critical appreciation of the servant character as a supportive minor character within the selected play. Likewise, the paper aims to bring to light other servants worthy of study in Shakespeare's canonical plays. In the proceeding paragraphs, the paper details the methodology used in the research.

2. Methodology

The study of any theatrical works including Shakespearean plays encompasses two types of reading. In Beckerman's view, "where the theatre student will read [the plays] for situation, for stage business, for audience response, the literature student will read for symbolic significance, for thematic strands, for intellectual nuance" (as cited in Brown, 1990). Although the theatrical community has been emphasizing on the appreciation of Shakespeare's dramas through stage performances, Beckerman observed that the current literary circle has shown a renewed interest in textual analyses by returning to the study Shakespearean playtexts. While both types of readings have their indefinite advantages in discovering the merits of the dramatist's works, this paper approaches the selected play through the method of close reading embedded within the lens of textual criticism. According to McCaw (2008), close reading has been a recent approach in literary criticism through which the interpretation of texts is aided by the analyses of their internalized literary devices which give light to the work as a whole. For Beckerman,

a close, systematic examination of a good text does not restrict the free play of the imagination or reductively limit the opportunities available for effective performance. Rather, it brings into more exciting relationship the most provocative features of a dramatic work (as cited in Brown, 1990).

As such, it is hoped that this study enhances the appreciation of Shakespeare's dramatic works through creating "greater *enjoyment* of its complexities" (McCaw, 2008, italics original), particularly involving the play, Pericles.

Dramatist Atkins (1983) further affirmed that "almost every literary work is attended by a host of outside circumstances which, once we expose and explore them, suffuse it with additional meaning" (p. 5). Drawing from that, the paper provides a brief explanation of the idea of a servant during the Elizabethan era in order to understand the master-servant relationship shared by Helicanus and Pericles. In addition, Bush (1964) claimed that "reading a literary text does not just entail dealing with 'the artistic use of words and materials' but with the moral and spiritual experience that are its subject matter" (p. 572). During the early twentieth century, notable works of literature were measured by the universality of its moral values. Hence, textual interpretation was dominated by how the works highlight these values and morality. The intimate relation shared between literature and the theoretical-philosophical realm has resulted in many close reading advocates viewing themselves as "*liberal humanists*; liberal humanism being a broad philosophy that assumes a universal core to human experience" (McCaw, 2008, p. 45, italics original).

Consequently, when literary criticism was accused of becoming increasingly politicized during the mid-twentieth century, liberal humanism and the close reading method were greeted with aggressive rejections which is believed to have paralyzed their academic position until this very day. For Manley, the increase of modern-day pressure to achieve economic success makes it harder to substantiate the relevance and practicality of the humanities among students. Nevertheless, he believed that the recent recession intensifies the need to come back to humanities as the "intellectual science' that views the world from historical, interpretive, linguistic and symbolic perspectives – modes of understanding that other disciplines cannot adequately address" (as cited in Lee, 2009).

Manley's view is unanimously shared by other liberal arts proponents who agreed that the difficult time encourages questions about the various purposes and aspects of the human life. In Hammersley's (2008) words, "the task is not just to produce a reading of a particular 'text' but also to use this to illuminate general issues about human life" (p. 56). As literary studies continue to build upon one another, new theoretical findings are extended to provide conclusions which propel us towards a deeper understanding of our universal human values.

Furthermore, Leavis (as cited in McCaw, 2008) is convinced that the close reading approach brings positive influences to scholars by enabling them to view "the ways in which texts upheld particular moral values and codes of behaviour [and] 'teach' readers about life and human nature" (p. 52). In the study of Shakespeare's texts, it is believed that the dramatist portrayed his stand on moral judgment through his dramatic characters. This is in line with Aristotle's (as cited in McCaw, 2008) belief that

the poet aims at the representation of life; necessarily, therefore, he must always represent things in one of three ways: either as they were or are, or as they are said to be or seem to be, or as they ought to be (p. 107).

Therefore, the research attempts to enlighten readers on the moral values found within the selected play, specifically concerning the portrayals of loyalty found within the character analysis of Helicanus towards Pericles. This corresponds to Kenney's (1988) argument that the elements of loyalty within the texts were "not [clearly] stated for our enlightenment and convenience at the beginning or the end" (p. 99) of Shakespeare's *Pericles*. By addressing the issue which is often overlooked in the study of the selected text, the research methodology adopted within the paper aims to shed light on the importance and significance of loyalty in its relation to our lives and surroundings.

3. A Renaissance 'servant'

In his book about masters and servants during the Renaissance, Burnett (1997) established the early view that the idea of a 'servant' during the Renaissance "was far from universally agreed or established" (p. 2). For Gouge and Ling (as cited in Burnett, 1997), "any individual bound by a contract was a 'servant'" (p. 2). Foucault (as cited in Anderson, 2005) regarded 'service' as "a constant, total, massive, non-analytical, unlimited relation of domination, established in the form of the individual will of the master, his 'caprice'" (p. 10). While Anderson (2005) felt that Foucault's definition did not clearly represent the notion of service found in Shakespearean plays, she does agree that the term 'servant' generally meant "inferior to someone" (p. 22). As such, the definition of a 'servant' necessarily includes the "subordinate positions with which [servants] were inevitably associated" (Burnett, 1997, p. 3). According to Weil (2005), service in early modern England was understood "through association with various forms of dependency" (p. 1). She further quoted Morgan, who observed that a 'servant' during the Elizabethan era connotes "anyone who worked for another in whatever capacity" (p. 2). Nevertheless, it is necessary to distinguish the hierarchical divisions even within the class of servants. For Burnett, these servants were grouped according to:

- i) The upper levels, gentlemen servants or chief officers comprising of the steward, chamberlain, comptroller, receiver, secretary and gentleman usher.
- ii) The lower levels or yeomen servants comprising of grooms, stable-hands, waiters, footmen and musicians.

The subordinate and inferior position held by the servants may have accounted for the reason why Shakespeare did not base his plays on servants as the dramatic protagonists. Despite that, servant characters continue to play prominent supporting roles in Shakespearean dramas. This paper argues that Helicanus' contribution is believed to be essential in the servant character's development within the selected play.

In the drama, Helicanus is a councillor in the courts of Tyre ruled by Pericles. The servant character receives orders and instructions from Pericles. The protagonist also refers to him as a "fit councillor and servant for a prince" (2. 67). Helicanus was entrusted to take over the government of Tyre during Pericles' absence. He was also responsible for updating Pericles on the events involving Tyre and its surrounding countries. When the other councillors wanted to crown Helicanus as their new king upon Pericles' absence, the loyal Helicanus requested that they wait for the prince's return in order to resume the throne.

In addition, when Pericles was mourning for Marina's² death, the loyal servant accompanied his master throughout the duration until the final reunion of the royal family. Through discussions from selected scenes within the play, the paper aims to highlight the portrayals of loyalty displayed by Helicanus towards Pericles. Prior to that, it is necessary to present a brief sketch of the Elizabethan hierarchical scheme in the society from which Shakespeare drew inspirations for his characters. By understanding the social hierarchies occupied by the Elizabethan community and their corresponding acts of service, readers will be able to better comprehend the position held by Helicanus and subsequently, grow to appreciate the service and displays of loyalty extended by the selected servant character towards his master, Pericles.

4. Focus of the Study

Shakespeare's Elizabethan England was largely divided into four major social hierarchies which defined the people's status and wealth. The ruling class occupied the uppermost level of the hierarchy. This social class comprised of nobles, knights, and squires, recognized as "those whom their race and blood or at least their virtues do make them noble and known" (Kinney, 1999, p. 3). Below them were the burgesses who were given the freedom of trade according to their expertise. The third level of the social category consisted of the yeomen who were usually farmers who possessed lands or those who worked their gentlemen's land. The lowest social class of the hierarchy was occupied by day laborers, poor husbandmen, artificers and common servants.

As discussed earlier, Helicanus served as one of the lords in the council of Tyre. He was also a trusted advisor for Pericles, the ruler of Tyre. This position is likened to the members of the Elizabethan Privy Council. For the purpose of this paper, discussions pertaining to the Elizabethan servants will focus on this particular social class. As a writer who often ridiculed the Renaissance pompousness of aristocracy in most of his plays, Shakespeare's stance on loyalty could be taken as someone who "had been a privy counselor all his life, and in each successive reign" (Hazlitt, 1997, p. 241). Building on from that, the following discussion entails the acts of service displayed within the ruling class of the Elizabethan society.

4.1. The Privy Council

In the playwright's seventeenth-century England, the reign of Queen Elizabeth I was assisted by the Privy Council which consisted of "part time administrators" (Badawi, 1981, p. 31). These were "men of very superior standing in the realm, often independent actors in matters political and social" (Elton, 1985, p. 3). Although they were supposed to extend their loyal service towards the ruling crown, Hopkins and Steggle (2006) alleged that "the court was almost invariably composed of a large group of the richest and most powerful aristocrats in the country [which] was the most fashionable, most extravagant and [...] the most immoral place in Britain" (p. 43). Assuming that loyalty between master-servant relationships was a common and expected act of service within the Renaissance aristocrats, Anderson (2005) emphasized that viewing Shakespearean servants as reflections of the servants during the Elizabethan era is "largely incorrect, unless we accept that reflections can be distorted" (p. 10). As discussed in the proceeding paragraphs, the Elizabethan society in general was seen as being plagued with corruptions fueled by self-interest and greed. This phenomenon is also observed to be affecting the servants in the noble household.

Elton (1985) observed that the Privy Council of the Elizabethan era possessed "independent powers unusual in the administrations of the age [and] discharged many tasks of the government on their own authority" (p. 3). They also displayed "excessive greed" (Elton, 1985, p. 8) and "could not afford to let themselves be moved by loyalties and sentiments" (Elton, 1985, p. 17). As the years passed by, these aristocrats grew more inclined "to pursue personal advancement and to promote particular policies by forming associations within the Council" (Elton 1985, p. 3). Janette Dillon (2007) pointed out that this decentralized system became plagued with the "decay of hospitality" (p. 99) which caused a tension between the old cultural values that maintained the importance of social harmony, and the new cultural values which recognized this social harmony as "the last remnants of an essentially feudal social structure" (ibid). As a result, the Renaissance court was "in a constant state of competition, renegotiation and reorganization" (Hopkins and Steggle, 2006, p. 42) as each member of the council sought their own benefits.

² Marina is Pericles' daughter who was left under the care of King Cleon and Queen Dionyza while the protagonist was in mourning for the death his wife, Thaisa's. Driven by jealousy and fear that Marina will overshadow her own daughter, Queen Dionyza ordered Marina's assassination. However, her life was spared when she was kidnapped and sold off to a brothel in Mytilene, eventually leading to the reunion with her father.

Contrary to popular belief, Anderson (2005) reported that “public service usually has a personal, rather than patriotic basis” (p. 37) in Shakespeare’s seventeenth-century government. For instance, Robert Cecil who held the position of Secretary of State intervened with the succession of King James I to the throne two years before the death of Queen Elizabeth I. Resulting from that,

he prospered under the new king, who immediately made him Lord Cecil of Essendine and later earl of Salisbury and who endowed him with more and more political responsibility until Cecil’s death in 1612 (McDonald, 2001, p. 307).

On a different but not altogether irrelevant note, it is interesting to discover that Cecil was able to secure the favour of the Queen due to his musical talents. While he was still the secretary to the council, Cecil composed verses which were sung to the Queen, a common practice during the Elizabethan period to show appreciation towards the sovereign. According to Fenlon (1989), “to the end of her reign, music was both seen – and proved – to be an essential means of treating with Elizabeth” (p. 333). It may therefore not be too far-fetched to assume that Lord Cecil’s musical gift paved the way for his interference with the election of King James I as the Queen’s successor, thus securing his own position in the court. This became an example of how a servant could garner the master’s favour due to subjective reasons.

When the shift of monarchy occurred in 1603, Elizabeth I’s frugality was replaced by James I’s prodigality which corresponded to what Jowett (2004) called “Timonesque generosity in gift-giving” (p. 7). The Jacobean traits further encouraged the aristocrats to personal benefits and self-gratification. Dillon (2007) pointed out that before the throne was passed to King James I, “a financial crisis was already developing for the country’s aristocracy, many of whom financed their life-styles, including their gift-giving, through credit” (p. 99). Such a situation marked a decline of the Council’s integrity when wealth and material gain took precedence over virtues such as loyalty.

As reflected by the servants of different masters in Pericles, Shakespeare invokes the decline of loyalty as seen in the period. Despite that, Shakespeare’s Helicanus remained loyal to his master, Pericles, displaying his loyalty at the most tempting time when he was pressured to take over the throne of Tyre during Pericles’ absence, an act which does not conform to the corrupted lifestyle during Shakespeare’s Elizabethan England. In brief, the servant character’s portrayals of loyalty marked a stark contrast to the escalating corruptions occurring within the ruling class of the Elizabethan era. The following discussion focuses on the examples and extent of loyalty offered by Helicanus towards Pericles in selected scenes of the play.

4.2. Helicanus in Pericles

Shakespeare’s Pericles opens with the protagonist, Pericles, attempting to win the hand of King Antiochus’ daughter in Antioch. Like many other suitors before him, the prince of Tyre wished “to seek her as a bedfellow” (1.33) by passing the test which involved solving a riddle. Although all the previous suitors had failed the test and was beheaded as a result, Pericles was able to decipher the content of the riddle which revealed an incestuous relationship between King Antiochus and his daughter. Upon Pericles’ discovery, King Antiochus ordered his servant, Thaliart, to assassinate the prince of Tyre. The protagonist, knowing King Antiochus’ intention, escaped Antioch during the night.

In scene 2, when Pericles returned to Tyre with a disturbed mind, the lords exercised their flattery on him:

FIRST LORD

Joy and comfort in your sacred breast!

SECOND LORD

And keep your mind peaceful and comfortable. (2. 34-5)

This reminds us of the unhealthy association within the Privy Council which was discussed earlier in the paper. As Robert Cecil used music to his advantage in dealing with the Queen, the councillors in Shakespeare’s Pericles also showered insincere flatteries upon their prince, Pericles. Viewing this incident, Helicanus stepped in to rebuke them for their flattery and asserted that obedience was more important in treating their king:

HELICANUS

They do abuse the King that flatter him,
 For flattery is the bellows blows up sin;
 The thing the which is flattered, but a spark,
 To which that wind gives heat and stronger glowing;
 Whereas reproof, obedient and in order,
 Fit kings as they are men, for they may err.
 When Signor Soothe here does proclaim a peace
 He flatters you, makes war upon your life. (2. 43-50)

This marks the first portrayal of loyalty shown by Helicanus towards his master, Pericles, which corresponded to Shakespeare's interpretation of obedience and loyalty. For Frye (1963), the scene also represents "Shakespeare's customary reference to the difference between counsel and flattery" (p. 155). Unlike the insincere lords in the courts of Tyre, Helicanus endeavoured to reveal the truth about Pericles' sorrowful temperament:

HELICANUS

(*To Pericles*) You do not well so to abuse yourself,
 To waste your body here in pining sorrow,
 Upon whose safety doth depend the lives
 And the prosperity of a whole kingdom.
 'Tis ill in you to do it, and no less
 Ill in your council not to contradict it (2. 37-42)

In these lines, Helicanus reminded Pericles that his emotional well-being affects the kingdom and the people under his rule. In his honesty, Helicanus rebuked Pericles for displaying such a pessimistic outlook. This scene coincides with Weinstock's (1971) observation that "as soon as their master strays from his own moral qualities, [Shakespeare's] loyal servants try to restore in him the essence of his natural and familiar being" (p. 463). Unfortunately, Helicanus' honesty had provoked Pericles to anger:

PERICLES

Helicanus, thou

Hast moved³ us. What seest thou in our looks?

HELICANUS An angry brow, dread lord.

PERICLES

If there be such a dart in princes' frowns,
 How durst thy tongue move anger to our face?

HELICANUS

How dares the plants look up to heaven from whence
 They have their nourishment?

PERICLES

Thou know'st I have power to take thy life from thee.

HELICANUS

I have ground the axe myself, do you but strike the blow. (2. 55-63)

In the dialogue, Pericles was furious at Helicanus for revealing his anger. Despite that, Helicanus defended himself by reinforcing his loyalty towards his king, comparing their relationship to that of a plant which looked up to the heaven as its source of life: "How dares the plants look up to heaven from whence / They have their nourishment?" (2. 60-1). Even when Pericles threatened to kill Helicanus, the servant was willing to risk his life in loyal service to his master. For his sincerity, Helicanus earned Pericles' trust and confidence:

³ According to Warren (2003), the word 'moved' in line 56 meant "angered" (p. 106, n. 56) while the word 'durst' in line 59 meant "dare" (p. 106, n. 58).

PERICLES [*lifting him up*]

Rise, prithee rise, sit down, thou art no flatterer,
I thank thee for it, and heaven forbid
That kings should let their ears hear their faults hid.
Fit councillor and servant for a prince,
Who by thy wisdom makes a prince thy servant,
What wouldst thou have me do? (2. 64-8)

The king then proceeded to seek Helicanus' advice as he confided in his loyal councillor about the ordeal in Antioch.

Upon hearing about Pericles' dilemma, Helicanus advised his master to leave Tyre until the conflict between him and King Antiochus has subdued. The loyal servant further pledged that "[d]ay serves not light more faithful than [he]'ll be" (2. 115) if Pericles decides to leave the rule of the kingdom under his care. However, Pericles was fearful of Antioch's attack: "But should he in my absence wrong my liberties?" (2. 117). Here, Helicanus' reply marked the second example of his loyalty when he claimed "We'll mingle our bloods together in the earth / From whence we had our being and our birth" (2. 118-9). Helicanus indicated that he was willing to sacrifice himself for Pericles' sake. The protagonist thus set sail towards the neighbouring Tarsus, ruled by King Cleon and Queen Dionyza while the government of Tyre was entrusted to Helicanus. In scene 3 of the play, King Antiochus' assassin, Thaliart, reached Tyre in pursuit of Pericles. In his loyalty towards Pericles, Helicanus immediately sent news to his master, causing Pericles to set sail from Tarsus.

Throughout Pericles' absence, Helicanus constantly sent news to inform his master of the updates from Tyre and Antioch. This is evident from Gower's account:

GOWER

Good Helicane that stayed at home,
Not to eat honey like a drone
From others' labours, for that he strive
To killen bad, keep good alive,
And to fulfill his prince' desire
Sent word of all that haps in Tyre (5. 17-22)

By scene 8 of Pericles, the long absence of the protagonist began to invoke much unrest and tension within the council. Uncertain about the whereabouts of their ruler, the councillors began pressuring Helicanus to take over the throne:

SECOND LORD

- your noble self,
That best know how to rule and how to reign,
We thus submit unto as sovereign.

ALL [*kneeling*] Live, noble Helicane! (8. 36-9)

Despite the pleas of the councillors to elect Helicanus to the throne, the loyal servant refused to take over his master's position:

HELICANUS

By honour's cause, forebear your suffrages.
If that you love Prince Pericles, forebear.
[*The lords rise*]
Take I your wish I leap into the seas
Where's hourly trouble for a minute's ease,
But if I cannot win you to this love,
A twelvemonth longer then let me entreat you
Further to bear the absence of your king;
If in which time expired he not return,
I shall with aged patience bear your yoke. (8. 40-8)

According to Helicanus, the councillors should wait for their king's return and not be too quick to take the easy way out to solve the problem. Their act of nominating him to the throne is likened to bring "hourly trouble for a minute's ease" (8. 43). This scene marks the most apparent example of loyalty for Helicanus.

The servant character then urged the councillors to be patient for another year in waiting for Pericles' return. If their ruler remained missing after that, Helicanus would reluctantly take the crown: "I shall with aged patience bear your yoke" (8. 48). Although Helicanus could have taken over the throne for his personal comfort and benefit, he refused to usurp his master. For Lamb (1995), Helicanus represents

a noble pattern of truth, of faith, and loyalty, who, when he might have succeeded to a throne, chose rather to recall the rightful owner to his possession, than to become great by another's wrong (p. 313).

In putting Pericles' honour and dignity above himself, Helicanus' exemplary attitude proved that he is indeed loyal. Other than declining the offer for the crown, Helicanus also encouraged the councillors to diligently seek the whereabouts of their king:

HELICANUS

Go seek your noble prince like noble subjects,
And in your search spend your adventurous worth,
Whom if you find and win unto return,
You shall like diamonds sit about his crown. (8. 49-52)

He asserted that if Pericles returns to Tyre, the lords of the court must stay loyal to him like "diamonds sit about his crown" (8. 52). The servant character's act corresponds with the view forwarded by McDonald (2001) who maintained that

Shakespeare has often been considered a willing spokesman for the orthodoxy of his age, a loyal monarchist with a hatred for disorder and a contempt for political rebellion and disobedience (p. 323).

In Pericles, Helicanus endeavoured to encourage unity among the councillors of the court by directing them towards a common cause of searching for Pericles. Weinstock (1971) observed that "it is voluntary service like [Helicanus'] that makes all willing persons join in perfect community" (p. 470). Helicanus not only preserved his loyalty towards Pericles but further led the councillors to focus on searching for Pericles. Due to the servant character's fervent devotion towards his prince and master, Pericles was eventually reunited with his family and restored to his rightful position as Tyre's king and ruler. In the final scene of the play, Pericles acknowledged Helicanus' loyalty when he introduced the servant character to his wife, Thaisa:

PERICLES

You have heard me say, when I did fly from Tyre,
I left behind an ancient substitute.
Can you remember what I called the man?
I have named him oft.

THAISA 'Twas Helicanus then. (22. 71-5)

Thaisa's acknowledgement of Helicanus represents the impact of the servant character's loyalty towards his master. Helicanus' portrayals of loyalty corresponds to Weinstock's (1971) statement that Shakespeare's "good servants serve in order to actualize their master's potential" (p. 463). In addition Maurice Hunt (2007) believed that Helicanus represents "one of the major lessons for Pericles' development of courageous character" (p. 509). For his commendable acts of loyalty, Helicanus is regarded as a strong symbol of loyalty. In the closing speech of the play, Gower hailed Helicanus as "a figure of truth, of faith, of loyalty" (22. 114).

5. Conclusion

From the examples and discussions forwarded, Helicanus' loyalty towards Pericles has indeed become an invaluable contribution to the development of the play. Although servants are recognized as occupying an inferior position, Helicanus showed how his presence influenced the well-being of his master ending with the restoration of Pericles to his throne. Despite the wide-spread of greed that characterizes the Privy Council of Shakespeare's age, the dramatist's Helicanus displayed commendable loyalty towards the throne that he served. The selected servant character showcased his loyalty towards Pericles by being truthful to his master in contrast to the other councillors who only sought to flatter Pericles.

Helicanus was also willing and prepared to lose his life for the sake of his service to Pericles. While the protagonist was away, the servant governed Tyre with diligence, constantly sending news to update his king about the events happening in Tyre and Antioch. Even though the councillors wanted to nominate Helicanus to take over Pericles' position to ruler Tyre, the loyal servant refused to usurp his master, requesting instead that the councillors seek the whereabouts of their king. For Weinstock (1971), the voluntary service displayed by Helicanus in *Pericles* marked the highest perfection of loyalty in Shakespeare's plays. With his significant contribution to the progression of the play and the final restoration of Pericles' reputation, Helicanus certainly deserved much more recognition than what has thus far been credited to him. The research also has potential to be developed to include other Shakespearean servant characters such as King Lear's Kent as well as involving real life characters⁴ outside mere literary texts. It is hoped that this paper also instigates many other studies concerning Shakespeare's loyal servants. In Weinstock's (1971) words, "Helicanus and Pericles complete each other" (p. 471).

References

- Anderson, L. (2005). *A Place in the Story: Servants and Service in Shakespeare's Plays*. Cranbury: Rosemont Publishing & Printing Corp.
- Atkins, D. G. (1983). *Reading Deconstruction: Deconstructive Reading*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- Badawi, M. M. (1981). *Background to Shakespeare*. London: Macmillan Education Ltd.
- Brown, J. R. (Ed) (1990) *Studying Shakespeare: A Casebook*. London: Macmillan Education Ltd.
- Burnett, M. T. (1997). *Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and Culture: Authority and Obedience*. Hampshire: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Bush, D. (1964). The Humanities. In *Essays: An Analytical Reader*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Dillon, J. (2007). *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare Tragedies*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Dowd, M. M. (2006). A Place in the Story: Servants and Service in Shakespeare's Plays (review). *Renaissance Quarter*. Retrieved November 16, 2009 from EBSCOhost database.
- Elton, G. R. (1985). The State: Government and Politics under Elizabeth and James. In John F. Andrews (Ed), *William Shakespeare: His World, His Works, His Influence*. (pp. 3-36). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Fenlon, I. (Ed) (1989). *The Renaissance: From the 1470s to the end of the 16th century*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.
- Frye, R. M. (1963). *Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Hammersley, M. (2008) *Questioning Qualitative Inquiry*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Hazlitt, W. (1997). Characters of Shakespeare's Plays. In John Adler (Ed), *The History of British Theatre: Responses to Shakespeare*. London: Routledge.
- Hopkins, L. and Matthew S. (2006). *Renaissance Literature and Culture*. London: Continuum.
- Hunt, M. (2001). Qualifying the Good Steward of Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* English Studies. Retrieved October 4, 2007 from EBSCOhost database. Jowett, J. (Ed). (2004). *Timon of Athens* (1605). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kenney, W. P. (1988). *How to Read and Write about Fiction*. New York: Simon and Schuster Inc,
- Kinney, A. F. (Ed.). (1999) *Renaissance Drama: An Anthology of Plays and Entertainments*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers.
- Lamb, C. and Mary Lamb. (1995). *Tales from Shakespeare*. 1807. Croydon: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Lee, P. (2009, March 9). In today's world, do liberal arts matter? *Yale Daily News*. Retrieved from <http://www.yaledailynews.com>.
- McCaw, N. (2008). *How to Read Texts: A Student Guide to Critical Approaches and Skills*. London: Continuum.
- McDonald, R. (2001). *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare: An Introduction with Documents*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Nicholl, C. (2007). *The Lodger: Shakespeare on Silver Street*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Robbins, B. (1993). *The Servant's Hand: English Fiction from Below*. (1986). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Shakespeare, W. (1607). *Pericles*. (Roger Warren. Ed, 2003). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Weil, J. (2005). *Service and Dependency in Shakespeare's Plays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weis, Rene. (2008). *Shakespeare Revealed: A Biography*. London: John Murray (Publishers).
- Weinstock, Horst. (1971). Loyal Service in Shakespeare's Mature Plays. *Studia Neophilologica*.
- Wells, Stanley. (2005). *A Dictionary of Shakespeare*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁴ Other papers resulting from similar research has compared some of Shakespeare's servant characters such as the Steward in *Timon of Athens* and Helicanus in *Pericles* to Malaysian political personalities during the 2008 nationwide general election.