EARLY MODERN
LITERARY STUDIES

The Play as Truce: Attainable Peace in *Henry V* and *The Winter's Tale*

Nathalie Rivere de Carles
Université Toulouse Jean Jaurès
nrivere@univ-tlse2.fr

In the history plays dealing with the Wars of the Roses and the Hundred Years' War, Shakespeare does not focus on the end of the war. He dramatises the conflicts to such an extent that we have the impression they are never-ending experiences. Somehow it would be almost incoherent for the playwright to focus on the end of war in plays that each mark but a short episode in a lengthier war whose 'end' is thus located outside the temporal boundaries of the series of plays. More surprisingly, yet in keeping with the chronology of warfare, Shakespeare intersperses war plays with momentary cessations of conflict. This article shifts the focus from war to moments of truce, of temporary agreements between opposing parties and their impact on the audience. It does not focus on the truce as a military tactic to re-arm but as an essential element in a strategy of peace or entente.

The article deals with an unusual pairing of two plays juxtaposing a domestic and international conflict: William Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1599), and *The Winter's Tale* (1611).[1] The plot of the Elizabethan history play opposing England and France while England is experiencing a bitter succession war is historically located in the middle of many failed truces which eventually led to a flawed peace via the 1420 Treaty of Troyes. Shakespeare echoes the actual environment of truces in the play thanks to the insertion of sub-plots taking the form of momentarily-suspended mirror conflicts. In *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (1625), Grotius quotes Latinus Pacatus' definition of a truce as suspension: 'Truce

[1] Quotations from William Shakespeare *Henry V*, New Cambridge Shakespeare, ed. by Andrew Gurr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) and *The Winter's Tale*, The Oxford Shakespeare, ed. by Stephen Orgel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). All other quotations from Shakespeare's plays are taken from *The Norton Shakespeare Third Edition*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Suzanne Gossett, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus, Gordon McMullan (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2016).

suspends the Effects of War'. He adds Gellius's distinction between truce and peace 'A Truce cannot be called a Peace, for the War continues, tho' Fighting ceases'.[2] I posit that *Henry V* uses three scenes as truce moments: the Nym and Pistol scene (2.1), the Captains scene (3.3) and the Le Fer scene (4.4). They are pauses relegating the international feud in the background and discussing friendship, national union and subjugation, and the uncertain outcome of the cessation of hostilities.

The Winter's Tale features a similar breakdown in diplomatic relations between two kings and two kingdoms based on a prince's uncontrolled hubris. In the opening scene of the Jacobean tragicomedy, the relationship between Leontes, King of Sicily, and Polixenes, King of Bohemia, is defined diplomatically as 'loving embassies' (1.1.27). Both characters are repeatedly named through their territory rather than their monikers. However, the friendly encounter takes a sour turn when Hermione, Leontes' wife, tries to convince Polixenes to stay by changing his status from 'guest' to 'prisoner' (1.2.51-2). This turns a king into a hostage, a situation known to many an early modern prince. The royal friendship and diplomatic relationship turn into a conflict increasingly rephrased in political and military terms. Even the planned murder attempt against Polixenes is expressed as a violent opposition between polities:

> CAMILLO I do, and will fetch off Bohemia for't –
> Provided that when he's removed your highness
> Will take again your Queen as yours at first,
> Even for your son's sake, and thereby for sealing
> The injury of tongues in courts and kingdoms
> Known and allied to yours (1.2.331-6).

The conflict expands from the courtly sphere to 'kingdoms'. Polixenes himself defines Leontes' discontent in territorial terms: 'The King hath on him such a countenance / As he had lost some province, and a region' (364-5). The dispute is more and more defined in subtle political and military terms, transforming the love feud into a symbolic war that is not immediately resolved by Leontes' act of contrition in Act 3 Scene 2. The audience must wait for Paulina's art-based peace-making device in the final act. Unlike *Henry V*, *The Winter's Tale* does not happen on a battlefield. However, like *Henry V*, the conflict between monarchs is based on a hubristic sense of territoriality and more importantly is

[2] *Hugo Grotius On the Law of War and Peace*, ed. Stephen C. Neff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) Bk III, ch XXI, I.2, p. 449. All quotations from Grotius's *De jure belli ac pacis* are taken from this edition.

only truly ended through diplomatic encounters and nuptials.[3] In between the war-like moment and its appeasement, it takes a sixteen-year gap in the plot for the conditions for peace negotiations to emerge. *The Winter's Tale* follows the same pattern as an earlier problem play, *Troilus and Cressida* (1602-3). The latter occurs during a truce, and the former's sixteen-year gap is a similar suspension of a jealousy-based *âgon* between monarchs. Unlike the doomed Trojan episode, the suspension in *The Winter's Tale* creates a space to negotiate a resolution of the tragic strife and turns the play itself into a productive truce.

This article's approach to truce in Shakespeare is based on Timothy Hampton's notion of 'betweenness' and Nir Eisikovits's truce as a non-ideal theory which 'helps us think about ending wars and about how to diminish their viciousness when they cannot be ended'.[4] Truce-making is motivated by ideals as asymptotic goals to attain (in the best case scenario, peace), but it is set in a non-ideal situation. This article posits that Shakespeare's handling of truce as an operating framework for some plays articulates ideal and non-ideal theories as it reconfigures peace-making through truce-thinking.[5] The method lies in giving an operating form to Hampton's 'interstitiality' through what Eisikovits identifies as the method to a successful truce: finding 'cracks' or 'openings' (zones of negotiation) in the war process. The dramatic truce relies on a sense of *kairos* (timeliness and opportunity).

The article first argues that *Henry V* and *The Winter's Tale* dramatises the theory of truce and its implementation through the performative nature of dramatic 'cracks' such as secondary plots, scenes of comic relief and temporal gaps. Secondly, this piece argues that truce is an operating framework in a strategy of peace-making or at least of the sustainable suspension of conflicts not only at the level of the characters but of the

[3] For the diplomatic content of *The Winter's Tale*, see Patricia Akhimie, 'Galleries and Soft Power: The Gallery in *The Winter's Tale*', in *Early Modern Diplomacy, Theatre and Soft Power*, ed. by Nathalie Rivere de Carles (London: Palgrave, 2016), pp. 139-60; N. Rivere de Carles, 'Ambassadrices imaginaires et diplomatie de l'imagination dans *Le conte d'hiver* de Shakespeare et *La grande Sultane, Catalina de Oviedo* de Cervantès', in *Shakespeare et Cervantès*, ed. by Ineke Bockting, Pascale Drouet, and Béatrice Fonck (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2018) pp. 157-91.

[4] Timothy Hampton, 'The Slumber of War: Diplomacy, Tragedy, and the Aesthetics of the Truce in Early Modern Europe', in *Early Modern Diplomacy, Theatre and Soft Power*, p. 28. Nir Eisikovits, *A Theory of Truces* (London: Palgrave, 2016), p. 3.

[5] For a discussion of ideal and non-ideal theory, see John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1971). For the discussion of truce as non-ideal theory, see Thaddeus Metz, 'Jus interruptus bellum: the ethics of truce-making' and Eisikovits, 'The non-ideal theory of conflict management: a response to critics of A Theory of Truces' *Journal of Global Ethics* 13.1 (2017), 6-13; 52-7.

audience. Laura Valentini says that 'ideal theory allows us to identify instances of partial compliances (by telling us what full compliance requires), but it does not tell us how to respond to them'.[6] That is where Shakespearean theatre comes in handy as the unfolding of the plot demands a response. By virtue of leaving the page for the stage (the liminal space between fiction and reality), theatre guides the action in the real world while asking: 'What ought we to do in circumstances where others do not do their part?'[7] The prism of the truce as a suspension of the *âgon* and the negotiation of its potential resolution offers a first answer that comes from the dark recesses of the plays under study: the secondary-subaltern-characters. Shakespeare explores the means of response to conflict through the handling of truces by secondary characters in secondary plots that either fail (*Henry V*) or succeed to resound on the main plot (*The Winter's Tale*). Both plays present different outcomes for the truce, thus showing that Shakespearean drama offers a supple view of the truce as an instrument to reach attainable forms of peace.

The article first shows how early modern English theatre gives a literary agency to truce by making it a functional part of the play's rhythm. Truce reconfigures the *âgon* away from its conventional outlook. From this panoramic study emerges two different visions of truce, 'base' and 'happy' truce dramatised in *Henry V*. The latter stages both a zero-sum-gain negotiation in Act 3 Scene 3 (one player's gain is predicated on the other players' loss) and the possibility of a non-zero-sum agreement (one player's gain [or loss] does not necessarily result in the other players' loss [or gain]) in Act 2 Scene 1.[8] In *Henry V* and *The Winter's Tale*, truce-making is left to secondary characters, but it is the tragicomedy with its play-long expansion of the time and territory of truce that really tests a method to implement a successful 'happy' truce through a time-lapsing diplomacy. In addition, the play offers another method: theatre and wonder. Thus, lastly the article posits that artistic performance gives further agency to this newly-created dramatic truce through the redefinition of the characters' and the audience's relationship with the past in both the final scene of *The Winter's Tale* and some contemporary performances of *Henry V*. The article concludes that truce as an operating framework and as the strategy for a performance of history shows that the Shakespearean play offers a practical articulation of ideal and non-ideal views of peace-making, the responsibility of which lies ultimately with the audience.

---

[6] Laura Valentini, 'Ideal vs. non-ideal theory: a conceptual map', *Philosophy Compass*, 7 (2012) 654-64.

[7] Ibid., 657.

[8] See Roger Myerson, *Game Theory: Analysis of Conflict* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 222ff.

Riding the *âgon*: Truce as Setting, Concentrating and Regulating the Play's Conflict

Early modern English playwrights' interest in the truce mirrors the two peaks of the discussion of truce in early modern dictionaries between 1550 and 1603 and in the 1650s (the end of the Thirty-Year War). The period is characterised by post-schism conflicts with the continent notably the four Anglo-French Wars between 1542 and 1593, and the Anglo-Spanish war (1585-1604).[9] Throughout Europe, a fertile truce-related literature developed.[10] The slow brokering of a truce between the Low Countries and Spain resulting in the Twelve Year Truce (1609-21) was so influential that its negotiation (c. 1607-8) was subsequently dramatized in Italian in a five-act tragedy: *Argomento d'una tragedia profetica delli negozi delli Paesi Bassi rappresentata l'anno passato in Siria dinanzi il Bassà di Tripoli* (*A plot for the prophetic tragedy concerning the negotiation with the Low Countries staged last year in Syria in the presence of the Pasha of Tripoli*).[11] The truce is not only an event, a military tactic chronicled by historians and regularly discussed by jurisconsults, it is both a non-literary text setting terms and conditions and a literary trope.[12] In drama, it handles comic or tragic conflicts. It is a structural element of the plot and the scenography that relies on potentiality. It characterises the generic and dramatic flexibility of early modern English drama as it generates a permanent dramatic tension and enables a functioning juxtaposition of plots. After establishing that truce is a device setting the space, the time and the plot, this section observes how it concentrates the *âgon*, and helps regulate it.

Although the truce is complicated by its inherent betweenness, drama gives it a concrete visual and aural shape. In *Richard II* (1594-6), an inner stage direction calls for a trumpet to indicate a truce: 'Through brazen trumpet send the breath of parley' (3.3.33). The physical signal of the suspension is reinforced by the original stage direction, '*Parle without and answer within*' (SD.61), confirming the call for an offstage negotiation. The

[9] Statistics based on corpus analysis of search results in *Lexicon of Early Modern English*, https://leme.library.utoronto.ca/

[10] The terms and conditions of truces are not only published in French territories involved in conflicts but they are also translated. See introductory article and Marie-Céline Daniel's article in this issue.

[11] *Argomento d'una tragedia profetica delli negozi delli Paesi Bassi rappresentata l'anno passato in Siria dinanzi il Bassà di Tripoli* (1601-1700), Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb.lat.818.pt.3, 557r-559v. In his unpublished paper, *Reason of State: Italian narratives of the Twelve Years' Truce (1609)*, Alberto Clerici dates this play more likely between 1607 and 1609, i.e. at the time or just after the negotiation. Clerici notes that the play script is pretty much influenced by Cardinal Bentivoglio, the Papal Nuncio (ambassador) and his literary discussion of the terms and conditions of the truce.

[12] See Hampton, 'The Slumber of War', p. 31ff; and his article in this issue.

suspension is verbal and musical marking its time and space. The dramatic truce is also an object: 'the flag of truce' (3.1.140) waved in *Henry VI Part 1* (1590) and Thomas Heywood's *Edward IV Part 2* (1599).[13] The actual military object is imported verbally and visually onto the stage, redefining it as a territory of truce.[14] Official publications defined the terms and conditions of the truce and its allocated time and territory. In turn, plays used the materialised truce for space- and time-setting.[15] Truce's limited temporal form serves to time the central conflict of comedies as when the protagonists have 'until the calends next month' in Samuel Rowley's *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* (1607-8). It is also the time frame for the entire play: John Marston's tragedy *Antonio and Mellida* (1599-1602) starts with a truce between Genoa and Venice and ends on marriage, while William Davenant's 1630 tragedy *The Cruel Brother* sets the play during 'a truce with Genoa'.[16] In both cases, truce-making is seen more as a tactic to concentrate the agonistic action than as part of a dynamic of peace.

Early modern drama echoes and uses the contractual nature of truces as plot devices to enable the transition from one genre to another. Shakespeare's tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* (1594-6) recalls that a truce must be agreed by both parties to be effective as Grotius later explained.[17] Tybalt's refusal of a truce triggers the tragic dynamic while the account of Romeo's gestures and words acts as a methodological mirror for the truce-maker:

> BENVOLIO: Tybald here slain, whom Romeo's hand did slay –
> Romeo that spoke him fair, bade him bethink
> How nice the quarrel was, and urged withal
> Your high displeasure: all this uttered
> With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bow'd,

---

[13] 'And that the drum and trumpet both began / To sound war's cheerful harmony, behold / A flag of truce upon the walls was hang'd' in Thomas Heywood, *The First and Second Parts of King Edward IV* (4.92-4), The Revels Plays, ed. by Richard Rowland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

[14] 'The flag of truce is one under which during the course of hostilities, a messenger from one side approaches the other, the flag being designed to ensure the messenger's safe passage', G.R. Berridge, Alan James, Lorna Lloyd, *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Diplomacy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 238.

[15] George Peele's history play, *Edward I* (London, 1593), positions a truce in Scene 5 during the battle between the English and the Welsh. Mortimer pits 'a truce with honorable conditions' against 'a truce with capital conditions ta'en'.

[16] William Rowley, *A Shoemaker, a gentleman* (London,1638); John Marston, *Antonio and Mellida* (London, 1602); William Davenant, *The Cruell Brother. A Tragedy* (London, 1630).

[17] Truce is one of the 'Things that used to be granted mutually by sovereign Princes, in Time of War', *De Jure*, Bk III chp XXI Sect I. Par.1.

Could not take truce with the unruly spleen
Of Tybalt deaf to peace, but that he tilts
With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast (3.1.150-7).

Benvolio's speech acts as diplomatic primer for truce-speaking while stressing its limited agency. The negotiator's technique is based on truthful speech ('spoke him fair'), on moderation ('gentle breath, calm look') and distance ('bade him bethink'). Romeo's truce-making is confronted with what Guicciardini observes as the reason for failure: the lack of will to execute a truce.[18] Tybalt's humoral hatred is the insurmountable obstacle that folds truce in war in this ominous phonetic slide from 'peace' to 'piercing'. Despite its failure in terms of action, truce plays a structuring part in plays. In *Romeo and Juliet*, its betweenness partakes in the turn from erotic comedy to tragedy and helps focusing and amplifying the *âgon* as Benvolio evokes both what could have been (peace) and what was (war).

Truce concentrates the action, decelerating and dilating it, as in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (1602-3). The play is set during a truce and does not dramatize truce as the interruption of war, but its continuation in the background. To that end, Shakespeare reverses the perspective and shows us the behind the scenes of the battlefield. First, truce mirrors the deadlocked conflict: 'this dull and long-continued truce' (1.3.258). Later, it is the homothetic mirror of further war as Aeneas greets Diomedes in the manner of Janus, one face indicating peace, the other predicting war:

Health to you, valiant sir,
During all question of the gentle truce;
But when I meet you arm'd, as black defiance
As heart can think or courage execute (4.1.12-15).

Aeneas' rhyming sibilants turns truce into defiance and confirms the mythical *agôn* to be perpetuated as the brotherly encounters in Act 4 are only redolent of death wishes. Truce appears to be a fertile setting for the tragic feud to flourish. In Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine Part 2* (1590), it feeds into the tragic flaws of the protagonist when the eponymous character stubbornly refuses Bajazet's truce. Similarly, in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1580), truce offers less a respite than a moment to concentrate the feud and to re-arm: 'Ay, Balthazar, if he observe this truce, / Our peace will grow the stronger for these wars' (1.2.145-6). Later, truce is associated with Hieronimo's vengeful

[18] *The historie of Guicciardin conteining the warres of Italie and other parties*, trans. by Geoffrey Fenton (London, 1579), Book XVII, chp XXVII; Bk XVIII, ch VII, ch VIII, chp XXVIII.

monologue: 'Take truce with sorrow while I read on this' (4.7.31). Truce's concentrating effect combined with revenge may explain the success of Van den Bergh's adaptation of Kyd's play as the Twelve-Year Truce was breached and war resumed in the Low Countries.[19]

Thus truce paradoxically accelerates the *âgon*: in Act 2 Scene 7 of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* – a play performed during the diplomatic visit of the King of Denmark at King James VI/I's court in 1606 – Pompey negotiates a truce with Caesar, Antony and Lepidus on a ship: 'We'll speak with thee at sea' (25); 'I came before you here a man prepared / To take this offer' (40-1). The scene illustrates the contractual limitation of the territory where truce applies, the sense of *kairos* (timely opportunity) it requires, and seals Pompey's fate. Menas ominously comments: 'Thy father, Pompey, would ne'er have made this treaty' (84). The comment occurs in an aside, a momentary suspension of the main action and truce's dramatic form. In keeping with Guicciardini and Machiavelli's observations, truce is here a military tactic in the hands of three generals that precipitates their rival's tragic end.[20]

However, truce is also used to regulate the *âgon.* It is mentioned as a moment of verbal negotiation with the other: 'Let me have leave to speak and truce to parley' in Thomas Randolph's *Aristippus or the Jovial Philosopher* (1630). It is also invoked as seen in *The Spanish Tragedy* as a moment of negotiations with one's own humours or humour. Similarly, in George Chapman's comedy *All Fools* (1599), Gostanzo is told to 'take truce with passion' (4.1.118).[21] Truce's association with temperance sometimes coincides with the pattern of the comic relief scene. In *Henry V*, Shakespeare frequently interrupts the military action with behind-the-scenes moments whether they are diplomatic or truce scenes.

The latter involve soldiers and are located at key moments of the plot, before the battle in Act 2 Scene 1, during the battle in Act 3 Scene 3 and at the end of the battle in Act 4 Scene 4. These truce scenes start after Henry's declaration of war at the end of Act 1

---

[19] Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, in *Four Revenge Tragedies*, Oxford World's Classics, ed. Katharine Eisamann-Maus (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). See Helmer Helmers, 'The Politics of Mobility: Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, Jan Vos's Aran En Titus and the Poetics of Empire', *Politics and Aesthetics in European Baroque and Classicist Tragedy*, ed. by Jan Bloemendal and Nigel Smith (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2016), pp. 344–372 (p. 349).

[20] Guicciardini, *Historie*, Bk III, chp. 1; Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses* ed. by Julia Conaway Bondanella, Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), Bk II, chp. 10. See introductory article.

[21] George Chapman, *All Fools*, ed. by Charles Edelman, The Revels Plays (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018).

Scene 2. They are moments of suspension from the main conflict between England and France. Their form and content echo actual articles of truce: the prose style, the importance of time, the definition of territories – whether erotic or linguistic – and financial counterparts.[22] They all feature a moment of negotiation between rivals or enemies: Act 2 Scene 1 opposes Nym and Pistol in an erotic brawl about Nell while Henry prepares his French campaign in the background; the Captains scene in Act 3 Scene 3 suspends the battle of Harfleur for the representatives of the four nations of the British Isles to discuss their relations; Act 4 Scene 4, stages Le Fer's negotiation of his survival with Pistol through an interpreter, the Boy. All these scenes satirise the *miles gloriosus* (bragging soldier) and act as moments of dark comic relief. They are revealing mirrors to the problematic nature of the war raging in the background.

These parenthetical moments stopping the time of war are matched on a structural level by the role truce sometimes plays regarding the denouement of a play. At the end of Act 4 of *The Faithful Shepherd* (1602), the English translation of Guarini's tragicomedy *Il pastor fido* (1585), truce signals the catastrophe and the lead up to the denouement when the chorus announces that 'our ills a truce will one day take'. Thanks to its temporary nature, truce becomes a dramatic instrument signalling the play's end as in the anonymous tragedy *The Weakest goes to the wall* (1600).[23] Early modern theatre absorbed truce's betweenness and its adaptability as a tactical regulator enabling the play's wider generic strategy.

We should note, however, that truce helps rework the conditions of the play's resolution and favours the renewal of the dénouement of tragedy not as the rise of new harmony but as an uncertain open ending where the tragic feud is waiting to be rekindled. Modelling the parameters of the resolution of the *âgon* on those of truce produces more realistic dénouement (notwithstanding their reliance on dramatic illusion as in *The Winter's Tale*). Truce as dramatic device partakes of a 'dialectical model that imagines extension rather than contraction'.[24] According to Valerie Forman, this model is the hallmark of tragicomedy as opposed to romantic comedy. Indeed, the truce is particularly adapted to the tragicomic genre and dialectical model as it favours including possible ways out rather

[22] See the introductory article to this issue, 'The Agency of Truce in Early Modern Culture: Negotiating Appeasement and Entente'.

[23] G.B. Guarini, *Il Pastor Fido: or the faithfull Shepheard*. Trans. Anon (London, 1602), Anonymous, *The Weakest Goeth to the Wall* (London, 1600).

[24] Valerie Forman, *Tragicomic Redemptions: Global Economics and the Early Modern English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 10.

than focusing the plot exclusively on destruction. The *âgon* is thus reconfigured as an opposition between inward-looking coercion and outward-looking cooperation.

The Debate between 'Base' and 'Happy' Truce in *Henry V*

Beyond its structuring function, drama discusses the nature and value of the truce per se. Two visions of the truce emerge at the same time in plays: the 'base truce' and the 'happy truce'. The latter is taken from Samuel Brandon's tragicomedy, *Octavia* (1598), where truce relieves the mind of fear. The former is taken from Shakespeare's *King John* (1594-6):

> BASTARD Shall we, upon the footing of our land,
> Send fair-play orders and make compromise,
> Insinuation, parley and *base truce*
> To arms invasive? (5.1.165-73; my emphases)

This 'base truce' is a moment of deception, a moment to rearm to overpower an enemy.[25] In *Henry VI Part 1* (1590-2), Alençon deems 'the peaceful truce' to be unreliable and uncertain: 'And therefore take this compact of a truce, / Although you break it when your pleasure serves' (5.6.163-4). Truce is then often seen as inefficient.[26] Contrasting two truce scenes in *Henry V*, the captains' scene (3.3) as 'base truce' and the Pistol-Nym's sentimental feud (2.1) as a 'happy truce', is the opportunity to see how the stage reprises the realistic view of truce as a military tactic of subjugation while introducing the ethical dimension of truce-making perceptible in Bodin, Gentili and later Grotius, through the ideal of friendship.[27] The contrast illustrates two doctrinal directions in Elizabethan diplomatic and military thinking that can be explained by borrowing from game theory. The captains' scene stages a zero-sum-gain negotiation (a player has to be the loser): here, three lose out to their negotiator in chief, the English Captain. The Nym-Pistol brawl offers the contrary, the possibility of a non-zero-sum agreement. The loss is mitigated by a form of common pursuit: reaching a financial agreement and surviving Agincourt.

---

[25] See the anonymous play, *Claudius Tiberius Nero* (London, 1607) and William Tomkis' university comedy, *Albumazar* (London, 1615) where truce is a source of destruction.

[26] See the introductory article on historical accounts and discussions of truce. See for instance Shakespeare's *Edward III*, where truce is offered and turned down four times (Act 1 Scene 2; Act 3 Scene 1; Act 4 Scene 2; Act 5 Scene 1).

[27] See the introductory article on the ethical dimension in early modern discussions of truce.

Henry V illustrates the uncertainty of truce in terms of outcome. Historically speaking, the action of the play happens after a long series of truces (1403, 1408, 1413 and 1414). The actual battle of Agincourt in 1415 was followed by a truce between 9 October 1416 and 2 February 1417, then another one in 1420 which was partly used to draft the peace Treaty of Troyes (21 May 1420).[28] The action is thus framed by historical truces and so was its composition and performance. In 1597, 1598 and 1599, truces were brokered in Ireland with Tyrone, who exploited them to his advantage. Truce is also a recurring concern in Elizabethan correspondence about conflicts on the continent, whether it is the French War of Religion or the conflicts between Spain and France.[29] As a history, *Henry V* is permeated by truce as a pattern and as a discussion raised by the contrast between Act 3 Scene 3 and Act 2 Scene 1. The former illustrates truce as a mere tactic in a strategy of war and subjugation and the latter subtly introduces an ethical dimension in the handling of truce as a way to retarget its strategic outcome towards peace.

About Act 3 Scene 3, Alan Powers observes that 'the dialect humor and comedic structure… resolve on stage those same ethnic and political divisions that threatened the Tudor establishment'.[30] In Act 1 Scene 2, Henry had already commented on 'the ill neighbourhood' (154) and alluded to the conflicts between the different nations of the British and Irish Isles. Act 3 Scene 3 stages these violent rivalries. The scene suspends the battle of Harfleur, but it becomes the place of another feud and another demand for truce. The feud between Macmorris and Llewellyn in 3.3.59-71 redefines the captains' interactions as 'a comic spectacle of intra-Celtic rivalry' that works to contain an otherwise threatening Celtic alliance by turning it into 'an internal competition among reluctant allies over how best to advance the cause of an English king'.[31] The captains' truce should be understood in terms of incorporation as shown by the phonetic macaronism of many a sentence that favours the English language over the others: 'It is no time to discourse, so Chrish save me' (46). About this scene, Stephen Greenblatt writes

[28] The numerous truces between France and England are chronicled in Guicciardini, *Histories*, Book XV and later in Gaetan De Raxis De Flassan *Histoire raisonnée de la Diplomatie Française*, Seconde époque, livre Ier (Paris, 1864), p. 116ff. Françoise Autrand, Lucien Bély, Philippe Contamine, Thierry Lentz, *Histoire de la diplomatie française: Tome 1, Du Moyen Age à l'Empire* (Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin, 2007).

[29] See for instance Letter from Elizabeth to Henri de Navarre, 7 October 1593, SP 78/32 f.205 (O.S.) on fol.2^{v}.

[30] '"Gallia and Gaul, French and Welsh": Comic Ethnic Slander in the Gallia Wars', in *Acting Funny: Comic Theory and Practice in Shakespeare's Plays*, ed. by Frances Teague (Rutherford: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994), p. 110.

[31] Christopher Highley, *Shakespeare, Spenser and the Crisis in Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 146.

that 'by yoking together diverse peoples… Hal symbolically tames the last wild areas in the British isles, areas that in the sixteenth century represented… the doomed outposts of a vanishing tribalism'.[32] The war in the background of Act 3 Scene 3 is not the Hundred Years' War, but England's colonial conflicts. The captain's anglicised voices feed 'a fantasy of British unity, an odd fantasy given that Scotland was by no means subject to the English during Henry's reign (or Elizabeth's for that matter) and Ireland was a tenuous possession as well'.[33] Alan Sinfield and Jonathan Dollimore argue the play provides 'a displaced, imaginary resolution of one of the state's most intractable problems' – Ireland.[34] The truce is reasserted not only as a military tactic, but as a geopolitical instrument of conquest and submission.

Between lines 70 and 77, Gower, the English Captain, is cast as the truce-broker: 'Gentlemen both, you will mistake each other'. The hendiadys emphasises that it is on 'both' nations that English benevolent power is applied. Ironically, the sound of the parley (76) interrupts the feud. The word 'parley' derives from the French verb *parler* (speak) and signals a truce during which opponents discuss whether to continue to fight or to negotiate a ceasefire. If the parley eventually proves detrimental to the French, it is even more significant that the parley's trumpet-call is the signifier of a ceasefire amongst the Captains. However, Llewellyn's concluding words after the sound of the parley gives a war-like signified to the signifier of truce: 'when there is more better opportunity to be required, look you, I will be so bold as to tell you I know the disciplines of war' (75-7). The benevolent peace between the four nations is a dubious promise. The scene's falsely disparate voices intend to sound the idea of Britain as 'the coincidence between hegemony and collectivity'.[35] However, the truce between the four nations is a zero-sum gain as it is a matter of subjugation and reassertion of a coercive projective English power expressed through language.

---

[32] Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 56-7.

[33] Marianne Montgomery, *Europe's Languages on England's Stages, 1590-1620* (Basingstoke: Ashgate, 2012), p. 34.

[34] Jonathan Dollimore, 'History and Ideology: The Instance of *Henry V*', in *Alternative Shakespeares,* ed. by John Drakakis (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 206-27 (p. 225).

[35] Claire McEachern, *Poetics of English Nationhood 1590-1612* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 20-2.

This infertility of truce is however disputed in *Henry V* in both a realistic and an ideal way already noted in Bodin, Gentili and later Grotius's works.[36] *Henry V* illustrates the debate between base and happy truce. Nonetheless, this 'happy truce' is not an ideal expression of peace but rather an extension of the necessary truce demanded from the Captains so they survive the battle of Harfleur. The happy truce is a realistic process towards an entente or an acceptable form of peace. It usually relies on the focus on points of agreements guaranteeing in turn short- and long-term gains and may emerge then as useful in a non-zero-sum strategy.

The multiple definitions of the truce in early modern plays and more particularly in *Henry V* seems to herald Eisikovits' emphasis on considering conflicts outside the strict dichotomy between war and peace. It is especially true when it comes to conflicts that will not end, as many actual or symbolic conflicts featured in early modern plays. Eisikovits instead advises to focus the concept of truce and its potential outcomes. He identifies five major tenets for truce thinking and truce-making: (1) 'an optimism about the passage of time' (buying time); (2) 'a belief that partial, modest arrangements or agreements can alleviate living conditions for those involved in chronic conflict and improve mutual attitudes' ; (3) 'a realization that intractable ideological foes don't have to fight in the name of their incommensurate ideologies' ; (4) 'a conviction that waging war in the name of abstract principles or a virtuous political self-understanding may make wars longer and bloodier than they have to be'; (5) 'a belief that truces can be helpful in resting and rearming for a future round of conflict'.[37]

Truce can be a moment to rearm and to pursue the conflict, but it can also suspend the conflict to create physical or intellectual conditions for a form of agreement, even if temporary. These 'philosophical and psychological commitments'[38] mirror the way early modern culture dealt with ongoing conflicts. Indeed, truce in early modern drama is an alternative way of thinking and representing the usual dichotomy between war and peace. It leads the audience to adapt their way of thinking about conflict based on the Heraclitean vision of *discordia concors*: 'that which is drawn in different directions harmonises with itself'.[39] Far from Kant's later view of permanent peace, Renaissance drama is more realistic and moves into the realm of diplomacy where 'relating to one's opposite means

[36] See introductory article. It is also expressed in comic ways in *The Comedy of Errors* (1592-4) where the non-performative nature of 'truce' takes the form of a character pledging a truce from sex (2.2.145).

[37] Eisikovits, *A Theory of Truces*, pp. 2-3; p. 28.

[38] Ibid. p. 3.

[39] Heraclitus, *Fragments: A Text and Translation with a Commentary by T. M. Robinson* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 37.

making room for the other'.[40] Truce is not always seen as 'base' or discordant but as an opportunity to be seized to deescalate a conflict in a literal military meaning and also in literary terms. After all, the play must reach a denouement one way or the other: the conflict must be reduced to a manageable level.

In *Henry V*, Act 2 Scene 1 happens during a suspension of the main military action of the play and echoes the feuds between old friends (Harry and Falstaff, Harry and Scroop, England and France). Its satirical form turns it into a moment of comic suspension rather than relief. The scene offers a non-ideal resolution to the two characters' conflict based on invoking the ideal of friendship and the insertion of pragmatic terms and conditions. Grotius later stressed the similitude between friendship and truce and showed that both have the same capacity to exist in a different form even in suspension.[41] Bodin had already emphasised this link with the classical concept of *amicitia* in his account of the war between Henry V and France:

> *Henry* the 5 king of England sent word to *Lewis* duke of Orleance by his ambassador, That he could not defie him, vnlesse he renounced his friendship, and sent back the alliance. And at this day those which be brethren in armes, [H] and princes which do weare one anothers order, they send back the order before they make warre.[42]

The need to denounce friendship as a pre-requisite for war implies that a sworn friendship acts as a conflict-prevention mechanism. In Act 2 Scene 1, Shakespeare reconfigures this fact when Bardolph asks whether 'Ancient Pistol and [Nym] friends, yet?' (3). The battle in France cannot happen if friendship is not declared in the English camp: 'I will bestow a breakfast to make you friends, and we'll be all three sworn brothers to France' (9). Bardolph defines the time of the truce, its territory and summons the ritual of food sharing. He even voices the outcome of the truce. Spoken in prose, his words are evocative of the terms and conditions to be found in truce agreements and in historical and legal commentaries.

---

[40] Author's translation. 'la relation des contraires laisse de la place pour l'autre', Jean-François de Raymond, *L'esprit de la diplomatie* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres / Presses Universitaires de Manitoba, 2015), p. 286.

[41] Grotius, *De jure*, Bk III, chp XXI, I.1.

[42] Jean Bodin, *The Six bookes of a Common weale* (1575) trans. by Richard Knolles (London, 1606), Bk 5, chp 6.

The scene begins with a hand gesture where Pistol responds to Nym's provocation: 'Now by this hand I swear I scorn the term' (26). It starts a short spat where the actors would have been waving their mock weapons on the stage as satirical braggarts until the entrance of the Boy's announcing Falstaff's agony. Bardolph displays the *kairos* associated with truce-making and argues for peace as he rhetorically asserts his diplomatic betweenness: 'Come, shall I make you two friends?' (71). A financial settlement between the two in the paradoxical form of vowing not to pay ensues:[43]

> NYM: You'll pay me the eight shillings I won of you at betting?
> PISTOL: Base is the slave that pays.
> NYM: That now I will have: that's the humour of it (2.1.76-8).

The truce is thus agreed through the opportunity seized by Bardolph of the Boy's interruption as a de-escalation of the previous physical fight between Nym and Pistol. Second, it is concluded by the reminder of the common identity of both parties as thieves. Bardolph adds the terms of the agreement in the form of a syllogism centred not on contradiction but on an order: 'Corporal Nym, an thou wilt be friends, be friends. An thou wilt not, why then be enemies with me too' (83). We can almost follow the various steps of truce-making as found in Guicciardini's *Histories* as Bardolph uses the coercive power of a third-party and introduces the possibility of a cascading conflict to convince both parties.[44] His endeavour leads to a binding agreement phrased by Pistol in the shape of a chiasmus: 'I'll live by Nym, and Nym shall live by me; is not this just?' (87-8). Peace is never really worded, and what is reached here is a cessation of the physical hostilities (they put their swords back in their sheath) and a sort of stalemate situation. This is a truce not peace. The scene concludes on a significant gesture of handshaking as reversal of Pistol's hand movement: 'Give me thy hand' (89).[45] However, nothing says whether they actually shake hands as Nym immediately substitutes the financial settlement to their actual peace:

> NYM: I shall have my noble?
> PISTOL: In cash most justly paid.

---

[43] As mentioned earlier, financial arrangements were frequently part of truce agreements.

[44] Guicciardini, *Historie*, Bk III, chp 1.

[45] Handfasting is a common contractual gesture since antiquity. It is used not only in betrothals, but it has permeated certain languages to the point of meaning 'treaty' or 'agreement' as in *haandfestning* in early modern Danish. For more discussions on the symbolic significance of the hand, see Farah Karim Cooper, *The Hand on the Shakespearean Stage: Gesture, Touch and the Spectacle of Dismemberment* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2016), pp. 197-240. See also Jeanne Mathieu's article in this issue.

NYM: Well, then, that's the humour of’t (2.1.90-2).

This open ending only actors and directors can really solve reiterates the betweenness of the truce that is being concluded for the time of the French campaign. Hence, the ‘happy truce’, although based on the ideal of friendship, is in fact a pragmatic and realistic conclusion of an entente more than an ideal peace.

The final chapter of Book 3 of Sidney’s *Arcadia* opens on the words ‘mediation of necessitie’ and ‘truce’.[46] The truce is seen as a moment of thinking between past and future. As a soldier-poet, Sidney pragmatically identifies truce as a moment to ponder on how to rearm and fight anew. However, the insertion of a truce at the very end of the work also suggests that the tragedy never ends and that if a feud is deemed perpetual, so is its negotiation. Sidney thus refuses a categorical peace, but realistically offers an alternative to the ideal of peace as well as reasserting the military tactic. Bodin writes that ‘the truce is alwayes more holy and lesse violable than a peace treaty’ and it should be reminded that truce ‘interrupted or terminated [the Greeks’] wars’.[47] Truce can partake of a dynamic towards peace and that is what Shakespeare introduces through the comic reassertion of the ideal of friendship in the truce negotiation between Nym and Pistol.

In *Troilus and Cressida*, the known ending of the Trojan War resists any form of peaceful issue for the truce. Similarly, in *Henry V*, the wider context of the Hundred Years’ War and the battle of Agincourt reinforce the pragmatic truce as a time of rearmament for future victories. However, the growing influence of tragicomedy at the turn of the seventeenth century seems to shift the perspective towards a more optimistic yet still realistic view of the truce. This shift is not only enabled by the comic hybridisation of other genres. The ‘happy truce’ is in the hands of socially, sexually and diegetically subaltern characters as in *Henry V*. The ‘lesser men’ – and women – are the operators giving truce a more successful agency.[48] It is no wonder then that a functioning tragicomedy such as *The Winter’s Tale* should offer a full implementation of a ‘happy truce’ as a realist(ic) method.

---

[46] Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia* (London, 1593) Bk III, chp 29.

[47] Bodin, *Six bookes,* Bk 5, chp 6; F. E. Adcock, ‘The Development of Ancient Greek Diplomacy’ in *L'antiquité classique*, Tome 17, fasc. 1, 1948. *Miscellanea Philologica Historica et archaelogia in honorem Hvberti Van De Weerd*. 1-12; doi:https://doi.org/10.3406/antiq.1948.2822 https://www.persee.fr/doc/antiq_0770-2817_1948_num_17_1_2822

[48] Aristotle, *Poetics*, ed. by Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 2:1448a.

The Winter's Tale or The Play as Truce: Time-Lapsing Diplomacy as Attainable Peace

Richard Brome's *A Jovial Crew* (1641-2) features an entertainment identified as a short truce.[49] The play as a whole, its dramatic time and its performance time are envisaged as a truce. The dramatic experience juxtaposes the time of the performance (dramatic time), that of the plot (poetic time), and that of the spectator (real time).

> SPRINGLOVE: Oh, here come the chief revellers. The soldier, the courtier and the poet, who is Master of their Revels, before the old couple in state. Attend, and hear him speak as the inductor.
>
> SCRIBBLE: Here, on this green, like king and queen,
> For a short truce, we do produce
> Our old new-married pair (4.2.133-9).

This temporal multiplicity parallels the juxtaposition of the time of war running the background of the time of truce, a suspension the impact of which might generate the time of peace. Understanding and performing truce requires what Jonathan Gil Harris calls a 'polysynchronic and multitemporal'[50] approach to time. On the stage, it means to re-invent the finite time of the play as an alternative to eschatological enmity both inside and outside the play. This section shows how Shakespeare's invention of polysynchronic and multitemporal time turns the play into a diplomatic instrument of 'happy' truce.

The Winter's Tale's temporal structure tests truce's performance and performativity. Grotius explained that war is discontinuous: 'By war is meant a state of affairs, which may exist even while its operations are not continued. Therefore… a peace and a truce are not the same, for the war still continues, though fighting may cease'.[51] Eisikovits adds that 'incompleteness [allows] the truce thinker to search for the cracks and openings between the ideological commitments of foes and their practical inclinations'.[52] This

---

[49] Richard Brome, *A Jovial Crew*, ed. by Tiffany Stern, Arden Early Modern Drama (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

[50] *Polysynchronic* means 'A more fluid view of time, where process and connection are more important than how long it takes to complete a task' and *Multitemporal* means 'Having multiple tempos; Based on multiple time series'; see Jonathan Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), p. 4.

[51] Grotius, *De Jure Belli*, Bk 3, ch 21, §1-2.

[52] Eisikovits, *A Theory of Truces*, p. 64.

concept of cracks or gaps in the discontinuous fabric of war is interesting to understand how Shakespeare turns truce into the active principle of the resolution of the *agôn* in *The Winter's Tale*. A crack is the very expression of *kairos*: it is an opportunity to seize, a moment, or a gesture which alters the rhythm of the conflict by emphasising its discontinuity. It is in the very discontinuity of war that an 'island of agreement' can be identified. It generates a moment of pause in the fighting that suddenly refocuses the adversaries' attention.

In *The Winter's Tale*, Paulina summarises Leontes' tragic action and the play's *âgon* as 'the storm perpetual' (3.2.212). The metaphor of the tempest displaces the conflict on a more abstract level focusing on its temporal nature. This is the starting-point of Paulina's work as a truce-maker: if the form of the conflict is temporal, then it is the angle she must choose to manage it. The perpetual nature of the storm is thus the key to her method: a dilation of time during which she negotiates. This takes the form of the sixteen-year gap in the story that Leontes himself announces at the end of Act 3 Scene 2:

> Our shame perpetual. Once a day I'll visit
> The chapel where they lie, and tears shed there
> Shall be my recreation. So long as nature
> Will bear up with this exercise, so long
> I daily vow to use it. Come, and lead me
> To these sorrows (3.2.235-40).

However, this gap should not be seen as a reactivation of the pain (although it may seem so in this scene) as it would provoke the truce's complete failure. Eisikovits explains the relationship with the past during a truce:

> the truce thinker recognizes the claims of the dead on us (and, for that matter, the claims of the unborn), but she also insists on placing such claims behind those of the living and, more practically, she argues that it is only such prioritization that will allow us, eventually, to get to the claims of the dead.[53]

The gap needs to be envisaged from the point of view of the play's entire timeline and Paulina's actual endgame which she discloses in 5.1.35-40 (the oracle's prophecy) and the last scene. The sixteen-year gap is a truce during which Paulina negotiates Leontes' atonement until the conditions are met to build new peaceful relationships. The ellipsis

---

[53] Ibid, p. 43.

partakes of the non-linear conception of time of female characters in the play illustrated by Paulina's announcement of the ripeness of her strategy in the excipit:

> *'Tis time*; descend; be stone no more; approach;
> Strike all that look upon with marvel. Come,
> I'll fil your grave up: stir, nay, come away,
> *Bequeath to death your numbness, for from him*
> *Dear life redeems you* (5.3.98-103; emphasis mine).

Truce depends on the same synchronic sense of time as the generative cyclical time characterizing feminine agency in the tragicomedy. It relies on a reconsideration of our linear vision of past, present and future. Paulina's truce had one aim which was to refashion Leontes' agonistic memory in light of the present desire for appeasement in hope of its potential projection in the future. As paradoxical as it may seem, the ending of *The Winter's Tale* shies away from the unrealistic mirage of full resolution and implementation of peace. Marriages are conventional peace mechanisms with a relative efficiency as John Watkins notes.[54] Thus we could argue that the resolution of the tragicomedy is less in the nuptial announcements as utopian eradication of the conflict, but in the creative moment of suspension of the time-gap and its climactic performance in the gallery. *The Winter's Tale* is a lesson in the de-escalation of a deadlocked conflict relying on a republican pattern of checks and balances.

Bodin writes about the right of reprisals and the intervention of individuals in truce or peace negotiations:

> But princes gradually gave this power to governors and magistrates, and in the end reserved it for their majesty in order to preserve the peace and give greater security to truces, which were often disrupted by reckless private individuals abusing their right of reprisal.[55]

This warning may jar at first with Paulina's part in the resolution of the *âgon* in *The Winter's Tale*. However, what Bodin alludes to is the danger of a hubristic disruption of a truce agreement motivated by individual tyrannical desires. This is precisely the source of the conflict in Shakespeare's play and what individual intervention is set to curb: the peace is not wrecked by a reckless private individual but a reckless tyrannical authority.

---

[54] John Watkins, *After Lavinia, a Literary History of Premodern Marriage Diplomacy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019), pp. 51-69.

[55] Bodin, *Six bookes,* Bk I, ch. 2.

It is Paulina as private subaltern who brokers the truce and interrupts the tyrannical agonistic action.

The realistic curtailing of war and the dynamic towards peace are performed in *The Winter's Tale* through subaltern characters acting, in the case of Paulina, as official counsellors to the authority and, in the case of the secondary characters in *Henry V*, as informal counsellors to the audience.[56] Paulina's truce comes to fruition as she manages to extinguish the international feud between two kings and to reconcile Leontes' household. However, such success is mitigated by her silencing by the same marriage mechanism sealing the alliance between both kingdoms. This silencing may be a limitation of the power of the individual stakeholder in a peace or in a truce process – for the reasons Bodin emphasised – or it hints at the continuation of Leontes' tyranny. To be entirely successful, the play's truce requires its perpetual extension in the performance time. By being played repeatedly, the play adapts its ideal principles to changing (non-ideal) contexts. It is the creative process rather than the plot itself that seems to give truce some performativity.

The Past is but a Prologue: Performance as Truce

Eisikovits explains the complex but pragmatic relationship of truce thinking with the past: one of the truce's aims is to generate a habitus that both parties equally appreciate.[57] The point is to see more individual and collective ease in the truce than in fighting. If sustained long enough, the truce can generate a positive memory that you could build upon for an entente. Eisikovits' view of the truce echoes Guicciardini's view that memory facilitates diplomatic agreements: 'The act of reminding marks memory as political in nature, as a kind of rhetoric aimed at the construction of a story shared by different communities'.[58] On stage, the performed play acts as diplomatic memory. The performance as diplomatic truce helps reconfigure the present thanks to the creation of a live memory that will serve to envisage a different future. In the theatre, the only truth is that of the performance in the making, so memory becomes malleable. The point of the performance is then to focus on a memory of harmony rather than a memory of suffering. It does not deny past pain, but chooses to focus on a projective form of past rather than a paralyzed past.

---

[56] See Joanne Paul, *Counsel and Command* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 41-96.

[57] Eisikovits, *A Theory of Truces*, p. 42.

[58] Timothy Hampton, *Fictions of Embassy: Literature and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 27-8.

The creation of live memory during the time of creation is explained by Marina Abramovic: she argues that artist and spectator must 'meet in a completely new territory, and build from that timeless time spent together… And really, that's the only way I can see: to have time is to create time in performance'.[59] Shakespeare actually suggests a similar creative experience of time in *The Winter's Tale* as a means to sustain the tragic action and to generate a fertile conclusion out of the tragic chaos. The statue in the final scene exemplifies the diplomatic use of artistic creation as a performative instrument of appeasement.

After using truce as a plot-mechanism to create a time and space for the slow curtailing of Leontes' tyranny, Paulina gives a proper territory and shape to truce: the territory covered by truce is the gallery, and the statue of Hermione, whose life is but suspended, embodies truce. Hermione's statue is not only suspended between life and death, but rhetorically it is also a cross between prosopopoeia and allegory. In Book II of *The Fairie Queene*, Spenser makes Medina the physical embodiment of the temporary truce between Elissa and Porissa, the two excesses. Medina is, as shown by the etymology of her name (Medina: medium, middle), the representation of the golden meane. In Spenser, the embodied truce fails and excites further misdeeds (II.2.13).[60] Shakespeare reprises the same allegorical pattern in *The Winter's Tale* but guarantees its performativity by adding the prosopopeic power of drama and projects the statue in a favourable space for truce-making.

Gentili noted that during a war the act of admission of an embassy is akin to a truce.[61] And the gallery Paulina uses was a common location for informal diplomatic encounters.[62] In addition, the Spanish Ambassador Guzman's report shows that galleries were a diplomatic space whose time-definition and description is reminiscent of the terms and conditions laid out in truce agreements: 'We then went into a very large gallery, where she took me aside for nearly an hour'.[63] The gallery is where both parties agree to

---

[59] Chris Thompson and Katarina Weslien, 'Marina Abramovic Interviewed', *Performing Arts Journal*, 28.1 (2005), 48.

[60] Sir Edmund Spenser, *The Fairie Queene* (London, 1596), Bk II, chp 2.

[61] 'Furthermore, even when war is actually going on, there will be a cessation of hostilities during the stay of an embassy which, sent on this very business, has been admitted, for the act of admission seems to constitute a sort of truce'; see *De Legationibus*, Book II Chp XIII, 'The Right of an Embassy Which Has Been Received'.

[62] Roberta Anderson, 'Marginal Diplomatic Spaces During the Jacobean Era, 1603-25', in *Early Modern Diplomacy, Theatre and Soft Power*, pp. 163-82.

[63] *CSP Spanish*, i n°256: Guzman de Silva to the King (10 July 1564), 367-8.

take the time: it is a place where time is both fixed as for a truce and dilated as it is perceived as a suspension from the rest of the political day. The gallery is redefined temporally as a territory under a truce.

It is the performance space required to test Paulina's truce-based strategy of peace. It is an embedded experience where the characters are made spectators of a show and so is the audience. Paulina's display of the statue in the gallery is a show-within which aims to recreates the broken bonds of friendship between monarchs as shown by Patricia Akhimie.[64] The final scene of *The Winter's Tale* makes the dramatic time and the performance time coincide in order to involve the play's spectators in the experience of recreation. The slow motioning of the statue into action is a literal expression of the performativity of that artistic diplomacy. The dual state of the statue as object and as Hermione, both static and internally mobile, dramatises the betweenness of truce. The statue then comes to represent the paradox of truce as being war and not war (and thus giving some space to create peace if such thing is wanted).

> LEONTES: See my lord,
> Would you not deem it breathed? And that those veins
> Did verily bear blood?
>
> POLIXENES: Masterly done:
> The very life seems warm upon her lip.
>
> LEONTES: The fixture of her eye has motion in't,
> As we are mock'd with art. (5.3.63-8)

Linguistic community is reinforced by repetitions and the use of shared lines as harmonious verbal temporality. Yet, the statue cannot be read only in terms of material soft power, but in temporal terms:

> PAULINA: You'll mar it if you kiss it, stain your own
> With oily painting. Shall I draw the curtain?
>
> LEONTES: No, not these twenty years.
>
> PERDITA: So long could I

[64] Patricia Akhimie, 'Galleries and Soft Power' in *Early Modern Diplomacy, Theatre and Soft Power*, pp. 139-60.

Stand by, a looker-on (5.3.82-5).

The experience of the statue is defined in terms of suspended gesture and dilated time. Paulina's rhetoric of questions throughout the scene aims to delay the revelation of the statue's true nature. The suspended time required to repair the broken bonds is echoed in the shared-line pattern of the father-daughter dialogue. Besides, the theatrical gesture of curtain-drawing signals the performance as a truce: the curtain sets the time and refines the territory of truce.

LEONTES: Her natural posture.
Chide me, dear stone, that I may say indeed
Thou art Hermione – or rather, thou art she
In thy not chiding; for she was as tender
As infancy and grace. But yet, Paulina,
Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing
So agèd as this seems.

POLIXENES: O, not by much.

PAULINA: So much the more our carver's excellence,
Which *lets go by some sixteen years,* and makes her
As she lived *now.* (5.3.23-32; emphases mine)

The statue materialises a *topos* of diplomatic speech: memory. Leontes himself in Act 5 Scene 1 says that Paulina 'hast the memory of Hermione' (49). This memory is expressed in terms of possession and materialised in the time-marked statue. The statue fuses Hermione's present wrinkled self and the memory of her living self at the time of the 'loving embassies' (1.1.19) between Polixenes and Leontes. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato argues the fertile link between memory and love as the sight of Beauty awakens or reactivates aesthetic emotions and ensures the viewer's remembrance of a transcendental love.[65] Hermione's statue, the ultimate example of material diplomacy, generates this temporal experience of appeasement for both the spectators and characters. For the audience, the statue is the actress's living body and its physicality reactivates the mixed memories of her ordeal as well as her loving sensuality. Hermione's statue completes the work of memory which is at stake throughout the play and which Leontes repeats in the excipit.

[65] Plato, 'Phaedrus' (275a) in *Complete Works* ed. by J. M. Cooper (Indianapolis IN: Hackett, 1997), pp. 551-2.

Wolfgang Clemens writes that in Shakespeare's tragicomedies 'the past is clarified, redeemed, and transformed so that the path to a new future is open'.[66] The tragic world grants an incomplete knowledge, but tragicomedies offer a transfiguring perspective. Leontes asserts the memory of events that happened 'in this wide gap of time since first / We were dissevered' (5.3.156-7) will be reiterated even beyond the time of the performance as a form of preventive catharsis preserving present and future concord. The statue functions as a temporal instrument of a time-based diplomacy. This diplomatic imagination relies on material objects and the creation of new exemplary models: the characters of the play. That Shakespeare uses the stage not to 'write from history'[67] but to boldly offer that future history could stem from the dramatic as well as the performance time. Shakespeare and the contemporary directors of his plays simply offer to build a new memory in performance: a polysynchronic and multitemporal memory giving equal space to past, present and future.

Like *The Winter's Tale*, *Henry V* juxtaposes two conflicts: a domestic conflict and an international one. The international conflict is in fact a crack, an opening, that allows the succession war between barons to be suspended momentarily (though it carries on raging in the background as shown in the treason scene). Yesterday's enemies can focus on a common target. This play about war and made of war makes, then, a bizarre case for truce. Katharine Eisaman Maus writes that '*Henry V* is one of a group of plays rather than a freestanding work. It refers constantly to events before and after its own temporal limits, events familiar to Shakespeare's audience from plays they had already seen performed'.[68] *Henry V* was composed last in the War of the Roses series: its chronological links with the other plays are retrospective and mirror the reconstructive subjective experience of time required from the audience. Thus, *Henry V* is an achronological object, i.e., proceeding through time in a nonlinear fashion. It is experienced in terms of process rather than event. The play's achronology is a creative possibility detaching the play from its original historical context and allowing a projection of the war process anywhere in time when the play is performed. Such projection can go two ways: reigniting wars or creating entente.

Antic Disposition's 2016 production of *Henry V* sets the play during the First World War and blends Shakespeare's play with A.E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*.[69] The temporal

---

[66] Wolfgang Clemens, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art* (London: Methuen, 1972), p. 143.

[67] I borrow the phrase from the title of Timothy Hampton's *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

[68] Katherine Eisaman Maus, introduction to *Henry V*, *The Norton Shakespeare, Third Edition*, p. 1534.

[69] http://www.anticdisposition.co.uk/henry-v.html

hybridisation is both textual and contextual and is articulated by an added pre-prologue featuring a diplomatic gift-giving scene. Shakespeare's *Henry V* starts with the French Ambassador creating a diplomatic incident by delivering the 'tun of tennis balls' which 'strikes [France's] crown into the hazard' (1.2.263). The contemporary production duplicates Shakespeare's untimely material exchange but its outcome is rather different. The production staged at Middle Temple Hall opened with a crowd of First World War British and French wounded soldiers being carried on stretchers away from the front (relegated outside the hall)[70] but remaining behind the screen doors. A blinded British soldier and a limping French private detached themselves from the turmoil behind the screen and entered the main hall with two nurses. The French soldier had saved the British one, and the latter tried to thank the former for his pain by giving him a book. A nurse played the intermediary between both men. The gift, a copy of *Henry V*, triggered the French private's ire.

For a second, the audience witnessed the transfer of the untimely gift as history sadly repeating. However, the ineluctability of the return of history was immediately challenged by the intermediary. The conflict was tamed as the nurse explained the gift's value: it was not only the English private's favourite book, it was his sole possession. The object in performance is the achronological conductor between two failed historical diplomacies: that of the Hundred Years' War and that preceding the First World War. Linking two non-contiguous events through an object evoking the untimeliness of men is neither a repetition of the past nor a supersessionary erasure of the Renaissance by contemporary history. In the words of Jonathan Gil Harris, the gift is 'untimely matter' which travels in time and 'suggests the simultaneous agency of past and present subject in reworking our conceptions of temporality'.[71]

The failed material diplomacy of Shakespeare's *Henry V* is turned into a successful cultural diplomacy between former enemies as the soldiers decided to stage the play in the field hospital. This asymmetrical transformation of the gift-giving during the performance is even more symbolic as the object is Shakespeare's play itself. *Henry V* is a cultural object travelling in time and performing the cathartic role of diplomatic exchange the original play had failed to achieve. The temporal experience of Shakespeare's *Henry V* offered by Antic Disposition is akin to Roman Herzog's saying

---

[70] During the battle scene, the hall was plunged in darkness and lighting effects and sound effects imitated a shelling outside Middle Temple Hall. War was not only on and off the stage, but literally inside and outside the theatre, thus blurring the temporal boundaries between drama and reality.

[71] Harris, p.13.

that 'only history divides us now'.[72] The play in performance juxtaposes several historical conflicts to generate 'a third temporality'.[73] The spectator's dramatic experience is polysynchronic and multitemporal: the play's tragic action is grounded in the past while its resolution lies in future performance.

The context of performance of Antic Disposition's production of *Henry V* plays a part in this observation of the dramatic performance of truce. As part of the *Shakespeare 400* programme of plays in 2016,[74] the performance collided with the political calendar of the Brexit referendum. One may think that juxtaposing a play seen as exalting English heroic exceptionalism and the poisoned debates over the twenty-first century relationship of the United Kingdom with its neighbours was more fuel to agonistic fire than truce. However, by virtue of the betweenness of a multilingual cast, the choice of sanctuary places for the performance in England (cathedral, inns of court), and Housman's intertext, the production was physically a truce. The soundscape of bombs and combat outside the building contrasted with the silence of the auditorium, delimiting the space and time of the performance as a suspension from war. The stage as truce territory relied on the collective work between actors supposedly belonging to enemy countries. Despite the realistic inclusion of the historical enmities whether medieval or contemporary, the company offered the 2016 spectators an early modern choice of truce: a tactic in a strategy of old feuds rekindled or a tactic to create 'forward recollections' of cooperation.[75]

Conclusion

The play is a truce allowing the collective represented by the audience time to rethink certain ideals and experiment in ways of making them sustainable goals. The play in performance is the *kairos* the public sphere must seize to observe and sometimes find motivations or ways to implement affordable solutions to curb conflicts. As a non-ideal object, a play in performance is an unpredictable object. This unpredictability of the performed play (due to performing conditions and the variety of interpretations) and the

---

[72] Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 37.

[73] Ibid, pp.14-15.

[74] http://www.shakespeare400.org/

[75] Rebecca Warren Heys defines 'forward recollections' as 'a means to open the past up to the future by revealing glimpses of the future in the past, yet on the understanding that neither the past nor the future are fixed, but both are subject to change'; see *Memory in Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy* (Ph.D., Royal Holloway, University of London, 2014), p. 161.

modesty of Shakespearean conclusions that always include the possibility of destabilization show that the Shakespearean play is not about absolutes but about pragmatic methods of de-escalation as in *Henry V*. However, the play is also an ideal object, a text using (or abusing) aesthetic and philosophical principles: it often reasserts certain ideals of political virtue and sociability as a means to oppose, and by 'opposing, (trying to) end them', anti-ideals such as tyranny as shown in *The Winter's Tale*. In 1590, Robert Wilson linked the failure of truce with tyranny as he spited: 'Vaunters, vaineglorious, tyrants, truce-breakers'.[76] In both plays under study, the conclusion of truce-making is the constant management of tyrannical impulses. Renaissance theatre is reasserted as a very concrete laboratory for truce thinking which tests the mechanisms of truce. It not only uses the mechanisms of both successful and failing truces, it also offers the conditions of performance for a successful truce and states what you intend to create during this truce. Without any naive guarantee of a successful outcome, what the performance intends to do is to be a work of diplomacy as Jean-François De Raymond defines it: 'Rivalries form in the present view of the future, oppositions take root in the past, with their historical foundations and their exclusiveness that diplomacy endeavours to conciliate and to steer toward harmonization'.[77]

---

[76] Robert Wilson, *The pleasant and stately morall, of the three lordes and three ladies of London* (London, 1590).

[77] Author's translation: « Les concurrences se forment dans la vision présente du futur, et les oppositions s'enracinent dans le passé, avec leurs formations historiques et leurs exclusivités que la diplomatie entreprend de concilier et de faire évoluer vers leur harmonisation ». See De Raymond, *L'esprit de la diplomatie*, p. 287.