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Honors Thesis

The Tyrant and The Rogue: Political Implications of Redemption in William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*

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1 April, 2011

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Too hot, too hot!
 To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods.
 I have *tremor cordis* on me; my heart dances,
 But not for joy; not joy. This entertainment
 May a free face put on, derive a liberty
 from heartiness, from bounty, fertile bosom,
 And well become the agent....
 O, that is entertainment
 My bosom likes not, nor my brows! (I.ii.108-114,118-119)

With these words, Leontes, King of Sicilia, first suspects his wife Hermione's supposed infidelity. The consequences of these suspicions include the death of Leontes' son, presumably his wife and daughter, one of his close friends, and the banishment of his counselor Camillo. In spite of Leontes' guilt in these situations stemming from his destructive and jealous behavior, at the end of the play it would seem as if he has been absolved of his past mistakes and been given full redemption for them, as he is reunited with his wife Hermione and his daughter Perdita. The final lines of the play do not dwell on sorrow or regret; rather, they focus on transcending the mistakes of the past, the forgiveness bestowed on Leontes through Paulina and Hermione's actions, and on the reconciliation of the characters best exemplified by the newly formed and reformed relationships of Paulina and Camillo and Leontes and Hermione.

Often, *The Winter's Tale* (1611) is read as presenting Leontes' redemption from his transgressions as absolute and complete: as the play ends, all that had been sundered and broken is now fixed and renewed (McFarland 144). Past wrongs have been forgiven and forgotten: Leontes and Hermione are reunited, Perdita is returned to Sicilia, Polixenes is reconciled with Florizel, and Paulina is awarded Camillo as a husband to replace Antigonus. The play (along with the other Romances) is also often read as an affirmation of monarchy, supporting "established modes or authority" (McGrail 79). In his 1947 study, S. L. Bethell connects the ruler with the state, stating that "As Leontes and his kingdom are one, we have here an acted

parable of social regeneration”(Bethell 94). He goes on to claim that the “last scene most obviously expresses the future life in terms of the present” and that “the scene...clarifies the expression, in this old tale, of the Christian scheme from the fall of man to his ultimate restoration in heavenly bliss” thereby connecting the redemption and renewal of Leontes with that of Sicilia (Bethell 104). Constance Jordan maintains that in the final scene, Hermione’s return coincides with the return of Leontes’ “kingdom to dynastic life from an heirless death” while Stuart Kurland states that in the culmination of the play “the succession to both crowns is secured” (Jordan 141, Kurland 379). This happens because the play concludes with the tyrant king transforming back into the just ruler with little apparent consequence or negative impact (Jordan 146, McGrail 109). According to Harry Keyishian, the conclusion of the play coaxes the reader “into believing that contrition and forgiveness can provide us all that revenge offers—all the vindication, peace of mind, and sentimental reassurance that we desire—and more” (Keyishian 142). In other words, the ending of the play affirms Leontes’ behavior as monarch by providing a resolution for his transgressions that ends positively. However, this reading of *The Winter’s Tale* may be complicated by considering the play in context with a stage instantiation as well as elements of the text which provide nuance to the traditional reading.

Performance criticism illuminates dramatic works by drawing on the practice of theater in addition to the text of a play (Rosenberg 123). By analyzing a stage production of *The Winter’s Tale*, two goals are accomplished. First, a performance record is created, adding to the context of the body of critical work surrounding the play, enriching the diversity of production and creating a written record of a specific performance production. Second, performance criticism seeks to treat the text as performance rather than the text against performance. In other words, performance criticism “seeks to replace purely textual interpretations with a critical practice that

uses stage performance to represent the truly ‘dramatic quality’ of Shakespeare’s plays” (Worthen 155). By approaching a stage instantiation as a way of accessing the “...authentic literary work...” it is possible to replay “...the formal structures of Shakespearean character, language, and meanings, in the corporeal idiom of theater” (Worthen 155). The tools of performance criticism – close analysis of theatrical elements – aid the critic in “...determining how Shakespeare’s plays have been produced as cultural artifacts, and how the process of production inscribes itself into – and perhaps constitutes – the ‘works’ it represents” (Worthen 186).

The Marti Maraden-directed Summer 2010 Stratford Shakespeare Festival production of *The Winter’s Tale* at the Tom Patterson Theatre in Stratford, Ontario complicates the overly sympathetic reading of absolute and total redemption in the play by connecting Leontes with Autolycus the rogue. The production compares and contrasts the two characters in a way that illuminates the nature of Leontes’ crimes. By presenting an ironic redemption (Autolycus) and differentiating their respective redemptive processes the production investigates whether Leontes has ultimately been redeemed or not. In addition, the kinship between the tyrant and the rogue invites a discussion of the play’s construction of good governance and tyranny. The text of *The Winter’s Tale* accomplishes this by utilizing different initial circumstances and negative behaviors, agents of redemption, and lastly, varying attitudes toward the redemption itself on the part of both characters. Maraden’s production contrasts the two characters by highlighting the differences and unique aspects of both characters and their situations through the combined use of theatrical elements including blocking, costuming, and the actors’ performances themselves. Furthermore, by emphasizing the kinship between Autolycus and Leontes and holding both characters to the same standard of redemption—to be brought back within the realm of law and

reason (whether or not this is realized)—the production unveils the play’s surprisingly progressive view of monarchy. By holding both the tyrant king and knave peasant to the same standard, the play undercuts and subverts the absolute conception and affirmation of monarchy normally attributed to *The Winter’s Tale*.

Starting with the negative behavior exhibited by Leontes and Autolycus, this paper traces the process of redemption through the experiences of both characters, considering material both from the play and the Stratford production. The political and civic effects of Leontes’ tyranny will be contrasted with Autolycus’ roguery, followed by a comparison of the various agents of redemption. These characters and the offers of redemption they make have a profound effect on their respective redemptions, but only so far as Leontes and Autolycus receive them. The paper closes with a discussion of the results of the redemptions, and the interrelated meaning this creates when the play’s historical context is engaged.

“Something savours of tyranny”: Transgression and Initial Contexts

Following this line of analysis, there are several thematic connections between Autolycus and Leontes. They are the only characters in *The Winter’s Tale* that require redemption for their negative behavior. In addition, both characters serve as key plot catalysts and movers: Leontes in the tragic half (Acts I-III) and Autolycus in the comic half (Acts IV and V). In the Stratford production, the two were the only characters to break the fourth wall and address or interact with the audience. For both characters, redemption involves forgiveness for past mistakes and alleviation of the consequences of those actions. For Leontes, played by Ben Carlson, this means earning forgiveness for his actions resulting from his paranoid jealousy—attempted infanticide, presumed uxoricide, attempted homicide, alienation and dismissal of his counselors, tyranny, and a rejection of divine guidance and truth. Leontes’ actions result in the dissolution of his family

unit with the loss of Hermione, the death of his son, and the exposure of his infant daughter. Furthermore, Leontes disrupts the state of Sicilia by forgoing the rule of reason: “The jealousy that made him suspect every sign of independence as an instance of rebellion directly affects his person (or body natural) as madness, and by extension the state (or body politic) as anarchy” (Jordan 110). Because of the loss of his children, the kingdom is left without an heir. According to Constance Jordan, this leaves Sicilia “headless... ‘heirless’ and airless, without a future and apparently dead” (Jordan 110). Leontes also rejects wisdom and reason in the form of his councilors, several of whom are killed or exiled: “Consumed by his passion... Leontes mistakenly followed his ‘forceful instigation’ in publicly accusing Queen Hermione of infidelity (II.i.163) instead of heeding the moderate counsel of the loyal courtiers who found his suspicions groundless. The results have been similarly catastrophic” (Kurland 365). In short, by replacing the rule of law and reason with the rule of his passionate rage, Leontes’ compromises Sicilia’s national security. In order for Leontes to receive redemption, not only must he personally alter his behavior, but the political and familial structures he destroyed must also be reformed and reunited.

In the case of Autolycus, portrayed by Tom Rooney, redemption entails the correction of bad behavior, a change of his roguish lifestyle and actions, and similarly to Leontes, freedom from the consequences of his past negative behavior which included stealing, lying, cheating, and deception in general. Autolycus describes himself as a “snapper-up of unconsidered trifles” and relates how he wears rags because he lost his other clothes in a gambling match (IV.iii.26). This description possesses little of the sinister feeling present in the first three acts and minimizes the magnitude of Autolycus’ crimes, as he only steals that which people do not notice; he steals that which holds little or no importance. In addition, whereas Leontes’ crimes stem

from an intense, accusatory jealousy, Autolycus snaps up baubles and pilfers purses simply because he looks out for himself, and himself alone (Pafford lxxx). Autolycus goes on to dupe the Clown, stealing his sheep-shearing money, and deceiving the Clown into believing that the wily thief Autolycus is the reason that he (Autolycus) is currently wearing rags (an irony which is not lost on the audience) (IV.iii.61-105). In his introduction to the Arden edition of the play J.H.P. Pafford maintains that although Autolycus is unpleasant because he is a thief, "...his crimes are understandable, and in a sense, even healthy, and felony or not, they are venial in comparison with those of Leontes. On the stage the crimes of Autolycus are hardly felony at all; they are primarily tricks..." (lxxx). Rooney's performance reinforces this idea both by making Autolycus the center of the production's comedy, as well as by making the crimes themselves humorous rather than sinister. When Rooney steals from the Clown, the Clown's buffoonery and naiveté lends the audience the feeling wrong may not have been done. However, while the reasons for their redemptions differ, the fact remains that both Leontes and Autolycus act in ways that harm others and undercut society.

In Maraden's production, costuming provides an important source of differentiation between Sicilia and Bohemia (and conversely between Leontes and Autolycus) that sets the tone for both Leontes' and Autolycus' initial situation. The different styles of clothing contribute to a contrast between the two groups that divide the play into its tragic and comic sections. When Autolycus first appears in Act IV Scene iii, he sings a pastoral song introducing his roguery to the audience by describing a target of his larcenous tendencies (the white sheets) and mentioning romantic liaisons (including a tumble in the hay) with various beggar women. Immediately after the song, Autolycus mentions his past employment with Prince Florizel (IV.iii.1-20). In addition, Autolycus introduces himself as the son of a thief, "littered under Mercury," very much the heir

apparent of both a petty thief and the trickster god (IV.iii.23-25). The connection with Mercury is reinforced later in the production when Autolycus assumes disguises which dupe all those at the Shepherd's celebration, including the Clown from whom Autolycus had recently stolen. In the production, Autolycus dresses in a bright yellow tunic and wears boots and a colorful head-scarf, walking on stage carrying a satchel. He also possesses a tattered, greenish-brown cloak that appears stained and travel-worn. Rooney adds to the roguish nature of the character by acting out the lyrics from the scene-opening song. He steals several white linen sheets from off stage-prop bushes as he talks and sings, stuffing the sheets into his satchel. Rooney also hides his satchel and uses his cloak as a decoy to cut the purse of the Clown, effectively setting the stage for the depiction of Autolycus as the jovial petty criminal.

In the Stratford production, the Sicilians wear long, flowing robes with floor-length sleeves over dark undergarments.¹ The robes and other pieces of clothing appear simple yet sophisticated, and usually are a mix of grey and green accented with subdued dark colors, gold, and silver.² In Maraden's production, the male Sicilians all begin neatly groomed and are mostly clean shaven, Antigonus being the major exception (although his beard was well kempt). None of the men wear hats or headgear of any sort, because of which, combined with the solemn clothing, the Sicilians appear minimalistic with a somewhat clerical feel.³ Leontes' embodies the costuming style of the Sicilians. In the opening scene, Leontes dresses identically to the other Sicilian men of his court (with the exception of Camillo) in the characteristic Sicilian long robe

¹ The Sicilian costumes are reminiscent of the costumes worn by both the Elves of Imladris (Rivendell in the Common Speech) and Lothlorien, and the Men of Gondor in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy films, specifically Elrond, Celeborn, and Aragorn while he resides at Minas Tirith and Rivendell.

² The contrast between the two countries has connections with an earlier version of the play produced at Stratford, England involving Sir Ian McKellan, where the stage setup and Sicilian costuming were more luxurious and overstated, and in fact set in Lapland, complete with scenes of reindeer hunting (Laroque 396).

³ This is also evident in their set design. During scenes set in the Sicilian court, the stage setup utilizes only a few props that fit with the Sicilian aesthetic of refined minimalism. These include a wooden table with brass goblets, a simple wooden throne, and a couch.

over a black shirt with gold embroidery. His continuity with the rest of the characters could suggest his mental stability at the beginning of the production as well as his unity with the body politic. Dressed like the other Sicilians, Leontes doesn't yet endanger the state or accuse Hermione. This is supported by his conversations with her in Act I Scene ii line 28 where Leontes asks Hermione to speak and voice her opinion, and in line 89, where he, presumably sincerely (as he has not vocalized any suspicion or jealousy at this point), refers to Hermione as "my dearest" (I.ii.28,89). Carlson's portrayal reinforces Leontes initial mental stability by appearing well-kempt, with neatly trimmed and styled hair, and fairly clean-shaven.

Much like Leontes' costuming is similar to that of the rest of the Sicilians, Autolycus dresses in the same manner as the Bohemians. Whereas the Sicilians dress formally and similarly to one another, the Bohemians do not have the same collective feel. The Bohemian costuming conjures up images of the folk dress of Eastern European peasants, specifically those from the former Czechoslovakia and Hungary.⁴ Although the Bohemian royalty (Polixenes, Florizel, and later, Camillo) wear robes similar to those of Sicily, they are of a much looser cut and much more vibrant pattern and color. The Bohemian costuming reinforces Autolycus' status as a lowly peasant rogue through its chaotic and jumbled aesthetic. The Bohemian commoners wear loose fitting pants with fur or wool-lined boots, hats, and vests of a plethora of wide ranging colors over light colored shirts with bright, intricate patterns. Whereas the Sicilians wear muted grey and green, the Bohemians wear bright blues, reds, yellows, and oranges (among others), which reflects the more positive, upbeat feel of Acts IV and V in contrast to the darker Acts I-III.

⁴ The real world region (former kingdom) of Bohemia occupies a large part of the Czech Republic, and was part of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire (in Shakespeare's day, Bohemia was a province of the Holy Roman Empire). While this might have influenced the feel of Maraden's production, the same may not be true for Shakespeare as his Bohemia is located in the middle of the European continent and completely land-locked.

The eclectic nature of the Bohemian costuming conflicts with the quiet elegance of the Sicilian costuming, reinforcing the contrast between Leontes and Autolycus in the production.

Unlike Autolycus' behavior—primarily petty crimes—Leontes' transgressions, which range from the civic to the emotional and religious are of a more political nature, especially given his position as the king of Sicilia. Leontes is classified by many critics as a tyrant. According to Mary Ann McGrail, Leontes' "fit of blind passion leads him to destroy all that is dear to him..." (81). Throughout the first three acts of the play, Leontes acts in the manner of a classical tyrant, or rather: "...one who acts according to his own will, without regard to the good of his subjects" whether that will is based on a single passion, or a "complex of passions" (McGrail 86, 92). In his *Politics*, Aristotle defines tyranny as rule "in unchallenged fashion over persons who are all similar or better, and with a view to its own advantage and not that of the ruled" (Aristotle 133). The Philosopher contrasts this with a better sort of kingship: "to have law rule is to be chosen in preference to having one of its citizens do so... One who asks law to rule, therefore, is held to be asking god and intellect alone to rule, while one who asks man adds the beast. Desire is a thing of this sort; and spiritedness perverts rulers and the best men" (Aristotle 14). Once his jealous rage takes hold, Leontes ignores the counsel of those surrounding him in favor of his constructed fantasies, culminating in his rejection of the message of Apollo's oracle: "There is no truth at all i' th' Oracle: The sessions shall proceed: this is mere falsehood" (McGrail 91; III.ii.140-141). The redemption required for Leontes' transgressions differs from that needed by Autolycus because Leontes not only acts against the body politic and the state, but also he transgresses against a god (as opposed to simply mortal men like Autolycus).

Leontes' crimes differ from Autolycus' because he acts against those whom he, as king and husband, should be protecting—his wife and courtiers. As mentioned above, Leontes forms

jealous suspicions that his wife Hermione has had an affair and become pregnant by Polixenes (I.ii.187-204, II.i.60-62). With little to no cause evident in the text, Leontes states that:

There have been
 (Or I am much deciev'd) cuckolds ere now,
 And many a man there is...holds his wife by th' arm,
 That little thinks she has been sluic'd in 's absence,
 And his pond fish'd by his next neighbor—by
 Sir Smile, his neighbor. (I.ii.189-196)

In the production, Leontes begins to express jealousy as he watches Hermione and Polixenes converse in the background, as she, according to the stage directions, “Gives her hand to Polixenes” (I.ii.107-108). He goes on to claim that Polixenes caused Hermione’s current pregnancy, and that he “has made thee [Hermione] swell thus” (II.i.61). Leontes then begins to question whether Hermione had cuckolded him in the past, and if his son Mamillius is truly his:

Mamillius, Art thou my boy?...
 What? [hast] smutch'd thy nose? They say it is a copy of mine. Come, captain,
 we must be neat; not neat, but cleanly captain:
 And yet the steer, the heckfer, and the calf
 are all call'd neat.—Still virginalling
 upon his palm?—how now, you wanton calf,
 art thou my calf? (I.ii.118, 121-127)

This is the point in the play where Leontes’ jealousy starts getting the better of him. Accusing his wife of such infidelity starts the chain of events for which Leontes requires redemption. As a result of his jealous suspicion, Leontes tries to have Polixenes murdered and puts Hermione on

trial. The above quote provides insight into Leontes' mindset as he develops his jealous passion. Although he addresses Mamillius, he remains focused on Hermione – “Still virginalling upon his palm?” This phrase combines connotations of virginity and musical instrumentation. The virginal was a keyed musical instrument similar to a spinet, foreshadowing Leontes statement “Go, play, boy, play; thy mother plays, and I play too...” (“virginal, n; I.ii.190). Another way to read this passage is that Hermione ‘plays’ with Polixenes, maintaining her virginity upon his palm (“virginal, adj.”). In other words, Leontes accuses Hermione of being masturbated by Polixenes. The fact that Leontes assumes an onanistic relationship between the two friends without any evidence shows his succumbing to passion. The base imagery—calling his son a calf, his wife a heifer and a pond to be fished—suggests his departure from the realm of human reason towards passion and animalism. Leontes goes on to conclude that because his son, although close in appearance, is not an exact clone of himself, he is the result of indiscretion on Hermione's part (I.ii.129-130, II.i.57-58, Jordan 114).

At Hermione's trial, in spite of the fact that he receives a divine message from Apollo's oracle at Delphos explicitly contradicting Leontes' suspicions, proclaiming “Hermione is chaste, Polixenes / blameless, Camillo a true subject, [and] Leontes a jealous / tyrant” (III.ii.132). Leontes deludes himself and lets his passions guide him by ignoring Apollo, continuing to believe his wild presumptions are correct, completely denying the Oracle's authority: “There is not truth at all I' the' oracle. The sessions shall proceed, this is mere falsehood” (III.ii.140-141). Inga Stina-Ewbank maintains that this is Leontes' foremost rejection of truth and justice, as he absolutely rejects Apollo's divine message as soon as he finds out that it does not match his desires (Ewbank 144). This is interpreted by Paul Siegel as a jealousy-inflamed tyrant destroying the social order (Siegel 304). Siegel also states that what made Leontes a tyrant in the eyes of

the Elizabethan audience was not his specific action, but his subjection of reason to passion (Siegel 303). Leontes' crimes and jealousy are made worse by the fact that, unlike other Shakespearian characters like Othello, his crimes are of his own volition. In *The Winter's Tale*, there is no Iago to instigate the jealousy; rather, as Hunter puts it, "No one encourages or tempts Leontes, or lies to him. His sin is his own work" (Hunter 160).

The presence of the oracle in the play and its revelation alter the nature of Leontes' transgressions by introducing a divine actor to the play. Bergeron claims that having the messengers swear to the truth and formally read the oracle enforces the authority of Apollo; Leontes, by rejecting the oracle, is committing "sacrilege and blasphemy against Apollo" and when Leontes receives news of Mamillius' death he "perceives the consequences of his lack of spiritual faith" (Bergeron 372). This crime of Leontes, rejection of clear divine guidance, makes his mistakes spiritual and religious as well as civic and political. Instead of harming only those around him, Leontes has committed a crime against a god. During the trial, Carlson wears a black garment heavily lined with black fur, an outfit reminiscent of Henry VIII, an interpretive approach that was previously used by John Phillip Kemble (Bartholomeusz 49). While this does visually increase his power, it also creates an additional meaning through its comparison to the Tudor king. Henry rejected the authority of a semi-divine figure because of an issue with his spouse and is a famous example of a monarch whose perspective and attitude toward his queen(s) created tensions and national strife. This visual choice on Maraden's part enhances the audience's context for the production by drawing on a well-known figure whose jealousy and paranoia towards his wives remain culturally significant today.⁵ At any rate, Leontes' misdeeds contrast with those of Autolycus, whose only documented crimes are against peasants and

⁵ The Henry VIII connection holds much potential for irony. He was obsessed with having a male heir, and abandoned the daughter who eventually succeeded him as illegitimate. I feel that it is likely, if not certain, that Henry VIII served as an, at least, partial model for Leontes, whether for Shakespeare, Maraden, or both.

country folk such as the Clown and the Shepherd, rather than against those close to him, or a deity.

Another way Maraden's production emphasizes Leontes' descent into passion is through blocking.⁶ During Act I scene ii, Carlson separated himself from the rest of the characters—especially Hermione and Polixenes—serving to distance him from them emotionally. He watches from a distance as Hermione and Polixenes interact, and first voices his jealousy as Polixenes gives Hermione a brightly colored shawl and wraps it around her. As the scene progresses, Leontes begins moving in a frenetic, disturbed fashion. He paces in circles or back and forth across the top of the thrust stage with varying speed, moving up and down the levels of the stage, becoming increasingly unhinged and manic. In Act II Scene i, when Leontes accuses Hermione of adultery, she stands in the center of the stage, signifying her truth and innocence.⁷ Leontes contrasts with this by constantly moving in circles around her, and moving up and down the various levels of the steps at the fringes of the stage. In the text, the progression is shown in the language Leontes uses.

At the beginning of the play, Leontes is thrilled that Polixenes, his childhood friend, is visiting, and encourages Hermione to entreat him to stay. His sentences are well-crafted, and reflect the thinking of a rational person: “Stay your thanks a while, and pay them when you part... We'll part the time between's then: and in that I'll no gainsaying... Tongue-tied our queen? Speak you” (I.ii.8-9,18-9,28). These quotations are mechanically and grammatically

⁶ Overall, this production made excellent use of the unique stage qualities of the Tom Patterson Theatre. It is a small, intimate venue in which the actors have the possibility of increased audience interaction. The actors also utilized the large thrust stage to full effect.

⁷ The spot at the center of the top of the thrust served as a sort of “Spot of Truth.” At this location, much of the truth in the play was revealed, or the characters possessing the truth or being in the right stood here. This is where Cleomines and Dion read the oracle, and where Paulina stands when she defends Hermione. This is also where Paulina tells Leontes about the “statue” of Hermione in Act V Scene iii. Thanks to Gretchen Bell and Theron Calkins for coining this term.

correct, and the sentence order is coherent. They also represent give and take communication: at this point in the play, Leontes can hold a conversation; later, he spouts passionate rage while completely ignoring what those who address him say. As he speaks with Paulina and Antigonus in Act II Scene iii and his jealous rage begins consuming him, Leontes responds to any attempt to reason with him with violent, wild accusations; he labels Paulina a “mankind witch” and calls several of his counselors “traitors” because they won’t remove Paulina from his presence (II.iii.67,73). He replies to Paulina’s assertion that Mamillius and Perdita are his children by saying, “A gross hag! And, lozel, thou art worthy to be hang’d, that wilt not stay her tongue” (III.ii.107-109). Leontes even uses violent imagery when describing himself: “Affection! Thy intention stabs the center...Thou may’s’t co-join with something; and thou dost...and I find it...to the infection of my brains” (I.ii.138). In his rage, Hermione, previously a good queen and loving wife, becomes in Leontes’ speech a traitor, adulteress, and bawd who has been “sluic’d in ‘s absence”: “Go, play, boy, play: thy mother plays, and I play too; but so disgrac’d a part, whose issue will hiss me to my grave” (I.ii.194, 187-189). In this passage, ‘hiss’ connotes a connection between Hermione and Eve (who was deceived by a serpent). Through this link, Leontes attempts to heap the blame on Hermione as the originator of transgression in the play by comparing her to the presumed originator of worldly sin. However, Leontes does not even stop at accusing Hermione, but places guilt on many women: “...Should all despair that have revolted wives, the tenth of mankind would hang themselves” (I.ii.198-200).⁸ This statement removes Leontes even further from the realm of reason into passionate rage, as this claim takes his—unfounded—jealousy towards Hermione and transposes it onto all women, a clear logical fallacy.

⁸ This assumption, that women are the originators of sin, though distasteful and sexist to contemporary readers, was not uncommon in Shakespeare’s day

The crimes of Autolycus are of a different nature than those of Leontes. Whereas Leontes' crimes destroy the social order through the shattering of the family unit and disruption of the state, Autolycus is content to lie, thieve, cheat, and deceive his way through life at the expense of others, subverting rather than shattering the social order. Soon after he appears in act IV scene iii, he describes himself as a "snapper-up of unconsider'd trifles" and states that "Beating and hanging are terrors to / me" (IV.iii.26, 28). The first person that Autolycus interacts with is the Clown, who is on his way to market to buy food for the sheep-shearing feast. The rogue, in order to rob him, feigns that he has been preyed upon by Autolycus, describing him as "A fellow, sir, that I have known to go about with troll-my-dames...he hath been since an ape-bearer, then a process-server, a bailiff, then he compass'd a motion of the Prodigal Son, and married a tinker's wife. Having flown over many knavish professions, he settled only in rogue. Some call him Autolycus" (IV.iii.86-87, 94-100). The description of the "robber's" vices is particularly humorous, and plays a role in the switch from the tragic first half to the comedic second half. One of the best examples of Autolycus' behavior is his speech in act IV scene iv after having sold all sorts of trinkets to the shepherds and then stolen their money after observing who had the fattest purse:

Ha, ha, what a fool Honesty is! And Trust,
 His sworn brother, a very simple gentleman! ...
 ...I picked and cut most of their festival
 purses; and had not the old man come in with a
 whoobub against his daughter and the King's son, and
 scar'd my choughs from the chaff, I had not left a
 purse alive in the whole army (IV.iv.595-617)

Through the use of the language of the body politic—‘King’s son’ and ‘army’—Autolycus demonstrates his knowledge of the social order. This means that his antisocial behavior is committed with a full knowledge of what it subverts; Autolycus commits his crimes cognizant of their social consequences. An additional layer of irony here stems from Autolycus’ origins. Pafford reads Autolycus’ statement “I have served Prince Florizel” to literally mean Autolycus was a servant (Pafford lxxx; IV.iii.13). In contrast, Jordan maintains that Autolycus was a nobleman who fell out of favor, a “courtier turned peddler” (Jordan 136). Although the production does not follow this line of reasoning, the concept of Autolycus as a noble intensifies the social commentary leveled by his character: this would mean that he does in fact have a knowledge of the social order and willingly, intentionally rejects it. Although she does not take this exact line of reasoning, Barbara Ann Mowat reads Autolycus as a presentation of numerous “infracontexts” running beneath the surface of the play (she emphasizes the historically negative and sinister connotations of the term ‘rogue’ that do not exist today) (Mowat 59). In spite of this, petty theft and deception seem to be the limits of Autolycus’ crime, as he never physically harms people. He even appears to have a code of ethics based on roguish behavior. This is shown when he chooses not to reveal Florizel’s escape from Bohemia to Polixenes on the basis that it is “the more knavery to conceal it” and therefore, he will remain consistent with his roguish ethic by not divulging the information he has learned. Rooney’s portrayal of Autolycus reinforces this aspect of the character. He panhandles multiple times in the first few rows of the audience, exaggerates his asides and crimes, and steals various items constantly.⁹ He repeatedly turns away from those he speaks to and uses facial expressions and body language to convey an ironic, mocking tone to his conversations, further reinforcing Autolycus’ roguish nature.

In order for redemption to occur, an awareness or realization of wrong must exist within the character. Leontes experiences this almost immediately after he receives news of his son's death that confirms Apollo's message: "Apollo's angry, and the heavens themselves / Do strike at my injustice" (III.ii.148). He restates this after his wife appears to die: "I have too much believ'd mine own suspicion... / Apollo, pardon / My great profaneness 'gainst thine oracle!" (III.ii.151). Robert Hunter maintains that Mamillius' death is "the god's punishment for Leontes' sins, and particularly for his final sin of blasphemy" (Hunter 163). Mamillius' death has ramifications far and above simply being the death of Leontes' son—Sicilia is left without an heir, severely compromising the national stability of the kingdom. Leontes realizes the gravity of the situation and immediately expresses his sorrow and contrition for his sins: "I'll reconcile me to Polixenes, new woo my queen, recall the good Camillo, whom I proclaim a man of truth, of mercy; for being transported by my jealousies to bloody thoughts, and to revenge" (III.ii.154-159). Carlson portrays this by not only changing his tone of voice from an angry, powerful tone to a distressed, pain-filled hiss of anguish, but also by crumbling physically. At the news of his son's death and the sight of a fallen Hermione, Carlson drops to his knees, weeping. At this point, Paulina, played by Seana McKenna, kneels next to him and physically comforts him by placing a hand on his back. For Leontes, the veil has lifted and he can survey all his wrongdoing, and in Maraden's production he genuinely expresses regret which he carries into the later scenes. In this moment, Leontes is broken and repentant. However, this does not change the fact that his kingdom has been compromised. With the death of Mamillius and the exposure of Perdita, Sicilia is dispossessed of heirs to the throne. The absence of an heir places the national security in jeopardy, fulfilling the oracular curse "and the king shall live without an heir, if that which is lost be not found" (III.ii.135).

In contrast to the regret and sorrow for his transgressions that Leontes exhibits, Autolycus never appears to feel sorry for his actions before the Clown and the Shepherd offer him redemption. This beautiful chiasmic structure is the only time Autolycus express regret. However, it is interesting to note that he laments the consequences rather than the deeds themselves, saying “Gallows and knock are too powerful on the highway. Beating and hanging are terrors for me. For the life to come, I sleep out of thought of it” (IV.iii.28-30). He celebrates his wrongdoing, and seems to enjoy lying and thieving, as is evidenced at the end of Act IV Scene iv where he convinces the Clown and the Shepherd that he is a nobleman and has influence with the king (IV.iv.681-842). He even appears to be conscious of the fact that he could be moral if he wished to: “If I had a mind to be honest, I see Fortune / would not suffer me...” (IV.iv.831). This statement can be interpreted two different ways with significantly divergent results. Autolycus may mean that if he desired to be honest Fortune would not punish him. However, an alternate definition of ‘suffer’ as “To undergo or submit...To be the object of an action, be acted upon, be passive” would result in the fatalistic assertion that even were he to desire to be good, fate would not allow him to be so (“suffer, v” OED).. Tom Rooney reinforces this reading through his interactions with the audience. Many of his asides, and even specific comments not meant as asides, are directed at members of the audience as he interacts with them. When he goes around the stage panhandling, Rooney stops at an audience member until he placed money in the hat he uses.¹⁰ Autolycus consistently acts in the manner that benefits himself the most, regardless of the effects of his actions on those around him. This may be one possible reason for his flippant attitude towards the redemption offered to him.

¹⁰ The audience member was Juan Chioran, who plays the lead character Fred Graham/Petruchio in the 2010 Stratford Shakespeare Festival production *Kiss Me Kate*. Obviously, there is a rapport between the two men, and perhaps a festival inside joke.

“Thou wilt amend thy life?”: Agents of Redemption

In the play, Autolycus does not express a desire to change, until he is asked if he “...wilt amend thy life?” by the Clown and Shepherd, the very characters whom Autolycus deceived and cheated throughout Act IV (V.ii.154). The two buffoons, who had just been elevated to “gentle” status on account of their relationship to Perdita (they were embraced by the kings as “brother”), use their new status to condescend to Autolycus, and—acting as agents of redemption—offer him a chance to escape from his life as a rogue. Autolycus responds by saying, “Ay, and it like your good worship” (V.ii.155). This can be interpreted in multiple ways. This statement could mean that Autolycus is transcending his status as a rogue, and that he responds in good faith with good intention, an opinion held by Lee Sheridan Cox: “The whole force and movement of image, event and theme attests to the sincerity of Autolycus’ promise and to the conclusion that Autolycus is also a ‘precious winner.’ The Shepherd may be a fool and Autolycus an unlikely aspirant to the role of tall man, but their very inadequacies underline Shakespeare’s comment on the power of faith and the good intention” (Cox 298). However, this statement could also mean that Autolycus may be accepting the redemption because it pleases the newly noble Clown, or that, much like the Clown’s artificial position as a noble given the arbitrary and recent nature of the elevation, both the offer of redemption and Autolycus’ acceptance are likewise illusory. This less traditional reading is supported in the text by Autolycus’ greeting to the Shepherd and Clown after they have been elevated by Leontes: “I know you are now, sir, a gentleman born” (V.ii.135). This statement can be considered false, especially when the response of the Clown is considered: “But I was a gentleman born before my father; for the King’s son took me by the hand, and call’d me brother; and then the two kings call’d my father brother...and so we wept; and there was the first gentleman-like tears that ever we shed” (V.ii.138-145). Just as the status

of the ‘nobles’ offering Autolycus the chance to reform himself is slightly superficial, so the redemption offered by them may be empty as well. Because the play complicates Autolycus’ redemption at the hands of the Shepherd and Clown, *The Winter’s Tale* questions the very nature of redemption, in the process subverting the traditional reading of Leontes’ redemption as complete.

Maraden’s production takes the second, seemingly more likely reading. Autolycus states that he will change his ways like the Clown and the Shepherd changed their status. He realizes that simply because the two peasants are now called “gentlemen” it does not change the fact that they are still a Shepherd and a Clown from the Bohemian countryside and are no more noble than Autolycus himself. Maraden reinforces this reading by having the Clown and Shepherd appear in this scene wearing new clothes combined with elements from their old outfits, such as the shepherd’s staff, the Clown’s hat, and both of their boots. This complicates the position of the Clown and the Shepherd as the agents of redemption for Autolycus. After all, if they are themselves falsely in a superior position, then any redemption they offer may not be genuine.

Leontes’ redemption involves several agents who facilitate his journey towards reformation of his broken relationships. The passage of time (represented by the character) allows Leontes to “become aware of truth in a wider sense...” as it is not enough for him to see the error of his actions; instead, he must be subjected to what Ewbank terms “Time the Revealer” (Ewbank 145). The sixteen years that pass between the acts provide Leontes with adequate opportunity for both reflection and penance. Time allows him to correct his perspective on his actions and to feel the full weight of his sins (Ewbank 150). But it is not enough for time simply to pass in order for Leontes to change his ways and be redeemed. Rather, that time must be utilized correctly, and Paulina serves as the agent who facilitates this. After the trial scene,

Paulina comforts Leontes when he collapses at the trial, after which neither character appears until Act V.

Unlike the Shepherd and the Clown, Paulina's role as Leontes' counselor would appear to be justified. She is legitimately a noble, and "a worthy lady" respected by many of those with whom she comes into contact (V.ii.5). Pafford writes that "Her frank, outspoken sanity acts as a foil to the introverted morbid madness of Leontes...she can sympathetically appreciate Leontes' weakness and the nature of his disease" (Pafford lxxiv).¹¹ Paulina is the first character to speak to Leontes after Hermione swoons, informing him of her death, but not before indicting him for his behavior:

What studied torments, tyrant, has for me?
 What wheels? Racks? Fires? What flaying? Boiling
 in leads or oils? What old or newer torture
 must I receive, whose every word deserves
 to taste of thy most worst? Thy tyranny,
 together working with thy jealousies...
 O, think what they have done,
 and then run mad indeed—stark mad!" (III.ii.175-183).

Through the use of torture imagery, Paulina invokes elements of despotic authoritarian monarchy. The implements being described evoke the rule of fear and violence rather than law and reason. Torture is often used as a tool for obtaining the truth through the application of force. The irony of this situation is that the violence and coercion Leontes employs drives him further and further away from truth into his delusions. These lines also serve as a veiled critique of the

¹¹ In addition to this, Paulina is unique among Leontes' counselors simply because of her sex. In the historical context of the play, women rarely, if ever, served as counsel to a monarch—even for female rulers like Elizabeth I or Mary I.

play's contemporary leaders, as the tools described in this passage were utilized not exclusively by tyrants but also by legitimate English (among others) monarchs of Shakespeare's day.

Furthermore, Paulina addresses Leontes with an attitude of active resistance, challenging him to do his worst to her because it cannot compare to his previous actions. Paulina hyperbolically engages Leontes' tyrannical actions and the corrupted state by exposing them for what they are—the violent and dangerous tools of a fear-monger unable to inspire true loyalty in his subjects—in the hope that she can catalyze Leontes to change. Using her position as Hermione's confidant and as Leontes' advisor, Paulina encourages Leontes to act in a particular way (Kurland 373). In Act V Scene i, Cleomines tries to tell Leontes that he has suffered enough for his mistakes, and that the time for penance is over (V.i.1). Paulina does not allow Leontes to agree to this, even by reminding him of how perfect was “she you kill'd” (V.i.15). Paulina argues with the noblemen, maintaining that Leontes needs to remain without a woman other than Hermione, and reminds them of the oracle's claim that Leontes would not have an heir until Perdita was found (V.i.34). She even makes Leontes swear that he will not remarry unless he finds another “As like Hermione as is her picture” and what more, the woman must be of Paulina's choosing (V.i.73). Stuart Kurland comments on Paulina's relationship as counselor to Leontes: “Paulina, of course, makes a habit of telling Leontes exactly what he doesn't want to hear, constantly reminding him of his errors and their consequences... Urging Leontes not to consider remarriage, Paulina acts... as self-appointed preserver of Hermione's memory” (Kurland 377). As an agent of Leontes' redemption, Paulina serves as a reminder of his past transgressions and keeps him on course, preparing him to receive the redemption offered to him in the form of a reunited family and reformed state. Furthermore, Paulina is the coordinator and executor of the scene that reconnects Leontes with Hermione. Pafford states that “Paulina has throughout the

time-gap stage-managed everything for the denouement...She skillfully ‘produces’ the final scene” (Paffrod lxxv). This production facilitates the reconnection of Hermione and Leontes, setting up his final redemption.

In the Maraden production, Paulina’s role as Leontes’ conscience is made clear. In Act III, Leontes’ throne room consists of one chair, and no other furniture. In Act V, the throne room includes both the throne, which Carlson sat on, and a smaller chair, which Paulina sits on. This reinforces Paulina’s presence in the throne room. The way that Carlson and McKenna block each other also provides insight into their power dynamic. In previous scenes, Leontes always appears in physically dominating positions or attitudes, and frequently appears above Paulina, or standing while she sits. When Paulina and Leontes reappear in Act V, she always appears, above Leontes, blocked in the dominant position . Throughout much of the scene, Leontes sits in his throne as McKenna walks around the room, or, most notably, stands behind Leontes and talks to him over his shoulder. This reading of Paulina and Leontes is echoed by Hunter: “She is the personification of Leontes’ conscience and she is determined that his sufferings will continue until the pattern of the gods has worked itself out” (Hunter 169). Paulina forces Leontes to remember and regret his sins and transgressions, and in the process, become open and ready for redemption.

Although Paulina and the character of Time aid Leontes in his movement toward redemption, the primary agent of the culmination of his redemption is his wife. Hermione appears in Act V scene iii disguised as a statue. Upon glimpsing her, Leontes immediately notes her realistic appearance, stating, “Her natural posture...Thou art Hermione; or rather, thou art she in thy not chiding; for she was as tender as infancy and grace. But yet, Paulina, Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing so aged as it seems” (V.iii.23-29). In the intervening years,

Hermione's appearance has changed—she developed wrinkles and her hair shows streaks of gray—just as Leontes himself has changed. After living with his transgressions for sixteen years, Leontes has become truly penitent (albeit with the help of Paulina). This important step was necessary for Leontes to be redeemed. Velma Bourgeois Richmond claims that “Wrinkles, sixteen years of loneliness, the eldest son's death—all part of human suffering in the world—are remembered in the last scene, a necessary prelude to the statue's coming alive in a resurrection that is a sign of grace” (Richmond 200). By making the audience aware of the physical changes Time has rendered on the characters, the play reinforces the internal changes that have occurred within Leontes.

Hermione, played by Yanna McIntosh, fulfills the role of final agent of redemption for Leontes in Maraden's production. In the final scene, McIntosh stands on an elevated platform posing as the statue. She appears clothed in a long, flowing white dress (suggestive of her purity and innocence), which in combination with her elevated position, contributes to a semi-divine aura for Hermione. This is furthered by the set piece. The platform on which Hermione stands is initially shrouded by a beautiful, ceiling-high veil of white gossamer cloth, which, on Paulina's command, was rapidly drawn up into the ceiling, creating the effect of ray of light from on high shining down on Hermione. McIntosh's head is framed by a number of lights or candles, which encourages her appearance of divinity, and in addition adds a Marian flavor to her character. The seriousness of this scene is reinforced by Carlson when he, in apparent awe and religious wonder, beckons everyone present to kneel. This act adds gravitas to the scene and quells any comedic or absurd humor that could have been found by the audience in the fact that the characters were fooled by the “living statue.”

As Carlson and the other actors kneel in front of Hermione's platform, he appears to be in utter amazement at seeing the statue. The tone that he gives his lines with McKenna further reinforces the feeling that he has truly repented and wants nothing more than to see and touch Hermione one more time. The manner in which McIntosh descends the staircase and approaches Carlson adds to the theme of divine forgiveness. Hermione standing and dressed in all white approaches the kneeling Leontes and offers him her hand. By extending her hand, Hermione offers her forgiveness to him, which, because of her divine status, could serve as Leontes' ultimate forgiveness for his sins, especially blasphemy. While Carlson and McIntosh do embrace, they do not kiss, and their embrace appears somewhat strained. This reinforces the idea that while Leontes receives redemption, their relationship would never be identical to the way it was before his passion overtook him. Other evidence of this is the absence of Antigonus, which is brought to the forefront in Leontes' closing lines where he pairs Paulina with Camillo, as well as the absence of the dead heir Mamillius (V.iii.135). By presenting these complications, the play leaves the audience with the feeling that Leontes' redemption is not totally complete, and that although Hermione's offer and his acceptance are genuine, the reunion is something that must be maintained rather than being permanent. The Stratford production used the post-play to leave the audience with a feeling of controlled hope: as the applause died down and the rest of the actors quickly exited the stage, Carlson and McIntosh clasped hands and slowly made their way into the darkness of the backstage. This reinforces the idea that although Leontes and Hermione have rebuilt their relationship, it is just that—a relationship that must be maintained.

**“If this be magic, let it be an art lawful as eating” or “Ay, and it like your
good worship”: Reception towards Redemption**

Although Leontes’ redemption is nuanced, several definite changes in the play’s political situation become actualized in the final scene. With the reunion of Leontes and Hermione, along with the arrival of Perdita in Sicilia, the family unit that was broken has been restored. This restoration acts as a metaphor for the reformed state, a connection not at all uncommon in Shakespeare’s historical context. Jordan maintains that “...notions of gender were framed in the language of politics—family politics. The duties of husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant were thought to reflect the order of an ideal commonwealth, a community of persons dedicated to a common prosperity” (Jordan 4). One application of this to *The Winter’s Tale* is that the rebuilt family unit serves as a metaphor for the reconstructed state. With his rejection of the Oracle of Apollo, Leontes disrupted his kingdom and his family in one fell blow; with her forgiveness of Leontes, Hermione gives new life to both structures. The problems of state—rejection of counsel, lack of an heir, an unjust ruler—are now solved. The return of Camillo and his union with Paulina provide Leontes with good counsel. For Kurland, Camillo is the most important counselor in a play which is deeply concerned with “the relationships of rulers to counsel” (Kurland 366). The appearance of Perdita, and her union with Florizel give Sicilia heirs, and therefore, a secure future. Finally, as Leontes has been brought back within the fold of reason, and has transformed from tyrant into a just ruler, the state has been secured, evidenced by the presence of heirs (Perdita and Florizel) and the reunited family unit.

Autolycus responds to his offered redemption much more ambivalently than does Leontes. As mentioned above, the agents offering him the chance to forgo his roguery do not

stand on a solid foundation, and Autolycus' responses to their offers and questions are sarcastic and ironic. Prior to the events of the play, Autolycus had been in the service of Prince Florizel (IV.iii.13). Knowing that he had once already slipped from noble service into roguery, Autolycus realizes that transition may happen again. The Stratford production provides a reading which complicates Autolycus' redemption similarly to this line of thought. After Autolycus agrees to serve the Shepherd and Clown and give up his knavery, they all exit the state together. Promptly, Rooney's Autolycus returns to the stage and slips a goblet into his coat. He then slinks back offstage. This act of thievery stands in clear contrast to his immediately preceding statements and leads the viewer to a nuanced ending for Autolycus, one in which he forgoes the offer of redemption in order to look out for himself, a position taken by Pafford (Pafford lxxx). Although both play and production complicate Autolycus' reception of his redemption, neither communicate that he benefits in any way from this attitude. Because Autolycus forgoes the Clown's offer, he remains threatened by "gallows and knock...beating and hanging," acknowledging the negative effect of his knavery on "the life to come" (IV.iii.28-30). In other words, Autolycus cannot rejoin civil society unless he relinquishes a life of roguery.

“Lead us from hence, where we may leisurely each one demand, and answer to his part...since first we were dissever'd: hastily lead away”: Conclusions

The principle that the rule of law and reason holds the key to existence in a just society applies to both Leontes and Autolycus in their respective redemptions. Leontes must rid himself of his murderous passion and replace the rule of rage with the rule of law. Only when this happens, can the structural integrity of the family—and by extension, the state—be secured.

Autolycus must quit his life of theft and deception in order to rejoin society. By holding both of these characters to the same social standard, *The Winter's Tale* puts forth a political ethic that reflects the tensions between absolute and limited monarchy that existed in its political/historical context. Jordan writes: "England's political culture during the early years of James I's reign exhibited what might be called a divided consciousness. Arguments for absolute rule tended to support the monarch's authority and power as without limitations in positive law. They were countered by assertions of the people's liberties and even liberty, and reflected a belief that England's origins in feudalism justified a government in which monarch and people stood in collaborative relations..." (Jordan 6). Donna B. Hamilton maintains that although the politics of *The Winter's Tale* is often overlooked in favor of its romantic or tragic features, the play "is deeply implicated in political discourse" especially those concerning the reign of James I and the restoration of good government (Hamilton 228, Jordan 1). By creating Autolycus as a foil for Leontes, the play effectively holds a peasant to the same standard as a king and vice versa. This thought conflicts with the ideals held by the monarch of *The Winter's Tale's* England, James I. In 1598, James (at the time solely the King of Scotland) published *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*, which argued that although the ruler was not himself divine, his rule was sanctioned by God, and therefore tantamount to divine (Jordan 14). By holding Leontes to the same standard of law as Autolycus, the play takes a position closer to the Constitutionalists, who maintained that "divine right" meant the office, rather than the officer (ruler) derived its power from God (Jordan 20).

In that final scene of *The Winter's Tale*, a family reunites and a state regains its security. It would seem that all the fractured relationships are made whole; however, the play includes subversions of this reading: the death of Mamillius and Antigonus, Hermione's signs of aging,

and Autolycus' nuanced redemption. The Stratford production combines the two readings—complete and subverted—to show that genuine redemption is a process that takes time and effort, and not a quick fix. The two characters are placed in parallel positions: both engage in harmful behavior and both need redemption to be brought within the folds of society and law. By exploring the differences and similarities between Leontes' and Autolycus' redemptive processes, the production engages elements of the text that have often been overlooked. By approaching both the text and the production, this analysis unlocks insight unavailable to either one taken alone. No longer is Leontes affirmed as an absolute ruler gone prodigal and returned home. Instead, he is a man, flawed and imperfect, who needs the support and wisdom of his wife and counselors to succeed as a ruler and who, like his subjects (noble or peasant), must conform to the limits of law and reason. Through analysis of the text and the performance, ties to the play's historical-political context are brought to light. At their most basic level, Leontes and Autolycus are both humans. Although one rules a nation and the other steals bed sheets, they are both in need of redemption. This kinship, this bond, holds the two men to the same standard, subverting the idea that a monarch possesses absolute authority and dominion over the state and its people.

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