

"MORE THAN HISTORY CAN PATTERN:"

A STUDY OF THE WINTER'S TALE

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THESIS

in

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts at  
Sir George Williams University  
Montreal, Canada

April, 1973

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## Abstract

The thesis examines two major themes in The Winter's Tale and shows how they affect each other. The first theme concerns the relationship between a king and a daughter; the second, the relationship between art and nature. The integrating argument of the thesis is that in The Winter's Tale a particular aspect of the content, i.e., the father-daughter theme, affects to a striking degree the form of both the prose and the poetry and that what Shakespeare has to suggest about the relationship between kings and daughters is directly related to what the form of his prose and poetry suggests about the relationship between art and life. The effect of the content on the form is epitomized in the image of "a broken delivery" in V.ii. The gentleman who uses the phrase is referring to his own fragmentary report of the part of the reconciliation he has witnessed between Leontes and Camillo. The issue of what he has heard and seen, however, proves to be more than his delivery of a "broken" verbal report: it is also, in a metaphoric sense, the incomplete delivery of a daughter and father. The issue of the new Leontes is completed in V.iii when the king is reconciled with Hermione. The poetry of the last scene, as contrasted to the fragmentary prose concert in V.ii, reflects the perfect marriage of word and deed. This unbroken delivery of poetry plays out for the audience the crowning completion of a man, i.e., his re-creation in his reunion with wife and daughter. Shakespeare may be asking us to accept the convention that on the stage life is not always "more/ Than history can pattern" (III.ii.35-6).

To the memory of

PROFESSOR NEIL M. COMPTON<sup>1</sup>

who, in the short time I knew him,

taught me many fine things

about the uses of love

and humour

and courage

One hesitates to analyse such poetry as this, I suppose because of a fear of violating something fragile. But the presentiment is false. Poetry as great as this is not fragile, but very strong.

A.D. Nuttall, William Shakespeare:  
'The Winter's Tale' (London, 1966),  
p. 42.

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## Preface

I have attempted in my thesis to examine the point at which two different ideas coincide in The Winter's Tale. The first idea is the relationship between parents and children, especially that between Leontes, a king, and Perdita, his daughter. The second idea is the relationship between art and nature.

The remarkable relationship between father and daughter that obtains in the four plays frequently referred to as romances is prefigured, to some extent, in King Lear; but King Lear, not being a "romance", does not deal with the conventions of drama and art in the same self-conscious way as do Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale and The Tempest. The Tempest, on the other hand, though it too represents a variation on the theme of father and daughter, establishes a tone so different from the other romances that I consider it to be in a class by itself and therefore beyond the scope of this thesis.

The play most like The Winter's Tale in its deliberate insistence that the audience be always aware of the fact that it is watching art and not life and that it be made to instantaneously see through and accept dramatic convention is Pericles; consequently, I have drawn from that play much that brings into clearer focus certain relationships in The Winter's Tale. Cymbeline, while it concerns itself less self-consciously with singers, story-tellers, poets and sculptors, contains in its diction and imagery much that links it with The Winter's Tale. Where plays other than the ones mentioned, regardless of whether they were written close in time to The Winter's Tale or not, help in some significant way to illuminate a relevant notion in The Winter's Tale, I have referred to them.

I have tried to show that in The Winter's Tale a particular aspect of the content, i.e., the father-daughter theme, has to a striking degree affected the form of both the prose and the poetry and that what Shakespeare has to suggest about the relationship between fathers and daughters is directly related to what the form of his poetry suggests about the relationship between art and life.

The volume of literary criticism I have read over the past three years has taught me much about Shakespeare and his work; unfortunately, I came upon no book or article that dealt specifically with the ideas I wished to consider in my thesis.

I wish to thank Dr. David McKeen for showing himself to be not only a conscientious and supportive adviser but an inspiring and inventive teacher as well:

Time as long again  
 Would be fill'd up, my brother, with our thanks;  
 And yet we should, for perpetuity,  
 Go hence in debt: and therefore, like a cipher  
 (Yet standing in rich place) I multiply  
 With one 'We thank you' many thousands more  
 That go before it (W.T.I.11.3-9).

I. Faith and Art

When, in V.1 of The Winter's Tale, Dion urges Leontes to consider

What dangers, by his highness' fall of issue,  
May drop upon his kingdom, and devour  
Uncertain lookers on (V.1 27-29),<sup>1</sup>

and consequently urges him to choose a new wife. "For present comfort, and for future good, / To bless the bed of majesty again" (32-33). Paulina reminds those present of the message of Apollo's Oracle.

There is none worthy,  
Respecting her that's gone. Besides, the gods  
Will have fulfill'd their secret purposes;  
For has not the divine Apollo said,  
Is't not the tenor of his Oracle,  
That King Leontes shall not have an heir,  
Till his lost child be found which, that it shall,  
Is all as monstrous to our human reason  
As my Antigonus to break his grave  
And come again to me; who, on my life,  
Did perish with the infant. 'Tis your counsel  
My lord should to the heavens be contrary,  
Oppose against their wills (34-46).

There is much in the play that is "monstrous to our human reason", and the levels of this monstrousness are various. The play includes: two future kings of different countries "trained together in their childhoods" (I.1.22); a grown king's sudden and inexplicable rage; a man devoured by a bear on the sea-coast of Bohemia; an audience completely taken in by the trumpery of an irrepressible singer of bawdy songs; an old shepherd in mortal fear of a threat that has been removed; a statue come to life; an abandoned child and a supposedly dead wife restored after an interval of sixteen years. The play contains a deliberate and recurring insistence that what cannot be is, as

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1. All citations of The Winter's Tale are to the New Arden edition, ed. J.H.P. Pafford (London, 1963).



though to suggest that the absurd must be accepted at face value. To question the precise locality of a country in which two young and future kings frisk in the sun may be reasonable but it is not faithful; it may be rational but (or so Sir Thomas Browne might have seen it) it is rebellious. The essential reality is the tale itself: "the play's the thing"; and the only answer to the question is probably that these fellow "lordings" of different countries grow up together on the sea-coast of some land-locked country. As vehemently as the play maintains that life is rooted in the ground and honour in the blood, it insists that art is a leap of faith, the quality of which shapes the form of these same adult kings so that "they have seemed to be together, though absent; shook hands, as over a vast; and embraced, as it were, from the ends of opposed winds" (I.i.28-31). The faith that easily leaps the vast expanse of both space and time and that perceives the presence of the parents in the embraces of the children is the faith that supports art.

At the beginning of IV.i the Chorus appears, not only "in the name of Time" (3) but also in the name of Art, to directly address and exhort the audience of The Winter's Tale to allow its patience to make that leap of faith:

Impute it not a crime  
 To me, or my swift passage, that I slide  
 O'er sixteen years, and leave the growth untried  
 Of that wide gap, since it is in my power  
 To o'erthrow law, and in one self-born hour  
 To plant and o'erwhelm custom (IV.i.4-9).

This self-generating Chorus, Time, functions in the same way as does that more peripatetic chorus figure in Pericles, "ancient" Gower, who comes Phoenix-like "From ashes" "To sing a song that old was sung" (I.i.W.?).<sup>1</sup> Gower informs his

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1. All citations of Pericles are to the New Arden edition, ed. F.D. Hoeniger (London, 1963).

listeners that he stands "i' th' gaps to teach" (9). The audience is not asked to believe that statues in their own houses and chapels will come to life, but it is being instructed to allow that same transformation to take place on stage. A fictive Chorus cannot teach an audience to equate the faith that supports art with that kind of belief in miracle that will help make life away from the theatre enduring. Such a leap, if it is taken, remains privately individual and finally unutterable.

"It is required," Paulina reminds the king just before the statue of Hermione moves, "You do awake your faith" (V.iii.94-95). A violation of faith destroys art just as a violation of blood does honour. Faith and honour, moreover, are as inextricably bound up in each other as are art and life. In the midst of the sheep-shearing feast, after the identities of Camillo and Polixenes have been revealed, Perdita anticipates the loss of her dignity; but Florizel declares:

It cannot fail, but by  
 The violation of my faith; and then  
 Let nature crush the sides o' th' earth together,  
 And mar the seeds within! Lift up thy looks:  
 From my succession wipe me father; I  
 Am heir to my affection (IV.iv.477-82)

And when Camillo admonishes him to "Be advis'd" (482), Florizel adds:

I am: and by my fancy. If my reason  
 Will thereto be obedient, I have reason;  
 If not, my senses, better pleas'd with madness,  
 Do bid it welcome (IV.iv.483-86).

Faith supports honour; its violation mars life. The seeds of the earth are allowed to function only when the "looks" are lifted up.<sup>1</sup> Although Polixenes cannot "wipe" his son from his succession any more than he can cut off "true

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1. c.f. Paulina's admonition of Leontes at III.ii.148-9: "look down/ And see what death is doing" (italics, mine).

blood" (IV.iv.148), the irrationality behind Florizel's "desperate" (486) insistence on being rid of the ties of blood is momentarily reminiscent of Leontes's rejection of Hermione and Perdita. Because "wipe" denotes "clean" and "wash", it may be that this desperation of Florizel's has a purging effect similar to that of Leontes's rage. This desire to clear away may represent the annihilation of the delusive that immediately precedes the readiness to be filled with that which engenders new life or new art.

Before being filled with that which regenerates, an individual (or an audience) must first become receptive. This state of readiness is effected by an emptying out of all that is not conducive to the awakening of faith. Frequently in Shakespeare, and notably in the later plays, the washing out of the self is brought about by the tears of grief or, to borrow a phrase from Erasmus, by "the gift of tears"<sup>1</sup> "Nothing almost sees miracles, / But misery" (II.ii.165-6),<sup>2</sup> knowingly declares the disguised and loyal Kent in King Lear, alone on stage after having been cruelly placed in the stocks by Cornwall and Regan; and Cymbeline, newly reconciled with Imogen, "my flesh, my child" (V.v.264),<sup>3</sup> blesses her with these words: "My tears that fall / Prove holy water on thee" (268-9).

It is true that the madness Florizel speaks of preferring he tentatively links with a creative and leaping faith, but when fancy abandons

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1. "The Complaint of Peace," in The Essential Erasmus, trans. John P. Dolan (New York, 1964), p. 179
  2. All citations of King Lear are to the New Arden edition, ed. Kenneth Muir (London, 1964).
  3. All citations of Cymbeline are to the New Arden edition, ed. James Nosworthy (London, 1955).

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reason altogether the result is mad. Florizel is not quite ready, not yet pregnant. To be the beneficiary of the affection to which he clings can be disastrous, and (while we know that Perdita deserves his love) we are not sure that Florizel is right to prefer heirship to his own will ("I/ Am heir to my affection": 481-2) to heir apparencey to his father's kingdom. That he considers himself heir to an "affection" which contemplates fancy without reason a little too uncomfortably recalls Leontes's passionate imaginings:

Affection! thy intention stabs the centre:  
Thou dost make possible things not so held,  
Communicat'st with dreams;--how can this be?--  
With what's unreal thou coactive art,  
And fellow'st nothing: then 'tis very credent  
Thou may'st co-join with something; and thou dost,  
(And that beyond commission) and I find it,  
(And that to the infection of my brains  
And hard'ning of my brows) (I ii 138-144)

Florizel, as Perdita has already done, reacts to the unkingly behaviour of his father in language that reflects another king's abandonment of decorum. Again, the child; "as over a ~~cut~~" (I.i.30), mirrors something of the parent as though to mock the parent's deluded fantasy of a wife and a friend or a son and a friend's daughter "making practis'd smiles/ As in a looking glass" (I.ii.116-117). Florizel turns from "fancy" and "madness" back to "reason" only when the irrational part of his nature that his father's rage has provoked is brought under control by means of Camillo's settling influence. It is Camillo who keeps Florizel from "a wild dedication of yourselves/ To unpath'd waters, undream'd shores; most certain/ To miseries enough" (IV.iv.567-569). To act without a rational plan, as Florizel is about to do, is to act wildly.

Cam. Have you thought on  
A place whereto you'll go?  
Flo. Not any yet:  
But as th'unthought-on accident is guilty  
To what we wildly do, so we profess

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Ourselves to be the slaves of chance, and flies  
Of every wind that blows (IV iv. 537-542).

To deny the existence of any order higher than that of "chance" is to reject the possibility of growth. Being blown about like a fly by every wind that blows provides a kind of shallow excitement. Autolycus assumes that life consists in taking things as they come and going whichever way the wind blows. "Sure the gods do this year connive at us, and we may do any thing extempore" (IV. iv. 676-677); he concludes after Camillo has forced him to change clothes with Florizel. For Autolycus, all of life is an off-hand improvisation, an impromptu entertainment that revolves around himself. The wise old lord of Sicilia, on the contrary, envisages "A course more promising" (566):

...make for Sicilia,  
And there present yourself and your fair princess  
(For so I see she must be) 'fore Leontes:  
She shall be habited as it becomes  
The partner of your bed. Methinks I see  
Leontes opening his free arms and weeping  
His welcomes forth; asks thee there 'Son, forgiveness!  
As 'twere I' th' father's person; kisses the hands  
Of your fresh princess; o'er and o'er divides him  
Twixt his unkindness and his kindness; th' one  
He chides to hell, and bids the other grow  
Faster than thought or time (IV. iv. 544-555).

Camillo's imaginings contain the same rich promise as do those of Perdita in the long flower passage in IV. iv. He sees Leontes "opening his free arms and weeping", embracing Florizel as Perdita had pictured herself doing. Just as Perdita's conceptual embrace across the "vast" of the imagination has foreshadowed this present one in Camillo's mind, so Camillo's description of Leontes's act of forgiveness and the consequent reconciliation prefigure actuality. "What we wildly do" enslaves; when imagination leaps within the limits of reason, life goes and grows with it. "I am bound to you," Florizel

tells Camillo; "There is some sap in this" (IV.iv.565-66). The sap of life is contained in the bond of order and reason, such a tree (as another Shakespearean prince who thinks in these terms puts it) as those "Which fence the roots they grow by and defend them" (Pericles I.ii.32).

To "oppose against" (V.i.46) the wills of heaven is to cut the bond that gives life. If, on the other hand, Leontes binds himself to the divine Apollo, "the crown will find an heir" (V.i.47). Confinement to the will of Apollo is the bondage that frees. (Camillo, in IV.iv, imagines the yet penitent Leontes as "opening his free arms" to welcome the son of Polixenes and bind him in an embrace; and Paulina, carrying the infant Perdita to Leontes, tells one of the lords who tries to stop her that the imprisoned Hermione is "a gracious innocent soul,/ More free than he [Leontes] is jealous": II.iii.29-9.)

Something of the self is given up in order that something greater may be received. A lordling surrenders his "wildness" so that he may become a "pregnant" king. Leontes, after a sixteen-year performance of "saint-like sorrow" (V.i.2), having "paid down/ More penitence than done trespass" (3-4), cries to Paulina:

O, that ever I  
Had squar'd me to thy counsel! Then, even now,  
I might have look'd upon my queen's full eyes,  
Have taken treasure from her lips, --

"And left them," Paulina concludes, "More rich for what they yielded" (51-55).

Paulina admonishes the servant who announces the arrival of Prince Florizel and "his princess" (V.i.86) because the servant, by declaring Perdita to be not only "The fairest I have yet beheld" (87) but also "the most peerless piece of earth, I think,/ That e'er the sun shone bright on" (V.i.94-95), has allowed her beauty to eclipse that of Hermione. "O Hermione," complains

Paulina,

As every present time doth boast itself  
 Above a better gone, so must thy grave  
 Give way to what's seen now! Sir, you yourself  
 Have said, and writ so; but your writing now  
 Is colder than that theme: 'She had not been,  
 Nor was not to be equall'd';--thus your verse  
 Flow'd with her beauty once: 'tis shrewdly ebb'd,  
 To say you have seen a better (V.i.95-103)

The theme of the poet-servant's poem, "She had not been,/ Nor was not to be equall'd", is an incomplete one. Hermione may be unequalled, "peerless" as "Flora/ Peering in April's front", but the servant has forgotten to include what Florizel already has included. Because Hermione is a queen, all her acts are queens and everything she does "Still betters what is done" (IV.iv.136); each her doing, "So singular in each particular,/ Crowns" (144-145) what she does. Perdita, who is very much Hermione's doing, "crowns" her mother in the dual sense that she is better than Hermione and that she makes Hermione "more rich" for what she yields. The act that crowns a queen is the creation of a queen. Hermione not only yields a new queen in the person of her daughter, she gives birth to that which, by manifesting the quality of her virtue, newly re-affirms her own royalty.

Both parents and children are incomplete in themselves; each of them crowns the other. A king is a man who has completed himself by piecing together the members of his family. R.A. Foakes has commented on the fact that "piece" is a favourite word of Shakespeare's for the heroines of the last plays.<sup>1</sup> Of the three people in The Winter's Tale who use the noun in reference to Perdita one, speaking in anger, uses the word in a derogatory manner. When

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1. R.A. Foakes, ed., King Henry VIII (London, 1957), p. 175, 1.26n. All citations of King Henry VIII are to this New Arden edition.

Polixenes removes his disguise and reveals his identity in the midst of the sheep-shearing festivities in order to separate, with assumed authority, his "sceptre's heir" from a "sheep-hook", he furiously addresses Perdita:

And thou, fresh piece  
Of excellent witchcraft, who, of force, must know  
The royal fool thou cop'st with. (IV.iv.423-425).

Polixenes uses the noun merely as a synonym for woman, but an examination of instances of the word in this and other late plays makes highly likely the suggestion that "piece" held special connotations for Shakespeare.

Earlier in IV.iv Florizel speaks to Perdita of the gods who "Humbling their deities to love, have taken/ The shapes of beasts upon them" (IV.iv.26-27). "Their transformations," he tells her by way of justification for having obscured his "high self" (7) "With a swain's wearing" (9), "Were never for a piece of beauty rarer,/ Nor in a way so chaste" (31-33). Florizel's association of Perdita with a piece of something rare prefigures the comment of the poet-servant when, in V.i, he looks on Perdita for the first time and calls her, much to the dismay of Paulina, "the most peerless piece of earth ... that e'er the sun shone bright on" (V.i 94-95). In a far less exalted manner Marina, the daughter of Pericles, is also referred to as a piece of earth by Boult, the pandar's servant who is made callously impatient by Marina's obstinate refusal to become a whore and stupidly upset by the fact that she has succeeded in driving away Lysimachus, a nobleman originally expected to do lucrative business with her in the brothel

Boult. The nobleman would have dealt with her like a nobleman, and she sent him away as cold as a snowball; saying his prayers too.

Bawd. Boult, take her away; use her at thy pleasure. Crack the glass of her virginity, and make the rest malleable.



Boult. And if she were a thornier piece of ground than she is, she shall be plough'd - (IV.iv.138-145).

"Malleable" suggests that the "piece of ground" has the potential to be moulded into something else. Boult, however, has no power, other than that of his ineffectual words, to change the shape of Marina. Much of the imagery in The Winter's Tale, moreover, makes it clear that a piece of earth is to be considered primarily as that which shapes and is shaped by the seeds of new life: Florizel declares that the inconceivable violation of his faith would be the impetus for nature to "crush the sides o' th'earth together, / And mar the seeds within!" (IV.iv 479-480); he also speaks of "all the sun sees, or The close earth wombs" (IV.iv 490-491); and he is figured himself as an earthy "bank" for Flora in love "to lie and play on" (IV.iv.130). Leontes, believing the woman with Florizel to be his wife and a stranger to Sicilia, welcomes Florizel in the following manner:

The blessed gods  
Purge all infection from our air whilst you  
Do climate here! (V.i.167-169).

According to the OED, as Pafford points out, since one definition of "climate" is "a region of the earth", used as a verb it means "to live in a particular district". More exactly, Leontes asks the gods to cleanse the air of Sicilia while Florizel, as welcome "As is the spring to th'earth" (V.i.151), does live in this particular part of the earth. Since Perdita has just been described as a "peerless piece of earth", the connotations of "climate" include the sexual. The major conclusion to be tentatively drawn is that Shakespeare frequently uses the word "piece" to suggest that which can be moulded to become part of something new and greater than itself.

A significant variation on Shakespeare's use of "piece" occurs in Henry VIII. In III.ii the Earl of Surrey angrily refers to Cardinal Wolsey as "a piece of scarlet". The metonymy is further developed in IV.i by the gentleman who describes to two other gentlemen the behaviour of the people pressing forward to witness the coronation of Anne Bullen.

Hats, cloaks  
 (Doublets, I think) flew up, and had their faces  
 Been loose, this day they had been lost. Such joy  
 I never saw before. Great-bellied women,  
 That had not half a week to go, like rams  
 In the old time of war, would shake the press  
 And make 'em reel before 'em. No man living  
 Could say 'This is my wife' there, all were woven  
 So strangely in one piece (IV.i.73-81).

In one case a piece of cloth indicates a whole man; in the other, the whole cloth suggests the fitting together of many separate pieces. The idea of pieces of cloth being woven into one whole is, perhaps, not quite as striking as the idea of a piece as something malleable that can be shaped as a sculptor shapes a statue, something that, while it requires art to attain its form, somehow completes that which has life. Towards the conclusion of Henry VIII Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury, speaks to the king of his infant daughter, the "mighty piece" who will become Elizabeth I.

This royal infant (heaven still move about her)  
 Though in her cradle, yet now promises  
 Upon this land a thousand thousand blessings,  
 Which time shall bring to ripeness: she shall be  
 (But few now living can behold that goodness)  
 A pattern to all princes living with her,  
 And all that shall succeed: Saba was never  
 More covetous of wisdom and fair virtue  
 Than this pure soul shall be. All princely graces  
 That mould up such a mighty piece as this is,  
 With all the virtues that attend the good,  
 Shall still be doubled on her (V.iv.17-28).

"O lord archbishop," the king replies, "Thou has made me now a man" (63-64).

A close look at the ways in which Shakespeare uses "piece" as a verb in The Winter's Tale may serve to clarify his intention. On hearing from another gentleman that Leontes and Perdita are going to look at the statue of Hermione "newly performed by that rare Italian master, Julio Romano" (V.ii.95-96), one gentleman asks, "Shall we thither, with our company piece the rejoicing?" (107-108). Pafford here gives the following meanings for "piece": augment, help to complete, join (p. 151). Polixenes, in the next scene, just before the statue of Hermione comes to life and Leontes's penance reaches its climax, entreats the King of Sicilia:

Dear my brother,  
Let him that was the cause of this have power  
To take off so much grief from you as he  
Will piece up in himself (V.iii.53-56).

Bohemia desires to be allowed to take a piece of his close friend's grief into himself. The piece of Sicilia which Bohemia takes would augment and help to complete himself. The nature of these metaphoric pieces, however, is that they augment and complete not only whoever takes them up but also whoever yields them. Camillo makes it evident that Leontes's sorrow, like the colour on the statue "newly fix'd" (V.iii.47), is not yet dry.

My lord, your sorrow was too sore laid on,  
Which sixteen winters cannot blow away,  
So many summers dry: scarce any joy  
Did ever so long live; no sorrow  
But kill'd itself much sooner (V.iii.49-53).

Leontes's sorrow is his life: it will not be killed. If sixteen winters have not blown away the moist seeds within, then the king's potent tears will continue to rain and reign. That part of his grief which he gives to Polixenes, or to anyone else close to him, will disseminate and leave him "more rich" for what he yields. Real fullness, such as that of "my queen's full eyes" (V.i.53)

is that which fills itself by becoming part of something new.

"Piece" is used twice in the play with reference to the statue of Hermione. The gentleman who speaks of the sculptor Julio Romano refers to his work as "a piece many years in doing" (V.ii.94-95); and Leontes, standing close to the statue and on the verge of miracle and reconciliation, cries:

O, thus she stood,  
 Even with such life of majesty, warm life;  
 As now it coldly stands, when first I woo'd her!  
 I am asham'd: does not the stone rebuke me  
 For being more stone than it? O royal piece!  
 There's magic in thy majesty, which has  
 My evils conjur'd to remembrance, and  
 From thy admiring daughter took the spirits,  
 Standing like stone with thee (V.iii.34-42).

Just as important as the fact that this royal piece comes to life is the fact that its coming to life is the deed that completes and re-crowns Leontes.

The transformation of the statue of Hermione into the real queen presents a pattern that has occurred more than once before in the play -- that of art yielding and becoming life. The continuation of the sad winter's tale that Mamillius softly begins in his mother's ear is the actual machinations of Leontes's diseased mind. -- The poem the poet-servant writes to celebrate the eternal uniqueness of Hermione becomes a spontaneous encomium for Perdita. The timeless commemoration sung by Autolycus of the red blood's reigning in the winter's pale becomes immediate and fragmentary trumpery.

Paulina, having witnessed the transformation in the theme of the poet-servant's poem of praise, addresses the absent and supposedly dead Hermione:

O Hermione,  
 As every present time doth boast itself  
 Above a better gone, so must thy grave  
 Give way to what's seen now! (V.i.95-98).

This is the second time in one scene that Paulina has referred to graves giving way. She describes the possibility of Leontes finding his lost child as an occurrence

as monstrous to our human reason  
As my Antigonus to break his grave  
And come again to me (V.i.41-43).

In this play graves do give way to new life as winter does to spring.<sup>1</sup>

Because Hermione is not dead and Perdita not lost, the idea of a grave becomes another figure for the "show of death" that refreshes life (Cymbeline I.vi.40: see further note below, p. 34). The identification, furthermore, of a seemingly dead queen with a carefully formed statue pushes the implications of this imagery of surface show one major step forward. Art is not only the show of life; but as the close earth of winter wombs the branching spring, so art is the shaping that gives birth to life: it is the "pale" that frames the reigning blood. The life which art engenders does not eclipse but crowns it.

There is a difference between the effect of the words shaped by the poet-servant and that of the words shaped by the Oracle of Apollo. If Paulina's summary of the servant's theme is accurate, then the poem represents an incomplete work of art since it makes no provision for the extension of Hermione's beauty; i.e. it ignores the effects of time. The poem denies the inevitability of the queen's beauty flowing into and becoming something else. A world that implies the finality of the insistently pluperfect "had not been"

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1. While Antigonus does not "break his grave" in the way in which Hermione does, the play does suggest that his death gives way to both new life (his death is seen as a process of ingestion into nature: III.iii.95, 105, 127-8, before he is finally "put ... i' th' ground": 134-5) and new art (cf. p. 79).

and the rigidly future "Nor was not to be" is reminiscent of the impotent place of refuge from strong and hot blood Leontes seeks in I.ii. The world of the servant's poem is like the one Polixenes recalls of young lambs frisking in the sun. Time forces it to give way and become mutable. The message of the Oracle, on the other hand, contains the seeds of change because it includes the conditional:

Hermione is chaste; Polixenes blameless; Camillo  
a true subject; Leontes a jealous tyrant; his in-  
nocent babe truly begotten; and the king shall  
live without an heir, if that which is lost be not  
found (III.ii.132-136).

The fact that Perdita is found changes the servant's poem, but it does not change Apollo's message. The inclusion of the conditional "if" in the message is equivalent to the seeds of life contained in the shape of art. Leontes is surprised at what he sees when he first examines the statue of his wife: "Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing/ So aged as this seems" (V.iii.28-29), he tells Paulina; and the good and wise woman explains to him:

So much the more our carver's excellence,  
Which lets go by some sixteen years and makes her  
As she liv'd now (V.iii.30-32).

The statue is an excellent work of art because its initial conception, not in the mind of the imaginary carver but in that of the prophetic Paulina, included the workings and changes effected by time. The real artist is Paulina, operating, perhaps, as an agent of Apollo; and it is the life of Leontes that she has helped to carve.

From the moment Perdita re-enters the court of Leontes that which has been lost is on the verge of being found. All the sexually intense anticipation of what is not yet but just about to be contained in the figure of "The

marigold, that goes to bed wi' th' sun/ And with him rises, weeping,"  
trembles through Leontes's welcoming words to Florizel and Perdita.

Your mother was most true to wedlock, prince;  
For she did print your royal father off,  
Conceiving you. Were I but twenty-one,  
Your father's image is so hit in you,  
His very air, that I should call you brother,  
As I did him, and speak of something wildly  
By us perform'd before. Most dearly welcome!  
And you fair princess!--goddess!--O, alas!  
I lost a couple, that 'twixt heaven and earth  
Might thus have stood, begetting wonder, as,  
You, gracious couple, do: and then I lost--  
All mine own folly--the society,  
Amity too, of your brave father, whom  
(Though bearing misery) I desire my life  
Once more to look on him (V.i.123-137).

Leontes's speech, uttered on the brink of his own re-creation, is full of the imagery of pregnancy and birth. Instead of associating the child's resemblance to the father with the horns and cuckoldry he imagines while Mamillius is alive

(Why that's my bawcock. What! hast smutch'd thy nose?  
They say it is a copy out of mine. Come, captain,  
We must be neat; not neat, but cleanly, captain:  
And yet the steer, the heifer and the calf  
Are all call'd neat: I.ii.121-125),

his awareness of familial resemblance is now, after sixteen years of repentance, happily shown. What he now sees in Florizel is what, despite the insistence of Paulina, he once refused to accept in his own daughter: "Although the print be little, the whole matter/ And copy of the father" (II.iii.98-99). The identity between parent and child is strikingly reiterated throughout the speech. The use of "print" and "image" suggests a similarity between conceiving a child and conceiving a work of art. Florizel is his father's image, a work composed of "his very air." The pun must be intentional for Florizel

is not only an extension of his father's behaviour and appearance, he is his heir as well. The impalpable, allowed to develop according to the simultaneous workings of the laws of art and nature, becomes palpable. This is a formation diametrically opposed to that imagined by the now purged infection of Leontes's brain. The King of Sicilia had previously thought that his perverted idea of Hermione's adultery (the palpable) was the actual Hermione. He assumed that the "nothing" allowed by the "affection" that makes possible "things not so held" could "co-join with something." The "air", however, that composes Florizel is not supported by dreams; it is akin to the "most sweet" (III.i.1) air and delicate climate of the fertile isle of Delphos. It is the air that creates heirs.

Not only does Leontes see the air and heir of Polixenes when he looks at Florizel, he is reminded upon meeting Perdita, whose actual identity has not yet been revealed, of his own heir. The emphasis on the relationship between the tangible and intangible, between life and art, is repeated in the images of Florizel and Perdita "begetting wonder" and of Leontes "bearing misery." Woe engenders new life; wonder, new art. Both life and art are part of the natural cycle of growth. When Paulina speaks of the child that was

...prisoner to the womb, and is  
By law and process of great nature, thence  
Free'd and enfranchis'd (II.ii.59-61),

she speaks of the birth of a "royal piece" that well may be as much a work of art as one of nature. The parent who would be crowned by his child must first grant his child enfranchisement: Perdita is not the completion of Leontes until she is herself and is so in her father's eyes as well as in her own.



## II. Sicilia and Loss

When Hermione questions Polixenes about "my lord's tricks, and yours, when you were boys" (I.ii.61), the King of Bohemia not only describes the innocence of "twinn'd lambs" (I.ii.67), he indicates as well the change that came over them as they grew:

Her. Come, I'll question you  
Of my lord's tricks, and yours, when you were boys.  
You were pretty lordings then?

Pol. We were, fair queen,  
Two lads that thought there was no more behind,  
But such a day to-morrow as to-day,  
And to be boy eternal.

Her? Was not my lord<sup>a</sup>  
The verier wag o' th' two?

Pol. We were as twinn'd lambs that did frisk i'th'sun,  
And bleat the one at th'other: what we chang'd  
Was innocence for innocence: we knew not  
The doctrine of ill-doing; nor dream'd  
That any did. Had we pursu'd that life;  
And our weak spirits n'er been higher rear'd  
With stronger blood, we should have answer'd heaven  
Boldly 'not guilty', the imposition clear'd  
Hereditary ours (I.ii.60-75)

Although Polixenes considers the spiritual and imagined advantage of remaining boys eternal, he recognizes that the essence of the change from boy to man, lording to king, involves the transformation of "weak spirits" into "stronger blood", and that this rearing somehow expands and raises the individual.

Shakespeare uses "higher" here to suggest both taller and nobler: the nobility of a king grows with the length of his body and the strength of his blood.

The harmony of nobility functioning in accordance with nature is reflected not only in this particular speech of Polixenes but throughout the conversation between Bohemia and Hermione in this exposition scene (and, in fact, throughout much of the play). The statement of Polixenes that introduces the

scene links the connotations of "throne" with those of "Nine changes of the watery star". Pafford explains in a footnote in the Arden edition (p. 5): "This period is the minimum to make it possible that Polixenes could be the father of Hermione's child." The diction both in this speech and in Polixenes's next continues to suggest the shape of pregnancy: not only does Polixenes worry about "what may chance or breed" upon his absence; time "would be fill'd up" with thanks, yet still Polixenes, like a cipher "standing in rich place", would "multiply" one thank-you into thousands (just as the round-bellied Hermione, standing beside the King of Sicilia, has the potential to "multiply" the king's one self into many children). The blatant sexual imagery that is shortly to be heard in the speeches of the jealous Leontes may be anticipated, somewhat ironically, in Polixenes's declaration to the king he honourably loves: "There is no tongue that moves, none, none i'th'world, / So soon as yours, could win me" (I.ii.20-21). The tongue, too, stands in rich place: it is capable of expressing both sexual passion and noble articulation. Hermione reveals a little later that she is aware of the tongue's dual nature. She tells Leontes:

cram's with praise, and make's  
As fat as tame things: one good deed, dying tongueless,  
Slaughters a thousand, waiting upon that.  
Our praises are our wages. You may ride's  
With one soft kiss a thousand furlongs ere  
With spur we heat an acre (I.ii.91-6).

The physical and intellectual functions are not only reconciled in the "piedness" of the tongue, but even when these functions are separated, they suggest each other: words of praise make us fat; "one soft kiss" makes us want to ride faster. ("Ride", associated here with "kiss", "spur", and "heat", suggests an explicitly sexual image.) If "one good deed, dying tongueless, /

Slaughters a thousand, waiting upon that", then the implication is that the praise of a tongue impregnates "one good deed", multiplying it into thousands.

There is a rhythmic banter to the dialogue between Polixenes and Hermione which seems to exclude Leontes. Hermione's speeches contain images of things that function in twos: "a lady's Verily's/ As potent as a lord's" (I.ii.50-51); "Force me to keep you as a prisoner,/ Not like a guest" (52-3); "Not your gaoler then,/ But your kind hostess" (59-60). Hermione's language shows an acceptance of the implications of "stronger blood". The dance of "twinn'd lambs" frisking in the sun easily becomes, for her, that of the tripping and slipping of grown men. Particularly suggestive, and in direct opposition to the thinking of her husband, is the fact that Hermione twice associates sexual activity with "Grace". Whatever the interpretation of the intentionally ambiguous use of the noun "Grace", the connotations of the word are all related to the attributes or aspirations of those who have been "higher rear'd". The first association of sex with grace follows Hermione's assumption, in her conversation with Polixenes, that because of the rearing of "stronger blood", the frisking of boys has since become the tripping of men.

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

Her. Grace to boot!  
Of this make no conclusion, lest you say  
Your queen and I are devils. Yet go on;  
Th'offences we have made, you do, we'll answer,  
If you first sinn'd with us, and that with us.  
You did continue fault, and that you slipp'd not  
With any but with us.

Leon. Is he won yet? (I.ii.76-86).

Leontes's interruption prevents Polixenes, or perhaps relieves him, from having to explain whether he and Leontes, as younger unmarried men, had, in fact, slipped "with any but with us".

Hermione's second association of sex with grace occurs in reference to the only deed that Leontes considers her to have performed to even "better purpose" (I.ii.89) than that of successfully entreating Polixenes to stay.

Her. My last good deed was to entreat his stay:  
 What was my first? It has an elder sister,  
 Or I mistake you: O, would her name were Grace!  
 But once before I spoke to th'purpose? when?  
 Nay, let me have 't: I long!

Leon. Why, that was when  
 Three crabbed months had sour'd themselves to death,  
 Ere I could make thee open thy white hand,  
 And clap thyself my love; then didst thou utter  
 'I am yours for ever' (I.ii.97-105).

For the first hundred lines of I.ii Leontes says hardly enough to affect the harmony that exists between Hermione and Polixenes. Despite his admonition of his wife, "Tongue-tied our queen? (I.ii.27)", it is he, not Hermione, who, for the moment, is tongue-tied. There is something about Shakespeare's figurative treatment of the tongue which implies that tongue-tiedness is not only the inability to speak but the inability to perform sexually as well: just as to say or speak well (88,90) is to do well, to perform a "good deed" (92,97), so to be tongue-tied is to be impotent. Leontes's first substantial speech of any length is an intrusion. It destroys the rhythm and mood of the dialogue. His diction (crabbed, sour'd, death, make) associates sex with frustration and fear. Hermione's graceful declaration of lasting love comes, in Leontes's mind, only as a grudging conclusion after "Three crabbed months had sour'd themselves to death".

Rather than associate stronger blood with higher rearing, Leontes connects it with extreme, uncomfortable heat and unnatural sex. His heart cannot trip; instead, it is seized with tremor cordis. This trembling frightens Leontes; and the insecurity which causes him to misinterpret it is a manifestation of that which has infected not only his brain and consequently his capacity to communicate, but also his blood and therefore his capacity to inform. (The tremor cordis that terrifies Leontes is, in another sense, the labour pains that precede birth. This agitation will later become the trembling that precedes his own "rebirth": "the birth/ Of trembling winter" (IV.iv.80-81), to be dealt with further on in this thesis.)

The idea that physical and moral or spiritual growth are part and parcel of each other and that growth of any sort must, by nature, involve "piedness" may again be suggested in Leontes's use of hand imagery. The action of Hermione's white hand claps her Leontes's love. Pafford, in a note on "clap", gives the following explanation (p. 11, 1.104n.): "The custom still exists of clapping or shaking hands to 'strike' a bargain; the hands are struck together and then clasped." Though the OED quotes from this particular speech to illustrate its seventh meaning of "clap" (to strike hands reciprocally, in token of a bargain), at least two other meanings of the word seem appropriate in this instance as well. An older meaning of the verb is to talk loudly, chatter, prate (OED 2), and the word is also an alternate form of "clepe": to call (OED 17). The notion that Shakespeare meant to imply the verbal as well as the physical aspect of the word might gain some little support from the fact that Hermione later uses the phrase "to prate and talk for life and honour" (III.ii.41) with regard to her own behaviour at her trial.

If the double meaning is intended, the hands have a dual function similar to that of the tongue. A hand at once says and does: its action instantaneously crowns its words.

To Leontes, it is not enough that the advantages of remaining "boy eternal" dwell in memory and imagination. Not only does he want that time to be real; he, in a sense, lives in that time, or desperately tries to live in it and make it his present. The time of "twinn'd lambs" is a time of "weak spirits" and of paleness. It is an easy time because there is no hot blood to mingle friendship with. It is a time of innocent frisking, of asexuality, that even Mamillius has already outgrown. When Mamillius makes his first appearance on stage, his personality is represented only through the infected brain of his father. Leontes sees his son not only as "a copy out of" (I.ii.122) him but, more significantly, as a young animal that will inevitably grow the horns of cuckoldry. The inchoate sexual connotations of "bawcock" and "wanton calf" suggest a corruption of the vision of the remembered world of "boy eternal". Leontes talks as though he expected his wanton calf to become a bull, not only with a shaggy head but with horns as well:

Thou want'st a rough pash and the shoots that I have  
To be full like me (I.ii.128-9).

Paulina, on the other hand, who expects Hermione's second child to be another boy

(Emil. She is, something before her time, deliver'd.

Paul? A boy?

Emil. A daughter: II.ii.25-6)

has the resiliency to accommodate herself immediately to the unexpected and actual. Leontes's expectations are merely the deluded projections of his

self; to live in the world of expectations is to live in the world of dreams. "You speak a language that I understand not," Hermione tells Leontes at her trial; "My life stands in the level of your dreams" (III.ii.80-81). The queen knows that her life, at that moment, no longer stands in rich place. Her actuality cannot be "coactive" "with what's unreal"; her capacity to multiply the king will follow nothing as long as the cipher that she is is co-joined with the blank of dreams. Hermione's misery is flat (III.ii.122) because the one she stands beside cannot fill her with that which gives life and multiplies.

The second and last time Mamillius appears it is without his father, and consequently the prince is seen as he really is. He does not want to be the "play-fellow" (II.i.3) of a lady who intends to treat him as a baby by assuming that he will respond innocently and asexually to a "hard" kiss. The manner of the First Lady towards the prince recalls that same tone implied by Polixenes's earlier allusion to Leontes as "my young play-fellow" (I.ii.80) in those "unfledg'd" days before either king had met the woman who was to become his wife and with him be expected to transform playfulness into the more decorous behaviour attendant upon "stronger blood". Opposed to his father who associates brows egocentrically and self-deceptively with his own cuckoldry ("hard'ning of my brows": I.ii.146), Mamillius associates brows with women in a manner that suggests both the alertness of his perception, even a sense of humour, and the naturalness of his incipient sexuality:

Mam.	I love you better.
Sec.Lady.	Why, my sweet lord?
Mam	Not for because Your brows are blacker; yet black brows, they say, Become some women best, so that there be not Too much hair there, but in a semicircle, Or a half-moon, made with a pen.

Sec.Lady. Who taught' this!  
 Mam. I learn'd it out of women's faces. Pray' now,  
 What colour are your eyebrows?  
 First Lady. Blue, my lord.  
 Mam. Nay, that's a mock: I have seen a lady's nose  
 That has been blue, but not her eyebrows (II.1.6-15).

The words used by Paulina to refer to Mamillius' on her announcement of his death suggest an even more important role for the prince:

...the young prince whose honourable thoughts  
 (Thoughts high for one so tender) cleft the heart  
 That could conceive a gross and foolish sire  
 Blemish'd his gracious dam (III.ii.195-8).

The word "high", used by Paulina to describe the nature of Mamillius's thoughts, despite his youth, recalls Polixenes's earlier recognition that in the natural world of princes time transforms weakness into a spirit that is both stronger and higher. Mamillius's somewhat precocious development of the stronger blood of passion, however vehemently Leontes rejects it: "you Hermione / Have too much blood in him" (II.1.57), is here explicitly associated with honour, the honour recently declared by Hermione to be "a derivative from me to mine, / And only that I stand for" (III.ii.44-5). Here is an identity again suggested between the physical and the abstract qualities of kingship.

The heart of Mamillius, Paulina says, "could conceive a gross and foolish sire/ Blemish'd his gracious dam". This is the second time that the deliberately ambiguous "conceive" has been used in relation to Mamillius's thoughts. Leontes, reacting to his son's illness and his own erroneous interpretation of its cause, had earlier exclaimed:

To see his nobleness,  
 Conceiving the dishonour of his mother! (II.iii.12-13).



Leontes's syntax tells us that Mamillius conceived the dishonour of his mother; Paulina's, that he conceived "a gross and foolish sire" as well. Paulina's words, moreover, reiterate the guilt the prince felt for his mother's having been dishonoured: he conceived the foolish father who "Blemish'd his gracious dam". In both instances Shakespeare has used the verb "conceive" ambiguously. On the literal level Mamillius forms in his mind the effect of the deed of a foolish father and the fact of the dishonour of his gracious mother. Metaphorically, he becomes pregnant with, and therefore responsible for the emergence of, the grossness that blemishes grace. He imagines that by conceiving his own father he has killed a queen in the sense that the blemishing of his mother has brought about her removal from throne to prison. There is the implication in speeches both of Camillo and Leontes that to repeat a sin, to say it with words, is as bad as to commit the original act. Camillo replies to Leontes, who has just asserted that his wife is "slippery":

You never spoke what did become you less  
Than this; which to reiterate were sin  
As deep as that, though true (I.ii.282-4).

On the announcement of the arrival in Sicilia of Prince Florizel, and immediately preceding the unexpected reunion between father and daughter, Paulina, true to her role, reminds Leontes of the similarity in more than age between Mamillius, "Jewel of children" (V.i.116), and Florizel. "Prithee, no more; cease," the king urgently pleads; "thou know'st/ He dies to me again, when talk'd of" (V.i.118-9). If reiteration can be taken to include repeating in one's own mind, as well as aloud, then Mamillius in conceiving "a gross and foolish sire/ Blemish'd his gracious dam" committed, in his own mind, a sin as deep as doing. If Paulina, when she speaks the words that contain the

accusation, is crediting Mamillius with too much intelligence for his age in order to play upon Leontes's sense of guilt, then, perhaps, the sin Mamillius reiterated was not that of his father, which he may not have understood, but that alleged sin of his mother. The last thing the prince hears before leaving for good the stage and his mother's presence is Leontes's blatant and public accusation:

Bear the boy hence, he shall not come about her,  
 Away with him, and let her sport herself  
 With that she's big with; for 'tis Polixenes  
 Has made thee swell thus. [Exit Mamillius] (II.1.59-62).

He is not allowed to remain to hear his mother's denial. It is as though Leontes were removing the part of himself that could conceive his wife's innocence and deliver truth and honour.

If honour is a "derivative from me to mine" which Hermione delivers in and with her child and the child dies when the mother is dishonoured, the implication is that the delivering of honour is a process that is concurrent with life. Honour flows as long as does Hermione's breath: "And only that I stand for." Mamillius is Hermione's honour, just as she is the source of his. When her honour "dies", he no longer stands. But Mamillius himself is imbued with that which impresses itself upon others as regenerative power:

Arch. ...You have an unspeakable comfort of your young prince Mamillius: it is a gentleman of the greatest promise that ever came into my note.  
 Cam. I very well agree with you in the hopes of him: it is a gallant child; one that, indeed, physics the subject, makes old hearts fresh: they that went on crutches ere he was born desire yet their life to see him a man.  
 Arch. Would they else be content to die?  
 Cam. Yes; if there were no other excuse why they should desire to live.  
 Arch. If the king had no son, they would desire to live on crutches till he had one (I.1.34-45).

Not only does he ~~make~~ old hearts fresh, there is a suggestion that he informs that which can at once shape and be shaped with the capacity to give birth to new life or new art. It is the prince who whispers into the ear of his mother the archetypal winter's tale: "There was a man.../ Dwelt by a churchyard" (II.i.29-30). And what immediately follows with the entrance of Leontes is the beginning of such "A sad tale" as is "best for winter"; of a king whose rage eventually forces him to live for sixteen years beside the chapel where he believes the bodies of his dead wife and son to be lying. Mamillius is a precocious story teller who has already learned many things "out of women's faces", and who has already proved to his mother that he is "powerful" at inventing stories "of sprites and goblins"; besides, he has a sense of humour. Here is a story teller of great potential, the conceiver, perhaps, of a pregnant tale.

Just as Paulina describes the products of Mamillius's mind as high and honourable thoughts, she refers to those of Leontes as "Fancies too weak for boys, too green and idle/ For girls of nine" (III.ii.181-2). Both defect (weakness) and excess ("Too hot, too hot!: I.ii.108) are alike in their departure from the natural norm; for a king to act "too low" is as unnatural as it is for him to act "too high". As Florizel declares in V.i.: "The odds for high and low's alike" (206). Leontes's jealous behaviour recalls that of sheep-like lads frisking and bleating in the sun. By opting for "weak spirits" instead of "stronger blood" in an attempt to relive the innocent time of "twinn'd lambs", Leontes has, in a sense, abdicated his kingship. Once he ceases to act like one who has been "higher rear'd", he is no longer respected, no longer looked up to by his subjects. Not only does the

"priest-like" (I.ii 237) Camillo neglect to follow his instructions to kill Polixenes, but by the end of the second act the whole court seems to be at odds with Leontes. As kingly decorum is abandoned, a grotesque humour takes its place, the hallmark of which seems to be a monstrous, if not ludicrous, disregard for life. The raving of a man no longer king cannot move his audience upward. Leontes's business, concludes Antigonus, with the incisiveness sporadically reminiscent of the fool in King Lear, will not raise but rouse us all "To laughter, as I take it,/ If the good truth were known" (II.i.198-9). The Leontes who once was able to "from meaner form" (I.ii.313) bench and rear his cupbearer to worship has lost his ability to move others upward. By urging Camillo to "bespice a cup" (316) for Polixenes, Leontes has tainted his own vision and made himself "sighted like the basilisk": the thousands he looks on will no longer (unlike the subjects of the still kingly Polixenes) speed the better by his regard (cf. 388-90). If nobility must function in accordance with nature, then the abandonment of kingly behaviour inevitably throws nature out of kilter. Antigonus, in response to Leontes's insistence on his wife's adultery declares:

Be she honour-flaw'd,  
I have three daughters: the eldest is eleven,  
The second and third, nine and some five:  
If this prove true, they'll pay for't. By mine honour  
I'll geld 'em all; fourteen they shall not see  
To bring false generations: they are co-heirs,  
And I had rather plib myself, than they  
Should not produce fair issue (II.i.143-150).

A world in which Hermione is "honour-flaw'd" is distorted: it is a world of nightmare placed off-centre which cannot "bear/ A schoolboy's top" (II.i.102-3). Pafford, in a note on Antigonus's threat to geld his daughters or himself explains: "Apparently the point of this is simply to show the extent of

Antigonus' feelings; for to geld (glib) himself can have nothing to do with the children which his daughters and joint heiresses may produce" (p.37).

But there is more to this apparent sexual reversal. The intention of Antigonus's words is to threaten to geld his daughters, not himself, rather than let them in their issue degenerate from the honour of his house. That he would rather "glib" himself than have his daughters produce children that are not "fair" reveals the intensity of his insistence upon the pre-eminence of honour.

Perhaps he would rather have been castrated before his daughters were conceived so not to have had any heirs at all whose issue was destined to be dishonourable. What Antigonus would do to his daughters (geld them) would severely affect himself by cutting off his own means of survival in time.

On the other hand, there is also the suggestion in the syntax that by castrating himself now or in the near future Antigonus would somehow prevent his living daughters from bearing and bringing forth children of their own.

What a father does to himself affects his children. The ambiguity is probably intentional since the closeness in identity between parents and children is essential to the play: what the father does to the child he does to himself and vice versa. The poetic intention is to blur the delineation between

parent and child: the son is the father; the daughter, the mother. The blur is even extended to people of the same age: Mamillius becomes Florizel; Polixenes, Leontes. Leontes, by mistaking himself for Polixenes (II.1.81-2), makes himself a cuckold and consequently kills his son. By using nothing but his own diseased mind to make an adulteress of Hermione, Leontes has unmanned himself; because of the effect his actions have on Mamillius, the prince will never produce "fair issue", at least not in the form of a child.

There is more than Antigonus's ludicrous vow to destroy life that meets Leontes's step down from kingship. Monstrous commitments to death fill the stage immediately following Leontes's refusal to recognize his own daughter. The king himself wildly orders that the "brat" (II.iii.92) (Perdita, not yet named) and its "dam" (II.iii.94) be committed to the fire. He calls Paulina "A callat/ Of boundless tongue" (II.iii.90-91) and tells her husband that for his inability to "stay her tongue" he deserves hanging. What really infuriates Leontes is what he sees as the lewdness of Paulina's tongue. (In speaking to Antigonus, Leontes refers to Paulina as "thy lewd-tongu'd wife": II.iii.171.) Her words have identified the king with the infant (Perdita), the issue of "stronger blood". But Leontes still perceives only the physical aspect of strong blood: sex is sin to him. To accept his daughter as his own would be to accept not only the strength but the "height" of passion. By denying that sexuality is natural and that sex is not only the equivalent of honour but the force by which honour is conceived and continuously delivered, Leontes denies his own kingship and therefore his role as the source and seed of honour. As the death of Mamillius reiterates, to flaw honour is to destroy life.

Leontes in his anger recalls the devilry of the queen in Cymbeline.

He talks to Camillo about poisoning:

...thou

His cupbearer, --whom I from meaner form  
Have bench'd and rear'd to worship, who may'st see  
Plainly as heaven sees earth and earth sees heaven,  
How I am gall'd, --might'st bespice a cup,  
To give mine enemy a lasting wink:  
Which draught to me were cordial. (I.ii.312-18);

to Antigonus about hanging:

...lozel, thou art worthy to be hang'd,  
That will not stay her tongue (II.iii.108-9);

and again to Antigonus about burning:

My child? away with it! Even thou, that hast  
A heart so tender o'er it, take it hence  
And see it instantly consum'd with fire (II.iii.131-3) --

all with the ease with which Cymbeline's queen experiments with poison. The effect, moreover, of Leontes's anger is similar to that of the poison given to the queen by Cornelius. The wise physician, in fact, composes the "poison" in keeping with the nature of the person who will use it:

I do not like her. She doth think she has  
Strange ling'ring poisons: I do know her spirit;  
And will not trust one of her malice with  
A drug of such damn'd nature. Those she has  
Will stupefy and dull the sense awhile;  
Which first (perchance) she'll prove on cats and dogs,  
Then afterward up higher: but there is  
No danger in what show of death it makes,  
More than the locking up the spirits a time,  
To be more fresh, reviving. She is fool'd  
With a most false effect: and I the truer,  
So to be false with her (I.vi.33-44).

Cornelius's concoction does not actually kill: it produces a show of death which affects life in the same way that winter does, "locking up the spirits a time, / To be more fresh, reviving". Just as Cornelius manipulates the queen, so Paulina does Leontes: she sees to it that the "death" effected by Leontes is a show. Part of Leontes does die: Mamillius vanishes as does the show of life with oncoming winter; but the more essential part of Leontes, that which is continuously capable of being impregnated with his seed and therefore with his honour, i.e., his wife, is only apparently dead, her spirits temporarily "locked up".

That the time of Leontes's penitence and Hermione's "imprisonment" is to be associated with winter's "show of death" is revealed in Paulina's admonishing her king at the death of his son and the seeming death of his queen:

...betake thee  
 To nothing but despair. A thousand knees  
 Ten thousand years together, naked, fasting,  
 Upon a barren mountain, and still winter  
 In storm perpetual, could not move the gods  
 To look that way thou wert (III.ii.210-14).

That Perdita is figured as the spring has always been obvious in commentary on The Winter's Tale. The "Blossom" (III.iii.46) that Antigonus plants "upon the earth" becomes "Flora/ Peering in April's front" (IV.iv.2-3). That Hermione, and not only Leontes, as Flora's parent, is figured as the winter has been neglected. "The Emperor of Russia 'was my father'" (III.ii.119), Hermione tells the court. In Greene's Pandosto (to be discussed in some detail in a later chapter), as Pafford and others have noted, the Emperor of Russia is not the father of Bellaria (Hermione) but of the wife of Egistus (Polixenes). Pafford further comments that "the introduction of the Emperor here gives 'a sense of majesty and pathos' (Charlton) and the old feeling of tragedy as being 'de casibus virorum illustrium'" (p.60). But more than an Emperor is mentioned: so is Russia. Shakespeare here identifies the north as a source of "storm perpetual", and such a storm, in turn, with new life, in Pericles. In the chorus that introduces the third act of that play, Gower refers to the action of the north that immediately precedes, and remains to accompany, the birth of Marina:

the grisled north  
 Disgorges such a tempest forth,  
 That, as a duck for life that dives,  
 So up and down the poor ship drives (III.ch.47-50).



In Cymbeline, furthermore, Shakespeare directly relates the anger of a father to the storming of the north and the "show of death" effected by winter. Imogen complains to Pisanio, servant to the banished Posthumus, that before she could give her husband the parting kiss which she

...had set  
 Betwixt two charming words, comes in my father,  
 And like the tyrannous breathing of the north,  
 Shakes all our buds from growing (I.iv.34-7).

(Note how a kiss set between two words suggests in this play as well the dual function of the tongue.)

Paulina, too, defines the anger of a king in terms of tyranny:

I'll not call you tyrant;  
 But this most cruel usage of your queen --  
 Not able to produce more accusation  
 Than your own weak-hing'd fancy -- something saviours  
 Of tyranny, and will ignoble make you,  
 Yea, scandalous to the world (II.iii 115-120).

The implication seems to be that Leontes's anger, like winter, is part of a natural cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Perhaps because it is a showing forth of stronger blood, Leontes's anger somehow renders him receptive to that which can redeem him. It is as though his expression of rage empties him of all that is destructive and leaves him ready to be shaped into something new. The king, that is, becomes pregnant in the essentially Shakespearean sense of the word: he becomes ready to be filled with that which will inevitably and continuously reshape him; he becomes receptive to growth, to nature, to that state of being which is always on the verge of dissolving into something new. The OED (II 3d) defines what it terms a chiefly Shakespearean meaning of pregnant: receptive; disposed, inclined, ready. Although Shakespeare does not use the adjective specifically in The Winter's Tale till V.ii.31 ("if ever

truth were pregnant by circumstance"), and even then with only an indirect allusion to Leontes, the way the imagery works throughout the play strongly suggests that this peculiarly Shakespearean conception of pregnancy is relevant to one's understanding of Leontes.

When examined in the light of Shakespeare's use of related diction and imagery in some of the other late plays, the last thing Leontes utters before he retreats from the audience for a period representative of sixteen years suggests that the period of the king's penance is one of gestation.

Prithee, bring me  
To the dead bodies of my queen and son:  
One grave shall be for both: upon them shall  
The causes of their death appear, unto  
Our shame perpetual. Once a day I'll visit  
The chapel where they lie, and tears shed there  
Shall be my recreation. So long as nature  
Will bear up with this exercise, so long  
I daily vow to use it. Come, and lead me  
To these sorrows (III.ii.234-43).

The tears Leontes sheds shall, to accept Mahood's reading of the pun, be his re-creation as well as his recreation. The potency of the tears of sorrow are suggested in King Lear. Edgar, disguised as Tom o'Bedlam and fresh from witnessing the "side-piercing" recognition scene between his mad king and his blind father, replies to Gloucester's request to know what he (Edgar) is:

A most poor man, made tame to Fortune's blows,  
Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,  
Am pregnant to good pity (IV.vi.222-4).

Deep sorrow has disposed Edgar towards, made him susceptible to being filled with, pity. In Cymbeline as well, Imogen, having assumed that the dead and mutilated body of Cloten is that of her husband Posthumus, uses words that suggest the capacity of sorrow to fill and engender:

How should this be, Pisanio?  
 'Tis, he, and Cloten: malice and lucre in them  
 Have laid this woe here. O, 'tis pregnant, pregnant!  
 The drug he gave me, which he said was precious  
 And cordial to me, Have I not found it  
 Murd'rous to th' senses? That confirms it home:  
 This is Pisanio's deed, and Cloten--O!  
 Give colour to my pale cheek with thy blood,  
 That we the horrider may seem to those  
 Which chance to find us. O, my lord! my lord! (IV.ii.323-32).

Nosworthy (p. 136) explains that "pregnant" is usually glossed as evident, palpable (from Onions's first meaning, from "preignant": pressing, cogent), but then goes on to cite an important note by Furness which makes use of Onions's second meaning, from "prægnans", and winningly tries to combine it with the first: "Imogen's exclamation ... indicates, I think, that light is just dawning on her. The mere mention of Pisanio and Cloten ... gives the clue, and she suddenly realizes that these two names enfold the whole mystery, --that they are big with the plot against her life." Furness was on the right track, but he neglected to include the significance of Imogen's woe. It is quite possible that the connotations the word "woe" held, consciously or unconsciously, in Shakespeare's mind caused the poet to follow the word immediately and emphatically in the same line with "O, 'tis pregnant, pregnant!" The malice and lucre in Pisanio and Cloten suddenly appear to be pregnant and clear to Imogen: she is filled with what is eventually to become an understanding of the truth. It may be that it is the woe that instills the dawning light. This is not to suggest that Imogen is big with an erroneous understanding of what has taken place but that she is now ready to receive and be informed by the truth. That which is received by the brain alone, cut off from nature, so to speak, is ultimately barren. So a lord of Cymbeline's palace sizes up and dismisses Cloten primarily because of the manner in which his mother gave birth to him:

That such a crafty devil as is his mother  
Should yield the world this ass! a woman that  
Bears all down with her brain, and this her son  
Cannot take two from twenty, for his heart,  
And leave eighteen (II.i.51-5).

Imogen, because she "Bears all down" with more of herself than only her brain, contains the promise of yielding that which will prove fitting to "The walls of thy dear honour ... [and] that temple, thy mind" (62-3).

There can be no pregnancy without sorrow, no birth of truth without tears. "I am great with woe," Pericles cries on the verge of recognizing Marina, "and shall deliver weeping" (V.i.105-6). Pericles's tears are, indeed, his re-creation: what they deliver is that which delivers him.



O Helicanus, strike me, honour'd sir!  
Give me a gash, put me to present pain,  
Lest this great sea of joys rushing upon me  
O'erbear the shores of my mortality,  
And drown me with their sweetness. O, come hither,  
Thou that beget'st him that did thee beget;  
Thou that wast born at sea, buried at Tharsus,  
And found at sea again. O Helicanus,  
Down on thy knees! thank the holy gods as loud  
As thunder threatens us: this is Marina (V.i.190-99).

There is something here of the metaphor that Milton was later to develop in Lycidas: the association of mortality with the shore and the implication that continuous delivery into new life demands the capacity figuratively to live at sea in a perpetual state of flooded awareness. To drown in this particular way is to transcend life.

The connection between tears and rebirth also obtains at the conclusion of Cymbeline. In the last scene Belarius reveals to Cymbeline how "that Belarius, whom you sometime banished" (V.v.334) stole the king's sons and brought them up as Polydore and Cadwal.



(IV.iv.79-81). The conventional season imagery is reversed here. The silence of the king and queen seems to represent not the expected symbol of the show of winter's death but the more remarkable idea of a specious "summer's death". There is something about summer that goes on unseen beneath the surface. It is true that Perdita is the spring, but the play is more about Leontes, and therefore about the birth of winter. The richness and complexity of the scenes in Bohemia are products of a late, hot summer. Spring is fresh and light but only as the year grows "ancient" is there a sufficient gallimaufry, if not of gambols (IV.iv.329) then of tears, to re-create the flowers of winter.

Late summer is the season of kingship on the  rebirth. The essential point in The Winter's Tale is the verge: the  point a man is at when he is at once most what he is and just about to become something else. It is a time that can be pinpointed only abstractly, only with words, because it is not a stop but a "trembling", an agitation that connotes a change in the direction of motion that must remain continuous. It is the same point to which the sun of middle summer, couched in the weeping, swelling marigold, rises, tumid, at its moment of greatest potential. The flowers that Perdita offers to mature men, one of them a king, are those that promise more than spring, for they wait on "the birth/ Of trembling winter" and the re-creation of kingship at its most complete.

Here's flowers for you:

Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram,  
 The marigold, that goes to bed with sun  
 And with him rises, weeping; these are flowers  
 Of middle summer, and I think they are given  
 To men of middle age. Y'are very welcome (IV.iv.103-8).

The virtue of the queenly marigold resides in its capacity to rise and become great with the sun; the virtue of the regal sun is to make rich the infinite number of places in which it rises and stands.

If Leontes's rage is the agent by which the king is emptied of his delusions and rendered apt to receive, and if his penance is a period of gestation, what is it that impregnates him? It is possible that Mamilius, in the act of whispering the archetypal winter's tale into his mother's ear, in some way conceives new life or new art. In Twelfth Night Shakespeare also alludes to a peculiarly creative function of the ear. Viola disguised as Cesario, insists that Olivia give her private audience:

My matter hath no voice, lady, but to your  
own most pregnant and vouchsafed ear (III.1.100).<sup>1</sup>

Here is a pertinent association between the state of "pregnant" readiness and the access through which that which is empty can be informed. The same association obtains in II.v of Antony and Cleopatra when Cleopatra impatiently commands a messenger: "Ram thou thy fruitful tidings in my ears, / That long time have been barren" (24-25).<sup>2</sup> That play's pun on ear as plough --

Menecrates and Menas, famous pirates,  
Makes the sea serve them, which they ear and wound  
With keels of every kind (I.iv.48-50) --

and its sexual use of plough --

She made great Caesar lay his sword to bed;  
He plough'd her, and she cropp'd (II.11.227-8) --

suggests that what is fruitfully rammed in the ear is that which inseminates.

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1. All citations of Twelfth Night are to The Complete Works of Shakespeare, ed. Hardin Craig (Chicago, 1951).

2. All citations of Antony and Cleopatra are to the New Arden edition, ed. M.R. Ridley (London, 1954).

There is in The Winter's Tale a remarkable and quick turn from the fruitless shouting of Leontes to the "ear deaf'ning voice of the Oracle" (III.i.9). It may be that the words of Apollo, transmitted by Cleomenes and Dion and disseminated in the king's open court by an officer, penetrate the ear of Leontes and become the seeds of the sorrow that fills. In that case, despite his declaration, "No: I'll not rear/ Another's issue," the "circumstance" of Delphos does indeed make Leontes pregnant with the "truth" of what he is or will be.

What happens on stage during the fourth act (in Bohemia) is, on one level, a metaphor for the change in Leontes that takes place internally, the gestation period of Apollo's issue. Life in rural Bohemia represents the kind of "piedness", the reconciliation between the physical and the spiritual or moral qualities, which Leontes must accept in order to reassume his throne. He must grow out of the time of "boy eternal" and learn to include the continual quivering of nature in his definition of himself. He must, as Hermione has already done, define himself in terms of "bed" as well as "throne":

For behold me,  
A fellow of the royal bed, which owe  
A moiety of the throne, a great king's daughter,  
The mother to a hopeful prince, here standing  
To prate and talk for life and honour 'fore  
Who please to come and hear (III.ii.37-42).

Hermione sees her royalty first in terms of her capacity to become pregnant with "life and honour". To be a king or queen is to be "a vessel.../ So fill'd, and so becoming" (III.iii.21-2), trembling on the verge of creating and being created.



### III. Bohemia and Replenishment

The dominant impression created by the rural scenes in Bohemia is one of the blood in motion. From the moment he enters, singing, the itinerant Autolycus keeps not only himself but everything and everyone around him constantly moving. His first song sets the scene for the commotion to come.

When daffodils begin to peer,  
 With heigh! the doxy over the dale,  
 Why then comes in the sweet o' the year,  
 For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale.

The white sheet bleaching on the hedge,  
 With hey! the sweet birds, O how they sing!  
 Doth set my pugging tooth an edge;  
 For a quart of ale is a dish for a king.

The lark, that tirra-lirra chants,  
 With heigh! with heigh! the thrush, and the jay,  
 Are summer songs for me and my aunts;  
 While we lie tumbling in the hay (IV.iii.1-12).

It is a song of summer experience that both remembers spring and anticipates winter. The daffodils that "begin to peer", foreshadowing "Flora/ Peering in April's front", are immediately followed by "the doxy over the dale"; the "sweet o' the year" does not come with spring but with "the sweet birds" of summer. Autolycus assumes that he must move with nature, but his song suggests no attempt on his part to accept responsibility for his actions. The same sun that causes the bleaching of the sheet ordains his pugging tooth and his tumbling with his "aunts". There is no difference between the music of the birds and that of Autolycus. The rogue becomes another aspect of irresistible but mindless nature. There is a sense in which the sun moves him, but he does not, like the marigold, rise with it. The songs he sings seem to be imposed on

him: they reflect more than he is aware of. His conversation says what he knows himself to be, but his songs come from without: they are composed by whatever it is that composes nature. They sing the truth of what is and provide, in part, a commentary on the intention of the play as well as an exposition of the man who sings them.

Autolycus's introductory song contains an image which is central to the play: "the red blood reigns in the winter's pale." The image at once recalls the higher rearing of weak spirits with stronger blood and anticipates the complexity and variety of passion contained in the remaining scenes of the play. The red blood and the pale blood are synonymous with the stronger blood and the weak spirits referred to in I.ii. by Polixenes. "Pale blood is what yields "fancies too weak for boys, too green and idle/ For girls of nine" (III.ii.181-2). Red blood, on the other hand, reigns: it is that which moves kings. Winter's "pale", or enclosure, may include an allusion to the confinement of Leontes and Hermione, each in his own peculiar manner, to the chapel. Leontes's penance, as well as confinement generally, has already been associated with winter; the red blood now reigns over winter's territory and is preparing to reign in winter's (pale) blood. Shakespeare most likely also intended an aural pun on reign and rain. The idea of the red blood raining in upon or coursing through and transforming the pale blood's current brings again into sharp focus the cyclical imagery of birth, death and rebirth. Hermione and Leontes, contained by the chapel in a "show of death", are all the while being imbued with that which shapes new life. More particularly, the line may include a reference to Leontes's tears of sorrow raining on the seemingly dead body of Hermione and thereby re-creating that which will beget a new king.

That Autolycus does not shed tears is the reason why he can be king ("for a quart of ale is a dish for a king") only in his own imagination. Instead of rising with the sun in a continually repeated effort to hover trembling at the zenith and transcend detumescence, Autolycus tumbles with his "aunts" like a school boy's top anticipating the downward pull of gravity. His characteristic action is a more or less aimless wandering. His first words, carelessly announcing his severance from royalty, are followed by another song:

But shall I go mourn for that, my dear?  
The pale moon shines by night:  
And when I wander here and there,  
I then do most go right (IV.iii.15-18).

Despite the number and variety of his daytime activities, Autolycus seems to move in the perpetual paleness and dewlessness of the moon.<sup>1</sup> At the end of IV.iii he reiterates his insistence on merriment and his lack of interest in sadness and therefore in tears.

Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,  
And merrily hent the stile-a:  
A merry heart goes all the day,  
Your sad tires in a mile-a (IV.iii.119-22).

Autolycus might rouse an audience to laughter but not readily to anything higher. He represents a kind of involuted motion that is self-devouring. Just as his levity denies him the purging experience of rage, it renders him immune to tears and thus, ultimately, sterile.

Another figure who acts as a kind of linking force in the play is the old shepherd, Perdita's foster father. Like the other fathers in the play, he

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1. If, not for the fact that we see Autolycus always by day, his severance from royalty along with his musical allusion to the moon would tend to align him more closely with Falstaff, Shakespeare's best known anti-royal figure: "we that take purses go by the moon and the seven stars, and not 'by Phoebus, he, that wand'ring knight so fair': ... [we] are squires of the night's body, ... Diana's foresters, gentleman of the shade, minions of the moon ... governed as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal" (*I Henry IV* I.ii.13-15, 24-29: New Arden edition, A.R. Humphreys ed., London, 1960).

tries to preserve the honour that is peculiar to him. Once the royal identity of Doricles is revealed to him, he angrily turns on Perdita:

O cursed wretch,  
That knew'st this was the prince, and wouldst adventure  
To mingle faith with him! (IV.iv.459-61).

The anger of the old shepherd is directed against the mingling of faith. His opposition is reminiscent of that of Leontes against "mingling bloods" (I.ii.109), and that of Perdita, in word, but Polixenes, in deed, against mingling strains. Ironically, but suitable to the contrasts between Sicilia and Bohemia established by the poetry, there is no objection on the part of the shepherd to any past act or future promise of the mingling of bloods between Florizel and Perdita. It is the nature of rural Bohemia to take frank sexuality for granted. What the shepherd cannot do is make the leap from blood to faith. It is somehow particularly fitting that the shepherd should first discover the babe Perdita not only at that very moment that Antigonus, unknown to the shepherd, is being devoured by the bear, but just as the shepherd, berating "these boiled-brains of nineteen and two-and-twenty" (III.iii.63-4) for offending the decorum of their elders, complains of the disappearance of two of his best sheep which, he fears, "the wolf will sooner find than the master" (66-7). The old man serves as a kind of fulcrum at the centre of a number of opposing forces of varied significance; but, like Autolycus, he remains essentially unaffected and unmoved. His reaction to the infant, though gentle, is more or less inhumane: he assumes that the new-born child is "some changeling" (III.iii.117) left him by the fairies. "It was told me, I should be rich by the fairies" (116). The quality of his faith is no more complex than the trust he puts in fairies. In IV.iv, after Polixenes threatens to hang him, his fear becomes groundless not only because it becomes part of a

comic scene in which Autolycus entertains himself and hopes to profit at the expense of the shepherd but also because Polixenes almost immediately and apparently unnoticed by the old man rescinds his sentence

Thou churl, for this time,  
Though full of our displeasure, yet we free thee  
From the dead blow of it (IV.iv.433-35).

Because there is no reason for the shepherd's fear, his expression of emotion is insubstantial, a mere device for laughter. It is as illogical as is Antigonus's threat to prevent unfair issue by castrating himself; and yet there is logic in the fear for such a Polixenes. Dramatically, the old shepherd is reduced, with the help of Autolycus, to comedy: he fears a bear which has ceased to pursue him. But over and above this, and going on all the time, is a jarring reminder in the poetry that only a part of the meaning of anything resides in words spoken. The old man, like Autolycus and the songs he sings, is part of something timeless; he is, in a sense, part of the earth which Florizel and Perdita, as Flora, must grow through and eventually "peer" out of.

Despite his limitations, the old shepherd nonetheless recognizes the natural obligations imposed by participation in the sheep-shearing festival, especially on the host and hostess. He admonishes Perdita for not living up to the lusty paradigm of hospitality set by his "old wife" (55) when she lived:

You are retired,  
As if you were a feasted one, and not  
The hostess of the meeting: pray you, bid  
These unknown friends to's welcome; for it is  
A way to make us better friends, more known:  
Come, quench your blushes, and present yourself  
That which you are, Mistress o'th'Feast. Come on,  
And bid us welcome to your sheep-shearing,  
As your good flock shall prosper (IV.iv.63-70).

Though he mistakes what Perdita is, he does recognize the obligation of presenting "yourself/ That which you are". The festival seems to celebrate not only the shearing of sheep. Metaphorically, anyone who participates is shorn of all outward show, whether it be fabricated by costume or by language and whether it be unintentional or deliberate.

Polixenes's decision to disguise himself in order to spy on his son is an intrusion on the shepherds of rural Bohemia and a violation of their sheep-shearing celebration. This action of Polixenes recalls Leontes's abandonment of kingly decorum; a king disguised, by jealousy or by clothes, is not a king. Even as Polixenes is punished with "the remembrance of that penitent...and reconciled king, my brother; whose loss of his most precious queen and children are even now to be fresh lamented" (IV.ii.27-25), he is about to deny the fact that, his "unfledg'd days" (I.ii.78) being past, Florizel is on the verge of tripping as his father did before him and as his own issue will no doubt do after him. The act of denying the mingling of bloods and the process of the seasons is an abdication of kingship. Polixenes's disguise, on the dramatic level a device to prevent his son's supposed misalliance, is also a visual symbol of a metaphoric reality: in order to behave in an unkingly manner, he is dressed for the part. He has become something other than what he should be. To act as a king is not only to see but to accept things as they really are. Polixenes temporarily loses his capacity to accept, i.e., his aptness to receive, because he refuses to see what is true and thereby penetrate the reality beneath the show. Whether he cannot see the queenliness in Perdita because he is not dressed as a king or whether he must appear in disguise because he is incapable of seeing as a king should

see may be a moot point though I prefer the latter interpretation. The fact is that in IV.iv it is Florizel, not his father, who looks and receives with the trenchant eye of a king. Florizel partially errs when he declares to Perdita:

These your unusual weeds, to each part of you  
Do give a life: no shepherdess, but Flora  
Peering in April's front. This your sheep-shearing  
Is as a meeting of the petty gods,  
And you the queen on't (IV.iv.1-5).

The eye that apprehends Perdita's nobility as quickly and as easily as it perceives her physical form is exact. What Florizel cannot rationally yet know (though as the scene progresses he seems intuitively to find words for it) is that Perdita's "weeds" do not give her her queenliness any more than any one of the costumes Autolycus puts on can give him sufficient life to change his character or personality one iota; it is Perdita's actual queenliness that makes her words fit: it is characteristic of Perdita that her language suits the capacity of her listener to perceive her reality. Because the disguised Polixenes sees her primarily as "the wildest stock" (IV.iv.93) and as "a bark of baser kind" (94), she replies to him in a manner fitting the thing he initially sees her as. Polixenes's treatment of Perdita recalls Leontes's insistent reference to her in her infancy as "it" (eleven times in II.iii.154-81), as a bastard and a brat, and as the issue of "thou thing--/ which I'll not call a creature of thy place" (II.i:82-3). Perdita repeats the language of her father when she calls carnations bastards, thus denying their association with coronation, the act of completing a man by crowning him king (coronation, according to Onions; is an earlier form for carnation; Pafford, in a note on IV.iv.82, explains that since carnation means the

'crowning', the carnation is known as the 'coronation' flower); and she further responds to Polixenes with the harshness his abdicated self demands and expects by conjuring up the image of herself as a woman "painted" (IV.iv.101) with ugly cosmetics and prepared to coarsely "breed" (103) with Florizel. The barrenness of Perdita's "rustic garden" (IV.iv.84), similar to the "barren mountain" (III.ii.212) Paulina envisages as a suitable site for Leontes's perpetual penitence, is that associated with winter. It suggests the conditions of a "garden" in which the inhabitants live by mere "gazing" (IV.iv.109). To see only with the eyes and not to penetrate with the mind, i.e., to respond as Polixenes is doing, is to be aware only of surfaces and shows. Seeing with the mind implies an understanding of the total reality: such understanding is aligned with the "grazing" (108) that nourishes without which, Perdita tells Camillo, "You'd be so lean that blasts of January/ Would blow you through and through" (111-2). It is as if the absence of "carnations and streak'd gillyvors" negated whatever else was in the garden, just as Leontes's refusal, upon his wife's request in I.ii, to be theirs, Hermione's and Polixenes's, "i'th' garden" (I.ii.178) somehow negates their existence. Hermione, "the child bed privilege denied, which...longs/ To women of all fashion" (III.ii.103-4), has been made barren by her husband; Polixenes has fled, and the one still living royal child has been removed from Sicilia. In the absence of a true king and of a "coronation" flower, it seems, kingdoms and gardens can maintain no form of productive life or art.

Perdita, in the presence of Polixenes, thinks much like her father before her: she rejects the worth of the "piedness" of the "streak'd gillyvors". Mingling bloods, to her too, results in the production of bastard flowers. Her



use of the word "slips" (IV.iv.84) and "slip" (100) in reference to what she considers "nature's bastards" recalls Hermione's implied question to Polixenes in I.ii:

Th'offences we have made you do, we'll answer,  
 If you first sinn'd with us, and that with us  
 You did continue fault, and that you slipp'd not  
 With any but with us (I.ii.83-6).

This is the point in the conversation between Polixenes and Hermione at which Leontes returns to take part; he has probably overheard his wife's last words. Slipping, to Leontes, has not yet become the mature sexual behaviour which the frisking of play-fellows inevitably yields to; it connotes, rather, the loose behaviour of a "slippery" (I.ii.273) wife. Perdita, her words unintentionally suiting the stature of a king without a crown, denies the coronation in carnation and sees the flowers as bastards just as Leontes had previously rejected and labeled bastard the royalty of what even Antigonus had recognized as a "Blossom" and Florizel, as Flora. In Perdita's capacity as not-yet-queen she possesses the plasticity to be whatever her perceiver is capable of seeing:

In response to Florizel, who sees her as a flower "Peering", suggesting not only her appearance but her rank as well, Perdita speaks of sex with a freshness that is at once frank and delicate; and when she speaks of the flowers she holds rather than of the ones she will not have, her diction loses its Leontes-like hardness.

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

Per. I'll not put  
 The dibble in earth to set one slip of them;  
 No more than, were I painted, I would wish  
 This youth should say 'twere well, and only therefore  
 Desire to breed by me. Here's flowers for you:  
 Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram,  
 The marigold, that goes to bed with'sun  
 And with him rises, weeping (IV.iv.98-106).

The ugliness of the "desire to breed by me" is transformed into the rhythmic motion of going to bed "wi'th'sun" and rising with him.

Extending her role as Flora, Perdita addresses the shepherdesses as though they too were flowers, wearing upon their "virgin branches yet" their "maidenheads growing" (IV.iv.115-6).

Per. Now, my fair'st friend, [To Florizel]  
 I would I had some flowers o'th'spring, that might  
 Become your time of day; and yours, and yours,  
[To Mopsa and the other girls]  
 That wear upon your virgin branches yet  
 Your maidenheads growing: O Proserpina,  
 For the flowers now that, frightened, thou let'st fall  
 From Dis's waggon! daffodils,  
 That come before the swallow dares, and take  
 The winds of March with beauty; violets, dim,  
 But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes  
 Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,  
 That die unmarried, ere they can behold  
 Bright Phoebus in his strength (a'malady  
 Most incident to maids); bold oxlips and  
 The crown imperial; lilies of all kinds,  
 The flower-de-luce being one. O, these I lack,  
 To make you garlands of; and my sweet friend,  
 To strew him o'er and o'er!

Flo. What, like a corpse?  
 Per. No, like a bank, for love to lie and play on:  
 Not like a corpse; or if--not to be buried,  
 But quick, and in mine arms (IV.iv.112-32).

Much of the imagery throughout IV.iv implies that growing maidenheads "cannot choose but branch" (I.i.24). The branching of maidenheads, like that of an affection between kings "rooted" (23) in childhood, is part of the development of everything in nature that must divide and open in order to receive and multiply. The fright of Proserpina, who is associated by Shakespeare's juxtaposition of images as well as by myth with virginity, is no doubt sexual; and the flowers she lets fall are part of a complex pattern of pertinent sexual imagery. Perdita's description of flowers she lacks leads up to, and is presented in anticipation of, her climactic imaginings of herself and Florizel

in each other's arms. The first three kinds of flowers which Proserpina drops in fear are each personified in a manner that suggests the premature flowering of maids who die still virgins. The early daffodils that charm with the beauty of fragility "come before the swallow dares"; the "violets, dim" are as delicate as eyelids and breath: they suggest not the actuality but only the possibility of sex. The language describing the primroses is more explicit. That they are "pale" includes them in the development of one of the dominant themes in the play -- the confining effect of pale blood on the growth of kingship or queenship. Dying "unmarried, ere they can behold/ Bright Phoebus in his strength" is reminiscent of the effect on Leontes of the "Oracle, by the hand deliver'd/ Of great Apollo's priest" (III.ii.127-8). An "unmarried" flower, like a king not yet "pregnant", cannot engender new life. That "Bright Phoebus" might have brought about the pollination of the primrose, making its death a sexual and "married" one, supports the idea expressed earlier in this thesis that the words of Apollo's oracle have filled Leontes with the capacity to create new life.

The last flowers which Proserpina lets fall rather than connote virginal fear of sex are representative of Perdita's present state of mind. Headed by "bold oxlips" and the "crown imperial", they denote the firmness and frankness of Perdita herself. The comment of Steevens, cited by Furness<sup>1</sup>, pertinently characterizes the oxlip: "The 'oxlip' has not a weak flexible stalk like the cowslip, but erects itself boldly in the face of the sun." The sexual connotations are obvious. The special significance of these flowers is that they link sexual ingenuousness with the crown of royalty. Unlike the pale-

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1. The Variorum edition of The Winter's Tale, ed. H.H. Furness (New York, 1898; rpt. New York, 1964), p. 198.

blooded primrose that dies unmarried, Perdita anticipates herself lying with Florizel. The flowers of her own branching virginity are to be strewn over, in some sense perhaps, transplanted into, the rich "bank" (IV.iv.130) that is her "sweet friend". Florizel's sweetness, though, is not merely that of eye-lids and of breath; it is aligned with firm, deliberate contact. It is a sweetness that can be touched and that remains "for love to lie and play on". Florizel's "corpse", "buried" in the arms of Flora, is the "quick" corpse of a sexual death. Florizel's death is that which, like the death of Antigonus, immediately precedes "things new-born" (III.iii.113). It is characteristic of nature that "things", for example, the "it" Leontes takes the infant Perdita to be, planted in the ground and allowed to react naturally to the cycle of the seasons, will become the new life that engenders.

The earth in which Antigonus laid the infant has become a life-giving "bank". Florizel is that which contains the promise of the Polixenes of I.ii: "a cipher ... standing in rich place" (I.ii.6-7). He has the capacity both to fill and be filled.

Florizel's kingliness is manifested, in part, in his recognition that surface show does not affect the reality beneath and that, in fact, an outward and transient change of form may be evidence of transformation toward something higher. Perdita, self-conscious and fearful in her "borrowed flaunts" (IV.iv.23) of a possible confrontation with the father of Doricles, is admonished by her lover:

Apprehend

Nothing but jollity. 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-rob'd god,

Golden Apollo, a poor humble swain,  
 As I seem now. Their transformations  
 Were never for a piece of beauty rarer,  
 Nor in a way so chaste, since my desires  
 Run not before mine honour, nor my lusts  
 Burn hotter than my faith (IV.iv.24-35).

Florizel's sudden allusion to the concept of gods as beasts places the vision of Antigonus pursued by a bear in renewed and somewhat adjusted focus. The lofty and the ludicrous are part of one entertainment just as the supernatural and the bestial are part of one god and the noble and the passionate part of one man or one king. The ludicrous, the bestial and the passionate exist on the surface: they are the clothes, the specious and palpable show -- the confinement beyond which "pale" eyes cannot penetrate. To perceive the deeper levels of art and of gods and of men is first to accept and come to terms with the "show". There would be no Winter's Tale without the bear and the bawdy songs of Autolycus, no gods without bellowing bulls and bleating rams, no royalty without physicality or honour without sex. Florizel is controlled by "honour" and by "faith" because he is able to mingle successfully their effects with those of his "desires" and his "lusts". As the festival guests arrive, Florizel's desire to be "red with mirth" (IV.iv 54) re-emphasizes the impression and dominance of the blood that "reigns in the winter's pale" (IV.iii.4).

There is evidence in IV.iv of the process of Florizel's natural growth from lording to king. Though he begins with an inclination to trust the "show" and assumes that Perdita's "unusual weeds, to each part of you/ Do give a life" (IV.iv:1-2), he comes intuitively to correct Perdita (and his earlier self) when she declares that "this robe of mine/ Does change my disposition" (IV.iv. 134-5). More accurately, it is the disposition of Florizel that has been significantly altered, not by Perdita's clothes but by the "Peering" nobility

she is heir to. The play on "Peering" (IV.iv.3) gives the touch of royalty to the flower appearing in "April's front". Perdita is metaphorically crowned before her father is. Her control over the flowers in her "rustic garden" is closer to being complete than that of Leontes over the subjects in his Sicilian garden. According to Perdita's abbreviated re-telling of the myth, Proserpina's act of letting her flowers fall is a reaction against the sexuality, awakened with the introduction of Dis, which "cannot choose but branch". Perdita may have been Proserpina at another time, but that certainly would have been before she met Florizel. Now she holds and firmly controls the flowers she has; she neither drops nor abandons them but recognizes the singularity of each and decorously distributes them. Even the flowers of her imagination are made into garlands for maidens or strewn over her lover. The conclusion of the long flower passage leaves Perdita in full charge of her sexuality. Florizel no longer assumes that Perdita's robe affects her disposition or gives her life. Just as her words have implied the change that natural growth and time have wrought in her, his words reveal an awareness that there is an essential part of Perdita that remains beyond time.

What you do,  
 Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet,  
 I'd have you do it ever: when you sing,  
 I'd have you buy and sell so, so give alms,  
 Pray so, and, for the ord'ring your affairs,  
 To sing them too: when you do dance, I wish you  
 A wave o' th' sea, that you might ever do  
 Nothing but that, move still, still so,  
 And own no other function. Each your doing,  
 So singular in each particular,  
 Crowns what you are doing, in the present deeds,  
 That all your acts are queens (IV.iv.135-46).

Florizel begins and ends with what Perdita does; acts, not words, are what crown and complete. Because everything that Perdita does betters

everything done before, each act of hers is a perfect completion of all other acts. The slow, insistent cadence of the lines implies Perdita's continually occurring expression of queenliness. Shakespeare almost makes the noun a verb: if "acts are queens", then Perdita's acting is queening; and she queens to the rhythm of dancing, of singing, of poetry. This eulogy of Florizel's does, in fact, contain Shakespeare's definition of queenship or kingship. The act which crowns is that performed with singularity. "Singular" is ambiguous: it implies two kinds of comparison occurring simultaneously. Each act of Perdita's betters every act performed in the past not only by her but also by everyone else. Acting with singularity bears a similar connotation to "Peering in April's front" (IV.iv.3). These images set Perdita off as being separated from and ahead of everyone else; they establish her uniqueness. The inclusion of the phrase "in the present deeds", somewhat troublesome to commentators on the play, insists not only on the time but on the doing. The nature of that kind of completion suggested by a coronation is such that it cannot be carried out and finalized by any one specific act. The sort of crowning referred to here is a metaphor central to this play and, indeed, to much of what Shakespeare has written elsewhere. A coronation is a continuous process. A woman is a queen as long as she performs deeds that are "singular"; every present act of a queen is a renewal of her queenship. The primary condition of queenship, or kingship, is that it be constantly acted anew: it must repeatedly give birth to itself.

Just as it is Perdita's real self and not her costume that gives her life, so Polixenes does not suddenly display kingship when he merely removes his costume and discovers himself at the sheep-shearing feast. Like Perdita's

diction earlier in IV.iv, the words of the undisguised Polixenes continue to recall those of Leontès. Whereas Perdita's words reflected the way in which her father's infected brain saw her and were an indication of the identification between parent and child, as though the extension of the father in the child could be evidenced by his filling her with words (and the process reversed, perhaps, by Mamillius's whispering the winter's tale into Hermione's ear), the words of Polixenes refract. Bohemia repeats Sicilia but deflects his "infection" in a slightly altered direction. As Leontes had called his issue bastard, Polixenes calls his "base" (IV.iv.419). His threat to hang the man he believes to be Perdita's father reiterates Leontès's threat to Antigonus (II.iii.108). Particularly suggestive is his use of hook imagery. "Thou a sceptre's heir," Polixenes exclaims to his son, "that thus affects a sheep-hook!" (420-21); and a few lines later he declares to Perdita:

If ever henceforth thou  
 These rural latches to his entrance open,  
 Or hoop his body more with thy embraces,  
 I will devise a death as cruel for thee  
 As thou art tender to't (IV.iv.438-42).

The more vehemently Polixenes in his anger accuses Perdita of hooking her body to catch his son, the more apparent it becomes that it is he who is re-enacting the deceptive behaviour of Leontes who, with the jarring notes of his spoken jealousy, divulges his method: "I am angling now, / Though you perceive me not how I give line" (I.ii.180-1). At the beginning of II.iii Leontes further states in a soliloquy that though "the harlot<sup>o</sup> king / Is quite beyond mine arm" (4-5), "she [Hermione] / I can hook to me" (6-7). The obscene implication of Leontes's "Go to, go to!" (182), is contained in Polixenes's insistence that Perdita "must know / The royal fool thou cop'st with" (IV.iv 424-5). The idea



of Perdita's opening "rural latches" to Florizel's entrance is reminiscent of Leontes's talk of other men's "gates" (I.ii.197) being opened, their ponds "fish'd" (195) and their wives "sluic'd" (194). There seems to be a significant contrast invited between the sex act envisaged by enraged parents as a mechanical act of sluicing, latching and hooking and the same act figured by the language of the children they have disowned as that which is as natural as going to bed with the sun and rising, weeping, with him.

Polixenes erroneously assumes that natural growth can, like a gate, be opened up and shut off at will. As concerned as was Antigonus with "fair posterity" (IV.iv.410), he tries to prevent unfair issue by cutting off his son: "we'll bar thee from succession;/ Not hold thee of our blood, no, not our kin" (IV.iv.430-1). His threat is as ludicrous, and as monstrous, as that of Antigonus to maintain the honour of his family by castrating either his daughters or himself. Honour is "a derivative from me to mine" (III.ii.44); it is rooted in the parents and branches in the children. To cut off one's own blood is to dissever oneself from honour. The action of the blood is beyond the control of Polixenes as it was of Leontes and of Antigonus. The attempt of a supposed king to confine his blood in a pale to which only he controls the gate and latch is a deed antithetical to the deeds that crown. There exists no sluice gate, except that of a deluded mind, to dam up blood or honour. Not only does "true blood" (IV.iv.148) inevitably peep through and "look out" (160); it just as inevitably "peeps fairly through". To have the complete and crowned use of one's eyes is to see the truth of blood. Camillo, with his "priest-like" (I.ii.237) insight, looks at the blood

rushing to Perdita's cheeks and sees royalty: "He [Florizel] tells her something," Camillo explains to Polixenes during the rural feast,

That makes her blood look out: good sooth she is  
The queen of curds and cream (IV.iv.160-1).

But Polixenes sees only clothes and surface lawn:

This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever  
Ran on the green-sward: nothing she does or seems  
But smacks of something greater than herself,  
Too noble for this place (IV.iv.156-9).

The nobility Perdita crudely "smacks of" is something greater than her actuality. Polixenes's inability to see the truth of what is, is suggested by his manner of alluding to Perdita's deeds in terms of negation and indirection. His "nothing she does or seems" contrasts significantly with Florizel's direct "What you do" and with the affirmation of both Florizel and Camillo, respectively, that "all your acts are queens" (146) and that "she is/ The queen of curds and cream."

## IV. An Unbroken Delivery

The primary source of The Winter's Tale, Robert Greene's Pandosto, contains a theme of incest. In Greene's novel, Pandosto (Leontes) "contrary to the law of nature ... lusted after his own daughter."<sup>1</sup> When rumours of the beauty of Fawnia (Perdita) first reach the ears of her unknowing father, he is a man of about fifty who still possesses "young and fresh affections".<sup>2</sup> Once Pandosto, unaware of their actual relationship, has met Fawnia "contrary to his aged years [he] began to be somewhat tickled" with her beauty. Pandosto, King of Bohemia, seeks "by reason and wisdom to suppress this frantic affection" for a woman he believes beneath him in breeding and therefore in honour. "How art thou pestered," he tells himself, "with fresh affections, and unfit fancies, wishing to possess with an unwilling mind and a hot desire, troubled with a cold disdain! shall thy mind yield in age to that thou has resisted in youth? Peace, Pandosto: blab not out that which thou mayest be ashamed to reveal to thyself." But "he could take no rest". His "frantic affection" having mounted till he is "broiling at the heat of unlawful lust", Pandosto swears that "if in a short time she would not be won with reason, he would forget all courtesy and compel her to grant by rigour". John Lawlor sums up the conclusion to Greene's plot:

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1. Robert Greene, Pandosto, The Triumph of Time, in Pafford, p. 275. The other passages from Pandosto are quoted from Pafford, pp. 218-22.
  2. When he meets Perdita in V.1, Leontes's age is approximately the same as that of Pandosto. In I.11 Leontes is twenty-three plus the age of Mamillius, about eight to ten (cf. 155). When he sees Perdita, he is about twenty-three plus ten plus sixteen, or forty-nine, years old.

With the arrival [in Bohemia] of the Sicilian embassy the truth of Dorastus's [Florizel's] parentage is made known. Now, it seems, Pandosto has every justification for railing upon Fawnia; he can vent his own anger at her obduracy while apparently reproving her presumption in 'being a beggar, to match with a Prince'.... In the end, there is nothing for it but a farcical volte-face. When the Shepherd speaks of Fawnia's true origins, Pandosto must all in a moment modulate from 'Thou disdainful vassal, thou currish Kite...' to 'my Daughter Fawnia, ah my sweet Fawnia, I am thy Father, Fawnia.' We can well believe that 'This suddaine passion of the King drave them all into a maze, especially Fawnia and Dorastus.'<sup>1</sup>

In his discussion of "Shakespeare's transmutation of Greene's incest-theme" Lawlor observes that the "violently strained" hospitality in I.ii is fulfilled in V.i. 'Now it is Leontes who, Polixenes-like, praises another man's beloved, in delicately complimentary terms. Florizel's plea for help --

at your request

My father will grant precious things as trifles --

draws the reply:

Would he do so, I'd beg your precious mistress,  
Which he counts but a trifle. (V.i.220-223)"<sup>2</sup>

The incestuous lust in Pandosto of father for daughter, Lawlor maintains, is "at once related to Leontes's sense of unalterable loss. Paulina chides him for the complimentary vein:

1 John Lawlor, "Pandosto and the Nature of Dramatic Romance", Philological Quarterly, 41(1962), 96-113; rpt. in Shakespeare's Later Comedies, ed. D.J. Palmer (Harmondsworth, 1971), p. 296.

2. Lawlor, p. 298.

Not a month  
Fore your queen died she was more worth such gazes  
Than what you look on now--

and Leontes, in his reply, identifies present courtesy with perpetual longing:

I thought of her  
Even in those looks I made. (V.1.224-227)

Time past is bridged; a youthful Hermione is ever-present to Leontes's mind.

For the audience, alerted by Paulina's words, before the arrival of the lovers--

Unless another,  
As like Hermione as is her picture,  
Affront his eye-- (V.1.73-75)

the scene is a foretaste of what is to come in greater measure, an evidence of the stirring of new life. Perdita's beauty has moved the recollection of a lost happiness;

Important to an understanding of the transmutation of the incest-theme is the fact that as a prelude to Florizel's asking Leontes for help, the prince beseeches the king to "Remember since you ow'd no more to time/ Than I do now" (V.1.218-219). The man who begs Florizel's "precious mistress" is, for the nonce, a contemporary of Florizel's. Just as his first glimpse of Polixenes's son brings back his own youth--

Were I but twenty-one,  
Your father's image is so hit in you,  
His very air, that I should call you brother,  
As I did him, and speak of something wildly  
By us perform'd before (V.1.125-129) --

a close look at Perdita, naturally, reiterates other and older looks upon his queen's "full eyes" (V.1.53) and yields sexual desire. Leontes is suddenly lord and king simultaneously. As the delineation between Polixenes and Florizel, Hermione and Perdita becomes blurred, the identity between parent

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1. Lawlor, pp. 298-299.

and child is emphasized. One way a man triumphs over time while he is still alive is by reliving his youth in the "air" of his children. The "gazes" for which Paulina rebukes Leontes are a repetition of Camillo's reaction when he first sees Perdita: "I should leave grazing, were I of your flock, / And only live by gazing" (IV.iv.109-110). A gaze, as has been suggested earlier in this thesis in another connection, is the kind of fully perceptive use of the eyes that nourishes. What the eyes of Leontes take from Perdita has been transformed from the self-devouring incestuous force present in Pandosto into that which is self-perpetuating.

Incest as that which devours the self is explicitly set forth in the riddle Pericles must solve to win the hand of the daughter of Antiochus:

I am no viper, yet I feed  
 On mother's flesh which did me breed.  
 I sought a husband, in which labour  
 I found that kindness in a father  
 He's father, son, and husband mild;  
 I mother, wife, and yet his child:  
 How they may be, and yet in two,  
 As you will live, resolve it you (I.i.65-72).

When it becomes apparent to Antiochus that Pericles has "found the meaning" (I.i.110), he attempts to put Pericles off ("I will gloze with him": I.i.111) and thus buy time. The Prince of Tyre, of course, is not fooled

How courtesy would seem to cover sin,  
 When what is done is like an hypocrite,  
 The which is good in nothing but in sight!  
 If it be true that I interpret false,  
 Then were it certain you were not so bad  
 As with foul incest to abuse your soul;  
 Where now you're both a father and a son,  
 By your uncomely clasplings with your child,--  
 Which pleasures fit a husband, not a father;  
 And she an eater of her mother's flesh,  
 By the defiling of her parent's bed;

And both like serpents are, who though they feed  
 On sweetest flowers, yet they poison breed.  
 Antioch, farewell! for wisdom sees, those men  
 Blush not in actions blacker than the night,  
 Will shew no course to keep them from the light.  
 One sin, I know, another doth provoke;  
 Murder's as near to lust as flame to smoke.  
 Poison and treason are the hands of sin,  
 Ay, and the targets, to put off the shame:  
 Then, lest my life be cropp'd to keep you clear,  
 By flight I'll shun the danger which I fear (I.i.122-143).

Pericles, here, uses the words "incest" and "lust" interchangeably. That all incest should be seen as the gratification of lust follows clearly; that all lust be incest (and I think Shakespeare is attracted by this idea - whoever wrote this part of Pericles) requires some consideration. Both Shakespeare and Greene, in the company of other men of their age, define "incest" more loosely than does the twentieth century. Greene writes that Pandosto "caused a general proclamation to be made through all his realm that the queen and Egistus (Polixenes) had, by the help of Franion (Camillo), not only committed the most incestuous adultery, but also had conspired the king's death" (p. 190). Since Egistus is described as an "old friend and companion" (p. 185) of the King of Bohemia and nowhere as a blood relation, it is obvious that Greene's use of "incestuous" is a somewhat extended one. Shakespeare omits the idea of incest from Leontes's overt indictment of Hermione which an officer reads in the open court:

Hermione, queen to the worthy Leontes, king of Sicilia, thou art here accused and arraigned of high treason, in committing adultery with Polixenes, king of Bohemia, and conspiring with Camillo to take away the life of our sovereign lord the king; thy royal husband: the pretence whereof being by circumstances partly laid open, thou, Hermione, contrary to the faith and allegiance of a true subject, didst counsel and aid them, for their better safety, to fly away by night (III.ii.12-21).

Leontes, though, seems to have been poisoned by such a concoction as Pericles imagines is bred by those who commit "foul incest". In II.i, upon being informed of the flight of Polixenes and Camillo, Leontes interrupts Mamillius's winter's tale; and totally oblivious to the charm and grace inherent in the scene he breaks in upon, he speaks out his own poison:

How blest am I  
 In my just censure! in my true opinion!  
 Alack, for lesser knowledge! how accurs'd  
 In being so blest! There may be in the cup  
 A spider steep'd, and one may drink, depart,  
 And yet partake no venom (for his knowledge  
 Is not infected); but if one present  
 Th'abhorr'd ingredient to his eye, make known  
 How he hath drunk, he cracks his gorge, his sides,  
 With violent hefts. I have drunk, and seen the spider (II.i.36-45).

The spider Leontes sees is of his own making: it is no more substantial than the courtesy of Antiochus, "good in nothing but in sight". Both the spider and the courtesy are specious inventions or devices of diseased imaginations. Leontes fills himself with his own poison and thereafter sees others only as he sees himself. Taking Mamillius away from Hermione, he tells her:

Give me the boy: I am glad you did not nurse him:  
 Though he does bear some signs of me, yet you  
 Have too much blood in him.

"What is this? sport?" an incredulous Hermione asks; and Leontes replies:

Bear the boy hence, he shall not come about her,  
 Away with him, and let her sport herself  
 With that she's big with; for 'tis Polixenes  
 Has made thee swell thus (II.i.56-62).

Hermione uses "sport" almost in the sense of playing a practical joke. She cannot, at first, take Leontes's complaint seriously. The king, in a game which Shakespeare with more or less intensity plays often and well, repeats and expands the diction of his wife. The implication of Hermione's sporting



herself with the child she is big with is incestuous. That the child will be a daughter renders the idea of incest, in retrospect, as ridiculous as Antigonus's threat to geld his daughters or himself to preserve the honour of his name. Leontes sports himself with the venomous spider he is big with; he is the creator of that which eats his own flesh. Instead of attempting to kill the spider, he tries to destroy his child. Because he insists on unnaturally containing all of himself within himself, he inevitably devours the part of himself that is his son. There is a suggestion running through this play and possibly other of the later plays that a child of the same sex as the parent is that part of the parent which he or she cannot willingly separate from himself or herself. There exists a reciprocity between father and son, mother and daughter which peculiarly contains a kind of shared and mutually nourishing sexuality. There is also the suggestion that whereas the son repeats the father, it is the daughter alone who includes the capacity to expand him. The metaphor is rooted directly in the physical: the daughter's biological potential to become big with child in some way increases the father. This promise of issue becomes, in the late plays, more important than the continuation of name, which only the son can bring about. The reconciliation between father and daughter is the source of new life because it represents a type of primal and innocent union of the sexes. The metaphor is fragile and delicate and quite deliberately, I think, borders on the repulsive and absurd. The distance between innocence or self-perpetuating love and incest or self-devouring lust is no more easily discerned or safely guarded than that between life and death, art and nature, a babe and a bear. It is interesting that Leontes never does call Perdita "my daughter" even in V.iii. He refers to her once in V.iii

when addressing Hermione as "thy admiring daughter" (41) and later as "your daughter" (151). Mamillius, on the other hand, is "my boy" (I.ii.120), "my bawcock" (121), "my calf" (127), "my collop" (137). His eventual reunion with his daughter symbolizes Leontes's conscious effort to move out of himself and courageously embrace that which is different from the part of himself he knows best.

The piece of Leontes that regenerates him is planted outside of himself, in the belly of Hermione. Because the Leontes of II.i still believes that knowledge is implanted in his eye, he assumes that whatever his own eye sees is so. He addresses his wife as though her "bulk" (20) were not "goodly" but unnatural; and he calls Camillo the "pandar" (46) of Polixenes. Leontes's eyes are playing him false. He not only imagines a lustful relationship between Hermione and Polixenes, he hallucinates a lust as gorge-cracking as incest. He projects his spider's poison everywhere. And yet as much as Leontes conjectures in his mind's eye and takes to be fact, he is almost aware, at some level, that his eyes have not seen the truth. When Antigonus argues for the recognition of Hermione's honour and thereby her release from prison and suspicion, Leontes replies:

Camillo's flight,  
 Added to their familiarity,  
 (Which was as gross as ever touch'd conjecture,  
 That lack'd sight only, nought for approbation  
 But only seeing, all other circumstances  
 Made up to th' deed) doth push on this proceeding  
 (II.i.174-179).

Gross familiarity between Hermione and Polixenes he has not really seen and something in him makes him say so, despite the fact that something else undercuts and overlooks "only seeing". That Leontes should be satisfied that

what he knows is right and yet send for the Oracle is not only necessary to the plot, it is befitting the tenor of absurdity that drifts continually through the play. The seeds of sight are contained in blindness. The spider devours the self to make room for that which perpetuates

That in Leontes which is self-devouring, like the same force in Autolycus, seems to pour forth in a profusion of words. When words are divorced from deeds, they are at best beside the point, at worst destructive. Only when words accord with present action are they true, even electric. Leontes tells Paulina, when she says she will make the statue of Hermione move,

What you can make her do;  
I am content to look on: what to speak,  
I am content to hear; for 'tis as easy  
To make her speak as move (V.iii.91-94).

The emphatic use of the present tense as well as the rhythm of deliberation recall Florizel's "What you do, / Still betters what is done..." Speech moves with and is as easy and as natural as action. This marriage of word and deed, rising and moving together, is probably the closest definition of reality in nature that Shakespeare's poetry affords. Artistic reality is something else.

The dialogue in the first part of V.ii presents a different kind of "reality". Rather than have the reconciliation between king and counsellor, king and king, father and daughter performed before the audience, Shakespeare has it related on the instigation of Autolycus, who introduces the scene by asking a gentleman: "Beseech you, sir, were you present at this relation?" (V.ii.1). The consequent replies to Autolycus's question and to ensuing queries of their own of three court gentlemen, one of them Paulina's steward, make up a report in concert. The rehearsing of the recognitions that take place off stage turn them into art. If the gentlemen's re-telling is a kind of concert,

then Autolycus who begins and ends it is in some sense its conductor. The rogue, representing a kind of temporal life force, helps to shape life into art. The words of the gentlemen make up one last song for Autolycus to perform. The scene is penultimate in the sense that song and all other art are always penultimate: what is inevitably born out of their performance must be, at least on Shakespeare's stage, life, the ultimately vital scene. Life inspires the word-concert of V.ii which in turn issues forth the perfect wedding of word and deed in V.iii.

A word concert issuing in fictive life has been performed earlier in the play; though it may not be recognized for what it is until its paradigm in the more assertively artful V.ii has been shaped, the first scene of the play serves as just such a verbal and incomplete abstract of the whole drama which succeeds it.

Immediately after Paulina draws the curtain in V.iii to reveal Hermione standing like a statue, there occurs a marked pause in the rhythm of the play to be broken only by the lady herself:

I like your silence, it the more shows off  
Your wonder: but yet speak; first you, my liege (V.iii.21-2).

The silence evoked by wonder is proof of a respect for, and acceptance of, what is about to happen; it is not so much an expectation as a readiness to receive. Despite the fact that the silence pleases Paulina, she insists that her audience speak and calls first upon Leontes to do so. The wonder that Hermione's statue begets is that which itself engenders new art or new life. Since one of Paulina's roles is to keep things moving, she urges a verbal response to the sense of wonder. The words spoken, and thus disseminated, by Leontes are the "something" that the rich "nothing" of silent wonder yields.

The play begins with a similar insistence on, and self-consciousness of, the need to speak. In the first twenty lines of I.i Archidamus, the lord of Bohemia who appears only in this scene, repeatedly refers to his own deliberate action of using words:

If you shall chance, Camillo, to visit Bohemia, on the like occasion whereon my services are now on foot, you shall see, as I have said, great difference betwixt our Bohemia and your Sicilia.

Verily I speak it in the freedom of my knowledge: we cannot with such magnificence -- in so rare -- I know not what to say -- .

Believe me, I speak as my understanding instructs me, and as mine honesty puts it to utterance (I.i.1-4, 11-13, 19-20).

Archidamus's "you shall see, as I have said" (3), coming as it does in the opening thought of the play, is addressed, perhaps, to a wider audience than one man. The audience sitting in the theatre, as well as Camillo and other actors in The Winter's Tale, will see what Archidamus has said come to life on the stage not only in accordance with the words he has uttered but because he has uttered them.

Archidamus, in his capacity to be moved to wonder by that which is "rare" (12), prefigures Paulina's steward who is so deeply affected by "that rare Italian master, Julio Romano" (V.ii.96). The Bohemian lord's verbal delivery of a projected entertainment in Bohemia for Sicilia, never to be realized in the confines of the drama as Archidamus originally conceives it, is also a "broken delivery" (V.ii.9);

Cam. I think, this coming summer, the King of Sicilia means to pay Bohemia the visitation which he justly owes him.

Arch. Wherein our entertainment shall shame us: we will  
 be justified in our loves: for indeed --  
 Cam Beseech you --  
 Arch. Verily I speak it in the freedom of my knowledge:  
 we cannot with such magnificence -- in so rare -- I  
 know not what to say -- We will give you sleepy  
 drinks, that your senses (unintelligent of our insuf-  
 ficiency) may, though they cannot praise us, as little  
 accuse us (I.i.5-16).

Archidamus is as aware of the insufficiency of words as he is of the necessity to use them; it is as though he knew that to say words was to plant something, to set in motion that which must not be allowed to stop.

Camillo's role in the beginning of the play is to explain and therefore, dramatically at least, to create the past; Archidamus projects into and creates the future. His thoughts, like those of Paulina's steward in V.ii, contain the conditional. His first word, the one that significantly begins the play, is if: "If you shall chance, Camillo, to visit Bohemia . . ."; and the last thing he says is likewise a statement of condition: "If the king had no son, they would desire to live on crutches till he had one" (44-5). These two "if" clauses, one supposing the chance of Camillo's visiting Bohemia and the other the possibility of the king's having no son, contain within them the seeds of the entire plot: they are the pregnant truth of The Winter's Tale. Archidamus also asks the only question in the scene: "Would they else be content to die?" Would the citizens of Sicilia who go on crutches be content to die once they had seen Mamillius a man? Their "excuse" (42) for living is their desire to see a child and "lording" become a man and their king. The son of a king, like the use of the word "if", is an assurance of continuation.

Mamillius is the something in nature that functions as does the art of Archidamus's words: he is a link between the past and the future. "They that went on crutches [in the past] ere he was born desire [now] yet their

life to see [in the future] him a man." According to the laws of nature and of art, what exists now must inevitably be used to create the future. In I.i the future means, most specifically, the rest of the play. Knight and Traversi were right to emphasize the significance of the branching image: "They [Leontes and Polixenes] were trained together in their childhoods, and there rooted betwixt them then such an affection which cannot choose but branch now" (22-24). The ambiguity of that branch, separating and growing, ending and continuing, is not self-annihilating. It contains the kind of paradox that is central to the play. The more something appears to be one thing the more it implies its opposite. The more impossible a thing appears the more possible it is. As the Renaissance admired Tertullian for oddly resolving, no less assertively because paradoxically, Certum est quia impossibile est.

Commenting on the insufficiency of his own words as well as on the imagined inadequate means of Bohemia to reciprocate the magnificence of Sicilia, Archidamus tells Camillo: "We will give you sleepy drinks, that your senses (unintelligent of our insufficiency) may, though they cannot praise us, as little accuse us" (13-16). These "sleepy drinks" are akin to "that which may/ Unfurnish me of reason" (V.i.121-2). As Leontes in V.i awaits the entrance of Prince Florizel and his princess, Paulina reminds the king of his dead son:

Paul. Had our prince  
 (Jewel of children) seen this hour, he had pair'd  
 Well with this lord: there was not a full month  
 Between their births.

Leon. Prithee, no more; cease; thou know'st  
 He dies to me again, when talk'd of: sure,  
 When I shall see this gentleman, thy speeches  
 Will bring me to consider that which may  
 Unfurnish me of reason (V.i.115-22).

Mamillius dies to Leontes again immediately before Florizel is born to him. This poetic action represents the epitome of that kind of growing affection "which cannot choose but branch now" (24). It is the severing that is continuously creative. "Where there is a reconciliation," Joyce's Stephen Dedalus says, "there must have been first a sundering."<sup>1</sup> This redundant but poetically creative death of Mamillius is caused by words. When Leontes sees Florizel, the effect of the speeches of Paulina will unfurnish him of reason. Specifically, her words will make Mamillius die again as Leontes looks on Florizel. But the implication is also that because the two sons are paired so closely, Leontes will look at Florizel and see Mamillius. That which makes Mamillius die again simultaneously makes him live. Paulina's are branching words: they defy reason and make so what is not so; they artfully obliterate the "pale" between life and death.

The "sleepy drinks" which Archidamus imagines giving his visitors are intended to dull the senses of the Sicilian audience at the Bohemian entertainment. The Bohemian lord wants his audience sufficiently unfurnished of reason so that it becomes unable to praise or blame, able only to accept. Perhaps Archidamus's essential role is to make the audience "pregnant", i.e., ready to receive the art that restores. He may share with Gower one aspect of the role the ancient poet plays in Pericles. The "purchase" (Pericles I.i.9) gained by the audience of Archidamus's entertainment may also be glory.

"Sleepy drinks" will enable an audience to suspend disbelief and thereby accept dramatic convention and court courtesy as the truth against which

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1. James Joyce, Ulysses (London: 1937; rpt. 1955), p. 182.



all else is to be measured. Sleepy drinks in I.i, like tears later in the play, control awareness. They affect the manner in which an audience of one or many responds to "entertainment" or art. Only in the level of "reason without miracle" (Lear I.i.122) does entertainment "shame" (W.T. I.i.8). To be asleep to "reason without miracle" is to awaken to wonder. This is not the sleep (brought on by unkingly and unkinging draughts from cups bespiced by spiders) that "stands in the level of your dreams" (III.ii.81) but the sleep that rounds the cipher of life because it stands in the level of art.

If Archidamus's "sleepy drinks" and all art are "trumpery", then it is that kind of trumpery which is "justified in our loves" (9). The love that justifies art is the love that is accompanied by "understanding" (I.i.17) and "honesty" (20). Archidamus's honesty is that which gives him "freedom" to speak of everything within his "knowledge". He asks, simply, that his words and his courtesy be accepted: "Believe me" (19). What Archidamus cannot say will not be. "You have an unspeakable comfort of your young prince Mamillius" (34-5), he tells Camillo. Because that comfort is "unspeakable", it is unrealizable. What is not said in this play does not exist. The fictive aphorism of The Winter's Tale is that words and tales and art create reality.

In order to be complete and continue a king must have a poet as well as a daughter of "His fortunes all lie speechless, and his name/ Is at least gasp" (Cym. 2-3).

Each of the three court gentlemen in V.ii expresses his reaction to the reconciliation that has taken place off stage in terms of its ineffability. The first gentleman tells Autolycus that he cannot present to him the complete "issue" (V.ii.8) of the revelations of the old shepherd because "I make a

broken delivery of the business" (9). His delivery is broken, not only because he was commanded out of the chamber before the reunion between father and daughter, but also because he possesses no verbal language to give a definitive description to what he has seen. Camillo and Leontes had themselves communicated in a language other than that of words: "there was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture" (13-14). The "notable passion of wonder" (15-16) that appeared in Camillo and Leontes is infectious: it is instantaneously caught by the onlookers as it is shown forth by those reconciled. It is this highly contagious "amazedness" (4), these "notes of admiration", (11), the "deal of wonder ... broken out within this hour" (23-24), that renders the language of words so ineffectual "that ballad-makers cannot be able to express it" (24-25). The third gentleman describes the meeting of the two kings as "a sight which was to be seen, cannot be spoken of" (43-44); he, too, repeats the idea of his report being a "broken delivery": "I never heard of such another encounter, which lames report to follow it, and undoes description to do it" (57-59). Words that report or follow after wonder are somehow bent out of shape.

There is a vital and infinitely complex paradox at work in this scene. On one level the poetry is saying that the language of words is broken and incomplete; on another, that the words of old tales, like all art, are true because they are impossible to believe. To complicate matters, each pole of this paradox is itself paradoxical. The words that report the reconciliation in V.1 are "broken" because the reconciliation is only partial. Leontes remains incompletely re-created because the "delivery" of Perdita, the child and issue of the business, will not be a whole delivery until Hermione is

come to life to dispose the gods to "look down; / And from your sacred vials  
pour your graces / Upon my daughter's head!" (V.iii.121-123).

The language of the scene implies an identity between truth and tales. The gentleman who first announces that the oracle is fulfilled and the king's daughter found makes the statement that "This news, which is called true, is so like an old tale that the verity of it is in strong suspicion" (27-30).

The wonderful news, called true, is so like an old tale that it may not be true. The kind of truth that creates a tale brings itself under suspicion.

In order to be art truth must somehow negate itself. Old tales "make possible things not so held" (I.ii.139): art is the nothing that is something: "'tis

very credent" (I.ii.142). Having been asked by one gentleman whether the king has found his heir, the gentleman who has seen most (Paulina's steward) replies,

"Most true, if ever truth were pregnant by circumstance: that which you hear you'll swear you see, there is such unity in the proofs" (V.ii.31-33). The

image of pregnant truth is of primary significance. The "circumstances" that impregnate truth are a mixture of remarkable items: "The mantle of Queen

Hermione's, her jewel about the neck of it, the letters of Anticonus found with it, which they know to be his character; the majesty of the creature in

resemblance of the mother, the affection of nobleness which nature shows above her breeding" (33-38). The mantle, the jewel and the letters, despite the fact

that they symbolize the truth beneath the show, are so intangible as to be practically unprovable. Fairy tale relics and impalpable metaphors make truth

pregnant. "That which you hear you'll swear you see": the tale whispered into the ear creates the visible actuality. Because the audience hears the

undone report of the reconciliation in V.ii, it will give birth itself to

the vision of complete delivery in V.iii. The stuff of art, as of nature, goes on, however, whether there be ears to receive and minds to conceive or not:

Sec. Gent. What, pray you, became of Antigonus, that carried hence the child?

Third Gent. Like an old tale still, which will have matter to rehearse, though credit be asleep and not an ear open (V.ii.60-61).

The bear that devours Antigonus allows him to triumph over time by providing the shepherd's son, who has the same kind of tangible and intangible, noble and fairy tale-like, proofs to his credit ("his innocence ... a handkerchief and rings": 65-70) as does Perdita, with a pregnant tale to tell. The rehearsing of the tale gives birth both to another tale and to a long-lost child.

If, for the poet, the unit and agent of his creations is the word, for nature it is the tear. Tears regenerate the human soul as rain drops do the ground. The first gentleman in V.ii tells Autolycus that the king and Camillo, meeting for the first time after sixteen years, "seemed almost, with staring at one another, to tear the cases of their eyes" (11-12). They use no words; their gestures, including those of their eyes, speak for them. It may be that there is a pun on "tear" and therefore a paradox implied. To tear or to rip the cases of the eyes suggests the destruction of that which forces one to view the unbelievable. The eyes' tears, on the other hand, promise "a world ransomed", an issue redeemed. "The wisest beholder, that knew no more but seeing" (13-17) cannot say whether joy or sorrow prevails, not only because he is perceiving rather than experiencing, but also because to make a work of art, a play, of the experience of joy or sorrow and to

create an audience, more or less wise, to behold the play, renders the joy and the sorrow equivalents. Tears are the essence of both joy and sorrow; i.e., when the eyes see through tears, joy and sorrow mingle to become that which re-creates. The description of the meeting of Leontes and Polixenes given by Paulina's steward repeatedly identifies joy and sorrow with each other. The gentleman's introductory and concluding sentences, in their reiteration of the inability of words to express what he has seen, suggest that, for the time being, tears without words are sufficient.

Then have you lost a sight which was to be seen,  
cannot be spoken of. There might you have beheld  
one joy crown another, so and in such manner that  
it seemed sorrow wept to take leave of them, for  
their joy waded in tears. There was casting up of  
eyes, holding up of hands, with countenance of such  
distraction, that they were to be known by garment,  
not by favour. Our king, being ready to leap out of  
himself for joy of his found daughter, as if that joy  
were now become a loss, cries 'O, thy mother, thy  
mother!' then asks Bohemia forgiveness; then em-  
braces his son-in-law; then again worries he his  
daughter with clipping her; now he thanks the old  
shepherd, which stands by, like a weather-bitten  
conduit of many kings' reigns. I never heard of such  
another encounter, which lames report to follow it,  
and undoes description to do it (V.ii.43-59).

These tears are restorative; they precede and then stay to accompany joy, like the storm (already mentioned) that precedes and accompanies the birth of Marina, the daughter of Pericles. The constant motion of the scene -- wading, casting, holding, leaping, embracing, worrying, clipping -- suggests the doing that initiates saying; tears set the blood coursing. The king's agitation, his tremor cordis, has become the pangs of re-birth. He is "ready to leap out of himself," but he has not yet done so. The only words directly attributed to Leontes by the steward are "'O, thy mother, thy mother.'" Significantly, he

does not at this moment of recognition cry 'O, my daughter, my daughter!' His leap out of himself will be completed only at the moment of the restoration of his wife. Then, what the eye sees will become equivalent to what the mouth says. There will be no time gap between doing and saying: "report" and "description" will have become superfluous. There will be "such unity" (33) in tears and words. At the time the steward speaks Hermione is still supposedly dead; tears have not yet become words. The scene could not have been acted directly in front of the audience (except perhaps in pantomime) without the playwright's destroying his own crucial metaphor. For the same reason, the lame report of the steward, the attempt to speak what "cannot be spoken of" (44), is presented in the language of prose. In Shakespeare's plays prose is a language of incompleteness: Leontes is still suffering a loss which requires more tears in order to be restored. The figure of the old shepherd standing by "like a weather-bitten conduit of many kings' reigns" suggests a continuing regeneration. His association with many kings seems to render his tears symbolic of the royal tears that rain as well as reign. The joy that wades in tears is saturated with potency. Paulina lifts "the princess from the earth" (70), repeating the action of the old shepherd upon finding the infant, as though to joyously pluck and welcome the flower of spring, palpable proof of the inevitable "birth of trembling winter."

In order for Perdita to play her role in the re-creation of her mother, she too must weep. The one direct quotation afforded her by the steward -- "Alas" (87) -- provides a cue to our imaginations to see her supplying just such a raining of tears. Perdita's bleeding tears and the steward's comment that "Who was most marble, there changed colour" (86-89)

prefigure the kind of transformation to take place in the following scene. The steward's admission that "my heart wept blood" along with his imaginative linking of the animation of marble with universal woe (90-91) reveals him, despite his use of prose, as the one real court poet in Sicilia. Most important is his inclusion, in his description, of the conditional: "if all the world could have seen't, the woe had been universal" (90-91). He creates a vast and pregnant audience of limitless potential. Because he believes Hermione to be really dead and the statue no more than a statue, the leaping faith with which he speaks of the artist and the work of art is profoundly moving. He describes the statue as

... a piece many years in doing and now newly performed by that rare Italian master, Julio Romano, who, had he himself eternity and could put breath into his work, would beguile Nature of her custom, so perfectly he is her ape: he so near to Hermione hath done Hermione, that they say one would speak to her and stand in hope of answer (V.ii.94-101).

He can stretch his mind sufficiently to conceive of what would happen if that rare sculptor had all of time in which to create; he can even conceive not only of speaking to a work of art but of standing "in hope of answer".

Dramatically it is Paulina, with the help of Apollo, who completes the regeneration of Leontes by preserving Hermione and presenting her, after sixteen years, simultaneously to Leontes and Perdita; but aesthetically (perhaps also ironically) it is her steward, the prose-uttering poet, who re-creates the king. There is a level at which the statue must be understood to come to life because a poet has spoken of a sculptor's putting breath into his work and has conceived of speaking to art and standing, like a cipher in most rich place, waiting to be shaped.

Paulina in V.iii says to Leontes:

That she is living,  
Were it but told you, should be hooted at  
Like an old tale; but it appears she lives,  
Though yet she speak not (115-118).

Tales may be hooted at, but "it appears" Hermione lives and Leontes is completed because the tale has been told. Things appear because they have first been told and hooted at. What the poet-steward says Leontes does: art creates nature.

It does, though, take the questions and answers of three different men, led and followed by Autolycus, to imperfectly piece together the "broken delivery" of the first of two recognition scenes. The first such scene is necessarily undercut in this way because it is incomplete. At the same time, the penultimate scene contains the seeds and promise of completion; it gives birth to a crowning, so to speak. The final restoration is born out of the bloody tears and the faith of the poet-steward, the "conduct" (57) of "the red blood [that] reigns in the winter's pale" (IV.iii.4).

Although Autolycus, the old shepherd and the clown provide some necessary comic relief at the end of V.ii, their fooling does not detract significantly from the established tone. Their talk of clothes, of family relations, of gentlemen being born reflects much of the language of what has just preceded. The benevolence of the shepherd and his son is connoted in Autolycus's reference to them as "already appearing in the blossoms of their fortune" (125-126). Humorously, but gently, their rise in life is compared to that of Perdita, once called "Blossom" by Antiponus as he placed her on the earth of Bohemia, and "Flora/ Peering", by Florizel at the beginning of IV.iv. Their tears, though less substantial, provide a bond with those of princes and poets:



...I was a gentleman born before my father;  
 for the king's son took me by the hand, and  
 called me brother; and then the two kings called  
 my father brother; and then the prince, my  
 brother, and the princess, my sister, called my  
 father father; and so we wept; and there was the  
 first gentleman-like tears that ever we shed  
 (V.ii.139-145).

Here is at once a parody of the aesthetic idea of words or art creating reality and a suggestion that in such charming circumstances the words of the son of a "weather-bitten conduit of many kings' reigns" should be true. The clown's invitation to Autolycus to "Come, follow us: we'll be thy good masters" (V.ii.174-175), if accepted, might just conceivably redeem the charming rogue.

Leontes looks on the statue of Hermione in actuality with the same tears and the same faith with which the poet-steward looked on the work in his imagination. "Let be, let be!" he begs Paulina who threatens to draw the curtain.

Would I were dead, but that methinks already --  
 What was he that did make it? -- See, my lord,  
 Would you not deem it breath'd and that those veins  
 Did verily bear blood? (V.iii.62-65).

The art shaped in the imagination by the prose of Paulina's steward has become the breath and blood of Hermione's statue and the poetry of Leontes's words. Standing before the statue "in hope of answer" (V.ii.101), Leontes believes "There is an air comes from her" (V.ii.78). Like Leontes's realization of the resemblance between Florizel and Polixenes -- "Your father's image is so hit in you, / His very air" (V.i.126-127) -- this new one also contains a pun. The air that comes from Hermione is not only her breath, it is also Perdita, the heir, whose "broken delivery" is now made whole. Hermione herself tells Perdita:

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...thou shalt hear that I,  
Knowing by Paulina that the Oracle  
Gave hope thou wast in being, have preserv'd  
Myself to see the issue (V.iii.125-128).

"If there were no other excuse why [she] should desire to live," she "would desire to live on crutches" (I.i.42-45) till she had seen her daughter. The issue seen, Hermione is restored. Leontes's faith, or "madness", the pleasure of which "no settled senses of the world can match" (V.iii.72), does now allow him "to leap out of himself" (V.ii.50-51). It is true that Hermione is warm because she is, in fact, alive; but she is warm also because Leontes believes in the magic which equates sculpting and eating, art and life: "If this be magic, let it be an art/ Lawful as eating" (V.iii.110-111).

Hermione does not speak until Paulina identifies the princess: "Turn, good lady,/ Our Perdita is found" (120-121); and Perdita, in turn, is not completely delivered until, having been accepted by her father, she is blessed and spoken to by Hermione. The issue which has been lost is not found until it has been recognized by both the king its father and the queen its mother. Perdita must be "my daughter" (123) to Hermione before she is "an heir" (III.iii.135) to Leontes.

Mamillius was right to assume that "A sad tale's best for winter" (II.i.25); a sad tale is a pregnant tale that mingles tears and words so that its audience is never too certain of the exact differentiation between raining tears and reigning words.

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