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- 1 As Stuart Clark has incisively pointed out in his chapter "Images: The Reformation of the Eyes", one "important shock to early modern Europe's visual confidence was administered by Protestant Reformation".

Like so many other aspects of European life and culture, vision became the subject of fierce and unprecedented confessional dispute. Such was the role of images and 'sacramental seeing' in contemporary religious liturgy and worship that things could hardly have been otherwise. [...] Late medieval piety invested heavily in the sense of sight, supported by visual theories that gave eye-contact with objects of devotion a virtually tactile quality. But in the 1370s the Lollard John Wycliffe was already revisiting an old argument about spiritual belief being incompatible with the indulging of the senses. [...] The general aim of many pre-Reformation and Protestant critics of the Church in the intervening years, Lutherans least wholeheartedly perhaps, was to replace eye-service with ear-service – the image with the word.¹

From a conceptual point of view, the demarcation between image-meaning and word-meaning was hard to define, Clark argues. But the epistemological nature of the dispute was divisive enough – between those who maintained that knowledge of divine reality could be pursued by means of tangible images and those who opposed such a view – to become a breeding ground for iconoclasm. Images were offensive well beyond "their capacity to represent or misrepresent something else".² They were offensive because, with their lifelike figure – even more so if they were carved as three-dimensional statues –, they induced the faithful to mistake a delusive and corruptible copy for the spiritual and incorruptible essence of the original. "It was sentiments like these, expressed in the language of pollution and cleansing", Clark observes, "that helped to make necessary their destruction, rather than their removal".³

- 2 "Iconoclasm was the central sacrament of the reform", Eamon Duffy has written in his book *The Stripping of the Altars*,

and as the programme of the leaders became more radical in the years between 1547 and 1553, they sought even with greater urgency the celebration of that sacrament of forgetfulness in every parish of the land. The churchwardens' accounts of the period witness a wholesale removal of the images, vestments, and vessels which had been the wonder of foreign visitors to the country, and in which the collective memory of the parishes was, quite literally, enshrined. Some of this, especially in the capital, was true iconoclasm, expressing deeply held Protestant conviction, destruction as itself a religious act. But it was patent that much of it was nothing of the sort. There was grudging fulfillment of the will of the Crown, and sometimes an attempt to anticipate the actions of the Crown in order to save something from the wreckage.⁴

Such an aggression towards things of vision – “a sacrament of forgetfulness”, as Eamon Duffy puts it, a “shock to early modern [...] visual confidence”, as Stuart Clark invites us to see it –, is what marks at the core England's relationship with the visual arts. In Shakespeare's times such a relationship rested in the whitewashed walls of parishes, walled niches, stripped pedestals, empty reliquaries, outlawed cults, carefully compiled inventories of desacralized stones and objects turned into merchandise: the stuff of a reformed memory grounded in eradication, erasure, dispersion and effaced wounds which problematized in important ways the relationship between past and present in early modern England, as well as progressively desacralized ways of seeing and the nascent phenomenon of art collection.

- 3 Among things to be forgotten were images, signs, and narratives connected to the Marian cult. This was a cult which was second only to that of Christ in pre-Reformation England, as Duffy has argued, one that had been recorded in an infinite number of visual representations in painting, carving, glass, and whose enforced erasing must have been felt as particularly depriving for the eye and the soul, let alone the imagination revolving around the maternal figure. In prayers, Mary functioned as a merciful figure of intercession, and the “tenderness of Mary as Mother of Mercy was sometimes contrasted to the justice and severity of the Father and Son”.⁵
- 4 The heretical potential involved in such a compensatory role played by the Virgin Mary, within the Catholic church itself, has been forcefully brought to the fore by Julia Kristeva in her “Stabat Mater”: “In asserting that ‘in the beginning was the Word’, Christians must have found such a postulate sufficiently hard to believe and, for whatever it was worth, they added its compensation, its permanent lining: the maternal receptacle, purified as it might be by the virginal fantasy”.⁶ Originally published as “Hérétique de l'amour” in *Tel Quel* (1977), “Stabat Mater” highlights the power Mary had increasingly acquired since late medieval times – precisely as Mother of Mercy, *Mater Dolorosa*, or as a body crowned in heaven –, in relation to dynamics related to the unconscious and a pre-Oedipal libidinal economy, as well as to the ways her name and prerogatives fertilized the imagination and the realm of art, especially in counter-Reformation culture. Roland Barthes was of the same view when in the autobiographical framework of *La chambre claire* he described the way he used to indulge in gazing at his mother's photo as if it were a cherished heretical ritual of “l'Imaginaire”.⁷
- 5 In England, within the scenario created by early modern Protestant iconoclasm, what Kristeva and Barthes mean by “l'imaginaire” was turned into a field of dilapidation authorized by law. But it also became the field of many forms of heresy. The practices of sale and burial of sacred images sometimes functioned as a remedy to oblivion. In the complex mixture of intentionality, reluctance, opposition, and surrender which

characterized iconoclasm in early modern England, sales were sometimes “pre-emptive, designed to retain for parishes the value of objects certain to be seized by the Crown”.⁸ The purchase of desacralized objects, on the other hand, might be interpreted as a gesture aiming at rescuing them. Very often these were images of the Virgin Mary. “When the Edwardine spoliation of the church [at Long Melford] began”, Duffy recounts in his marvellously detailed revisionist reconstruction of this period, “William Clopton systematically bought up many of the images [...]. One of these images, of the Virgin and Child in bed venerated by the Magi, was discovered unbroken under the church floor in the nineteenth century, so it seems likely that Clopton took the images to preserve them”. Others at Stamford, “walled their patronal image of the Virgin into its niche, where it was discovered in the nineteenth century”. Some of these images may have been disinterred during Mary Tudor’s return to Catholicism, to enjoy a ghostlike temporary resurgence, before uncannily vanishing again with Elizabeth’s return to Protestantism. “Parishioners at Wakefield hid twenty-five alabaster images in the roof of a local chapel. The parishioners of Flawford, near Nottingham, hid three images under the floor of their chancel”.⁹

- 6 These forms of resistance to the draconian visual rigour of the Reformation were more widespread, according to recent historiography, than one might think, and they regarded specifically the Marian cult. What, however, is worth noticing for the purposes of this essay is that the eradication was enforced with specific harshness in relation to images, narratives, and feasts relating to the Joys of Mary (Annunciation, Nativity, the Resurrection, Ascension, her Coronation in Heaven). An attendant feast like the popular harvest celebration of the Assumption was abolished. Similarly, in York and other towns, plays devoted to the Assumption of Mary were gradually cancelled from the liturgical cycles of Corpus Christi, before the Catholic drama itself was suppressed altogether in the course of the last quarter of the sixteenth century, to be soon replaced, starting with James Burbage’s Theatre in 1576, by a secularized professional theatre.
- 7 How may this collective story of delusive idols and reformed eyes, eradication, burial, and saving from the wreckage, have remained as a trace in Shakespeare’s fable-like representation of the maternal in *The Winter’s Tale* and in *Pericles*? In Shakespeare’s time it was no longer piety but theatre, we might say upsetting the purpose of Clarke’s apt phrase, that “invest[ed] heavily in the sense of sight”. The feverish confessional dispute about vision, if not quenched, was being superseded by a parallel, science-based, pre-Cartesian scepticism about the possibility of seeing well. And Shakespeare was forcefully contributing to this secular and newly modulated concern with sight and its pathologies and vulnerability¹⁰, when in *The Winter’s Tale* (but see also *King Lear* or *Macbeth*) he constructed his play as the hallucinatory staging of a king’s eye, and his hero’s destructive jealousy as originated by a non-existent cause, “a touched conjecture” (II.ii.178).¹¹ In this, Shakespeare’s ‘reformed’ art was staging a problem which went beyond the religious connotations. But how is the retrieval of alienated images and narratives of the maternal related to the baroque illusionism of Shakespeare’s late plays, and up to what extent may this be perceived as a return of the repressed and a displaced healing of the loss?
- 8 It is my contention in this essay¹² that Shakespeare’s obsessive un-burial of controversial memories of the maternal is ambivalently intersected by the same drives of destruction and recovery that characterized the early modern English relationship

with images of cult – as well as the same interplay of forgetfulness and remembrance that recent criticism has viewed as underpinning the forced “social amnesia” of England’s reformed culture.¹³ In such a context, I want to suggest, references to Giulio Romano, Renaissance Italian art, Paulina’s secret gallery and concealed statue, Cerimon’s and Paulina’s art of resuscitating the dead, can be perceived as the deviated and secular forms of recovery Shakespeare devises to fill up the void inherited from exceptional times of prescribed forgetfulness.¹⁴

- 9 In Shakespeare’s late plays, the representation of the maternal relies considerably on an idea of transit from place to place, state to state,¹⁵ and on a Raphael-like liturgy of death and resurrection. Obsessively and consistently a precluded mother determines a fascination with an economy of representation based on appearance and disappearance. Twice in these plays, typically in *Pericles* and *The Winter’s Tale*, a mother dies in order to reappear, together with her daughter – bodies “stol’n from the dead” and “preserved” to each other (*The Winter’s Tale*, V.iii.116-125) –, as an agent of reconciliation. In both plays death is problematically related to childbirth and the obscure or uncanny side of pregnancy. Meaning produced by the mother figure is in all sense “immeasurable”, and her body non-localizable, one might say borrowing from Kristeva’s “Stabat Mater”.¹⁶
- 10 What kind of transfiguration (or ‘re-formation’) does the mother undergo in the interval which takes her from death to life again in order that she may acquire the virtue she needs to perform such a cathartic task? Drawing on the ways in which the female body affects, ‘infects’, and finally *seems* to clarify the male gaze through the purifying alignment of mother and daughter, I want to explore the ways in which the Renaissance Italian visual art and the Marian cult contributed to influence this cathartic/purgative representation of the maternal. I will also suggest that the reference to Giulio Romano (“that rare Italian Master”) in *The Winter’s Tale* is not casual, as is so often maintained.
- 11 My approach stems from the premise that acts of seeing, and their problematization, take centre stage in Shakespeare’s late plays. In fact, Shakespeare’s late dramatic art is teeming with encroaching hallucinatory objects and final, seemingly redemptive visions, whether they be seen by the characters within the play or by ourselves as beholders of the play, or both. Take Leontes’s sight invaded by the contaminating, spider-like vision of Hermione’s pregnant body in *The Winter’s Tale*, and then in its second part Paulina’s awe-inducing spectacle of Hermione’s body returning from the realm of the dead with its restored and restoring “grace”. Or think also of the cooperative role played by Gower – a figure for an omniscient narrator in *Pericles* – in ekphrastically performing the task of accompanying our “judgement of [the] eye” (i.41) as beholders of the play, and also in narratively foregrounding (or distancing) the contaminated gaze of his hero as he travels from the confused incestuous scenario of Antioch to the last apparition of a purified and appeasing maternal body in the reordering scenario of Ephesus.
- 12 But was there a Renaissance visual model which could accommodate both the tragicomic status of romance, and this double-minded narrative of the maternal? I feel this question may receive a first answer by invoking Nietzsche’s powerful reading of Raphael’s *Transfiguration* and the painting’s fractured perspective, which he foregrounds:

In his *Transfiguration*, the lower half, with the possessed boy, the despairing bearers, the helpless, terrified disciples, shows to us the reflection of eternal primordial pain, the sole basis of the world: the 'appearance' here is the counter-appearance of eternal Contradiction, the father of things. Out of this appearance then arises, like an ambrosial vapour, a vision like new world of appearances, of which those wrapt in the first appearance see nothing – a radiant floating in purest bliss and painless Contemplation beaming from wide-open eyes. Here there is presented to our view, in the highest symbolism of art, that Apollonian world of beauty and its substratum, the terrible wisdom of Silenus, and we comprehend, by intuition, their necessary interdependence.¹⁷

Nietzsche's genealogical lens, with which he interprets Raphael's painting, helps us envisage the complex paradigm that can preside over romance modes of understanding/representing the world, modes which he traces back to a layered Apollonian ideal, capable of keeping together two opposite spheres and forms of knowledge or art: the annihilating vision of horror and what he calls the 'naïve' if freeing illusion of dreams. Indeed, Nietzsche invites us to see a "reciprocal necessity", an inner relation between the two drives or modes. The relation is an impulse towards harmonious fusion with the surrounding world which, as in Homer, responds to the tragedy of primordial pain through a particular form of "naïveté". But for the Greeks, "naïveté" is born of the will, it is a struggle, in Nietzsche's words, a rose slowly budding from thorny bushes. It is the will to be transfigured, to glorify oneself, "and, as a monument of its victory, Homer, the naïve artist, stands before us".¹⁸ As I have argued elsewhere¹⁹ Shakespeare elicits a similar reading of his "old tale[s]"; tales "which will have matter to rehearse though credit be asleep and not an ear open" (*The Winter's Tale*, V.ii.55-56).

- 13 What I would like to add at this stage is that Raphael had also authored an *Assumption-Coronation of the Virgin*, now at the Vatican museum together with his most famous *Transfiguration*. This can provide a more direct path in discovering the role Giulio Romano may have played in Shakespeare's (bipartite) tales of maternal transfigurations.
- 14 Tracking Giulio Romano, "that rare" and only "Master" (V.ii.87) to be mentioned by Shakespeare in his plays, one is led to Mantua at Federico Gonzaga's court, a court renowned for its unique art collection. This was started when Giulio Romano arrived from Rome in 1524, thanks to the good offices of Castiglione, who was the Gonzaga's ambassador to the court of Pope Clement at that time. As an ambassador, a former friend of Raphael and Giulio himself, Castiglione used all the means at his disposal, according to Vasari, to secure the services of the man whose "excellent qualities gave him the reputation of being the best artist in Italy" after the death of Raphael.²⁰ Giulio Romano – Raphael's best pupil and his assistant in many of his works – would remain in Mantua for the rest of his life to serve as a court painter and an architect for the many "fabbriche" launched by the Gonzaga (including the Palazzo Te, which he designed and lavishly decorated with mythological frescoes). But he also worked as an "ordinatore" (consultant) of the "galleria", an office that he maintained until his premature death in 1546, and which may have played a part in inspiring Paulina's secret "gallery" in Shakespeare's play.²¹ Among those who had preceded Giulio as court painter in the previous century was Mantegna, and among those who succeeded him in the office of "ordinatore" in the early years of the new century was Rubens. Indeed, by the time the Gonzaga's gallery was deemed complete by Federico's successors in 1611-1612, the Mantuan court had become a sought-after place for the best artists in Italy and Europe.

Titian, Rubens, and other Flemish painters sojourned and worked there. Others, Raphael, Leonardo, Tintoretto, were present with their masterpieces. However, it was mainly during and thanks to the Giulio Romano period that the splendor of the Mantuan court achieved widespread fame in Europe where knowledge of its palaces and works of art (especially those of the Palazzo Te) circulated through prints, often taken from drawings by Giulio Romano himself, who excelled in most of the skills linked to the three arts of design – architecture, sculpture, and painting – mentioned in his tomb epitaph, as attested to by Vasari and later biographers.²²

15 Shakespeare claimed a place in this outstanding list of Italian and European artists when, taking us by surprise in his *Winter's Tale*, and through a crucial visual episode of his Sicilian play, he chose to conjure up the artist who had authored the wonders of one of the most dazzling Italian courts and officiated the marriage of the arts. No: Shakespeare's mention of the artist was not "pointless"²³, I want to argue. The Tudor's long-standing cultural transactions with the Mantuan court had been only slightly jeopardized by the Reformation, and for the aristocratic audience at Whitehall in Stuart reformed England, Giulio Romano stood for a 'rare' and most coveted and empowering item – art – however contentious its visual compound might be in terms of 'truth' and deception.

16 "Prepare / To see the life as lively mocked as ever / Still sleep mocked death. Behold, and say 'tis well" (V.iii.18-20, my emphasis), Paulina announces to Leontes, Perdita, and the group of gentlemen who are visiting her secret gallery in her "removed house" (V.ii.96). Then, as per the implied stage directions, she "draws a curtain, and reveals Hermione standing like a statue". Dramatically, and with a single gesture, Shakespeare endorsed the interconnection, or kinship, between theatre and the visual arts. But here he also contrives a metatheatrical scene which while conjuring up the very terms of reformist ostracism against images – namely the confusion between copy and prototype – overturns them into an apotheosis of perfect likeness and quasi 'sacramental seeing': "[Giulio Romano] so near to Hermione hath done Hermione, that they say one would speak to her and stand in hope of answer" (V.ii.90-91). Aptly, the unveiling of the statue, as Shakespeare conceives it, draws the awe-stricken male beholders toward a speculation on mimetic art and the relevant wonders of fictive truth, a speculation now provided as a 'civile conversazione' seemingly modeled on the discourse on art that his aristocratic audience might find proposed as a self-fashioning and enabling practice in Castiglione's *Courtier* (among others), where, intriguingly, it is alike dramatized as a convivial dispute presided over by women: Elisabetta Gonzaga and her witty waiting gentlewoman, Emilia Pia.²⁴ Suggestively, such a mimed, if not divinatory, rite of possession materialized between 1628 and 1632 when Charles I, taking advantage of the Gonzaga's declared bankruptcy, purchased a large part of their art collection.²⁵

17 The statue is so "[m]asterly done" by its assumed Italian author, Giulio Romano, that "The very life seems warm upon her lip" (V.iii.65-66), observes Polixenes in *The Winter's Tale*. Interestingly, in Shakespeare's time Giulio Romano was also famous for his artistry in devising theatrical spaces and *trompe-l'œils*. The Elizabethans might find it celebrated in the very first pages of Vasari's life devoted to him, in which he is praised for his work on the construction of the Villa Madama in Rome:

Accommodating himself to the qualities of the site [...] Giulio designed a semicircular façade for the front, like a theatre, dividing it into niches and windows of the Ionic order [...]. Giulio painted many pictures in the rooms elsewhere, and

especially beyond the first vestibule, in a very beautiful loggia he decorated with large and small niches on every side in which there are a great many antiques statues [...] along with many other extremely beautiful statues.²⁶

Indeed, to the eyes of Vasari's European readers, Giulio excelled in delusive architectures and 'painted' statues: "he also painted a building that curves around like an amphitheatre and contains statues of such beauty and composition that none the better could be seen", Vasari wrote.²⁷ By which he meant to underline that Giulio excelled in the art of making true - through perspective and the lights and shadows ("i lumi e le ombre") of painting - the three-dimensionality of sculpture and architecture.

- 18 However, what I am also interested in bringing to the fore is the role Giulio Romano, and through him Italian art theory, may have played in relation to the gender-coded issues of Shakespeare's late plays, and more precisely the playwright's much longed-for reappropriation of a fulfilling image of the maternal, which I propose to see as forcefully indebted to a diffuse Medieval and Renaissance maternal figurative subject - the *Dormitio Virginis* -, a theme subsumed in that of the assumption of the Virgin Mary in the context of religious belief and iconography.
- 19 Giulio Romano himself, still in Rome at that time, contributed to the subject, as Vasari reminds us (a fact that critics, at least to my knowledge, have so far largely failed to notice), with a large panel, the *Assumption of Our Lady* (c. 1525), now known with the name of *Madonna di Monteluce*; a painting seemingly commissioned to Raphael, which he inherited and completed with the help of Francesco Penni (Figure 1). It is my suggestion in this paper that the painting (now in the Vatican Museum in a room next to the one in which the two above mentioned paintings by Raphael are exhibited), can be relevant in relation to Shakespeare's late theatre and its indebtedness to Italian visual culture. In fact it provides a theme and a frame which are structurally and authoritatively evocative of the binary maternal motives of absence and presence, concealment and apparition, infection and redemption, death and rebirth or resurrection, and hence of the very tragicomic pattern of Shakespeare's late plays.



Figure 1. Giulio Romano, *Madonna di Monteluce*, c. 1525

354x232 cm

COURTESY OF MUSEI VATICANI, ROME

- 20 Both in *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*, the knowledge of the female figure we perceive through the male protagonists has an immediate sensory quality. It affects their gaze at the outset of the play like a tempest which is physically damaging to the eye, only to be recovered, through an experience of separation, death, and resurrection, as an image of worship which is intended to be, similarly, physically restorative to their obsessed eye. In this sense the image-making process or representation of the maternal in these two plays seems to interact in complex ways with both the Marian iconography of transalpine visual arts and the heated debate over the questionable visual content of religious faith and the deceptive role of images which marks the passage from Catholicism to Protestantism in early modern Northern Europe.
- 21 Antiochus's daughter at the opening of *Pericles*, the female figure which incestuously combines the familial roles of daughter, wife, and mother, affects her suitors through the eyes as delusive idols would do. "See where she comes, apparelled *like the spring*" (i.55, my emphasis) says Pericles, in ekphrastic mode, on the Princess's apparition as a mute, though seductive, Flora-like image. The delusive image of Flora is then soon replaced by an utterly horrific and damaging 'likeness' – the uroboric and incestuous circle of the viper provided by the riddle: an abrasive image for Pericles, which leaves him with "sore eyes" as a dust storm would. Nevertheless, as if obliquely complicit with great Antiochus's sin (one might invoke Freud's reticence in this regard, which he adopts in defence of fathers in his seduction theory),²⁸ he decides that that image will remain dumb – an unspoken, if internalized form of knowledge which he likens by inversion to that of a "blind mole", crushed under overwhelming weight (i.142-143).

- 22 More than fear, it is this wounding and contaminating form of knowledge that swells the veils of Pericles's ship; the ship that following a sanitizing Western course, will take him away from the archaic and incestuous Eastern scenario of Antioch. Alas, not precisely, or not immediately! For, this initiatory knowledge, which seems to have been left behind the keel of Pericles's swift ship, will continue to inhabit the jolting depths of sea, plot, and bodies – all of them governed, as is convenient in a romance, by the fortuitousness of chance and the tempest. Unleashed by the tempest, such knowledge surfaces as an obscure menace of contamination, on the night of his wife's delivery onboard his ship.
- 23 Safety depends on "the excision of the sexual female body", Janet Adelman has argued. This is superstitiously known by the sailors when they insist that the dead body of Thaisa, still warm with the humors of childbirth, be thrown overboard. But in the world of Shakespeare's romances, differently from his tragedies, this is the beginning of a cure achieved "by splitting and dispersing the female body", that is, by separating the roles which appeared as "dangerously compacted in [Antiochus's daughter] and [by assigning] them to discrete persons". Mother, daughter (and father) "are violently put asunder, each to be desexualized and reborn purified".²⁹
- 24 In the 're-forming' world of Shakespeare's romance, purging begins with a childbirth which is deadly for the mothers (or so it seems). It continues with a period of concealment of their presumptive dead body – a sort of quarantine that corresponds to a black hole, a void of representation – after which they are resuscitated or reshaped by the 'art' of a physician (Cerimon in *Pericles*) or artist (Giulio Romano in *The Winter's Tale*), dried up of their swelling and turgid body, as an image of "lawful" worship (*The Winter's Tale*, V.iii.105, 111).
- 25 In between, there is the suspensive stage of death and concealment, which is crucial, in defining the condition of resurrection and reapparition for Shakespeare's mothers. For, what the maternal body recovers during this suspensive state of death – the state by means of which Shakespeare dramatically articulates and amplifies the cloistering or disciplining role performed by the culturally prescribed postpartum lying-in month – is the integrity and sanctity of a virgin mother. Thus Hermione's ghost appears to Antigonus in *The Winter's Tale* – "In pure white robes, / Like very sanctity" (III.iii.21-22) – once she has been cruelly snatched away from both her parturient bed (her "child-bed privilege" [III.ii.101]) and her baby. As for the dead Thaisa in *Pericles*, by the time she has completed her *transitus* by coffin towards Diana's temple in Ephesus, she has recovered the intactness of her body: the necessary supplement, one might say, of the resurrecting liturgy officiated by Cerimon. It is no coincidence that she is imagined as having no memory of childbirth, an expedient forgetfulness for the role of votaress in Diana's temple she is about to assume: "That I was shipp'd at sea / I well remember, even on my eaning time; / But whether there deliver'd, by the holy gods / I cannot rightly say" (xv.4-7). Thus she enacts the fantasy of a desexualized body, a woman without a womb, unwittingly freed of those "disturbances" so disquietingly medicalized in contemporary constructions of women's reproductive bodies.³⁰
- 26 Ephesus, however, on whose shore Thaisa is tossed in her coffin to remain cloistered in the temple of Diana until her final reapparition at the end of the play, conveyed more, I argue, than it did simply as the site of the pagan goddess. In fact, according to one of the many ancient Christian traditions regarding the end of Mary's life, none of them with scriptural foundation, Ephesus was also the place where Mary died and was

assumed into Heaven. Specialists in the Ancient Church and the *Dormitio Virginis* issue inform us that this belief (which contrasts the mainstream account of Mary's death in Jerusalem) originated in the early Christian tradition of the apostle John's mission to Ephesus, and in a conjecture that Mary may have accompanied him, following "Christ's instructions from the cross to his mother and the 'Beloved Disciple', 'Woman here is your son', etc."³¹

27 As some critics maintain, the link between Catholicism and Shakespeare's late predilection for romance should not be underrated,³² especially, I argue, if we take into account the relation between Shakespeare's resurrected mothers and the legendary nature of the apocryphal *Dormitio Virginis* theme (also called *Transitus*), as it was best recorded in the Catholic fabulous world of the once popular *The Golden Legend*.³³

28 "Reverend appearer, no: / I threw her overboard with these same arms", cries Pericles upon Thaisa's re-appearance at Ephesus in Diana's temple. "Look to the lady", Cerimon continues, "Early one blustering morn this lady / Was thrown upon this shore. I oped the coffin, / Found there rich jewels, recover'd her, and placed her / Here in Diana's temple" (xxii. 37-44). As if in charge of a sacred representation, in front of a group of believers, Cerimon unfolds the tale of Thaisa's last *transitus* from death to her awakening as that of a body to be "placed" in a temple: a holy body. Similarly, Paulina stages her *coup de théâtre* – the awakening of the statue – in the form of a miracle played in a "chapel":

Music; awake her; strike!
 [To HERMIONE] 'Tis time. Descend. Be stone no more. Approach;
 Strike all that look upon with marvel. Come,
 I'll fill your grave up. Stir. Nay, come away.
 Bequeath to death your numbness, for from him
 Dear life redeems you.
 [To LEONTES] You perceive she stirs.
 (*The Winter's Tale*, V.iii.98-103)

The music, the awakening, the wonder of the beholders, the empty grave: these are all elements which seem to be exploiting Marian assumptionist³⁴ resonances, with the extra metatheatrical awareness on the part of Paulina (and Shakespeare) of enacting an event which changes place with an ancient fable-like story or stories: "That she is living, / Were it but told you, should be hooted at / Like an old tale" (V.iii.116-118).

29 Renaissance artists had repeatedly represented this story by splitting the space of the canvas into two halves, by placing Mary's assumed and crowned body in the upper part, flanked by angel musicians (Raphael) or bearing garlands of flowers (Giulio Romano), and by depicting Mary's empty grave (or Mary's dead body assisted by the Apostles) in the lower part. The empty grave is lavishly filled up with flowers in Giulio Romano's *Assumption of Our Lady* or *Madonna of Monteluce* – a motif cherished by Shakespeare – and theatrically surrounded by a ring of awe-stricken apostles, their eyes and hands convulsively interrogating the empty grave as they turn up towards the assumed body. In Shakespeare's own tragicomic secularized diptych – the two halves severed by a long temporal divide – we find a strikingly similar way of representing awe and mirth in front of the miraculous return of those who were thought to be dead: "There might you beheld one joy crown another, so and in such a 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" (V.ii.39-44).

- 30 Leontes will have to wait sixteen years for the moment when he himself, purged of his evil humours by mourning and loss, will be restored to a sanitized gaze by means of a redeeming vision of the female body. That, however, will be the job of persons who proverbially never tell the truth: the job of a woman, Paulina, who loves magic, art, and theatre; the dubitable job of an artist, Giulio Romano, praised by Vasari in his *Lives* for the uttermost form of deception, that of making people seem more real than life.
- 31 The animated "stone" of Hermione descending from its/her niche and moving forward, in a straight line, towards the centric point established by Leontes's eyes (during Paulina's ritualized staging of the event), is mimetic art made flesh. "What fine chisel / Could ever yet cut breath?" (V.iii.78-79), Leontes cries out in wonder. Hermione's "dead likeness" (V.iii.15) is now endowed with the conciliating proportion and quality which can reintegrate Leontes in his sovereign gaze. The Queen is true to life, and yet ideal ("as tender / As infancy and grace" [V.iii.26-27]). But as we are alerted, in the course of the protracted disquisition on 'good' mimesis which accompanies the spectacularised reanimation, and with which Shakespeare decides to conclude his play, perfect resemblance, or seeing right, doesn't mean avoiding artifice, or being deceived. "The fixture of her eye has motion in't, / As we are mocked with art" (V.iii.67-68), says Leontes. If intended as a gift for the old penitent king, Hermione's resurrection as a reassuring Madonna ("as tender / As infancy and grace") is, as it is staged by Shakespeare, one more illusionism: a *trompe-l'oeil*.
- 32 What kind of belief or denial of belief was then Shakespeare's interrogating when he recurrently played with the appearance and disappearance of the mother in his late art, we might ask? By transgressing the grim Law of the Word, art had recovered for itself the excess of signs connected with the maternal – namely its indomitable fluidity, its constitutive baroquism. As such, as Julia Kristeva, may help us to say, this was in itself a kind of Counter-reformation:

Christianity is perhaps also the last of the religions to have displayed in broad daylight the bipolar structure of belief: on the one hand, the difficult experience of the Word – a passion; on the other, the reassuring wrapping in the proverbial mirage of the mother – a love. For that reason, it seems to me that there is only one way to go through the religion of the Word, or its counterpart, the more or less discreet cult of the Mother; it is the 'artists' way, those who make up for the vertigo of language weakness with the oversaturation of sign-systems. By this token, all art is a kind of Counter-reformation, an accepted baroqueness.³⁵

NOTES

1. Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 161.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 163 *et passim*.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
4. Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1992, p. 480.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 264.

6. Julia Kristeva, "Stabat Mater", in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi, New York, Columbia University Press, 1986, p. 176.
7. Barthes also claims that in legitimizing the representation of maternity, Christianity favoured the Imaginary over the Law: "Judaism rejected the image in order to protect itself from the risk of worshipping the Mother; [...] Christianity, by making possible the representation of the maternal feminine, transcended the rigor of the Law for the sake of the Image-Repertoire ['Imaginaire']. Although growing up in a religion-without-images where the Mother is not worshipped (Protestantism) but doubtless formed culturally by Catholic art, when I confronted the Winter Garden Photograph I gave myself up to the Image, to the Image-Repertoire" (*Camera Lucida* [1980], translated by Richard Howard, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1981, p. 74-75).
8. Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, *op. cit.*, p. 485.
9. *Idem*, p. 490-491.
10. I have dealt extensively with questions related to visual knowledge in my essays "A Spider in the Eye/I: The Hallucinatory Staging of the Self in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*", in *Solo Performances: Staging the Early Modern Self in England*, ed. Ute Berns. Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2010, p. 133-155 and "Troubled Metaphors: Shakespeare and the Renaissance Anatomy of the Eye", in *Dialoge zwischen Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur in der Renaissance*, eds. Klaus Bergdolt and Manfred Pfister, Wolfenbütteler Abhandlungen zur Renaissance-forschung, xxvii Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2011, p. 43-70.
11. All references to *The Winter's Tale* and *Pericles* are from *The Norton Shakespeare, based on the Oxford edition*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt (General Ed.), Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus, Norton and Company, New York and London, 1997.
12. An expanded and differently angled version of this essay, titled "Shakespeare's Maternal Transfigurations", is included in the volume *Maternity and Romance Narratives in Early Modern England*, eds. Karen Bamford and Naomi Miller, Farnham and Burlington, Ashgate, 2015, p. 93-117.
13. See Christopher Ivic and Grant Williams, eds., *Forgetting in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, London and New York, 2004 (especially the "Introduction", p. 1-17).
14. The pervasive presence of the counter-Reformist Marian mythology in Shakespeare's late plays has also been addressed by Ruth Vanita in her essay "Mariological Memory in *The Winter's Tale* and *Henry VIII*" (*Studies in English Literature*, 40, 2, 2000, p. 311-337), but she is more concerned with focusing its empowering quality than in exploring related issues connected with sight, visuality, and the visual arts, as I do.
15. For more on this and its relation with the theme of the *Dormitio Virginis* see later p. 13-14.
16. Julia Kristeva, "Stabat Mater", *op. cit.*, p.177.
17. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy, or Hellenism and Pessimism*, transl. W.H. Haussmann, London, Allen & Unwin, 1909, p. 39-40.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
19. See Maria Del Sapio Garbero, *Il bene ritrovato. Le figlie di Shakespeare dal King Lear ai romances*, Roma, Bulzoni, 2005, p. 81-91.
20. Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, transl. A. B. Hinds and ed. W. Gaunt, revised edition 1963, 4 vols, London, Dent, vol. 3, p. 102.
21. In his Introduction to *The Winter's Tale* (Oxford Shakespeare, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 56 and 221-222), Orgel suggests viewing Paulina's gallery in the context of "the Jacobean passion for collecting, and for collecting Italian art in particular", but he goes no further in exploring either the relation between collecting and the gallery of the Gonzaga, or the role played by Giulio in this respect.
22. See Carlo D'Arco, *Istoria della Vita e delle Opere di Giulio Pippi Romano. Con tavole*, Mantova, 1842, p. 132ff.
23. See Northrop Frye, "Recognition in *The Winter's Tale*", in *Shakespeare: The Winter's Tale. A Casebook*, ed. Kenneth Muir, London, Macmillan, 1968, p. 191. Although much commented upon,

Shakespeare's reference to Giulio Romano is still easily argued away as "pointless" in the wake of Frye, or outright erroneous, and all in all as lacking any major specific relevance apart from that of providing a hold for contrasting theatre with "idealized" art (Richard Meek, *Narrating the Visual in Shakespeare*. Farnham and Burlington, Ashgate, 2009, p. 169). Partial exceptions to this reading are Leonard Barkan, "Living Sculptures: Ovid, Michelangelo, and *The Winter's Tale*", *English Language History*, 48/4, 1981, 652-663 and "Making Pictures Speak: Renaissance Art, Elizabethan Literature, Modern Scholarship", *Renaissance Quarterly*, 48/2, 1995, 326-351; and Leo Salinger, *Dramatic Form in Shakespeare and the Jacobean*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 1-18.

24. See *The Courtyer of Count Baldessar Castilio [...] done into Englyshe by Thomas Hoby*. London, 1561; Reprint, London, David Nutt, 1900, p. 91-96.

25. See Alessandro Luzio, *La Galleria dei Gonzaga venduta all'Inghilterra nel 1627-28 (con i documenti degli archivi di Mantova e Londra)*, Milano, L. F. Cogliati, 1913.

26. Vasari, *op. cit.*, p. 360-361.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 365. Vasari had not yet been translated at that time. But a conversational discussion of this topic, which was part of the Renaissance debate on imitation, and hence the rivalry or cooperation among the arts (*paragone*), could be easily found in English in the first book of Castiglione's *Courtier* translated by Hoby in 1561 (*cit.* p. 91-96).

28. See Sigmund Freud, "On Femininity" (1933), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, London, The Hogarth Press, 1961, 24 volumes, volume XXIII, p. 112-135 and "The Aetiology of Hysteria" (1896a), *ibid.*, volume III, p. 191-221.

29. Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays*. Hamlet to The Tempest, New York, Routledge, 1992, p. 196.

30. See Helkiah Crooke, *Microcosmographia. A Description of the Body of Man*, London, 1615, p. 225.

31. Stephen J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (2002), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 75.

32. See Velma Bourgeois Richmond, *Shakespeare, Catholicism, and Romance*, New York and London, Continuum, 2000, p. 16-17.

33. In 1527, at the eve of the Reformation in England, *The Golden Legend* (first printed in 1483) had reached its ninth edition. People who still remembered its legendary narratives of Mary's *transitus* from life to death and assumption into heaven in Shakespeare's reformist times, might have perceived more than a similarity with the playwright's way of figuring his mothers' death and resurrection: the motif of menaced funeral rites, the role played by the apostles (so similar to that of Paulina and Cerimon's) in solicitously washing and preserving Mary's body, the secrecy of their action against the ostracism of the high priests, the proclivity to consider death as a state of sleep, the ways in which this was connected with purity, physical incorruptibility, and holiness. I have elaborated extensively on this in my essay "Shakespeare's Maternal Transfigurations", in *Maternity and Romance Narratives in Early Modern England*, *op. cit.*, p. 109-110.

34. I owe this term to Stephen J. Shoemaker who in his study *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (*op. cit.*, p. 146-147) distinguishes between 'Assumptionless' and 'Assumptionist' traditions.

35. Julia Kristeva, "Stabat Mater", *op. cit.*, p. 176.

ABSTRACTS

The fierce confessional dispute over the sense of sight and the delusive nature of images which tore apart early modern England during the Reformation, together with its intertwined story of iconoclasm and resistance, dilapidation of images and their recovery, is what marks at the core England's relationship with the visual arts. How may that collective story of delusive idols and reformed eyes, eradication, and saving from the wreckage, have remained as a trace in Shakespeare's representation of the maternal in *The Winter's Tale* and in *Pericles*? Obsessively and consistently in these plays a precluded mother determines a fascination with an economy of representation based on death and resurrection, appearance and disappearance. It is my contention in this essay that Shakespeare's obsessive un-burial of controversial memories of the maternal, overtly or obliquely indebted to Italian art, is ambivalently intersected by the same interplay of forgetfulness and remembrance that recent criticism has viewed as underpinning the forced "social amnesia" of England's reformed culture. In such a context, I suggest, references to Giulio Romano, Renaissance Italian art, Paulina's secret gallery and concealed statue, Cerimon's and Paulina's art of resuscitating the dead, can be perceived as the deviated and secular forms of recovery Shakespeare devises to fill up the void inherited from exceptional times of prescribed forgetfulness.

Les violentes polémiques autour du sens de la vue et de la nature trompeuse des images qui ont fait rage en Angleterre pendant la Réforme, ainsi qu'une histoire entremêlée d'iconoclasme et de résistance, de destruction des images et de leur réhabilitation, sont au cœur de la relation entre l'Angleterre et les arts visuels. Comment cette histoire collective d'idoles trompeuses et de regards réformés, de destruction et de sauvetage du naufrage, s'est-elle maintenue à l'état de trace dans la représentation shakespearienne de la maternité dans *Le Conte d'hiver* et *Périclès*? De manière obsessionnelle et constante dans ces pièces, une mère frappée d'interdit déclenche une fascination au sein d'une économie de la représentation fondée sur la mort et la résurrection, l'apparition et la disparition. Dans cet article, je propose de démontrer qu'en détournant systématiquement des souvenirs controversés de maternité directement ou indirectement hérités de l'art italien, Shakespeare se place de manière ambivalente au carrefour de l'oubli et du souvenir, dans une posture que la critique récente a identifié comme centrale dans « l'amnésie sociale » de la culture réformée anglaise. Dans un tel contexte, les références à Giulio Romano, à l'art italien de la Renaissance, à la galerie secrète de Paulina et à la statue cachée, ainsi qu'à l'art de Cerimon et de Paulina de ressusciter les morts, peuvent se concevoir comme des formes indirectes et sécularisées utilisées par Shakespeare pour remplir le vide créé par une période d'oubli obligatoire.

INDEX

Keywords: Baroque, heresy, iconoclasm, illusion, images, Italian Renaissance, Marian Cult, motherhood, Pericles, Protestantism, Reformation, resurrection, Romano Giulio, Shakespeare and the visual arts, sight, Winter's Tale (The)

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