Tragicomedy on the Road to Modernity: Interpreting the Genre of *The Winter's Tale*

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March 25, 2019

Contents

Introduction

The Winter's Tale was first performed in the spring of 1611, five years before Shakespeare's death, in the Globe playhouse, on an open and uncluttered stage.[1] It was played again in the fall of the same year in King James's court; at Whitehall, for royal marriage festivities, in 1613; and there are records of court performances in 1618, 1623, and 1633.[2] This is enough to infer that it was a popular play, more so, for instance, than *King Lear*. What was this play? How could it be interpreted? And what was at stake in those interpretations?

From one perspective, it was daring and different. Out of Italian and French interpretation of Aristotle's *Poetics* had come the idea that any play on the stage ought to represent one day and one place and, as a corollary, that there ought to be one permanent and realistic set. Men like Sidney in 1581 wanted the unities and scenic literalism for the English stage as well, and Shakespeare did respect the rules in both his first play *The Comedy of Errors* and his last *The Tempest.*[3] But in between, he was accused of often failing to do so.[4] *The Winter's Tale*, with its outlandish jump of 16 years, its mixtures of structure and theme, and its coastal Bohemia, seemed to flaunt its disrespect as a particular kind of play, a 'tragicomedy'.

On the other hand, the play was not different at all. It was a romance and played on the native, popular folk drama tradition, with a tale of a tyrant and a long-lost princess, of a prince falling in love with a shepherdess, of young lovers confronting a forbidding father. Furthermore, the victimized queen's miraculous return to life at play's end suggests that Shakespeare was drawing on a long-established English and Christian dramatic tradition, which has itself been labelled tragicomic with the benefit of hindsight.

What does it mean, then, for *The Winter's Tale* to be a tragicomedy? This paper traces the sources of and responses to the play over time in order to describe its position in the history of tragicomedy. Sources are genres, plots, themes, and characters which Shakespeare imitated or played on, and largely separate into two traditions: the classical and the Christian; making the play simultaneously an examination and juxtaposition of tragedy and comedy, and an interpretation of sin, redemption, and the story of Christ. Responses to the play include performances and adaptations up through to when melodrama as a genre began to take over the Western world; all of which, like Shakespeare's own response to traditions, can also be seen as instances of interpretation of tragicomedy.

Shakespeare in *Hamlet* jokes about the classification of genres by having Polonius call the players the "best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral …".[5] As the labels proliferate one begins to lose faith in their meaningfully differentiating power. To take seriously the name of tragicomedy might also lead to such a pitfall. Hopefully this paper will show, rather, that since it was written at a time of religious, social, and political change in English history - arguably, at a time that began modernity - *The Winter's Tale* in its various forms and contexts serves as a focal point for considering continuations, conflicts, and cleavages in those patterns of thought underlying classical and Christian traditions that gave rise to the notion of 'tragicomedy'. To discuss shifts in interpretation over time means looking for the essential tensions between responses.

Tragicomedy before *The Winter's Tale*: Influences and Sources

Shakespeare played simultaneously on an English tradition of Christian ideas and drama and on Renaissance notions about the classics for *The Winter's Tale* (hereafter referred to as *WT* and cited in text[6]). The two lines of influence stood in a certain contrast to each other, but it is clear that the Christian preceded the classical as a set of influencing ideas and tensions. Ristine suggests that the classical influence was primarily felt in the field of critical discussion rather than practice, while the reverse was true of the medieval religious influence. Typical characteristics of the Elizabethan stage, owed to the medieval, include a blending of serious with comic material, a love for poetic justice, and a "disregard for humanistic notions of decorum", where decorum was the notion that developed out of engagement with Ancient Greek texts.[7] But Christianity and Christian drama gave much more than that.

The English Christian Dramatic Tradition

How did the generic form and themes of *WT* draw on its popular and prevalent medieval predecessors? These include Latin church drama, vernacular plays like the mystery 'Creation to Doom cycle' plays, and morality plays. They provided the basis for ideas about time and salvation, guilt and innocence, associations between objects and meaning, and especially the structure and meaning of *WT*'s final statue scene. Mystery plays in particular gave Shakespeare the structure of a fall from grace, a trial and innocent's sacrifice, a birth promising redemption, the flight of the innocent from the tyrant, and a resurrection at the end.[8]

Early Liturgical Drama and the Sight of Revelation

We begin with Latin church drama as the set of conventions that started it all; although in the Middle Ages comedies by Terence and Plautus *were* preserved out of ancient Greek and Roman drama and adapted for Christian subjects, the Church largely denounced it and created its own.[9] In the 10th century, short Biblical passages were set to music as tropes for ceremonies, which then evolved; for example, the trope for Christ's resurrection, *Quem quaeritis*, became a longer Easter drama.[10] The audience was predominantly clerical, the setting monasteries, and the language Latin. The stage typically consisted of a *mansion* in the back and a *platea* as the acting area, with the opposite sides of the stage denoting the realms of Heaven and Hell.[11] We note then that our Renaissance play – performed in court and in public, and, moreover, in English – has distant roots in a system of meaning particular to the Roman Catholic service of the Middle Ages, which differed from it in purpose and context.

This difference partly lies in assumptions of shared belief about the drama's audience and that audience's relation to the drama. Indeed generally, though much of the religious drama of the Middle Ages, like *WT,* seems to have also been about 'raging tyrants, and clowns', its 'life-blood' were religious, not dramatic.[12] Thus, it is not only commonly believed today that a medieval audience already would not have thought in terms of the modern dichotomy between religious and secular spheres of existence, such that representations on stage of acts like miracles *would* have had to them the same kind of legitimate reality as that of their everyday lives, but unlike plays that in Georg Lukacs's terminology would be considered true plays today, the earliest liturgical dramas did not create independent 'worlds' confronting the audience's world.[13] Instead, as Hans-Jurgen Diller has written extensively, they drew on the liturgical ceremony for

the world that they represented and assumed a congregation of participants rather than a confronted audience.[14]

The idea of dramatic competence could also express this gulf between liturgical and Jacobean dramas, as Diller writes. A dramatic world can't be truly self-contained, or it would be incomprehensible to its audience. Instead, it has a double layer of information, such that its signs signify simultaneously to the audience - inhabitants of the 'First', ordinary world - and to inhabitants of the 'Second', dramatic world. Accordingly, there's a question of the extent to which signs in the Second world are regulated by considerations internal to the Second world, and the extent to which those signs are consistent and therefore dramatically competent. *WT* is undoubtedly regulated to a great extent by internal and aesthetic considerations, whereas in the Latin church dramas put on to represent such scenes as the Women at the Sepulchre, the Shepherds and the Magi at the Manger, the time and place represented were liturgically regulated.[15] For example, the earliest of its kind, the *Visitatio Sepulchri* of St Aethelwold's *Regularis Concordia* (ca. 970) was performed at a time corresponding in the church year to the event it represented. Following Karl Young's distinction between 'representing' and 'impersonating', the idea being that impersonation suggests a deeper and more complete relation between representor and represented, and that dramatic improprieties arise out of the side-by-side presence of impersonating and non-impersonating features - for example, when an actor refers to his character in the third person, which often occurs in liturgical dramas, but not in *WT* – liturgical drama was incompetent.[16] By implication, plays full of improprieties come at a primitive stage before the genre evolves towards drama with counterparts in the represented world, i.e., plays like *WT* which iconically rather than symbolically represent the world.

Interesting as it is to express the historical development towards *WT* as development towards impersonation without improprieties, Diller points out that it would mischaracterize liturgical drama to suggest that it was ever interested in such a goal. It is already somewhat of a misnomer to call the viewers of church drama the audience: better to call them addressees. As in medieval paintings, the First World beholder is the addressee of the represented gesture such that he should subordinate and assimilate his subjective consciousness to the represented object.[17] Any emotional empathy on his part, for example, would be *mere* empathy, and not the intended kind of participation.[18] Furthermore, *WT* and in general the dramas of Shakespeare's time had other sources and influences – a wealth of history separates the Middle Ages and the Renaissance – so that it is also misleading to speak of development as if there were a direct line of descent. Comparing between church drama and *WT* is fruitful more simply because it highlights the echoes of liturgical worlds, of Christian address and ideas, in *WT*.

The first echo is the allegorical significance of location. Recall that opposite sides of the liturgical stage denoted good and evil. Darryll Grantley argues that Shakespeare plays on this long tradition wherein locations are morally contrasted via a pattern of corruption and subsequent movement.[19] Leontes's jealousy causes the court, which had been defined by a spirit of friendship, to be defined by injustice and lament; the play moves to a pleasant pastoral setting, but then Polixenes's anger corrupts it; the innocent lovers flee to the court, which has been prepared for them by Leontes's penitence; finally, the play moves to a pure and secluded location for the redemption scene. It is at this point that the drama of the Middle English Roman Catholic Church also gave to *WT* the tradition of an association between graves and altars, since altars were erected over the graves of saints and martyrs (or relics), and dramas like the *Visitatio Sepulchri* took place in that part of the church as the site of divine presence and communication[20]. When *WT* was first performed in the early 17th century, Wickham argues that a

tomb was used to suggest that the statue was in a "chapel" (5.3.86); specifically, that it was mounted on a sarcophagus.[21]

WT also maintains a link with the world of early church drama by its typological philosophy. As Diller argues, the relationship between representation and reality in liturgical drama is based in typology or figural interpretation in soteriological thinking, according to which events have both salvific significance in their own time and symbolic-referring significance to events in the future.[22] Characters in the Old Testament, for example, are prefigurations of Christ in a history preordained by God. So just as Mass repeats the sacrificial death of Christ, medieval church drama performance is a repetition and elevation of the event to which it refers, while leaving itself and the signified event in their respective contexts.[23] And the structure of *WT* is typological, if gently so, because it is about two generations, where children repeat and redeem their parents. The figure of Time that intervenes at the halfway point in the play to narrate the jump in generations announces his "power/To … o'erwhelm custom", not only to suggest the existence of an inhuman structural principle more permanent and powerful than transitory human events, but moreover to suggest that this principle is unchanging, since he then says:

> Let me pass
> The same I am, ere ancient'st order was
> Or what is now received: I witness to
> The times that brought them in … (4.1.9-12)

Each small time brings in what seems to be a different order before a court that coolly witnesses, that stays the same, and, by implication, organizes each order into a larger recursive structure.

Such a conception of time allows drama to represent ancient peoples and places in that suspiciously English, contemporary manner, because there were no importantly enduring differences between time periods.[24] Liturgical drama and *WT* as it was written and performed in Shakespeare's time did not prioritize historical accuracy and was therefore full of anachronisms. Another way to say this is that "Time future and Time past coexist with Time present" in *WT*.[25] Shakespeare combines the existences of a Delphic oracle, a daughter of the Emperor of Russia, kings of Sicily and Bohemia, the folk of Elizabethan England, and an Italian Renaissance artist.

Particularly in the last act, which revolves around the question of the future and the possibilities of Leontes remarrying for an heir and of Florizel and Perdita marrying in defiance of Polixenes's wishes, Shakespeare continually plays on the concept of children as repetitions of their parents. Paulina, the most knowledgeable character and the one to reveal Hermione, is shown throughout 5.1 navigating the tension between repetition and replacement. Before the audience knows that she intends to reunite Leontes with Hermione, they watch her insist on Hermione's uniqueness, calling her "unparalleled" (5.1.16), and arguing with the other courtiers about Leontes marrying again because another wife could never measure up to the first. At the same time, she forces Leontes to agree only to marry again by her consent to one "as like Hermione as is her picture" (5.1.74). When Perdita is described as "peerless" (5.1.94), she reacts furiously at the threat that the daughter could be better than the mother, but before the prince's arrival, she takes the opportunity to remind Leontes that his own dead prince would have "paired/Well with this lord" since they would have been of the same age (5.1.116-17). The children arrive, asking for help; Leontes calls Florizel a "print" of his father (5.1.125) and tells Florizel and Perdita that he had

> …lost a couple that 'twixt heaven and earth
> Might thus have stood begetting wonder as
> You, gracious couple, do. (5.1.132-134)

In looking at Florizel and Perdita, Leontes is in fact presented with a nightmarishly exact repetition of his past fear – that his best friend and his wife were having an affair, and that they had had a child together. But here the couple beget "wonder" rather than horror. A new horror presents itself as a possibility: Perdita looks so like Hermione that Leontes tells Florizel he'd "beg his precious mistress" for his own (5.1.223); Paulina swiftly reminds him of the peerless Hermione. And in the next scene, as Empson pointed out, the old shepherd, standing by Perdita's reunion with her real father, is described "like a weather-bitten conduit of many kings' reigns" at the conclusion of a long description of the royal families' jubilations (5.2.55), which thereby qualifies that jubilation as a transitory moment within Time.[26]

The fact of typology, in church drama as in *WT*, needs to be explained via a mediator to the onlookers. Thus the 'Revelation situation' that Diller categorizes as the essential characteristic of early liturgical drama turns into this statue scene of the fifth act, where a priest faces a congregation or, more generally, a Revealer faces Recipients, the characteristic structure depending on the hierarchical division of roles.[27] The Revealer knows and orders, the Recipients respond and obey; the Revealer has a fixed physical position, the Recipients can move; the Revealer has authority, moral and otherwise. Character and relations between characters are largely exhausted by these roles. And a set of relays ensues, as further repetitions of the main transfer of information, in order to more finely grade the distinction between the characters-as-onlookers and the audience-as-onlookers and thus include the addressees in the congregation. E.g., the Marys in the *Visitatio Sepulchri* pass on the message to the chorus.

How far can the statue scene be called a Revelation situation? It is true that 5.3 is not exhausted as a Revelation situation and characters are not exhausted by their roles. Hermione begins as a statue but her first movement and subsequent stepping down towards the rest of the characters constitutes a transformative moment because she meets them on their human level. But in other respects 5.3 powerfully recalls liturgical revelation scenes: a "reverential" group approaches the statue, the focus shifts to an individual's emotional reactions in an increasing emotional buildup, and finally a truth is revealed.[28] Hermione's physical position is fixed while Paulina acts as mediator and the characters of the court as the congregation, so that Perdita, for example, calls herself a "looker-on" (5.3.84). The possible judgment of Heaven had been continually referred to by the court, Paulina, and Leontes (e.g., 5.1.5, 45-46, 172). Shakespeare also gives a relay *before* the actual revelation of 5.3, when members of the court tell each other what happened during the family reunion. This echoes 1.1, where courtiers discuss the politics of the royal families, which gives an impression of the extent to which the family drama resonates outward, at least within the Second World.

What's clear is Shakespeare's self-consciousness of how and why Revelation situations are effective. Paulina tests and acknowledges the possibility of her viewers' doubts. Before she expressly declares "It is required/You do awake your faith" (5.3.94-95), the belief that the statue could live is referred to as possible "superstition", "madness", and "afflict[ion]" on the part of its viewers (5.3.43, 73, 75). The possibility, in fact, "mocks" them (5.3.19-20, 68). Paulina is finally compelled to say,

> If you can behold it,

> I'll make the statue move indeed, descend
> And take you by the hand. But then you'll think –
> Which I protest against – I am assisted
> By wicked powers. (5.3.87-91)

which is a far cry from a straightforward revelation of the divine. The use of "if" and "can" destabilize the entire promise of Hermione's life as something which has an objective existence external to the viewers' attitudes, and responsibility for the miracle is shifted towards a witchlike figure, not a divine messenger. There's a great deal to say about the reasons for the self-consciousness that characterizes the scene. We will focus on one: that the manner in which Shakespeare's revelation differs from the liturgical is symptomatic of an anxiety over visual media which had been intensified over time and handed down to the Renaissance. The extent to which the viewer accepts the illusion of presence constitutes a continuing though not a static or a simple problem for Christian drama.

In Michael O'Connell's analysis of the status of visual media in early modern theater, the anxiety originates in a deep-seated conflict between language and visual representation which always makes itself known during periods of revolution of technologies of representation – as Shakespeare's time was.[29] He points out the many issues at stake in the conflict, for example: on the one hand, language is evocative, allowing subjectivity, while the visual is manipulative, coercing affective responses; on the other hand, language belongs to the powerful in history, constituting a kind of cultural hegemony, while the visual is the nonverbal language of those who are marginalized, particularly of women.[30]

Most importantly for Shakespeare and early religious drama, language and visual representation can also be seen as conflictual legitimate ways of knowing God. Clearly Judaism privileges text and speech. For a long time it was only practiced orally. The central prayer, said twice daily and as the last words before death, asks Israel to hear (שְׁמַע, Deuteronomy 6:4) that God is the one Lord; the name and not the presence is the central idea. The story of the ten commandments also directly contrasts the textual commandments against the idolatrous golden calf, which is not to mention that the second commandment reads "You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image, or any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth" (Exodus 20:4), so that for hundreds of years the Jews had no visual art. An amusing and telling legacy of this attitude is illustrated by Jerusalem's rejection in 1995 of a gift from Florence, a replica of Michelangelo's nude David[31]. The Judaic tradition stands in contrast to the much more widespread attitudes across the Mediterranean. As O'Connell writes:

> … in the terms of Hellenistic thought … the [Jewish] temple was built for the *idea* [i.e., the *name*] of God. But the difference between *name* and *idea* is in fact the heart of the matter. The root of *idea* is the verb ἰδεῖν, to see; its original meaning concerned form and visual appearance. A Greek temple would have sought the provisional indwelling of the god through a conceptual pact based on the *eidolon* (a cognate of *idea*), the image. In Hebraic terms *eidolon* becomes the idol, the object of opprobrium.[32]

Christianity agrees with both to an extent and therein lies the tension. The history of antitheatricality is a symptom of a long-standing suspicion against visual representation.

Tertullian, an influential Christian writer, argued that acting is falsification.[33] The most popular textbook of the Middle Ages, *Etymologiae*, which had been written by a Spanish bishop in the 600s, warned against pictures that produce illusions instead of recalling the actual model.[34] And Erasmus, not an iconoclast himself, yet insisted that in the printed gospels Christ lived more effectively than in reality and with more presence than if he were actually looked on.[35] But the very tradition of Christian drama suggests a belief in the power and legitimacy of visual representation and, in particular, in the very cognitive and affective processes it evokes in the addressee/viewer by its illusionism. In O'Connell's review – and in Shakespeare's statue scene – connecting various ideas about visual representation is the central notion of its psychic power or effectiveness, which has to do with its verisimilitude, or the extent to which 'realism' is achieved. David Freedberg suggests that realistic images are effective because they seem to capture or incorporate reality – which, in the case of drama, is literally the case – such that *sign*, *signifier*, and *signified* are fused and nonarbitrary. [36] This is why Diller writes that for medieval aesthetics "the individual phenomenon with its specific details was relevant only as a reflection and sign of a more general significance … too much detail and realism were even suspect in the Middle Ages"[37]. Central to all these images is the human body – which, in the theater, is achieved *by* a human body – as the image of ourselves. And Christianity holds that God is embodied in a human body, an embodiment that sanctifies the body and the senses: Christ is called "the *image* of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15-20, emphasis mine). Thus O'Connell writes that for England there developed "a deep disjunction in the culture's religious experience".[38] During the Reformation in the 16th century, when the Church of England broke away from the Roman Catholic Church, the issue of the image erupted as a crisis of iconoclasm which led to the banning of biblical theater (the later forms of Christian drama, described in more detail in the following sections) in the 1570s. [39] But secular theater came to be considered idolatrous too and was closed in 1642.

Shakespeare reacted against the critique of theater by insisting on the presence within the illusion, the successful realization of the symbol, in the Revelation scene. After exploring the viewers' doubt, Hermione yet embodies the statue. But throughout the text of the First Folio, Shakespeare establishes a balanced, skeptical position on the issue of the word versus the image. In 5.2 when secondary characters tell each other about the reunion and reconciliation between Leontes and Perdita and Leontes and Polixenes, the action is narrated instead of shown: Shakespeare confirms himself as a verbal artist. Richard Meek points out that many other significant events, including the encounter with the oracle, Antigonus's dream and death "are conspicuous by their absence" (147). But the steward tells Rogero, "That which you'll hear you see … Did you see the meeting of the two kings? … then you have lost a sight which was to be seen, cannot be spoken of" (5.2.31-42). Shakespeare confirms his visual art, preparing the groundwork for the next scene, which truly can only be seen, not spoken of.

Generally, the language of *WT* itself incorporates doubts as to the reliability of perceptions and representations, including linguistic representations, even as the power and importance of language is explored. William Morse writes that the representation of the difficult-to-understand Leontes shows "the opacity and density of a language that represents rather than the clarity of a language assumed to represent".[40] The tragedy of the first half is based on Leontes believing what he thinks he sees, despite what amounts to no more than the words and advice of people around him; the comedy of the second half is based in part on what Rawdon Wilson has described as Autolycus "sell[ing] narrative ballads the stories of which must seem to

lack referential certitude".[41] Barbara Hardy goes as far as to say that the play is "about the morality of narrative, full of lies, slanders and crises of telling and listening".[42]

World-Containing Drama and the Emotional Figure

The 11th century saw an increasingly world-containing, detailed liturgical drama through the dramatization of new Biblical narratives, particularly the encounter between the Magi and Herod, which originated a new and long-lasting figure in Herod, the first Western stage villain.[43] A significant characteristic of this later liturgical drama is its treatment and gendering of emotions within the larger structure of fall and redemption. Diller writes that such a development is "a mirror of changes in the history of piety" which came to emphasize "personal devotion, concrete-sensual contemplation, and emotional participation".[44] The emotional figure of Herod constitutes an important image on which Shakespeare draws for Leontes; the figures of the Virgin Mary and of Christ serve the same role for Hermione; moreover, these associations did not cross – Leontes is closest to a mankind figure, Hermione closer to the figures that bridge between the human and the divine, and never would Leontes be associated with Christ.

Herod was cast as a ranting, abusive, bullying maniac.[45] He primarily evinced wrath to the extent that anger was his static, defining characteristic, and in the dichotomy of sympathy for or against Christ, he was cast plainly "as an enemy of God" or "as an incarnation of the evil principle".[46] Like Herod, throughout the first half of *WT* Leontes falls into anger and threatens Polixenes, Camillo, Hermione, and Perdita in a picture of "growing irrationality".[47] He especially recalls Herod when he cries "Traitors!" (1.72) and when he insults Paulina in 2.3. Herod was also diabolical in the story of the Slaughter of the Innocents, with which associations would have been evoked when Leontes orders Antigonus to kill Perdita, adding:

> If thou refuse
> And wilt encounter with my wrath, say so;
> The bastard brains with these my proper hands
> Shall I dash out. (2.3)

Additionally, in the later mystery plays Herod figures had a special "raging speech style" which may have informed actors' portrayal of Leontes's madness.[48]

To the extent that Leontes recalled Herod for Shakespeare's audiences, he was unequivocally villainous. But his characterization changes into a mankind figure in the style of the morality plays discussed below as, later in the play, Leontes comes to be extremely penitent. This is a particularly important kind of emotional state in *WT* and Christian drama generally. Eleanor Prosser writes that the late medieval emphasis on penitence was the reason for the development of the mystery plays.[49]

Unlike the portrayal of wrath, the portrayal of grief via the lament began to allow for onlooker empathy, which was a "new dimension of experience" in liturgical drama and was primarily achieved in the figure of Mary who bridged between the human and the divine.[50] With the Marian laments at the Cross, the viewers perceived Mary's grief acoustically as well as intellectually and assumed "a psychologically active role", although as witnesses rather than participants, since the arousal of compassion contributed to her veneration.[51] Hermione – a "wronged innocence" symbol through her suffering in prison and calm bearing during her unfair trial, her innocence established by the authority of the oracle, and her martyrdom cemented by her dying and appearing in Antigonus's dream – recalls the older representations of Christ but

especially the Virgin Mary as a dramatic figure.[52] At the end of her trial Hermione lists her joys and sorrows exactly as the Mary figure often does in later Christian drama, with the facts reported objectively:

> The crown and comfort of my life, your favour,
> I do give lost, for I do feel it gone
> But know not how it went. My second joy,
> And first fruits of my body, from his presence
> I am barred, like one infectious. My third comfort
> Starred most unluckily, is from my breast,
> The innocent milk in it most innocent mouth,
> Haled out to murder … (3.2.92-99)

Eventually, in vernacular drama of the 13th century, the emotionalized figure of Mary is really "psychologized and humanized".[53] Her lament comes to express the feeling that life appears meaningless to her, and viewers are asked for "pity".[54] It also casts the viewers as her antagonists, which Diller argues induces for the viewers a "cathartic and implicit" identification with sinners which continues to be important in the mystery plays.[55]

Altogether Shakespeare inherited from the religious theater associations between emotional states – primarily anger and sorrow – and spiritual states – primarily corruption and innocence – with a state of penitence as the bridge between the two extremes. But the question of the psychology of emotion is not simple. On the one hand, it seems clear that certain strands of the Christian tradition privileged the representation of the emotional figure in a manner that actually objectified the emotion for the purpose of moral instruction: the representation of a wrathful or a penitent mankind figure was instrumental, intended as commentary on the role of emotion in a moral life and not as a means of eliciting a participatory attitude on the part of the onlookers. This renders such drama anti-sentimental, or anti-nostalgic, because the representation of emotional expression does not represent the *experience of feeling*. Shakespeare, in this tradition, shows a willingness to make opaque the tyrant's emotional motivations even as he makes extreme the expression and consequences of wrath, envy, sorrow, and penitence. Leontes's jealousy and destructiveness are blind; his sixteen years of penitence are terrifying.

On the other hand, the germs for the psychologizing of emotion and the elicitation of the proper response for the proper emotion – e.g., pity for lament – do also seem to exist in this dramatic tradition, and arguably the didactic purpose, in the larger schema of innocent victim and wrathful bully, would have had the effect of polarizing responses to emotional representation. That is to say, to what extent does the drama encourage emotional identification with the victim? I think this is a question that can't be answered in general terms, but it is certainly the case that later performances and adaptations of *WT* considered emotional identification with the victim – and the question of who the victim is – vital for the play's interpretation.

Vernacular Plays: Mystery, Miracle, Cycle

In the previous sections we ignored many differences between *WT* and early religious drama in order to highlight the continuity of certain ideas and tensions in Shakespeare's play. Among the most obvious difference would be psychological complexity: whereas Hans Jantzen called the early figures "gestural" in that they are only understood by their characterizing

gestures, Shakespeare's figures can be called "verbal" in contrast, due to the supposition of a consistent psychological substratum underlying characters' speech.[56]

Diller argues that in the early dramas there was no such substratum, as evidenced by the 'context-free-ness' of dialogue in which everything relevant and nothing irrelevant is verbalized and where all communications are functional questions, commands, etc., between the roles, rather than indirect speech acts; there was also the highly non-realistic phenomenon, for example, of dividing a speech among several characters, like in antiphonal singing.[57] In considering the more properly world-containing liturgical drama of the 11th century, it is still difficult to find evidence of a *development* towards such a substratum. It is true that there developed representations of the human psyche mainly in the new figure of Herod, since his actions spring from personal motives, his speeches self-portray, and his character moves in social relationships, but psychological complexity was largely limited to Herod and did not spread to interpersonal relationships between characters.[58] Then there developed Latin miracle plays which dramatized saints' lives, seemed truly to be performed for a viewing public, and with techniques of representation that seemed to show the influence of the Roman comedies studied in the monasteries. [59] Time and space, in particular, were humanized in that their representation became more faithful to human experience, such that elements like suspense and surprise could emerge.[60] But character differentiation here too did not seem to have been a goal nor is it easy to find evidence of development. At this point it is important to consider non-dramatic influences on changes in English theater and the developing temptation-fall-repentance stories. Namely, the church "went out into the world" and the purpose of the drama became the audience.[61]

The system of property ownership was feudal in the Middle Ages: in the country, serfs served landowners, and in the towns, journeymen served masters in guilds. In the early 13th century, with the founding of the mendicant orders which traveled and lived in urban areas instead of in monasteries, theater became vernacular instead of Latin and plays called the Corpus Christi ("Body of Christ") cycles were written.[62] Since the clergy were forbidden from acting in public in 1210, these, in turn, were performed by lay guilds and confraternities, which is why they came to be called Mystery Cycles – mystery in Latin (*misterium*) meaning craft or trade. Consequently religious ceremony became less dominant as a feeling suffusing the drama.[63] Still maintaining their religious character, the plays were closely tied to social and economic reality. Guilds were responsible for plays that were relevant to their profession; for example, shipwrights performed Noah plays. And the number one reason for the appearance or disappearance of certain dramas was the economic situation of the guilds that were responsible for them.[64] The cycles were often presented at the Feast of Corpus Christi and at folk festivals in order to educate the masses. While stages continued to house a *sedes* and *platea,* plays could be performed on mobile pageant wagons. Although there was a wide variety of staging conventions and effects, the cycles were known for elaborate special effects and masks.

WT as a "tragicomedy" was a complex secular imitation of this archetypal medieval drama, the structure and elements of which are morphed but not aborted.[65] Just like in *WT*, in many of the stories of the four cycles, events are spread over two places, and, although sometimes the drama shows continuous correspondence between the two places in the form of journeys and travel, a new cutting technique emerged such that the drama would jump directly from one location to the other.[66] Also, the forerunner of the Elizabethan aside was the audience-address, which arose from the need to both instruct and entertain the viewing public.[67] This led to a shift from using text as authority for illustrative action to using text as commentary on visuals.[68]

Moreover, following William Babula's identification of the essential schemes of the medieval archetype for Shakespeare's late plays in general, it seems clear the *WT* draws on those schemes. The use of the oracle's prophecy and the many references to the judgment of Heaven give the sense that God or Providence authors all. Hermione's character arc of unfair trial, (apparent) death, and (apparent) return to life suggests the great ordering scheme of Christ's passion and resurrection; her arc is not only alluded to but structures the play, forming the basis for the tragedy in the first half and the closing scene of wonder in the second. Just as the role of Christ is to allow for the possibility of eternal reward, which is what makes a true tragicomedy and a full divine judgment (characters are judged forever, and not only in their mortal life), Hermione's return opens up the space of the future of the play.

Another inheritance is that two opposing views of life are shown in tension, with one view elevated above the other at the end. Where earlier that had been belief in and doubt of God, in Shakespeare's hands it is magic against logic. The division of good and evil is made clear through a divine order of punishments and rewards; *WT* sets Leontes up as the villain who must repent, while Hermione is the victim that suffers. Finally, the role of the miracle in *WT* is scarcely abated from its all-powerful status in medieval tragicomedy. A statue comes to life just when it needs to, eliciting the redemptive wonder and admiration in the characters who see it.

Another, less powerfully structural but not unimportant precedent was the mixing of what looked like the comic and tragic. Ristine writes that the "secularization" described above in the rise of vernacular drama led to comic scenes inserted in the serious themes of the Biblical narratives.[69] These insertions gave not only comic relief but an apparently realistic touch to the portrayal of ordinary life. The plays took full advantage of Herod's ranting and of the shrew figure in Noah's wife. And this comedy is not disconnected from the severity, but often arises spontaneously from the scene. In the Towneley cycle, Cain's murder is followed by the servant's comedy, and in the York cycle, while the servants wait for a sign of the Nativity they try singing like angels, to apparently great comic effect.[70] As the following sections discuss, the established tradition of alternating between the exalted and the low was a problem by Shakespeare's time. But Shakespeare was skilled at this kind of alternation. It is most evident in some of the tragedies – the low porter scene in *Macbeth*, for example, offending not a few people by its insertion in the tragedy.

Constituting one of the most significant precedents is the *Secunda Pastorum* of the Towneley cycle, where, describing the story of the Nativity, the "complete farce" of the sheep-stealing episode arises by virtue of the main story.[71] Some scholars have seen such comic action as a problem for the mystery plays. But Diller writes that the farce and the Nativity story are deeply connected by suspense and resolution such that the religious myth is integrated into the secular everyday world, but the everyday is also "patterned by" the religious – overall showing "a deep love for the world of everyday experience" although it's a world that needs to be saved.[72] The play thus "narrows the gap … between the everyday world and its God".[73] The medieval drama tradition had come to the point where it was deeply concerned with the representation of divine providence in the world of lived experience. Shakespeare drew on this concern. For example, he closes the court tragedy of part one with such a scene of everyday experience, where the Shepherd and Clown find Perdita. Finding the gold that Antigonus (eaten by a bear) left with her, the Clown delights:

> You're a made old man. If the sins of your youth are forgiven you, you're well to live. Gold, all gold! … Go you the next way with your findings. I'll go see if the

> bear be gone from the gentleman, and how much he hath eaten. They are never curst but when they are hungry. If there be any of him left, I'll bury it. (3.3.117-129)

What's the difference between gold and divine favor? At what point does a half-eaten corpse switch from a "him" to an "it"? Shakespeare combines consideration of economic, physical, and spiritual reality in just a few of the Clown's lines.

Finally, Shakespeare gives his characters interiority and thereby gives the cycles a new location: the mind. Where a medieval tragicomedy might pit belief against doubt through the conflict between a vice figure and a virtuous figure, Shakespeare stages the conflict within a character's psyche. The text therefore immediately accepts into itself doubts about the absolute truth of divine punishments and miracles, even as it gives the cycles a new truth, a psychological one. The audience considers the miracle of Hermione's return *as* a miracle through Leontes' emotional reaction. Here is a man faced with the redemptive impossible after having undergone the extremes of tragic transformation. The last scene is a miracle from his point of view, therefore constituting a psychological resolution that further underlies the rightness of the miracle as the *generic* resolution.

Morality Plays and Poetic Justice

One of the most important structural precedents for *WT* were the morality plays. In the late 14th century, morality plays emerged which focused on an individual's life and were full of allegorical mankind figures like *Ill-Advised* or *Everyman* as well as expressly virtue or vice figures, including the seven deadly sins. *The Castle of Perseverance* (c. 1405–25), *Mankind* (ca. 1465), and *Everyman* (1510) are examples of these "more overtly binary" plays of contrast.[74] They dramatized the struggle of the soul between the forces of good and evil in the tradition of the 4th century poem *Psychomachia*. The audience was often poor and rural; later, the interludes of the Tudor era which greatly resembled morality plays were intended for the higher class.

Ristine argues that the essence of the morality play was its didactic purpose, which in its turn necessitated serious action and mood but a happy ending for the righteous characters – usually effected by a happy turn of fortune – which thereby kept morality plays from really tragic effects. I.e., the essence of the morality plays was poetic justice. The drama needed to represent symbolic victory over evil.[75] Characters die for their sins; if the righteous die, the play insists on the "spiritual triumph in store for the innocent sufferer".[76] While *WT* does not completely exemplify this sort of poetic justice, Grantley argues that *WT* certainly emphasizes the didactic point of blessed redemption. Shakespeare's specific departures from his source, *Pandosto* by Greene, are indications of the extent to which he was following the morality plays. In Greene's story the king does feel remorse for his main crime, but the climax is made up of the rediscovery of the daughter, the king's lust for his daughter, and his suicide.[77] Shakespeare instead generally suppresses the intrigue, keeps the rediscovery off-stage to be merely narrated, and writes the real climax as the queen's return. Not only do the king and queen live at *WT*'s end, but, Grantley writes, the characters are elevated to the old roles of the redemption dramas (as we've seen).[78] Grantley suggests that Shakespeare in fact heightens the sense of redemption because he also heightened the sense of loss in the deaths of Mamillius and Antigonus.

Furthermore, *WT* follows the morality plays through the progress of Leontes and Polixenes as mankind figures, whose changes are sudden transformations from extreme guiltlessness to extreme sin to extreme penitence. The play begins with an assertion of childhood

innocence and lack of knowledge before their fall. Then Leontes' fall into jealousy is underscored by its juxtaposition against the child, the medieval "image of moral vulnerability", to whom he speaks in increasingly erratic baby talk which further emphasizes his loss of innocence.[79] (Similarly, Polixenes's fall is contrasted against the innocence of the lovers in the play's second half.) When Leontes says

> Looking on the lines
> Of my boy's face, methoughts I did recoil
> Twenty-three years, and saw myself unbreeched,
> In my green velvet coat; my dagger muzzled
> Lest it should bite its master, and so prove,
> As ornaments oft does, too dangerous.
> How like, methought, I then was to this kernel… (1.2.153-9)

Shakespeare ties the morality play cycle of innocence and fall to many of the ideas we've touched on regarding the typological notion of time, of children as imprints of their parents, and sight as the sense that suggests these anxious repetitions. That is to say, the son imitates his father's likeness by the pattern of his life, a pattern that above all is characterized by a sexual danger and inevitable fall. And though time is experienced linearly - the years go by, numbered in order, leaving "lines" on the face – the greater pattern is cyclical: the face is round, the father's reaction is to "recoil", and the child is a "kernel", a round thing that depends on the cycle of the seasons to grow.

The moral image informs the figures of Hermione and Perdita as well, who are continuously associated with "grace" (1.2.76, 80, 99, 105; 2.2.23; 4.1.24; 4.4.76; 5.2.122). Perdita especially is considered by the shepherd who adopts her a gift from fairies (3.3) and is at various times associated with Nature (2.2.59-61, and throughout 4.4), which is not to mention that her very existence fulfills the prophecy.

WT incorporates the figures of virtue and vice but disrupts the psychomachian balance in an interesting way. Paulina takes the virtue role that stays by Leontes's side and manages his repentance. Autolycus takes the vice role. Like the old vice figures he makes a "dramatically strong, attention seeking, and solo entry" to introduce himself to the audience, goes on to disguise himself and steal from an unsuspecting victim, and generally exhibits theatrical, verbally dexterous behavior.[80] He addresses the audience directly on several occasions (4.3.1-31; 4.4.596-620, 670-83, 832-43; 5.2.113-23). Most importantly, he delights in his amorality, as when he says, "Though I am not naturally honest, I am so sometimes by chance" (4.4.712-13). But Shakespeare's Vice is not equal and opposite to the virtue figure, hovering on Leontes's other side. Nor could the Vice's activity be described as *corruption*, since it is merely theft. Relations of victimage are not straightforward or balanced; at an ironically illustrative moment, Autolycus even pretends to be his own victim. And since Leontes remains also a Herod figure, ranting and miserable, he suffers as much as he inflicts suffering.[81]

Thus, though Shakespeare's text draws on the medieval Christian dramatic tradition for the Revelation scene, the conception of Time, the tension between visual and verbal representation, the emotional figure and the primary emotional and corresponding spiritual states of corruption and innocence, the plot structure of the passion and resurrection of Christ, the representation of the role of Providence in the world of everyday experience, and the use of poetic justice to close the drama, the text also questions and innovates this tradition. In the main,

WT does not cleanly set up the balanced opposites of Heaven and Hell and good and evil that deeply characterize the dualistic tradition. It only carefully maintains the dependence of 'good' on wronged, victimized innocence and that of 'bad' on what stands in authoritative opposition to the victim. Shakespeare turned instead to the Ancient Greeks for such a contrast – between tragedy and comedy.

The Ancient and Italian Renaissance Traditions

In the imagination of 16th century scholars and men of letters, the name "tragicomedy" often brings to mind classical precedents.[82] When Fletcher used the term to describe a play he wrote in part with Shakespeare called *The Faithful Shepherdess*, or when Battista Guarini said of his work that it was a tragicomedy, they meant so in terms of how their dramas engaged with classical models. Indeed, why did we begin with describing the traditions of a medieval Christian stage if classical sources must have predated medieval ones in the timeline towards "tragicomedy" as exemplified by *WT*? But since classical texts, in particular Ancient Greek and Roman texts, were only *re*discovered during the Renaissance, and since this rediscovery and interpretation itself occurred first outside of England, whatever pontificating went on about names and theories taken from the ancients and contemporary Italians could only be added on top of the traditions with which the English were already familiar and which, therefore, constituted an important basis. But of course to call it pontificating isn't completely fair since classical precedent and its interpretation were more than superficially important to *WT* in terms of its myths, philosophies, vocabularies, canons, and tensions.

Ovid and Pygmalion's Idol

The trope of the lifelike statue existed in Greek and Roman myths: Hephaestus created automata, Zeus made Pandora out of clay, and Aphrodite brought Pygmalion's ivory statue to life. This last story, told in Ovid's Latin narrative *Metamorphoses*, likely competes with the Revelation scene as a source for Shakespeare's version of the objectification of a woman. The text reads:

> Pygmalion … carved in ivory such a maid, so fair,
> As Nature could not with his art compare,
> Were she to work; but in her own defense
> Must take her pattern here, and copy hence.
> Pleased with his idol, he commends, admires,
> Adores; and last, the thing adored, desires.
> A very virgin in her face was seen,
> And had she moved, a living maid had been:
> One would have thought she could have stirred, but strove
> With modesty, and was ashamed to move.
> Art hid with art, so well performed the cheat,
> It caught the carver with his own deceit:
> He knows 'tis madness, yet he must adore,
> And still the more he knows it, loves the more …[83]

The comparison of art and nature is echoed in Perdita and Polixenes's discussion (4.4.79-108). Perdita flips the comparison, suggesting that cross-fertilization is an instance of art imitating nature, while Polixenes equivocates on the possibility that art itself is nature; and Perdita's answer, that problematically the art of appearances (through makeup) can inspire natural desires in men, is a direct critique of Pygmalion's falling in love and lust with a beautiful statue. This idea of art as a cheat and deceit is echoed in Leontes' "we are mocked with art" (5.3.68). The description of Pygmalion's reaction in the line "He knows 'tis madness" is echoed in Leontes' "the pleasure of [this] madness" (5.3.73). Notice, also, that the man's relation to the statue is explicitly sexual and that the statue is an "idol". Sight in the myth, unlike in the Christian source, is straightforwardly the sense that mediates belief, as the end of the myth elaborates, when Pygmalion discovers that Aphrodite has granted his wish for the statue to live:

> He kisses her white lips, renews the bliss,
> And looks, and thinks they redden at the kiss…
> He would believe, but yet is still in pain,
> And tries his argument of sense again,
> Presses the pulse, and feels the leaping vein.
> Convinced, overjoyed, his studied thanks, and praise,
> To her, who made the miracle, he pays:
> Then lips to lips he joined…

Leontes's reaction to Hermione echoes Pygmalion's not only in the general pattern of testing "the argument of sense" and then rejoicing, but in the focus on the lips, the physical site of reunion as well as the entrance and exit of breath, the invisible and fundamental difference between a likeness and a living figure. Leontes muses that "the very life seems warm upon her lip" (5.3.66) and Paulina warns him "the ruddiness upon her lip is wet" (5.3.81).

What's in a Name?

Greek comic poets from the period of Middle Comedy (c. 400-300 BC) invented the name tragicomedy, or rather "comedy-tragedy"; unfortunately, only titles remain of lost plays[84]. Poets called Anaxandrides and Alcaeus both wrote plays called *Comoedotragoedia*. Later, a joke in the prologue to Plautus's *Amphitryon* (c. 254-184 BC), which was a play widely read in the 16th century, offers a first chance at a definition:

> … I'll tell the subject of this Tragedy. Why have you contracted your brows? Is it because I said that this would be a Tragedy? I am a God, and I'll change it. This same, if you wish it, from a Tragedy I'll make to be a Comedy, with all the lines the same … but I'm too foolish; as though I didn't know, who am a God, that you so wish it; upon this subject I understand what your feelings are. I'll make this to be a mixture - a Tragicomedy. For me to make it entirely to be a Comedy, where Kings and Gods appear, I do not deem right. What then? Since here the servant has a part as well, just as I said, I'll make it to be a Tragicomedy.[85]

Plautus does not really argue that the mingling of characters of various ranks defines tragicomedy. Rather, he plays on the tensions inherent in the theory and practice that posit pure tragedy and pure comedy. It is in this sense that the notion of mingling between two extremes

persists in other texts with regards to dramas that don't fall on any extreme. Aristotle's *Poetics* was one such text so that, in the section concerned with tragic action, a passage reads:

> In the second rank comes the kind of tragedy which some place first. Like the Odyssey, it has a double thread of plot, and also an opposite catastrophe for the good and for the bad. It is accounted the best because of the weakness of the spectators; for the poet is guided in what he writes by the wishes of his audience. The pleasure, however, thence derived is not the true tragic pleasure. It is proper rather to Comedy, where those who, in the piece, are the deadliest enemies-- like Orestes and Aegisthus - quit the stage as friends at the close, and no one slays or is slain.[86]

Thus, given a theory of pure tragedy and pure comedy, Aristotle seemed to endorse the existence of a kind of crowd-pleasing drama that was a tragedy with a double plot, poetic justice, and a happy ending. Euripides's *Ion*, *Orestes*, *Iphigenia*, *Helen*, *Electra*, and *Alcestis*, as well as Aeschylus's *Eumenides* and *Suppliants* were considered to be just such tragedies.[87] This is not to mention that Horace, in *Ars Poetica*, wrote:

> The poet, who first tried his skill in tragic verse for the paltry [prize of a] goat, soon after exposed to view wild satyrs naked, and attempted raillery with severity, still preserving the gravity [of tragedy]: because the spectator on festivals, when heated with wine and disorderly, was to be amused with captivating shows and agreeable novelty.

which ties the mingling of gravity and levity to satyr drama. For Renaissance humanists the main example was Euripides's *Cyclops*, which was made by various people to do heavy lifting as an exemplar of ancient tragicomedy.[88] I have quoted these somewhat repetitive definitions at length because they too were made to do heavy lifting for what they seemed to show of ancient beliefs or the general proof that the ancients were familiar with a tragicomic kind of drama.

Comic versus Tragic Order

Ristine points out that since the morality plays of England were just such serious dramas with happy endings as described by Aristotle and Horace, the notion of tragicomedy was well-suited to what already existed in the English tradition.[89] What, then, can the classical models be said to have given *WT* that it didn't have from the medieval tradition? If anything, the notion of tragedy and comedy as separate, contrasting genres arguably influenced Shakespeare more than any Greek definition of their mixture. Ben Jonson led the charge for classicism and this influenced his contemporaries, including Shakespeare, to observe classicist decorum to an extent. Strictly speaking, decorum meant observance of the canons of Ancient Greek drama according to Renaissance interpretation – the unities, meaning the representation of a single action in a single place and day, within a larger separation of comedy and tragedy – as well as a kind of consistency in the portrayal of type and character, so that a king, for example, should speak and act like a king, and a tragedy, for example, should not have any parts of a comedy.[90] Though scholarly opinions on the definitions of comedy and tragedy were not at all in agreement across countries and time periods, nor did they align with actual practice, we should insist generally not

on Shakespeare's disregard but rather on his use of the classical models. *WT* takes medieval tragicomedy and splits it cleanly according to tragedy and comedy.

On the level of plot, tragedy describes the rise of man from the human to the godlike, then the fall of man back down to human.[91] It is associated with realism, appealing to the pessimists and radicals in the audience, and when it describes the political and domestic spheres it tends to show the cracks in the established order. Witness how the first acts of *The Winter's Tale* are about male power gone insane and the subsequent victimization of women and children. Comedy, on the other hand, describes the fall of man from the human to the animalistic, then the rise of man back up to human. It is associated with farce and festival and tends to be the more conservative type, because it is about reinstating transgressive characters into the social order. Witness the gathering of characters at the end of the play, the removal of patriarchal obstruction to the union of Perdita and Florizel, and the reunion of Leontes, Hermione, and Perdita which heals the family and the state. On the level of its plot, *WT* seems to simply juxtapose tragedy with comedy in a variation on the double plot described by Aristotle.

However, for both pure forms, the ending - death or loss versus marriage or reunion - is extremely important as the generic resolution that comments backwards on the preceding events that built up to it. Tragic order depends on the final realization of tragic possibilities in death and loss. Comic order depends on resolving to reunion and (often economic) gain. Since *WT* moves full circle from the tragedy of the tyrant to the comedy of the long-lost daughter, it highlights its resolution all the more as an issue upon which the play's interpretation hinges. Does conservative comedy overwrite whatever glimmerings of subversion made themselves known in the first half? Does subversive tragedy render the reconciliation at the play's end problematic? Does the combination of types allow for a wider vision of the struggle between individuals and society? The fact of the happy ending seems like conservative fruit; that Hermione does not speak to Leontes when she returns is fertile ground for the interpretation that all is not forgiven. But it does seem that the combination of tragedy and comedy in one opens the scope of the drama to a more general notion of life; it is usually the breadth of tragicomic scope the critics quoted in this paper praise.

But in opposition to classicist notions of the tragedy-comedy distinction yet relying perversely on Aristotle, Horace, and Plautus, there sprang in Europe theoretical defenses of 'the free drama' which also influenced Shakespeare. The happy ending became one of the central elements defining tragicomedy as a genre label in the history of this defense, while the Plautine emphasis on the mingling of characters is less and less referred to; we will see that as part and parcel of the changes in definition, these plays were much more like comedies than tragedies. Moreover, notice that both Aristotle and Horace, within the attention paid to what seems to be superficial categorization of elements characteristic to tragedy and comedy, make consistent reference to the *purpose* of mingling the two, namely, entertaining the masses. Whereas morality plays had an expressly didactic purpose, tragicomedies in the Ancient Greek and Renaissance Italian strain were to a greater extent associated with entertainment.

Neo-Latin Drama or Sacred Comedy

The majority of the vernacular plays of the 16th century that claim the title tragicomedy considered in this section are tragical comedies. This was in keeping with developments in the second half of the 15th century, the transitional step before the Elizabethan stage had truly fused the Christian and classical lines of influence, which, Ristine argues, is represented in the neo-Latin drama of the early humanists. It was sometimes called "sacred comedy".[92] Inspired by

attempts at stage revivals of Plautus and Seneca by men like Pomponius Laetus, Italian humanists set about imitating the ancients with both Biblical and secular subject matter. Thus *Ferdinandus Servatus* (1494) by Carlo Verardi: a "tragicomedia" in Latin verse, dramatizing Catholic conquering of a pagan kingdom, pagan revenge on the king, and a miracle that saves the king at the last moment because of the virtuous queen's prayer.[93] The tale was based on an actual assassination attempt on King Ferdinand of Barcelona in 1492 and declared, "Let no one expect the laws of tragedy or comedy to be observed, for a true history and not a fable is to be acted".[94] Use of the term "history" continued to be associated with these sort of plays, which went on to flood the middle and western countries of Europe. The Old and New Testaments were popular for content and the old "edifying" purpose; the classical models gave a division into acts, versification, and a chorus, among other features.[95] In keeping with both types of sources, these dramas had happy endings.

One of the few English examples is *Christus Redivivus* (1543) by Nicholas Grimald, dramatizing the triumph of the Cross. According to its author, the play was a tragicomedy because "the first act ends in tragic misery, but the fifth and last is turned to joy and gladness: thus there is variety enough, now sadness, now joy is sown among all other intermediate parts."[96] This is the first description of a "tragicomedy" that may be said to apply to *WT* directly, which also ends a first part in tragic misery and the second part in joy.

Thus, with humanism as "the connecting link uniting the contrary forces of classicism and medievalism in all forms of literature", the humanist playwrights took the name of tragicomedy as a convenient label for their religious play of serious theme and happy end. It "was but a step to extend the name to secular plays" and vernacular drama as well.[97]

Guarini's Argument: Popular Taste for a Comic Order under Threat

In Italy, the earliest example of tragicomedy given and explained as a label to vernacular drama was in Luca Contile's prologue to *Pescara*, where the author more or less defended the title on the grounds that the play showed "mingled action crowned with a happy ending".[98] That play had been called also a comedy, but another play associated more with the label of tragedy was also defended as tragicomedy for the same reasons. This was Giraldi Cinthio's *Altile* (1543).[99] His defense additionally mentioned the need for concession to popular taste (which dislikes ending the story with misery), and recalled Aristotle's and Horace's writing.[100]

Following the rediscovery of the classics, there increasingly appeared in Italy "neo-classic handling of romantic stories", many of them Giraldi's plays, which disregarded the unities, mixed the comic and tragic, played up action and adventure, approached the possibility of tragic consequences, but kept the happy ending, usually effected by a character supposed dead returning to life or a lucky recognition halting an execution.[101] In addition to relying on ancient and particularly Aristotelian precedent, Giraldi's writing on tragicomedy focused on how the audience is affected by drama. Not only should care be taken to please the spectators, but they should "be held suspended between horror and compassion clear to the close, and be allowed no intimation of the outcome".[102] Moreover, that outcome should follow poetic justice, with rewards and punishments properly distributed. This is evidence for Ristine's point that Italian tragicomedy was well-suited to the English tradition, because both emphasized poetic justice.

Battista Guarini then wrote a hugely popular pastoral tragicomedy, *Pastor Fido*, first printed in 1589. It is a complicated Greek romance of 7,000 lines in an Arcadian setting. An oracle promises that Arcadia will be free from having to sacrifice to Diana every year when "two of divine race shall join in love, and the noble piety of a faithful shepherd make amends for the

evil of a faithless woman." An innocent nymph, Amarilli, is wrongly accused as this evil woman. Her lover, the shepherd Mirtillo, offers be sacrificed in her stead, but at the last moment they find out that he is the lost son of divine race, so his love with Amarillo and his offer to die in her place fulfills the prophecy. All ends well.[103] Again the Italian tradition meshes well with the English, not merely in the use of an oracle but in the central issue of a woman's faithfulness and the main complication of a wrongly accused innocent.

In 1587, a Giasone de Nores criticized Guarini's play as a "monstrous and disproportionate composition".[104] This led to a public back-and-forth between de Nores and Guarini on the definition, defense, and classical precedent for tragicomedy. For our purposes the point of the controversy is Guarini's definition, which influenced playwrights in Spain, France, and England. Treading a careful line between the authority of the ancients and the need for a free drama,[105] he argued that tragicomedy, far from being a mixture of pure tragedy and pure comedy, is a combination of the elements of each that can be combined into a balanced whole, just as two colors form a third. Tragedy gives "the noble characters, not the action, the story, probable but invented, the emotions, stirred but tempered, the delight, not the sadness, the danger, not the death"; comedy gives "the decorous mirth, the sober gentleness, the invented plot, the happy change, and above all the comic order"; its purpose "is to delight, not to instruct"; its character is "noble, ancient, simple, proportionate, and capable of every artifice belonging to a well-woven composition".[106] Giovanni Savio in 1601 agreed that to imitate the mean between two extremes satisfied the notion of poetry as "a mirror of human life".[107]

Spain and France followed. In the vernacular tragicomedy of Spain, beginning with *Celestina* (1502), it's interesting to note the realistic representation of everyday life; but *Celestina* is unusual in its unhappy ending.[108] The real corresponding Spanish form is the national, popular Cloak and Sword drama exemplified by Lope de Vega's plays. These emphasized romantic plots full of intrigue and gallantry and combined outright bloodshed and violence with the happy ending.[109] Tragicomedy and comedy were used indiscriminately as labels for the plays.[110] And Lope in 1609 echoed the Italians' language when he wrote that "Nature herself gives us the example of [this variety]", which looks like a "species of monster like the Minotaur".[111] France for much of the 16th century supplied plays called tragicomedies that took a religious instead of a secular theme, and therefore resembled morality and mystery plays; it was in the hands of Alexander Hardy in the early 1600s, who wrote about twenty such plays, that tragicomedy became a definite genre in the likeness of the romantic Italian and Spanish ones.[112] French discussion of the genre also greatly resembled the Italian and Spanish discussions, and the plays were very popular until classicism took over.

The name reached England, and, more so even than in the continent, it was a fitting cover for the local dramatic tradition. Richard Edwards's popular *Damon and Pythias* (1563) was a "tragicall commedie" because it combined "myrth and care".[113] In the nick of time, Damon's arrival at the end of the play saves Pythias's life. More like a morality play was Richard Bower's *Tragicall Comedie of Apius and Virginia* (1567), since, while the wicked judge Appius dies, the honorable Virginia is beheaded too – but she is promised "Memorie, Justice, Rewarde and Fame" in the afterlife.[114] Both plays include farcical scenes but no division into acts, and both were performed at court. Finally George Gascoigne's *Glasse of Gouernement* (1575) was "A tragicall Comedie so entituled, bycause therein are handled aswell the rewardes for Vertues, as also the punishment for Vices".[115] As much as such poetic justice seems like the outgrowth of the morality plays, use of the name of tragicomedy suggests that the justification followed Aristotle's definition. All three playwrights were humanistic scholars, familiar with the

tragicomedies of Italy, Spain, and France, and therefore using "tragedy" only as the adjective for the true "comedy" that each wrote.[116]

But it is easy to fall into the trap of according to much stable meaning to the name. It is not uncommon to see the same work called a tragedy in one case and a comedy in another, even as the learnèd playwright defends his work with academic ideas about decorum![117] Even the meaning of decorum was not agreed upon. In order to classify a growing group of diverse plays with no clear label, the somewhat agnostic term "history" that had also been used for sacred comedy rose in popularity. Witness this dialogue in John Florio's *First Fruits* (1578):

> G. After dinner we will go see a play.
> H. The plays that they play in England are not right comedies.
> T. Yet they do nothing else but play every day.
> H. Yea, but they are neither right comedies nor right tragedies.
> G. How would you name them then?
> H. Representations of histories without any decorum.[118]

The limits of tragicomedy in England, building up to Shakespeare's time, are not confined by the name. Mingling the tragic with the comic was already the characteristic of the national drama as an inheritance from the Christian medieval tradition, and morality, romantic comedy, and chronicle history plays could all in one sense or another be said to mingle the serious with the light.[119] Keeping in mind the difference between practice and theory, that the narrow term had in itself come to be able to denote different kinds of dramas, and the fact that theory had very little effect on practice, Elizabethan England had no famous defense but only a famous criticism of tragicomedy in 1581, in Sir Philip Sydney's *Apology for Poetry*. A block is quoted here because it is such a well-used and -abused text:

> But, besides these gross absurdities, how all [English] plays be neither right tragedies nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns, not because the matter so carries it, but thrust in the clown by head and shoulders to play a part in majestical matters, with neither decency nor discretion; so as neither the admiration and commiseration, nor the right sportfulness, is by their mongrel tragi-comedy obtained … I know the ancients have one or two examples of tragi-comedies, as Plautus has *Amphitruo*. But, if we mark them well, we shall find that they never, or very daintily, match hornpipes and funerals.[120]

With some justification for ignoring whether or not the name of tragicomedy was used in a specific case, it is possible to declare that several sets of dramas by the beginning of the 17th century mingled the comic and tragic in a manner that hearkened back to the Italian, Spanish, and French intrigues. Due to altered conditions of social life in England, as idealism and patriotism subsided between the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James, these took a particular interest in domestic crime or in presenting a satirical comedy of manners.[121]

The first were a set of domestic reconciliation dramas, like *How a Man may Choose a Wife from a Bad* (1602), *The Fair Maid of Bristow* (1605) and *The London Prodigal* (1605), all of which dramatize the trope of a husband who suspects and kills his faithful wife, suffers, repents and is saved by the timely reappearance and forgiveness of the supposedly dead woman. Giraldi's device of the returning forgiving innocent wife had become a trope. That being said, *A*

Woman Killed with Kindness (1607) shows instead a wronged husband forgiving his unfaithful wife just before she dies. If this last play came from similar instead of differing impulses as the others, it is significant that a repentant wife figure dies but a repentant husband figure never does. It suggests that in these domestic dramas, the locus of the action is the husband, not the wife: the emotional-spiritual state that structures the plot and determines the denouement is the husband's, regardless of whether his needed action is to forgive or repent.

While the text of the first folio probably corresponds closely to the earliest performances of *WT*, it was not subsequently held sacred, and changes to the text suggest a slight refocusing on those elements that made it similar to domestic dramas. A promptbook discovered from the seventeenth century, believed to have been used beginning in the 1620s, initiates not least the tradition of dispensing with 1.1.[122] In that opening scene two civilized, cultured courtiers talk quietly of Bohemia and Sicilia, the "loves" between their respective monarchs and the hospitality they owe each other, and of their "comfort" in Sicilia's young prince, whose very potential is an inspiration for old men to live on. Their discussion provides that whiff of the court and sophistication which will shortly be destroyed by the king's ugly jealousy and suggests the presence of the people surrounding the royal families, who live and worry by their lives and worries and, further, set their hopes on the royal families' futures. That is to say, 1.1 sets the human and political scope for the rest of the play, because it shows both how subjects depend on stability and peace and how the old depend on the young. Cutting out 1.1 in performance means that the play begins with the monarchs themselves, narrowing and heightening the focus, and moves immediately to the explosive domestic quarrel, which dramatizes Leontes' jealousy.

The second set of contemporary dramas were satirical or realistic comedies. These include Marston's *Malcontent* (1601), in fact registered as a tragicomedy. In the spirit of the reconciliation dramas, it is about how the deposed duke of Geneva enters his usurper's court in disguise, helps unmask and stop the plans of a different would-be usurper, reveals himself, and forgives the penitent villains; but it is distinguished by a host of bloody intrigues and a cynical tone.[123] Another example is Chapman's *Gentleman Usher* (1602), featuring a plotting, lusting villain and miraculously healed lovers; Marston's *Dutch Courtesan* (1605); Chapman's *Widow's Tears* (1605); and Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1604), which combines the devices of the disguised duke, the lusting villain, and the ending wherein lovers are saved and villains are forgiven.

In many of his plays Shakespeare interwove the comic and tragic, like in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Merchant of Venice*. For example in *The Merchant of Venice*, he mixed the light storyline of the three caskets with the dark storyline of the pound of flesh, not merely by alternating scenes but with some of the same characters involved in both: each storyline thus 'qualifies' the interpretation of the other, since we must consider Shylock's justice in light of the Christians' mercy, but the Christians' virtue must also be qualified by their completely and totally destroying Shylock in the trial scene. In this play too, the denouement is characterized by conversion and the triumph of love over threat, and it would be really interesting to consider how Shakespeare comments on the 'mingling of comedy and tragedy' through his having caused the love story to necessarily effect Shylock's conversion, while the conversion is a necessary step towards removing obstruction to the lovers' union. But for Shakespeare's audiences the happy ending was probably never in question for *The Merchant* – Shylock unlikely to have been played as a truly tragic figure – so that, in keeping with the vernacular plays of Italy, Spain, France, and England until the 17th century, this tragicomedy was structurally a comedy more than anything else.

Simultaneously, the influence of Italian tragicomedy – Guarini's *Pastor Fido* having made its way into translation and print in London – finally led to the first English pastorals, Daniel's *Queen's Arcadia, A Pastorall Trage-Comedie* (1605) and *Hymen's Triumph* (1614), and Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess* (1608).[124] Both Daniel's plays feature the tangled and frustrated fortunes of Arcadian lovers. Daniel explicitly patterned his first pastoral play on Guarini's, but he eradicated the element of suspense and the effectiveness of impending tragedy because he added two shepherds to overhear the villainous plans and assure the audience, as they do, that they will thwart the villain.[125] The climax of the second one more effectively depends on a recognition of mistaken identity and miraculous healing. Fletcher's play features a pair of lovers' long night of misunderstandings, stabbings, and near-suicides, until everyone is healed at the end. Fletcher cared about Guarini's definition and offered his own similar one, emphasizing his drama as a mean between two extremes, and one which moreover lacks tragic consequences:

> A tragi-comedy is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants deaths, which is enough to make it no tragedy, yet brings some near it, which is enough to make it no comedy, which must be a representation of familiar people, with such kind of trouble as no life be questioned; so that a god is as lawful in this as in a tragedy, and mean people as in a comedy.

What these pastorals bring out from the Italian sources, in contrast to the domestic and realistic comedies of the England of the time, was the spirit of romance. But Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess* is less an imitation of Italian example than are Daniel's plays: it is distinguished by its de-emphasis of narration as a method of conveying information and a new emphasis on action, suspense, and rapid changes of fortune in the plot. Ristine argues that 'English tragicomedy' proper began with Fletcher's work and was the dominant dramatic genre in the first half of the 17th century. *WT* was written just as this historically delimited period of tragicomedy began, evincing many similarities to other Elizabethan and Restoration narratives and dramas of the name, but also departing from them in crucial ways.

Fusing Two Fountainheads: English Tragicomedy

The following section will consider, first, tragicomedy as it was embodied by Shakespeare's contemporaries, Beaumont and Fletcher, and other playwrights in the first half of the 17th century; second, how *WT* differed from this embodiment; and what this meant for Shakespeare's overall engagement with the Christian and classical traditions. On the one hand, both gave to *WT* dualistic philosophy and the structure and meaning of a comedy: a generally conservative view resolving life according to the logic of poetic justice, and claiming to address the representation of life in a broad, full way. On the other hand, there can be found, in both traditions, methods of destabilizing comic logic, and subtle but important differences between the good and bad guys.

Tragedy in Suspense and the Spirit of Romance

English tragicomedy is exemplified by plays like Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster, or Love Lies a-Bleeding* (ca. 1610), Massinger's *Bashful Lover* (1636), Shirley's *Young Admiral*

(1637), Davenant's *Love and Honor, or The Courage of Love* (1634), and Dryden's *Spanish Friar, or, The Double Discovery* (1636). What were its characteristics?

Sidney's academic irritation and distinction between contemporary English and ancient tragicomedy had to do with what he saw as English "absurdities" and extremism standing in contrast to the daintier ancients. The argument over tragicomedy often turned on the distinction between a monstrous and well-woven composition: between the unnatural and natural, unpleasant and pleasant, what Frankenstein truly was instead of what he was intended to be. (Correspondingly, it turns in the writings of Lope, Savio, and others on the need for art to imitate nature.[126]) As part of this ideally proportionate nature, Ristine summarizes tragicomedy in England as a tale of "averted tragedy", and its very essence the "ruling spirit of romance".[127]

Heroic romance dominated English drama in the 1580s, waned in the satirical and realistic dramas of the first decade of the 1600s, and rose again with the dramas of Beaumont and Fletcher. The word is, like tragicomedy, used loosely to indicate "the unreal and imaginative in literary expression" but it is also associated with a set of important tropes some of which have been seen above, including the return of the supposed dead, miraculous healing, and oracle.[128] Romantic Italian novels were turned into English collections of popular Italian tales which, in concert with medieval romance, gave playwrights material for plots about adventures in foreign lands, dangers and difficulties in the way of love, idealized women, and gallant heroes. This romantic element characterizes many of the dramas of Shakespeare, Greene, Lyly, Edwards, and Whetstone.

Greene's popular plays exemplified the tragicomedies of heroic and sentimental romance. They always included the tragic element and always ended happily. These include the romantic comedies *The Honorable History of Friar Bacon, and Friar Bongay* (1589) and *A Pleasant Conceited Comedy of George Green, a Pinner of Wakefield* (1588-92), which mixed violent deaths of secondary characters into the plot; the romances *The Comical History of Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (1589) and *The History of Orlando Furioso* (1891), truly offering tales of bloody violence ending in marriage and good fortune for the hero; and most importantly *The Scottish History of James the Fourth* (1598), essentially a historical romance based on Giraldi's *Hecatomithi*. It told of King James's attempts to replace his wife, Queen Dorothea, with the virtuous Ida; it seeming to be the case that he has successfully had the queen killed, war is declared on King James; but the queen, actually alive, returns just in time, forgives her repentant husband, and all ends well.[129]

Ristine suggests that tragicomedy was as well suited to romance as to morality plays, because impending but ultimately averted tragedy so characterizes romance. Instead of the triumph of virtue over evil, romance shows the triumph of love over adversity, which does not signify much difference because the lovers are usually virtuous – or else their happy end is itself constituted by a turn towards repentance by one of the lovers, who till then has been erring on an unvirtuous path. We do see, though, that here the classical conflicts with the Christian influence not merely academically but in practice, because the Christian tradition had led to the prevalence of plays that represented everyday life with a didactic purpose while the classical promoted romance and averted tragedy for the audience's pleasure. Unreal, imaginative romance is not so easily combined with the familiar and commonplace.[130]

Seeming further in conflict with the medieval Christian heritage, when Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* and *A King and No King* returned to these heroic romantic themes they did so with a new kind of pacing and denouement. They added to the heroic romantic atmosphere the "constant use of surprise, reverse, and surprise again" such that fates hung in the balance till a

last-minute turn of fortune. Inevitableness had to be avoided, since theatrical effect depended on keeping the audience in suspense.[131] This philosophy reminds of the Italians' idea of the importance of keeping the audience balanced between "compassion and pity". But is it immiscible with the representation of divine Providence assuring poetic justice? In fact not necessarily, because it merely heightens the effectiveness of the final distribution of rewards and punishments.

The characteristics of these plays include a foreign, distant setting; royal or noble characters; a lofty tone; the plot of complications; and a happy ending ingeniously constituted by the culmination of a series of reversals and dangers and not predictable or assured.[132] For example, *Philaster* takes place in a utopian kind of forest. The hero, wrongly believing his love (the king's daughter) and his servant are unfaithful, stabs them; after miraculous healing, the course of love still doesn't run smooth, because the king sentences the lovers to death for crossing their class boundaries; but an insurrection interrupts, and then a timely recognition of a disguised character allows for a happy end, the lovers' marriage, and Philaster's position as the prince is established. *A King and No King* dramatizes Arbaces's lust for his sister, Panthea; right before he commits murder, incest, and suicide, it is revealed that they are not siblings.

Both plays inspired a long history of performances, revivals, adaptations, and imitations; not least, Ristine suggests, in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest*, and *WT*.[133] And by the time Fletcher's plays were printed in 1679, many were directly labelled tragicomedies. Some of these that best exemplify the genre are *Loyal Subject*, *Mad Lover*, *Island Princess, A Wife for a Month, and Humorous Lieutenant*, as well as Fletcher's collaborations with Massinger, *Queen of Corinth*, *Knight of Malta*, and *Laws of Candy*[134]; additionally there are Massinger's *The Bashful Lover*, *A Very Woman*, and *The Bondman*[135]; and Shirley, Fletcher's and Massinger's student, wrote for example *Duke's Mistress*, *Imposture*, and *Doubtful Heir*.[136] For a detailed review of the plots and themes of these dramas, please see Ristine's book. The closing of the theaters in 1642 briefly put a halt to tragicomic writing, but it was then continued by Davenant, Carlell, Cartwright, Killigrew, and other Caroline playwrights.[137] (After the theaters reopened, the influence of French romance became more important, not to mention that England got the opera, a more modern stage with movable parts, and female actresses. The "guiding spirit" of drama shifted away from the public to the court.[138] But tragicomedy remained flexible and able to accommodate these changes; it was classicism and the 18th century that ended the genre according to Ristine's localization of the label to the plays produced in the 17th century.)

In general, a Manichean duality colors the theme and the characters. Emotional ideals – love, honor, loyalty, friendship, faithfulness – are kept in contrast with their base opposites – lust, jealousy, revenge, plotting, and general villainy. This duality is taken to extremes, so that horrible tragic actions like murder, rape, torture, and poisons are contrasted against the expressions of virtue like constancy and forgiveness. The same occurs in the portrayal of the conventional types, all of whom belong to the upper class. Among the villains are the lusting king or duke and the intriguing court favorite; among the virtuous are the noble hero and chaste heroine, usually a quite eloquent character.[139] Sympathies are held with the lovers, villainous motives are the causes of complications for their love, and at stake is often the future of the court. Often one of the lovers seems to be of low birth, and so a revelation of their noble lineage is in order. And characters never die in a Fletcherian tragicomedy, although this rule is not always followed, most notably by Shirley and Killigrew.

Interestingly, Ristine considers the focus on the tragicomic villain's disruption and reinstatement as a barrier to poetic justice in these extreme dramas, because the villain's quick

and seemingly unmotivated final repentance fails to satisfy in the balance against his equally unmotivated crimes. The impression is given of a "perverted ethics".[140] While it is not necessarily the case that audiences of the time would have seen perversion in these endings, I think Ristine's problem with these tragicomedies is a reaction to what really was immiscible in the classical and Christian traditions of a drama of poetic justice or "an opposite catastrophe for the good and bad". Shakespeare's main difference, in *WT,* from Fletcherian tragicomedy is where he chooses the Christian over the Italian precedent.

Shakespearean Departures from English Tragicomedy

It should be established first that in many respects *WT* is perfectly a romantic pastoral tragicomedy of its time. Taking place in the foreign Sicily and Bohemia, it makes reference to "oracles, defenses, dreams, reports, old tales, statues", and the storm and shipwreck, to name a few such devices.[141] It combines the pastoral with the more established forms of tragicomedy also in that it shows shepherds and royal personages. Moreover, the plot hinges on a husband's misplaced jealousy *and* a long-lost princess mistaken for a shepherdess *and* lovers across class barriers *and* the return of a queen supposed dead. The ending features reconciliation and restoration of the courts and their ruling families.

But there are signs of divergence. For example, *WT* does admit deaths as part of its generally not being a tale of averted tragedy; rather, it shows *reversed* tragedy to an extent. The painful consequences of Leontes's wrath are carried to their conclusion in what seems like an explicable chain of events: Perdita is abandoned because of Leontes's unreasonable jealousy, Mamillius dies because of the accusations against his mother, Hermione dies at the accumulation of her loss. Death is admitted into the plot not only in its rational but also its irrational guise, as when the bear comes out of nowhere during a storm and chases Antigonus. It is also noteworthy that crime and its effects are largely confined to death rather than rape or torture.

Deaths being allowed, *WT* shows a corresponding change in the representation of Leontes's repentance (or rather, a stronger reliance on the morality plays for the representation of repentance). Sudden it may be, just as in Fletcherian tragicomedy, but the transformation is a reaction to catastrophe instead of to the many instances of pleading and advice to the king. With the use of the sixteen-year-jump artifice, Shakespeare also represents Leontes's penitence. Rather than a sudden repentance as the necessary and sufficient condition for the happy ending, Shakespeare shows Leontes' having repented for a generation to no avail. This is so extreme that it brings into question the process and role of regret – instead of asking if the king repents or not, it asks how much sorrow is enough? It also changes the cause-and-effect structure of repentance and resurrection that would be expected in other tragicomedy, because the many years of sorrow do not precipitate Hermione's return, even if Paulina wouldn't have revealed the statue should Leontes have failed to repent. Structurally, Hermione's return seems better dependent on Perdita's return, if only because this is part of the literal content of the oracle's word.

The very existence of two storylines, one with the older generation and one with the younger, begs the question of which is more important for the happy ending. Or rather there are two: the happy ending for the lovers, which is occasioned by actions taken in the realm of the court and mankind (someone, namely Leontes, needs to convince Polixenes not to stand in the lovers' way) and the happy ending for Leontes, Hermione, and Perdita, which is occasioned by the miracle and is not clearly the result of human or divine action. This latter happy ending is the main one. And while Perdita's return prompts Paulina to reveal Hermione, the denouement is dramatized less for its reuniting mother and daughter than for it resolving the state of Leontes'

soul; more lines and more time are given Leontes's reaction, and Paulina, the moral authority figure, is shown preoccupied mostly with Leontes.

In short, Shakespeare keeps the focus on the tyrant, but he diverges from typical tragicomedy by refusing to allow the tyrant to achieve his own happy ending. He depends for that on the victims and virtue figures, a mostly female cast. In short, Shakespeare's text draws deeply on the medieval Christian dramatic tradition for associations between emotional and spiritual states, like anger and corruption, sorrow and innocence, and penitence as the bridge. It also depends on the tradition of anti-sentimental, opaque representation of emotion such that both wrath and repentance can arise very quickly but they burn for a long time; and real-world consequences must be tied to the emotion, which must be recognized for its role in the moral life. In contrast, Fletcherian tragicomedy plays on associations between innocence/guilt and emotions, but it makes use of these associations insofar as they label characters, while the story is structured more by surprise and reversal. Robbed of its substance in the harsher Christian fall-forgiveness structure, the tragicomic villain's ultimate repentance is then much less convincing, which may explain Ristine's dissatisfaction with it.

But *WT* also interrogates the tradition of the balanced opposites of Heaven and Hell, good and evil, victim and villain, in a way that Fletcherian tragicomedy does not. For example, while Camillo is the obvious candidate for the scheming courtier figure, his scheming saves Polixenes's life and helps Perdita and Florizel arrive in Sicily for the scene of reconciliation: an individual's negative actions are crucial for positive outcomes for the community. Likewise Autolycus, the vice figure, helps the Clown and Old Shepherd follow after Perdita and Florizel and overall is not represented as equal and opposite to Paulina, the virtue figure. Perhaps the main way in which Shakespeare complicates the duality is by his faithful use of Greek tragedy to structure the first half of the play, which means that he explores the figure of the villain beyond its crime and punishment to the point where it is has been broken by penitence and can enter into the comic order neither exactly the villain nor the victim. In the Christian tradition, he can certainly never be the victim-hero: he is defined by his scapegoating Hermione. But this ambiguity in Leontes's status, it will be seen, is turned too much in the 'victim' direction in the play's performances and adaptations of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Shakespeare's allegiance to both the medieval and classical structures of meaning having been discussed, it remains to explore how he combines them.

The Common Condition of Man

The Greek canons incorporated notions of a cycle into their representation of life. Similarly, the mystery stage offered a cycle, or more specifically a notion of 'the general condition of man' uniting superficially disparate elements in a kind of realism. Diller writes:

> A miracle … is an occasional intervention of the deity in the physical world … man's deeds in this world will be punished and rewarded in the next. And often enough the judgment seat before which he will have to appear is visible on the stage. If the *platea* often appears as the scene of a harsh, bitter and funny world far from God, that may well have sharpened medieval man's sense that this is the world which will be judged by God and which can only hope for His forgiveness to be saved. It is true that the *platea* often showed social criticism, realistic anachronism, and comic contradiction to the sacred action. But a detailed study

> will show that all these are facets of the general condition of man, who must face the superhuman and divine on the one hand and anti-human evil on the other.[142]

Tragicomedy arising out of either the ancient Greek or the medieval Christian source receives the same thing - a structural fullness. This is exactly what critics celebrate in *WT*. And the music and costumes inferred to have been used in early performances show just this "extraordinary interplay of opposites" like in "Renaissance painting: the contemporary and the mythical, tragedy and comedy, realism and romance, winter and spring, death and resurrection are fused together".[143] Moreover, this is an interplay made out of the elements of the English folk/fairy-tale tradition. To put it another way, *WT* localizes its tragicomedy, which is why it can call itself *the*, not *a*, tale for winter, representative as it is of the tales in its first audiences' minds. It blended the English into the European.

For example, in the setting of Bohemia the play shows a pastoral dance of shepherds and shepherdesses recalling the morris dances of Whitsun, which really were accompanied by "a tabor and a pipe" (4.4.184). Its other surviving musical settings belong to the ballad tradition of the time. It shows a bear, too, and the bear appears in Greek mythology like the myth of Callisto but it also has a place in English folk memory: as Warwick and Leicester ('two bears there are the greater and the less', according to Whitney[144]) and as the two constellations. Bear-baiting was Renaissance sport. In using the English bear as a ridiculous and terrifying *deus ex machina* to end the first half of the play, marking the transition between tragedy and comedy, Shakespeare created a highly concentrated image of anachronism.

Most of Act 4 - the pastoral scene, as it was first performed - epitomizes Shakespeare's localization of Italian and Greek traditions. For example, it shows a satyr dance, and the satyrs (mythic irrationality) come from the Greeks, from Dionysus, from over the channel and long ago[145]; they also reminded the audience of Jonson's very contemporary *Mask of Oberon*, which had been performed at Whitehall in January 1611 and featured a satyr dance.[146] In fact, Shakespeare may have used Jonson's music.[147] The costumes worn in the pastoral scene function in the same way. Perdita, the lost princess in the guise of a shepherdess dressed up as "Flora" distributing flowers (4.4.2), evoked both Botticelli's Flora and Benozzo Gozzoli's angels in 'The Adoration' as well as contemporary English young women during holidays.[148] Autolycus, English pedlar and ancient vice figure, most of all had a foot in both worlds. His evocative power for audiences is apparent in the only first-hand surviving response to the first performance, which focuses mainly on describing the "Rog"'s trickery and notes the moral "Beware of trustinge feined beggars".[149]

The best example of how Shakespeare truly combined larger classical and Christian views of life has to do with the relationship between art and nature and with the use of the statue in *WT*, supposedly created by a "Giulio Romano" capable of "beguil[ing] Nature of her custom". Bartholomeusz argues that Romano was a student of Raphael's and that his creation would have been meant by Shakespeare as a "naturalistic work of the Renaissance".[150] Surprisingly, the bear was important in the debate over nature, art, and their relation in the Italian Renaissance. That the mother bear both births its cubs and then licks them into form led it to be taken by the Venetian artist Titian as a mythic emblem of the relationship between art and nature, with the motto "Natura potentior ars".[151] The motto means either "Art is more powerful than nature" or "Nature is a more powerful art".

Figure 1. Natura Potentior Ars

The first translation was quite common but emphasizes the competition between art and nature in a way that gives art superiority. Such a translation is tied to the also common topos that Titian's way of working with color was like divine creation: for example, in Speroni's dialogue (1537), Tasso says "it is better to be painted by Titian than engendered by Nature" and Tullia says that while Nature is like a minor portraitist of God, Titian is "not a painter, and his virtue is not art but a miracle", for in Titian's colors "God placed the paradise of our bodies; which are not painted, but sanctified and glorified by his hands".[152] I.e., Titian does what both art and nature do, but in a way closer to God. This is another place where appears the notion of art that surpasses living beauty, and it's significant that Titian was also known for eroticized images of women. Thus Perdita's gentle deriding of using "paint" to arouse desire in the sheep-shearing scene. Altogether in the Italian Renaissance the superiority of art (or design) in competition with nature was an idea associated with Renaissance Tuscan artists of what Mary Garrard calls a masculinist philosophy of art – in contrast to the Venetian.[153]

The second translation (that nature is a more powerful art) better suits the Venetian philosophy of a reciprocal and complementary relation, which was another strain in classical texts. This is the notion of artifice as normal to nature. Ovid wrote that the licking mother bear exemplifies how "ever-inventive nature continually produces one shape from another".[154] Seneca wrote "the natural things of the body or the faults of the soul are fixed by no wisdom: whatever is unfixed and natural, is softened by art".[155] A related idea was that nature created the artist, so the artist's creations are nature's own. This more "reverential" view of nature and its interdependence with art was characteristic of the Venetians and led directly to their appreciation for whatever was lifelike and realistic in visual representation: successfully imitating what was natural was a high achievement because nature was superior to art.[156]

Garrard writes further that a

> design versus color *paragone* overlapped with – indeed, grew out of – the longer standing discourse of art versus nature, which was also shaped by a model of gender. The masculinity of design that is presupposed draws virility from its opposition to a feminine principle. It could be claimed (and was) that art *is* design, yet color is not at all the same thing as nature … what color and nature share is their femininity, their otherness to art/Design, which in the system of binary oppositions is obliged to embrace the irrational, the unpredictable, the formless.[157]

Garrard argues that Titian's motto and art took and elevated the feminine position by showing an interdependent dialectic of color and form in visual representation. And what we have previously called the anxiety over visual and verbal representation in the Christian tradition can likewise be put in terms of the need to establish the superiority of nature over art simultaneously with the representation of the human body as truly sanctified and glorified. Shakespeare found where the Christian and Ovid, Seneca, and Titian's ideas of the art-nature dialectic met, for he has Perdita, associated with nature and purity, kneel before the naturalistic statue of her mother which then comes alive as a miracle in the sense of an expression of the presence of deity within the appearance of reality.

Interpretations and Adaptations

A silence of over a hundred years separates the few performances of the play in Shakespeare's age and the next time it was finally performed. During the period, Shakespeare became famous in London and beyond.

Intersecting with how critics and actors interacted with the Christian and classical legacy, one of the issues that began to mediate interpretation of the play was quality and value judgments. Michael Caines's *Shakespeare and the Eighteenth Century* reviews this issue.[158] There were two received Shakespeares: one "barbaric", in Voltaire's term; the other the kind of great writer who could with a fine and delicate faculty understand deep abiding truths. Within the larger complaint that Shakespeare disrespected the unities of time, place, and action, it was pointed out that he tastelessly ended *Othello* with a brutal, sexual strangling, misunderstood basic geography in *The Winter's Tale*, and saturated *Romeo and Juliet* with puns. Even as *Macbeth* was lauded, its porter scene was not, since tragedy and comedy were considered unacceptable in mixed form. This was the neoclassicist view, according to which it made sense to see Shakespeare as a recent playwright in English history, who approached the canon undereducated and appealed best to people with the worst taste. But then again, in the age of Newtonianism, rival editors Theobald and Pope could agree that he was a natural genius who uncovered the laws of human nature. And after Walpole's Licensing Act in 1737, it was a fact that Shakespeare *was* safely in the canon and his plays available to be performed. Moreover, the plays were increasingly read in the home as well as seen in theaters. Eventually, Shakespeare was made to stand with Virgil and Chaucer in Poet's Corner.

Neoclassicism and Newtonianism in the 18th century simply led to Pope's argument that Shakespeare could not have written the absurd entirety of *The Winter's Tale*, and it, among other plays, was often only read and performed after heavy editing.[159] These adaptations were advertised with Shakespeare's name. One such adaptation was Macnamara Morgan's *The Sheep-Shearing*, the other David Garrick's *Florizel and Perdita, a Dramatic Pastoral*. However the 19th century restored enough of the first folio text that we speak there more properly of performances,

not adaptations, by Kemble, Macready, Phelps, and Kean. In all cases, it is difficult to speak directly of tragicomedy as a goal or an organizing principle for interpretation, since the word, at least, seemed to have been used less and less. But insofar as *WT* remained a tragicomedy, or something that carried heavy reference to its sources and themes, all its forms reflect interestingly on reactions to those sources, themes, and tensions previously discussed.

The 18th Century: Middle Class Narratives

In a breathtakingly bold move, the adaptations entirely removed the first half of *WT* and emphasized instead the comic/pastoral second half. Garrick's prologue announces:

> The five long Acts, from which our Three are taken,
> Stretched out to sixteen years, lay by, forsaken.
> Lest then this precious Liquor run to waste,
> 'Tis now confin'd and bottled for your taste
> 'Tis my chief Wish, my Joy, my only Plan,
> To lose no drop of that immortal Man.[160]

which suggests that the 18th century made paradoxes of their productions, considering adaptation preservation. Even remaining agnostic as to what should qualify as preservation of an original, and what extent of adaptation should qualify as a new original, and what, in fact, is an original, it seems that Garrick's claim to losing no drop of Shakespeare is perversely at odds with what he's actually doing. It is especially ironic in light of a general consensus among sentimentality scholars of the period that Garrick's adaptation was a sentimental, patriarchal, simplistic play, while Morgan's version was a "musical farce".[161] But within his prologue Garrick, who was a wine merchant before he was an actor and playwright, in fact turns the irony on its head by joking about the tricks of the wine trade to pass off lesser or weaker (or, worse, French) drinks for their betters. The joke is not on the merchant but on the customers whose utility comes from supposed higher quality but who cannot actually distinguish good from bad:

> Thus the wise Critic too, mistakes his Wine,
> Cries out with lifted Hands, 'tis great! — Divine!
> Then jogs his Neighbour, as the Wonders strike him;
> This Shakespear! Shakespear! — oh there's nothing like him!

Warburton, a critic who did believe that Shakespeare had written the play, loved Garrick's improvements so much that he wrote him with congratulations.[162] On the other hand, another critic, Theophilus Cibber, howled that the play had been "lop'd, hack'd, and dock'd", but not many agreed with him.[163]

No Sense for the Tragic

A version based more or less on the text of the First Folio did not succeed. As Bartholomeusz has documented, it was performed in January 1741, in Goodman's Fields as entertainment between two halves of a concert, running eight times total over two months and then again once in November in Covent Garden. When it was again attempted in January of the following year it included "a new Grand Ballet called the Rural Assembly" full of nymphs and

shepherdesses and a herdsman, but this contemporary addition failed to make the play more charming to audiences and the whole production was discontinued.[164]

Instead, Macnamara Morgan's *The Sheep-Shearing: Or Florizel and Perdita* was first performed March 1754 at Covent Garden and ran for nearly fifty years at Covent Garden and Drury Lane, the only two licensed theaters in London of the time.[165] Hermione, Leontes, and the bear - envy, tragedy, and the impossible - are cut out so that the play becomes the story of two young lovers in conflict with apparent class barriers and a forbidding father. The denouement depended not on Hermione's return but on the revelation of Perdita's true birth.[166] The tensions that appeal to the middle class were thus brought out, and just as in Fielding's contemporary *Tom Jones*, it's a good thing that Perdita is really a princess in unwitting disguise.[167] But to rationalize Perdita's fantastic trajectory from princess to shepherdess to princess, she is accompanied along the way by steady Antigonus, who, instead of having exited pursued by a bear, disguises himself as the old shepherd who raises her.

The strongest generic effect lies in the highlighting of the play's comedy together with romance, to the point where the structure is wholly comedic. Comedy is the genre that best 'valorizes' the lowly, that transforms shepherdesses to princesses, that crafts the rose-tinted glasses through which to see the young lovers. To comedy belongs a type of trickster character that expresses the supposed joie de vivre of the lower class and all that's English and natural ("Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world"[168]), and Morgan's version is especially noteworthy for Autolycus the clown played by Ned Shuter, "the greatest comic genius" Garrick had ever seen, with many embellishments as well as most of the original lines.[169] His part was embellished with extra lines. Moreover, a new song single mindedly celebrating marriage replaces the statue scene. All the events of the adaptation tend towards an ending proclaiming "let us all be blithe and gay/Upon this joyful, bridal day/That Florizel weds Perdita …"[170]

Following likewise in the traditional comic vein is Garrick's version, the only competitor to Morgan's, first performed January 1756 at Drury Lane and running as a critical success for many years, and opening with:

> In this Night's various and enchanted Cup,
> Some little Perry's mixt for filling up.

It bears strong similarity to a part of the prologue in Plautus's *The Brothers Menaechmus*, although, in comparison, it is more understated, and maintains its reference to mixture, variety, and romance:

> I now intend to pour a lot of plot for you.
> Not just a cupful, fuller up, more like a pot.
> Such is our storehouse, brimming full of plot![171]

A prevalent semantics of wealth, license, and liquid plays out in and with comedy. The boast in Plautus works on three layers: an economic meaning implied by a "storehouse" of things, an allusion to the sensual pleasure (*voluptas)* promised by the comedy, and a claim for the professionalism of the troupe that would perform the comedy, creating a sense of richness and fullness definable by a constellation of the concepts. As a rule, money flows, wine flows, the laughter flows. The imagery of an overflowing cup in particular is loaded with positive values like generosity and stands in for a festive social situation and a good story. *WT* holds potential

for exploration of these ideas; Garrick's version brought out into greater emphasis ideas that were already there.

Another shift that occurs in both adaptations is an increase in verbal narrative rather than dramatic action. More information is conveyed in dialogue, and more important scenes happen offstage. In essence the *Tale* becomes more of a tale. Garrick's version opens in Polixenes's court, which is preparing to receive a visit from Leontes. Camillo narrates to a character called Archidamus and later to a Gentleman of the two kings' old friendship, that Leontes had grown suspicious of his wife and Polixenes, that Polixenes and Camillo had fled while Hermione was imprisoned, that she'd died in prison after giving birth, and that Paulina had also fled to Bohemia. Additionally, he adds that Leontes in the sixteen year interim has tried to kill himself twice. The rest of the first scene establishes that Polixenes is looking for Florizel, who seems to be in love with a beautiful shepherdess (who is Perdita). The next scene begins with the Clown and Shepherd discussing a shipwreck that they have just seen, just as in Shakespeare's Act 3 – but here, the shipwreck's survivors are Leontes and Cleomenes.

Emotionalism and the Audience's Sympathies

By this point Garrick has primarily changed the representation and role of Leontes. In removing the sight of Leontes as a wrathful figure – the Herod, the incarnation of evil – he leaves only the Leontes of grief and repentance. This repentance is so extreme as to be suicidal; nor is Mamillius and his death on the king's conscience. Garrick then gives Leontes the following:

> To nothing but despair - a thousand knees
> Ten thousand years together, naked, fasting,
> Upon a barren mountain, and still winter,
> In storms perpetual, could not move the gods
> To look this way upon me. (1.2.81-87)

These lines in Shakespeare's text had constituted part of Paulina's attack on Leontes as a tyrant. But Garrick's Leontes appropriates the criticism as self-criticism, moreover, in a quite pathetic context as a bedraggled shipwreck survivor. Robbed of power and horror, he has turned instead into a sympathetic figure, a victim of the past.

That the performances emphasized audience identification with Leontes seems well established, as part of more general move towards emotional connection on the 18th century stage. According to sentimentality scholars, no longer does the didactic purpose dominate aesthetic value; instead, it is the ability of art to "provoke emotion".[172] Jean Marsden, analyzing a "rhetoric of sentiment", argues that this drama was "dependent upon immediacy and spectatorship ... inspiring sympathy to an extent possible in no other form".[173] In *WT*, this need to inspire sympathy led in particular to an increase in the representation of weeping. Paulina cries in 1.1, and Leontes does so a great deal, as evidenced by stage directions like "bursts into tears" or "weeps". Vanessa Cunningham suggests that this change was in sharp contrast to anti-weeping sentiment prevalent throughout Shakespeare's original version.[174] At her trial Shakespeare's Hermione says

> Do not weep, good fools
> There is no cause.

> When you shall know your mistress
> Has deserved prison, then abound in tears
> As I come out. (2.1.120-123)

– a line cut out in the adaptations. But more lines are added to the final scene, notably Leontes giving a running description of his feelings as Hermione is found to be alive. The expression of emotion had also shifted towards verbalization through added lines. Upon Hermione's first movement, Leontes is made to cry "Heavenly powers!" He continues:

> Support me, gods!
> If this be more than visionary bliss,
> My reason cannot hold: my wife! My queen!
> But speak to me, and turn me wild with transport
> I cannot hold me longer from those arms;
> She's warm! She lives!
> Her beating heart meets mine, and fluttering owns
> Its long-lost half: those tears that choak her voice
> Are hot and moist – it is Hermione.

and at that point Perdita cries, "O Florizel!"[175] These additions were kept in subsequent performances until the mid-1800s.

Most sentimentality scholars argue that the effects of Garrick's changes were to create a "framework of bourgeois moral propriety"[176], which seems like a reasonable interpretation (although see Phillip Moses on a reconsideration[177]). Cunningham considers the result an audience-pleasing celebration of patriarchal structures.[178] Effects on the portrayal of women included the diminishing of Paulina's authority, since she is not shown aggressively confronting the unrepentant king. Perdita in Garrick's version is also 'cleaned' and made more attractive. Her line to Florizel "but quick and in my arms" (4.4.132) was changed to "come, come, take your flowers"; her debate on art and nature with Polixenes was removed; and she was awarded a song that became very popular in the 18th century, composed by Arne, that was considered to present a light, gay, conventional charm.[179] It began with "Come, come, my good shepherds …"[180] Most conspicuously unlike in Shakespeare, Hermione forgives Leontes verbally, crying "My lord, my king … My husband!" (3.4.216-217). I would point out, further, that her story arc no longer resembles that of Christ; she is not shown calmly bearing her unjust trial. The position of the victim, in fact, has shifted somewhat towards grief-stricken Leontes.

Another order of business was fixing what seemed like an actual logical impossibility in the original text. In 4.4, the action indicates that Autolycus switches clothing with Florizel such that Autolycus looks like a courtier and Florizel looks like a pedlar. But this couldn't happen if indeed Florizel is already disguised as a shepherd – Perdita having observed earlier that Florizel is "obscured/With a swain's wearing" (4.4.8-9). Garrick replaced the section with a passage where Autolycus explains that he has stolen his courtly clothes from a sleeping gamester. Garrick also didn't have the lovers flee to Sicily in any case. The entire adaptation takes place in Bohemia.

In keeping with the newfound support for the bourgeois family, the adaptation somewhat transforms the relation between court and country that had been maintained in Shakespeare's text. Moses argues that Garrick presents the poor shepherds in a surprisingly negative light,

"denigrating the unmarried, promiscuous sheep-folk who lie and cheat and are unable to control themselves". In the sheep-shearing episode, the bawdy conversations between these characters are expanded on to contrast their representations against the courtly characters. Polixenes may spy on his son and try to stop his marriage, but without the first half to show the corruption of the Sicilian court, in general the royals are shown in positive light, reuniting in love and friendship at the court of Bohemia.

The 19th Century: Quick and Smooth Transitions

The 19th century was the age of actor-managers and melodramas and elaborate, fantastic sets. By then, the unities had started to lose their fans; Dickens's serialized novel *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-1839) showed Mr. Curdle to be a ridiculous exponent of their strict observance, and possibly the romantic idea of "emotional" unity began to overcome the desire for the classical, as in Stendhal's *Racine et Shakespeare* (1823).[181] Thus John Philip Kemble, the first actor-manager to revive *WT* in March 25, 1802, at Drury Lane and later at Covent Garden, heard Cibber's cry and restored the tragic first half of play. Kemble's production was very popular and Hazlitt wrote that it was "one of the best acting" of Shakespeare's plays.[182] Kemble's text was used for about fifty years by two others as well, Macready and Phelps.

Kemble and Tempo

The new text restored some of the first folio text and kept some of Garrick's and Morgan's changes, like Perdita's song and Autolycus's tale of the stolen costume in Act 4 as well as Leontes's speeches to the statue and his concluding speech in Act 5.[183]. To accommodate a more complicated set, Kemble also made some structural alterations, beginning Act 3 immediately with the trial and splitting it into two scenes, which meant that it was easier to set up the scene between the acts, especially because he added a great many other characters to stand in the background so that his stage was more crowded than previous ones: priests of Apollo during Cleomenes and Dion's scene; a host of judges and priests, clerks and pages in the trial scenes; and sixteen dancers for Act 4.[184] Macready and Phelps may have cut down somewhat on these extra characters, but by and large they maintained the crowded stage; and Charles Kean's version later in the century grew the cast even more.

Other changes and cuts were applied to the quieter or more philosophical moments in order to speed up the play and to begin acts with major scenes. Kemble began Act 3 with the trial and removed the figure of Time from the play's middle, so that the second half immediately began with Perdita as a teenager, which evidently wasn't too confusing to the audience.[185] In Act 1 he cut down the conversation between Polixenes and Camillo and Leontes "Affection, thy intention stabs the center" soliloquy, in Act 4 he removed Perdita and Polixenes's debate on art versus nature, and in Act 5 he cut some of the speeches of the Gentleman in 5.2 which narrate the reunion and reconciliation (although Phelps restored these), moving more quickly to the denouement.

Bartholomeusz argues that Kemble wanted the action to "flow as swiftly as possible"[186]. But we can see in these changes not so much a desire for speed but rather a sensitivity to intensifying the ups and downs in the mood of the story. Thus Kemble shifted the moment of the king's repentance after the trial to a private, domestic setting, the King's Closet, and he moreover made a note to "take time here".[187] Having rendered the scene of the crime harsher and more public, he made the king's recognition of his crime seem more intimate.

Additionally, psychology in the 19th century text seems less opaque than in the text of the first folio. Bartholomeusz suggests that drawing out the change of heart helped show it as more naturalistic.[188] The king's emotional states are thus distanced from the extreme transformations of the morality plays, the representation of which had been motivated by religious considerations. Moreover, Leontes's insane "Affection, thy intention stabs the center" soliloquy is famously difficult to decipher, so its removal kept the king's character more transparent. In effect, while Kemble restored the tragedy, he took steps to explain it and to mitigate the representation of out-of-control solitary male power. Reviews of Kemble's acting often suggest an appreciation of his natural expression of emotions and transitions between them.[189]

The cuts also protected delicate sensibilities. The italicized sections of the following lines were cut: when Florizel tells Perdita of the gods turning into beasts –

> The gods themselves,
> Humbling their deities to love, have taken
> The shapes of beasts upon them: *Jupiter*
> *Became a bull, and bellow'd*; the green Neptune
> A ram, and bleated; and the fire-robed god,
> Golden Apollo, a poor humble swain,
> As I seem now. (4.4.25-31)

– and when Leontes, increasingly suspicious in 1.2, talks of "fishing" and "gates" –

> There have been,
> Or I am much deceived, cuckolds ere now;
> 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 neighbour, by*
> *Sir Smile, his neighbour: nay, there's comfort in't*
> *Whiles other men have gates and those gates open'd,*
> *As mine, against their will*. (1.2.189-198)

These lines commit Florizel more strongly as a lover and Leontes more as a villain, but reviewers were glad for the tactful removals.[190]

What Kemble did accept – but later actor-managers did not – were Shakespeare's historical and geographical mixtures and impossibilities. His stage embraced the anachronisms via a peculiar mix of Grecian, Gothic, and contemporary English fixtures. Grecian flats opened 1.1 in which courtiers discuss the royal families; they were withdrawn to show the interior of a Gothic palace with the sound of trumpets, chairs and thrones far upstage, characters wearing ceremonial Tudor costume involving layers of velvet, so that Leontes at the onset of his jealousy could walk towards the audience and work himself to a frenzy that strongly contrasted the beauty; and the mood in Sicily continued to be supported by Gothic images throughout the trial scene.[191] The set for the prison scene was patterned after Piranesi's nightmarish drawings in the Carceri series (ca. 1745), with monstrous machinery and a play of light and shadow.[192]

The bear was shown as if it were being hunted in the distance, not at all in a funny way; apparently comedy came instead with the Shepherd's discovery of the crying infant.[193] Bohemia – introduced as the setting for Autolycus, singing – was designed to look like the contemporary English countryside, and the comedy was performed in a grotesque, hearty manner, with representative English merriment.[194] The following pastoral scene was set far back on the stage in order to suggest the existence of a green lawn. Instead of the dance of the satyrs, the shepherds danced round a maypole to the tabor and pipe.[195] Act 4 returned to the Gothic; Act 5 was Grecian. Most importantly, Hermione (who had been only described as "stone" in the text) was shown as a white marble statue mostly hidden by drapery, wearing no cross.[196]

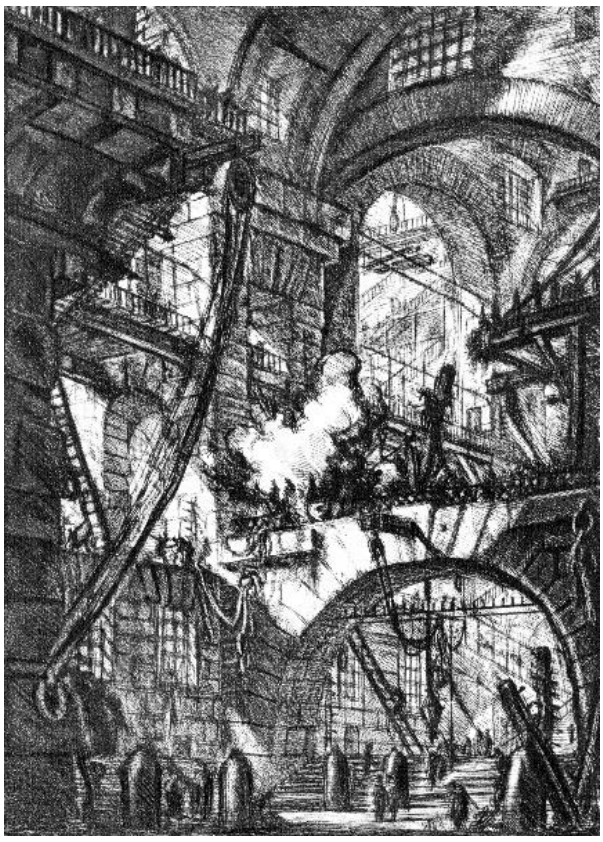

Figure 2. Piranesi's Prison

The suggestion of the miraculous was thus achieved at a distance from the Christian Revelation situation, since Hermione looked like one of the Muses, not the Virgin Mary. This was done to great success; the actress who played Hermione, Mrs. Siddons, was almost universally acclaimed in her acting. Hazlitt described her as having "monumental dignity and noble passion".[197] She chose her first movement as a startled turn of the head and later actresses followed her example, but it was a difficult moment to carry off naturally and often resulted in critical reviews.[198] The issue of the natural appearance of the statue also sometimes raised itself among reviewers, the statues of Shakespeare's time being colored, not white, and it making more sense for the statue to look as life-like as possible in any case.[199] We have also seen that color and paint were integral to the idea of the realistic statue for Ovid, Italian humanists, and Shakespeare. Accordingly Helen Faucit, who played Hermione in Macready's productions between 1823 and 1843, struck a more careful balance between the appearance of art and the appearance of nature.[200] She wore a cashmere instead of a muslin dress that was colored purple and gold at its edges, and after the music began she moved her head very slowly. Nonetheless, the dress stayed white, and her posture stayed relaxed and sensuous against a marble pedestal, so that she struck an absolutely Grecian note for the audience.

Kemble's production was generally marked by a sort of dignity and sense for the sublime; Macready acting as Leontes was famous rather for "emotional realism" and a sense for the "familiar", according to reviews from the time period.[201] Where Kemble had spoken very clearly, Macready spoke quickly, which sometimes rendered him difficult to understand but lent his performance an "immediate truth".[202] He especially succeeded in the representation of sorrow. Throughout 5.1 he showed Leontes either weeping or on the edge, a handkerchief in his hand.[203] Then the emotional sequence of wonder, doubt, terror, and belief that culminated in a "magnificent out-pouring of joy and ecstasy" at Hermione's return kept the house shocked and

riveted in a "convincingly inward" representation.[204] We continue to see an interest in the visible and convincing representation of emotion.

Phelps and Verbal Poetry

Samuel Phelps's productions at Sadler's Wells between 1845 and 1860, the most popular of all the plays at that theater at that time, added a greater interest in "archeological correctness" and in the poetry and design within the drama. It followed a completely Grecian motif. Since the theater was much smaller than the two that had held the London monopoly until that point, it could achieve subtler effects through clear and natural speech and left the audience with a new sense of inner unity, so that noticeable among audience reactions is an appreciation of the tragicomic type of wholeness: "the gloom vividly fronts the gaiety … the dignity, the drollery; and the graceful, the grotesque". [205]Another wrote:

> [The play's] interest is so human and at the same time so various … In its wide range of character it is almost a microcosm of old world existence. King and peasant, lord and pedlar, pass distinctly before us in all the strong contrasts of youth and age.[206]

Phelps first interpreted Leontes in a way strongly influenced by Coleridge, whose analysis emphasized that Leontes was "constitutionally suspicious" and that jealousy was "a vice of the mind" that grasped at the smallest evidence, just as in Othello.[207] Thus Leontes was a small, selfish, domestic figure. But over time Phelps came to play Leontes more as a grand Greek king, perhaps in order to become more consistent with the Grecian theme.

Kean and Scientific Spectacle

But none of these actor-managers were as committed to theme as Charles Kean, who began in 1856 to produce one of the most popular and long-running productions of the Victorian era. Charles Kean's wife's comments about the genesis of the new style given to *WT* are worth quoting at length since they show the values and motivations behind the Victorian production:

> My husband … was in despair and said I do not see a chance of attraction in it and said what *can* be done with this *first act*. Can anything be flatter than these four people stalking down the stage to say 'goodbye'. At last his *eyes* or rather his *brain* opened to the *opportunity*. 'Polixenes is our guest – he is leaving – he would probably have a banquet' – He went to his Greek authorities to see what was done at these Banquets – and out of this thought came throughout the play the most wonderful illustrations of Greek and [Bithynian] manners.[208]

The text of *WT* was, in short, boring; and use of the word "flat" is interesting because it again implies that attraction lay in something like a variable landscape. These realms of attraction are purely visual: the happy outcome was composed of "illustrations". The reference to the brain is also a sign of the times, since in the 1800s English scientific inquiry into the brain exploded (the prevailing opinion, handed down from Aristotle throughout the Middle Ages, having been that the heart and not the brain was the seat of cognition and emotion) especially after George Combe promoted Gall and Spurzheim's phrenological science of "reading the skull" to the masses. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, a story which created horror and romance out of the possibilities of

science, was published in 1818, and Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* was published in 1859. Little wonder then that Kean wanted Greek "authorities" for his production, in a time that saw increasing interest in scientific correctness.

In creating the Greek setting, Kean excised all mentions of other places and anachronisms from the text, including the reference to Julio Romano, and aggressively created a spectacular, opulent, factually realistic, Hellenic setting occurring at precisely 330 BC. He took the Oracle of Delphi as "the pivot on which the story revolves" and proceeded from there.[209] Objects on the set were patterned after artifacts in museums and costumes were even modelled on pictures found on vases from the period. The play opened with a luxurious feast, the kings in reclining poses, servants and slaves serving drinks – a hymn was sung to Apollo – a dozen women performed a Pyrrhic dance – and this was only the beginning. Each new scene shifted to a new beautiful set, and Kean made the most of the latest technology to create illusions of spacious rooms on the stage of the Princess's Theatre. The spectacles of the bear, Time, the satyr dance, and Hermione's statue were made the most of. The satyr dance took about three hundred dancers, two sheep, and a goat. Bartholomeusz compares the effect of the spectacles on the actual text and action as a "flood" that sank all beneath it.[210]

In light of our analysis of the classical precedents for Shakespeare's play, Kean's production is interesting for literally rather than symbolically emphasizing those precedents. For example, Kean split the presentation of Time into three reimagined Greek figures. The scene took about half an hour. The goddess of the moon spoke first, appearing on a floating chariot (suspended by invisible ropes) surrounded by starts; Chronos succeeded her, sitting on a globe; Apollo, brilliantly lit and standing in a car pulled by horses, finished the set. Also, a "satyric, Dionysian mood" was created for "the festival of Pan" in the second half.[211] This destroyed the English mood that had usually been given the scene. Finally, a Sicilian flower festival closed the play.[212]

Incidentally or by design, the focus shifted wholly away from Christian revelation. In the statue scene, there was such a crowd onstage – reacting with cries, rising to their feet, shrinking in horror, etc. – to Leontes's interactions with the statue that the audience must have been focusing more on the *spectacle* of spectacle than on the meaning of the miracle of resurrection.[213]

Kean continued the work that his 19th century predecessors had begun in 'explaining' Leontes's jealousy to the point of justifying it. The opening scene showed Hermione and Polixenes in deep conversation, body language leaning towards each other, and Leontes watching anxiously from the start.[214] Later producers imitated Kean's innovation in giving Leontes real motive.

Kean's production was essentially Victorian. Archeological correctness was pursued in the architecture more than in the portrayal of characters and Hermione was made "a Victorian heroine" exemplifying pathos, dignity, and womanliness.[215] Accordingly Kean's wife, Ellen Kean, played Hermione with starched petticoats under the Greek dress and pulled her hair smoothly back in twists around her ears. In keeping with stricter Victorian sensibilities Kean also cut references to Hermione's pregnancy: "The Queen your mother rounds apace (2.1.16) and "she is spread of late/Into a goodly bulk" (2.1.19-20). The text was thus shorter, because in addition to keeping Kemble's cuts, Kean cut Garrick's additions, but the overall production was much longer due to the processions, dances, and ceremonies. It was performed 102 times, including for the queen.

Conclusion

In this beautiful and subtle play, Prince Mamillius is at one point called the *print* of his possibly-cuckolded father, which concentrates many important ideas and tensions on which *WT* plays: the notion of children as repetitions of their parents, the larger idea of generations repeating but redeeming generations in a preordained history, anxiety over visual repetition and representation, and its ties to sex and reproduction. These tensions are embedded in both the medieval English Christian dramatic tradition and the drama of Ancient Greek and Italian Renaissance. Thus the trope of a statue of a beautiful woman that comes to life, which in itself concentrates questions about the power and role of art and nature as processes of repetition and representation. And O'Connell suggests that the invention of printing and print culture in the 15th century was the most significant transition moment in the history of technologies of representation, because at that point humanism devalued visual compared to linguistic representation of the sacred. Shakespeare's text maintains a careful balance between visual and verbal narratives as equally legitimate and equally problematic arts, but it becomes evident, indeed, that as performances and adaptations of *WT* distanced themselves further from interpreting the play as a Christian drama of fall and redemption, and more as a play dramatizing a psychologically transparent drama of reconciliation, that the visual element exploded while the verbal was cut and simplified in the interests of a different, more varying kind of temporal structure.

Generic structure is one of the most important elements mediating interpretation of these overloaded tropes and images. *WT* was interested in a structure that contrasted tragedy and comedy within a Christian tragicomic order essentially describing the presence of God in a reality wherein men inevitably fall into sin and need to be forgiven. That is to say, it inherited and played on several kinds of generic structures which were largely comic, leading to an end structured according to the logic of poetic justice, and claiming to address the representation of life in a balanced, full way. The Christian logic of poetic justice was particularly vital for its unique and harsh emotional-spiritual characterization of the scapegoat/innocent, guilty, and penitent. Interpretations and performances of *WT* over time suggest a dissociation from this characterization and a corresponding loss in the motivating difference between victims and villains, such that Leontes as the focus of the play, originally conceived as a villain and mankind figure, is reconfigured into a victim-hero.

Insofar as the name of tragicomedy can be intended to mean many different generic structures or definitions, it is somewhat pointless to declare *WT* a tragicomedy because of X and Y. But generally, *WT*'s position in the history of tragicomedy suggests that it drew on both the Christian and classical traditions of cyclical generic structures mingling the serious and light for a denouement based on restoration, and did so, moreover, without having developed to the stage of suspenseful tragicomedy represented by Shakespeare's contemporaries, Beaumont and Fletcher.

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