

*The Winter's Tale: Liminality and Communitas in Analysis and
Performance*

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by

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Introduction

I started thinking about *The Winter's Tale* around the autumn of 2010. I was trying to get approval from a student group to direct a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and had been pondering Shakespeare's metatheatre, especially in plays in which lower class characters—*Midsummer's* mechanicals or *Love's Labours's* mix of intellectuals, foreigners, and clowns—perform for society's upper crust, its aristocracy or royal family. Historical instances of this sort of thing (scholars cite the Queen's 1575 visit to Robert Dudley, Earl of Kenilworth's castle at Kenilworth, Warwickshire, recounted in a famous published letter by Robert Langham) often occurred as part of larger festivals and carnivals and on special holidays, so my focus, which began on the wacky metatheatrical components of the comedies, was shifted to early modern English holidays and festivals, and the ways they manifested themselves in the works of Shakespeare. From there I swiftly learned about Mikhail Bakhtin's theories on carnival and Victor and Edith Turner's research into rites of passage, zones of liminality and communitas.

Essentially, though, I was still focused on the Early Modern party. Of course, Shakespeare never wrote a party bigger or better than the one in act IV, scene iv of *The Winter's Tale*, and it seemed to me that a production of that play might be an effective way to study liminality and carnival in Shakespearean performance. Directing and examining *The Winter's Tale* for my senior directorial and thesis has made it clear that liminality and communitas play a central role in *The Winter's Tale*. The play's

redemption and the redemption of its characters occur not only *in* a liminal world, but *because* of that liminal world.

I begin with the idea that *The Winter's Tale* can be effectively analyzed using Victor Turner's *social drama*, an anthropological unit of analysis he uses to refer to moments of upheaval and contention in social groups. There is inherent liminality to the social drama for two reasons. First, it occupies a space apart from and bracketed by the normal life of the social group. Second, liminal actions or rituals might constitute a significant part of the redressive mechanisms that eventually bring the drama to a close. Liminality is an important quality of *The Winter's Tale* too. The liminal spaces of the play's fourth act are the same spaces that scholars have long cited as being redemptive. I will argue that these spaces are redemptive *because* they are liminal and that liminality is crucial to bringing about the changes necessary to happily resolve the plot and rehabilitate the play's characters. The play's tragic first half depicts Leontes's attempts to establish tyrannical rule, to eliminate the stories of his family, friends, and subjects, to cut off dialogue, and to erect totalitarian hierarchical structure. The second half redeems those actions by presenting joyous, playful, anti-structural liminality, the breakdown of class, familial, and sexual structures that limit human interaction and community. By writing redemptive liminality into the second half of the play, Shakespeare is proposing healthy, potential alternatives to normative sociopolitical structure.

My experiences and observations directing *The Winter's Tale* for the College of William and Mary Theatre Department's Second Season, suggest ways we can translate this analysis, based on the social drama, liminality, and *communitas*, into performance. A redemptive broadening of agency and an opening of society in *The Winter's Tale's*

second half that opposes Leontes's authoritarian rule in the first half, and we can extend that broadening and opening to audiences in performances to create theatrically liminal spaces. The result is that the trajectory of the performance mirrors that of the play's structure: it progresses from closed to open, limited to infinite. In the second half of the play, Shakespeare gives us heteroglossia and dialogue— stories told by kings and shepherds, princes and thieves, men and women, and even a couple of sheep. Our goal was to allow the audience to join the tale-telling, by increasing the degree to which they affected the performance and the community of which they were a part.

We played our production of *The Winter's Tale* five times, from Thursday, October 18th to Sunday, October 21st, 2013. For the first four performances, we were on a thrust stage in William and Mary's Phi Beta Kappa Hall Studio Theatre, and for the fifth we moved outside to William and Mary's Sunken Gardens, where we set up our "tiring house," an arbor with a curtain on it which I built for an earlier production, laid our props out on the grass, and played on a stage that was as much of a thrust as the small assembled audience allowed it to be. In the Studio, we performed with universal lighting, wanting to cut no one off from the action of the play and the community of the event; in fact, we had no lighting designer, and instead used a plot designed for another show that sought to mimic exactly the standard lighting in the studio space. When we performed outdoors, we brought no artificial lighting with us. Many elements of our staging were inspired, though not dictated by, the Shakespearean "original practices" movement. As a movement concerned with the revitalization of Shakespearean text and increasing the presence of the audience in the playhouse, the "original practices" movement is a good place to start in our search for theatrical *communitas*, and although my project was not

explicitly about this movement, it did provide an opportunity to investigate and consider the “OP” movement’s ideals and claims.

Our audiences were largely composed of students and professors of the College and the families of the actors, and on the evening of Saturday, October 20th, we performed to an overflowing house with audience members seated on the floor on all sides of the thrust and a line of spectators hanging over the railing of the balcony. A great deal of my research consists of those audiences’ responses to a series of talk-back questions I asked after each show, along with conversations I had with some of them and observations I made during the performance. I was also able to conduct a post-mortem discussion with the cast, whose responses helped me to understand our workshop process’s effects on them. This kind of research, which takes into account the personal experiences and feelings of numerous interviewees, is wholly consistent with the academic approach to *communitas*, which can only be studied through stories registered after the event (Turner, *Communitas*, 9).

Martin Buber, the Austrian philosopher who wrote the influential *I and Thou*, which I will discuss in my third chapter, begins that work by saying, “To man the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold attitude” (3). *The Winter’s Tale* too is twofold, in its division into tragic and comic halves, and in many ways this thesis is also twofold. It advances a new analysis of *The Winter’s Tale* based on the social drama, liminality, *communitas*, and carnival, and also is a record of the production in which I sought to apply that analysis in performance. As a result, the first four chapters are very roughly split in half. In each, the first half is devoted to criticism, theory, analysis, or history, and the second is given over to performance, be it ours or those of practitioners through

history. No one chapter of the thesis fully explains or tells the story of our production; rather, examples, stories, and ideas from the process and performance are scattered throughout the thesis in the places in which I think they are most useful.

My first chapter is an introduction to *The Winter's Tale*, exploring two of its major themes— redemption, incorporated into structure, and the art and life binary— and its long production history. *The Winter's Tale* has a significant place in theatre history, especially when it comes to Harley Granville Barker's revolutionary 1912 production, and my thesis will explore some significant twentieth-century productions of the play in England and America as a way of studying other practitioners' approaches to the themes that we sought to explore.

My second chapter will introduce *The Winter's Tale* as a “social drama” and present the ways my production envisioned and treated the play's structure and sought to create an environment of redemption. The “social drama” is a “unit of analysis” developed by Victor Turner that addresses “‘theatrical’ potential of social life” (Turner, *From Ritual to*, 9). My analysis will elaborate on *The Winter's Tale's* structure, introduce useful terminology, and establish key qualities of the world of the play.

My third chapter's three word title, “Liminality, Carnival, Communitas” is deceptively simple. This chapter explicates *The Winter's Tale's* two liminal zones using the works of Victor and Edith Turner, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Martin Buber. The first is that created in the world of the play by Shakespeare, which manifests itself both in Sicilia and Bohemia in the fourth act. The second is the liminal space we sought to establish in our performance by blurring the lines and dismantling the hierarchies between actors and audience. We tried to break down the structures that maintain difference between those

two groups and extend theatrical agency to the audience. Because at least half of this chapter is devoted to my theory of theatrical liminality, it also includes much of the history of and response to our production: what our ideas were, how we executed them, and what the audience thought of them. The chapter also includes my notes on a theatre-going experience I had during a production of *Midsummer Night's Dream* at the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, Virginia, which for me was an experience of intense spontaneous *communitas* that helped me to develop my ideas on liminality in the actor-audience relationship.

The fourth chapter concerns the English folk drama that we introduced to the text of *The Winter's Tale*. Our production added a mummers' play to the beginning of Shakespeare's play and, in keeping with Perdita's invocation of "Whitsun pastorals," added an edited Robin Hood play to the fourth act.

The fifth chapter will examine our "workshop" process. Our idea for the production was to make the process highly collaborative and open-ended, requiring, as I told my cast, a great deal of faith. In this chapter I make two particularly significant conclusions. The first is that the workshop format is the ideal format for a production seeking *communitas*; the second is that the experiences of the audiences that came to see the play reflected our experiences in the process of thinking and rehearsing it. Thus, the workshop is the true first practical enactment of my analysis of *The Winter's Tale* and its need for dialogue and community.

The results of this project are, first, a new and valuable analysis of *The Winter's Tale*, second, an understanding of how performances of that play may benefit from that analysis, from incorporation and attention to folk drama, and from a collaborative

workshop rehearsal process, and third and most importantly, an articulated theory of a *liminal theatre* that seeks to draw actors and audiences onto a mutual and undifferentiated plane of *I-Thou* being.

Chapter One

An Introduction to *The Winter's Tale*

Before addressing our production of *The Winter's Tale* at William and Mary and its goals, it is worth establishing some of the text's key thematic and structural concepts and a sense of past performance and critical history.

I will establish two of the play's themes in particular: its redemptive nature and its examination of the art and life binary. "Themes" might be a misleading word because the first of these is perhaps a narrative and structural element more than a theme. *The Winter's Tale* has an inversive and redemptive second half; that is, the action and speech of the second half of the play redeem that of the first. From Antigonus's death through the pastoral fourth act, Shakespeare presents linguistic, thematic, structural, and narrative opposites and reversals of Leontes's language, behavior, and goals for Sicilian society. This idea of redemption, especially in its socio-politically dimension, was central to our production.

"Thou met'st with things dying, I with things newborn," the Shepherd tells his son in act III, scene iii after Antigonus's death. This line summarizes the structure of the play: birth and rebirth follow the deaths that Leontes causes in the first half of the play. The Shepherd's line occurs precisely at the shift from noble tragedy to pastoral comedy. Shakespeare reverses and redeems the first half's tragedy in a number of ways. M.M. Mahood's cites as one example of this redemption Shakespeare's use of the word "play." She begins with Leontes's "Go play, boy, play. Thy mother plays, and I/ Play too, but so disgraced a part, whose issue/Will his me to my grave" (I.ii.186-189):

Only the first *play* is used in a single sense. We might paraphrase Leontes's double-entendres thus: 'Go and amuse yourself; your mother is also pretending to play by acting the kind hostess, but I know that she is a real daughter of the game and up to another sport which makes me act the contemptible role of the deceived husband. So for the moment I'm playing her like a fish ("I am angling now") by giving her the line.'"(149)

Shakespeare counters each of Leontes's puns by further meanings which relate the word to the larger context of the play's thought and action. The meaning 'make-believe' is added in this way to all the senses of *play*. Leontes' in play-acting in his outburst; it is characteristic of such obsessions as this that the sufferer is deluded yet half knows he is under a delusion—as when we know we are in a nightmare but cannot wake from it. Only the make-believe of Hermione, in playing at being a statue, and the make-believe of Perdita in playing the part of the shepherd's daughter, can restore Leontes to a sane discrimination between illusion and reality." (150).

Thus, redemption is written into the text in Shakespeare's multi-signifying word choices.

Mahood's observations on the playing of roles will become important later. Now, let us look at the second sense of the word "play," which is at once about deception and about sex, both "Your mother deceives me" and "Your mother has sex with Polixenes." In the first half of *The Winter's Tale*, sex is abhorrent to Leontes. The thought of being cuckolded makes him squirm, and his euphemisms for sex are correspondingly disgusting. For example:

And many a man there is, even at this present,
Now while I speak this, holds his wife by the arm,
That little thinks she has been sluiced in's absence
And his pond fish'd by his next neighbor...
(I.ii.192-195)

Sex is a destructive force in the Sicilian scenes that begin the play. The idyllic picture of Leontes and Polixenes's boyhood is interrupted by sex (both in terms of "the opposite sex" and "sexual desire"):

POLIXENES

We were as twinn'd lambs that did frisk i' the sun,
And bleat the one at the other: what we changed
Was innocence for innocence; we knew not

The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dream'd
 That any did. Had we pursued that life,
 And our weak spirits ne'er been higher rear'd
 With stronger blood, we should have answer'd heaven
 Boldly 'not guilty;' the imposition clear'd
 Hereditary ours.

HERMIONE

By this we gather
 You have tripp'd since.

POLIXENES

O my most sacred lady!
 Temptations have since then been born to's; for
 In those unfledged days was my wife a girl;
 Your precious self had then not cross'd the eyes
 Of my young play-fellow.

(I.ii.67-79)

This was a time, Carol Thomas Neely points out, when the young princes each had “a dagger muzzled/ lest it should bite its master” (194). As sex corrupts this early childhood utopia, the suspicion of sex corrupts the scene’s earlier imagery. Neely suggests that when Leontes perceives Polixenes and Hermione “paddling palms and pinching fingers,” it is a corruption of his memories of their courtship, when she “open[ed her] white hand/ And clap[ed her]self [his] love.” “The sexual disgust that leads Leontes to imprison and condemn Hermione corrupts and destroys his relations with Polixenes and Mamillius as well,” Neely writes (193).

In the second half of the play, though, sex and the word *play* fortunately appear again in act IV, scene iv, in a more positive context that rehabilitates both:

PERDITA

O, these I lack
 To make you garlands of, and my sweet friend,
 To strew him o’er and o’er.

FLORIZEL

What, like a corpse?

PERDITA

No, like a bank for love to lie and *play* on,
 Not like a corpse; or if, not to be buried,

But quick, and in mine arms.
(IV.iv.127-132)

In this passage we can also read the sexual sense of play. Critics have noted Perdita's frank sexuality and here, her words are decidedly sexual. The image of love lying and playing on a bank is sexual: after all, in *Midsummer Night's Dream* it is a *bank* on which Titania falls in love with Bottom the Ass—Oberon says “I know a bank where the wild thyme blows/...There sleeps Titania sometime of the night.” It is also a bank on which Lysander suggests that Hermia might sleep with him before they have been married. Returning to our passage from *The Winter's Tale*, the corpse that Florizel fears he has been cast as in Perdita's metaphor is suddenly transformed, alive, “quick:” corpse in the sense of a *dead* body becomes corpse in the sense of a *living* body, full of vigor and virility. That body is in Perdita's arms. A.D. Nuttall notes parallels between this exchange and the Old Shepherd's line in act III, scene iii: “Thou met'st with things dying, I with things newborn.” (43)

Play is rehabilitated, and, looking at the big picture, sex is rehabilitated.

Shakespeare returns to some of the themes of the first half of the play—sex and lies—using the same language, but frames them with new circumstances that recast them as fun and welcome. The festival's satyr dance, which we replaced with a pre-Shakespearean Robin Hood play in part so that we would not have to strip actors down and cover their legs with fur, is another moment when positive, fun sexuality and anti-structure insert themselves into the proceedings. The satyrs come with definite connotations of virility and prolific sexuality, and their dance is a celebration. They revel in Dionysiac sexuality and excess that would have terrified Leontes (although this too has a dangerous undercurrent. Ros King writes the following useful introduction:

Half man and half goat, satyrs are creatures of the woods, Dionysiac figures associated with sexuality and drunkenness ... Three of these dancers claim to have jumped before the king, and indeed a playlet and dance of satyrs formed the antimasque in the *Masque of Oberon* ... One of Inigo Jones's drawing, which might relate to this masque, shows a circle of dancers in satyr costumes, each in a different leaping pose, and with elbows and knees pointed outwards in wild, inelegant fashion. Since the social dances of this period normally required dancers to move in harmony together, a 'gallimaufry of gambols' such as the satyrs would present indicates a potentially subversive force (50).

Mary Judith Dunbar writes that "although Shakespeare's pastoral scenes are bucolic, they are also full of the darker energies of the con man Autolycus and the Dionysiac satyrs" (17) and repeatedly notes the darker currents of sexuality and mischief released by the inclusion of the satyrs in various productions of the play throughout history. As often as audiences sense the darker energies of these figures, though, they have *fun* with them. Autolycus might be dangerous to his fellow characters, but he is so honest and friendly to the audience, so open about his motivations and opinions, that we cannot help but like him.

What is Autolycus's role? An hour long production of the play that I saw in 2009 at the American Shakespeare Center Theatre Camp cut him entirely, with little effect to the plot. In *Broken Nuptials in Shakespeare's Plays*, Carol Thomas Neely casts Autolycus as one of several second-half "parodic doubles" of Leontes. For Neely, it seems that almost all of the characters of the second half of the play double a character of the first. This is redemptive in-and-of-itself, since the redemption of Leontes's character is written into all of the play's other characters. Paulina and Perdita are Hermione's double, regenerating the late Queen's virtues for Leontes and for the audience respectively (201). Florizel is the transformation of and foil to Leontes as the lover of Hermione (201); the Old Shepherd is the transformation of and foil to Leontes as a father,

given that he seeks difference from Perdita while Leontes looks to Mamillius and Perdita for similarities, “signs of me” (202). Autolycus, of course, is Leontes’s redeeming double through-and-through, and it is through him that we most strongly realize that sex, mischief, and anti-structure will fix the errors that the Sicilian king has wrought:

The ‘delicate burden’ of Autolycus’s ballad urges “jump her and thump her (IV.iv.194-95); chastity is temporary and unnatural in the fourth act of *The Winter’s Tale*, and aggressive male sexuality is celebrated. It is implied, too, that it is better to be even the usurer’s wife “brought to bed of twenty money-bags at a burden” (IV.iv.263-64) than to have been the woman “turned into a cold fish for she would not exchange flesh with one that loved her” (279-81). “Red blood reigns” throughout the act, as in Autolycus’s introductory song; all are caught in its pulsing rhythms, even— temporarily— Camillo and Polixenes, enthusiastic participants in revelry, who welcome the rough satyrs’ dance by the men of hair (IV.iv.328). Sexuality is natural, grotesque, or humorous; phallic aggression and female passivity are trivialized: “Pins and poking-sticks of steel;/what maids lack from head to heel!” (IV.iv. 227-28)

Autolycus’s role as parodic double of Leontes is centrally responsible for transmuting into comedy the conflicts and motives of the first three acts. Leontes dangerous fantasies are translated into Autolycus’s tall tales, and his cruel manipulative actions into comic turns. Leontes’s delusion of deceit and infidelity on the part of those he deceives and harms become Autolycus’s enactment of victimization (by himself) as he robs the clown. Leontes’s revulsion from sexuality and fatherhood is incorporated comically into the ballads with their rejected lover, their grotesque childbirth, and their love triangle of ‘two maids wooing a man’ (a cheerful reversal from the male perspective of the triangle of Leontes’s imagination). ... Leontes’s need to take revenge against his family is reiterated and displaced in Autolycus’s exaggerated descriptions to the shepherd and clown of the revenge Polixenes will inflict on them as a result of their kinship to Perdita. This episode recapitulates the dangers of family intimacy and emphasizes Autolycus’ freedom as an outsider, unencumbered by social or familial ties ... Autolycus “makes change his constancy, directionless his direction, role playing his role.’ His merry marginality is a positive version of Leontes’ isolation in paranoia and penance [...] All along, Autolycus’s manipulations are relatively harmless and ultimately beneficial (203-204).

Certainly, as Neely and Dunbar point out, there are darker energies to Autolycus and his meanings, but in many productions they are often lost amongst the rogue’s song melodies or softened in his telling of tales. The larger point is that in the pastoral scene,

Shakespeare envisions positive roles for sex and disguise. These elements of human experience are redeemed, and the characters can once again be at play.

Neely's doubling of Leontes is reversed by Northrop Frye, who sees the king as a corrupted parody of Florizel (107). Florizel's transcendent love is the flipside of Leontes's unstoppable lunacy, in the dichotomy suggested by *A Midsummer Night's Dream's* Theseus: "The lunatic, the lover, and the poet/ Are of imagination all compact" (V.i.7-8). Florizel forsakes his father and status for love: Frye calls this his state "above reason. Leontes's is a "fantasy below reason," so in Frye's reading, it is Leontes that is the parodic double. Though Frye and Neely perceive these parodies running in opposite directions, they both write about *The Winter's Tale's* use of parody and double to re-imagine theme and character.

I also want to examine the play's seasonal progression, in two ways. I will address first the seasonal change and contrast's effect of redemption and second the myriad possibilities for interpretation that an examination of *The Winter's Tale's* seasons offers.

"The personal rhythms of destruction and renewal are profoundly linked to the wider seasonal rhythms" (Bartholomeusz 6). F. David Hoeniger writes,

In *The Winter's Tale*, in fact, the theme of the changing seasons is so closely interwoven with that of youth and age, of death and resurrection, the presence of one implying the other, that a few references only to the text will suffice to indicate the existence of the latter through the work" (101).

In act II, scene i, Mamillius tells Hermione that "a sad tale's best for Winter," establishing the season during which the play's first half takes place. During the moment which I will refer to later as the "horticultural debate," Perdita tells Polixenes "Sir, the

year growing ancient/ Not yet on summer's death nor on the birth/ Of trembling winter" (IV.iv.79-81). Shakespeare contrasts summer to winter, deriving his structure from the Old Shepherd's "Thou met'st with things dying, I with things newborn." The fecundity of summer (the second half) is contrasted with the bleak landscape of winter (the first half). At the same time, act four's Bohemian summer contrasts with a strange, simultaneous, preserved state of winter back in Sicilia. Time is not frozen in Sicilia. Shakespeare makes it clear that Time waits for no man, but rather will "please some, try all, both joy and terror" (IV. i.1). Even the statue of Hermione has aged:

LEONTES

But yet, Paulina,
Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing
So aged 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.

(V.iii.27-32)

I persist, though, in perceiving winter in Sicilia. There, sex and wooing are prohibited by Paulina's decree. We might best understand the frozen winter of Hermione-less Sicilia, though, through the myth of Persephone and Demeter. The myth of Persephone and Demeter has a significant place in *The Winter's Tale* that sheds even more light on the play's seasonal motifs. Persephone is lured to the underworld by Pluto, who ravishes her and makes her his bride. Her mother, Demeter, goes into mourning, and "suffered not the seed to grow in the earth but kept it hidden under ground" (Frazer 36). Zeus commanded that Pluto free Persephone, but before she departed, Pluto tempted her with a pomegranate, the seeds of which would ensure her return. She ate, but Zeus dictated that

she would spend two thirds of the year with her mother and a third in Hades with her husband: hence, winter.

“Perdita is born during early winter, deposited in the desert as a ‘blossom,’ and then flowers forth into the spring of youth in the pastoral scenes” (Hoeniger 101). She is lost from Sicilia, where winter continues, and is followed by fertility and new life. She herself makes this connection, when she says,

O Proserpina,
For the flowers now, that frighted thou let'st fall
From Dis's waggon!

(IV.iv.116-118)

The return of Perdita to Sicilia, prophesied by the Oracle—“if that which is lost be not found”—is thus also the return of spring and summer. This seems almost too obvious given that Leontes greets her and Florizel with the line “Welcome hither,/ As is the spring to the earth” (V.i.150-151).

In *The Golden Bough*, Frazer finds the kernels of this myth in the corn seed, “which is buried under the soil for some months of every winter and comes to life again” (40). “And if the daughter goddess,” he writes, “was the personification of the young corn of the present year, may not the mother goddess be a personification of the old corn of last year, which has given birth to the new crops?” Hoeniger allows Frazer’s thesis to account for similarities between Hermione and Perdita: “if this is the case, the Persephone of the one year becomes the Demeter of the next. Therein lies the identity of Demeter and Persephone. By analogy, we can understand the close similarity between Perdita and Hermione” (101). Here we can see the unification of Hoeniger’s theories about the seasonal themes of *The Winter’s Tale* and its use of the Persephone myth with

Neely's ideas about redeeming doubles. Both scholars perceive Perdita as a figure of the lost Hermione.

Seasons in *The Winter's Tale* obviously open up interpretive possibilities and also have a redemptive function. The play studies and represents seasonal contrasts and employs them as an allegory for its message of redemption. Act four's summer is the redeeming opposite of three acts of winter and of the wintry liminal zone that Sicilia becomes after Leontes's transgression: that opposite also includes the play's messages about sex and play, since summer is the season for play and fertility.

The second major thematic element that I want to treat is *The Winter's Tale's* examination of the relationship between art and life. We must take *art* broadly here: in *The Winter's Tale*, art might include storytelling, sculpture, Autolycus's artifice, and Paulina's magic.

Both J.H.P. Pafford and Howard Felperin's analyses of the play emphasize strong currents of realism and veracity. For Felperin, Leontes's jealousy is true to life—"it is the nature of jealousy that it has neither rational cause nor adequate motivation" (222)—and Hermione's protestations of innocence make her a more realistic and easily playable character than Cordelia or Desdemona. *The Winter's Tale* is based on a prose romance called *Pandosto* by Robert Greene, and Pafford notes that Shakespeare alters Greene's source text by rendering the impossible plausible and the magical explainable (Pafford lxiv). For example, Polixenes has been at Leontes's court for nine months, making it possible that the Bohemian king impregnated Hermione. Mamillius, rather than simply being struck down by Apollo's wrath, has been ill, as a result of grief, since the arrest of his mother. In the statue scene, Shakespeare writes lines for Polixenes, Hermione, and

Paulina that imply that Hermione has been living in hiding for sixteen years. Shakespeare has added nuance and realistic alternatives to divine intervention or magic.

Both Pafford and Felperin overstate the case for realism in *The Winter's Tale*. Realistic elements are noticeably juxtaposed with moments of magic, art, and theatre. In act III, the proclamation of Apollo, the ghostly story Antigonus relates to the infant Perdita, the storm, and, of course, the bear attack, are moments of enormous spectacle and theatricality. *Pandosto* does not include a bear, and for all of the ambiguity that Shakespeare adds to the final scene, neither does *Pandosto* include a statue of Hermione. These unbelievable moments are wholly Shakespeare's. There is an improbable moment for each of the play's probable ones, and characters play roles and act theatrically as often as they act realistically. At any given moment Autolycus pretends to be one of three imaginary characters, and even Perdita acts in a way that is inherently theatrical. She pretends to be a queen, the mistress of the feast, and says she is "most goddess-like prank'd up." Her speech and demeanor are self-consciously for the consumption of an audience, comprised of the guests at the sheep-shearing feast and of the actual audience of *The Winter's Tale*. Of course, though, in doing so she is also revealing her true identity, that of a princess.

That Hermione tries to explain herself might make her a more realistic character than Cordelia, as Felperin suggests, but Polixenes, Camillo, Autolycus, Florizel, and Perdita all wear disguises just as bizarrely impenetrable as Kent's. Each moment in *The Winter's Tale* that could be identified as realistic is met with one that is equally theatrical or artificial. Much remains in *The Winter's Tale* that requires suspension of disbelief.

These are all examples of Shakespeare's juxtaposition of art and life in *The Winter's Tale*. Throughout *The Winter's Tale*, realism goes hand-in-hand with shameless theatricality, spectacle, and magic, constituting a play-length meditation on the relationship between art and life. Mopsa, at one point, says, "I love a ballad in print, a life, for then we are sure they are true" (IV.iv.261-262). Her naiveté does not allow her to distinguish between truth and fiction. That said, *The Winter's Tale* has a way of making rhetoric into reality. Felperin points out that the idyllic childhood shared by Polixenes and Leontes, who are figured as "twinn'd lambs," actually exists in Bohemia, where Florizel and Perdita frisk not as twinned lambs but with actual lambs. Felperin also points out a plethora of food and drink imagery present in the opening scenes of the play which appears in fact in the abundant hospitality of the sheep-shearing feast.

Included in these examinations of the binary of life and art, is a study of art in many forms, one of which is story-telling. Stories are woven through *The Winter's Tale* on multiple levels. The emphasis on story-telling begins with the title. The Arden notes that "'a winter's tale,' or similar expression, meant an old trivial tale of some length suitable for nothing better than to while away a winter evening" (liii). The play itself has some of these qualities: it has great violence, great romance, a lovable rogue, a shipwreck, a bear attack, and a moment of transcendent magic. In the play, Mamillius begins to tell Hermione a tale with the line "a sad tale's best for winter" right before Leontes enters with his accusation. In our production, we tried to further emphasize this moment by placing it at the very start of the play as a prologue, following it with the traditional mummers' play that constituted Mamillius's tale. Either way, Mamillius's tale is cut off by the arrest of Hermione. It is interesting to note that the only real story

presented in the first half of the play is cut off by Leontes, and this contributes to the sense that the first half of *The Winter's Tale* is about Leontes's attempts to establish the superiority of his voice and his story over others'.

Later, though, in IV.iv, the sheep-shearing festival scene, stories protect us, keeping us safe from the return of Leontes's cruel actions in the figure of Polixenes. The moments when act IV, scene iv retreats back into tragic territory fail to scare us as thoroughly as Leontes's earlier ravings because they constitute a story as old as dirt. We can look back to Menander, Plautus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, and *commedia del'arte* for the origins of Florizel and Perdita's fraught romance. Polixenes fills the role of the *senex*, the old man who keeps the lovers apart, and on some level we realize that this is not quite a tragedy, but rather is another obstacle. Polixenes even dresses as an old stranger to complete the effect. In New Comedy tradition, Perdita "is proved by birth tokens to be respectable enough for the hero to marry her" (Frye 108). At the same time as this culturally ubiquitous script is employed to protect us, the society depicted in the play is opening up to include the stories of characters from a multiplicity of backgrounds and social classes, and, potentially, to the stories of the audience as act IV, scene iv's party spills from the stage.

The proliferation of stories continues in act V, scene ii. The great revelations that largely resolve *The Winter's Tale's* plot are not played for the audience, but rather are recounted by three gentlemen whom Autolycus encounters. Each tries to top the others' stories, and although in our production we consolidated the three men's stories into a massive monologue spoken by Emilia, played by Rachel Wimmer, we tried to preserve the flavor of one-upmanship that accompanies what is essentially a story-telling

competition. Rachel played much of the speech to the audience, using them to illustrate the meeting of the kings and cajoling them into standing in for different characters. In rehearsal, we realized that Shakespeare had crowd-sourced the resolution of the play, allowing his audience to fill in (literally, in our production) the images, characters, and dialogue for themselves. This mirrors the extension of agency and transition of the play's society from univocal to multivocal. Act V, scene ii extends agency to the audience, allowing them a role in the story-telling. Our staging also asked the audience to make real something that is presented only as a story, reflecting Felperin's note that the first half's rhetoric becomes the second half's reality. It is worth noting that major directors from Harley Granville Barker to Peter Brook have seen great value to this scene. Barker wrote that "the [final] scene is elaborately held back by the preceding one, which though but preparation, actually equals it in length, and [the final scene's] poetry is heightened by such contrast with fantastic prose and fun" (Barker, *More Prefaces*, 22).

Art and life also conflict in the much-analyzed debate between Polixenes and Perdita in act IV, scene iv over horticultural breeding. Here, *art* operates in the sense of that-which-is-made-by-man, while *life* means that-which-is natural:

PERDITA

Sir, the year growing ancient,
Not yet on summer's death, nor on the birth
Of trembling winter, the fairest flowers o' the season
Are our carnations and streak'd gillyvors,
Which some call nature's bastards: of that kind
Our rustic garden's barren; and I care not
To get slips of them.

POLIXENES

Wherefore, gentle maiden,
Do you neglect them?

PERDITA

For I have heard it said
 There is an art which in their piedness shares
 With great creating nature.

POLIXENES

Say there be;
 Yet nature is made better by no mean
 But nature makes that mean: so, over that art
 Which you say adds to nature, is an art
 That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry
 A gentler scion to the wildest stock,
 And make conceive a bark of baser kind
 By bud of nobler race: this is an art
 Which does mend nature, change it rather, but
 The art itself is nature.

PERDITA

So it is.

POLIXENES

Then make your garden rich in gillyvors,
 And do not call them bastards.

PERDITA

I'll not put
 The dibble in earth to set one slip of them;
 No more than were I painted I would wish
 This youth should say 'twere well and only therefore
 Desire to breed by me.

(IV.iv.89-103)

Here, Polixenes adeptly and frustratingly argues exactly as we would expect him *not* to, in support of inter-class or inter-species breeding that produces offspring more cultured and gentle than its baser parent. Perdita, on the other hand, rejects this human intrusion into the business of flowers, but finishes her argument with a point more easily attributable to her, that love and admiration should follow inherent value and inner beauty. Of course, Florizel does love her for her inner beauty, and is able to look past her social status as the daughter of a rustic shepherd.

In *William Shakespeare: The Winter's Tale*, A.D. Nuttall presents two readings of the debate. The first is that there are two Polixeneses— one who argues philosophically about horticulture and animal husbandry and another who, when it comes to humans, is

“all for aristocratic exclusiveness”— and that Shakespeare seems to endorse Polixenes the philosopher by wedding Florizel to the ostensibly baser Perdita. The second, which Nuttall finds “less palatable” but more convincing, is that Shakespeare endorses Polixenes’s practical actions rather than his rhetorical ones, given the fact that Perdita is actually not of “baser kind” but is indeed a princess. “I am myself inclined to the view that the second reading is the right one, and that it *is* offensive,” he writes,

The egalitarian world of the pastoral could never be more than an interlude for Shakespeare. The court with its hierarchy was always the profounder, harder reality. Duke Senior in the Forest of Arden is effusive on the merits of the simple life, but at the end of the play there is no question but that he should go back to his dukedom.

We can see the importance of this “horticultural debate,” then, to critics: Nuttall derives his conservative vision of the play’s message entirely from Polixenes and Perdita’s conversation about flowers. I will return to this debate and to Nuttall’s theories in the next chapter, when I will suggest that Shakespeare’s insertion of significant anti-structure and liminality into the text might prompt a more liberal interpretation.

We can see various readings and manifestations of these themes in *The Winter’s Tale* long performance history. Studying these historical productions of the play allows us to tease out other practitioners’ approaches to themes I have engaged and stagings I will write about later. For example, Harley Granville Barker introduces non-illusionistic staging, Trevor Nunn tries double casting Hermione and Perdita, and Declan Donnellan’s Russian production emphasizes the play’s political dimension.

The Winter’s Tale was written either in 1610 or 1611, but Shakespeare was not the originator of its plot. The play is based on Robert Greene’s prose romance *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time*, published in 1588. The stories are drastically different, and the

redemptive impulses we locate in *The Winter's Tale* are almost entirely absent from *Pandosto*: they are wholly Shakespeare's creation. There are many significant differences between the two works. Shakespeare famously switches Bohemia and Sicilia, and invents many new characters including Paulina, Antigonus, the Clown, and Autolycus. *Pandosto* has no bear, but since the Perdita character, named Fawnia, is merely floated to Sicilia in a boat on her own and there is no Antigonus, there is no need for a bear to eat Antigonus. In *Pandosto*, huge sections of the text are comprised of Florizel (Dorastus) and Perdita's (Fawnia's) courtship, and huge sections of that are comprised of self-critical soliloquies in which the lovers chastise themselves for falling in love with a person of a different class. Socio-economic class is more of a dilemma for Greene's characters, and the story is less ambiguous in its messages about class than Shakespeare's is: when it is revealed that Fawnia is a princess, "Fawnia was not more joyful that she had found such a father than Dorastus was glad he should get such a wife. The ambassadors rejoiced that their young prince had made such a choice..." (36)

Perhaps most dramatically, Bellaria, Pandosto's wife, is not resurrected in the end of the story. Instead, *Pandosto* ends like this:

Eighteen days being passed in these princely sports, Pandosto, willing to recompense old Porrus, of a shepherd made him a knight. Which done, providing a sufficient navy to receive him and his retinue, accompanied with Dorastus, Fawnia and the Sicilian ambassadors, he sailed towards Sicilia, where he was most princely entertained by Egistus, who hearing this comical event, rejoiced greatly at his son's good hap, and without delay, to the perpetual joy of the two young lovers, celebrated the marriage, which was no sooner ended but Pandosto, calling to mind how first he betrayed his friend Egistus, how his jealousy was the cause of Bellaria's death, that contrary to the law of nature he had lusted after his own daughter, moved with these desperate thoughts he fell in a melancholy fit and, to close up the comedy with a tragical stratagem, he slew himself, whose death being many days bewailed of Fawnia, Dorastus and his dear friend Egistus, Dorastus, taking his leave of his father, went with his wife and the dead corpse

into Bohemia, where after they were sumptuously entombed, Dorastus ended his days in contented quiet (36).

Greene's romance ends with tragedy: this is the great alteration made by Shakespeare, and thus it is clear that the redemption effected in *The Winter's Tale* is wholly of *The Winter's Tale*, wholly unique to Shakespeare's work. It is Shakespeare who creates the character of Autolycus, Leontes's "parodic double," Shakespeare who writes the sheep-shearing festival scene as the antithesis to Leontes's Sicilian tyranny, and Shakespeare who resurrects Hermione and reunites and creates families at the end of the play. In *Pandosto*, Bellaria is dead, permanently, and, in the final paragraph, Pandosto unexpectedly joins her. As for the pastoral scenes, one might contrast pastoral Sicilia to aristocratic, urbane Bohemia (remember that Shakespeare switches Greene's locations around), but it exists in no sense as antithesis or redemptive opposite, because it lacks the carnival and liminal elements Shakespeare introduces. Greene's work spends most of its time developing the relationship between Dorastus and Fawnia, and most of that time is spent moving from one to the other as each delivers angsty monologues about inconvenient class hierarchies:

Ah, Fawnia, why dost thou gaze against the sun, or catch at the wind? Stars are to be looked at with the eye, not reached at with the hand; thoughts are to be measured by fortunes, not by desires; falls come not by sitting low, but by climbing too high (Pandosto 24).

The effect is to close off potential interpretation of the social implications of *Pandosto*.

The Winter's Tale's famous horticultural debate brings up issues of inter-class relationships, but the issue, complicated by Perdita's unknown royalty, is left unresolved and ambiguous: it is difficult to derive a social message from the relationship between Florizel and Perdita. Greene, on the other hand, makes it evident though the lovers'

endless dithering that the relationship between Dorastus and Fawnia is only acceptable because Fawnia is really a princess. At the story's end, Greene writes, "the ambassadors rejoiced that their young prince had made such a choice" (36). The story's social message is not up for interpretation. Thankfully, Shakespeare spares us Greene's endless metaphors for dating out of one's league. By introducing Perdita and Florizel's relationship *in medias res*, Shakespeare is largely able to focus on the creation of the liminal world that will give the play its redemptive qualities.

A contemporary account of *The Winter's Tale* was written by Dr. Simon Forman on May 15th, 1611. Included in a volume of Forman's "holograph, astrological, alchemical, and biographical materials," are accounts of four plays he saw at the Globe in 1611: Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Winter's Tale* and a version of *Richard II* by another playwright. Forman wrote:

Observe there how Leontes, the King of Sicilia, was overcome with jealousy of his wife with the King of Bohemia his friend that came to see him, and how he contrived his death and would have had his cupbearer to have poisoned, who gave the King of Bohemia warning thereof and fled with him to Bohemia.

Remember also how he sent to the Oracle of Apollo, and the answer of Apollo, that she was guiltless and that the King was jealous, etc., and how except the child was found again that was lost, the King should die without issue; for the child was carried into Bohemia and there laid in a forest and brought up by a shepherd. And the King of Bohemia his son married that wench, and how they fled into Sicilia to Leontes, and the shepherd having showed the letter of the nobleman by whom Leontes sent away that child and the jewels found about her, she was known to be Leontes' daughter, and was then sixteen years old.

Remember also the Rogue that came in all tattered like coll pixci, and how he feigned him sick and to have been robbed of all that he had, and how he cozened the poor man of all his money, and after came to the sheep-shear with a peddler's pack, and there cozened them again of all their money. And how he changed apparel with the King of Bohemia his son, and then how he turned courtier, etc. Beware of trusting feigned beggars or fawning fellows (1967).

Howard Felperin reads Simon Forman's account and recalls Mopsa and her belief in the truth of ballads in "the print, a life," (IV.iv.261) imagining that Forman's ability to distinguish between art and life has wholly abandoned him. Forman passes over much of the play's second half to indulge his interest in Autolycus and draws the moral of the play from that character: Shakespeare's fictional events have reminded him of his real life fears and frustrations. Forman leaves out the most arresting theatrical moments of *The Winter's Tale*: the exit pursued by a bear and the miracle of the statue that comes to life. Dennis Bartholomeusz believes these moments were not left out of the Globe's performance, integral as they are to the meaning of *The Winter's Tale*. "Dramatic performances," he writes, "do not always get the observers they deserve." More charitably, we could imagine that Forman was trying not to spoil the ending for anyone who should read his account. Forman also writes that Perdita is left by Antigonus in a forest. It is hard to say what this means. Maybe the Globe performance imagined a forest in act III, scene iii, rather than a beach: it would have been difficult for Forman to ignore the discussion of ships and waves had they been present in that early production. On the other hand, it might mean that there was indeed a bear and that Forman extrapolated a forest from its presence, given that traditionally one is more likely to encounter a bear in a forest than on a beach.

Scholars have asked whether, in original productions of *The Winter's Tale*, its bear was real or performed by human actors. The majority of research seems to indicate that it was not genuine. Earlier plays featuring bears wrote antics or dances for these ursine characters, implying that they were played by men (Dunbar 22). Other scholars have pointed out that *The Winter's Tale* was performed at a variety of venues, including

the indoor Blackfriars Theater on the north side of the Thames and at Whitehall and before the king (Bartholomeusz 13). A real bear would have necessitated untenable risks in transportation and performance. There is also dramatic and thematic significance to the bear, which might have been lost in the excitement caused by the presence of a real bear. The bear is the signal for the shift from tragedy to comedy. He destroys the last vestiges of Leontes's jealous thought and prepares us for the second half of the play. Additionally, Elizabethan folklore had it that when bear cubs were born, they were shapeless masses of gunk that the mother bears "licked into shape." Here again we see juxtapositions of nature and art!

The Winter's Tale seems to have been well received from its premier in 1610 or 1611 to the closing of the English theaters in 1642. On November 11th, 1611 it was performed before Kings James I, and records show that it returned to Whitehall in 1612-13, 1618, 1619, 1623-24, and 1633-34. Bartholomeusz notes that it was performed there more times than even *King Lear* (Bartholomeusz 12), although that consists of only six recorded performances (Hunt 3). Its relative popularity with aristocratic court audiences suggests that "the masque-like features of the play and its intellectual romance design recommended it" to the upper crust of society.

After the Interregnum, however, *The Winter's Tale* was not looked on favorably. The play is not in keeping with Neoclassical tastes, as it defies the unities of time and place, and late seventeenth-century critics and audiences found it laughable. In 1754, Macnamara Morgan wrote *The Sheep Shearing: Or Florizel and Perdita*, and two years later, David Garrick premiered his *Florizel and Perdita, a Dramatic Pastoral in Three Acts*. Both of these plays cut *The Winter's Tale* in half, retaining the comic pastoral and

reducing the tragic first half to a conversation between Camillo and another gentleman (not that Shakespeare was above reducing major potential dramatic moments to conversations between nameless gentlemen himself). In *Florizel and Perdita*, Paulina escapes to Bohemia before the play starts, bringing the statue of Hermione with her so that Garrick is allowed to retain the statue scene, although it is significantly edited. A repentant Leontes washes up on the Bohemian shores and the reunification of his family is effected there, rather than in Sicilia.

The nineteenth century returned *The Winter's Tale's* missing first half. John Philip Kemble directed *The Winter's Tale* and played Leontes in 1802, 1807, and 1811 (Dunbar 26). Kemble and his contemporaries viewed *The Winter's Tale* primarily as a tragedy, in contrast to Garrick and Morgan's pastoral-comic edits; Dunbar writes that "neither Garrick nor Kemble seemed in touch with the mingled tones of the play" (Dunbar 26).

Herbert Beerbohm Tree directed the first major twentieth-century production in 1906, in a way consistent with his other output: his *Winter's Tale* employed "a live donkey, two live doves, and a running stream in the pastoral scene" (Dunbar 31). Elaborate stage business, including a long, silent introduction in which Leontes and Polixenes held court together, was added to the play (Bartholomeusz 127) while more than half of its lines were cut (Dunbar 31). Indeed, Tree made numerous textual emendations, compressing the play into three acts and rearranging and cutting scenes significantly within them.

Harley Granville Barker's *Winter's Tale* at the Savoy Theatre, which opened on September 21st, 1912, revolutionized Shakespearean performance. The performance was

a complete departure from the “strictly framed action of the proscenium stage and its traditions of elaborate pictorial realism (illusionism)” exemplified by Tree’s productions (Dunbar 33) and from the “sonorous declamation” and ““notoriously slow and deliberate”” speech of nineteenth-century Shakespeareans like Henry Irving (Dunbar 43).

Barker’s staging positioned him between Edwardian traditionalists and their pictorial realism and radical Elizabethan reformers like William Poel, who, with his Elizabethan Stage Society, is seen as something of a father to the current “Original Practices” movement. Barker generally had a positive relationship with and estimation of William Poel, having acted in two of Poel’s productions and made use of Poel’s theories in the influential *Prefaces to Shakespeare* (Townsend 12). He could be critical of Poel and the Elizabethan Stage Society’s mission, though, as when he wrote to *Play Pictorial*:

Tapestry curtains hung round? Well, tapestry is apt to be stuffy and—archeological. We shall not save our souls by being Elizabethan. It is an easy way out, and strictly followed, an honorable one. But there’s the difficulty. To be Elizabethan one must be strictly, logically or quite ineffectively so. And even then, it is asking much of an audience to come to the theatre so historically-sensed as that. (*Correspondents* 530)

Barker struck a balance between the two extremes, with design that neither strove to be faithful to Shakespeare’s early seventeenth-century stage nor to lush realism. The staging was meant to be suggestive rather than realistic: in fact, Barker rejected realism in the same letter excerpted above. He wrote:

I postulate that a new formula has to be found. Realistic scenery won’t do, if only because it swears against everything in the plays; if only because it’s never realistic...

What are the conditions? We must have a background. What sort? Any sort? But if we have our choice? Well, we want something that will reflect light and space; if it’s to be a background permanent for this play (this, for many reasons, it should be), something that will not tie us too rigidly indoors or out. Sky-blue then will be too like sky; patterns suggest walls (*Correspondents* 530).

In *The Winter's Tale*, Barker's stage was reflective of "light and space." Leontes's palace was overwhelmingly created in white, with white and gold decoration, a white downstage curtain, and the use of "perfectly white light." Barker also heavily used an apron, which protruded beyond the proscenium arch twelve feet at its center point. This allowed for ample direct address to the audience, and the extension of the stage past the proscenium was the frequent location of asides and soliloquies. Using what was surmised to be an Elizabethan staging practice, larger and more complicated sets, which might need to be changed, were erected upstage and behind a curtain, in front of which the cast could act smaller and shorter scenes (Dunbar 36). In the first half of the play, the upstage scenery consisted of "a simple harmony of white pilasters and dead-gold curtain" (*Times* 389)—what the *Daily Telegraph* called " 'rather an arrangement of line and color than anything real'" (Dunbar 36). The pastoral scenes were suggested by a non-realistic thatched cottage. *The Times* wrote "there is no 'scenery' in the modern sense of the term, but as Mr. Barker calls it, 'decoration'" (Critical essays 389).

As it eliminated long, tedious, action-less scene changes, the alternation between upstage and downstage spaces was one way that Barker was able to cut down the play's length so greatly. The play ran for approximately three hours, with a fifteen minute intermission. Remarkably, he cut only between six and twenty lines, by various estimates—by contrast, the production I directed lasted approximately two and a half hours despite the fact that whole scenes, speeches, and characters were cut from the text. The actors' manner of speech also contributed to the quick pace of Barker's production. Apparently, Barker's *Winter's Tale* was a revolution in Shakespearean speed. Dunbar writes that "typical of conservative responses was that of J.E. Harold Terry: 'It is a

thousand pities that all save one of two performers speak their lines at such a pace as to render them inaudible to the audience.’” (Dunbar 43).

Along with his revolutionary production, Barker also published the significant criticism on the play. Letters to newspapers and theatre industry periodicals explained his visions, an acting edition of the production was published, and he wrote *Prefaces to Shakespeare* and *More Prefaces to Shakespeare*, the latter of which includes commentary on *The Winter's Tale*. From his criticism it is clear that he was one of the first practitioner-critics to appreciate the full dramatic structure, complete text, and tragicomic tone of the play, which had been derided by critics since the late seventeenth-century. Barker writes, “it is a tragi-comedy. The technique of it is mature, that of a man who knows he can do what he will, lets himself in for difficulties with apparent carelessness, and overcomes them at his ease” (Barker 19). He goes even so far as to call the play a masterpiece.

This revolution in staging, delivery, textual treatment, and theory, it seems, did not necessarily spread quickly. Bartholomeusz writes that Henry Jewett’s 1929 Boston production incorporated some Barkerian elements but eschewed others. Bartholomeusz writes “that the performance moved swiftly much thanks to ‘decorative settings’ content to suggest Sicilia as a Romantic nowhere, slightly Grecian, readily changed, neither smothering the action nor distracting from it.” (Bartholomeusz 165). “Decorative settings” sounds much like Barker’s design as recounted in *The Times* review. On the other hand, Jewett made substantial cuts and edits. Characters were added, scenes and segments of dialogue were eliminated, and Jewett wrote in his promptbook, “No audience of these days would want to have *The Winter's Tale* in its entirety” (Bartholomeusz 168).

Ben Iden Payne's 1946 production at the Cort Theatre in New York made even more cuts, which left the script "closer to Kemble than to Barker" (169). Payne's was the longest running production of the play on Broadway, and was apparently a marvel of ensemble performance, in which "no single performance leapt out for attention." But it is Peter Brook's 1951 *Winter's Tale* at the Phoenix Theatre that Mary Dunbar calls the play's "next most significant twentieth-century production," noting "strong traces of [Barker's] ideas about text, verse speaking, acting and staging" in the Brook production (61).

Though "reviewers' ideas about *The Winter's Tale* were still very mixed by the time of Brook's 1951 production," (Dunbar 62), Brook followed Barker in his praise of the play's structure. In *The Empty Space*, published in 1968, he wrote the following on *The Winter's Tale's* structure:

Leontes accuses his wife of infidelity. He condemns her to death. The child is put to sea. In the second part the child grows up, and now in a different pastoral key the very same action is repeated. The man falsely accused by Leontes now in turn behaves just as unreasonably. The consequence is the same— the child again takes flight. Her journey takes her back to Leontes's palace and the third part is now in the same place as the first, but twenty years later. Again Leontes finds himself in similar conditions, in which he could be as violently unreasonable as before. Thus the main action is presented first ferociously; then a second time by charming parody but in a bold major key, for the pastoral of the play is a mirror as well as a straight device. The third movement is in another contrasting key— a key of remorse (Brook 82).

Brook picks up on the same qualities of the play I have discussed. Terms like “parody” and “mirror” reflect Neely’s concept of the “parodic double:” for Brook, the main action’s second presentation examines and reflects its first, and thus whole sections and actions of the play serve as “parodic doubles.” Brook also perceives a third movement in the “key of remorse.” In that movement, Leontes is presented with a choice: “If the dramatist’s sense of truth forces him to make Leontes vindictive with the children [Florizel and Perdita], then the play cannot move out of its particular world, and its end would have to be bitter and tragic: if he can truthfully allow a new equality to enter Leontes’s actions then the whole pattern of the play is transformed: the past and future are no longer the same” (82). The third movement is the manifestation of redemption, caused by the events and actions of the second.

This understanding of structure might have contributed to the success of Brook’s production, because he apparently was able to “make [the fourth act’s] connection with the rest of the play clear” (Dunbar 79). A critic wrote in *Time and Tide* that the production had made the discovery that “this pastoral interlude is not after all a different play and that it *is* possible to carry over the mood of the first part and also join it to the last” (quoted on Dunbar 79). Brook made the interesting choice to place the interlude before act III, scene iii. The second half of his production began with the Mariner and Antigonus’s entrance. A snowstorm whipped up around them, and after the mariner’s exit, the terrifying bear rose from the darkness upstage and chased Antigonus off. As the storm continued, Time made his entrance and in the midst of the storm, gave his monologue. On “I turn my glass,” the storm stopped, and as Time exited, the skies cleared up and the pastoral rustics were revealed enjoying the summertime (78).

The Winter's Tale so easily breaks down into two sections on either side of a sixteen year gap that the interlude is almost always placed after the discovery of Perdita and before Time's monologue. The play thus has a tragic first half with a bit of comic business tacked to the end and a comic second half with a bit of romance and remorse. Brook's production altered this, and with the help of significant stage effects (Dunbar quotes a reviewer for *The Stage* who called it "one of the heaviest snow-storms in stage history") was able to incorporate the tragedy and terror of the first movement into the second, remind his audience of what they had just seen, and comment on the recapitulation of the play's "main action."

In terms of design, *The Winter's Tale* was not nearly as spare as Brook's *Midsummer Night's Dream* would be in 1970, but did move towards the bare stage and away from pictorial realism, which continued even in 1951. The set was without an apron, and did not break the proscenium, but otherwise conformed to contemporary ideas of what Shakespeare's stages might have looked like (Dunbar 65). There was an upstage balcony and, below that, a curtained discovery space, with passages for exits and entrances on either side of it. Decoration trumped "'scenery' in the modern sense" in Brook's production as well as Barker's, and different locations were indicated by rapidly changing hangers and properties. This allowed for quick progressions from scene to scene. Brook still made cuts to the script, eliminating act I, scene i, act IV, scene ii, and the satyr dance entirely and reducing act III, scene i, with Cleomenes and Dion, and reference to Camillo and Paulina's ultimate marriage. Dunbar notes that the elimination of act III, scene i and the satyr dance is particularly interesting for a director who would

later write about Shakespeare's juxtapositions of the rough and the holy (Dunbar 77), since the cut scenes represent that contrast strongly.

In 1969, Trevor Nunn's run of Shakespeare's late plays returned *The Winter's Tale* to what Bartholmeusz might call the "bare stage" at the RSC in Stratford. Designed by Christopher Morley, the play was staged in a "white box," high white walls that extended into the vastness of the flies and pushed past the proscenium arch in an attempt to eradicate it. It was non-illusionistic, in that the flies and lighting instruments were exposed. The production was inspired by Peter Brook's recently published *The Empty Space*, and sought to create a space ripe for ritual in which the importance of the actor and the text are asserted by the scenery. One important scenic element was a three-sided transparent Perspex cube. In this cube, which could be made to rotate, Leontes opened the show as a pre-recorded line from Time's monologue played and a strobe light flickered:

I that please some, try all; both joy and terror
Of good and bad, that makes and unfolds error
Now take on me, in the name of Time
To use my wings.

(IV.i.1-4)

Barry Ingham's Leontes, arms outstretched, mirrored Leonardo da Vinci's 'Vitruvian Man' drawing, which appeared on a drop curtain in the RSC's concurrent production of *Pericles* and symbolized some of Nunn's conceptions of their entire season. Dunbar quotes Nunn: "[...] we wanted to say [...] this is what it's all going to be about: that image, the man alone, the man wrestling with his experience, the man trying to find balance and equipoise between his animal instincts and his intellect [...]" Leontes's position as he spun in the glass cube, suggestive of this Renaissance image, emphasized

his isolation and psychological imprisonment. The cube was also the platform for Time as he gave his monologue in act IV, scene i and for Hermione's statue in act V, scene iii.

Although scenically the production was spare, it did make heavy use of lighting. In this first half, effects were often in service of the isolation of Leontes. At points, a "black cone-shaped device, in which was a bank of lights, descended slowly, focusing an ever-narrowing pool of light on Leontes." (Dunbar 94). Another effect originated in an improvisation Nunn ran with Barry Ingham and the cast, in which Nunn asked Ingham to describe exactly what Leontes was seeing. "The 'terribly disturbing detail,' Nunn said, 'was so real to him, and so disturbing to us,' that they felt this work must not be 'a lost ingredient' or 'just be sub-text for the actors' [...]" (Dunbar 92). Thus, in the production, lighting effects and manipulation of actors' delivery of lines sought to bring the audience into the delusional mind of Leontes. An "ultraviolet" light was cast on the three principle actors as Ingham performed the "Too hot" monologue, and in freeze-frame motions Judy Dench as Hermione and Richard Pasco as Polixenes acted out Leontes's nightmares. Later, as Leontes says "How she holds up the neb, the bill to him," Polixenes and Hermione exchanged intimacies in slow motion; Polixenes kissed her neck and caressed her breasts and belly.

Nunn was the first director to employ this staging, though it has been used many times since (Declan Donnellan varied the staging slightly to great effect in 1997) (201). This method of performing the opening scenes is more than just a "surreal evocation of Leontes's inner vision." It is also way to directly communicate to the audience Leontes's story, his version of events. The first half of *The Winter's Tale* is monologic, monovocal: Leontes's story is the story that is told and acted on while others' stories, those of

Paulina, Hermione, Camillo, Antigonus, even Mamillius, go unheeded and unaccepted until too late. By staging Leontes's inner suspicions, they get the directionality of the play's first half spot on, by communicating the story of one to many viewers and eliminating the points of view and perspectives of other characters.

Nunn's Bohemia "drew selectively" from the hippie culture contemporary to the production, "with its rock music, hippie trends, and liberation of instinctual energies" (Dunbar 101). The pastoral scenes thus had a stronger connection to youth culture (Dunbar suggests that Autolycus, who already has a strong rapport with the audience as a result of his sly soliloquies and asides, particularly benefited from this connection with younger audience members). Nunn also incorporated the dance of the satyrs, and the rock music to which they performed expressed the "sexual energy" of the moment (102).

Nunn also cast Judi Dench as both Hermione and Perdita. In *A Lifetime with Shakespeare*, director Paul Barry writes that he dislikes this double: "it seems to me a cheap trick, displaying a lack of sensitivity, and it deprives the audience of the play's greatest moment" (220). Barry seems to me to be wrong about a great many things—he writes that Autolycus "was an afterthought" (225), and that "if you put the intermission anyplace before the 16-year time jump, you'll risk losing the philistines even earlier to the local pubs" (220)—Peter Brook might have something to say about that! Regardless of Barry's preferences, there was significant thought behind Nunn's casting of Dench. The actress effected such a great change between the two women, keeping them separate in her mind and in rehearsal, that Gordon Parsons wrote that "'she reduces the thematic relevance of one actress playing both parts'" (quoted on Dunbar 100). Barry's concern with the approach is primarily due to the problems it creates in the final scene, when

Hermione is unable to be reunited with her lost child since she happens to *be* her lost child. In the RSC production, Hermione's statue was revealed in the glass cube: a body-double for Dench stood in. At the moment of Hermione's resurrection, the cube began to spin. As it whirled, Dench approached it and changed places with the double, who got out and stood in for Perdita for the remaining moments of the show. Dench was not especially pleased with the effect, saying that "even when it did work well, it left the audience wondering how on earth it had happened, instead of feeling the emotion of what was happening between the characters. I didn't feel so much moved as breathless..." (Dench, quoted on Dunbar 104).

Such an approach must have emphasized the merging of Hermione and Perdita, the sense that the two of them are really one. Nunn seemed to hope that the casting, and the repeated uses of the glass cube (for Leontes, Time, and the statue of Hermione) would "resemble formalist emphases on thematic parallels and on unity" (99). "'In one sense, Hermione does not die,' [Nunn] said in an interview. 'Hermione's child is called Perdita, that which is lost, and Hermione is that which is lost to Leontes'" (Dunbar 99). As with Barker and Brook, the director's substantial thought about the structure of the play profoundly affected the execution of the performance. That said, we might trouble this particular instance of double casting. In 1887, the actress Mary Anderson had played both roles (Nunn was apparently unaware of this earlier instance). Anderson's casting seems to have been for her talent and star-status. Nunn backed his choice up with structural justifications, but we might ask why he chose to highlight the structural parallels between Perdita and Hermione without commenting upon others with his casting? No other roles were doubled (Dunbar 258) despite the fact that interesting themes might have been

drawn from the double-casting of, for example, Leontes and Autolycus, Leontes and the Old Shepherd, or, as we did in our production, Camillo and Antigonus. The oneness of Perdita and Hermione is suggested by Carol Thomas Neely and F. David Hoegardin, and in Nunn's statements we can hear echoes of their ideas about the two women. Neely, of course, suggests Perdita as a surrogate for Hermione, as a result of their shared "frank and whole-hearted acceptance of sexuality" (Neely 201), common sense, pragmatism, and virtue. But she also casts Paulina as the double of Hermione, and Florizel, the Old Shepherd, and Autolycus as doubles of Leontes. Could not interesting structural parallels have been derived from these doubles as well?

From 1954 to 1975, the state of Oregon produced a series of important productions of *The Winter's Tale*. In 1954, Paul Kliss developed a production that treated the play as a "dreamlike fairy-tale," in which reality is elevated to magical heights. Bartholomeusz characterizes Kliss's vision as "a piece of escapist theatre." A 1965 revival directed by Hugh Evans was staged in a new space, a wide, open stage modeled on the contract for the Early Modern Fortune Theatre designed by Richard L. Hay (189). Evans maintained the entirety of the text of the play, but Bartholomeusz insists that instead of relying on Shakespeare's text, Evans's production used a language of sight, sound, music and spectacle, necessitated by the open space of the theatre, "that could provide an entry point into the play's preoccupations." Dances crossed the entire stage and incorporated significant symbolic motion. For example, during the satyrs' dance, the satyrs reached for Florizel and Perdita as the lovers reached across the wide expanse for one another.

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival's newly constructed, indoor Bowmer Theatre was the site of the next production, directed by Audrey Stanley in 1975. The Bowmer was designed explicitly to allow for non-proscenium stagings, and Richard Hay's scenic design for Stanley finally pushed through the proscenium and onto a thrust, in this case a giant protruding "y" with steps that connected in to the auditorium floor. The design "provided opportunities for direct address and close relations between actors and audience" (113). The traditions begun by Barker continued to take hold, as "the non-illusionist set, changing before the spectators' eyes, supported continuity, rapid juxtapositions, symbolic presentational figures (*Time and the Bear*), and spectacle" (113). The 1975 production's use of direct address and rapidly changing scenery are particularly reminiscent of Barker's 1912 work.

Stanley's production notably devoted significant attention to "issues involving women," locating the strengths of the three central female characters in *The Winter's Tale* and stressing their actions as those of "serious moral agent[s]" (111). The production sought to wrest the story from Leontes in part by paying attention to the "centrality of Hermione's choices in making transformation possible" (112). These choices were especially evident in the statue scene, as Hermione lingered on her platform, suspending the audience in a moment of expectation before choosing, deliberately, to stretch her hand out to Leontes (127).

Peter Hall's 1988 production at the National Theatre, part of a series of Shakespeare's late plays that also included *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*, went in a darker direction than previous versions. Hall had a "view of the later plays as dark, contradictory, and extreme... Hall perceived the plays to be primarily disturbing or

problematic” (151). For instance, Hall’s production gave more consideration to the political implications of the play: “the production explored the dangers of political absolutism suggested by Leontes’ tyrannical behavior” (152).

Hall’s production moved through a variety of theaters— notably, the company ran for seven performances in Tbilisi, Georgia, when “transportation problems left them with neither set nor costumes.” Most of the time was spent in the National’s Cottesloe Theatre (with 400 seats) and its Olivier Theatre (with 1160 seats):

The force of the psychological conflict in Leontes’ asides and in the trial scene was especially memorable in the Cottesloe; the play’s political implications...were especially memorable in the Olivier... yet the greater size of the Olivier did not preclude an intense realization of intimate conflict (153).

The fraught performances in Tbilisi, of course, reminded the company that “the art of plays is the art of the actor.” The stripped down production revealed for reviewers the “primacy of acting and language over spectacle and design” (John Higgins quoted on Dunbar 154).

Mary Dunbar suggests that Hall’s treatment of the pastoral scene does not seem to have struck a contrasting note to the darkness of the first half of the play— it too seems to have been a dark affair. “The Arcadian met the Bacchic in a Dionysian satyr’s dance, thus releasing the Bohemia scene’s darker sexual energies” (154). Ken Stott’s Autolycus was more of a cynic than a lovable rogue. He glared at the audience and made them wait for the first song, stuck his tongue out at the audience at the end of the first scene, and, in act V, scene ii, laughed derisively when it was revealed that Antigonus had been eaten by a bear (167). Ken Stott, the actor, believed Autolycus’s “con act” had ““a lot of cruelty””

to it, and Hall thought of him as “‘urban, scruffy’” (quoted on Dunbar 167). How much this intended darkness translated to the audience, and how much it darkened the entirety of the scene, is difficult to say, because the scene tempers this darkness with great beauty, love, and comedy. The reunion of Hermione and Leontes, though, was definitely dark, despite its evolution throughout the production’s run. The statue’s frozen face had on it the same expression of grief Hermione wore when the death of Mamillius was announced, and Hermione remained almost frozen even after her resurrection. Interactions between her and Leontes were cold and definitely not reconciliatory, although in the best of their performances, the cast attained a fragile balance of acknowledged loss and the potential for reconciliation. Leontes’s yearning for a greater connection and relationship with the resurrected Hermione motivated his hasty arrangement of the marriage between Paulina and Camillo, Hall said, “like a parody of the tying up of the bows at the end of the comedies” and an effort to hint to Hermione that their reconciliation and remarriage might be desirable (171).

In 1997, British director Declan Donnellan staged *The Winter’s Tale* with the ensemble of St. Petersburg’s Maly Drama Theatre. The Russian language production was critically acclaimed and won numerous awards, including Russia’s Golden Mask award for Best Production. Donnellan said that he had wanted to direct *The Winter’s Tale* before being invited to direct at the Maly, and fortunately had selected a play “about forgiveness and redemption after a long period of estrangement. It isn’t explicitly about the Russian experience, but obviously we drew on the actors’ experience” (quoted on Dunbar 195).

The production used a translation by Russian intellectual Pyotr Gnedich, published in 1904. Despite its age, the translation was heard as “rough” and “modern” by

some reviewers. Dunbar writes that it “does at times sharpen the colloquial force of parts of the Shakespearean text” (196). For example, when Leontes demands “Will you not push her out?” in act II, scene iii, the Russian colloquial translation “‘is what one would use to order a stray dog or mouse to be chased out’ ... not only to be chased out of his chamber at once, but out of existence for ever” (Olga Kuskova, quoted on Dunbar 197).

Russian “enculturation,” effected through the translations into Russian text and Russian context, was significant. The production was not set during any specific time period, employing costumes that recalled the reign of Nicolas II, the last Tzar of Russia, the military of the early Stalinist era, and, in the case of a head-phone wearing and imported-video-selling Autolycus, the late Soviet era, what critic John Peter called “the brave new Russia of pirate capitalism” (quoted on Dunbar 206). Because the production refused to select a time period, the play’s political dimensions echoed Russian experience as a whole. Donnellan’s production picked up on the play’s warnings against political absolutism and tyranny and translated them through one hundred years of Russian history:

Such cultural resonances, from early and middle parts of the century, spanning two world wars and beyond, suggested to reviewers partial comparisons to regimes rooted in such differing historical contexts, ideologies, and practices as Jacobean absolutism, the autocratic rule of the tsars, fascism, and Stalin’s totalitarianism...Because no one period was represented in naturalistic detail in the Maly production, audiences could see...dangers of authoritarian leadership in other times and places... (Dunbar 199).

One imagines that the “sharpened” language of Gnedich’s translation heightened the sense of the injustice done to Hermione and Paulina by Leontes’s tyranny and of the fourth act’s rustic degradation and colloquialism. In Donnellan’s production, the

language, design, and shared cultural history of its actors and audience all contributed to a stronger political interpretation of the play.

After a preview performance of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* in the unfinished space, the Globe's 1997 inaugural season included *The Winter's Tale*, along with *Henry V* with Mark Rylance in the title role, Middleton's *A Chaste Maiden in Cheapside*, and Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy*. *The Winter's Tale* was what is called a "freehand" production. The Globe has a staggering number of classifications for its shows. On one end of this spectrum is "Original Practice," which the Globe conceives of as having costumes and props made entirely from materials and with techniques that would have been available in the Early Modern era and casting only men. On the other is the "freehand" production, which allows the director full latitude. Women are cast, new facades are built over the Globe's *frons scenae*, and props, sets, and costumes from any period of history are permitted. The 1997 *Winter's Tale* fell into this latter category, and as a result

From a theater historian's perspective, the Globe Winter's Tale was of little value, for the director brought with him a strong "concept" linked to ritual practices and design choices and, as a consequence, invented his own conventions (e.g., the repeated throwing or sweeping of dirt, Paulina spitting at Hermione's "statue" to bring it to life) rather than responding to clear signals in the script and special features of the Globe (Dessen 195).

Director David Freeman believed the play required belief in the power of oracles and envisioned it as being set in an animist world like that of the ancient Greeks (Miller-Schütz 2). The decision was made to set the play in a non-specific world with inspiration drawn from Asian and African societies, and the design of the production followed from this: red dirt covered the stage floor, and, after the actors improvised with and explored the use of adapted objects—"junk clothes, clay and wax, old bottles and tyres"—such

items were used in the play's major moments. Leontes's throne, for example, was an old tire (Dessen 195). Rituals were explored a great deal. In rehearsals, the cast was asked to form idols out of clay and to pray to them, and, in pairs, to carry out "human sacrifices" in which a victim was seduced and made to agree to the ritual action, and then metaphorically "sacrificed" (the execution of which is not entirely described in the Globe's *Winter's Tale* research bulletin). Ritual was pervasive in the production. The Research Bulletin states that "Every gesture in the scene has a ritual value: [for example,] Florizel, a welcome stranger, is to be brought on blindfolded by the shepherds, in a sort of initiation process" (8), and that "the whole scene was conceived of as one long wait for the arrival of Pan and the explosion of a pagan feast" (8).

In these early days of the reconstructed Globe, great attention was given to the effects of its new (or rather, new-old) performance conditions. Direct address to the audience was examined particularly. Actors' accounts from the period almost always address their experiences speaking to and with the audience. For example, Jonathan Slinger, who played Florizel, said the following:

Given the opportunity to communicate with the audience, there is a definite skill that you need to develop. We were taught that we should focus on one person, who will carry it to the rest of the audience. I tried to do it, but there was often a kind of blur. I tried to take out as many things as I could to the audience. Sometimes it was blurred, sometimes I wasn't focusing on one person, and sometimes it didn't feel right to be doing it. There is a definite art of doing that, which Mark [Rylance] has really mastered, a technique which needs to be looked at, knowing when it is going to be effective. I felt I was contacting gallery people more than the groundlings. It's probably not true, but I had this horror that if I took it to someone down below, people up there would miss out on it. So I always aimed up to the second row. But actually, because the groundlings are more responsive, stuff directed to them was effective overall, because they inform the response of the whole theatre. It travels up from them (Jonathan Slinger quoted on Miller-Schütz 56).

Such accounts are particularly germane to my thesis given our insistent use of direct address, and it is worth noting that Slinger's theory about focusing on a single audience member is similar to the direction that I gave my actors as they began to work with direct address. *The Winter's Tale* was performed by the Globe's White Company, which was also responsible for *The Maid's Tragedy*. Dessen writes that the White Company's productions used less direct address and almost never staged scenes in the yard (where the Groundlings stand and watch the show), and, as a result of this their performances generated less "buzz" (Dessen 197). Of course, *The Winter's Tale* was being compared to the powerfully patriotic *Henry V*, during which audience members were known to toss vegetables at the French characters (Performance #14).

I find the Globe's first production of *The Winter's Tale* particularly interesting because my production had a strong interest both in ritual and in something that approximated "original practice staging." The next time the Globe produced *The Winter's Tale* was in 2005, in its season of "The World and Underworld." This production was designated as OPMG/RM— Original Practices Mixed Gender/Renaissance Music (Carson 239). The production presumably answered some of the questions Dessen raised about its early modern performance, though it was not reviewed in the *Shakespeare Quarterly* or in the *Shakespeare Survey*. Many reviewers were not positive about the piece: Charles Spencer called Jonathan Dove's staging "efficient but soulless" and notes that "a fusty atmosphere of 'heritage' theatre hangs over" the performance. Nick Curtis wrote "It begins as theme-park Shakespeare— stuffed with over inflated britches, gross declamation, and twangy period instruments." Indeed, Paul Jesson, in the role of Leontes, wore britches so puffed and voluminous they looked as though they were inflated with a

bike pump before the show and again during intermission. These critiques of “Original Practice” came nine years and many “Original Practice” shows after the Globe’s inaugural season though, and it seems curious that “a fusty atmosphere” might hang only over *The Winter’s Tale*, rather than the entire Globe Theatre enterprise. One asks what critics saw in prior “OP” productions that brought those shows to life that *The Winter’s Tale* lacked. It should be noted that *The Sunday Times* reported that “the audience was riveted, responding to irony, sarcasm, and passion...the thunderous applause was well deserved.” Regardless of how successful the second production was, the spectrum established by these two performances, with animistic ritual on one side and “original practice” on the other, seems to belie the degree to which the two might be combined in a single production.

There has been a great deal less time to evaluate the historical significance of millennial productions of the play, but there have been significant productions, along with what seems to be a change in perceptions of the work. In a review of Nicolas Hytner’s 2001 National Theatre production, Susannah Clapp wrote :

The Winter's Tale used to be considered a 'problem' play, but that hasn't deterred recent directors: Hytner's is the fifth production I've seen in four years. Consciousness of the millennium may have given lustre to this account of a new golden era being bred out of a frozen past.

Clapp liked Hytner’s production, which contrasted a world of sleek modern professionalism with a pastoral like “Glastonbury-cum-Woodstock” in which the stage was wreathed with smoke and “these your unusual weeds” referred simultaneously to Perdita’s costume and the “huge spliff” Florizel was smoking.

The Winter’s Tale, along with *The Cherry Orchard*, also appeared in the opening season of Sam Mendes’s Bridge Project, which unites British and American actors in

productions of canonical plays. In 2009, *The Winter's Tale*, with Simon Russell Beale garnering acclaim in the role of Leontes, was judged to have been the better of the Project's two offerings. Ben Brantley's *New York Times* review makes the first half of the play sound personal rather than political: "The first 90 minutes of this "Winter's Tale"... have a pure emotional strength that leave [sic] you open mouthed and teary eyed. As a filmmaker Mr. Mendes has specialized in bare-knuckled portraits of domestic disharmony... and he brings to "The Winter's Tale" an intimate understanding of unhappy households." Brantley faults Mendes's second half, in which the Bridge Project's American actors showed up, writing that it recalled *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* and says "Mr. Mendes's version features sexually sophomoric dances with balloons and gosh-gee yokels overdoing stupidity."

Productions at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first seem to be made of equal parts theatrical inventiveness and ambiguity. In the former category, Propeller's 2005 production beat mine to the punch with several ideas, including the doubling of Mamillius and Perdita (both played by Tam Williams) and the casting of actors—including Richard Clothier, who played Leontes—as act four's sheep (Rutter 237). Theatre de Complicité 1992 production put Autolycus in the audience: the lights came up on the house, and a strange man came out, walking through the audience, speaking in rapid Italian and then translating into broken English, and stealing a woman's purse (235). As for ambiguity, a number of productions agreed with Peter Hall's vision of the play, especially in the way they staged the ending. Declan Donnellan's Maly production cut Paulina and Leontes's final monologues, leaving the audience with Hermione's last lines: in Russian, "You gods, lower your gaze towards/ And cover my

daughter with blessings!” Her face remained dreamlike, in what Jeremy Kingston called “a rapture that is also grief” (quoted on Dunbar 210). The actors froze, and Mamillius, led by Time, entered and examined the members of his family, reaching out to touch Leontes in a gesture to which there have been numerous attributions. Time gestured to the boy, and led him offstage again (210).

Propeller also reintroduced Mamillius at the end of the play. The resurrected Hermione “pointedly said nothing” to Leontes, and one by one the court left him, alone in a pool of light. He was joined by Tam Williams— both Perdita and Mamillius, here dressed in the young boy’s pajamas— who gazed at Leontes before blowing out a candle, leaving the audience with inscrutable darkness (242). Darkness played a role in Hytner’s ending as well, in which “mother and daughter are left wrapped around each other in a pool of light; the men have gone; darkness is all around them. Reconciliation is enclosed by sadness” (Clapp). Simon Usher directed a particularly bleak production for Leicester Haymarket in 1991, in which Autolycus “pissed on trees, drew a knife on the clown, and made thieving cynical work” (Rutter 235). Even in this production, darker even than Peter Hall’s, there was potentiality and ambiguity to the ending. While the court stared at the statue, the living Hermione entered from behind it, looking nothing like the idealized figure, walking with the aid of crutches and with a face “disfigured by scar tissue. So: no miracle,” writes Rutter, “unless it was the couple’s exchange of looks and their miraculous final embrace” (241). Even in the darkest productions, directors suggested that there might be some small measure of light. It is worth noting that of all of the productions I have analyzed here, Usher’s was the only one in which the statue did not magically come back to life.

In this chapter I have examined the some major thematic elements of *The Winter's Tale* and presented, with the help of significant and extremely useful books by Dennis Bartholomeusz and Mary Judith Dunbar, a survey of historically important productions of the play, in the hopes that I will more easily be able to refer to thematic material and production history as I begin to fully address my directorial. The next chapter, which examines *The Winter's Tale* through the lens of the “social drama,” will begin to explain my analysis of the play’s narrative structure and provide the essential analytical framework for the rest of my thesis.

Chapter Two

“Social Dramas” in *The Winter’s Tale*

In *From Ritual to Theatre* and other books, Victor Turner establishes a “unit of description and analysis” which he calls the “social drama.” Turner locates the origin of this unit in his childhood: his mother was an actress and his father was an electrical engineer. As an anthropologist, his theatrical background alerted him to the “‘theatrical’ potential of social life,” the ways in which events in society sometimes progress in the grand arcs of plays or stories. Normal time is replaced by “dramatic time” and the behavior of societal actors is heightened. Turner writes that “during social dramas, a group’s emotional climate is full of thunder and lightning and choppy air currents” (10). *The Winter’s Tale* is a play, the product of a *liminoid* society, about a social group in the midst of a social drama. The society Shakespeare creates is theatrical in-and-of-itself; it is theatrical beyond simply being the focus of a play. The events of this Sicilian-and-Bohemian world progress in the characteristic pattern of the social drama, and as a result there is an inherent performativity to these events and to the actions of Shakespeare’s characters.

The concept of the social drama incorporates many of *The Winter’s Tale’s* thematic and structural qualities into one analytical framework. The social drama allows for sections of transition and liminality in the plot of *The Winter’s Tale*, speaks to the play’s themes of art and life, and helps us to envision a purpose for act IV’s liminal performances, rituals, and play. The social drama also provides a valuable vocabulary for discussion of *The Winter’s Tale*. More useful than concepts of exposition, inciting action, rising action, climax, and so forth, we can speak in the social drama’s terms of *breach*,

crisis, redress, and reintegration. I hope to use these terms to express how extraordinarily well-reasoned and structured *The Winter's Tale* is.

The social drama begins with *breach*, a transgression against the normative values of a society that might be constituted by anything from a lapse in manners or decorum to an act of violence. The breach might be premeditated and planned or an act of spontaneous passion. This breach slides into *crisis*, the second phase, as members of the given social group take sides. Turner notes that during this phase of the social drama, there is an exposure that occurs: the “pattern of factional struggle within the relevant social group” and the “less plastic, more durable, but nevertheless gradually changing basic social structure, made up of relations which are relatively constant and consistent” become increasingly visible. I think we can in some ways apply this notion of exposure to the crisis that takes hold in acts two and three of *The Winter's Tale*. There are certain enduring relationships that come to light, such as the fundamentally antagonistic relationship between Leontes and Paulina that Leontes reveals in his exhortations to Antigonus in act II, scene iii: “Away with that audacious lady! Antigonus,/ I charged thee that she should not come about me:/ I knew she would” (ll. 42-44) The implication is that this underlying antagonism is longstanding and relatively consistent. At the end of the play Leontes can rely on Paulina for counsel, but at the beginning, it is evident that she is reliably critical and outspoken and that Leontes would prefer it if she were neither.

The third phase is *redress*, in which the “critics of crisis seek to restore peace” (Turner 10). There is a host of potential redressive means that might be employed:

All or some of these seek to apply *redressive machinery* [...] by the juridical means of courts and the judicial process or the ritual means provided by religious institutions: divination into the hidden causes of social conflict (witchcraft, ancestral wrath, the gods' displeasure), prophylactic sacrifice, therapeutic ritual

(involving the exorcism of malefic spirits and the propitiation of 'good' ones), and finding the apt occasion for the performance of a major ritual celebrating the values, common interests, and moral order of the widest recognized cultural and moral community, transcending the divisions of the local group.

Leontes's appeal to Apollo is the actual measure of redress taken by the group to solve its crisis, combining divination and judicial processes to punish wrongdoers. Leontes's measure fails though, sliding back into crisis when the king, who in this case is the critic of crisis with a vested interest in the *status quo ante*, refuses to accept the outcome produced. The real, successful redressive means in *The Winter's Tale* lie in the famous sheep-shearing festival scene, act IV, scene iv, and are set into motion not by any character, but rather by the playwright himself, whose interest in bringing around a satisfying conclusion is as strong as that of any critic of crisis inside the world of the play. The sheep-shearing feast is ritual and traditional: It has long been held by these Bohemian shepherds and is in many ways similar to various English seasonal celebrations. It is redressive in that the traditions it celebrates and the ways it celebrates them notably run opposite to those Leontes holds dear in the first half of the play. I wrote in the previous chapter that the events and characters of the second half of the play redeem or symbolically rehabilitate those of the first half. The rituals and artistic presentations of the sheep shearing festival rehabilitate sex, lies, theft, and disguises. The Bohemian community enacting this redressive machinery does not simply live a life opposite to Leontes's: they perform it and endorse it in their ritual and art. Autolycus meets with great success dealing in dirty ballads, including one about a woman who is turned into a fish for refusing to have sex with her lover. As Dunbar notes in her performance history of *The Winter's Tale*, the satyrs' dance similarly introduces strains of gleeful darkness and prolific sexuality into the play (17). Again, these are

performances and works of art of a decidedly sexual nature: the Bohemian shepherds do not merely speak about sex or live in a way that is anti-structural or anti-hierarchical. They endorse it in their cultural events and incorporate it into their rituals. Indeed, in addition to its approval of the sex and lies so abhorred by Leontes in the first half of the play, act IV, scene iv signifies the return of art in *The Winter's Tale* period. The festival's dances, stories, songs, ballads, and classical allusions suggest the kind of artistic and creative culture that, according to Turner, constitutes redressive machinery in modern, post-industrial liminoid culture. Because the first half of the play specifically concerns Leontes's attempts to establish tyranny and erase the stories of others, the sheep-shearing festival's artistic performances are redemptive not only in their attitudes towards sex, lies, and socioeconomic inversion, but simply in their being. Art and story have not appeared in *The Winter's Tale* since Mamillius's "sad tale," told to his mother in act II, scene I, is cut off in the middle by the furious Leontes.

I want to establish why the word *tyranny* is so important to my analysis and how, exactly, it is possible to locate in the play the sociopolitical redemption that I suggested in the previous chapter. I see an essentially political element to *The Winter's Tale* because the struggle, between Leontes and his enemies or between the first half of the play and the second half, is for the soul of society: will it operate according to rigid hierarchy, or will it embrace equality, egalitarianism, and mutual good-faith? The word *political* seems strange because the play's politics manifest themselves in personal ways. Leontes's quest for tyrannical control is enacted through the punishment of individuals close to him (Hermione, Paulina, Antigonus), which makes the play seem like a heightened family drama. Such a reading forgets that the warring parties in the first half of the play

constitute not just a family but also a social group and the state of Sicilia. The debate between supporters of a closed society versus those of an open society is a political one. The political dimension of the play is also the reason that socioeconomic inversions in act IV, scene iv, contribute to the redemption of the play. These inversions upset hierarchy and offer a political alternative to Leontes's dictatorial rule.

The social drama unit is triply apt, then, because in addition to expressing the narrative structure of the play and commenting on the intersections of art and life, it also deals with conflicts writ large across society. Turner reminds us that the conflicting parties in the social drama consist of people who hold the fractured group as their *star group*. Of all the groups of which they are a part, the star group is the most significant to them, and Turner writes "According to my observations, the political aspect of the social drama is dominated by those I have called 'star-groupers' (Turner 79). *The Winter's Tale's* crisis is a political one that occurs between Sicilian star-groupers: political aspects of the play are obscured by personal or familial ones because the "star-group" in which the crisis occurs is both a family *and* a political entity. In performance, we sought to extend the group to the audience so that they too were a part of the debate between hierarchy and anti-structure.

After this redressive machinery has run its course and the audience and characters have dealt with the jolt of Polixenes's fury, the play gives way to reintegration as the social group that it began with is (roughly) made whole again. This *reintegration* is the final phase of the social drama, in which the factions formed in crisis resolve their differences, or, in some cases, agree that the differences are irresolvable and mutually consent to a permanent division in their social group.

There often might be a liminal aspect to the ritual behavior that a group undertakes as a redressive measure: there certainly is in *The Winter's Tale*. There is also a liminal aspect to the social drama on the whole. "Since social dramas suspend normal everyday role playing," Turner writes, "they interrupt the flow of social life and force a group to take cognizance of its own behavior in relation to its own values, even at times to question the value of those values. In other words, dramas induce and contain reflexive processes..." (92). First, social dramas interrupt the normative. The typical structure of a social group is exposed, examined, momentarily split apart, and this period during which the *status quo* is suspended is liminal. Second, there is an aspect to the social drama that is introspective and self-examining. For Turner, this aspect of the drama is the germ of the *liminoid*, which I will treat in the following chapter, and of the creative and innovative potential of anti-structure.

The Winter's Tale's reintegration phase does not exactly return the play and its characters to their *status quo ante*. There are deliberate and certain changes to the characters and their relationships and to the underlying structures that Turner suggests are revealed in crisis. The relationship between Leontes and Paulina, for instance, is irrevocably altered. Indeed, Leontes is irrevocably altered. We also see a new degree of agency from Hermione. In act I, scene ii, Leontes recalls their courtship:

Three crabbed months had sour'd themselves to death,
Ere I could make thee open thy white hand
And clap thyself my love: then didst thou utter
'I am yours for ever.'

(ll. 102-104)

It is admittedly difficult to tell whose hand reaches for whose, but in terms of *hands* and *effort* it seems that Hermione has gained agency by act V's reunification. In the passage

quoted above, the emphasis is on Hermione's hands, but on Leontes's persistent efforts at courtship. In act V, scene iii, Paulina tells Leontes to present his hand and asks if Hermione is "become the suitor" (l. 108) to him, implying that the effort is Hermione's and signifying a welcome shift in power and agency. In the final scene, Paulina seems to tease Leontes, offering to "afflict [him] farther" (l. 74) but then telling him to forbear and asking if she should draw the curtain back over the statue. Why the back-and-forth? In rehearsals for our production, I suggested that part of Paulina's motivation as she prevaricates and threatens to "draw the curtain" is to establish new agency for Hermione. Paulina will not allow Leontes to kiss or touch Hermione, and when she returns to life, Hermione embraces Leontes, rather than *vice versa*. The change in Leontes's demeanor and the reversal (established, protected, and commented on by Paulina) of the play's earlier courtship norms suggests that there is a difference between *The Winter's Tale's* *status quo ante* and its *status quo post*. The origin of this change may rest in the creative, innovative potential of liminal and anti-structural zones suggested by Brian Sutton-Smith and Turner. In disorderly play and anti-structural zones, there are the germs of creativity:

If play is the learning of variability, a position for which we now have increasing experimental evidence, then we can perhaps say also that all these forms of inversion involve experimentation with variable repertoires. All involve the development of flexible competencies in role taking and the development of variable repertoires with respect to these roles [...] In this view the anti-structural phenomena not only makes tolerable the system as it exists, they keep its members in a more flexible state with respect to the system, and, therefore, with respect to possible change. Each system has different structural and anti-structural adaptive functions. The normative structure represents the working equilibrium, the anti-structure represents the latent system of potential alternatives from which novelty will arise when contingencies in the normative system require it. We might more correctly call this second system the proto-structural system [his emphasis] because it is the precursor of innovative normative forms. It is the source of new culture (Sutton-Smith 26).

Recall Nuttall's assumption of a central conservatism in *The Winter's Tale* when he wrote:

The egalitarian world of the pastoral could never be more than an interlude for Shakespeare. The court with its hierarchy was always the profounder, harder reality. Duke Senior in the Forest of Arden is effusive on the merits of the simple life, but at the end of the play there is no question but that he should go back to his dukedom.

There *is* a return to the hierarchy of the court, but it is not the *same* hierarchy. Duke Senior had no lesson to learn in the *green world* of the Forest of Arden, as he was not the one at fault in the first place. On the other hand, Leontes needs to be taught a lesson, hence his sixteen years of submission and repentance. As Sutton-Smith suggests, disorder has lessons to teach us: the lessons Leontes learns are implicitly those of Bohemia's pastoral anti-structure. The "potential alternatives" explored in the fourth act deeply affect the normative world of the court. In Sicilia, "contingencies in the normative system" absolutely require the introduction of novelty. Things cannot return to their pre-crisis state, not only because major characters have died (Mamillius, Antigonus), but also because in that pre-crisis state the stage was set for crisis. New culture blessedly arises from the play's liminal and anti-structural experiments. In *The Empty Space*, Brook writes:

If the dramatist's sense of truth forces him to make Leontes vindictive with the children [Florizel and Perdita], then the play cannot move out of its particular world, and its end would have to be bitter and tragic: if he can truthfully allow a new equality to enter Leontes's actions then the whole pattern of the play is transformed: the past and future are no longer the same. The level changes, and even if we call it a miracle, the statue has none the less come to life" (82).

Here, Brook agrees that reexamination of the main action in subsequent movements induces significant change between the *status quo ante* and *status quo post*. Given the chance and the motivation to repeat his unreasonable actions, Leontes exemplifies

redemption and chooses reason, evidence of the change that pastoral anti-structure has worked on him and the play.

To emphasize the inversion, redemption, and reunification that occur during the play and to call attention to the powerful nature of its reintegrating phase, I double-cast actors. First, Catherine Styrcharz played both Mamillius, the son killed by grief for his mother and the wrath of Apollo, and Perdita, the lost princess (creating a striking family resemblance). Second, John Ponder White played both Camillo and Antigonus. This double was less effective: many audience members did not realize that John was playing two different characters, since Camillo and Antigonus are similar to begin with (both are aristocratic advisors to Leontes), are presented one right after the other, and since their costumes were not significantly different. The point of these two double-castings, though, was to recomplete families onstage at the end of the play. The resurrection of Mamillius was nearly effected by the presence of Catherine/Perdita, and Paulina, Antigonus's widow, marries Camillo at Leontes's behest. Paulina is married to two men played by the same actor.

Double-casting was also employed to make a point about the anti-structure and inversion of act IV. In the first half of the play, I asked Christine Jacobs to play a waiting-woman and the officer who reads the scroll of Apollo in the trial scene. Both of these characters are figures of hierarchy: the officer, especially, is an enforcer of law and order and is the voice of higher powers. In the second half, Christine played Autolycus, the play's Lord of Misrule and defender of mischief and crime, along with a brief stint as Robin Hood, robber of the rich and her of the poor. At the same time, the second half of the play witnessed Jamie Ellis playing the servant who introduces Autolycus to the

sheep-shearing feast, celebrating the ballads “without bawdry” but naively overlooking the “delicate burthens of dildos and fadings, ‘jump her and thump her!’” (IV.iv. 195-197). He and Sunny Vinsavich (Paulina) also played sheep: two of the play’s most powerful and aristocratic characters became hungry ungulates. Jamie’s dual role, Leontes and sheep, pleasantly juxtaposes the lion and the lamb.

The social drama also speaks to our conception of *The Winter’s Tale* as a play about intersections of art and life. Social dramas are instances of life imitating art. Turner writes that “there may well develop, as Richard Schechner has argued, a convergence between them, so that the processual form of social dramas is implicit in aesthetic dramas (even if only by reversal or negation), while the *rhetoric* of social dramas—and hence the shape of argument—is drawn from cultural performances. There was a lot of Perry Mason in Watergate!” (90). In *The Winter’s Tale*, a play which ends with art literally becoming life, theatre is borrowing a unit of real social life which characteristically incorporates aspects of art and theatre: art imitating life imitating art. Here we return to the play’s instances of theatrical role playing, the third meaning of Leontes’s “play.” Hermione’s suspected play (sexual play and counterfeiting play, playing-at) has drawn the king into the game, and now he must “play too,/ But so disgrac’d a part...” Perdita also dresses up and plays a part, saying “Methinks I play as I have seen them do/ In Whitsun pastorals” and commenting on her costume:

...and me, poor lowly maid,
Most goddess-like prank’d up: but that our feasts
In every mess have folly and the feeders
Digest it with a custom, I should blush...
(IV.iv.9-12)

Never mind that she is actually an actor playing a character in a pastoral comedy or that there is a traditional Whitsunday entertainment to follow (the Robin Hood Play). In these instances, the characters take on both the dramatic aspect and the theatrical consciousness of actors in a play.

The Winter's Tale also emphasizes perceptions of time, nicely suggesting Turner's "dramatic time." The first half of the play moves with speed, driving linearly towards its climax. Events feel particularly compressed. For instance, Leontes's jealousy is given no time to grow or ferment, while Polixenes and Camillo's escape is affected immediately and recounted to us only by a later conversation. Our production cut act II, scene ii, in which Paulina negotiates to see Hermione in prison, and, like Brook, act III, scene i, in which Cleomenes and Dion discuss their visit to Delphos, as well, and the sense was that events drove forward even faster, in an even straighter line, since II.ii and III.i constitute notable drops in pace, conflict, and intensity. The jump from II.i to II.iii was jarring, but heightened the sense of "dramatic time," since the days that doubtless separated the two events were compress into a single moment, one simple exit and re-entrance. All plays move in "dramatic time," of course, because plays are dramatic. Indeed, all plays touch on the social drama, because the social drama is dramatic and by the transitive property, plays are social dramas and *vice versa*. My argument, though, is that *The Winter's Tale* is exceptionally vested in the social drama, and that the social drama provides an effective framework for analysis of the play. The use of "dramatic time" in a play is nothing to write home about, since plays are the basis for what we conceive of as "dramatic time," but in *The Winter's Tale* the driving linear progression of time in the first half is countered and accentuated by the easy-going pace of the second.

The second half is not circular by any means — events occur in the order in which they might be expected to in real life— but events that drive the story forward are few and far between, and Shakespeare repeatedly detours his audience into a song, dance or metatheatrical performance. Part of this is further rehabilitation of the first half by the second: Shakespeare problematizes speed and suggests that a more meandering pace is at times preferable. Another part is that the difference calls attention to the way we perceive time and the progression of plot-driving events in *The Winter's Tale*. Our sense of what dramatic time is is heightened by our sense of what it is not. Additionally, the two sections of the play are separated by a monologue by Time personified. Time's monologue reminds us of the ways that we feel time pass differently in different circumstances:

Impute it not a crime
 To me or my swift passage, that I slide
 O'er sixteen years and leave the growth untried
 Of that wide gap, since it is in my power
 To o'erthrow law and in one self-born hour
 To plant and o'erwhelm custom[...]
 Your patience this allowing,
 I turn my glass and give my scene such growing
 As you had slept between...

(IV.i.4-17)

Perception of time is central here, so we notice the way that time in *The Winter's Tale* is manipulated by the playwright, the way it drives forward, hits a wall in act three, and stumbles around for an act while it recovers. These different approaches to time call attention to time and its powers (both to heal and to harm) as a significant theme of the play.

The social drama can be found in the structure of all plays, but especially of *The Winter's Tale*. It is an analytical unit that addresses the play's redemptive aspects, its

focus on art and life, and its liminal spaces. We can use the vocabulary of the social drama to refer to *The Winter's Tale's* breach, crisis, redress, reintegration, *status quo ante*, and *status quo post*. One of the most useful concepts that the social drama gives us is that of redressive machinery. *The Winter's Tale's* redemptive elements constitute the social drama's redressive machinery, and by applying that term to them, we characterize them as intentional, working, and liminal. Thus, the anti-structure and play that are featured in the second half of *The Winter's Tale* are constructive, productive of new potential forms of societal normalcy.

In my next chapter, I will search for liminality and *communitas* in the text and in our performance of *The Winter's Tale*. When we talk about liminality, the idea that anti-structure and play can do real work is particularly important, and we will see them do plenty as I analyze our production's attempts to join the actors and audience in a single, liminal community.

Chapter Three

Liminality, Carnival, Communitas

Central to our conception of *The Winter's Tale* is the notion that it is a play that can be analyzed effectively using anthropological concepts of liminality and communitas. The structure *The Winter's Tale* begins with (the court of Leontes and his kingly power) is destroyed and rebuilt before the eyes of the audience, so anti-structural and inversive symbolic states are thematically central. The play's liminal and carnival spaces rehabilitate its sociopolitical climate, and are redemptive just like the play's seasonal elements or approaches to sexuality. The antidote to Leontes's tyranny is found in the liminal anti-structure of the fourth act, in the sheep-shearing scene and characters like Autolycus. In this chapter I will answer what in the play specifically constitutes these anti-structural, inversive, redemptive states, and how we were able to make them manifest in our performance.

As I suggested in my introduction, our production sought to create two liminal zones. The first was diegetic, written into the world of the play in the topsy-turvy events and sentiments of its fourth act. The second was the theatrical liminality that our production tried to create. One of the production's major aims was the production of communitas, a "modality of social relationships" (Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 96) that bucks normative structure and brings people into a zone of what I frequently referred to in discussions as "big togetherness." Communitas is a concept introduced by anthropologist Victor Turner in his studies of liminality. Liminality, a particular betwixt-and-between state in which structure is often inverted or removed entirely, is key to the production of communitas, and I sought communitas in part as a metric that would gauge

our success in creating liminal theatrical zones. This chapter will explain Turner's concepts of liminality and *communitas* and go on to locate them in the world of Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* and our performance.

In Turner's research, liminality often referred to a ritual state in which a group of people and/or a series of events removed themselves from the normal, day-to-day business and structure of their society. Liminality is a symbolic mode, signified by a number of qualities. These include structural inversions, unusual powers granted to the weak, to minorities, or to representatives of minorities, ritual humor, ritual abuse, and a variety of sexual signifiers. Turner's sense of liminality builds on Arnold van Gennep's work with rites of passage, and often deals specifically with rituals that usher initiands through in-between states. A famous instance of Turner's research into this process is his work on the Lunda circumcision ritual, in which the boys of the Lunda society are ushered into manhood through a ritual that breaks them down and builds them up again in a distinctively liminal space (see Turner's *Lunda Rites and Ceremonies*). More pertinent to *The Winter's Tale* and its story of kings, though, might be Turner's account of an installation rite of the Ndembu Lunda people in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), which is particularly helpful in understanding liminality and its signifiers. "Among the Ndembu, the ritual powers of the senior chief were limited by and combined with those held by a senior headman [Kafwana] of the autochthonous Mbwela people" (Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 98). After a protracted conflict, the Ndembu Lunda tribe conquered the Mbwela tribe, but in doing so entrusted the Kafwana, the Mbwela headman, with the special *lukunu* bracelet, "the supreme symbol of chiefly status among tribes of the Lunda origin" (98), giving the Kafwana a major role in the installation of the Lunda chief, the

Kanongesha. “In the relationship between Lunda and Mbwele, and between Kanongesha and Kafwana, we find the distinction familiar in Africa between the politically or militarily strong and the subdued autochthonous people, who are nevertheless ritually potent” (99).

In the installation ritual, the Kafwana guides the Kanongesha-to-be and a female companion, either his first wife or a slave girl, and administers the “Reviling of the Chief-Elect” (100). The ritual occurs about a mile outside of the capital village, in a hut of leaves referred to as “*kafu* or *kafwi*” (100), terms derived from “*ku-fwa*, ‘to die.’” Turner notes that death imagery is prevalent in other Ndembu liminal ceremonies: shelters in which circumcision rituals are performed are *ifwilu* or *chifwilu*, both derived from *ku-fwa*. Additionally, in the installation ceremony, both the chief-elect and his companion are referred to as *mwadyi*, “an index of the anonymous state of initiand” (102) used also to refer to boys undergoing an Ndembu circumcision ritual.

Next begins the rite of *Kumukindila*, which means literally ‘to speak evil or insulting words against him’; It begins when Kafwana makes a cut on the underside of the chief’s left arm—on which the *lukanu* bracelet will be drawn on the morrow—presses medicine into the incision, and presses a mat on the upper side of the arm. The chief and his wife are then forced rather roughly to sit on the mat. The wife must not be pregnant, for the rites that follow are held to destroy fertility. Moreover, the chiefly couple must have refrained from sexual congress for several days before the rites.

Kafwana now breaks into a homily, as follows:

Be silent! You are a mean and selfish fool, one who is bad-tempered! You do not love your fellows, you are only angry with them! Meanness and theft are all you have! Yet here we have called you and we say that you must succeed to the chieftainship. Put away meanness, put aside anger, give up adulterous intercourse, give them up immediately! We have granted you chieftainship. You must eat with your fellow men, you must live well with them. Do not prepare witchcraft medicines that you may devour your fellows in their huts—that is forbidden!...Do not be selfish, do not keep your chieftainship to yourself! You must laugh with the people, you must abstain from witchcraft, if perchance you have given it

already! You must not be killing people! You must not be ungenerous to the people!...

After this harangue, any person who considers that he has been wronged by the chief-elect in the past is entitled to revile him and most fully express his resentment, going into as much detail as he desires. The chief elect, during all this, has to sit silently with downcast head, 'the pattern of all patience' and humility. Kafwana meanwhile splashes the chief with medicine, at intervals striking his buttocks against him (*kumubayisha*) insultingly. Many informants have told me that 'a chief is just like a slave (*ndung'u*) on the night before he succeeds.... (Turner 100-101).

The experiences of the Kanongesha-elect reflect many of the attributes Turner assigns to liminal entities and to some extent, parallel the experiences of Leontes. To begin with, inversion is central in the proceedings. The Kafwana is the representative of a lesser power to which the Ndembu have assigned greater ritual authority. The man who is about to be the most powerful man of the Ndembu people, however, is harassed and reviled by this representative of a lesser power and by his own people. He takes on the demeanor of a slave and the ritual name of a boy undergoing a circumcision ritual. Here, "the underling is uppermost...the supreme political authority is portrayed 'as a slave'" (102).

The Kafwana's abusive sermon to the chief-elect also is meant to encourage a lifestyle productive of *communitas*, and represents "a condemnation of two kinds of separation from *communitas*. The first kind is to act only in terms of the rights conferred on one by the incumbency of office in the social structure. The second is to follow one's psychobiological urges at the expense of one's fellows" (105). We should note two interesting things about this abusive encouragement of *communitas*. First, the allowances made in liminality are geared towards the production of *communitas*. Second, the opposite of selfish, tyrannical behavior is behavior that embraces *communitas*. In *The*

Winter's Tale, *communitas* is the redemptive opposite of tyranny, and it is through liminality and *communitas* that the play can be concluded happily.

Leontes's social breach simultaneously creates two liminal zones in the world of *The Winter's Tale*. The first, in Leontes's Sicilian court, is reminiscent of the aforementioned Ndembu installation rites. Here, the formerly powerful king is reviled and the status of a former political non-entity—Paulina—is elevated. There is also a period of abstinence. The second, the sheep-shearing feast and Bohemian festival, is altogether a more carnivalesque version of liminality, in which social status and structure are inverted or obscured.

In discussion with the cast of our production, we realized that in performance it is dramatically necessary that the community (characters, actors, and audience included) understands that Leontes has wholly changed and repented before Hermione is resurrected. In the final scene of the play, this necessity is important to Paulina's motivation as she threatens repeatedly to "draw the curtain" even as she suggests that she might "afflict you farther." Her goal, we decided, is to ensure that Leontes is ready to receive his Queen and that Hermione will be safe once she is resurrected. Paulina must also be careful for the audience's sake, since it has only been reintroduced to Leontes in act V, scene i. Leontes, then, must have undergone a significant liminal period, a total reconstruction, before the audience is ready to accept him as being worthy of the resurrection of Hermione.

It is easy to imagine Leontes as taking on the "aspect of a slave" in the sixteen years following Hermione's death. Before his exit in act III, scene ii, he tells Paulina:

Prithee, bring me
To the dead bodies of my queen and son:

One grave shall be for both: upon them shall
 The causes of their death appear, unto
 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
 Unto these sorrows.

(ll. 234-243)

In our staging of act V, scene 1, we endeavored to construct a ritual for Leontes; as Paulina argues with Cleomenes and Dion, Leontes prayed for a moment at each corner of a triangle that takes up the entire stage. We sought to make evident his daily ritual and repentance and the liminal world, between states of normality, in which he had been living for sixteen years.

Aspects of enforced abstinence arise frequently in liminal ritual. In the Ndembu installation rites, the wife of the Kanongesha-elect must not be pregnant. In Ndembu circumcision rites, which, as suggested above, bear some resemblance to those of the installation, “the parents of the novices undergoing circumcision must abstain from intercourse until the circumcision scars are completely healed, otherwise they will not heal quickly, and indeed the boys’ lives might be in danger” (Turner, *Lunda Rites and Ceremonies* 11). Turner interprets these moments of ritual sexual continence as highly liminal given the place of sex in pre-industrial societies; in societies in which kinship and blood relations are “the basis for many types of group affiliation,” a moment of sexual continence signifies a momentary break in normative hierarchy and societal structure. “The undifferentiated character of liminality is reflected by the discontinuance of sexual relations and the absence of marked sexual polarity” (Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 104). By this logic, of course, promiscuous sex among many people representing different

social groups or the encouragement of prolific sexuality might similarly signal a break from normative structure.

In *The Winter's Tale*, Paulina gains control of Leontes's sexuality. She secures the right to choose him a bride and, when he finds himself attracted to Perdita, she reminds him of his age and his promise of abstinence and faithfulness. Carol Thomas Neely, focusing on Leontes's corrupt views of sexuality, notes that Paulina, acting as a surrogate for Hermione in the Queen's absence, "assumes an unthreatening, asexual role" (Neely 200). To begin with, this allows her to work with Leontes, who, as Neely suggests, longs for his idyllic, presexual boyhood (see Neely 194). It also places both Leontes and Paulina in an abstinent and asexual role similar to that assumed by initiands in liminal rituals. Abstinent liminality, therefore, is key to the happy resolution of the play. Leontes's redemption cannot be achieved without his passage through this world-without-sex.

Like the Kafwana, Paulina's status is elevated in the ritual-steeped society that reigns in Sicilia after Hermione's death. This is an example of the liminal element of the powers given to the weak, in which unusual power, influence, and acceptability is afforded in a liminal situation to a typically marginalized group or member of that group. The latitude given to the court jester is a form of this phenomenon. So is the power often assigned to members of marginalized cultural and ethnic groups in literature: Turner recalls Jim in *Huckleberry Finn*, among others (*The Ritual Process* 110). Paulina is a woman in a society that is not kind to women. Carol Thomas Neely suggests that Leontes's jealousy and hate are motivated by misogyny which arises from longing for his idyllic boyhood before the influence of women. In addition to Paulina's political status as

a woman, she has previously been reviled by Leontes for her actions, as a nagging shrew, a pecking hen— “thy Dame Partlet here” (II.iii.75),— “a mankind witch” (l. 67), and “a most intelligencing bawd” (l. 68). Given her prior mistreatment by Leontes, her power in Hermione-less Sicilia is astounding, and is directly linked to the transitional world between the trial in act III and the return of Perdita in act IV.

In our production we strove to establish a clear contrast between the Sicilian court before and after Hermione’s death. After intermission, we replaced bowing and kneeling with more informal modes of physical acknowledgement. For instance, when Florizel is introduced to Hermione, after her miraculous resurrection, I asked Will Hart, playing Florizel, to hug her rather than to bow and kiss her hand. When Perdita and Florizel arrive in Sicilia, they do not ostentatiously acknowledge Leontes’s status; when he greets them, he touches Florizel and drapes his arms around them.

This leaves us with the play’s second liminal zone, that of act IV, scene iv’s famous sheep-shearing festival. In my introduction to *The Winter’s Tale* and its performance history I sought to summarize ways past directors envisioned and created this festival in opposition to the autocratic Sicilian court, and later in this chapter I will explain our production’s treatment of the scene. Now, though, we should look at the ways the scene exemplifies the theories of carnival established by Mikhail Bakhtin in the introduction to his book *Rabelais and His World*. Bakhtin examines the long tradition of folk humor and carnival in the works of Rabelais, but they are equally applicable to *The Winter’s Tale*’s fourth act and to our vision of it. In his words we hear echoes of *The Winter’s Tale*, liminality, and communitas:

One might say the carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical

rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed (Bakhtin 10).

“The suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions:” what could be more carnivalesque, then, than *The Winter’s Tale’s* sheep-shearing feast, in which a king disguises himself as an elderly stranger and a princess who has been mistaken for a shepherd is elected “Mistress of the Feast” while carrying on a romance with a prince who is dressed as a “swain” and will later trade clothes with a pickpocket? The scene references Saturnalian traditions and the pastoral election of a summer kings and queens, and is deeply tied to grotesque folk celebration.

Bakhtin’s perception of “becoming, change, and renewal” in carnival helps to link the carnival societal state to ideas of liminality. Becoming, change, and renewal are liminal buzzwords straight out of Turner, who makes the point that the relationship between normative society and liminal society is analogous to that between state and transition.

The Winter’s Tale does not so strongly insist on the bodily images and “grotesque realism” that Bakhtin locates in the earlier works of Rabelais. This is expected though, since Bakhtin envisions a contradiction in the Renaissance view of the body. On one hand, it is still tied to the earth, still “is not presented in a private, egotistic form, severed from the other spheres of life, but as something universal representing all the people” (19) as it is in Rabelais. On the other, the works of Cervantes, contemporary to Shakespeare, begin to envision a body that is “private, individual...rendered petty and homely ... immovable parts of private life, the goal of egotistic lust and possession” (23). *The Winter’s Tale* was contemporary to *Don Quixote*, which explains the lack of overt

bodily imagery, but the play does access the grotesque body's more primitive connotations. The universal grotesque body is of the Earth, "an element that devours, swallows up (the grave, the womb) and at the same time an element of birth, of renascence (the maternal breasts)" (21). Bakhtin's "degradation" brings things to the level of the Earth, brings them downward, "to bury, to sow, to kill simultaneously, in order to bring for something more and better."

The grotesque body of carnival also has a liminal component, in that before it became "of the individual," it was "not separated from the rest of the world. It is not a closed, completed unit; it is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits. The stress is laid on those parts of the body that are open to the outside world" (26). These are liminal ideas: the transgression of limits and boundaries, growth, and unfinished processes.

The elements that Bakhtin identifies in the grotesque image are writ large across *The Winter's Tale*: birth and death, spring and winter, youth and age. Bakhtin writes, "In the famous Kerch terracotta collection, we find figurines of senile, pregnant hags...this is a typical and very strongly expressed grotesque. It is ambivalent. It is pregnant death, a death that gives birth" (25). In *The Winter's Tale*, a child born from death and winter becomes the figure of spring and summer. Again: "Thou met'st with things dying, I with things newborn." More specifically, of course, Autolycus is a carnivalesque figure, who represents Bakhtin's vision of heteroglossia in his imitations of destitute beggars and courtiers and the grotesque in his sexual jokes and bawdy ballads.

The product of these liminal zones, hopefully, is *communitas*, which, along with the word “workshop,” was my production’s biggest buzzword and is still close to the hearts of its cast and crew. Victor Turner writes:

Liminality may be the scene of disease, despair, death, suicide, the breakdown without compensating replacement of normative, well defined social ties and bonds...But where it is socially positive it presents, directly or by implication, a model of human society as a homogenous, unstructured *communitas*, whose boundaries are ideally coterminous with those of the human species.

Communitas is a “modality of social relationships” (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 96) through which people relate to one another in the undifferentiated manner that it holds in common with liminality. In *communitas*, people cease to play socially assigned or socially advantageous roles and interact on the most human and authentic of levels. *Communitas* “involves the whole man in his relation to other whole men” (Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 127) and rejects structure. Turner writes, “For me, *communitas* emerges where social structure is not...[there is the] spontaneous, immediate, concrete nature of *communitas*, as opposed to the norm governed, institutionalized, abstract nature of social structure” (126-127).

We should note that liminality is not the only path to *communitas*: Turner writes that *communitas* “can ‘play’ across structured systems in a way too difficult for us at present to predict its motions...Thus, in the workshop, village, office, lecture-room, theatre, almost anywhere people can be subverted from their duties and rights into an atmosphere of *communitas*” (Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre*, 45). While strictly liminal spaces, like the ones created in Lunda ritual, may not be necessary, a degree of subversion is. In our production, we tried to break actors and audiences out of their normative roles, their “duties and rights” of theatrical etiquette, to create *communitas*.

The space that we bring them into, though, I read as being liminal in addition to anti-structural.

Victor and Edith Turner frequently compare *communitas* to Martin Buber's sense of *I-Thou* relationships. Buber (1878-1965), was the Austrian born philosopher who wrote *I and Thou* (1923), which envisioned a dialogic stance in life. "To man the world is twofold," Buber begins, because he perceives the world through the twofold nature of two "primary words:" *I-Thou* and *I-It* (Buber 3). *I-It* relations are characterized by knowing, categorizing, "nothing other than socially conditioned categories of self-thought" (Kramer 26). Buber also writes that *I-It* relationships are of the past, "in so far as man rests satisfied with the things that he experiences and uses, he lives in the past, and his moment has no present content" (Buber 12). *I-Thou* relationships, on the other hand, are entirely of the present. They are *direct*: "No system of ideas, no foreknowledge, and no fancy intervene between *I* and *Thou*. The memory itself is transformed, as it plunges out of isolation into the unity of the whole. No aim, no lust, and no anticipation intervene between *I* and *Thou*" (11). When I receive another as *Thou*, rather than a *He* or *She* (either of which may stand in for *It*), my *Thou* is not "bounded from every other *He* and *She*, a specific point in space and time... nor is he a nature able to be experienced or described.. But with no neighbor, and whole in himself, he is *Thou* and fills the heavens" (8).

Both Buber and Bakhtin point us towards dialogism, or what Bakhtin might call heteroglossia, a term that signifies both the social determinism of the meaning— meaning is produced by cooperation amongst language, social status, and social situation— and the dialogue through which that meaning is determined. Bakhtin "differentiates sharply

between *dialogical* discourse, which explicitly or tacitly acknowledges the language of the Other, the controlling presence of social context; and *monological* discourse, which tries to have its say in a vacuum” (Richter 576). In the English comic novels of Dickens, Sterne, and others, “we find a comic-parodic re-processing of almost all the levels of literary language” (Bakhtin 588). The novel might parody the highfalutin language of parliament, or the world of business, or that used in newspaper articles (three of Bakhtin’s examples). These are interrupted occasionally by “the direct authorial word,” and the entire work is written in “a highly specific treatment of ‘common language,’ which is parodied and played-with in its own right:

To one degree or another, the author distances himself from this common language, he steps back and objectifies it...the author exaggerates, now strongly, now weakly, one or another aspect of this “common language,” sometime abruptly exposing its inadequacy to its object and sometimes, on the contrary, becoming one with it...(588).

Dialogic literature does not seek to hide or eliminate the perspectives of the Other: rather, it attempts to represent the viewpoints of all society. *The Winter’s Tale* is powerfully dialogic. In it, Shakespeare presents speech from a wide variety of perspectives, many of which necessarily are Other than him. Drama is necessarily dialogic in that plays are built of dialogue, and there is frequently no clear voice of the author. But *The Winter’s Tale*, if possible, is even more dialogic than other plays. Autolycus, for instance, creates heteroglossia single handedly, as he parodies courtly language— “How now, rustics! Whither are you bound?”(IV.iv.715)— and common language as he puts on his multiple disguises.

The first half of *The Winter’s Tale* is also dialogic, but its concern is a man’s attempted establishment of a monologic society. Although its discourse is almost entirely

courtly, Shakespeare gives voice to women, children, and servants, and all of these voices are more convincing and persuasive than that of the Sicilian king. Leontes's goal is the destruction of dialogic discourse and the establishment of his singular, dictatorial monologue. It is symbolic that Leontes interrupts Mamillius with the accusation of Hermione while the boy is telling a story. The second half of the play, then, in which the Shakespeare gives us the stories, perspectives, ideas, and histories of many people with many different experiences, is the victory of dialogue and heteroglossia over Leontes's tyrannical monologism. Given this progression from monologue to dialogue, closed to open, and the play's interest in stories, art, and the telling of tales, the opportunity for directors of *The Winter's Tale* is to extend the dialogue to the audience, to build their stories into the ultimate narrative of the play's second half. This extension of agency and voice redeems and rehabilitates the play's action just like the elements of sex and disguising I pointed out in previous chapters. One of the best examples of this redemptive extension and its manifestation in our production was our treatment of act V, scene ii, which I alluded to in my first chapter. In *More Prefaces to Shakespeare*, Granville Barker emphasized the importance of this scene, in which Autolycus meets with three gentlemen who tell the story of the miraculous return of Perdita and the reconciliation of Leontes and Polixenes. The scene has been widely critiqued, but, as I suggested in my introduction to *The Winter's Tale's* themes, we realized that it allows the audience full creative reign and is the height of the agency extended to them. Rachel Wimmer, playing the character of Emilia and replacing all three gentlemen, rushed around the stage delivering a monstrous monologue and enlisting audience members to stand in for characters in her story. Rachel pulled them out of their seats, stood them up, referred to

them as kings and princesses, requested that they hug one another, and pleaded for their mercy. We sought to take the idea of the crowd-sourced reunion as far as possible by literally asking the audience to constitute the scene they had missed. From the moment the Old Shepherd and Clown discovered the infant Perdita, we had asked audience members to play an increasing role in creating the production with their participation, hoping to move them into a liminal space that they could share with the actors. In act V, scene ii, they ended up filling in for absent characters.

Because *communitas* is so inextricably tied with Buber's dialogic stance and *I-Thou* relation, and because it occurs so readily in places of liminality, we sought it in our production, as I stated earlier, using it as a metric by which we attempted to gauge the degree to which we were able to create theatrical liminality. In *Communitas: The Anthropology of Collective Joy*, Edith Turner is quick to remind us that *communitas* cannot be forced. In fact, there is no quicker way to kill it than to try to create it (Turner 18). Instead, we tried to establish an environment in which *communitas* might break out, to set up the right conditions for *communitas*, and then waited to see what would happen. One of the ways we tried to set the stage for *communitas* was to create a theatrical liminal zone.

So, how can we apply this concept of liminality to theatrical practice? How can we make not only the worlds of our plays liminal, but also our theatrical spaces and events? Often, theatre in industrial and post-industrial societies is what Victor Turner calls a liminoid institution. The transition from liminal to liminoid follows the separation of work and leisure. In pre-industrial societies, rituals and other events with elements of anti-structural play, that we in industrial societies might conceive of as leisurely or

occurring in leisure-time, have strong elements of work to them. There are elements of play, but in liminal rituals these seemingly chaotic elements are part of “as Durkheim says, ‘*de la vie seriuese.*’” They work towards goals beneficial to their communities:

... performing symbolic actions and manipulating symbolic objects so as to promote and increase fertility of men, crops, and animals, domestic and wild, to cure illness, to avert plague, to obtain success in raiding, to turn boys into men and girls into women, to make chiefs out of commoners, to transform ordinary people in to shamans and shamanins, to ‘cool’ those ‘hot’ from the warpath, to ensure the proper succession of seasons and the hunting and agricultural responses of human beings to them , and so forth (Turner 32).

Liminoid phenomena are developed in what is, theoretically, leisure time, separate from real work. Turner’s social drama ends in “modes of redress.” These, he writes, “always contained at least the germ of self-reflexivity, a public way of reassessing our social behavior, [and these have] moved out of the domains of law and religion and into those of the various arts” (11). In liminoid societies, necessary, restoring self-reflexivity is partly the territory of the arts, which are able to imagine, rearrange, desacralize, and play with societal elements, imagining worlds of alternative structures.

The term *liminal* can be more broadly applied, though, to in-between states in which people are removed from their normative roles and statuses. In applying concepts of liminality to theatre, I have examined the ways in which a production might strive to bring audience and actors into a single, anti-structural liminal space. Liminality in theatre depends on where the focus of the community of the theatrical event (all of the people, actors, audience, crew, assembled in the theater on the night) is placed. One way to envision a liminal space in theatre is a space in which people are removed from their normative theatrical roles (actor versus audience) and exist between actor and audience, watched and watching. When the audience is brought into the action of the play or

addressed by an actor, they move into a liminal space in which they are not quite actors, but are not quite audience either, since the attention of the community is suddenly— and possibly uncomfortably— on them. In the same space, we might find carnival. Bakhtin writes:

In fact, carnival does not know footlights in the sense that it does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators. Footlights would destroy a carnival, as the absence of footlights would destroy a theatrical performance. Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all people (Bakhtin 7).

He envisions carnival as the “second life” of the people, in which spectacle is lived in and experienced addition to normative life. When I say that we sought to bring the audience into a liminal space in act four, I also mean that we sought to create carnival in our performance.

The ideal product of this anti-structural space is *communitas* in theatre: undifferentiated, anti-hierarchical relationships between total human beings. This raises significant questions. If, in *communitas*, humans relate to one another outside of the roles and structures of their daily life, can we experience *communitas* in the theatre, where the structure of the entire experience is based upon role-playing? Can actors and audiences enter into *I–Thou* relations when either *I* or *Thou* might refer to someone who is half-himself and half-character?

If a play is staged in a certain way, the audience is able to gain agency and move into the territory of the actors. The actors can also move into this liminal theatrical space when the world of the play or the given direction asks them to become observers. They might join the audience in observing the action onstage, as in *Midsummer* when Theseus, Hippolyta, and the lovers watch the Mechanicals’ performance of “Pyramus and Thisbe”

or in our production of *The Winter's Tale* when Polixenes, Camillo, and the Shepherd removed themselves from the main action to watch our inserted Robin Hood Play.

Shakespeare's very late plays are particularly suited to this kind of acting-as-audience because, as Tiffany Stern writes, "Shakespeare's late plays are often assemblages of different varieties of 'entertainments' – song, dance, musical interlude, poetic moment, dialogue, jest, stage effect, procession, theophany" (Stern 47). Stern, along with other scholars, uses the material realities of the Blackfriars (Shakespeare indoor playhouse, the rights to which were acquired under the reign of James I) to explain differences between the late romances and Shakespeare's earlier plays. For example, the smaller stage allows for fewer battles: "static arts were what worked best at Blackfriars: prominent features of the late plays are small-scale fixed aesthetics such as statues and tableaux." In the Blackfriars, the highest paying patrons sat on stools onstage, and it is their posturing and fidgeting that Stern presumably refers to when she writes that there were "mixed demands on audience attention" that altered the structure and contents of plays written for the King's Men's indoor stage. Certainly, such moments of metatheatrical entertainment appear in Shakespeare's earlier plays. *Midsummer* incorporates the Mechanicals' "Pyramus and Thisbe," *As You Like It* brings the god Hyman in to resolve its plot, and songs are littered all across the *Complete Works*. But *The Winter's Tale*, especially in the pastoral festival scene (act IV, scene iv) packs in more of these entertainments than usual. Act IV, scene iv includes at least three songs, a dance of shepherds and shepherdesses, and a dance of satyrs, the last of which our production replaced with a Robin Hood play. Stern's "small-scale fixed aesthetics" and "stage effects" manifest themselves in Hermione's statue (another example might be *The*

Tempest's disappearing banquet), while “theophany” is incorporated when Apollo makes his presence felt in the trial scene, or, as Northrop Frye would point out, during the sheep-shearing feast that Florizel describes as “a meeting of the petty gods” (IV.iv.4). These are moments of wonder for characters and audience members alike, and are examples of times when actors and audience are together in watching a piece of theatrical magic. Even when Shakespeare has not written in ostentatious moments of performance, in *The Winter's Tale* characters often act performatively. In act IV, scene iv, Perdita's poetic presentation of flowers to the assembled guests is a performative moment, especially because she is already “goddess-like pranked up.” The rest of the actors join the audience in watching and appreciating her performance. Stern notes that metatheatre staged at the Blackfriars appropriately calls attention to the fact that just like the actors, audience members were “pretending.”

Actors also take on an audience role through the use of direct address to the audience. When an actor takes a line to an audience member, they must observe that audience member for a response, and then quickly incorporate that response into their character and action. Productions that use direct address move audience and actors into a liminal zone that incorporates both.

Bridget Escolme treats direct address and its effects on the theatrical experience in her book *Talking to the Audience: Shakespeare, Performance, Self*. Escolme asks “what it is possible for the human figure to mean when, pretending to be someone else, he or she addresses or acknowledges those who are not pretending— who are always, sometimes somewhat recalcitrantly, themselves” (5). She writes that “the relationship between the audience and the fictional figure each actor portrays is rarely seen as

productive of that figure's meaning... I want in this study to think about other possible, meta-theatrical starting points for Shakespearean production..." Escolme asks what happens when an actor's character's relationship with his or her audience is allowed to construct that character's meaning or identity. Escolme herself perceived this effect while watching Anthony Sher's highly interactive performance as Macbeth in Greg Doran's 1999 RSC production. "Macbeth is something I feel I have had a part in making myself... I can't judge Macbeth, because I have enjoyed *Macbeth* so much. I can't judge Macbeth because I feel partially responsible for the figure he becomes in the act of performing to me" (4).

Escolme's assertion is that the use of direct address gives the audience a role in constructing character and meaning. In an interview, Doreen Bechtol told me about the challenges that direct address posed when she joined the American Shakespeare Company, which asked her to use it. The ASC has a particular style of direct address that is very important to them. The company stresses directly and personally acknowledging single audience members and looking into their eyes rather than addressing or scanning the crowd as a unit:

Looking at faces was definitely...it really shaped that experience. To speak to someone's eyes, for lack of a better word... to make a more human contact, that was awkward at first, definitely. Not frightening, in a way that's fear-based, but different, to say something to someone and recognize that it's not a casual moment, sort of to own a bit more than...it might be more profound than I'm giving it credit... it's very technically easy for me to look at you and give a line, and you can do that, and I think I probably did that for the first year or two...I think it's actually a more profound experience, or it has the potential to be. ...to say something to someone for a specific reason, and choose are they my ally, are they my confidante, are they my victim? To decide, also, in the moment, who they are. I mean, that's one thing that we talk about, trying to cast the audience: but sometimes it's not that at all, it's simply talking to someone. ..There is a contract, there is a social contract being made... and I think being open to it changing...I think going back there now, having not performed there for awhile, I'm finding

more and more that the more specific the event is with the audience, the more, sort of, open-hearted it is (that sounds sort of new age-y, but I'll say it), it gets closer to being a more profound experience.

Doreen's concept of a contract with an audience member, a mutual understanding of the significance of a shared moment, reflects Escolme's idea of characters constructed in relation to the audience. We also see that notion mirrored in what Doreen terms the "casting" of the audience: the actor has to decide, on the spot, what the audience member's relation to his or her character will be. Doreen's idea that this connection can be "open-hearted" relates to ideas of *communitas* that we will address later.

Even modest audience participation—simply directly addressing a line to a member of the audience—gives the audience an agency unfamiliar in the twenty-first century theatre. In *Environmental Theater*, Richard Schechner writes:

I began by asserting that participation takes place at the precise point where the performance breaks down – is broken down. It is hard to talk about participation because participation is not about "doing a play" but *undoing* it, transforming an aesthetic event into a social event- or shifting the focus from art and illusion to the potential or actual solidarity among everyone in the theater, performers and spectators alike. The orthodox view of aesthetics insists on an autonomous, self-contained (separate) drama performed by one group of people who are watched by another group. The architecture and conventions of the orthodox theater strongly enforces these aesthetics. However, I also said that participation is such a powerful intrusion into the orthodox scheme, that in the face of participation we must reconsider the very foundations of orthodox aesthetics: illusion, mimesis, the physical separation of audience and performers, the creation of a symbolic time and place.

Why has audience participation appeared at this moment in Western theater history, reintroducing methods that have been dormant since medieval time? Because participation is extra-aesthetic (according to orthodox aesthetics), the answer cannot be found in aesthetics. The theater is a particularly sensitive measurement of social feeling and action. It is also a holdout, technologically speaking: the last of the hand-crafted entertainments. In society in general, and in entertainment in particular the movement is to be self-contained, electronically processed, un-responsive systems—closed systems on which the individual can have little effect. Shout as you will at the TV set, Johnny Carson does not hear you. And even the phone-in programs have the famous "five-second delay," giving the broadcaster absolute control over what goes on the air. Closed, one-

way systems are inherently oppressive. They are even more maliciously so when they wear the costume of openness, as so much of “media programming” does. Orthodox theater is much more open than TV or films but much more closed than environmental theater. Environmental theater’s attempts at audience participation are both last-ditch stands, and tentative first tries at creating and enhancing entertainment, art and actual situations by opening the system, making feedback not only possible but delightful (45).

Schechner perceives “closed system-” theatre as being “oppressive.” Audiences in this kind of theatre are unable to affect the proceedings of the play, and are likened to TV audiences. This comparison also appears in the rhetoric of the modern “Original Practice” staging movement:

Ralph Alan Cohen, [a founder of the American Shakespeare Center,] describes the role of Elizabethan staging in combating alienation in twenty-first-century America. He asserts that ‘de Tocqueville’s convivial nation of citizens joined in countless fraternal, religious, political, and social groups’ has been replaced by “a nation of individuals, suspicious of one another, more comfortable with IM’ing than with front porch socializing, listening to iPods instead of attending concerts, withdrawing from all that is the life of a community...At a movie, the audience sits in the dark— individual and anonymous— and passively watches what a director, with the help of Industrial Light and Magic, has created’ (Falocco 172).

In much twenty-first-century theatre, agency, the ability to affect the system and the community, is solely the territory of the actors. Both Schechner and Cohen suggest that modern audiences cannot affect play productions and that they have had choice, in terms of viewing the play, stripped from them. Choice of focus, for instance, is removed from the audience by the picture-frame proscenium arch and by lighting: looking around “is impossible in the darkened house that cruelly makes you focus straight ahead, as in church or at school, at a performance that, finally, may not interest you at all” (Schechner 31-32). In our production of *Winter’s Tale*, restoring a measure of agency to the audience was one way that we attempted to break down the divisions between actor and audience,

the structure that keeps the full community of the event from feeling as though it was one.

Communitas between actors and audience occurs in these spaces, where the structural differences between the two groups are broken down and especially where the audience feels it has a role in constructing its experience with a production. Bridget Escolme's ideas about direct address are important here because she envisions the audience's presence as having a role in the creation of character. I experienced a particularly strong sense of this watching a production of *Midsummer Night's Dream* at the American Shakespeare Center's Blackfriars Theater (a reconstruction of Shakespeare's). The American Shakespeare Center, located in Staunton, VA, makes use of what it calls "Shakespeare's Staging Conditions" in performance, its own particular brand of "Original Practice" Shakespearean production.

The Blackfriars sells drinks and snacks before the show and during intermission as the actors, many of them talented musicians, play modern songs from the balcony above. Here, I will quote from my notes:

During [Stevie Wonder's] "Superstition," a young boy standing in line for the snack bar, probably about 9 years old, starts dancing. As more and more people start to notice him, and the actors start to notice him from the balcony, he starts to bust out cooler and cooler moves. Suddenly, he does the worm—fantastically—and moves into a [b-boy] freeze. The audience goes wild. He jumps up and throws his black and white checkered fedora into the audience. They go wild. The kid does backflips. Everyone is laughing and applauding. He's a fantastic, totally spontaneous center of attention. He takes many bows. Rick [Blunt] calls him out in his raffle ticket spiel, and the audience yells that [Rick] should do a cartwheel, to which he says "I'm not doing one after that." Apparently, he had done one before I arrived at *'Tis Pity* earlier in the afternoon. The... actress singing the next song, "Ain't Too Proud," sings it to the little boy...

The boy's dance had unified the audience and actors. That night, I noted that I felt a "particular give and take" from the two. Interactions between audience and actors were

frequent that night, and from the start, the community built upon them to the point at which they became a part of the event itself, a series of new, significant moments in the performance. When Helena recited her line “as waggish boys in games themselves forswear,” she referenced the dancer and his friends as the “waggish boys.” Later in the night, Michael Amendola, as Puck, had a dance break of his own. He did the worm, as well as the boy from before the show, and the audience gave him an ovation there and then. I do not know if Amendola did the worm every night, but that evening his dancing took on special significance because the worm *meant something* to all of us. During his death scene in “Pyramus and Thisbe,” Rick Blunt as Bottom executed a series of lovely cartwheels, and because he was answering a request the audience had made of him earlier, there was added meaning. I wrote in my notes: “The laughter is contagious. People continually talk back to the actors. The community of the event built a history together.” In this performance, direct address, universal lighting, and the audience’s proximity to the action allowed us to enact a version of Bridget Escolme’s concept of the audience’s role in constructing character and meaning.

Some useful background information might include the facts that Rick Blunt, an actor, was selling raffle tickets in the house during the pre-show entertainment. He and the troupe had a matinee performance of *‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore* earlier that day. I saw that earlier performance, and though I missed his later-iconic cartwheel, I did observe the audience and recognized many of the same people that evening when I went to see *Midsummer*. The audience seemed familiar with the ASC and its culture: When Patrick Earl, who played the incestuous lover Giovanni in *‘Tis Pity*, stepped into the house for a moment, a woman yelled to him and asked if he had been fooling around with his sister. I

later found out that Rick Blunt's sister was in the audience (it is worth noting that these two observations are unrelated).

After driving home from that performance of *Midsummer*, I also wrote in my notes:

Character is fluid. There's no attempt at total immersion here. Rick Blunt, during his pre-show raffle selling routine, is Rick, not Bergetto or Bottom. The pre-show speeches are *usually* not in character. Pre-show and intermission music is not in character, and no one worries. It's established.

It was during this performance that I began to believe that there was great power to prior relationships in the theatre. The *communitas* of *Midsummer Night's Dream* was built upon prior relationships and requests: Bottom's cartwheel was significant because we had asked Rick to perform one. Interactions before the show were the foundations for the most magical moments during the show. Richard Schechner writes of a particularly good actor in the Ramlila of Ramnagar, India, who plays the "semi-divine sage" Narad-muni:

He performs in the field between a negative and a double negative, a field of limitless potential, free as it is from both the person (not) and the person impersonated (not not). All effective performance shares this 'not-not not' quality: Olivier is not Hamlet, but he is also not not Hamlet... Performer training focuses its techniques not on making one person into another, but on permitting the performer to act in between identities; in this sense performing is a paradigm of liminality (Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology*, 123).

In *The Winter's Tale*, we sought to embrace these in-between spaces. I encouraged the actors to build relationships with specific audience members, not to turn away from the people they knew. We organized our pre-show and intermission like the American Shakespeare Center's, with food, drinks, and live music that, in their best moments, created a relaxed, party-like, atmosphere. During intermission my cast even organized a cartwheel competition, though only a few audience members ever joined in during the five show run. This seems to have paid off. One audience member told us:

One of the nice things about doing this in a college setting is that we know all these people, so if Christine [playing Autolycus] makes a joke to us, or something...I think that's a really nice thing. Part of the reason this worked so well is that the people in the audience and the people onstage are all peers and colleagues (Talk Back, Evening, 20 October 2012).

I interviewed Rebecca Turner, a theatre major at William and Mary, about her experience watching *The Winter's Tale*. Rebecca is not, perhaps, a representative audience member: for instance, she said, "I really enjoy the chance to be interactive when I'm in a theatre environment because it's not common..." This enthusiasm for interaction did have interesting effects on her experience. She told me that prior to the show, she spoke with Joseph Biagini, the actor playing Polixenes, as he was juggling and selling concessions. Never having met him before, she approached him and asked him to teach her to juggle. She expressed to me the feeling that she was able to create a relationship with Joseph, the actor, and that relationship carried over into the performance of *Winter's Tale* when Joseph assumed the character of Polixenes:

Rebecca: And in doing so that created a relationship that then went on for the rest of the show, that we could interact because I had spoken to him, I'd introduced myself. That happened with certain other performers in the cast, like if we interacted in the pre-show, it made it easier to interact with that person during the performance, because you'd already created something...

Ben: So are you saying that your bond with the actor, or whatever relationship you built with the actor, carries over to a certain extent....

Rebecca: I think so. I think if your actors are present at the beginning in a different character than what you see onstage, especially[...] that created a comfortable relationship, a comfortable interaction with the actors [...] It's especially interesting coming from the theatre department, knowing half the people by name, or by face recognition...

There is no guarantee that this is indeed what occurred. The actors in the production had been asked to speak to the audience directly. Joseph may have been speaking to Rebecca simply as a result of this direction, rather than because interaction with Rebecca would be

building upon a prior relationship. Maybe he always took those lines to an audience member sitting house left. That said, Rebecca's sense that Joseph's lines had the added significance of their prior personal relationship is parallel to my feelings about the ASC *Midsummer*. Michael Amendola might have done the worm every night, and Rick Blunt might have done cartwheels five shows a week and twice on Saturdays, but the *Midsummer* I saw achieved a special *communitas* regardless of this because those aspects of performance answered our prior experiences and had significance to that community. That Rebecca read Joseph's direct address to her as significant and based on their earlier conversation is extremely encouraging.

Ben: Were there specific moments at which actors called back to your prior relationship with them?

Rebecca: I'm fairly certain at one point Joseph addressed things to me.

Ben: Was it a joke about juggling in which he did that?

Rebecca: No, no, it wasn't a specific reference to...but it was a...I can't speak to his intentions, but it seemed similar to when you know where your family is in the audience of any show and, so you know that there's a face there that you speak to and that you can relate to and that you can talk to them, because you know them. Because that is different than speaking to a face that you don't know will respond back, and it's also that, you know, I had gone and interacted with him, he knew I would interact, in some way that I was going to be a willing participant and not sit there looking blankly back at him[. ..] I may be reading too much into that... but it did feel... I didn't necessarily feel singled out because we talked before so now he knows he can talk to me, but the fact that he approached me at all, or addressed anything to me at all... it's possible that he was just talking to me because I happened there and he was talking to everyone else around me but because we had had that context and that interaction before, it put me in the framework of mind that this is a... it made it more personable, it made it more that... we had a connection, from audience member to actor. That may not factually have been there or been the intent from the actor, but from the audience member the fact that we had interacted made me feel more special as an audience member or more connected to the performer. That happened a couple of times [...]

Almost unintentionally, parts of our production's act IV, scene iv almost entirely deprived the audience of their focus. Telling the audience what to look at is one of the most important things a director does. Kevin Inouye, a theatre professor who watched the production Saturday evening, reminded us that "focus is one of [a director's] most basic tools. It requires a lot of trust in your audience to give that tool to them," and suggested times when it might work better than others, noting that because the plot of *The Winter's Tale* is not known as widely or as well as that of, for example, *Romeo and Juliet*, being deprived of a focal point can be disorienting for an audience member. In our act IV, scene iv, actors Jamie Ellis and Sunny Vinsavich entered first as sheep, and then again as servants, Jamie as the servant who introduces Autolycus ("Dildos and fadings!") and Sunny as a vague representation of Phillip Stubbes adapted to introduce our Robin Hood play. Their casting as servants was a liminal reversal of hierarchy supportive of our production's goals: actors who played dominant, aristocratic characters in the first three acts of the play played animals and lowly servants in the fourth. As sheep, though, they were a totally chaotic influence. For about half of the scene, they ceaselessly drew the audience's focus from Shakespeare's text. During each performance, Sunny, crawling on her hands and knees, would grab a woman's purse in her mouth and drag it upstage with her, leaving it with one of the shepherdesses to be returned to its owner. Across the stage, Jamie would nuzzle audience members' legs and get them to feed him M&Ms. At the same time as Sunny and Jamie ambled around the stage in sheep costumes, the Clown (Daniel Burruss) flirted with Mopsa (Rachel Wimmer) and Dorcas (Erin MacIntyre) on an upstage picnic blanket. All of this was devised by the cast and was extra-textual, and drew a part of the audience away from the words and moments written by Shakespeare.

When I began preparing to direct *The Winter's Tale*, Professor Christopher Owens, who had directed the play in 2009 for the Virginia Shakespeare Festival, warned me that it was difficult to maintain momentum and pace through act IV when events briefly cease driving the story forward. Act IV is the longest in the play, and much of act IV, scene iv, at least, is made up of discrete entertainments, as Tiffany Stern notes is typical of Shakespeare's late plays. The text addresses the play's themes rather than its plot, touching on sex, disguise, and the art and life binary. The scene in which Perdita hands out flowers, including the famous horticultural debate (ll. 85-108) and the "No, like a bank for love to lie and play on" (ll. 130-134) section, introduces little new information that the audience needs to understand future events. For large portions of the play, if an audience member misses or does not understand a line, it will not harm their continued understanding or enjoyment of the plot, and they will still know what is going on.

Because act IV, scene iv introduces few new plot points, there was no inherent need to draw the audience's attention to one speech or event. For a number of reasons, the presence of the sheep was as thematically important as Perdita's given speech. First, Jamie and Sunny were reduced to playing wordless animals, inverting their importance as characters and as actors. Second, they took the play to the audience, incorporating its members into the action. At the point in the play at which storytelling agency begins to expand, this was thematically key. Why ask the audience to focus, then, on a speech that is no more important to their understanding of the play than the presence of two actors playing sheep? Why tell them what to look at, or which element of the scene was most important?

The lack of focus extended creative agency. Wolfgang Iser writes that “the literary work has two poles: the artistic and the esthetic: the artistic refers to the text created by the author, and the esthetic to the realization accomplished by the reader. From this polarity it follows that the literary work cannot be completely identical with the text, or with the realization of the text, but in fact must lie halfway between the two. The work is more than the text, for the text only takes on life when it is realized, and furthermore the realization is by no means independent of the individual disposition of the reader—though this in turn is acted upon by the different patterns of the text. The convergence of text and reader brings the literary work into existence...” (1002). Iser, writing in 1972, uses the terms *text* and *work* differently than we might prefer: living in a post-modern world, we are happier to read in everything the myriad possibilities of *text*, and at the same time *work* sounds too grave to actors and directors who prefer the inherent levity that the term *play* lends to theatrical creation. Regardless, Iser sees reading as a creative process that meets the author’s text (lifeless) halfway in order to create the literary work (alive).

By obscuring focus in the festival scene, we added a level to the selection process readers and audiences undergo when they encounter a text. Had focus been more strongly established, audience members would still have had to pick their way through the ambiguities in Shakespeare’s text. For example, they would have encountered Polixenes and Perdita’s debate over the merits of horticultural breeding and gillyvors (had we not cut it from our script) and, if they wanted to establish a consistent message, totality, pattern, or *gestalt*, would have examined the multiple levels of Perdita’s class identity, thought back through the argument, and created a resolution. They might have checked

out from the continuing action and text of the play in their search: Iser suggests that “the act of recreation...relies on *interruptions* of the flow to render it efficacious. We look forward, we look back, we decide, we change our decisions, we form expectations, we are shocked by their nonfulfillment, we muse, we accept, we reject; this is the dynamic process of recreation.” (1010). A tricky bit of text such as the horticultural debate might take an audience member out of the action for some time.

So, with or without applied principles of focus, quiet creation goes on as audience members meet with our productions’ texts and realize their “works.” In *The Winter’s Tale*, the moments at which focus was absent required audience members to perform a double process of selection. Not only did they engage with a text in an attempt to understand it or impose meaning on it, but they also had to select which text they would engage with. They could focus on our sheep and follow that path through the scene, which would also involve taking in other members of the audience as Sunny and Jamie harassed them. They could pay attention to the escalating fight Mopsa and Dorcas engaged in over the Clown. They could tune in to Perdita’s text and follow her as she passed out flowers to her guests. Thus, audience members are doubly creative collaborators, empowered to select the scenes they want to watch and also to attribute meaning and coherency to those scenes. One audience member found that agency and activity helped her to become a part of the community. A thrust stage has few positions in which an actor can stand and have her face seen by the entire audience. This audience member felt the *communitas* of the event more strongly because she had to lean in or over to try to see some of the action: “It makes you more active,” she told us (Talk Back, 18 October 2012). Having to lean or adjust to see a scene better, or just having to make a

deliberate choice of what to focus on, gives the audience agency and helps them to enter into a liminal theatrical zone.

In any study that examines *communitas*, we unavoidably encounter the so-called “problem of other minds.” I remember that during the production of *Midsummer* that affected me so profoundly, I looked across the stage and saw three girls, probably all between fourteen and seventeen years old, sitting under the Blackfriars’s overhanging balcony space. All three looked thoroughly disinterested, and I wondered if it was because they were in the shadow of the balcony, rendered separate from the action of the play and the *communitas* of the actors and audience. But we cannot know how they felt. By that same token, it is difficult to evaluate the *communitas* experienced by our audiences on different nights. I noticed that different people understood *communitas* differently, and that they experienced it at widely variant times. Some audience members and actors felt this sense of togetherness most strongly when during the trial scene, at the play’s emotionally painful height. Sunny Vinsavich, as Paulina, felt the community of the event affected her performance most strongly during the trial scene, and noted that the audience’s collective sorrow and confusion was her motivation for Paulina’s gestures of forgiveness towards Leontes: she asked, with the mourning audience, if anything could be done, and found no answer. It was at that point that she was most strongly able to derive motivation from the audience and to conceive of them as being undifferentiated from herself and the rest of the cast. Others actors and audience members felt it during act IV, scene iv, and still others during the mummers’ play at the beginning. After evaluating (somewhat flippantly) our respective audiences at my honors colloquium, Joan Gavalier, the head of William and Mary’s theatre department, reminded me that an

evaluation based upon audience responsiveness in the typical sense might not be sufficient given the deeper level of involvement and creativity we sought from the people who joined us for our performances. Wolfgang Iser's reader response theory particularly problematizes our standard measures of audience response and enjoyment given his belief that at all points the audience exercises creative agency. I cannot make a judgment about our audience's involvement and participation simply by listening to the volume of their laughter or applause: creativity is a slipperier thing than that.

In *Communitas*, Edith Turner writes that the only way to study *communitas* is by sharing stories—there is no better way than to recount it and talk about it. For the optimist, this means that studying *communitas* is easy because we can be our own objects of study and can be academically rigorous without having to ignore our own experiences and emotions. For the pessimist, it means that stories of *communitas* not told—in a talk-back, for example—are lost to us. One audience member who attended both on Thursday and Saturday night did tell us that Saturday night's performance, in which more audience members knew each other and knew the actors and there was significantly higher attendance, had a different energy. This kind of assertion, as vague as *communitas* is ineffable, might be the best we can do in terms of interpreting the audience's response to *The Winter's Tale*.

Despite our vision of direct address and interaction with the audience as emblematic of the extension of agency and voice that occurs during the second half of *The Winter's Tale*, the entire production used direct address and occasionally troubled the audience's focus. In the first half, Catherine Strycharz's Mamillius particularly drew focus from Leontes and his interaction by talking and playing with the audience. In

retrospect, we might have “closed” this part of the performance more— established a fourth wall or imaginary proscenium line, or prohibited actors from speaking to the audience— given Schechner’s characterization of “closed” theatre as “oppressive.” But we decided instead to try to establish the *modus operandi* of our production throughout, to sign a contract with our audience that asked for their participation from the start. It seems to me that people often read *communitas* as a process. The Turners talk a great deal about spontaneous *communitas*, and I felt that I experienced such a state when I saw the ASC’s production of *Midsummer*. But many examples of *communitas* in Edith Turner’s book portray the development of *communitas* based upon prior shared experiences. In a story in which *communitas* breaks out after a group has just reached the top of the mountain on a hiking trip, it is based upon relationships built and struggles overcome in the journey up the mountain (15). In a story that also demonstrates the potential compatibility of *communitas* with danger, Turner writes about *communitas* amongst people laying sandbags to protect their houses from rising floodwaters from the North Dakota/Minnesota Red River. In this case, *communitas* built on relationships within the community, shared goals, and collective action in a highly stressful and challenging situation (74). During our Thursday night talk-back, one audience member told us:

I feel like there’s been a couple of times in my life where actually I’ve experienced *communitas* and those times it has built over time. You get to the point where you’re both aware that something special is happening but you’re also still in the moment. Maybe the closest parallel is when there is an athlete who is in the zone, but if you start looking at yourself in it [he snaps], it goes away. So there’s both this being in it and being able to be sort of out of it at the same time. With this performance there was a sense of both being in it and being out of it at the same time, there was this sense of transparency. It felt different than most of the performances I’ve seen here or other places [...] For me, it didn’t have the length of time necessary to build up this *communitas* feel. I think just by

definition you come here, there's a performance, and then you're going to leave... it would be rare, I think, for me, the way *I* understand *communitas* and with my experiences, it would be rare to be able to create that in this confined time frame. But some of the aspects of it were there at the same time... This felt different from any other performance. But I don't know why, yet.

This gentleman needed more time and greater prior involvement to develop a sense of *communitas* (although his sense of being both inside and out seems to run contrary to Buber's sense of *I-Thou*, of which the philosopher writes "I do not experience the man to whom I say *Thou*. But I take my stand in relation to him... Only when I step out of it do I experience him once more. In the act of experience *Thou* is far away." While the man might have perceived this zone differently from Buber or the Turners, I am loath to say that he has misunderstood *communitas*, since nothing is more against the anti-hierarchical spirit of *communitas* than telling someone that you know what *communitas* is and they do not) (Buber 9). The same sentiment emerged during a post-mortem with the cast. I suggested that I had originally intended the rehearsal process to be a more radically creative one, in which we took *The Winter's Tale* apart, understood it, and built entirely new scenes and moments on top of it, deriving text from a variety of different sources including other literary texts and improvisations. The cast told me that they felt that creativity followed structure and familiarity. Christine Jacobs, who played Autolycus, told me,

I think now more than at the beginning we could have... if we had tried to do what you originally wanted to do *now*, it would have turned out much better than it would have had we originally done that. Now that we have the structure of this play in our heads and the structure of our performance, and what it was to us, and we *have* our *communitas* then I think we could jump off and make a whole new show [...] I think trying it now, I'm certain it would be better than it would have been at the beginning when we didn't know each other and we didn't have these connections to the characters or to each other, or any of the things we have built so far (Post-Mortem Discussion).

When I told them that I had hoped that our week and a half of table work would provide a basis for them to reinvent and restructure, they all immediately agreed that the table work would not have been sufficient, expressing the feeling that while the table work gave them an understanding of the play's themes, structures, and functions, it had not given them greater insight into their characters. John Ponder White, who played Camillo and Antigonus, thought that it was important to "understand the characters as people at a much deeper level" and "to understand each other as individuals...we need to have that trust with each other not just as actors but as humans" before greater reconstruction was to happen. Robin Crigler, who played the Old Shepherd and Dion, spoke about his own research into *communitas* on El Camino, the pilgrimage route through Spain to the Church of St. James, el Santiago de Compostela, and noted that his thesis was that the structure provided to the pilgrimage by its hostels and shelters allowed for the inspiration of *communitas* and joyous creativity.

Ultimately, the actors and the man in our audience on Thursday evening were expressing the belief that the *communitas* they built was possible because it was based upon solid interpersonal relationships and a structure that facilitated it, along with time, energy, and investment. First this is a fascinating perspective on *communitas*, and second, it legitimizes our decision to "open" the theatrical world to the audience for the entirety of the play. This mode of operation established that their participation and investment was desired, and while a "closed" system might have better characterized the court of the mad King Leontes, it also might have been a greater shock to audience members when, after the intermission, two actors entered as sheep and began chewing at their pant-legs. In addition to establishing the style of the show, there were other useful effects. There are

pleasing parallels between the playful-chaotic world of Mamillius and that of act IV that are heightened by performing these moments in ways that similarly deprive audiences of focal points. The importance of liminal anti-structure to the resolution of the play is better understood when elements of it are present both in the pleasant *status quo ante* and the joyous *status quo post*.

Interestingly, some audience members felt that the lack of focal points separated them from or deprived them of the true text of *The Winter's Tale*. During our Saturday afternoon talkback, a professor in the audience, Monica Potkay, expressed this view. She had been, she said, recently teaching her own students about Brecht, and noted that she had paid special attention to the techniques and staging conditions we employed and the ways they highlighted the play's examination of art and reality. I asked her if she had felt alienated, and she said, "I felt alienated from the play itself, but complicit with the actors." On Saturday evening, Rebecca Turner mentioned that "At times it did feel as though [the rejection of focal points] was a disservice to the text," and during our interview she added,

I enjoyed the experience. I thought you were successful in creating the communal aspect of making the audience feel engaged, making us feel important and creating relationships and interactions and emotional connections between both the characters and the audience and the actors and the audience. I did not necessarily feel like I had seen the world's best production of *The Winter's Tale*, because there were things that I missed, there were scenes that I missed [...] but I didn't feel like that was your intent [...] My experience as an audience member was more on being part of the production than on *this* show [*The Winter's Tale* and its text]."

We did feel a need to alert the audience to the enormous change that happens in the middle of *The Winter's Tale*, to signal to them that even more participation would be expected in the second half of the play than in the first. This signal was given using our

design's iconic bed-sheets. As I wrote in my introduction to the themes of *The Winter's Tale*, in one rehearsal, Kevin imagined Hermione-less Sicilia as a land covered in white sheets. It seemed to me a particularly evocative image, one that might have multiple symbolic levels. First, since the play begins in winter, the white sheets might stand in for white blankets of snow. Second, in act V, scene iii, Leontes presents Paulina's home as something of an art gallery:

O Paulina,
 We honour you with trouble: but we came
 To see the statue of our queen: your gallery
 Have we pass'd through, not without much content
 In many singularities; but we saw not
 That which my daughter came to look upon,
 The statue of her mother

(V.iii.8-14).

For me, white sheets conjured up images of unused furniture, unseen works of art, and closed-off rooms— Leontes and his servants closing the Sicilian palace up, with no wife or son to fill up its rooms. The statue of Hermione, viewed only by its sculptor and Paulina for sixteen years, might also be covered with a sheet.

As I thought more about sheets in Sicilia, it became clear to me that they might also serve as iconography for the play's examination of sexuality. We know from *Othello* that bed sheets have a prominent place in Shakespeare. After Othello accuses her of adultery, Desdemona requests that Emilia "lay on my bed my wedding sheets: remember;/And call thy husband hither" (*Oth.* IV.ii.105). The signal Desdemona means to send with the presentation of these sheets is unclear, but given the accusations leveled against her, she may be trying to prove her faithfulness by displaying blood stains on the sheets, which would imply that until she eloped with Othello, she remained a chaste virgin. *The Winter's Tale* also asks its heroine to prove her faithfulness and chastity, and

it is clear that Leontes is specifically concerned with proving and preserving the sanctity of his marriage. He even mentions the cleanliness of his sheets:

Dost think I am so muddy, so unsettled,
To appoint myself in this vexation, sully
The purity and whiteness of my sheets,
Which to preserve is sleep, which being spotted
Is goads, thorns, nettles, tails of wasps...
(I.ii.325-329)

The first half of *The Winter's Tale* is about the preservation of pristine sheets. While in *Othello* bloodied wedding sheets might indicate Desdemona's faithfulness, in *The Winter's Tale* we are far enough removed from Leontes and Hermione's wedding night that rumpled and soiled sheets signify to the king that his queen is a "bedswerver" and that Polixenes has sullied her honor and her bed. Leontes's desire to see clean sheets is all-consuming—rumpled sheets, signifying sex, would be disgusting and hateful to him.

Seeking to capture all of these significances in the *mise en scene* of our production, we clamped six white sheets to the Studio Theater's balcony, which hung there for the duration of the first half of the play.

John Ponder White, playing Antigonus, was chased offstage by a bear played by Erin MacIntyre (Hermione) and Jamie Ellis (Leontes), Jamie hugging Erin around the waist and picking her up in a rearing motion. Our bear was not realistic, in part because its costume never entirely developed. Erin wore a wire bear-frame strapped to her head: because it was relatively light gauge wire, and there was no effort made to fill in the gaps in the frame, everyone could see her face. It was not a comic bear, though, as other productions have given us. It was simply non-illusionistic. John reacted to the bear as if the danger were real, and great, and after he exited gave a blood-curdling scream that

clearly indicated to the audience the seriousness of the moment. As he screamed and thunder rumbled powerfully from backstage, five actors (Will, Catherine, Sunny, Rachel, and Christine) and Meghan Byrnes, our stage manager, unclamped the sheets and let them fall on the audience below.

The result was a wonderful moment of ambiguity, confused tragicomedy balancing on the split second between the two halves of the play. Every night, some members of the audience laughed nervously. An unrealistic bear had lumbered onstage and chased a man off: while this might have been funny, John's scream, the bear's deliberate and choreographed movement, and the thunder signaled to the audience that tragedy was occurring: a man was dying. Already dealing with these mixed messages, audience members on the sides of the space had bed sheets dropped, unexpectedly, on their heads.

Their laughter was the shift from tragedy to comedy. After this moment, there was a pause, and then Robin Crigler entered as the Old Shepherd, exclaiming "By Baldrick's Hornpipe" and marveling at the severity of the passing storm. (Robin had just acted in the trial scene as Dion, and his character change was a rapid one. In our post-mortem, he told us it had been nice to acknowledge, with the audience, the intensity of the preceding action, to take a breath before moving on).

While Robin and Daniel Burruss played the remainder of act III, scene iii, the five actors who had unclamped the sheets knelt on the floor of the balcony and watched the scene with and in full view of the audience. They had largely dropped character, although in our post-mortem conversation Sunny Visavich noted that she could not wholly let go of Paulina and the intensity of the earlier scenes, and Catherine Strycharz felt that she

was playing Perdita, observing, in a vague way, her own miraculous adoption. This moment, in which the actors observed the play with the audience, signaled our intentions for the second half, in which the actors and audience would, we hoped, become one community and share the same viewpoints. The sheets that had just fallen on audience members' heads were a physical reminder that we expected their participation in the creation of the performance. The tooth extraction moment in the mummers' play established this contract at the start of the performance, but after a long period of voyeuristic observation (in the first half, the audience was spoken to, but had fewer opportunities for significant participation) the sheets were a device meant to shake them from stillness and complacency.

During intermission, assistant stage managers collected the fallen sheets and brought them backstage. In the second half of the performance, we repurposed the sheets. Autolycus, who says that his "traffic is sheets" (linen stolen while drying) pulled a sheet out of his bag and tossed it over the audience. Florizel and Perdita came a spread another out across the floor to use as a picnic blanket at the beginning of act IV, scene iv. We always imagined that they might do the same whenever they visited their "bank for love to lie and play on," and the sheet used in act IV, scene iv was the location of one of Mopsa and Dorcas's battles for the affections of the Clown. At the very end of the play, Paulina wheeled on the statue of Hermione under one of the sheets. The sheets that Leontes had fretted over and tried to preserve in the first half were thus reused and rumpled in the anti-structural, hyper-sexual second half.

After this change in the play was signified to the audience by the drop of the sheets, we entered the part of the play in which we hoped most strongly for *communitas*.

So, can audiences and actors relate on an *I-Thou* level? A notable feature of audience members' responses to the production in talk-backs seems to be a sense of being *held back*. For example, one student told me, "It feels like they are talking directly to you" and "You feel like a part of it," using "you" to mean herself (Talk Back which night?). This strikes me as odd because she adds an extra layer to the interaction. She says, "It *feels* like they are talking directly to you," as if she is only imagining that the actors are talking directly to her, or as if only she perceived this phenomenon. In reality, they *were* talking directly to her, looking her in the eyes and delivering their lines, their intentions, and their emotions straight to her. Throughout the rehearsal process and the show, I stressed to the actors the importance of *really* talking to or with the audience, looking its members directly in the eyes, speaking to them in a way that was natural and unforced, and responding to the energy they returned. Some actors, of course, had more success with this technique than others, but this should not have changed the reality of being talked to. This audience member, perhaps, perceived and internalized the extra layer of the character, and conceived of the impossibility of genuine speech coming from a fictional world and landing in one of reality. For her, perhaps, *I-Thou* relations were impossible given that *I* was on a different plane of reality from *Thou*. On the other hand, phrases like "I feel" and "I felt" routinely appear in talk-backs as phrases signifying subjectivity; perhaps she was speaking in the *patois* of the theatre talk-back. Interestingly, though, that same audience member expressed her nervousness, and told us that she felt "very together, but in a forced way." "It breaks down that barrier between me, audience, you, actor; you do, I watch," she said, "it became, 'I'm doing as well, and I'm just going to sit here, and avoid it.'"

Other examples of the audience being *held back* I can point to with more certainty. Frequently, audience members in the talk-back would give us some variation of “I wanted to...but...” Obviously, there was still a strong sense of the role of the audience that inhibited interaction. Lauren Harrington, who arranged the production’s music and saw the play Saturday evening, told us that

I think it makes you sort of nervous, because when an actor is giving lines to me, and, you know, with Jamie saying all these horrible things about the queen, I want to grimace at him but I feel like I can’t, so I feel like there’s a conflict between how you are reacting and how you think you’re about to be reacting.

I return again to the comments of Rebecca Turner, who told us that despite her sometimes vocal reactions, she still felt inhibited:

I wanted to do a lot more, especially when Leontes was talking...and I wanted to just yell at him, or boo, or hiss, or whatever. So, a) that’s not really socially acceptable in theatre now—*bummer*— and also this idea that [because] we’re in the round here it means that the audience is watching the audience, not just the performance. So while on the one hand[...] it creates this feeling of community, I also felt like, if I boo at Leontes, the people across from me will yell at me for bothering [them during] their show.

The unorthodoxy of the interaction held back another audience member, whose response was “Wait, am I allowed to say something back, am I going to interrupt the flow of things? If there’s any uncomfortableness, that’s where it stems from. You’re used to just sitting there and passively watching.” Another audience member told us that audience interaction was “great, as long as it isn’t happening to you.” (Friday).

On the other hand, there was a sense that a staging like ours forced the audience to deal with real and immediate events and people. Even though one audience members only “*felt* like [the actors] were speaking directly to you,” others told us that interaction with actors increased emotional involvement and response because interactions were real. I personally experienced this during our Sunday matinee, which we brought out to

William and Mary's Sunken Gardens to experiment with changing the location of the event and to have fun on a beautiful day. I had my backpack sitting next to me, open, on a blanket, and Sunny, playing one of two sheep, pushed her nose in and stole my laptop charger. My emotional response was immediately one of frustration: "Damn, there goes my laptop charger," rather than "What a fascinating interactive experience, that actor pretending to be a sheep has pretended to steal my laptop charger." Despite the production's rejection of realism, despite even my enormous familiarity with the production, I felt a heightened sense of reality because my laptop charger was *really* gone, and I *really* had to negotiate its retrieval. Another audience member sitting on the floor was surprised when Leontes, yelling to Apollo for mercy, fell right into her lap. "This is something that is happening," the audience member reflected, "it brought me in, there was no escape. Jamie [Ellis], the king, was right there, and no matter what I felt about him, it was the reality I had to face." A moment afterward, another audience member agreed:

I think one of the biggest benefits of having your actors speak directly to the audience, especially when you have detestable characters... is you have to deal with them. If they're far enough removed on the stage you can be like, "you're a really bad person" and you can just write it off... if they're in your lap [referencing the earlier comment] you can't just write them off, you have to deal with it right then and I think that it really draws you in and makes you a part of it, like you said with the *communitas*...

These were, perhaps, the moments of the greatest liminality and *communitas*, in which the layers of theatricality disappeared for an audience member and he or she was able to experience a genuine moment with an actor/character. Another audience member recounted a moment when Sunny, playing a sheep, stole her wallet. Another cast member returned it, but when Jamie, our other sheep, approached her later in the scene, she

instinctively hid the wallet in fear she would lose it again, and reflected afterward how fascinating it was that she had felt that need despite the production's obvious unreality. A number of other audience members felt strongly that they were part of act IV, scene iv's community because, like at any real party, it had been difficult to focus and hear (talk-back, 20 October, 2012, matinee); one felt "hyper-aware that every audience member is having an individual experience" when he could not hear an interaction occurring on the other side of the room (talk-back, 19 October, 2012), a response that emphasized both the reality of not being able to focus and the importance of real, individual, personal interactions to our production. Reflecting on the production on Saturday evening, my assistant director and I reasoned that the trappings and conventions of theatre cease to matter when an old man (Robin Crigler's Old Shepherd) is steadily approaching you and genuinely asks if he can have your seat. Whether or not he is a real old man, you still have to decide if you will give up your seat.

The audience's response to the performance's inclusive and interactive nature was largely positive and excited. One audience member told us that he had been asked to participate onstage twice, and said, "That was awesome. No further analysis." The consensus seemed to be that given some time to warm up to the production's unfamiliar style, the audience felt like part of the community, the action, and the experience. Though some audience felt as though they had not seen the real *Winter's Tale*, others felt that interaction with the audience amplified the play's emotional power. One girl told us, "It was nice that if I thought something was funny, I could look around and see everyone else smiling, and it made it seem funnier [...] happy moments seemed happier ... it enhanced the emotions of the show" (Talk Back, 19 October, 2012).

Talking to the audience is a relatively simple thing to do, but Doreen Bechtol is correct when she says that it has enormously complicated implications and effects, too many to count or adequately describe. *The Winter's Tale*, though, begs for this kind of treatment, begs to have Leontes's crimes redeemed by the joyous inclusion of the entire community of the event into a single great *I-Thou* relationship. Our staging of the play attempted to provide this redemption with the extension of agency and community and the inspiration of dialogue.

One of the questions I asked our audience after each show was whether they perceived *communitas* particularly in the mummers' play and the Robin Hood play that we inserted into *The Winter's Tale*, along with whether one was more effective than the other. My next chapter will explore those traditional games and their place in our production.

Chapter Four

Folk Drama in *The Winter's Tale*

The Winter's Tale both presents and represents a certain kind of provincial, popular drama. Dennis Bartholomeuz writes that

it was the supreme artistic expression of a popular dramatic and theatrical tradition still surviving in early seventeenth-century England and soon to be extinguished. If *The Tempest* is the finest expression of the neo-classical tradition of the Renaissance, preserving with artistry and no sacrifice of essential life the unities of time, place, and action, and using the exacting canons to give the dramatic poetry concentration and intensity, *The Winter's Tale* is the supreme expression of the popular, native tradition of drama.

The Winter's Tale is a mess of rapidly shifting places and times, replete with geographical mistakes (like Bohemia's infamous sea coast) and anachronisms. Not only does it incorporate folk dramatics in its sheep shearing festival, but it takes on the style and structure of these performance.

An appropriate parallel might be the pre-Shakespearean Corpus Christi cycle. These annual play cycles were similarly unconcerned with consistency of place or time. V.A. Kolve writes:

Richard Southern's researches into the meaning of place and *platea* in medieval dramaturgy have led him to an important conclusion: the "place" was simply the area in front of the stage or scaffold, to which the actors might descend as necessary. It was never geographically localized, and there was no pretense that what went on there went on in an imagined locality relevant to the action. Action itself told the story, and it happened *there* in England, in front of and amid the spectators (Kolve 23).

This touches on both *The Winter's Tale* lack of regard for traditional geography and on its frequent anachronisms. Just as the shepherds of the "Second Shepherds Play" of the Wakefield/Townley cycle are transparently medieval English shepherds, Shakespeare's shepherds and rustics in *The Winter's Tale* feel like English peasants and Bohemia feels

like the English countryside. The play frequently alludes to Christian beliefs—Polixenes laments in act I, scene ii, “my name/ be yoked with his that did betray the best!” referring to Judas. Most famously, the Third Gentleman in act V, scene ii, tells Autolycus that the “rare Italian master, Julio Romano, who, had he himself eternity and could put breath into his work, would beguile Nature of her custom, so perfectly he is her ape,” has carved the statue of Hermione that the court has gone to see. Romano (1499-1546) was a painter and architect rather than a sculptor, but Shakespeare makes use of him and his reputation to establish that the statue of Hermione will trouble neat categories of art versus life and foreshadow her resurrection. Regardless of Romano’s talents, Shakespeare’s use of his name is clear anachronism.

In many ways, our production of *The Winter’s Tale* operated much like one of these folk dramas. Audience members recognized actors because of relationships and interactions from outside of the world of the play, just as assembled audiences would have recognized the actors playing biblical figures in one of the Corpus Christi Cycles. Kolve relates the story of a medieval performer who frightened passers-by by wearing his devil costume on the way home from the pageant (21). In our production of *The Winter’s Tale* too, audience members interacted with actors while they were in costume but not acting, before the show, during intermission, and after the show. Action that took place before the show and during intermission—singing songs, selling concessions, a cart-wheel contest organized and executed by the cast— took place in the same space that we would later ask the audience to re-imagine as a king’s court, a sea coast, a shepherd’s hut.

The Winter’s Tale hearkens back to folk drama, and in an effort to capture the carnival nature shared by Shakespeare’s play and those games of yore, we incorporated

folk drama into our production. We began with a mummers' (or St. George's) play originally performed in the nineteenth century Warwickshire town of Great Wolford, with the intention that it would serve as a prologue for the action and style that would follow. Later, in act IV, scene iv, we replaced the satyr dance with a Robin Hood play originally printed in 1562, in which Autolycus fittingly took on the role of Robin Hood.

One of the earliest works on the mummers' play is that of Reginald John Elliot Tiddy, an extraordinarily charming university professor of literature who was killed by a shell during the first World War, on August 10, 1916. His book, *The Mummers' Play*, was published posthumously in 1923. E.K. Chambers's examination of the custom followed in 1933. In the 1950s and 1960s, folklorist Alex Helm published a number of works on the mummers' play and related dramas; it is to Helm's work that Alan Brody's 1969 *The English Mummers and their Plays: Traces of Ancient Mystery* is most indebted (Brody ix). All of these early theorists believed that the mummers' play has pre-Shakespearean and potentially ritual origins. Helm, in particular, was a "life-cycle theorist," who saw the text of the play as superfluous as opposed to the critical action of the play, which was highly ritualistic. More recently, though, scholars have moved away from early to mid- twentieth-century critics' emphases on ritual and ancient origins and paid increasing attention to the texts and the ways they were developed and shared. Eddie Cass and Steve Roud's *Introduction to the English Mummers' Play: Room, Room, Ladies and Gentlemen*, published in 2002 by the English Folk Dance and Song Society, is highly critical of early scholarship that filled in the gaps of history with unsubstantiated claims of ancient ritual. While researching at EDFSS's Ralph Vaughan Williams Library, I had a

conversation with Steve Roud that further influenced my perception of the historiography of the mummers' play.

There are multiple forms of the mummers play: the three most commonly cited are the hero-combat play (with which I will primarily concern myself, and which we recreated in our production of *The Winter's Tale*), the wooing play, and the sword dance play. The hero-combat version, which appears to have been most widely spread (Cass and Roud 29), begins with a main presenter who clears room for the performance. In Great Wolford in Warwickshire he was recorded as having said the following:

In comes I old Father Christmas
In comes I to make the fun.
My hair is short my beard is long
And me hat's tied on with a leathern throng.
A room, a room, brave gallants all,
Give us all room to rhyme
And we'll show you some good activity
This merry Christmas time.
Activity of age, activity of youth.

This character's name varies widely. Steve Roud and Eddie Cass have records of him being nameless, or set down as First Man, Presenter, Headman, or something similar. He might have been called Bold Roomer or Captain Room. Sometimes it is the Fool or the Clown, and sometimes, as in Great Wolford, it is Father Christmas.

After this introduction comes the boast. Two combatants enter, and each boasts about his exploits and fighting prowess. Their names too vary widely. In Great Wolford, the first was King George, though we altered it to Saint George, following the example of many other mummers' plays. The other was Bold Slasher: part of the reason I selected Great Wolford's play was that it employed Bold Slasher rather than one of the potentially offensive racial stereotypes (the King of Egypt, the Turkey or Turkish Knight) seen in

many other mummers' plays. As I said, in many scripts, Saint George replaces King George. Oliver Cromwell and Saint Patrick appear in Irish versions. In a Clayworth Plough Monday play recorded by Tiddy, Beelzebub, a character who would normally show up in the later *quête* phase, is one of the boastful combatants. Regardless of *who* fights, they *do* fight, and someone is slain. Who is slain, again, varies. It might be King/Saint George, it might be the other combatant. Interestingly, Tiddy writes that "two protagonists appear," indicating that neither has the upper hand nor the audience's sympathies. The name of the hero-combat play implies the same: combat between two heroes, rather than a hero and a villain.

One of the heroes is slain, and another character, frequently the headman, mourns him: this is the Lament. In Great Welford, Father Christmas mourns for the slain St. George:

Doctor, Doctor, play thy part
King George is wounded in the heart
And pierced through the knee.
If a Doctor I could see
£1000 I'd freely give to he.

Such a speech is common, but occasionally, the headman will claim the slain hero for his son. Alan Brody locates traces of ritual origin here, writing that occasionally, a certain "verbal figure" that counts off the headman's sons is transferred from the upcoming *quête* to the lament:

Out of children eleven I've got but 7,
And they be started up to heaven
Out of the 7 I've got but 5,
And they be starved to death alive;
Out of the five I've got but 3,
And they be popped behind a tree;
Out of the 3 I've got but 1,
And he got around behind the sun.

Tiddy's record of the mummers' play of Overton, Hampshire, records a similar lament: "Oh dear, oh dear, out of eleven sons I've only got one left. Walk in Bold Slasher and see what thou canst do with the villain." (Tiddy 197). Of course, Bold Slasher dies as well, leaving Father Christmas with no sons. Brody reads the sons as representatives of the months of the past year: the last one to be slain is resurrected as the first month of the new year. He also picks up on "an unconscious pun, or perhaps even an inadvertent corruption," of son/sun (Brody 53). In Cocking, Sussex, St. George stands over his vanquished foe and laments "Oh Father, Oh Father, you see what I've done,/ I've cut this young man down, like the evening sun" (Tiddy 201). This might represent the "death of the sun in winter and its rebirth in spring."

The lament is followed by the cure, in which the Doctor arrives to resurrect the fallen hero. The Doctor is one of the most widespread characters in the mummers' play, although his name varies as well, perhaps reflecting the names of local doctors the mummers knew personally (Cass and Roud 37). The cure might be affected through pills, serums, or, commonly, the extraction of St. the fallen combatant's sore tooth.

After the cure is the *quête*, or collection. This is a procession of characters not previously introduced, who make little comic speeches, beg for money, and then start a song. In our production, for example, Christine Jacobs played Fidler Wit:

In comes I, Fidler Wit
 My head's so large, me wits so small
 I've brought me fiddler to please you all.
 Troll-de-roll the tinder box
 Father died the other night
 And left me all his riches,
 A wooden leg, a feather bed,
 And a pair of leather breeches,
 A coffee pot without a spout,

A jug without a handle,
 A guinea pig without a wig,
 And half a farthing candle.
 Sing brothers sing!

Here we meet figures such as Beelzebub, Fiddler, Fidler Wit, Little Devil Doubt, Big Head, and Twing Twang. In his search for the origins of the mummers' play, Alan Brody says that characters such as Little Devil Doubt and Beelzebub demonstrate some manner of descent from the Clown or Vice figures of medieval morality plays. Brody also writes that a female character also might appear during the *quête*. The appearance of "Mary Tinker, Mary (ain't been yit), Dame Dorothy, and Molly Masket" (Cass and Roud 61) is infrequent, but Brody suggests that she might be equivalent to the woman wooed by the Clown in the wooing play, the second form of the mummers' play, which deals more explicitly with issues of sex, courtship, and fertility. The antecedent of both the hero-combat play and the wooing play might have featured Beelzebub as a clown figure and the female figure in a more prominent way than most extant mummers' plays (Brody 61).

In its heyday, the mummers' play only allowed males to perform. They performed, rather than acted, in that they made no pretense that the play was anything more than a local custom, "declaiming" their lines rather than delivering them to one another with affectation of emotion or representation of character. Indeed, the men were not even *amateurs*, since they did not perform in other sorts of drama (Cass and Roud 41). Scholars have noted though the great seriousness of the performing mummers. "In their combats, as in the delivery of their lines, they appeared in deadly earnest." (T.F. Ordish, quoted on Cass and Roud 42). The men performed their plays upright, seriously, and sonorously, with "minimal and stylized gestures and much pacing up and down."

Costumes might have consisted of crudely representational garments, designed to look like the character the player was counterfeiting, but more often took the form of elaborately streamered garments. These were made of regular clothes with strips of fabric, wallpaper, newspaper, or ribbon sewn on (Cass and Roud 46). Often the mummers would blacken their faces with burnt cork. They were sometimes known as *guisers*, and scholarship once indicated that this corresponded to their well-maintained *disguises*. Alex Helm writes that these disguises were central to the ritual, and that if a performer was recognized, it would “break the luck” (37). Cass and Roud suggest though that there was no ritual attachment to the disguise and that the name *guising* simply referred to dressing up—Roud told me that if the spectators did not recognize the mummers, it was likely because there was a tacit agreement not to do so rather than because the disguises were particularly effective.

As for the play’s location, the mummers would process through the town and perform largely in private homes, especially those of well-off members of the community—factory owners, professionals like doctors or lawyers, or owners of larger farms— and of friends and family (Cass and Roud 48). Mummers also might often have stopped off in public houses or at larger social gatherings. Today, one can watch video recordings on Youtube of mummers playing to large crowds in town centers such as London’s Covent Garden, though these locations would not have been typical for mummers of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The intrusive potential of the mummers’ play, the chance that a crowd of streamer-bedecked men might barge into your kitchen, is part of its anti-structural nature. The play also included the potential for excessive consumption. The mummers always ended with a collection, and often

emphasized the amount of money they could make and the amount of food and drink they could consume in a day (49). In the late nineteenth century, rowdy social gatherings with alcohol came under attack by the English middle class, and while the mummers might largely have flown under this moral radar, their plays would certainly have an attached stigma (52). The stigma of begging was also of concern to mummers and patrons alike, and children who might have continued the custom were prohibited from participation. In some places, violence might be a part of the tradition. Rivalries once arose between nearby teams of mummers. In 1951, A.W. Boyd wrote that “it was customary until 30 or 40 years ago for the different gangs to come to blows and try to rob each other of their horses’ heads” (quoted on Cass and Roud 49). Christmas comes but once a year, and with it come comic-violent territorial conflicts between mumming teams.

While some community members undoubtedly looked down upon the practice, others took pride in helping to continue an English dramatic tradition and cherished community custom. Underlying the encouragement of the mummers was occasionally the belief that the mummers play was old—perhaps ancient and ritually significant— and ought to be passed down (Cass and Roud 50). This societal permission granted to anti-structure and holiday revelry is essential to carnival, the universal “second life” of the people sanctioned briefly by structural powers. In the mummers plays, behaviors often discouraged in normative society, such as begging, drinking, fighting, and barging into others’ homes, were preserved and enjoyed.

What were the origins and purposes of the mummers’ play? Reginald Tiddy writes that “the mummers’ play, degenerate and undeveloped though it may be, bears distinct traces of a ritual origin....” (70). For scholars of folk-lore of a particular time, the

mummers' plays that were performed all over Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were the mysterious remnants of pagan ritual and sympathetic magic. The plays varied widely, incorporating regionalisms and elements of popular culture, but many had a similar plot structure, which was seen as evidence of a common ancestral ritual.

That structure almost always includes "a combat, a death, and a revival" and it is from that trope that scholars long surmised that the mummers' play had ritual origins. As I stated before, R.J.E. Tiddy, E.K. Chambers, Alex Helm, and Alan Brody all endorse the thesis that the mummers' play is a remnant of pre-Christian drama performed as a fertility ritual or New Year's ceremony. Alex Helm defines the play as "a men's seasonal Ritual intended to promote fertility, expressed basically in terms of an action of revitalization, in which the performers must be disguised to prevent recognition" (Helm 6). Tiddy writes that "in the ceremony of primitive religion various means were used to secure the fertility of earth and flocks and tribes" (70). One such "conviction of the primitive mind" was the belief in sympathetic magic, that by acting upon an imitation or representation of a thing, the thing itself can be changed. The voodoo doll is an example. In the mummers' play and sword dance, a man pretends to be slain in combat, and then, to much rejoicing, is resurrected. In the mummers' play, a man might represent the "conflict between the old year and the new, between the waxing and waning life of the earth." (Tiddy 71), and by enacting out his death and resurrection might ensure the fertility and bounty of the coming year.

Some of the play's roots lie in an Elizabethan text by Richard Johnson called *The Famous Historie of the Seaven Champion of Christendom*, including the characters of the combatants and St. George's claims in his boast. Tiddy writes that the tone of the

combatants' boasts is derived from the same sources as the tone of tyrannical speeches in sixteenth-century Miracle Plays (97), although Chambers pooh-poohs this suggestion, asking "how else, in unsophisticated drama, are tyrants and fighting men to talk?" (Chambers 162) As for the characters of the *quête*, the devils might be derived from the miracle plays as well by way of the medieval moralities.

This leaves the element of the mock death and cure. Chambers, writing in 1933, analyzes the mummers' play with the help of Frazier's *The Golden Bough*. In prehistoric societies, a leader of men whose abilities exceeded those of others might have been imagined to possess a greater portion of the energy, life, or "potency" perceived to be a part of the "food-animal" or "food-plant." (Chambers 217). As this potency wanes at the end of the year, "another arises to slay the exhausted leader, and takes his place in the festival of a new spring." As societies progressed, the reigns of the medicine-men/kings extended themselves while the annual death became a ritual. Someone else, maybe a son or a prisoner, was required to stand in for the leader of the society when it came time for a ritual killing: he would "enjoy the attributes of a king for a few days and do some priestly rites," and then be killed. From this is derived the tradition of the Lord of Misrule and of the Mock King and Mock Death, and Chambers surmises that the latter tradition is present in the mummers' play, although by the eighteenth century it has been reduced from a ritual *coup d'état* to a drama performed to ensure luck, and various comic festival elements and an awareness of the changing seasons have been added to its primitive elements.

According to *An Introduction to the English Mummers' Play*, by Eddie Cass and Steve Roud, most of this is wrong. Cass and Roud note that the mummers' play is most

popular during the nineteenth century, and it is from the nineteenth century that we have gotten most of our extant texts. “Researchers are gradually turning up further ‘early’ material on the mumming plays and there is a growing cluster of references to recognizable Hero-Combat plays from around the 1720s to the 1750s. But research into the history of the mumming play before the eighteenth century has failed to produce any reliable evidence.” (16). Modern scholars view the text of the mummers’ play as being composed from widely ranging sources such as contemporary plays, characters, and cultural tropes. Death and resurrection might come from the performances of mountebanks dealing in patent medicines (16). Texts of or derived from *The Seaven Champions of Christendom* were popular and available into the early twentieth century. A mummers’ play from Overton and North Waltham include the following lyrics:

He comes, he comes, Oh here Oh here he comes
Sound, sound the trumpets and beat Oh beat the drums (Cass and Roud 17).

The same lyrics are quoted by Tiddy before his death in 1916 as

He comes, he comes, the hero comes:
Sound, sound the trumpet a piece a piece the drums (Tiddy 196),

To skeptical modern scholars, these lyrics all sound similar to Thomas Morell’s libretto for Handel’s *Joshua* (1748):

See the conquering hero comes
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums. (Cass and Roud 17).

According to Cass and Roud, scholars such as Alex Helm devalued the texts of the mummers’ plays, viewing them as “meaningless ‘accretions’” that accumulated like barnacles on the ships’ hulls of pagan fertility rituals. Modern scholars, less optimistic about the eventual discovery of some sort of source for the texts and more convinced that

what we now recognize as the mummers play appeared at the earliest in the eighteenth century, are more interested in the way the texts developed and were spread throughout Britain. This process of creating text, with its remarkable variety of references, anachronisms, regionalisms, and total non sequiturs from around the British Isles, is somewhat like the odd mix of times and places that make up the setting and culture of *The Winter's Tale*. It seems that the creators of both were happy to use whatever cultural touchstones were available to them.

Cass and Roud count E.K. Chambers as one who does not discount contemporary literary or theatrical origins of mummers' play rhetoric, but Chambers of course makes great use of Frazier's *Golden Bough* and tends to find common threads running amongst a host of European seasonal dramas that lead back to the death and resurrection and the slaying of a Mock King. Steve Roud suggested to me that earlier scholars were unduly influenced by Frazier's work.

Cass and Roud's hard-line distinction between their conception of the mummers play is like that between liminal and liminoid societies. Alan Brody makes a similar distinction between pure action, which constitutes ritual, and explained action, which constitutes drama.

It has been suggested that Macbeth contains all the elements of the archetypal winter king who must be slain by the figure of summer. This is a splendid insight, but no one would seriously think of performing the tragedy in order to ensure a punctual thaw. Ritual [being *pure*, rather than *explained, action*] is performed for precisely that reason. (Brody 117)

For modern scholars, the mummers' play is entirely the product of a liminoid society in which drama or re-enactment do not do real work and sympathetic and mimetic magic have been turned into theatre.

In retrospect, our production split the difference between earlier scholars like R.J.E. Tiddy and Alex Helm and more modern ones like Eddie Cass and Steve Roud. Like Tiddy and Helm, we hoped to tap into something more primal in our incorporation of a mummers' play into *The Winter's Tale*, searching for and implying a ritual significance that may never have been original to the mummers' play. The mummers' play, a traditional winter entertainment, fits well into the wintry first half of the play, and we moved a section of text from act II, scene i to the beginning of the play in an attempt to frame the mummers' play as the "sad tale" that Mamillius says is "best for winter." The goal was that the whole addition would act as a prologue to the play, presenting its themes and plot-structure in miniature, while also emphasizing our focus on ritual, liminal, and carnival states. Though *The Winter's Tale* seems to predate the mummers' play (and definitely predates all extant versions) their structures run parallel to one another. Each has a central resurrection, and each begins with seriousness, combat, and conflict, and then transitions into more light-hearted material. We sought to highlight these parallels. Erin MacIntyre, reading the lines of Hermione but wearing the costume of St. George, entered from upstage and looked to the audience: "What wisdom stirs amongst you?" she asked, "Come, now, pray you, sit by us,/And tell 's a tale." We began the production with Hermione addressing the audience and asking *them* to tell *her* a story, an inversion of the typical actor-audience relationship. Suddenly, Catherine Strycharz, as Mamillius, came bounding in from under the audience, to tell a tale. This tale turned out to be the mummer's play, and on a cue from Catherine, the rest of the mummers came bounding in, banging drums, clapping their hands, stomping their feet, and altogether trying to reflect the intrusive nature of the original mummers' plays and to create a

communal rhythm to start our performance off with a bang. Mamillius played Bold Slasher and Hermione was enlisted to play St. George, who is slain and resurrected by a doctor. The doctor, of course, was played by Sunny Vinsavich, the actor who played Paulina.

Our incorporation of the mummers' play also implied that such a drama might have been contemporary to Shakespeare, something that would give Cass and Roud pause (although when I told Steve Roud about my project, he gave me his blessing and suggested that I note in my thesis that our treatment of the play was deliberately anti-historical). On the other hand, we acted out the mummers' play as a liminoid phenomenon. We performed the play for entertainment and reflection; it was incorporated because of its parallels to *The Winter's Tale*, not because we believed we might be able to have ensured the fertility of our crops. It might have been interesting to ask the cast to work with the mummers' play as a liminal phenomenon— to treat it as a piece of sympathetic magic or useful, working ritual— to see what effects it would have had on their performance. Though our mummers' play hinted at ritual purposes it did not attempt to reenact them.

In addition to the Mummers' Play, we replaced act IV, scene iv's famous satyr dance with a combination of two plays about Robin Hood. One component part was from a text first recorded in 1562, and noted to be "very proper to be played in May-games" (reprinted, Wiles 72-79). David Wiles suggests that these texts actually come from the reign of Mary I, during which there was a revival of May-games (39). The other was from a now anonymous play first performed in 1593 called *George a Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield* (reprinted, Wiles 80-82).

In *The Early Plays of Robin Hood*, David Wiles writes that “Robin Hood Plays merit detailed study...because they are a rare and important example of a wholly indigenous, wholly secular cultural tradition – a spring equivalent to the Christmas plays of St. George...” (2). Scholarship that preceded Wiles tended to look at the Robin Hood myth by searching for the original Robin Hood or by examining the ballads about him, while addressing the Robin Hood plays only in relation to the morris dance. Wiles, though, notes that account books frequently show a proliferation of Robin Hood games that ends around the beginning of the sixteenth century: for example, in the Churchwarden’s accounts from St. Lawrence, Reading, activity by Robin Hood is last recorded in 1507, and morris dances are first mentioned in 1512 (Wiles 5). His conclusion, ultimately, is that the Robin Hood Play has more to do with the tradition of the Summer Lord than with the morris dance, and that these widely spread dramatic games have as much to do with the creation of the Robin Hood identity and legend as the ballads.

Wiles’s thesis is founded upon local account books in which multiple records of funds collected by Robin Hood replace what in the surrounding years would be records of funds collected by a Summer Lord, or vice versa. For example, in Henley-on-Thames in 1499, borough records shows that money collected at a Robin Hood gathering should be put towards a silver censer. In 1501, 1502, and subsequent years, collections are recorded as the proceeds of a “king-game,” and collected funds are put towards the same silver censer. In 1520, “Robin Hood’s money” makes its return to the records in place of the “king’s money.” A similar substitution is also observed in Henry Machyn’s diary entry for June 24th of 1559. At a May parade witnessed by Machyn, Robin Hood, Little John, Maid Marian, and Friar Tuck follow “the mores dansse:” Wiles says this position in the

parade would typically be afforded to a Summer Lord. His book presents ample evidence that the Robin Hood game tradition was closely linked with that of the Summer Lord or king-game: “We should here perceive the Summer Lord and Robin Hood as direct equivalents. Robin is not so much a participant in the dance as a Lord at the head of *his* morris men.” (6).

What is a Summer Lord and what does he do? One important source for information we have about the traditions of Summer Lords, May Kings, and Lords of Misrule is the *Anatomie of Abuses*, by grump-extraordinaire Phillip Stubbes. Published in 1583, the *Anatomie* is the text of a fictional dialogue between Philoponus and Spudeus. Philoponus has just returned after seven winters in his native *Ailgna* (a barely-disguised *England*) and tells Spudeus about the extravagances and excesses he witnessed in his time there: there is not, he says, “a people more abrupt, wicked, or perverse, living upon the face of the earth.” (23). The following is Philoponus’s diatribe against the Lords of Misrule; I have modernized much of the spelling but maintained some of Stubbes’s punctuation and most of his rejection of contractions (as in “him self”):

The name, indeed, is odious both to God and good men, & such as the very heathen people would have blushed at once to have named amongst them. And if the name importeth some evil, then, what may *the* thing it self be, judge you? But because you desire to know the manner of them, I will show you as I have seen them practiced myself. First, all the wild-heads of the Parish, conventing (sic) together, choose them a Grand-Captain (of all mischief) whom they innoble (sic) with the title of ‘my Lord of Mis-Rule,’ and him they crown with great solemnity, and adopt for their king. This king anointed chooseth forth twenty, forty, threescore or a hundred lusty guttes (sic) like to him self, to wait upon his lordly Majesty, and to guard his noble person. Then, every one of these his men, he investeth with his liveries of green, yellow, or some other light wanton colour; And as though that were not (bawdy) gaudy enough, I should say, they bedeck them selves with scarves, ribbons & laces hanged all over the gold ring, precious stones, & other jewels: this done, they tie about either leg xx. or xl. bells, with rich handkerchiefs in their hands, and sometimes laid a cross over their shoulders & necks, borrowed for the most part from their pretty Mopsies & loving Besses,

for buffing them in *the* dark. Thus all things set in order, then have they their Hobbyhorses, dragons & other Antiques, together with their bawdy Pipers and thundering drummers to strike up the devil's dance withal. Then, march these heathen company towards the Church and Church-yard, their pipers piping, their drummers thundering, their stumps (sic) dancing, their bells jingling, their handkerchiefs swinging about their heads like madmen, their hobby horses and other monsters skirmishing amongst the route: & in this forte they go to the Church (I say) & into the Church, (though the Minister be at prayer or preaching), dancing & swinging their handkerchiefs over their heads in the Church, like devils incarnate, with such a confused noise, that no man can hear his own voice. Then, the foolish people they look, they star, they laugh, they fleer, & mount upon sourmes (?) and pews to see the goodly pageants solemnized in this sort. Then, after this, about the Church they go again and again, & so forth into the church-yard, where they have commonly their Summer-halls, their bowers, arbors, & banqueting houses set up, wherein they feast, banquet, & dance all that day & (peradventure) all the night too. And thus these terrestrial furies spend the Sabbath Day.

They have also certain papers, wherein is painted some babbelry or other of Imagery work, & these they call 'my Lord of mis-rule's badges:' these they give to every one that will give money to maintain them in their heathenry, devilry, whoredom, drunkenness, pride, and what not. And who will not be buxom to them, and give them money for these their devil cognizances, they are mocked and flouted at not a little. And so assotted [drunk] are some, that they not only give them money to maintain their abomination withal, but also wear their badges & cognizances in their hats or caps openly. But let them take heed for these are badges, seals, brands, & cognizances of the devil, whereby he knoweth his Servants and Client from the Children of God.

It is worth noting that in England, maying and May-games did not necessarily take place on May Day or even in the month of May. The May-game observed by Machyn occurred on June 10th, and Stubbes, in his next chapter, which concerns the May-pole tradition, writes that such an event might occur "against *May*, *Whitsunday*, or other time." (149). Wiles writes that "It was in fact Pentecost which marked the moment when may-games began, as we learn from parish accounts which consistently associate gatherings of Robin Hood with Whitsuntide. The Prior of Worcester gave gifts to players of Robin Hood at a variety of dates between Whitsun week and the end of July, so the game which began in the Whitsun holidays could often be continued through the

summer” (4). In *The Winter’s Tale*, Perdita says to Florizel, “Methinks I play as I have seen them do/ In Whitsun pastorals: sure this robe of mine/ Does change my disposition.” It is to the revelry of the May-games that Perdita refers, and since it follows a few particularly forward lines (“No, like a bank for love to lie and play on;/ Not like a corse; or if, not to be buried,/ But quick and in mine arms,”), she may sheepishly be referencing the promiscuity of the Maid Marian character in the Robin Hood and morris dance traditions. This is also one of the play’s significant anachronisms.

As a result of a 1502 decree by Henry VIII, stating punishments for “persons that give or receive liveries, or that retain any person or persons, or be retained by any person or persons, by oath, promise, livery, writing, token, badge or otherwise,” proceedings such as the ones described by Stubbes were technically illegal (14). In such chaotic festival times, “technical” illegality might become genuine illegality or violence: in 1497 a Wednesbury Robin Hood was prosecuted in the Star Chamber, accused of taking his men to the fair at Willenhall and there encouraging them to “strike down” visitors to that fair from the town of Walsall (15).

We have yet to reach the point at which a parade like the one witnessed by Machyn or the revelry described by Stubbes includes a play of any kind. Wiles suggests that as a result of the long folk tradition of pageantry and dramatic games, the combat play was eventually joined with the May procession. The earliest text we have of such a play dates from 1475. This text has no speaker tags or line divisions, but in it Wiles locates a variety of competitions. Robin and an unnamed challenger compete at archery, stone casting, and wrestling. Robin is bested in the last of these rounds, and calls in his

men, at which point mortal combat between the characters begins. The anonymous knight is beaten and executed.

As the Robin Hood processions went on, performers might have developed short plays to put on a show for dignitaries or public figures in the audience, as at Shrewsbury, where “interluders” performed for the Prior of Worcester and the Bailiffs of Shrewsbury (31). In another speculative moment, Whiles suggests that instances in which the Summer Lord of one town or county visited another town demonstrated to have its own Summer Lord figure, combat or “improvised theatre” might have taken place between them (32). Combat and athletics might naturally have found a home at springtime festivals, so they might have been grafted to the dramatic framework of the Robin Hood procession (41).

Another of Wiles’s hypotheses is that fights in these early may-games were real. The 1475 text supports this view if we imagine that it served as a framing device for athletic or martial competitions that would have made popular sports at springtime festivals. These genuine competitions might have led to genuine fights, for the texts printed in 1562 do not have clear victors. In the first of the two scripts, Robin and his men combat Friar Tuck and his dogs, and Tuck is subsequently incorporated into Robin’s band of merry men. In the second, which seems to be unfinished, Robin duels a potter who refuses to pay for the privilege to use the path through Robin’s forest. David Wiles writes:

These two pieces have their place within the imaginative structure of a Summer Lord game. The basis of that game, as I have shown, lay in Robin’s requesting or extorting money in return for the liveries which admitted men into his company. In both these pieces, we see a challenge take place on the highway. The friar is taken into Robin’s service and is promised ‘both gold and fee.’ The potter is told that upon pain of a forfeit he must pay ‘one penny passage’ to the ‘chief governor/Under the greenwood tree’. Robin Hood is a Lord of Misrule or anti-hero, for he is demonstrably unheroic. (39-40).

Our constructed Robin Hood play combined the second text, in which Robin and Little John fight the potter, with a stage play first performed in 1593, by a now anonymous playwright. *George a Greene, The Pinner of Wakefield*, tells the story of George a Greene, who, in the company of his girlfriend Beatrice, is accosted by Robin Hood. They fight, and, as in other extant texts, there is no clear winner: stage directions imply that Robin Hood “stays,” but there is no indication of who has the upper hand when George is asked to join the outlaw’s band. The text is significantly more formal than those recorded in 1562, but it is an Elizabethan stage play. Though not a piece of folk drama, it maintains the old combat play format: Robin waylays the pinner, who then fights two of Robin’s men before fighting Robin himself, after which Robin offers the challenger a place in his merry band of outlaws. Our group felt the texts from 1562 had more substance. The excerpt from *George a Greene*, with three moments of combat, seemed to rely entirely on fighting and was consequently less attractive to the cast, but the relationship between George and Beatrice conveniently paralleled that between Florizel and Perdita. We combined the two, substituting George for the potter and Beatrice for his son and drawing text from both. We began with excerpts from Stubbes: Sunny Vinsavich and I developed a character who combined the servant that introduces the satyrs’ dance and Stubbes. He came in smarting from a recent confrontation with the mischievous Summer Lord, announcing Robin Hood’s presence and explaining the tradition to the audience. Autolycus and the Clown, acting as Robin Hood and Little John, entered and sought out willing participants to play George and Beatrice, and selected Florizel and Perdita. They joined in, and the four acted at acting shamelessly for the audience, which now consisted of both *The Winter’s Tale*’s audience of the night and

the actors not drawn into the production. This contingent included Robin Crigler's Old Shepherd, who commandeered a chair from an audience member and loudly commented on the performance to the audience members next to him, with lines like "That's my son!" We also had our own badges: small pins that read "Awake your faith," from Paulina's "It is requir'd you do awake your faith" (V.iii.94-95), which we sold during performances. Each night, Christine, playing Robin, gave one free of charge to a woman in the audience, her Maid Marian.

I was enormously pleased when I realized that these two folk dramas, so similar in structure and style, might effectively encapsulate the themes of *The Winter's Tale*. In addition to their strong thematic parallels to *The Winter's Tale*, these folk dramas took place at moments of *communitas*. Alex Helm writes of the mummers' play,

Despite [its] absurdities, once the performance began, all nonsense disappears and the performers become very different beings from the rather peculiarly dressed individuals they appear at first sight. Without effort they establish a bond between themselves and their audience, so that all are caught up in an atmosphere far remote from the twentieth century. This atmosphere cannot be transmitted on paper, it must be experienced physically during a performance before the sense of age, magic, and mystery, all caught up together, can be felt (1).

Performances of the mummers' and Robin Hood plays were moments of *communitas* and carnival. Spectators watching the mummers plays recount them as moments of magic and mystery. Kenneth Grahame, author of *The Wind in the Willows*, recounts a mummers' visit to his childhood home in *The Golden Age* using near mythic language: "Yesterday the mummers were here!... powdering the red brick floor with snow from their barbaric bedizenments; and stamping and crossing, and declaiming, till all was whirl and riot and shout...I was too big to run, too rapt to resist the magic and surprise" (117). In *The*

Winter's Tale, we hoped to use these qualities of community and magic to create *communitas*.

Ultimately, the two folk dramas we incorporated into the *The Winter's Tale* were probably the most bewildering parts of the production for both the cast and our audiences. In our post-mortem discussion, the cast told me that the two folk dramas had been points of great anxiety for them. John Ponder White, who played Camillo and Antigonus, mused that

It's a crazy way to start a show, in a sense ... we set up the whole play as a play within a play [...] From the moment we read it I think we all knew that it had clear parallels to *The Winter's Tale* [...] but to hear that [the audience] understood it, and they got it, [...] and enjoyed it as a way to start the whole show, the fact that it drew them in, and we got that audience interaction and they appreciated that, was *great* to hear.

Catherine Strycharz said, "I think that was more freeing for the other performances, after we heard that, it was like, wow, this actually works, let's just go do it and people will actually respond to it."

Audiences offered little consensus as to the plays' respective effectiveness. One audience member felt that the mummers' play was "jarring in a more confusing way," but "felt really connected when the Robin Hood play was going on." She told us that during the Robin Hood play, "I was like, 'Okay, I'm with this, I'm in it.'" The mummers' play was the less familiar of the two adapted folk dramas. Elizabeth Wiley, an acting professor in the audience Saturday evening, noted that "It might partly be the familiarity of the story... 'Oh I've heard of Robin, oh, Little John, yeah!'" (Talk-Back, evening of 20 October 2012). Additionally, the audience had had less time to acclimate to the style of the production when we began with the mummers' play, and having anticipated the text of *The Winter's Tale* and Shakespearean blank verse might have been shocked by the

previously unencountered characters and story and the rustic doggerel of the traditional mummers' play.

Lauren Harrington, the production's music director, provided another perspective on the mummers' play. She felt *communitas* in the audience's collective confusion:

Speaking to the folk drama, I thought in the mummers' play, I felt a sense of *communitas* not only because it is interactive but because it's so strange, and it's such an odd way to start things off, with everybody in weird costumes, and doing all these things... There's an understanding that what you're watching isn't necessarily normal, and you don't necessarily have to be a normal audience member [...] It's sort of jarring in a great way: 'Oh, this is different, oh, this is not what I expected' (Talk Back, evening of 20 October 2012)

Lauren's sense was that the mummers' play effectively established for the audience the style of the production and our expectations of them. The audience was united by communal confusion and asked to devote themselves to the play and the process immediately: in many ways, they were experiencing the emotions that the cast had experienced as they began the production's workshopping process.

One of my favorite moments of staging in the production was the "tooth extraction." In some versions of the mummers' play, including the one from Great Wolford, St. George is resurrected when the doctor character extracts George's tooth. As I was searching for a mummers' play we might perform, I saw a video in which a group of mummers' enlisted the audience to help yank on the offending incisor, and decided it would be an extremely effective bit of silliness that might fit well into our mode of performance. In our production, the doctor attempted to remove the tooth three times: first, Sunny gave it a yank, then the rest of the cast joined her, and finally, they pulled audience members out of their seats to help. The amateur oral surgeons spiraled around Erin's body, each holding on to the shoulders of the person in front of them. When the

tooth was finally pulled, many people, actors and audiences alike fell to the ground on top of one another. A large portion of the audience seemed to see great value to this moment: one member told us that later interactions between audience and actors, ones that addressed single members of the audience, felt less uncomfortable and intimidating because the tooth extraction had keyed the audience in to our expectations of them.

Through the talk-backs and our post-mortem discussion with the actors, I realized that a number of people, even within the cast, had understood the mummers' play as a framing device for the entirety of *The Winter's Tale*. This was unintentional: again, I meant for the play to act as prologue to the action that followed. Such a reading casts more focus on the play's storytelling theme, but does damage to the sense of the reality and genuine interaction that I noted at the end of the previous chapter.

Another woman watching Thursday night noted that sometimes she "checked-in" and "checked-out" of the community, and told us that the tooth pulling and the Robin Hood play were moments when she "checked-in." She also said that in these moments, the characters were also watching the performances, and that she was more engaged for being part of an undifferentiated set of spectators, in which "spectator-actors" could show her what to do. It was when the community was most divided between actors and spectators that she felt the production "wasn't as engaging" (Talk Back, 18 October 2012).

Some, though not all, members of the audience found the Robin Hood play more engaging than the mummers' play. Robin Crigler's Old Shepherd had a much stronger effect on the audience than I anticipated, especially as his interactions with them became more assured and more frequent as our run went on. One woman told us that she felt like

“more of a guest, and less of an intruder” as a result of speaking to the Old Shepherd. That she felt the reality of the event so strongly that she imagined she was an intruder rather than a more neutral voyeur is remarkable in the first place. In the second place, the amount Robin’s direct address and willing improvisation with the audience added to the Robin Hood play sequence cannot be overstated. While reflecting on the Robin Hood play, one audience member noted the powerful effects of the actors becoming part of the audience.

I think it has a really distinct *communitas*, you’ve got cast members who are now audience members, and so the line between cast and audience is even further blurred, so you’ve got them sitting in audience chairs, being a part of the audience, there’s really no distinction other than that they are playing a character being an audience member. It sort of blurs that line further and puts the actors more in conversation with the audience.

It is not surprising that the moments when many audience members most strongly felt *communitas* were the moments when the actors joined them in filling the same role, physically and figuratively moving over to the audience’s side to watch with them. If the audience found it difficult, at most times, to take a more active role in the production (using their bodies or their words to change the proceedings), community was built all the same when the actors joined them in their more passive, observational role.

Another girl, though, told us that while the mummers play was an effective hook that got people involved and interested, the Robin Hood play came at a point when she was “already really invested in the story, and the Robin Hood play distracted from that...you didn’t really know what was going on, and were confused.” In response to that,

a boy mentioned that Robin's comments to the audience also helped to link the Robin Hood play to the *The Winter's Tale* and maintain the moment's sense of place, its connection to the world of the play. In our rehearsals, I had had a difficult time determining how the Robin Hood play would fit in with the rest of the scene. Would it create a totally separate world? How would Florizel and Perdita be incorporated, and how could we signal their involvement to the audience? Ultimately, Daniel Burruss, who played the Clown, suggested that he, as Little John, and Christine Jacobs as Robin Hood would enter carrying extra costumes and decide to cast Florizel and Perdita as George a Greene and Beatrice. Florizel and Perdita's knowledge of the play would be derived partly from planning and rehearsal and partly from the play's status as a culturally ubiquitous text in their rustic shepherds' community. Robin's running commentary and conversation helped to anchor the Robin Hood play to act IV, scene iv and to make the audience feel like a part of a community that included the actors.

In hindsight, we might have explored the possibilities of these folk dramas further. For example, how would it have affected the actors and audience if I had asked my cast to perform the mummers play in the strictest possible sense of it as a ritual rite of seasonal passage—asked them to actually try to ensure a bountiful new year with their performance? Could we have pushed the Robin Hood play to the furthest extents of carnival? It would have been fascinating to free Christine and Daniel to harass the audience and extort money from them in exchange for our little “Awake Your Faith” buttons. Could they have led them in a carnival procession around the building, or moved the production to a new space for a moment? How would the audience have reacted to a

total breakdown of theatrical structure beyond anything we had given them up to that point?

Ultimately, though, I was pleased to hear that the folk dramas were two of the most engaging (or, at least, discussed and questioned) moments in the production. The mummers' and Robin Hood plays demonstrate the significance actors becoming part of the audience. The girl who suggested that she might have been "checked-in" or "checked-out" was most engaged in the production when we were able to break down the differences between actors and audience and create events within the play that united the entire room into a community. In addition to their effects on the community of the event, the plays signified the powerful carnival and ritual elements that are thematically central to *The Winter's Tale*.

Chapter Five

What Was the Workshop?

After I sent in my application to direct *The Winter's Tale*, the faculty of the William and Mary Theatre Department, concerned about the size of the undertaking, asked me to run the production as a workshop. I asked Laurie Wolf, my advisor, what a workshop was.

The idea was that the cast, crew, and I would radically reconstruct *The Winter's Tale*. Armed with a deep understanding of the play and a list of significant themes, elements, and moments I thought were important to my concept, we would draw from the text of *The Winter's Tale* and other sources and create a performance of ensemble scenes (hence the advertisement of the production as “Ensemble Scenes from *The Winter's Tale*). These would flow together into a coherent performance that told the story of *The Winter's Tale* and hit all the points that I wanted to include.

The workshop was to be a highly open ended process that would incorporate the ideas of the entire cast and crew. Most enticingly, Laurie and I discussed the way that the workshop process did not need to produce a finished and polished project. The workshop would emphasize the exploratory process, the attempt and effort to create *communitas* in a performance of *The Winter's Tale*. Because one of the signifiers of *communitas* is unmotivated, desire-less, aimless relation between whole human beings, the workshop process seemed particularly apt in that it would allow us to act not to pursue applause and good reviews but rather to engage meaningfully with the text and one another. In the end, the workshop never made it quite as far as that. The process ended up being relatively traditional, though slightly more open and exploratory. The most interesting quality was

the way that the workshop process put us through emotions and experiences similar to those experienced by the play's audiences.

After understanding the workshop process from Richard Schechner, director of The Performance Group, Victor Turner “likened [the workshop process] to the forest camp where novices are initiated in African circumcision rituals...in effect, dissolving their former social personalities in order to ‘regrow’ them...as self-disciplined, mature persons.” In the workshops of The Performance Group (TPG), which produced the famous *Dionysus in 69* among other works of experimental, environmental theatre, text was not privileged, but rather thrown open for theatrical practitioners to use as they liked—in some ways, the devised theatre produced by these groups produced text in ways similar to the folk dramas I wrote about in the previous chapter, in that text could be drawn from anywhere and reference anything. “Theatrical space, performers, director, media used, ... sustained separation of role and performer by many devices, all such units and devices are flexibly combined and recombined as reflections of a common will arising from rare moments of *communitas* among the human components of the theatrical ensemble,” writes Turner (*From Ritual to Theatre* 16). Turner understands a relationship between the workshop process and *communitas*: indeed, he suggests that every element of the production is devised to serve the will of individual members of group. In *Presence in Play*, Cormac Power writes that the experimental theatre companies of the 1960s (Beck and Malina’s Living Theatre, Chaikin’s Open theatre, and Schechner’s TPG) were most interested in enacting rituals and celebrations: “staging events in which the actors and audience were envisaged more as “celebrants” than as artist-speactator/consumers” (51). These groups were communities that produced theatre in the service of their

members and audience members, rather than in the service of texts or story. They did not deny their performers' identities, but rather incorporated them into their reconstructed texts and interactions.

Our workshop did not go so far, but did share some of its elements with Turner's perception of the theatrical workshop. To begin with, I understood from the start the significance of our actors and audiences as genuine people independent of theatrical role playing. As I wrote in my third chapter, "Liminality, Carnival, Communitas," I asked the actors not to turn away from prior relationships: in a way, I was asking them to subtly allow their own identities and their prior human relationships (their relationships with audience members from outside the context of the performance) to become a part of our reconstructed text. Ultimately, this may not have been clear—I may not have stressed this interest strongly enough to the actors, or understood it well enough myself at that point. We did know, though, that to create a performance that initiated communitas, we would have to engage one another in a workshop process that sought out the "human components of the theatrical ensemble."

Additionally, I hoped that I could make the process a transformative experience for our actors. When we started casting and rehearsing, my assistant director Kevin Place and I had just returned from highly educational summer theatre programs, Kevin from the National Theatre Institute's Theatremakers program and I from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art's Shakespeare Summer School. We were filled with passionate purpose and were excited that the workshop process would allow us to make the process an educational one. We planned to share the exercises and techniques we had learned over

the summer and hoped that an early emphasis on education and exploration would establish the culture of the production and the ensemble as a whole.

In the previous chapter, I quoted music director Lauren Harrington's analysis of the mummers' play's effect on the audience:

Speaking to the folk drama, I thought in the mummers' play, I felt a sense of *communitas* not only because it is interactive but because it's so strange, and it's such an odd way to start things off, with everybody in weird costumes, and doing all these things... There's an understanding that what you're watching isn't necessarily normal, and you don't necessarily have to be a normal audience member [...] It's sort of jarring in a great way: 'Oh, this is different, oh, this is not what I expected.'

The audience's experience with the mummers' play was not far removed from the cast's at the beginning of our workshop process. To begin with, auditions and callbacks included significantly more than the typical monologue and cold reading. In his or her audition, each actor was asked to do four things. The following comes from a sheet, given to the actors, with the heading "What Are We Doing in Auditions Today?"

1. CHAIRacter Exercise (dependent on time): Given two characters, enter and sit down as the first, return to neutral, and then move into the second, stand up, and exit.
2. Monologues: 1 ½ minute classical monologues are encouraged, but not required. Please remember that if we cut you off, nothing is wrong. We have a very limited time period. Remember: in this audition, direct address to the audience is encouraged, including Ben, Kevin and other students auditioning.
3. Cold Reads: Look over each of the cold reads provided. We will give you one of those in your audition. Direct address is important here too, and remember, you're on a thrust stage, so see what it's like to act on diagonals!
4. Neutral Mask Movement Exploration: As a group, you'll be given a painting and asked to *be* it physically. Rather than simply describing or miming it ("There's a bridge here, so I'll stand like a bridge") you're being asked to make a decision on the energies of the painting and to work with a group to express them. What are the physical energies of bridges: long wide, spanning, solid? What is the energy of fire? What is the energy of the color green, purple, or blue? Begin turned to the back wall. When you as a member of your group feel the impulse to begin, turn around. Connect with the audience, look at them as an actor, and then begin your piece. When the energy begins to drop, simply come to stillness, and turn again to the back wall.

You will have two minutes to discuss with your group, and three minutes to rehearse (five minutes total) before performance.

It should be obvious from the handout the degree to which we asked auditioning actors to deal with the unknown. If an actor was unfamiliar with thrust staging, the idea of acting on diagonals might have been totally foreign to them. The final exercise, which I drew from a Lecoq Neutral Mask intensive I attended in 2011, is extremely complicated. Auditions tested the actors' tolerance and enthusiasm for ambiguity and ability to work together. Callbacks lasted two days, during which most of the actors were asked to be there the entire time. The actors sang with Lauren, did beginning acrobatics and imagined themselves as predatory animals with Kevin, and did movement exercises and produced their own versions of the mummers' play with me.

Once we had cast the show, we began the rehearsal process with a week of table work and a series of the exercises Kevin and I had been so eager to introduce the cast to. Our table work was meant equally to help the actors to understand what they were saying, often by having them do word-for-word paraphrases of their lines, and to discuss the themes and structure of *The Winter's Tale* and my concept for the production. The actors all expressed to me that having a deep understanding of the show helped their work immensely. Robin Crigler told us that understanding the concept behind the show helped him to become comfortable with what I asked him to do:

Understanding the concept I think was a big thing for me [...] This was a totally different thing from that, in terms of audience interaction, for me. I feel like there was a point in this production where once we started doing runs, I just became totally okay with the concept. And totally secure in being in my blacks, being in my costume, just like walking around, milling about people, whatever the heck I needed to do, and not feeling any of that bad, like, oh, I'm an actor, a point at which I'd lost all my qualms about that, and that was immensely gratifying to me.

Most nights, we would follow table work with acting exercises. In the first week, they played games with status, in which they drew a card from a deck and had to act the status of their card and understand their relationship to the space given that status; they experimented with gaze—holding one another’s gazes, dropping one another’s gazes, looking up and down one another; and I had them do a series of exercises to help them create stronger images as they spoke text, including a pointing exercise designed to make their acting more specific. Later, we had a party in a rehearsal, where they ate, talked, tossed a Frisbee around, and played music, as I watched and directed them to perform a series of increasingly specific and urgent objectives by passing them notes on scraps of paper. This was designed to help them with the act IV, scene iv festival scene, in which we sought to create a believably chaotic carnival at the same time as we tackled the characters’ necessary objectives.

Just as our audiences had trouble embracing non-normative theatre-watching behavior, I found it very difficult to break out of a more traditional, goal-oriented approach to directing, and I have no doubt that the cast occasionally wanted a less open-ended process. Ultimately, the workshop was a tamer process than I thought it might be. I had not let go of my original intent to direct *The Winter’s Tale*, and my cast was excited to perform *The Winter’s Tale*, so in the end, we performed *The Winter’s Tale*: we even printed “It’s the whole damn thing!” on our posters. A more radical reconstruction of the play might have helped the audience to break down their inhibitions or reservations about participation more. As it was, the traditional theatrical elements of the play— such as its cohesive and intact script and its physical environment based upon the stages at the Blackfriars and Globe— might have been too familiar for the audience to wholly

overcome. The effect was that we ended up experimenting with liminality, carnival, and *communitas* within traditional structures of Shakespearean performance. We pushed our boundaries to the edge of the recognizable.

Just the name of the workshop, though, had a particular power for the cast of *The Winter's Tale*. For some reason, whenever we said the word “workshop,” we added jazz hands—outstretched palms and fingers, shaking from the wrist. The gesture emphasized a certain campiness and silliness to the concept, but also became a mantra through sheer repetition. After we began using this gesture, we were constantly reminded of the workshop ideal, one that rejected seriousness and encouraged play and exploration. Although the workshop never made it quite as far as we might have planned, its essential message was ever present, and knowing that was very freeing. I felt significantly more comfortable with the idea of the workshop behind me because it meant that I would not always have to provide an answer or pretend to know what I was talking about. Christine Jacobs told me:

For me, ‘workshop’ meant very collaborative but also very experimental...we would try things and even put things in the show ... still weren’t sure if they were going to work, but put them in the show anyway, to try them, because it was a workshop and not a full show. It was very freeing but also...very scary sometimes.

By many standards, *The Winter's Tale* was a full show, though occasionally not a fully polished one. I am suggesting that perhaps by repeating the name of the workshop so frequently and by internalizing its ideals, we were able to find freedom and *communitas* at every turn.

Catherine also suggested that “because we knew the script so well, and knew our characters so well, and because it was an experimental process, like you said, we were

able to add stuff... I know that I changed stuff for the Saturday night show, little things here and there...we had some freedom.”

The strongest effects of the workshop process were the bonds between cast members. I have never worked with such a cohesive, enthusiastic ensemble of friends and equals before. When I pointed this out to the actors at our post-mortem, Will Hart, who played Florizel, replied, “Yes, I think we love each other!” The strength of their relationships and trust in one another allowed them to handle the difficulty of the process and the challenges I asked them to meet. In our post-mortem, Catherine Strycharz attributed their successes in the performance to *communitas* amongst them:

There came a point at which you weren’t uncomfortable with it anymore, and you could just go out there and be very free with it. I think that that came a lot with the *communitas* that we experienced as a cast, and the fact that we could rely on each other and were so comfortable with one another [...] ‘If I do this, you guys will back me up and it’ll be fine.’ We all felt very, very comfortable with one another.

Christine Jacobs agreed, and echoing Lauren’s comment from Saturday evening’s talk-back, attributed some of their “fearlessness” and comfort with one another to significant weirdness early in the process:

I think that’s why I’ve heard from so many different people [...] that every single performance in this was so strong, and I think that’s because we were all fearless in our choices and fearless in how much we threw into the parts, because we knew we had ten other people doing the same thing and understanding what we were doing and backing us up [...] You sort of get that with other productions, but I think the way this was structured ... and maybe it was also the way we started it out too, just throwing us into weird things [...] those first...that first month of rehearsals... just *looking* at each other, we did so many weird things, but I think that helped, because that made us, like, just ready to throw things, and because we were all throwing things [...] Because we were all sort of in this weird place together, it made it okay to do weird things.

Rachel Wimmer, who played a number of characters including Emilia and Mopsa, felt that our approach to the production helped her to avoid stage fright:

Personally, for me, no matter how many times I go onstage, I get the shakes, and I get really nervous... I had absolutely none of that in this show, and I don't know if it was because of the audience interaction. ...I don't know what it was, but it felt good to not have that.

The cast also expressed the essential egalitarianism of the process. Daniel pointed out that each of the actors had roughly the same number of lines, since each actor played multiple characters, and committed roughly the same amount of time, since many rehearsals consisted of exercises or improvisations for which the entire cast was needed. The cast agreed that this anti-hierarchy could be attributed both to the personalities of the individual actors and to our insistence that all ideas would be accepted and considered. When I began our post-mortem discussion by asking "What was the 'workshop,' anyway," Catherine Strycharz replied that "All of our ideas were considered and included, and it was really a collaborative effort, rather than it just being you, [Ben]." Not only was this the *modus operandi* of *The Winter's Tale* Workshop, but it was also the desired outcome of our performances: dialogism and heteroglossia, multiple perspectives acting as antidote to a single, hierarchically supported one!

In *Environmental Theatre*, Richard Schechner writes that audiences that came to see *Dionysus in 69* wanted so badly to participate because they perceived of The Performance Group as a community with its own rites, religions, and culture: the events they witnessed as part of the performance were so beyond the pale that audience members thought they must have been more than theatre; they must have been the real life of the Group (43). They perceived the Group as a community and wanted to be a part of it. I asked the actors in *The Winter's Tale* if they thought that audience members had noticed the strength of their relationships and, as a result, desired strongly to join their community. They replied that in small ways they had. One girl who was friends with a

few of the actors returned to see the show multiple times, helped us to strike the set, and later came to a cast get-together: the cast told me she had felt “really connected to the show.” Additionally, Catherine’s boyfriend Luc, a student at another university, had come down to see the Saturday shows, and as a result spent a significant amount of time with us. During a later phone conversation, Catherine told us, he had told her that he “missed the show,” despite only being present for two days at the very end of the process.

Victor Turner is right to perceive *communitas* in the workshop process: my cast certainly had very strong moments of *communitas* and formed strong friendships and working relationships as a result. When we spoke about the workshop as a process that encouraged exploration and curiosity and rejected narrow-minded interpretations of success or failure, we were speaking about the qualities it shared with *communitas*. For a show meant to create *communitas* and dialogism, there was no better way to structure the rehearsal process.

The cast and production staff agreed that they experienced *communitas* while working together, whether or not they were able to extend this feeling to the audience. What is remarkable though is the degree to which our experiences during the process were reflected, in a condensed period of time, by the experiences of the audience. Both cast and audience experienced initial weirdness, which brought them together. Both were asked to interact with unknowns, which might have meant unfamiliar forms of drama as well the variables of live theatrical interaction. Both went through a “collective loosening-up.” At the same time, the workshop process reflected the qualities of *The Winter’s Tale* that we sought to highlight, enacting the play’s redemptive anti-structure, play, and dialogism in our rehearsals and the culture of our production.

Conclusion

*It is requir'd
You do awake your faith.*
-Paulina, *The Winter's Tale*, V.iii.94-95

In my thesis I have articulated a new analysis of *The Winter's Tale* using the works of Victor Turner to structure our understanding of the play. The search for social drama, liminality, carnival, and communitas in the pages and on the stages of *The Winter's Tale* opens the play to myriad new interpretive approaches and successfully provides a framework for analysis of its thematic and structural elements: its approach to time, its redemptive second half, and its themes of art and life. My senior directorial, staged in October, 2012, doubly enacted that understanding of Shakespeare's play in performance: first, in the collaborative and exploratory zone of our workshop, and second in our five performances of the play.

I persist in my assertion that a more radical reconstruction of the play may have brought us closer to true, total, anti-structural, *I-Thou* relationships between actor and audience reflective of the kind that I believe are necessary to the redemption of Leontes's actions in the world-of-the-play. Our production though, sought community and dialogue at the edges of tradition, finding ways to open the world of the play without entirely sacrificing text or focus. Because our production's style could have swung from closed to open performance, we were better able to examine the contrast between the play's two halves, along with the places in which anti-structure forces its way into the first half (often in the figure of Mamillius) or hierarchy rears its head in the second (as in Polixenes's diatribe). Additionally, because of the ways in which our production was inspired by "original practice" Shakespearean theaters such as the American Shakespeare

Center's Blackfriars or the Globe Theater, we were also able to draw useful conclusions about theaters' uses of direct address to the audience, universal lighting, proximity of the audience to the actors, audience interaction, and combinations of all of the above. As I suggested in my chapter on liminality and *communitas* in theatre, the huge range of potential audience responses to these methods of performance and staging, from total discomfort to total engagement and participation, is too wide to fully take stock of, but it is certain that the introduction of theatrical methods into a performance increase the degree to which the audience perceives their presence as integral to the creation of that performance. They begin to examine themselves and one other and their role in the theatrical event. In *The Winter's Tale* this kind of examination by the audience perfectly supports the play's questions about the relationship between art and life and about stories.

The production also helped to develop my theories on the liminal space in theatre between actors and audience in which true *communitas* may develop. Such a theory has significant implications on the ways we understand actors and audiences' relationships and interaction, presence in the theatre, and the effects that watching theatre as part of a community might have on people.

Most importantly, the audience overwhelmingly felt as though their experience with *The Winter's Tale* benefited from our staging and our desire to welcome them into the community of the event. There were several audience members who returned multiple times only because they felt a connection with the show. Many others understood the positive effects of their interaction with the characters: for example, one audience member felt that she understood and was able to pity Leontes much more only because he had spoken directly to her, and this helped her to understand his ultimate redemption at

the end of the play (talk-back, 20 October, 2012, matinee). After the production was over, Kevin Place and I were gratified when we noted that we had successfully navigated our way through the notoriously tricky act IV, scene iv. Our approach, ceding the agency of focus to the audience and creating a big, messy party, was effective and managed to keep up the play's tension and the audience's interest. I often proudly note that we retained every discrete moment of the scene. *The Flat Hat*, William and Mary's student newspaper, endorsed our production's inclusive goals:

This production strives for a sense of audience inclusion. Characters enter and exit scenes from a gap in the middle of the seating area, creating a world in which the audience is a part of the action, not merely seated outside or around it. The actors themselves feed off the audience's gaze, successfully forging an emotional connection across the abyss between thespian and theatergoer (Bolt).

Yet another audience member saw *communitas* in the interactions between other audience members and the actors, which were so natural she thought that the audience members were planted (Talk Back, 18 October 2012)!

However powerful the community of the event was for the audience, it could not have been stronger than the community built by the eleven actors who took *The Winter's Tale* and made it their own. This intense ensemble dynamic was made possible in part by the workshop format of our process, which enacted our theories on *communitas* as effectively and adeptly as our performance. In my chapter about the workshop, I noted parallels between the experiences of the actors in the workshop process and the experiences of the audiences in the performances. These parallels existed because both in process and performance, our production enacted the ideals my analysis perceives in *The Winter's Tale* and sought the production of *communitas*.

At the beginning of our work, I recited one of Paulina's lines to my cast: "It is required you do awake your faith." I told them that our workshop process would require a great deal of faith: we would explore, get to know one another and *The Winter's Tale*, resist closing off possibilities, and embrace ambiguity. I thought it would be dangerous but ultimately rewarding.

In part, it is faith that Leontes lacks, and it is this lack of faith that brings his downfall. He cannot countenance the stories of others because he has no faith in them. When Kevin Inouye spoke about the importance of focus to the director in our talk-back, he noted that "It requires a lot of trust in your audience to give that tool to them." It took great faith to stage a play that incorporated two pre-twentieth-century folk dramas that none of our audience members had previously encountered, a play in which two actors playing sheep would nuzzle the audience's knees, a play in which the audience could look at or listen to whatever they liked, and a rehearsal process in which actors were told to speak to an audience when all they had for seven weeks were rooms of empty chairs. *Communitas* rejects hierarchy, motivation, differentiation, and structure. It requires that you do awake your faith.

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