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"From strange to stranger": The Problem of Romance on the Shakespearean Stage

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by

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Long scorned for their strange inconsistencies and implausibilities, Shakespeare's romance plays have enjoyed a robust critical reconsideration in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. But in the course of reclaiming *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest* as significant works of art, this revisionary critical tradition has effaced the very qualities that make these plays so important to our understanding of Shakespeare's career and to the development of English Renaissance drama: their belatedness and their overt strangeness. While Shakespeare's earlier plays take pains to integrate and subsume their narrative romance sources into dramatic form, his late romance plays take exactly the opposite approach: they foreground, even exacerbate, the tension between romance and drama. Verisimilitude is a challenge endemic to theater as an embodied medium, but Shakespeare's romance plays brazenly alert their audiences to the incredible. When a corpse is miraculously revived in *Pericles*, a bystander muses, "Is not this strange?" When Time comes onstage to skip the plot of *The Winter's Tale* ahead by sixteen years, he defensively admits that the audience might view this gap as a "crime" against the dramatic unities. After hearing that three Britons defeated the entire Roman army in *Cymbeline*, a lord says, "This was strange chance." After a string of improbable events in *The Tempest*, Alonso complains that "they strengthen / From strange to stranger."

"From strange to stranger": The Problem of Romance on the Shakespearean Stage offers a novel perspective on these issues by showing how Shakespeare's romance plays conscientiously revive a dramatic genre that had fallen into disuse and disrepute as an abjuration of the highly coherent and unified dramaturgy that superseded it. Because of its otherworldliness and endlessness, romance was derided by opponents *and* defenders of imaginative literature as indecorous, incredible, and idle. When combined with drama, which was considered exceptionally suasive and therefore dangerous, romance seemed to its critics to present more than technical problems; it presented ethical problems as well. Although overwhelmingly popular in the early decades of the English playhouses, romance had largely disappeared from the stage by the 1590s as English drama became more sophisticated, unified, and realistic.

Looking at moments in Shakespeare's romance plays that draw our attention to their generic belatedness and formal strangenesses, this dissertation demonstrates that Shakespeare revives romance as a dramatic genre in order to pose ethical questions about community and representation through apparently technical questions of genre and decorum. I show how *Pericles* argues for the cultivation of virtue through promiscuous mingling; how *The Winter's Tale* pathologizes absolute autonomy—which Sir Philip Sidney famously claims in *The Defence of Poesy* (1595) for the poet and the poet alone—as destructively tyrannical; and how *Cymbeline* seeks multiplicity and plurality as an alternative to hegemonic unity to fashion the new British empire in relation to Rome. Finally, I explain why *The Tempest* ostentatiously employs dramatic strategies for unifying a play, only to conclude with Prospero's gesture of release. Rejecting sophistication, mastery, and hegemonic unity, Shakespeare embraces romance's expansiveness of time, place, and action, and opens up drama to become more ethically and aesthetically capacious in its representational possibilities.

And this thinking [poetically], fed by the present, works with the "thought fragments" it can wrest from the past and gather about itself. Like a pearl diver who descends to the bottom of the sea, not to excavate the bottom and bring it to light but to pry loose the rich and the strange, the pearls and the coral in the depths, and to carry them to the surface, this thinking delves into the depths of the past—but not in order to resuscitate it the way it was and to contribute to the renewal of extinct ages. What guides this thinking is the conviction that although the living is subject to the ruin of the time, the process of decay is at the same time a process of crystallization, that in the depth of the sea, into which sinks and is dissolved what once was alive, some things "suffer a sea-change" and survive in new crystallized forms and shapes that remain immune to the elements, as though they waited only for the pearl diver who one day will come down to them and bring them up into the world of the living—as "thought fragments," as something "rich and strange," and perhaps even as everlasting *Urphänomene.*

—Hannah Arendt, Introduction to Walter Benjamin's *Illuminations*

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Introduction

> HENSLOWE. It's a crowd-tickler—mistaken identities, a shipwreck,
> a pirate king, a bit with a dog, and love triumphant.
> LAMBERT. I think I've seen it. I didn't like it.
> HENSLOWE. This time it is by Shakespeare.
> FENNYMAN. What's the title?
> HENSLOWE. "Romeo and Ethel the Pirate's Daughter."
> FENNYMAN. Good title.
> —Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard, *Shakespeare in Love*[1]

> But they will say: How then shall we set forth a story which containeth
> both many places and many times? And do they not know that a
> tragedy is tied to the laws of poesy, and not of history; not bound to
> follow the story, but having liberty either to feign a quite new matter
> or to frame the history to the most tragical conveniency?
> —Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defense of Poesy*[2]

If you were a theatergoer in London in the 1570s and 1580s, you very likely saw a romance play.[3] These plays dramatized tales from narrative romance and were loosely structured, ranging across distant times and places.[4] But this kind of play had largely disappeared from the English stage by 1608. That's the year Shakespeare began writing a series of plays that mark a decisive shift in his dramaturgy, plays we recognize today as romances: *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest*. His first romance *Pericles* begins with a direct address to the audience:

> To sing a song that old was sung
> From ashes ancient Gower is come,
> Assuming man's infirmities
> To glad your ear and please your eyes.
> .   .   .   .   .   .
> And lords and ladies in their lives
> Have read it for restoratives.
> .   .   .   .   .   .
> If you, born in these latter times,
> When wit's more ripe, accept my rhymes. (I.0.1–12)[5]

Starting with the resurrected corpse of "ancient Gower" who has returned to "tell you what mine authors say" (I.0.20), *Pericles* does three things that come to define Shakespeare's romances: it emphasizes that it is reviving something old, something now obsolete "in these latter times, / When wit's more ripe"; it makes the task of dramatizing romance a part of its unfolding; and it reminds us of the enduring "restorative" pleasure and power of romance.

This dissertation investigates how and why Shakespeare writes romance plays when he does, how and why he puts pressure on his audience to see these plays as rich and strange, and the effects of the plays' generic self-consciousness. I am interested, that is, in the form of Shakespeare's romances, or more specifically, the formal implications of their romance plots: the separation, estrangement, reunion, and reconciliation of multiple generations over a long stretch of time and place. As Patricia Parker defines it in her landmark study *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode*, romance is a "strategy of delay," "that mode or tendency which remains on the threshold before the promised end, still in the wilderness of wandering, 'error,' or 'trial.'"[6] We have thus imagined the task of the romance playwright, including Shakespeare, as finding or inventing dramatic strategies to tame, assimilate, normalize, and otherwise adapt romance's errancy to drama's demand for unity, cohesion, and closure. Yet Shakespeare's romance plays do not try to smooth over or conceal the differences between drama and romance, between the familiar and the strange. They highlight, even exacerbate, those differences. Shakespeare's romances are formally distinguished by their open-endedness rather than closure; their sprawling minglings and multiplicities rather than structural unity; and their episodic plots that unfold by sudden, unmotivated chance and accident, rather than by logical cause-and-effect, by Aristotelian probability or necessity.[7] Barbara Mowat summarizes these formal qualities as the romances' "open form" as opposed to "closed form drama."[8] Above all, Shakespeare's romance plays are distinguished by the way they continually call our attention to those formal characteristics that, though essential and native to romance, defy our expectations of a play written at this particular moment in Shakespeare's career and in the development of English Renaissance drama.

Following Stephen Cohen's call to "rethink metadrama not as a closed circuit of formal (or deconstructive) self-reflexivity but as theater positioning and interrogating—even as it exercises—its own cultural power,"[9] I argue that Shakespeare's romance plays self-consciously adapt romance conventions to the stage to interrogate and critique then-established strategies for unifying a play. As his romances reveal, those strategies were not circumscribed by the immediate formal, pragmatic, aesthetic concerns of playwriting; they were ideologically loaded. Strategies for unifying drama were explicitly described by poets and antitheatricalists in the 1570s and 1580s, often against the sprawling dramatic romances that were so popular with London audiences, and were further developed and refined by English playwrights, including Shakespeare, in the 1590s and 1600s. The result was a dramatic structure that did not strictly obey the so-called unities of time, place, and action, but nevertheless was highly coherent and tightly structured by cause-and-effect and character motivation. We associate this kind of unified drama above all with Shakespeare's most canonical plays, which we take to be the high-water mark of English Renaissance drama, the fullest, most sophisticated, most masterful point of its development. But in 1608, after the success of his comedies, histories, and tragedies, Shakespeare returns to and revives an earlier form of drama. He undertakes this task self-consciously, revealing what is lost, excluded, or cannot be represented by a dramatic form and style that stress a high degree of unity and coherence. Shakespeare's romances estrange us from the strategies of unified dramatic form that had come to be so conventional as to be invisible, in order to make explicit the implicit ethics of those strategies.

By ethics, I mean that the romance plays reveal how unifying dramatic strategies produce, reproduce, and justify values and mores that dictate who belongs and who does not, who is represented and who is excluded, whose stories are told—and how they are told—and whose stories

are not. In the aesthetic terms used by Renaissance humanists, we could call this kind of order decorum.[10] We could also call it hegemony. Through a different kind of dramatic form that opens itself up to the conventions of romance as a narrative tradition—the radical expansion of time, place, and action—the romance plays make it possible to imagine a different kind of community than those afforded by the genres in which Shakespeare wrote up to that point in his career: comedy, history, and tragedy. I do not mean to suggest that Shakespeare's turn to romance toward the end of his career signals a newfound interest in ethics and ethical questions of how best to live, and what our responsibilities as individuals to each other are. Rather, I contend that Shakespeare's romance plays, through their distinct dramatic structure, make possible a different way of thinking about these ethical issues than what is offered by his comedies, histories, and tragedies, an alternative to hegemonic unity. To borrow Rosalie Colie's description of genre, romance offers a different "fix" or "frame" on the world.[11]

The earlier paradigm of the comedies, histories, and tragedies is of a world defined by generational succession. Its normative force is marked by Hamlet's horror at the transgression of that paradigm in the "rotten" state of Denmark:

> Oh, that this too, too sullied flesh would melt,
> Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew.
> .   .   .   .   .   .
> How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
> Seem to me all the uses of this world.
> Fie on't, ah, fie, 'tis an unweeded garden
> That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
> Possess it merely. (*Hamlet*, I.ii.129–37)[12]

In Hamlet's imagination, the older generation should naturally make way for the younger generation, like a garden that, properly tended, will flourish for many years. By remarrying, his mother has refused to yield her place, turning Denmark into "rank" rot, and leaving to her son a pointless, "unprofitable" life. Hamlet fantasizes about escaping this subjection via transcendent self-mastery, captured in the image of his "flesh" becoming "dew." Comedy, on the other side of the coin, depicts the proper and healthy replacement of one generation by the next, the younger generation's search for autonomy and self-possession, often by a willful overcoming of the older generation. So, too, does the history play as a genre with its interest in succession, in how the crown is passed on, a process that Prince Hal understands must always be invented, never simply and passively inherited; and, as Richard II comes to realize, is only ever a temporary residence. All three genres are driven by the pursuit of cyclical renewal, linear continuity, and self-mastery.[13]

Romance's distinct world-view is captured by the Third Gentleman's description of a reunion that has just taken place offstage, in the penultimate scene of *The Winter's Tale*:

> There might you have beheld one joy crown another, so and in such manner that it seemed sorrow wept to take leave of them, for their joy waded in tears. There was casting up of eyes, holding up of hands, with countenance of such distraction that they were to be known by garment, not by favour. Our king being ready to leap out of himself for joy of his found

daughter, as if that joy were now become a loss, cries "O, thy mother, thy mother!", then asks Bohemia forgiveness, then embraces his son-in-law, then again worries he his daughter with clipping her. Now he thanks the old shepherd, which stands by like a weather-bitten conduit of many kings' reigns. I never heard of such another encounter, which lames report to follow it, and undoes description to do it. (*The Winter's Tale*, V.ii.42–57)[14]

Here, antithetical emotions co-exist *in extremis*—joy and sorrow with felt recovery and loss—but they are held together in suspension without resolving in death, as we see at the end of *King Lear*.[15] Reunion is both enabled and made difficult by time, whose long passage—attested to by the presence of the old shepherd, "weather-bitten conduit of many kings' reins"—alters "favour" so much that loved ones might better be "known by garments," artifacts, and letters. (This convention of romance was especially distasteful to Stephen Gosson, Elizabethan playwright-turned-anti-theatricalist.) The king, Leontes, has done nothing to earn this joy or anyone's forgiveness, not that of his friend Polixenes, his daughter Perdita, his new son-in-law Florizel, or his daughter's adoptive father the Shepherd, each of whom he faces in turn in this scene. The reunion is presented to us in narrative report by a minor character, the Third Gentleman, whose incredulity as a spectator is a model for our own. In short, instead of the inevitable cyclical renewal of generations by replacement and substitution that drives tragedy, history, and comedy, romance pursues preservation, resurrection, and reconciliation. Instead of unity, multiplicity; instead of transcendence, expansion. Instead of mastery, grace.

As soon as the Victorianist critic Edward Dowden grouped together these four plays as "Romances" and dated their composition to the last few years of Shakespeare's career (1608–11), we have sought to understand why Shakespeare writes romance plays when he does.[16] In the last century and a half, scholars have offered answers rooted in biography and psychology (spiritual-religious, his anticipation of his retirement), the theater and book industries (the King's Men's new venue at the Blackfriars, the shuttering of the theaters due to plague, the rise of tragicomedy thanks to Beaumont and Fletcher, the popularity of prose romances), politics (King James I's accession, his interest in uniting England and Scotland), and economics (English exploration, English imperialism, expanding overseas trade).[17] This dissertation has benefitted a great deal from the insights offered by this scholarship, but it proceeds from the assumption that we can best understand what Shakespeare is up to in these self-conscious plays by thinking about them in terms of theater history: on the large scale, the early popularity and subsequent renunciation of romance on the English stage, and on the small scale, the arc of Shakespeare's playwriting career. If we value and canonize Shakespeare for his psychological depth and keen observations on the human condition, and read his career through an evolutionary lens, then his turn to these "mouldy tales" toward the end of his professional life is perplexing, even perverse.[18] Focusing on the ways that Shakespeare's late romances estrange us from their own form in part by highlighting their place in the broader literary community—their debts, their disagreements, and their engagements with contemporaneous literary criticism and literary writings—this dissertation sheds light on the question of why Shakespeare writes romance at what would appear to be the height of his career.

When Shakespeare began writing his romance plays in 1608, he had enjoyed roughly fifteen years of upward mobility as a playwright and shareholder in the Lord Chamberlain's Men, which became the King's Men in 1603. By then, Shakespeare had become the "best-published dramatist

with far more title-page ascriptions than any other English playwright dead or alive."[19] His company built its own playhouse, The Globe, which opened in 1599; in 1608, his company also took over the Blackfriars, an indoor theater that enabled them to stage plays, and therefore generate profits, year-round. By that year, writing on average two plays annually, Shakespeare had not only helped his company attract the King's patronage, he had also made himself a very wealthy man *and* a gentleman, with the successful application for a family coat-of-arms that had previously eluded his father.[20] It is then that he begins writing his romance plays, consciously reviving an early form of English secular drama that he had for the most part resisted in his own dramaturgy and in doing so helped to make obsolete onstage: fantastical, sprawling romance that depicts actions remote in time and place.

As I will elaborate in the subsequent chapters, writing romance plays is, for Shakespeare, an act of revival that requires risking failure and renouncing the mastery over his material that he had previously asserted.[21] The romances individually and collectively perform and reflect on Shakespeare's work as a dramatist, earlier in his career and now. Revival, risk, and surrender are major themes in the romance tradition, and Shakespeare dramatizes them in his romances to great effect. Beginning with Antiochus (who refuses to learn this lesson and is punished for it) and ending with Prospero, the male rulers in Shakespeare's romances must learn that their lives and fates are inextricably bound to those around them, including, especially, those they made 'other'; paradoxically, they must come to know and embrace their own subjection in order to be free.

Romance Onstage in Renaissance England

The opening scene of *Shakespeare In Love* efficiently conveys our standard narrative about the evolution of English Renaissance drama. The punchline of the scene, "Romeo and Ethel the Pirate's Daughter"—the play that Henslowe hopes will dig his theater out of debt, the play that Shakespeare never writes and transmutes into *Romeo and Juliet* instead—stands in for the kind of romance play that dominated the earliest decades of English secular drama in the public theaters and at Court, with titles like *Herpetulus the blew knighte & perobia, The Paynter's Daughter, The Blacksmith's Daughter,* and *Delphrigius King of Fairies.* Surveying the accounts of the Revels Office and contemporary non-court records, Betty J. Littleton discovers that "Almost one-third of the plays which were produced and/or printed during this period [1570–1585] were based on romance material." Romantic drama, she explains, "competed for popularity with the late morality and with the nascent classical and realistic drama both in and out of Court."[22] But this kind of play began to disappear from the English stage in the 1590s, and a decade later had become the target of parody, most notably in Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607).

Today we categorize these early plays as "dramatic romance," "romantic drama," and "romantic narrative plays." Shakespeare's contemporaries, however, never used the word "romance" to describe a play; the term was reserved for works written in prose and verse. Some scholars have called attention to this fact to argue against categorizing Shakespeare's romance plays as romances, suggesting that such a designation is ahistorical and anachronistic.[23] Stephen Orgel complains that "Modern criticism has removed *The Tempest* from its place as the first of the comedies, and has invented for it, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *Pericles* the category of romance."[24] He is referring

to the tripartite generic division of *Mr. William Shakespeares comedies, histories, & tragedies* (1623)—the First Folio—which puts *The Tempest* as the first of the comedies, *The Winter's Tale* as the last of the comedies, and *Cymbeline* as the last of the tragedies. (*Pericles* was not included until the Third Folio of 1664, where it was printed as a supplement and therefore not incorporated into the Catalogue page.) These generic designations have proven to be unsatisfactory, however, leading some modern scholars to suggest as alternative generic categories "romance," "tragicomedy," "late comedy," and "late play."

The current critical debate over how to categorize these plays revives the critical debates of the Renaissance about genre in general, and about romance in particular. Writers across the continent were deeply invested in developing, negotiating, and putting into practice theories and taxonomies of literary genres in relation to classical writings, literary careers, decorum, and ethics.[25] Romance was of especial interest, because its multiplicity, variety, digressiveness, and unboundedness seemed opposed to epic, the literary genre *par excellence*; because it was so protean that it could easily be combined with other genres; because classical theory did not explicitly account for it; because it was, simply, very popular.[26] In Elizabethan England, prose romances like Robert Greene's *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time*—which Shakespeare adapted into *The Winter's Tale*—sold briskly as advances in the publishing industry made pleasure reading accessible beyond the elite,[27] to say nothing about romance's ubiquity onstage.[28] Theater historian Alfred Harbage observes, "That by 1580 English drama was generally thought of in terms of such plays [as *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes* and *Common Conditions*] is indicated by the composite descriptions that have come down to us."[29] Indeed, because the vast majority of early English romance plays have not survived in print, much of our understanding of romance drama comes from contemporaneous writing that rails against the genre as absurd at best, and morally suspect at worst.

Stephen Gosson famously called the theaters "a general Market of Bawdrie" and a "Schoole of Abuse,"[30] and attacked early English playwrights for drawing their material from Greek, continental, and medieval romances: "The Aethiopian historie, Amadis of Fraunce, the Rounde table … haue beene throughly ransackt, to furnish the Playe houses in London … running through Genus and Species & euery difference of lyes, cosenages, baudries, whooredomes."[31] In response to Gosson's attack, Sir Philip Sidney wrote his *Defence of Poesy* to defend poesy and poets in theory, asserting that "as virtue is the most excellent resting-place for all worldly learning to make his end of, so poetry, being the most familiar to teach it, and most princely to move towards it, in the most excellent work is the most excellent workman."[32] But Sidney also condemned practicing English playwrights for writing "gross absurdities" that defy the dramatic unities of time and place, in a passage that seems paradoxically to have inspired the plots of *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*:

> By and by we hear news of a shipwreck in the same place: and then we are to blame if we accept it not of a rock. … Of time they are much more liberal: for ordinary it is that two young princes fall in love; after many traverses, she is got with child, delivered of a fair boy; he is lost, groweth a man, falls in love, and is ready to get another child; and all this in two hours' space: which, how absurd it is in sense.[33]

George Whetstone similarly mocks his fellow playwrights for depicting "impossibilities" and violating theatrical decorum:

> The Englishman … [is] most vaine, indiscreete, and out of order: he fyrst groundes his worke on impossibilities, then in three howers ronnes he throwe the worlde: marryes, gets Children, makes Children men, men to conquer kingdomes, murder Monsters, and bringeth Gods from Heauen, and fetcheth Diuels fom Hel.[34]

These critiques do not invoke the word "romance," but they describe recognizably romantic conventions. Tellingly, when Gosson enumerated the negative qualities of each dramatic genre, he named tragedy, then comedy, but when he came to romance, he referred to it as "nothing":

> The beholding of troubles and miserable slaughters that are in Tragedies, driue vs to immoderate sorrow … Comedies so tickle our senses with a pleasanter vaine … *Sometime you shall see nothing* but the aduentures of an amorous knight, passing from countrie to countrie for the loue of his lady, encountring many a terible monster made of broune paper, & at his retorne, is so wonderfully changed, that he can not be knowne but by some posie in his tablet, or by a broken ring, or a hand-kircher, or a piece of a cockle shell, what learne you by that?[35]

What brings together a group as wide-ranging as this one, with anti-theatricalists and poetry-apologists alike, is a sense that romance has no place onstage because it is "absurd"—not just full of "impossibilities," but "indiscreet," "gross," "out of order," pointless. Its roots in the Catholic medieval past and associations with Catholic countries makes romance especially morally suspect.[36] Romance drama, to paraphrase Patricia Russell, lacks both artistic coherence and moral substance.[37] It was also, as contemporary criticism and records attest, incredibly popular.

As we can gather from these critiques and from the few extant examples (*Clyomon and Clamydes* and *Common Conditions*), the early romance drama of the 1570s and 1580s depict a wide range of action, and are set in remote, fantastical times and places. They adapt their plots from chivalric narrative romances but also borrow dramaturgical strategies from medieval mystery and morality plays (interludes), which provide the pattern for the Vice figure (now secularized) and the *deus ex machinas* that descend and ascend from the stage with the mechanical aid of suspension gears, a device employed on pageant wagons since the fourteenth century.[38] But this kind of play, always already marked as 'old,' appears to fade from the English stage in the 1590s. "Fade" is perhaps not quite the right word, however, for a genre—or mode, to use Northrop Frye's word, or strategy, to use Barbara Fuchs'[39]—as flexible and protean as romance.[40] Rather, romance evolves in the 1580s and 1590s, resulting in plays like *Mucedorus*, *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune*, Robert Wilson's *The Cobbler's Prophecy*, and Thomas Heywood's *The Four Prentices of London*, which are set closer to home. Or, as Russell puts it, "in realms and situations which resemble life on the audience's side of the stage," "not in the never-never land of the Isle of Strange Marshes."[41] To be sure, scholars do not agree on how to classify these plays; Russell and Littleton categorize them as later dramatic romances to emphasize their continuity with but also evolution from the early romance plays of the 1570s and 1580s, while G. K. Hunter categorizes them as early comedies.[42] But all acknowledge that plays like *Mucedorus* and *The Four Prentices of London* retain many of the conventions of early Elizabethan drama, including the double-plot structure, character types like the manipulative Vice

figure, sudden shifts in fortune, sudden shifts in mood, marvelous coincidence, disguise, and loss of status and identity; but with a greater sense of cohesion and order, realism and what Russell calls "dramatic immediacy."[43] Taking a broader view of English Renaissance popular drama, Harbage observes that between 1560 and 1613, "Whereas the subject matter became somewhat more English and realistic as time went on, there is no real break in continuity."[44] But in that move toward "more English," "more realistic," what distinguishes the early romance play—its marvelousness, remoteness, and sprawl—is subsumed. It is precisely these characteristics, this early kind of play, that Shakespeare revives with his late romances.

Why English drama grew to be "more English and realistic" during this fifty-year period is beyond the scope of this dissertation. What the scholarship makes clear, however, is that Shakespeare is consciously and deliberately reviving something obsolete in material, setting, and form when he writes his romance plays. So plain is his project of revival that Dryden, later in the seventeenth century, mistook *Pericles* for an early play by Shakespeare, written before *Othello*:

> Shakespear's own Muse her Pericles first bore,
> The Prince of Tyre was elder than the Moore:
> 'Tis miracle to see a first good Play,
> All Hawthorns do not bloom on Christmas-day.
> A slender Poet must have time to grow,
> And spread and burnish as his Brothers do.[45]

Seen from the vantage point of the more English and more realistic plays of the 1590s and 1600s, the early romance plays of the 1570s and 1580s are naïve and unsophisticated in their dramatic construction and material. Reviving this earlier dramatic tradition, Shakespeare's romance plays have similarly been perceived by scholars as dramaturgically deficient, requiring explanation, justification, or solution. As I will show in the following section, this "deficit model" (a term I borrow from educational theory to describe an approach to student learning that perceives differences as deficiencies or weaknesses) follows from our persistent preference for "closed form" over "open form" drama as more sophisticated and masterful.

Solving the 'Problem' of Shakespeare's Romance Plays

The "deficit model" approach to Shakespeare's romances was particularly attractive in the age of New Criticism, which prized in art a sense of a self-sufficient whole. During this period, which we could call neo-Sidneyan, editors of *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Cymbeline* proceeded from the assumption that these plays were deficient in form, even undramatic, and attributed those deficiencies to romance and its conventions. J. C. Maxwell, introducing Cambridge University Press' 1956 edition of *Pericles*, describes the play as a "naïve transcription" of a "fantastic and often irrational narrative" that "makes very little attempt to adapt it to the requirements of drama." He takes that to be evidence that the play was not written by Shakespeare, who would have known how to do so better.[46] Editors of *The Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline* do not have the same luxury of pointing a finger at the shadowy figure of a co-author to explain the strange forms of these plays.

Instead, Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson, co-editors of The New Cambridge Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (1931), suggest with no small degree of disdain and perhaps also pity that the figure of Time was Shakespeare's best though "desperate" solution to the problem of the play's sixteen-year leap forward in time.[47] J. M. Nosworthy, the editor of the Arden Second Series' 1955 edition of *Cymbeline*, is more forgiving of this romance play's "structural ineptitude," attributing it to the play's "experimental nature" in blending romance together with drama. He acknowledges that there were earlier attempts to put romance onstage, but dismisses these plays as inadequate models for Shakespeare to imitate and innovate from. "Romance," he explains, "defeated the earlier dramatists, so that it afforded no model. … A tradition that rests on things no better than *Mucedorus* or Peele's *Old Wives Tale* scarcely merits the name of tradition."[48] *The Tempest*, even though it strictly observes the unities, also receives this kind of deficit reading in the period. Quiller-Couch and Wilson, detecting verse "fossils" in the 1623 *Tempest*, propose that the extant text is a revision of a much earlier play that originally resembled *The Winter's Tale* (and *Pericles*) in its sprawling plot.[49] According to their argument, *The Tempest*'s solution to the problem of romance onstage is to cut out the first half of the story altogether.[50] Each editor attributes the romance plays' formal strangenesses to the "challenge," "problem," and "difficulties" of the narrative structure of romance, with its "episodic," "often irrational" plots, with its "dispersed action" and "demand for alienation and subsequent reconciliation," a challenge that Shakespeare evidently was not prepared to face.

In the age of New Historicism, scholars have revitalized our understanding of English Renaissance drama as well as Shakespeare's place in it. We have replaced the model of the individual author with a model of theatrical collaboration, and broadened our focus beyond the text with attention to the material and historical conditions of working theaters, companies, printers, and publishers,[51] as well as the phenomenology of live enactment, which Henry S. Turner calls "theatricality."[52] What has not changed is our sense that English Renaissance drama, which continues to be chiefly represented by Shakespeare's plays, is distinguished by its extraordinary reality effect. Lorna Hutson attributes this sense of reality, liveliness, or naturalism, to a play's ability to generate "its own temporally, spatially, and psychologically coherent world."[53] Although we acknowledge that English Renaissance plays by and large do not follow the neoclassical rules of unified time, place, and action, we continue to prefer and privilege drama that displays, as Jeremy Lopez puts it, "poetic richness, individuated characters, and a high degree of structural unity," which he summarizes as "an essentially 'Shakespearean' dramatic style."[54] (Hunter more pointedly calls Shakespeare's dramaturgy "unindulgent" for the way he "hold[s] within severe limits the geographical and chronological spread of his stories."[55]) A wide and diverse range of dramatic forms and styles flourished in the English Renaissance; Harbage describes the period's drama as one "of amazing variety in story material and disconcerting flexibility of form."[56] But this variety has been obscured by the canon we have constructed under what Lopez calls "the shadow of the Shakespeare canon." Early modern drama anthologies, he stresses, are "consistent … in their selection of plays that most closely resemble Shakespeare's," and exclude plays like Thomas Dekker's *Satiromastix*, for example, with its "thematic self-contradiction, structural disunity, stylistic diversity, and the tenuous coherence of its disparate parts."[57] Although Lopez attributes our bias towards structural coherence and unity to a bardolatrous canon, and I attribute it to the persistent influence of New Criticism— though of course both are intimately interconnected—we both seek to revise our critical approach to

English Renaissance drama that perceives *Satiromastix*, and indeed, *Pericles* and *Cymbeline*, as non-normative or deficient plays.

Genre scholarship in the age of New Historicism reads Shakespeare's romances *qua* romance to understand them in their literary-historical moment and to shed light on how these plays would have been received by their first audiences. By setting Shakespeare's romances among other romances of the period, including narrative romances and early dramatic romances,[58] these scholars recuperate the romance plays as sophisticated and intentional in their formal structure. However, the genre approaches to Shakespeare's romance plays has continued to assume that these plays pose problems that require critical intervention. Specifically, scholars have tended to use genre to solve or smooth over the plays' perceived strangenesses and problems, suggesting either that Shakespeare was abiding by a set of aesthetic principles that are strange to our modern eyes but perfectly ordinary to Renaissance audiences, or that he was parodying the genre of romance. The former imagines romance as a "sea of stories"[59] into which Shakespeare willingly dives; the latter imagines romance as a vulgar, potentially corrupting force from which Shakespeare distances himself and his plays. Both arguments aim to ameliorate the plays' perceived defects of coherence, unity, and plausibility with recourse to genre, either by subsuming Shakespeare into romance, or by distancing Shakespeare from romance.

The distancing reading casts the romance plays as satires of their own genre in order to reconcile two beliefs: that romance is a low, naïve, primitive, and antiquated genre; and that Shakespeare is a sophisticated, masterful playwright. Alison Thorne suggests, "The plays themselves frequently call attention to their dependence on the 'thrice-told tales' and antiquated conventions of romance, but in ways that simultaneously point up their temporal and critical distance from the naïve or 'primitive' consciousness associated with this type of fiction."[60] In other words, rather than fully participating in "this type of fiction," Shakespeare's romance plays distance themselves from it as burlesques, satires, and parodies of romance.[61] By arguing that Shakespeare's romance plays call attention to their romance characteristics as a way to critique the genre, scholars defend the playwright from charges of "vile participation" (*1 Henry IV*, III.ii.87). This form of generic reading effectively places Shakespeare's romance plays in their own distinct category or class, above other romances of the period. In its mood and method, this approach to the romance plays exemplifies what Rita Felski calls "critique," or a "hermeneutics of suspicion," a phrase she borrows from Ricoeur and defines as an attitude of "vigilance, detachment, and wariness (*suspicion*)" combined with "identifiable modes of commentary (*hermeneutics*)" that pervades modern literary criticism and scholarship to the exclusion of "a wider range of affective styles and modes of argument."[62]

Other genre scholars read Shakespeare's romance plays as fully embracing romance and its particular set of aesthetic principles, distinct from those of unified, neoclassical drama. These scholars aim to restore a sense of continuity between Shakespeare's romances and other romances of the period, both dramatic and non-dramatic. Peter Womack, for example, defends *Pericles* by explaining that the play follows "a different model of theater," one in which "the Aristotelian criteria of formal unity and probability are not merely not observed, but necessarily and militantly negated. It is not that the play *fails* to be probable and consequential, but that it fully *intends* to transcend consequence and baffle probability."[63] This interpretation explains away the seeming strangenesses and inconsistencies of Shakespeare's romance plays as our modern ignorance of the conventions of medieval and Renaissance romance. As Helen Cooper reminds us, romances were "the stories that

the Elizabethans grew up with: which they did not need to learn, because they were so deep a part of their culture. It is that very familiarity, the lack of need of any extensive record or concern with preservation, that has made them largely disappear from sight."[64] This generic approach importantly recovers the "horizon of expectations"[65] for Shakespeare's romance plays in their broader literary-historical context. But it goes too far in normalizing and subsuming these plays into the general "sea of stories."[66] Shakespeare's romance plays resist normalization; they insist at every turn that we recognize their belatedness and their formal strangenesses as dramatized romances.

As Barbara Mowat has highlighted for us, Shakespeare knew well how to dramatize romance invisibly, which is to say, in a way that subordinates romance to the dominant conventions of drama. His earlier plays—including *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*—also incorporate romance story elements and motifs, and directly adapt their plots from medieval and Renaissance narrative romance. But these earlier plays do so by "employing, perhaps coincidentally, two of Sidney's proposed solutions: use a reporter, or limit the story so that it better fits the stage." The later romance plays are differently structured and, as Mowat claims, to "a new purpose—or so his late plays suggest":

> No longer weaving romance elements into comic or tragic fables, no longer working to avoid or conceal the difficulties presented to the playwright who would dramatize narrative romance, his strategy now is to highlight those features of prose romance that Sidney and Whetstone had considered absurd when staged.[67]

What distinguishes his late romance plays from his earlier plays is the way they foreground the friction between narrative romance and drama, which Mowat argues is "strategy and not accident."[68] But what does it mean for the romance plays to be strategic in highlighting their "prose romance features" and the "difficulties" they present to the playwright? To what purpose, if not parody? Mowat offers a few suggestions for why we would want to think about Shakespeare's late romance plays as adaptations of romance from page to stage: it "forces us to take seriously the prose romance form, to ask ourselves what kind of power, what kind of pleasure, lies in story—and, specifically, in Greek Romance story."[69] This dissertation is animated by Mowat's suggestion that pleasure *and* power inheres in romance narrative, and that Shakespeare knew that to be true.

Suspicious of unifying dramatic strategies and his own mastery, Shakespeare atavistically revives the genre of romance onstage. But *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest* do not wholly restore or idealize the past dramaturgy of the early dramatic romances, the way that it once was. Such a return is not only impossible but also undesirable, as his romance plays thematize, most strikingly in *The Winter's Tale* with the image of the wrinkles on Hermione's statue's face, and in *The Tempest* with Ariel's image of Alonso's body transmuted at the bottom of the sea "into something rich and strange." Instead, Shakespeare's late romances reflect on and critique the intervening years of dramaturgical mastery and hegemonic unity to make room for a new set of powers and pleasures: community, polyvocality, passibility—what Elizabeth Bearden defines as "impressionable susceptibility or capacity for change"[70]—subjection, surrender, redemption, and grace.

Overview

In the chapters that follow, I often draw from writings by Shakespeare's contemporaries—Philip Sidney, primarily—to illuminate how writers in the English Renaissance understood genre and literary form. I do not use these writings as foils to set off the greater sophistication and complexity of Shakespeare's plays, an approach that I often came across in the course of researching this subject. Scholars of literature have tended to privilege praxis over theory, to assume that praxis always exceeds theory. Scholars of English Renaissance literature in particular have tended to think that theory of the period—literary criticism—is conformist and doctrinal, while praxis—imaginative literature—is dynamic, dialectical, flexible, and therefore freer, therefore more 'critical.' A prime example is how we understand Sidney's oeuvre, which we split between his theory—*The Defence of Poesy*—and his praxis—particularly the *Old* and *New Arcadia*'s. Other examples include how we understand Spenser's "Letter to Raleigh" in relation to *The Faerie Queene*, and how we understand Milton's prose writings in relation to his poetry.

I disagree with this tendency to see literary criticism and theory of the English Renaissance as rigidly conservative, and its poetry as liberated and liberatory. I have been inspired and invigorated by a handful of scholars who have argued for a more interdependent rather than combative or detached relationship between theory and praxis in the English Renaissance. In her wittily polemical monograph *On Not Defending Poetry: Defence and Indefensibility in Sidney's Defence of Poesy*, Catherine Bates revises our typical understanding of Sidney's *Defence* in a way that brings it closer to his imaginative literature and to other imaginative literature of the period. Her central claim is that the *Defence* is more radical and resistant than we have thought, in the way that it seeks—though never states openly—a de-idealist model of poetry as profitless. She aims to contest the prevailing view that Sidney's *Defence* "articulates a model of poetry as ideal," arguing that this view results in

> a tendency to treat Sidney's treatise as the classic articulation of a traditional, idealist Renaissance poetics against which other texts—by Gascoigne, Marlowe, Nashe, Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne, and others—can be measured as contrastingly critical, experimental, and divergent. The effect has been twofold: to deny those qualities to Sidney's writing, and to consign the *Defence* to the status of doctrine.[71]

Lorna Hutson, in *Circumstantial Shakespeare*, challenges our assumption "both within and beyond the academy" that the genius of Shakespeare's plays resides in the way they transcend literary theory of the period, Sidney's in particular. Her broader goal is to

> challenge the governing antithesis between a continental neoclassicism (understood as the straitjacketing of drama by the unities of Time and Place) and a native English dramaturgy based purely in the 'freedom' of collaborative theatrical practice. [This book] will argue, rather, for the common ground between continental neoclassical theory and English dramatic practice.[72]

In doing so, Hutson gives us a more deeply historicized account of how Shakespeare's plays achieve their powerful liveliness effect precisely through the use of established rhetorical and literary

practices, in particular the "circumstances." My methodology in this dissertation practices the kind of reading that Bates and Hutson practice and promote, one that begins with the assumption that theory and praxis of the period are interdependent, not independent or antithetical.

Moreover, by focusing on the ethical assumptions, consequences, and possibilities in literary form as they are suggested in both theory and praxis in the period, I build on the work of scholars like those collected in the recent *Shakespeare and Renaissance Ethics*, co-edited by Patrick Gray and John D. Cox. That volume seeks to contextualize Shakespeare's "representation of human moral choice" with the intellectual history of his time, specifically classical philosophy and Christianity, which Gray and Cox refer to as "the two principal sources of concepts and systems for ethical reflection."[73] But as the title of the volume's third section suggests—"Shakespeare and the Ethical Thinking of Montaigne"—there is a third important source for ethical thinking in the period: literary and essayistic writing. Bringing their approach to Shakespeare and ethics a bit closer to Shakespeare's home, this dissertation turns often to writings about imaginative literature and drama that circulated in England during Shakespeare's lifetime. The relation between ethics and aesthetics was vigorously theorized in the period both by genre theorists—most notably and extensively by Sidney in the *Defence*—and, as I will show, by the strange forms of Shakespeare's romance plays.

This dissertation argues that, in choosing to open up his dramaturgy to romance, Shakespeare is renouncing his previous strategies for controlling, binding, and mastering his material. Equating unity with hegemony, he abjures both. All the while, he works in conversation with his contemporaries' literary and literary-critical writings. He co-authors his first romance with George Wilkins, an undistinguished playwright, and turns the presentation of the play over to the medieval poet John Gower. Of course, *Pericles* was an instant and enormous success, and for many more years was continually performed and reprinted (five times between 1609 and 1635, rivaling *Henry IV, Part 1* and *Hamlet*). But after *Pericles'* initial success Shakespeare does not write three more plays just like it. With each subsequent romance, he seeks new ways to show the ethical perils of unity as hegemony and new strategies for abjuration; new ways to change the stakes and to take greater or different risks; to make possible a different set of values. For this reason, each chapter focuses on a particular play and its most overtly romantic and 'problematic' formal issue (though each chapter also gives attention to the plays that come before and after to see how the formal issue is carried forward and further developed): mingling in *Pericles*, temporal disunity in *The Winter's Tale*, multiplicity in *Cymbeline*, and endlessness in *The Tempest*.

A quick note about the order of my chapters. I have put the plays in rough chronological sequence, but this dissertation aims to challenge the evolutionary narrative that reads *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Cymbeline* as mistakes, failures, partial solutions, and partial successes that lead up to the formal perfection of *The Tempest*, a triumph of neoclassical dramatic unity over romance sprawl and, as Shakespeare's last singly-authored play, the ultimate (as in final and best) proof of his mastery. Scholars have been able to date the compositions of *Pericles* and *The Tempest* fairly precisely but lack good evidence to establish which play Shakespeare wrote first, *The Winter's Tale* or *Cymbeline*.[74] Because *The Winter's Tale*'s form is more constrained and coherent than *Cymbeline*'s— an issue that I treat directly in Chapter Three—most scholars and editors put *The Winter's Tale* after *Cymbeline* to fit this evolutionary narrative. (The Oxford Shakespeare is a rare exception.) By reversing the usual order and putting *The Winter's Tale* before *Cymbeline*, I do not intend to make any radically new claim for dating the plays' composition. But this order has allowed me to uncover

more resonances between *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale* and between *Cymbeline* and *Tempest* that are obscured by the usual evolutionary ordering of these plays.

Chapter One, "'As good as rotten': The Virtue of Corruption in *Pericles*," shows that Shakespeare's first romance play—a dramatization of the ancient, much adapted tale of Apollonius of Tyre, co-authored by George Wilkins—presents a positive account of mingling. Mingling and adaptation were associated with impurity and corruption in the Renaissance. Ben Jonson in an "Ode to Himself" describes *Pericles* as a "mouldy tale," a mash of "stale," "nasty" scraps from older texts,[75] and John Marston in *The Dutch Courtesan* compares translated manuscripts to prostitutes.[76] *Pericles* doesn't just anticipate these charges, it does everything it can to invite them. The play calls our attention to its status as an adaptation by including narrative interludes that break the dramatic illusion. These interludes are presented by the medieval poet John Gower, whose *Confessio Amantis* is one of the play's source texts; at one point, he intones, "*Et bonum quo antiquius eo melius*" (the older a good thing is, the better). The play begins with the open secret of the incestuous relationship between Antiochus and his daughter; several scenes are set in a brothel; the play's heroine Marina is forced into prostitution after her grief-stricken father Pericles gives her up to foster parents; and at the end of the play, Pericles, reunited with his daughter, betroths her to one of her would-be brothel customers, the governor of Mytilene. In short, the play routinely troubles the distinction between virtue and purity on the one side, and vice and corruption on the other. The tyrannical Antiochus demands an excessive purity in his kingdom, executing all of his daughter's foreign suitors to keep her close; the virtuous Marina embraces the affordances of the brothel to convert her future husband and bargain for her own liberty. As I show, it is precisely through mingling and the rejection of tyrannical purity that the play achieves its happy ending.

Pericles and *The Winter's Tale* treat time like the early dramatic romances, as described by Sidney in the *Defence*, by skipping over months and years in a matter of moments. In *Pericles* Gower constantly apologizes for the play's artifices and entreats us to help bridge gaps in time and place with our imagination. But in *The Winter's Tale* Time is defiant—"I … please some, try all" (IV.i.1)—and insists on our passivity as spectators. Chapter Two, "'That wide gap': Disunified Time in *The Winter's Tale*," reconsiders the play's temporal disunity, its gaps and wrinkles in time, as the solution to the play's central conflict, not the thing in need of a solution. Continuous, linear, unified dramatic time was understood by proponents and practitioners to be verisimilar, natural, and decorous—faithful to our lived experience of reality—but characters in *The Winter's Tale* disabuse us of that notion by describing their own experience of time as discontinuous, circular, and relative:

> LEONTES. Three crabbed months had soured themselves to death
>   Ere I could make thee open thy white hand
>   And clap thyself my love. (I.ii.102–4)

> LEONTES. Looking on the lines
>   Of my boy's face, methoughts I did recoil
>   Twenty-three years, and saw myself unbreeched. (I.ii.153–5)

> POLIXENES. He makes a July's day short as December. (I.ii.168)[77]

The play goes further, associating aesthetic strategies of unifying time—employed in the first half of the play—with Leontes' tyranny and absurd jealousy. I argue that *The Winter's Tale* presents the sixteen-year gap of time in the middle of the play, which Time deliberately leaves unaccounted for, as the remedy to Leontes' pathology, his consuming desire to avoid subjection. The final scene, in which the statue of a woman thought to be long dead miraculously and inexplicably comes to life, caps the play's transition from a hegemonic unified drama that seeks to assert absolute control to one that accepts subjection and unmitigable loss, as signaled by the name of the daughter that Leontes casts out of his kingdom, believing her to be a bastard child: Perdita.

Painted in the broadest strokes, the romance plays are about families separating and then reconciling. In *Pericles* the family is separated for innocuous reasons, making their reconciliation dependent only on their chance reunion. *The Winter's Tale*, however, makes the family's final reunion and reconciliation more difficult to achieve: the father has deliberately split apart his family and driven them away from him. To write *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare magnifies the stakes, asking how two nations can reconcile after a bitter war. He complicates that question even further by weaving that political plot into at least three other major plots, and by mixing genres together in a way that Sidney and John Fletcher caution playwrights against. Chapter Three, "'The same dead thing alive': Plural Perspective in *Cymbeline*," argues that the play's multiplicity—its most distinctive feature, "beyond beyond" (III.ii.56)[78]—seeks an alternative to hegemonic unity and hierarchy in its formal structure as well as its political plot. The play's generic hybridity and its portrayal of Ancient Britain during the Roman Empire have attracted much scholarly interest and consternation. So has the play's final scene, which re-narrativizes the plot of the play through the contingent perspectives of multiple characters in a way that has been perceived as undramatic, unstageable. I interpret these elements through what I call the play's strategy of "plural perspective." This method of combination and dynamic relationality is achieved through apparently redundant narrative, through storytelling and counter-storytelling, a term I take from the social sciences to describe stories that challenge dominant or status-quo accounts.[79] Instead of giving us a single unified perspective on the matters that it presents, *Cymbeline* makes time and space for multiple perspectives and genres to coexist, sometimes uneasily, without allowing one to dominate over the others. In this play about the renegotiation of Britain's relationship to Rome, Shakespeare seeks simultaneity and multiplicity through storytelling as a counter to hierarchy and hegemonic unity.

As the first three chapters show, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Cymbeline* all foreground their romance conventions—the mingling of high and low, disunified time, and multiplicity—to reveal the ways that unifying dramatic strategies produce and reproduce structuring logics of purity, tyranny, and hegemony. To write *The Tempest*, Shakespeare employs those unifying strategies to an extent matched only by his early play *The Comedy of Errors*, even as he embraces magic and the supernatural to a greater degree than ever before. Chapter Four, "'Single I'll resolve you': Unities and Endlessness in *The Tempest*," reads the dramaturgy of Shakespeare's last romance play as a negative defense of bringing romance into the theater, critiquing unified dramaturgy even as it performs it. Put another way, the target of *The Tempest*'s critique is not the disunified early dramatic romances that Sidney and Jonson disparage, but the unified plays that superseded them. Sidney and Jonson recommend the unities as a way for the playwright to assert control over his material and his audience. Shakespeare makes *The Tempest*'s unified structure a product of *Prospero's* mastery over those around him:

PROSPERO. It was mine art,
    When I arrived and heard thee, that made gape
    The pine and let thee out.
ARIEL.   I thank thee, master.
PROSPERO. If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak
    And peg thee in his knotty entrails till
    Thou hast howled away twelve winters. (I.ii.291–96)[80]

By turning a character in the play, a magician no less, into the source of the play's unified structure—by casting the Sidneyan playwright into the play—Shakespeare puts pressure on us to recognize that unifying strategies for drama depend on controlling, manipulating, and subordinating other voices and bodies, including the audience's.

    We have tended to read English Renaissance drama as lively and powerful *because* it flouts classical and neoclassical theories of drama. Modern scholars enjoy asking the counterfactual "What would Sidney have thought of Shakespeare?" in a way that diminishes Sidney.[81] But as this dissertation shows, Shakespeare took seriously Sidney, Gosson, Whetstone, Greene, Jonson, Marston, Fletcher, and other writers who theorized about and wrote imaginative fiction. The question is not "What would Sidney have thought of Shakespeare?" but "What does Shakespeare think of Sidney?" To write his romance plays, Shakespeare took his contemporaries' theory and criticism, in addition to their imaginative fiction, as a "tool of artistic creativity," as something enabling, something to think through and with, rather than something conservative or obsolete to ignore, supersede, or transcend. Perhaps that is the source of his plays' enduring power: their bottomlessness, their inexhaustibility, as texts to think through and with.

<div style="text-align:center">NOTES</div>

[1] Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard, *Shakespeare in Love: A Screenplay*, 1st ed (New York: Hyperion, Miramax Books, 1998), 3.

[2] Sir Philip Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," in *Sir Philip Sidney: The Major Works*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 244.

[3] See Patricia Russell, "Romantic Narrative Plays: 1570-1590," in *Elizabethan Theatre* (London: Edward Arnold Publishers, 1966), 107–29; Betty J. Littleton, *Clyomon and Clamydes: A Critical Edition*, Studies in English Literature (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), 53–63, 195–98; Lee Monroe Ellison, "The Early Romantic Drama at the English Court" (Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1917); Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions* (New York: Macmillan, 1952).

[4] Recent studies of romance on page and/or stage in the English Renaissance include Lori Humphrey Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Steve Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England: The Rise of Prose Fiction* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006); Christopher J. Cobb, *The Staging of Romance in Late Shakespeare: Text and Theatrical Technique* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007); Mary Ellen Lamb and Valerie Wayne, *Staging Early Modern Romance: Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Tiffany Jo Werth, *The Fabulous Dark Cloister: Romance in England after the Reformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); Cyrus Mulready, *Romance on the Early Modern Stage: English Expansion Before and After Shakespeare* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[5] William Shakespeare, *Pericles*, ed. Suzanne Gossett (London: Arden Shakespeare, Third Series, 2004).

[6] Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 4–5.

[7] Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Stephen Halliwell (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 59–63.

[8] Barbara Mowat borrows the terms "closed form" and "open form" from the art historian Heinrich Wölfflin: "[Closed form literary works] are based upon syllogistic or qualitative progression," "work within generic conventions," and "make use of repetitive and incidental forms to give a sense of unity, of coherence, of wholeness to the work and to the experience of responding to the work," while "Open form drama, specifically, is that drama in which cause-and-effect patterns are broken, generic conventions abandoned (and with them the easily established point of view, of attitude, that observance of generic conventions make possible), and the dramatic illusion repeatedly broken through narrative intrusion, spectacle, and other sudden disturbances of the aesthetic distance. The resulting casual relationship with the audience gives a sense of unintentionality, of Wolfllin's 'adventitiousness,' of refusal to stay within the created art world, which seems to break all dramatic patterns and which creates a startlingly non-Aristotelian dramatic form" (*The Dramaturgy of Shakespeare's Romances* [Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979], 98–99).

[9] Stephen Cohen, "Introduction," in *Shakespeare and Historical Formalism*, ed. Stephen Cohen (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), 14.

[10] George Puttenham speaks at length about decorum in Book III, Chapter XXIII of *The Arte of English Poesy*, defining it as natural proportion: "This louely conformitie, or proportion, or conueniencie between the sence and the sensible hath nature her selfe first most carefully obserued in all her owne workes, then also by kinde graft it in the appetites of euery creature working by intelligence to couet and desire: and in their actions to imitate and performe: and of man chiefly before any other creature aswell in his speaches as in euery other part of his behauiour" (George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesy; Contriued into Three Bookes: The First of Poets and Poesie, the Second of Proportion, the Third of Ornament (1589)*, ed. Baxter Hathaway [Kent: Kent State University Press, 1970], esp. 268–9).

[11] Rosalie L. Colie, *The Resources of Kind: Genre-Theory in the Renaissance*, ed. Barbara K. Lewalski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

[12] Unless otherwise noted, all citations to Shakespeare's texts are taken from *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al., 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015).

[13] See Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to the Tempest* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

[14] William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, ed. John Pitcher (London: Arden Shakespeare, Third Series, 2010).

[15] First we hear about Gloucester's death, which occurs offstage ("His flawed heart … 'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief, / Burst smilingly"), then we witness Lear's death which—in the Folio text—ends with Lear howling over Cordelia's corpse, then suddenly seeing movement from her lips: "Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips, / Look there, look there!" This sequence of deaths by emotional extreme, the first represented in narrative description, the second presented, or enacted, anticipates in mirror-image the two reunion scenes that conclude *The Winter's Tale*.

[16] Edward Dowden was the first to group these plays together as "romances," as part of a New Shakespeare Society project to establish a chronology of Shakespeare's plays (Edward Dowden, *Shakspere: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art* [London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1877]).

[17] See Dowden, 402ff; George Wilson Knight, *The Crown of Life: Essays in Interpretation of Shakespeare's Final Plays* (London: Methuen & Co., 1947), esp. 9–31; G. E. Bentley, "Shakespeare and the Blackfriars Theater," *Shakespeare Survey* 1 (1948): 38–50; Constance Jordan, *Shakespeare's Monarchies: Ruler and Subject in the Romances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); G. K. Hunter, *English Drama, 1586-1642: The Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 503–4; Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1998), esp. 618–38; Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England*; Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Shakespeare: An Ungentle Life* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2010), 234ff; Mulready, *Romance on the Early Modern Stage*.

[18] See Bloom, *The Invention of the Human*. Having traced over the course of six hundred pages the growing sophistication of Shakespeare's plotting and characterization, Bloom is stopped short by the romances. Reading those chapters, one senses Bloom's bafflement and growing desperation to account for these romances with their stock characters and absurd situations. At one point in his discussion of *Cymbeline*, he suggests, "After composing perhaps three dozen dramas, Shakespeare has not exhausted his resources, but he craved distancing from what he was doing" (621).

[19] Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 135.

[20] See Duncan-Jones, *Shakespeare: An Ungentle Life*.

[21] See Jeffrey Knapp's "The Author Revived," which revises our understanding of Shakespeare's turn to co-authorship at the height of his career by suggesting that Shakespeare envisioned co-authorship not as "a weakness, weariness, or alienation that forced him to rely on others" but as "a kind of revival, an inheritance" (*Shakespeare Only* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009], 119–146, esp. 122, 125).

[22] Littleton, *Clyomon and Clamydes: A Critical Edition*, 53, 196.

[23] See Stanley Wells, "Shakespeare and Romance," in *Later Shakespeare*, ed. John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies 8 (London, 1966), 49–79, esp. 49; Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 10; Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England*, 13; Barbara A. Mowat, "'What's in a Name?' Tragicomedy, Romance, or Late Comedy," in *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works: The Poems, Problem Comedies, Late Plays*, ed. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard, vol. 4 (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 129–49, esp. 133; Barbara Fuchs, *Romance* (London: Routledge, 2004), 93–97; Gordon McMullan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Late Writing: Authorship in the Proximity of Death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 68–78.

[24] Stephen Orgel, "Introduction," in *The Tempest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 4–5.

[25] For more on the keen interest in genre in the Renaissance period, see Colie, *The Resources of Kind*; Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); Robert Henke, *Pastoral Transformations: Italian Tragicomedy and Shakespeare's Late Plays* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997), esp. 66-77; Daniel Javitch, "The Emergence of Poetic Genre Theory in the Sixteenth Century," *Modern Language Quarterly* 59 (1998): 139–69; Cohen, "Introduction," 1–27, esp. 8–9; Patrick Cheney, "Genre: The Idea and Work of Literary Form," in *A Companion to Renaissance Poetry*, ed. Catherine Bates (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018), 183–97.

[26] See Fuchs, *Romance*, esp. 66-98.

[27] See Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England*.

[28] Of course, plays were also circulated in print in the English Renaissance. G. K. Hunter reminds us that the most reprinted play during this time was *Mucedorus* (1588), which was reprinted "thirteen times before 1639" (*English Drama, 1586-1642: The Age of Shakespeare*, 99).

[29] Harbage, *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions*, 62.

[30] Stephen Gosson, "The Schoole of Abuse (1579)," in *Markets of Bawdrie: The Dramatic Criticism of Stephen Gosson*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1974), 69–118.

[31] Stephen Gosson, "Playes Confuted in Five Actions (1582)," in *Markets of Bawdrie: The Dramatic Criticism of Stephen Gosson*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1974), 169.

[32] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 228.

[33] Sidney, 243–44.

[34] George Whetstone, "Dedication to Promos and Cassandra (1578)," in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. Gregory Smith, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904), 58–60.

[35] Gosson, "Playes Confuted in Five Actions," 161, emphases mine.

[36] See Werth, *The Fabulous Dark Cloister*.

[37] Russell, "Romantic Narrative Plays: 1570-1590," 107.

[38] Glynne Wickham, *Early English Stages, 1300-1600* (London: Routledge and Paul, 1959), I.93-9.

[39] Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976); Fuchs, *Romance*, 2.

[40] As Mary Ellen Lamb and Valerie Wayne describe it, romances can "adapt to whatever terrain is most appropriate to their larger narrative purposes. They embrace incongruities and contradictions within their capacious, fluid boundaries" ("Introduction: Into the Forest," in *Staging Early Modern Romance: Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare*, ed. Mary Ellen Lamb and Valerie Wayne [New York: Routledge, 2009], 14).

[41] Russell, "Romantic Narrative Plays: 1570-1590," 129.

[42] Hunter resists referring to romance as a recognizable dramatic genre throughout his survey of English drama, 1586–1642, preferring to use romance adjectivally, and sometimes in scare-quotes. To introduce a section on generic self-consciousness in early comedy, he explains, "The popular 'romantic' stories of love and fortune cut completely across

the boundaries of love and fortune cut completely across the boundaries of genre as traditionally conceived … and were thus equally open to comic, tragic, or historical treatment" (*English Drama, 1586-1642: The Age of Shakespeare*, 93).

[43] Russell, "Romantic Narrative Plays: 1570-1590," 129.

[44] Harbage, *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions*, 65.

[45] John Dryden, "Miscellany Poems: Containing a New Translation of Virgills Eclogues, Ovid's Love Elegies, Odes of Horace, and Other Authors, with Several Original Poems" (London: Printed for Jacob Tonson, at the Judges-head in Chancery-Lane near Fleet-street, 1684).

[46]"The plotter [of *Pericles*] follows a complicated episodic narrative in a fashion unparalleled in Shakespeare, and makes very little attempt to adapt it to the requirements of drama, though the introduction of Gower reflects a certain sense of the difficulties involved. It might be said that it is only by means of a deliberately naive transcription that this fantastic and often irrational narrative could be put on the stage at all, but the contrast with Shakespeare's normal methods is none the less striking. … If it was Shakespeare who first dramatized the story, all we can say is that he used a method he never used before or after" (J. C. Maxwell, "Introduction," in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, ed. J. C. Maxwell, The New Shakespeare [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956], xi–xii).

[47] "Having to skip sixteen years after Act 3, [Shakespeare] desperately drags in Father Time with an hour-glass ... which means on interpretation that Shakespeare, having proposed to himself a drama in which a wronged woman has to bear a child, who has to be lost for years and restored to her as a grown girl, simply did not know how to do it, save by invoking some such device" (Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson, "Introduction," in *The Winter's Tale*, ed. Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson, New Cambridge Shakespeare, 1st Series [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931], xix).

[48] "That *Cymbeline* exhibits a certain degree of structural ineptitude may be conceded, but this can be attributed to the experimental nature of the play. Shakespeare, who had proved himself the supreme master of both tragedy and comedy, was yet unpractised in the art of blending the two in the service of romance. He undertook now to present difficult, even intractable, narrative components in a form which was quite new to him and which would clearly test his native invention severely. … Above all, perhaps, there is the structural challenge implied in the romance's demand for alienation and subsequent reconciliation. 'Once upon a time …', 'Far away and long ago …", formulas so simple and so current in fairy-tale, impose problems of space and time which sorely tax ingenuity when they are transferred to the stage. … *Cymbeline*, as we might expect, offers only a halting attempt at a solution. Temporal and spatial cohesion are not achieved. … Romance, with its dispersed action and, dramatically, disintegrating circumstances, had defeated the earlier dramatists, so that it afforded no model. … A tradition that rests on things no better than *Mucedorus* or Peele's *Old Wives Tale* scarcely merits the name of tradition. … *Pericles, Cymbeline*, and, to a certain but insignificant extent, *The Winter's Tale* were the pioneering colonizing efforts of a Shakespeare more completely without a reputable model than he had ever been. … Clearly this kind of excursion into unfamiliar, crudely-charted dramatic territory raises its own set of problems and difficulties which can be overcome only by methods of trial and error" (J. M. Nosworthy, "Introduction," in *Cymbeline*, ed. J.M. Nosworthy, Arden Shakespeare [London: Methuen, 1955], xxx–i).

[49] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), 79.

[50] Frank Kermode gives a brief overview of these "Theories of Earlier Versions," which he systematically dismisses, in *The Tempest*, 6th ed., Arden Shakespeare Second Series (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), xv–xxiv.

[51] For a summary of this scholarship, see Knapp, *Shakespeare Only*, 1–14.

[52] Henry S. Turner, *Early Modern Theatricality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3. See also *Shakespeare's Theatres and the Effects of Performance*, ed. Farah Karim-Cooper and Tiffany Stern (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2013).

[53] Lorna Hutson, *Circumstantial Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 12.

[54] Jeremy Lopez, "The Shadow of the Canon," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 65 (2014): 109.

[55] Hunter, *English Drama, 1586-1642: The Age of Shakespeare*, 390.

[56] Harbage, *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions*, 65.

[57] Lopez, "The Shadow of the Canon," 109, 116.

[58] See Alison Thorne, "Introduction," in *Shakespeare's Romances*, ed. Alison Thorne (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 1–26, esp. 4; Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*; Peter Womack, "Shakespeare and the Sea of Stories," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 29 (1999): 169–87.

[59] Womack's evocative description of romance.

[60] Thorne, "Introduction," 5.

[61] See also Lewis A. Collier, "The Redemptive Element of the Natural Settings in Shakespeare's Tragedies and Late Romances" (University of Washington, 1966); Diana Childress, "Are Shakespeare's Last Plays Really Romances?," in *Shakespeare's Late Plays: Essays in Honor of Charles Crow*, ed. Richard C. Tobias and Paul G. Zolbrod (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1974); Michael Baird Saenger, "*Pericles* and the Burlesque of Romance," in *Pericles: Critical Essays*, ed. David Skeele (New York: Garland, 2000), 191–204; McMullan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Late Writing*.

[62] Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 1, 3.

[63] Womack, "Shakespeare and the Sea of Stories," 174, 176.

[64] Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*, 7.

[65] Hans-Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), 22–26.

[66] Womack's term, which he borrows from Salman Rushdie.

[67] Barbara A. Mowat, "Afterword: Shakespeare and Romance," in *Staging Early Modern Romance: Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare*, ed. Mary Ellen Lamb and Valerie Wayne (New York: Routledge, 2009), 238.

[68] Mowat, 238.

[69] Mowat, 242.

[70] Elizabeth Bearden, *The Emblematics of the Self: Ekphrasis and Identity in Renaissance Imitations of Greek Romance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 4.

[71] Catherine Bates, *On Not Defending Poetry: Defence and Indefensibility in Sidney's Defence of Poesy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), vii.

[72] Hutson, *Circumstantial Shakespeare*, 4.

[73] Patrick Gray and John D. Cox, "Introduction," in *Shakespeare and Renaissance Ethics*, ed. Patrick Gray and John D. Cox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 13.

[74] Based on internal evidence—the plays' use of their source material—J. M. Nosworthy suggests Shakespeare wrote *The Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline* "more or less simultaneously … with consequent cross-fertilization" ("Introduction," xvi). Douglas Bruster and Geneviève Smith recently proposed that *Cymbeline* is Shakespeare's last play, based in part on a "constrained correspondence analysis of the plays' internal pauses" ("A New Chronology for Shakespeare's Plays," *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, 2014).

[75] "No doubt some mouldy tale, / Like Pericles; and stale / As the Shrieve's crusts, and nasty as his fish— / Scraps out of every dish / Throwne forth, and rak't into the common tub, / May keepe up the Play-club" (Ben Jonson, "Excerpt from *Ode to Himself*," in *Pericles: Critical Essays*, ed. David Skeele [New York: Garland Pub, 2000], 34).

[76] Marston describes that "translated manuscript[s]" as "false … prostituted and alducerate" (*The Dutch Courtezan, as It Was Playd in the Blacke-Friars, by the Children of Her Majesties Reuels* [At London: Printed by T.P. for John Hodgets, 1605], F3r).

[77] More recently, studies of time and temporality have thought of time as fundamentally dissonant and inharmonious, instead of unified, coherent, and consistent, in line with the way the characters in *The Winter's Tale* experience time. See, for example, Mark Currie, *About Time: Narrative, Fiction, and the Philosophy of Time* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007). Currie draws on Husserl's idea of protention, Derrida's idea of supplementarity, and Genette's idea of prolepsis to argue that narrative fiction is characterized by "temporal self-distance" (49) that elicits our temporal awareness and enacts temporal heterogeneity—subjective versus objective temporality, inner time versus clock time.

[78] William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, ed. Valerie Wayne (London: Arden Shakespeare, Third Series, 2017).

[79] Law professor Richard Delgado coined the term "counter-storytelling" in a now classic piece about the power of storytelling to "shatter complacency and challenge the status quo": "Stories and counterstories can serve an equally important destructive function. They can show that what we believe is ridiculous, self-serving, or cruel. They can show us the way out of the trap of unjustified exclusion. They can help us understand when it is time to reallocate power. They are the other half—the destructive half—of the creative dialectic" ("Storytelling for Oppositionists and Others: A Plea for Narrative," *Michigan Law Review* 87, no. 8 [1989]: 2414–15).

[80] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan (London: Arden Shakespeare, Third Series, 1999).

[81] "As for tragedy, Sidney, it is well known, made his pronouncements before the great age of drama in England. We now smile to think of his testing his prescription on such works as *Gorboduc* (1561), and expressing concern that, excellent in so many ways, the play fails to observe Aristotle's requirements for unity. … What, then, would Sidney have

made of those many dramas of Shakespeare that violate the 'laws' of time and place?" (John Roe, "Theories of Literary Kinds," in *A New Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. Michael Hattaway, vol. 2 [Malden: Blackwell, 2010], 9).

Chapter One
"As good as rotten": The Virtue of Corruption in *Pericles*

> Now, to that which is commonly attributed to the praise of history, in respect of the notable learning is gotten by marking the success, as though therein a man should see virtue exalted and vice punished—truly that commendation is peculiar to poetry, and far off from history. For, indeed, poetry ever sets virtue so out in her best colors, making Fortune her well-waiting handmaid, that one must needs be enamored of her.
>
> —Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*[1]

In Act IV of *Pericles*, the first of Shakespeare's romance plays, the Mytilene governor Lysimachus stops by the local brothel to request an uncorrupted prostitute, in order to slake his lust while also avoiding the pox: "How now, how a dozen of virginities? … Wholesome iniquity have you, that a man may deal withal and defy the surgeon?" (IV.v.27–8, 32–4).[2] He is apparently a regular client. The Bawd recognizes him immediately—"Here comes the Lord Lysimachus disguised" (24)—and Lysimachus banters familiarly with Bolt, a servant at the brothel. The Pander brings in Marina, with the assurance that she is "never plucked yet" (47-8). But after a few minutes alone with Marina, Lysimachus becomes so repulsed by the brothel that he recoils from its bulwarks: "To me the very doors / And windows savour vilely" (114–5). When Bolt comes back in to collect his tip, Lysimachus shouts at him, "Avaunt, thou damned doorkeeper! / Your house, but for this virgin that doth prop it, / Would sink and overwhelm you. Away!" (123–5). Converted from his wickedness and toward a life of virtue instead, Lysimachus is betrothed to Marina by the end of the play. We have often interpreted Lysimachus' precipitous swerve from whoremongering to honorable self-governance as proof of Marina's virtue and his worthiness as her "fair betrothed" (V.iii.72). And we have seen their marriage, which Pericles anticipates at the end of the play, as the virtuous antithesis of the corrupted, self-consuming pair that we see at the start of the play: the incestuous "bad child, worse father" (I.0.27), Antiochus and his daughter. In this way, we have positioned Marina as the obverse image of Antiochus' daughter, and the last scene as the obverse image of the first, an interpretation that imposes a neat, unified structure on the play's wandering plot.[3]

Even with this reading, the brothel scenes have remained highly troubling and controversial to us. *Pericles* is Shakespeare's only play to portray a brothel, and it does not hold back in its frank depiction of the business of selling sex.[4] Moreover, that the brothel is where Marina meets her husband has proven to be too much to stomach for many modern audiences. As Katherine Duncan-Jones protests, "We are required to accept Lysimachus as her Prince Charming even after his vile opening comment on Marina—'Faith, she would serve after a long voyage at sea.'"[5] Philip Edwards finds good reason to believe it "repugnant that a prince who has sought his gratifications in such a horrible place as this brothel, and has there met and been shamed by Marina, should then be presented as a suitable husband for her."[6] Margaret Healy suggests that even Shakespeare's first audiences would have been horrified by Marina's marriage to a man who undoubtedly carried venereal disease.[7] To buttress their objections, scholars have cast doubt on Marina's apparent

conversion of Lysimachus, which occurs over a tremendously, improbably short period of time—no more than a minute in performance. The abruptness of Lysimachus' complete about-face raises the question of whether Marina truly succeeds in converting him, to the extent that editors will often avoid altogether the language of conversion when describing the scene: "the *contest* between Marina and Lysimachus,"[8] "the brothel *interview* between Marina and Lysimachus,"[9] "the *encounter* between Lysimachus and Marina in the brothel."[10] The brevity of the scene has also raised questions about the integrity of the text, leading some scholars to conjecture that parts of Marina's speech must be missing. For the text of *Pericles*, unusually, survives in a single version that is unanimously considered to be a "bad" quarto, the 1609 First Quarto, which is the basis for the texts of all subsequent quartos and the 1664 Third Folio.

But we also cannot do without the brothel scenes. In the New Penguin edition of *Pericles*, Edwards describes the brothel scene as "the hub of the whole play."[11] Roger Warren, the editor of the Oxford Shakespeare Series edition of *Pericles*, describes the brothel scene as "of central importance to the play as a whole,"[12] and Arden editor Suzanne Gossett identifies it as "the play's most famous crux."[13] "Crux"—which can mean "the central or decisive point of interest" or "a difficulty which it torments or troubles one greatly to interpret or explain, a thing that puzzles the ingenuity"[14]—aptly captures both the importance and the difficulty of the brothel scenes.

The ways in which the brothel scene, in particular the behavior and speech of Marina and Lysimachus, have been seen as problems to be solved, inconsistencies to be ironed out, or moral or textual corruptions to be rehabilitated, epitomize the many "problems" of the play. Scholars now generally agree that the play was co-authored with George Wilkins,[15] but for much of the play's life, it has been the black sheep of the Shakespearean oeuvre. Along with *Cardenio* and *Two Noble Kinsmen*, the play did not appear in the 1623 First Folio;[16] and although it was finally included in the second printing of the Third Folio in 1664, it virtually disappeared again from the canon in the eighteenth century after Pope's 1723-25 edition, which excluded it. The play recycles the popular tale of Apollonius of Tyre, which had by then been retold by several authors across several centuries, leading rival playwright Ben Jonson to bitterly lambast the play as a "mouldy tale":

> No doubt some mouldy tale,
> Like Pericles; and stale
> As the Shrieve's crusts, and nasty as his fish—
> Scraps out of every dish
> Throwne forth, and rak't into the common tub,
> May keepe up the Play-club:
> There, sweepings doe as well
> As the best order'd meale.[17]

Moreover, the play calls attention to its recyclings and archaisms by presenting itself as a retelling of "a song that old was sung" for "you, born in these latter times" (1.0.1, 11). In the frame of the play, the medieval poet John Gower (whose *Confessio Amantis* is one of the play's source texts) is resurrected from ashes and comes onstage between acts to "tell … what mine authors say" (20), to narrate the action in antiquated, singsong-y tetrameter couplets, and to present dumb-shows, a stage convention that was distinctly archaic by the early seventeenth century. These archaisms,

undoubtedly, are what led Dryden to misidentify *Pericles* as one of Shakespeare's early efforts: "Shakespear's own Muse her Pericles first bore, / The Prince of Tyre was elder than the Moore: / 'Tis miracle to see a first good Play, / All Hawthorns do not bloom on Christmas-day."[18] The play flagrantly defies unities of time and place, spanning at least fifteen years and several island locations; its plot turns on chance, rather than cause and effect or clearly articulated character motivation; and where we might expect to find explicit moral instruction, the play is muddled. For example, in the final moments of the play, where we might expect portable *sententiae*, Gower misidentifies the play's villains, describing the innocent, Albany-like husband Cleon as "wicked" and the truly wicked Dionyza as, neutrally, "his wife" (epil.11).[19] When Philip Edwards titles his 1952 article "An Approach to the Problem of *Pericles*," that the play is a problem is a baseline assumption, not a part of his argument.

Yet *Pericles* was enormously popular in its time, on stage and in print. The title page of the First Quarto, printed in the midst of theater closures in London due to plague,[20] advertises the play as "The late, and much admired Play … As it hath been diuers and sundry times acted by his Maiesties Seruants, at the Globe on the Banck-side."[21] Before its eventual inclusion in the 1664 Third Folio, the play was reprinted five times.[22] *Pericles* was popular with mass audiences at the Globe as well as more rarified audiences, including the Venetian ambassador, the French ambassador, and the Secretary of Florence.[23] It was one of the first plays to be performed by the King's Men at the Globe after the theaters reopened in 1631 following additional plague closures, and it was one of the first Shakespeare plays to be revived in the Restoration, alongside *Othello*, *Henry IV*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.[24] In spite of our opinion that the play shouldn't work, it empirically did. Scholars, I think, love to quote Jonson's critique of the play because of the way he captures what we perceive as one of *Pericles*' many incongruities: that it is "mouldy," "stale," and "nasty," which is to say tediously old-fashioned and bad, but that is also popular. We have tended to see *Pericles* as a self-contradictory puzzle—how could the play be bad *and* popular?—but Jonson meant his critique to be self-explanatory: what is popular *is* bad; what the masses love *is* what is stale and nasty. And he'll have none of it.

This chapter proceeds from Jonson's insight into the play's workings. The problems that scholars have perceived in *Pericles* and tried to explain away, as I will show, are essential to it, not unintended corruptions of the text or mere generic conventions that must be obeyed. What is distinctive about Shakespeare's romances, as I will show throughout this dissertation, is the way they foreground their own strangenesses, particularly those that are endemic to the genre of dramatic romance—they fairly rub our noses in it. And that is the point. By beginning with ancient Gower, resurrected from ashes and announcing that he will "tell you what mine authors say," the play makes the task of translating literary romance to the stage a part of its unfolding. More importantly, by emphasizing the play's dusty archaisms, the play draws our attention to the strangeness of such a task.

In its portrayal of brothels and prostitution, of incest, and of family, *Pericles* generates a theory of romance aesthetics as one that admits the inescapability of corruption, and faces it head on—an aesthetic that rejects the kind of purity that John Milton would, later that century, describe as "a blank virtue, not a pure … an excremental whiteness."[25] Shakespeare is first drawn to romance because the open-endedness and irresolveability of the mode—all the ways that it evades and continues to evade definition—make it amenable to what he has to say about the virtue of

corruption in this play. The strangenesses and inconsistencies of *Pericles*, and the doubts that such inconsistencies raise, are strategic. The brothel scenes, which will be at the center of my readings to follow, epitomize Shakespeare's romance aesthetic, which teaches us not only that corruption cannot be avoided, but also that insisting on maintaining such a false dualism between virtue and corruption is perilous.

"This was a goodly person / Till the disaster": Textual and Moral Corruption

One solution to *Pericles'* "problems," offered by Edmond Malone and his successors, is that the play suffers textual corruptions stemming from the sloppy printing of the First Quarto. Malone argued in the late eighteenth century that "the earliest printed copy appears in so imperfect a form, that there is scarcely a single page of it undisfigured by the grossest corruptions."[26] To support his claim that *Pericles* has been disfigured and corrupted, Malone points to what he claims are the play's inconsistent meter, incorrect character attributions, textual omissions, and nonsensical passages:

> As many words have been inserted, inconsistent not only with the author's meaning, but with any meaning whatsoever, as many verses appear to have been transposed, and some passages are appropriated to characters to whom manifestly they do not belong, so there is great reason to believe that many words and even lines were omitted at the press. … The same observation may be extended to the metre, which might have been originally sufficiently smooth and harmonious, though now, notwithstanding the editor's best care, it is feared it will be found in many places rugged and defective.[27]

For many scholars, Malone's theory of *Pericles'* textual corruption sufficiently explains the improbable quickness with which Marina successfully converts Lysimachus. As Edwards laments, "It is the greatest misfortune that what our text gives us looks like a *clumsy abbreviation* of the original exchanges."[28] Warren puts it most bluntly: "In order to convert a tough, predatory whoremonger who also has the power of a governor to enforce his will, Marina needs stronger arguments than the few lines of the Quarto."[29] According to this textual approach, *Pericles'* textual corruption is both the problem and solution. Indeed, Malone's description of the play as "[disfigured] by the grossest corruptions" is an essential part of his defense of the play and its reinstatement in the Shakespearean canon in his 1790 edition of Shakespeare's works.[30] Having asserted that the play suffers from corruption, the textual approach suggests that editorial intervention can fix these flaws to reveal the original, uncorrupted version of the play—to reconstruct the text of the play as Shakespeare originally intended it.[31]

Such was the task of F.G. Fleay, who, in the nineteenth century, asserted that another writer, not Shakespeare, authored the brothel scenes. As part of his work with the New Shakespeare Society, Fleay was applying a method of metrical analysis to determine the chronology and authorship of works that had been attributed, throughout the years, to Shakespeare. However, he was unable to apply his usual quantitative methodology to the brothel scenes of *Pericles*, as they are largely written in prose, not verse. Fleay, undeterred, defended his conclusion on moral and aesthetic grounds instead, arguing that Shakespeare "would not have indulged in the morbid anatomy of such

loathsome characters,"[32] and so another, inferior writer must have written them; and he claimed that excising the brothel scenes yield "a perfect artistic and organic whole."[33] The superiority of this bowdlerized version of the play was apparently irresistible, as Fleay went on to publish a play titled *Marina*, "consisting merely of the scenes in which she is condemned to death by Dionyza, rescued by the pirates, and then discovered by her father."[34]

Fleay's moral and aesthetic objections to the brothel scene should not be dismissed as an amusing artifact of outdated Victorian prudishness, for they persist today, often under the guise of textual scholarship. Fleay's morally charged language of "morbid" and "loathsome" sounds remarkably similar to modern descriptions of the brothel scene. Warren describes the Quarto text as "grossly corrupt: many passages are garbled and nonsensical, others are actually missing, one of them crucially."[35] In the last part of this quotation, Warren is undoubtedly referring to the brothel scene, which he later describes as "the most crucial scene … [existing] only in an obviously mutilated form in the Quarto text."[36] In her biography *Shakespeare: An Ungentle Life*, Katherine Duncan-Jones cheekily titles this period of Shakespeare's career "Painful Adventures," and, echoing Fleay, describes Wilkins as a corrupting force:

> Perhaps it is a reflection of the coarsening influence both of Wilkins and of his open house in Turnmill Street that *Pericles* contains Shakespeare's only sustained scene located in a brothel, where the man destined to marry the virginal heroine appears to be a regular customer.[37]

The moral and textual approaches share the belief that the play as it has survived is unrepresentative of the play as Shakespeare originally intended it, and that the strangeness of the brothel scene is proof of that theory.[38] They have crafted a narrative in which, once upon a time, there was a pure, original play, but through the years it suffered corruption through no fault of its own. And like the silent, starving, pitiful character of Pericles, driven to madness by the supposed deaths of his loved ones, the corrupted play needs an outsider's intervention in order to restore it to its original, glorious state:

> Behold him.
> 　　　[PERICLES *is revealed.*]
> This was a goodly person
> Till the disaster that one mortal night
> Drove him to this. (V.i.29–31)

In other words, the text of the play has had its own "painful adventures."

By positing corruption and locating the source of that corruption squarely away from Shakespeare, the textual approach to *Pericles* has justified a kind of extreme editorial practice that we would not tolerate with Shakespeare's other works. This editorial practice seeks to impose logical, aesthetic, and moral consistency on the play in the name of reconstructing the so-called original form of the play. Edwards noted editors' tendency to conflate textual and moral issues in 1976:

> It has more than once been persuasively argued that Wilkins' version represents an earlier stage of the play than that which is reported in the 1609 text. The argument is both

linguistic and moral. It is linguistic in that Wilkins' prose, which clearly reveals fossils of blank verse, is not at all like the writing which the play exhibits at this point. It is moral in that (it is argued) the 1609 Quarto shows a development in the character of Lysimachus, an alteration to make him a prince more acceptable as the future husband of Marina; Wilkins therefore represents an unrevised and coarser concept of the part of Lysimachus.[39]

But this editorial practice has continued, and has been, paradoxically, both aided and stymied by the play's textual transmission. As Walter Cohen explains, "no reasonably authoritative text of *Pericles* exists," so any claim made about the text "must rely on internal evidence alone."[40] The question of how one determines Shakespeare's original intention is unresolvable in the case of all of his works—really in the case of *any* literary work—but it becomes a particularly vexed question in the case of *Pericles*. Suzanne Gossett suggests, rightly so, that "in *Pericles* it is not always possible to distinguish interpretive from textual problems,"[41] with the result that the text of the play can look very different from edition to edition.

Acknowledging the persistence of moral objections to the play—which she neutrally describes as "attitudes towards the social content"[42]—and eschewing textual corruption as an unreliable and flawed solution to the play's strangenesses, Gossett proposes a third approach to *Pericles*, which is to look at the play through a historical lens:

> Implicit in discomfort with Q's version of 4.5 is an objection to the double standard that silently accepts Lysimachus' behavior and the pure heroine's apparently contented betrothal to a man who frequents brothels. Yet both are consistent with early modern sexual ideology.[43]

As evidence to support her normalization of the play's treatment of its womanizing male hero, Gossett cites similar episodes that appear in contemporaneous drama by Marston and Beaumont and Fletcher.[44] This literary-historical argument has also been made by John Arthos: "One ought not to suppose any special vulgarity in Shakespeare's use of the brothel scenes. They were in his sources."[45] Arthos and Gossett's answer to this critique of the play may be historically accurate, but it is an explanation that has proved to be unsatisfying, as it has not been widely reproduced. One reason for the tacit rejection of this explanation is that it reduces the brothel and Lysimachus' seemingly inconsistent behavior to mere literary conventions that we must simply accept. Another reason is that it compares Shakespeare to inferior writers. Ironically, Arthos and Gossett's method of comparing *Pericles* to contemporaneous texts is precisely what led Fleay to raise his moral objections to the play, arguing that the portrayal of incest between father and daughter "would have been rejected by Ford or Massinger" and the brothel scenes "would even have been rejected by Fletcher."[46] Therefore, he insists, Shakespeare could not possibly have penned these scenes. An alternative to the moral, textual, and historical approaches to the play, then, is needed.

For some time now, a generic approach to *Pericles* has been growing in popularity. These scholars see the supposed problems of the play not as flaws to be fixed, but rather as fundamental features of the genre of romance. The textual and moral approaches to *Pericles* tend to assume that Shakespeare plays adhere to a particular standard of aesthetic or moral quality and consistency, so that any deviance from this standard must be the result of inadvertent corruption. The generic

approach, by contrast, argues that Shakespeare's romances adhere to a different aesthetic standard—that of romance. Arthos makes this argument to defend the inclusion of the brothel scenes in *Pericles*, pointing out that "the brothel was traditionally the scene in the old romances and in the lives of the saints where the power of innocence and trust could be most powerfully asserted."[47] Under this schematic, then, all of the play's strangenesses and incoherencies can be normalized through the lens of the genre of romance. In other words, rather than explain away *Pericles'* inconsistencies as textual or moral corruption, or as historically consistent with early modern ideology, the generic approach explains them away as misunderstandings about romance and its conventions. To understand *Pericles'* strangenesses, the generic approach argues, we must understand them *qua* romance.

But exactly how *Pericles* is a romance has not been adequately explained. This is not for any lack of critical conversation about romance. The last fifty years have seen a surge of interest in romance, including studies of romance as a secular alternative to religious scripture (Northrop Frye);[48] as a register of moments of historical change (Fredric Jameson);[49] as a mode of strategic deferral and delay of its own quest (Patricia Parker);[50] as an alternative to epic (David Quint);[51] and as continuous with, rather than distinct precursor to, the novel (Margaret Doody).[52] As a result of the work of these scholars and those who have followed them, the old pejorative perception of romance as rambling and under-structured has given way to a valorization of those qualities, moving romance from its former characterization as a primitive form of storytelling to something more properly "literary." This shift in our understanding of romance is perhaps one reason for the tendency today to see romance as a primarily literary, rather than dramatic, genre. (Here, I use the term "literary" as Lukas Erne defines it, as referring to a work that is intended to be read.[53]) Indeed, studies that approach Shakespeare's romances with this generic perspective tend to situate these plays among literary romances, particularly those that represent his source material—Robert Greene's *Pandosto*, Laurence Twine's *The Patterne of Painefull Adventures*, Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*—rather than the dramatic romances that dominated the English stage in the 1570s and 1580s, but disappeared from the stage, as I discussed in the introduction. As a result, the generic approach has tended to try to solve the problem of *Pericles* by arguing that its strangenesses derive from conventions of classical and medieval romances. In short, the generic approach attempts to treat *Pericles* as a romance *narrative*, rather than as a romance *play*. But the central question that this chapter seeks to answer—how do we understand *Pericles* as a romance?—is really the question posed by the play itself: How can a play be a romance? The answer, I suggest, has to do with the play's depiction of virtue and corruption as interdependent.

"A lady / Much less in blood than virtue": Marina in the Brothel

While the brothel scenes, Lysimachus, and indeed the entirety of the play have been variously accused of corruption, Marina has largely remained immune to those critiques. Scholars have taken for granted Marina as the "the sweet and virtuous heroine … thoroughly above reproach,"[54] who, through her unwavering virtue and chastity, is able to rescue Lysimachus and her father and reunify her family, and in so doing, purify the kingdom of the corrupting force of Antiochus' incestuous relationship with his daughter. That the first and last scenes of the play are reflections of one another

is a common interpretation: the concluding scene's reunion of Pericles, Marina, and Thaisa, and Marina's marriage to Lysimachus, restores the proper familial relationship that was perverted by Antiochus and his daughter in the opening scene.[55] The opening nightmare vision of a kingdom that has fallen into stagnancy—portrayed vividly by the row of heads taken from the able bodies of "many princes" (I.0.32) who have been unlucky enough to hazard an answer to Antiochus' riddle—gives way at the end of the play to a vision of multiple kingdoms joined in harmony: Pericles' Tyre, Thaisa's Pentapolis, and Lysimachus' Mytilene. In this interpretive scheme, Marina's virtue is required above all else to guarantee the play's happy ending.

This interpretation of the play is appealing for the way that it positions Marina as the obverse image of Antiochus' daughter, and by corollary, also positions the last scene as an obverse image of the first—thus drawing together into neat unity what could otherwise feel like a rambling play. Furthermore, this interpretation appears to explain the play's odd choice to place our heroine in a brothel as a prostitute. Under this interpretation, the brothel can be understood as the consummate test of Marina's virtue, a corrupting force that Marina must resist for as long as she is trapped there. The language these scholars use to describe Marina emphasizes her stasis, suggesting that she is simply biding her time, patiently waiting for an opportunity to escape. Algernon Charles Swinburne, for example, describes the brothel as a place where "the heroic *purity* of Marina is tried and tested as by fire."[56] J.C. Maxwell interprets the brothel scene symbolically as "Marina moving *unsullied* through the lowest depths."[57] David Skeele, similarly, describes how Marina "survives *unscathed* the horrific assaults of the brothel's keepers and customers."[58] In short, Marina's purity is tested, and proven beyond a doubt, by remaining "unsullied" and "unscathed" during her time in the brothel, much like a Teflon pan with its hardy non-stick surface.

However, this interpretation fundamentally misunderstands what makes Marina the guarantor of the play's happy ending, what makes her virtuous, and what virtue is. In *Pericles*, virtue is not the Aristotelian or Platonic kind that is an unwavering core of being, but is rather the Machiavellian kind, one that is context-specific. As Machiavelli tells us in *The Prince*, virtue is not constant goodness, as it would be in a strictly Christian context, but prowess and effectiveness, which require flexibility.[59] Marina's virtue is not synonymous with her virginity and chastity; rather, it resides in her effectiveness in persuading others. Lysimachus draws our attention to this distinction when he calls her virtuous after she converts him: "Thou art a piece of virtue" (IV.v.116). He accepts Bolt's word that Marina is virginal—just as Bolt accepts the pirates' assurances that they're selling him a virgin[60]—but does not call her virtuous until this moment. He understands that virginity and virtue are not synonymous (perhaps because of his frequenting of brothels). Similarly, when Pericles tells the fishermen that he plans to compete for Thaisa's hand in marriage and declares, "I'll show the *virtue* I have borne in arms" (II.i.141, emphasis mine), he means he will bring his courage, not his virginity; and Cerimon implies no conflict when he pairs together virtue and cunning—skill or cleverness—as the values he holds in highest esteem, that raise men to god-like status:

> I hold it ever
> *Virtue and cunning* were endowments greater
> Than nobleness and riches. Careless heirs
> May the two later darken and expend,
> But immortality attends the former,

Making a man a god. (III.ii.26-31, emphasis mine)

Marina herself uses the word "virtue" to mean cunning skill or accomplishment when she tells Bolt that she could earn the brothel owners more money if she were to "sing, weave, sew, and dance, / With other virtues … And I will undertake all these to teach" (IV.v.186-8).

By reestablishing our understanding of the play's use of the word "virtue," we can now understand the brothel scene anew. Prior to the brothel scene, Marina lacks virtue in this Machiavellian sense, and is merely virginal. It is in the brothel where Marina is transformed from an ineffectively, passively virginal woman to a virtuous woman who is able to persuade others. What scholars have failed to understand is that Marina becomes virtuous not in spite of but because of the brothel, and that she becomes virtuous not by wholly rejecting the brothel, but instead by skillfully turning the situation to her own advantage. That is, Marina cannot and must not avoid the brothel, but instead must *use* it.[61]

Scholars have precluded this unorthodox interpretation in part because they have glossed over the fact that Marina was not always "virtuous," not always the heroic guarantor and restorer of the harmonious state through her ability to persuade and subdue her enemies. In fact, before she arrives at the brothel, Marina is comically rubbish at persuasive speech, including at the hour of her greatest need. At the start of Act IV, Gower tells us that Marina's foster mother Dionyza is jealous of Marina's "skill" and "praises" (IV.0.30, 34), and fears that her foster daughter will overshadow her biological daughter Philoten. When Dionyza and her servant Leonine appear on stage, she reminds him that he has sworn an oath to kill Marina. Like the heroines of earlier English romances—Una in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*,[62] Philoclea in Sidney's *Arcadia*[63]—Marina faces down her own lion as an early test, but unlike these heroines, she clumsily fails.

Alone with his murder target, Leonine is first forced to endure the young woman's awkward attempt at small talk—like Macbeth, Marina defaults to comments about the weather[64]—and then her overtly implausible tale of her own birth—implausible not by its content but by the relation of the teller to her tale:

> MARINA. Is this wind westerly that blows?
> LEONINE.   South-west.
> MARINA. When I was born the wind was north.
> LEONINE.   Was't so?
> MARINA. My father, as nurse says, did never fear,
>   But cried 'Good seamen!' to the sailors,
>   Galling his kingly hands with haling ropes,
>   And clasping to the mast endured a sea
>   That almost burst the deck.
> LEONINE. When was this?
> MARINA. When I was born. (IV.i.48–56)

The man is patently unconvinced, even bored, by Marina's tale—he asks skeptically, "Was't so?" and "When was this?"—and at its conclusion, he abruptly changes the subject by obliquely announcing his plan to kill her: "Come, say your prayers" (IV.i.63). Marina fails to follow: "What mean you?"

(IV.i.63). When she at last grasps his murderous intentions, she launches into two more speeches: a tediously clichéd defense of her innocence—"I never killed a mouse, nor hurt a fly. / I trod upon a worm against my will, / But I wept for 't" (IV.i.77–9)—and finally, a presumptuous assessment of Leonine's virtue. He responds to her bluntly, unmoved by her speeches: "My commission / Is not to reason of the deed, but do't"; "I am sworn / And will dispatch" (IV.i.78–9, 86–7). In the end, Marina is saved, quite literally, by romantic cliché: pirates descend on the scene and carry her off.

Marina's speech is effective only in its sheer length, which delays and defers the moment of her death; however, she utterly fails in her intent to change Leonine's mind. If anything, her garrulousness paradoxically hastens her moment of death, by irritating Leonine and strengthening his resolve to kill her: "I am sworn / To do my work with haste" (IV.i.66–8). Romance, as Patricia Parker has argued, is a strategy of deferral and delay. But romance does not defer not for deferral's sake. What's important about romantic deferral is the way in which it is generative, in the way that it opens up time and place. Yet what Marina does here, when she is talking to Leonine, is purely take up time, without opening it up. Her speech is a parody of virtue, and a caricature of romance; she imitates the characteristics of romance aesthetics—delay and deferral, inconsistency and implausibility—but merely parrots them, all surface and no depth.

Only a handful of scholars have observed how badly Marina fails to persuade Leonine in this scene. Anne Barton notes that neither "is really listening to the other. Arbitrarily sealed off in separate worlds, they talk at but not really to each other."[65] J.C. Maxwell describes Marina's speech as "mincing fatuousness."[66] Roger Warren observes that Marina's speech is "a very curious passage, to put it mildly," in the way that it lacks the rhetorical skill that Marina is apparently known for: "The aim seems to be to express Marina's innocence, but its sheer *banality* suggests instead *simple-mindedness*, at compete odds with a character celebrated for her accomplishments."[67] Faced with an inconsistency in the play, Warren defaults to his theory of textual corruption to try to account for its strangeness, but in the process must perform several contortions:

> Shakespeare was a master of simple, direct expression … these lines [don't] sound like Wilkins either. Is it possible that the reporter (probably the actor of Marina) … was embroidering, or introducing lines from another play?[68]

His error, of course, is assuming that Marina's character remains consistent throughout the play. His characterization of Marina as "a character celebrated for her accomplishments" does not allow for the possibility that she might not always have been so accomplished, epitomizing the way that scholars have taken for granted Marina's constant virtue.[69]

This critical bias focuses almost exclusively on Marina's total success at persuasion when she is in the brothel—which takes place just a few short scenes after the Leonine episode—where she nimbly persuades all of her would-be customers not to rape her, and, in the most impressive cases, convinces them to replace their patronage of brothels with prayers at temples. Whereas Leonine exasperatingly responds to Marina's speeches with a request to be brief—"Pray, but be not tedious" (IV.i.66)—the brothel's customers respond to her speeches with wonder:

> 1 GENTLEMAN. Did you ever hear the like?
> 2 GENTLEMAN. No, nor never shall do in such a place as this, she being once gone.

> 1 GENTLEMAN. But to have divinity preached there—did you ever dream of such a thing?
> 2 GENTLEMAN. No, no. Come, I am for no more bawdy houses. Shall's go hear the vestals sing?
> 1 GENTLEMAN. I'll do anything now that is virtuous, but I am now out of the road of rutting for ever. (IV.v.1–9)

The Gentlemen focus not on Marina's visible, physical body, as might be expected of patrons of a brothel, but rather her speech: "Did you ever *hear* the like?" "To have divinity *preached* there." Whereas her earlier speeches to Leonine were lengthy, repetitive, and unconvincing, Marina's speeches in the brothel inspire not skepticism but wonder—and they do so by the improbability of their setting (in much the same way that Prince Hal puts himself among the lads of Eastcheap to set himself off): "in such a place *as this*," "divinity preached *there*." Her speech to the Gentlemen, which we do not hear, surpasses dreams: "Did you ever *dream* of such a thing?" And her speech to Lysimachus, which we do hear, evokes similar praise: "I did not think / Thou couldst have spoke so well, ne'er *dreamt* thou couldst" (IV.v.106–7, emphasis mine). And when Bolt intends to rape her in a misguided attempt to take away what he believes to be the physical source and proof of her virtue, Marina successfully persuades him otherwise, too. She evokes a grotesque image of the brothel as a low, sickly place that contaminates those who enter it, and then, for good measure, throws in some gold with the promise of more. She not only dissuades Bolt from raping her, she also persuades him to take up her cause with his masters, the Bawd and Pander. Marina's speech differs for each person; the way she speaks to Bolt—using grotesque and base language—is distinct from the way she speaks to Lysimachus, which is as transcendent, as poignant as any line in *King Lear*:[70]

> O, that the gods
> Would set me free from this unhallowed place,
> Though they did change me to the meanest bird
> That flies i'th' purer air! (IV.v.103–6)

It is in the brothel, then, where Marina becomes virtuous, where she learns the art of persuasion by adapting her speech to her interlocutor as a rhetorical strategy, and the art of generating wonder. The brothel is the setting for Marina's conversions, and the double meaning of that phrase—Marina's conversions—is intentional, for the brothel is a site for both the men's conversions *and* Marina's. It is no accident that the first time that Marina is described as virtuous occurs when she is in the brothel, nor is it an accident that it is Lysimachus who describes her as such. Marina's virtue and Lysimachus' conversion are mutually constitutive, so that his recognition of her virtue is required for his conversion, just as his conversion proves her virtue. Thus, rather than being a place that she must shun in order to preserve her virginity, as it has been traditionally understood, the brothel is, unexpectedly, an empowering place that Marina must embrace in order to be virtuous.

The prevailing reading of the brothel scene is that Marina and the brothel are wholly opposite, even incompatible—the virtuous virgin, the brothel whose "very doors / And windows savour vilely" (IV.v.114–5)—in a way that makes Marina more virtuous the more the brothel is depicted as base and corrupt. Walter Cohen makes this claim when he suggests that brothel

represents the theater. Quoting the Bawd's instructions to Marina to "seem to do that fearfully which you commit willingly, to despise profit where you have most gain," he argues that the play compares prostitution to "perform[ing] like an actor at one of London's professional theaters."[71] The brothel and the theater exist at the uneasy intersection of commerce and performance as places where the client or audience pays the prostitute or actor to pretend for an agreed-upon length of time. Under this argument, what Marina rejects is theater itself and its imperative to impersonate, to be insincere.[72]

But Cohen's analogy between brothel and theater is not quite right, for while the theater works on a mass scale—actor to audience—the brothel works on a one-to-one scale—prostitute and customer. While Marina does reject what the brothel would have her become, she exploits for her own gain the intimacy that the brothel is selling. It is the brothel's intimacy, that one-to-oneness between Marina and the brothel customer, that makes possible Marina's "sacred physic" (V.i.67)—Lysimachus' phrase for her persuasive power. For Marina's persuasive skill, wherein she listens and adapts her speech to her interlocutor, can only work with an audience of one.

We witness Marina's persuasive power on full display in her final act of conversion, when Lysimachus bids her to go and revive the strange man on the boat from his catatonic state. Marina insists that she be guaranteed full privacy—intimacy—with the man:

> Sir, I will use
> My utmost skill in his recovery, provided
> That none but I and my companion maid
> Be suffered to come near him. (V.i.68–71)

Marina's skill in speech requires one-to-oneness, because it is enabled by, intimately bound up with, her power to listen and respond to her interlocutor. As she begins to speak to him, he roughly pushes her away: "Hum, ha" (V.i.75). Then, after another speech of about 10 lines, she pauses, and reveals to us in an aside that her silence is strategic:

> I will desist,
> But there is something glows upon my cheek
> And whispers in mine ear, 'Go not till he speak.' (V.i.85–7)

And sure enough, Pericles begins to speak, at first haltingly, then sharply, entreating her for more:

> PERICLES. My fortunes—parentage—good parentage—
>   To equal mine. Was it not thus? What say you?
> MARINA. I said, my lord, if you did know my parentage
>   You would not do me violence.
> PERICLES. I do think so. Pray you, turn your eyes upon me.
>   You're something like that—what countrywoman?
>   Here of these shores? (V.i.88–94)

From there, Marina's responses continue to be brief, as she cannily withholds information from Pericles, who with increasing urgency asks her further and further questions, which accrue with such redundancy that they grow to a hysteria: "Where do you live?" "Where were you bred? / And how achieved you these endowments which / You make more rich to owe?" "Prithee speak." "What were thy friends? / Didst thou not say, when I did push thee back—/ Which was when I perceived thee—/ that thou cam'st / From good descending?" "Report thy parentage." "Tell thy story." "What were thy friends? / How lost thou them? / Thy name, my most kind virgin? / Recount, I do beseech thee." "Speak on. Where were you born?" "Well, where were you bred?" "How came you in these parts? Where were you bred?" (V.i.104–60). Unlike her conversation with Leonine, Marina's strategy of delay here is generative, in the way that it creates in Pericles the urgent desire to hear her speak.

What is remarkable about this conversation is how completely Marina is in control. She controls the pace of the conversation, the disclosure of information, even his reaction to her. In the fullest sense of the word, Marina compels him, drawing him out from his wordless, inward stupor and into full conversation with her. At one point, Marina refuses to disclose to him what she was so eager to share with Leonine earlier in the play:

> If I should tell
> My history, it would seem like lies
> Disdained in the reporting. (V.i.108–10)

What looks like coyness on Marina's part is partly done out of cunning, partly done out of fear. Like the Gentlemen and Lysimachus in the brothel, Pericles responds to Marina with dream-like wonder:

> This is the rarest dream that e'er dull sleep
> Did mock sad fools withal. (V.i.152–3)

Wonder is the emotional response that Marina means to elicit from her interlocutors through her speech. But wonder is a risky strategy, because while it could inspire awe, it could also tip into flat disbelief. And so, at every step, Marina demands that Pericles purge his wonder of disbelief. When she tells him his name, Pericles expresses doubt: "O, I am mocked, / And thou by some incensed god sent hither / To make the world to laugh at me." She immediately reprimands him—"Patience, good sir, / Or here I'll cease"—and he meekly obeys—"Nay, I'll be patient"—permitting her to draw him back into their conversation (V.i.133–6). Later, when he expresses disbelief again, she threatens him again: "You said you would believe me … I will end here" (V.i.141–3). It is not until after he repeatedly vows belief—"I'll hear you more, to th' bottom of your story, / And never interrupt you" (V.i.155–6); "I will believe you by the syllable / Of what you shall deliver" (V.i.158–9)—that she is at last satisfied, and finally declares, "I am the daughter to King Pericles, / If good King Pericles be" (V.i.169–70).

To suggest, as many scholars have done, that Marina merely "survives" the brothel is to underestimate her active participation and success in changing herself and her situation, and the perspective and actions of those around her. Unlike the heroines of Shakespeare's earlier comedies (Julia, Portia, Rosalind, and Viola), Marina is not in cross-dressed disguise as a man—a fact she draws our attention to when she asks all the men in the room but Pericles to leave—but rather is

effective in her own self. The silent, female presence of Marina's "companion maid" serves to emphasize the way in which Marina's power works. Marina's virtue—her persuasive power—functions through adaptability, not avoidance; transparency, not disguise; it works through sociality, by being open and flexible, and not by locking oneself away, to be resistant and self-contained. And in this scene, she teaches her father to be the same. In this way, Marina embodies the romance aesthetic offered by the play, the seeming paradox that corruption is needed for true virtue. Marina must become virtuous in order to become the obverse image of the "sinful dame" (I.0.31) that is Antiochus' daughter. And the marriage between Marina and Lysimachus must take place in order to defuse the threat of incest that haunts the play from its opening scene, and promise the kingdom's renewal and regeneration. But first, Lysimachus must prove to be worthy of the position.

"Wholesome iniquity": Lysimachus in the Brothel

While Marina's virtue has never been called into doubt—even when it should—Lysimachus' always has. When the governor first enters the brothel, he is aggressively lascivious and threatening:

> O, you have heard something of my power and so stand aloof for more serious wooing, but I protest to thee, pretty one, my authority shall not see thee, or else look friendly upon thee. Come bring me to some private place. Come, come. (IV.i.91–95)

Marina speaks three brief lines, appealing to Lysimachus' honorable birth and good judgment, which begin to soften his initial aggression to wonder and entreaty: "How's this? How's this? Some more, be sage" (IV.i.99). Then, after another short speech by Marina—not quite eight lines long—Lysimachus appears to have been fully converted, addressing Marina with admiration and respect:

> I did not think
> Thou could'st have spoke so well, ne'er dreamt thou couldst.
> Had I brought hither a corrupted mind,
> Thy speech had altered it. Hold, here's gold for thee.
> Persever in that clear way thou goest
> And the gods strengthen thee. (IV.i.106–11)

Roger Warren describes this scene with incredulity:

> The problems [of the brothel scene] focus on the character of Lysimachus himself and on Marina's response to him. Lyimachus' behavior and personality constitute a principal (perhaps *the* principal) puzzle of the play. From the tone of easy familiarity in his opening conversation with the brothel-keepers, it is clear that he is one of their regular customers; yet at the end of his scene with Marina he says, in the Quarto text, 'For me be you thoughten, that I came with no ill intent, for to me the very doors and windows savour vilely.' This odd remark, implying that he was merely carrying out a governor's responsibility by investigating the red-light district, seems at complete variance with his earlier sexual jesting with the

bawds. … Two brief speeches [by Marina] hardly seem enough to arouse such amazement and admiration in the sexual predator that we have seen in the early part of the scene.[73]

Warren identifies two principal problems with the scene: first, Lysimachus' immoral behavior at the beginning of the scene is irreconcilable with his virtuous behavior at the end of the scene; and second, Marina's speeches are too slight to plausibly explain such a rapid and wholesale conversion of Lysimachus.[74]

Indeed, that Marina was able to radically change Lysimachus' mind in eleven lines has proven a difficult fact for many to swallow. The doubt that this scene raises about Lysimachus' conversion is no small matter: it undermines his suitability as her husband, and our pleasure at the promise of their marriage. More troublingly, if the responsibility of imagining and thus guaranteeing the happy ending of the play lies with the audience, as Dennis Kay has suggested,[75] then the improbability of Lysimachus' conversion destabilizes the moral thrust of the play, which is emphasized by Gower in the Epilogue:

> In Antiochus and his daughter you have heard
> Of monstrous lust the due and just reward;
> In Pericles, his queen and daughter seen,
> Although assailed with Fortune fierce and keen,
> Virtue preserved from fell destruction's blast,
> Led on by heaven and crowned with joy at last. (epil.1–6)

In other words, if we cannot believe that Lysimachus's "corrupted mind" has truly been "altered" by Marina's speech, then the play undoes itself in its final moments, concluding as it began: with "monstrous lust" once again in the seat of power.

One extreme response to Lysimachus' ostensibly inconsistent behavior, and Marina's ostensibly too-scanty speech, is, once again, the textual approach that posits textual corruption. Editors who follow this textual approach pad out the dialogue between Marina and Lysimachus in the scene by pulling in language from Wilkins' *Painfull Adventures*—lines that they describe as "verse fossils"—and in some cases, surgically removing troublesome lines from the Quarto text. Philip Edwards first recommended this editorial practice in his 1952 article "An Approach to the Problem of *Pericles*." By way of illustration, Edwards points to Marina's speech, which he characterizes as "really only a passionate and inarticulate cry … an affecting cry [that] is not what the age called eloquence." He goes on to argue,

> What we need is amplification of these ejaculations into really persuasive arguments—and Wilkins … supplies just that very eloquence that is needed; we are given finely phrased, finely argued appeals which have all the power required to amaze, shame, and convince Lysimachus. Moreover, these appeals carry striking verse-rhythms. Surely they must represent parts of the scene omitted in the Quarto's report.[76]

It is interesting to note that Edwards did not follow his own advice for his own edition of the play, published in 1976 under the New Penguin imprint. His rendering of the brothel scene is done

instead with a consummately light touch. Subsequent editors, however, have taken up Edwards' recommendation with great enthusiasm, and the full title of the Oxford Shakespeare Series edition acknowledges such editorial emendations: *A Reconstructed Text of Pericles, Prince of Tyre*. "Reconstructed" is no neutral term. To describe this version of the play as "reconstructed" is to claim that Q1 is corrupted, and that editorial intervention has restored it to its original state. To alter so drastically the text of the brothel scene is to insist that Marina's persuasive power is inadequate to the challenge of converting Lysimachus, and requires editorial augmentation. And, to recall, Warren makes that argument explicitly in the introduction to his edition of the play: "In order to convert a tough, predatory whoremonger who also has the power of a governor to enforce his will, Marina needs stronger arguments than the few lines of the Quarto."[77] Valerie Wayne, too, describes Quarto Marina as "the silent or whimpering symbol of virginity's charm that an earlier generation of critics celebrated her for being," and enthusiastically supports the textual solution of adding in passages from Wilkins' novella, as it "presents a more articulate Marina … she becomes an important agent in the play's critique of those in power."[78] The result is a very different Marina, Lysimachus, and brothel scene, whose lines and meaning have been significantly altered in the name of rescuing the play from corruption.

Warren claims that incorporating Wilkins' version of the scene into the play's text "completely solves the problem of the inconsistency and contradictoriness of Lysimachus' character in the Quarto, as well as providing a much more dramatic confrontation between Lysimachus and Marina, which becomes a conversion scene."[79] What does he mean by Lysimachus' inconsistency and contradictoriness? To answer this question, let us focus on Lysimachus' speech at the moment of his supposed conversion. In the 1609 First Quarto, Lysimachus describes the effects of Marina's speech in the subjunctive: "had I brought hither a corrupted minde, thy speech had altered it."[80] This line has been the source of much controversy among editors and scholars, and is altered or obliterated from several twenty-first century editions of the play. The Oxford Shakespeare Complete Works—and the Norton Shakespeare, which used to be based on the Oxford edition—tweaks the line's diction, transforming it to read, "*Though* I brought hither a corrupted mind, / Thy speech *hath* altered it" (19.128-9, emphasis mine). The Oxford Shakespeare Series edition of *Pericles*—a series that publishes single volume editions of the plays—eliminates the line altogether. The Arden Third Series and the Complete Pelican Shakespeare, by contrast, retain the line as-is from the First Quarto, though with different line breaks.

In the First Quarto, Lysimachus cannily employs the subjunctive mood: it is not that Marina has converted his mind from corruption to virtue, because he was uncorrupted from the start. He testifies to Marina's persuasive power only as it would function in a hypothetical situation—"*had* I," "thy speech *had* altered"—a strategy that shields him from being perceived as corrupt, now or ever. And later in the scene, Lysimachus reiterates his constant virtue and his disgust at the brothel: "For me, be you bethoughten that I came / With no ill intent, for to me the very doors / And windows savour vilely" (IV.v.113-15). To have said in the indicative that Marina "altered" him would have been to admit that he was corrupted. But Lysimachus does just that in the Oxford Shakespeare Complete Works and the Norton Shakespeare, in which Lysimachus unambiguously confesses to his former corrupted self: "*Though* I," "thy speech *hath* altered." This declarative Lysimachus more closely resembles Wilkins' Lysimachus than Quarto Lysimachus. In Wilkins' *Painfull Adventures*, the governor describes his corruption with the vivid, highly rhetorical language of adequation:

> I hither came with thoughtes intemperate, foule and deformed, the which your paines so well have laved, that they are now white, continue still to all so, and for my parte, who hither came but to have payd the price, a peece of golde for your virginitie, now give you twenty to releeve your honesty.[81]

The Oxford Shakespeare Series lifts this language nearly verbatim, with line breaks to change it from prose to blank verse, replacing—and erasing—the play's careful equivocation:

> I did not think thou couldst have spoken so well,
> Ne'er dreamt thou couldst.
> *I hither came with thoughts intemperate,*
> *Foul and deformed, the which thy pains*
> *So well hath laved that they are now white.*
> *I came here meaning but to pay the price,*
> *A piece of gold for thy virginity;*
> *Here's twenty to relieve thine honesty.*
> Persever still in that clear way thou goest,
> And the gods strengthen thee. (Sc. 19, 149–58, emphases mine)

In the Quarto text, however, Lysimachus insists that he was never corrupted to begin with.

But Quarto Lysimachus' claim that he has always been virtuous is—importantly—a dubious one. J.C. Maxwell, in his introduction to the 1956 Cambridge edition of the play, argues, "The quarto version of Lysimachus' disclaimer of 'ill intent' is dramatically inept."[82] Edwards analyzes the scene at great length in order to painstakingly prove that we cannot possibly believe Lysimachus' claim to his original virtue.[83] Warren pronounces Lysimachus' claim to constant virtue "lame (and lamely phrased)," "patently unconvincing," and "transparently untruth"[84]—concluding, again, that these flaws can be fixed by the incorporation of Wilkins' text. But deciding whether or not we believe the governor's claim to his own virtue misses the point. Like Antiochus' riddle that is too easy to solve,[85] it is crucial that Lysimachus' claim to his own virtue be patently dubious, for he must play two contradictory roles, serve two contradictory purposes, in this scene: he must be corrupt *and* uncorrupt, the very "wholesome iniquity" (IV.v.33) he requests when he enters the brothel.[86] On the one hand, Lysimachus must be corrupt in order to position Marina to be virtuous and to save her kingdom by converting him against the odds—as Edwards rightly puts it, "If we take it that Marina does not alter Lysimachus, because he never was an irresponsible sinner, we have taken much of the heart out of the play."[87] Neither Bolt nor the Gentlemen who visit the brothel are enough of a challenge to definitively prove her virtue, but the governor of Mytilene is—a man whose first line in the play is "How now, how a dozen of virginities?" (IV.v.27–8). On the other hand, Lysimachus must be uncorrupted in order to be the man who marries Marina and helps to bring about the happy resolution of the play. Thus, the dubiousness of Lysimachus' claim to virtue and the improbability of his about-face are not the unintentional result of textual corruption to be fixed by editorial intervention, but are in fact deliberate strategies.

The editorial practice of eliminating Lysimachus' supposed inconsistency and contradictoriness in the brothel scene, particularly by importing language from Wilkins' text to supplement the Quarto's perceived gaps, is fatally flawed, because it exacerbates the problem it is supposed to resolve: it unambiguously establishes Lysimachus as the "tough, predatory whoremonger" that Warren describes him to be, and introduces even *more* doubt about Lysimachus' suitability as a husband for Marina. Wilkins' Lysimachus explicitly states that he was once corrupt and now has been converted to virtue, thus increasing our burden of belief in the success of Marina's conversion of Lysimachus, which in turn further undermines the moral correction promised by his marriage to Marina. In short, if the editorial practice of incorporating Wilkins' novella into the Quarto text of the play intends to improve the plausibility of Lysimachus' conversion, it backfires spectacularly.

As I have argued, Lysimachus' dubious claim to his own virtue is a part of the play's aesthetic strategy of generative ambiguity. This ambiguity makes Lysimachus both the test of Marina's virtue—in order to position her as the moral center of this play's corrupted world—and her worthy suitor—in order to make their marriage at the end of the play the proper revision of the incestuous relationship between Antiochus and his daughter in the beginning of the play. A virtuous, exogamous model of the family unit—Pericles, Thaisa, Marina, and Lysimachus—must be brought about by the end of the play to replace the original, sinful, supercoherent family of Antiochus and his daughter. What such a transformation requires is romance's dilation of time and space, and some amount of corruption, so that by the end of the play, Lysimachus is the Prince of Tyre, and not Pericles, by way of exogamous marriage. Yet the virtue of such a displacement and exogamous marriage is not immediately apparent. After all, this vision of exogamy is King Basilius' greatest fear in Philip Sidney's *Old Arcadia*—worse than the idea of his daughter's unnatural love, worse than the threat of adultery:

> Thy younger shall with nature's bliss embrace
> An uncouth love, which nature hateth most.
> Thou with thy wife adult'ry shall commit,
> *And in thy throne a foreign state shall sit.*
> All this on thee this fatal year shall hit.[88]

Exogamy motivates Sidney's entire romance, and sets it on its course: Basilius, puzzled and dismayed by the Delphic oracle's riddle, foolishly resolves to "prevent all these inconveniences of the loss of his crown and children" by hiding away himself "with his wife and daughters into a solitary place."[89]

By contrast, exogamy is what brings about the happy ending of *Pericles*, the element that restores true virtue and harmony to the play. But for this exogamous union to serve as the play's happy ending, Pericles must understand what true virtue is—just as we must. When he first lays eyes on Antiochus' daughter, he misreads her entirely:

> See where she comes, apparalled like the spring,
> Graces her subjects, and her thoughts the king
> Of every *virtue* gives renown to men;
> Her face the book of praises, where is read

Nothing but curious pleasures. (I.i.13–17, emphasis mine)

Pericles' misreading is encouraged by Antiochus, who uses similar language to describe his daughter: "Her face, like heaven, enticeth thee to view / Her countess glory" (I.i.31–2). This act of reading virtue on Antiochus' daughter's face epitomizes bad surface reading, in the same way that Marina's attempt to persuade Leonine epitomizes bad romance. But by the end of the play, Pericles has learned the virtue of corruption, as indicated by his celebration of the exogamous union of his daughter with Lysimachus:

> Pure Dian,
> I bless thee for thy vision and will offer
> Night-oblations to thee. Dear Thaisa,
> This prince, the fair betrothed of your daughter,
> At Pentapolis shall marry her. …
> Our son and daughter shall in Tyrus reign. (V.iii.69–83)

Shakespeare's romance aesthetic, then, teaches us that true virtue is one that faces corruption head on, and that what is truly inimical to virtue is the pure, supercoherent model of tyrannical, imperial control that is demanded by Sidney's Basilius—who hoards away his family in "strange solitariness"[90]—and Antiochus, who hoards his daughter by making "a law, / To keep her still, and men in awe, / That whoso ask'd her for his wife, / His riddle told not, lost his life" (I.0.35–38).

"Thou beget'st him that did thee beget": Incest and Romance

Antiochus' incestuous relationship with his daughter is the motivating event of the play's action—it sets Pericles and *Pericles* on their meandering paths—and the motivating enemy to the genre of romance. Unlike romance, which dilates time and place, incest contracts time and place, as Antiochus does when he makes his daughter his wife and closes her off to all suitors. Marina in the brothel, by contrast, is open to all. Incest collapses identities into one; romance, with its characteristic acts of conversions, imagines multiple and different selves. Incest, then, is both anti-romance *and* the defining, originary moment that justifies romance. It positions romance as salvific, in that romance loosens and undoes the perverse familial bonds created by incest. The conventional family unit in romance is torn apart and scattered to the winds, not to be reunited for years, even decades. Onstage, that dilation of time is marked visually through the characters' and actors' bodies, which is one of Sidney's famous criticisms of native English dramatic romance in the *Defence*:

> For ordinary it is that two young princes fall in love, after many traverses she is got with child, delivered of a fair boy, he is lost, growth a man, falls in love, and is ready to get another child—and all this in two hours' space, which how absurd it is in sense, even sense may imagine, and art hath taught, and all ancient examples justified, and at this day the ordinary players in Italy will not err in.[91]

In *Pericles*, the passage of time is indicated in Act IV by the young and beautiful Marina, no longer the swaddled infant we just saw in Act III; and in Act V by Pericles' long, untrimmed hair and beard.

But because romance so radically dilates time and place, the threat of incest persists. For if daughter is separated from father at birth, when the two are reunited in sixteen years they will be unrecognizable to each other. When Pericles first lays eyes on Marina after their long separation, he sees not his daughter, but his wife Thaisa:

> My dearest wife was like this maid, and such a one
> My daughter might have been. My queen's square brows,
> Her stature to an inch, as wand-like straight,
> As silver-voiced, her eyes as jewel-like
> And cased as richly, in pace another Juno;
> Who starves the ears she feeds and makes them hungry
> The more she gives them speech. (V.i.98–104)

In this aside, Pericles performs a Petrarchan blason on the body of his daughter, tracing in the features of the strange young woman standing before him the familiar, remembered, desirable features of his wife when she, too, was young: her brows, the curve of her body, her voice, her eyes. He tells Marina, "Thou look'st / Like one I loved indeed" (V.i.115–6). After multiple and superfluous demands of verbal confirmation from Marina, Helicanus, and Lysimachus, Pericles at last recognizes and reaches out for his daughter: "O, come hither, / Thou that beget'st him that did thee beget" (V.i.185).[92] Pericles' line, as many have noted, vexingly echoes the supercoherence of Antiochus' incestuous relationship with his daughter, and of the riddle Antiochus crafts to both reveal and conceal it:

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

As Walter Cohen observes, in Gower's medieval poem *Confessio Amantis*, the daughter of Apollonius of Tyre—whom the play renames as Pericles—is named Thaisa, not Marina, so that

> From an extradramatic and extratextual perspective, then, sexual relations with Thaisa, which in Gower would have been incest, are here converted into perfectly appropriate marital intimacy. It is almost as if the name change allows Pericles to have the very experience castigated in Antioch under the protection of the marriage bond.[93]

In romance, the solution to the threat of incest is the separation and scattering of the family unit. But that kind of dilation of time and place creates the possibility of misrecognition when father and daughter are reunited, thus re-introducing the threat of incest. Incest, then, is simultaneously the originary moment and primal fear of Shakespeare's romances, inescapable.

This is what Prospero seems to realize in *The Tempest*, and is perhaps one reason for his decision to cause the storm that wrecks the ship onto his island's shores. Before the play begins, the remoteness of the island means that Miranda's only possible sexual partners are Caliban and her own father, both unimaginable options. Prospero, then, must give up a degree of control and open up his once pure, secluded island kingdom to others, allow his daughter to leave the island, and thus introduce that amount of corruption that proves so essential in *Pericles*. Incest, too, is the source of the tragedy in Robert Greene's *Pandosto*, the prose romance that is the source text for *The Winter's Tale*, and the tragedy that Shakespeare's version narrowly averts but still registers as a possibility, just as giving Pericles' wife the name of his daughter from Gower's Apollonius tale similarly registers the taboo. Shakespeare's romances characteristically conclude with family reunions, which are brought about not by immediate physical recognition, but instead, crucially, by mutual and multiple verbal confirmations, calls and responses. (Antiochus' daughter's name, incidentally, is never revealed in the play, because the riddle's answer is never spoken. Her name is withheld entirely; it doesn't appear on the list of dramatis personae or in the stage directions, which identify her only as "Antiochus' daughter" or, simply, "Daughter." If revelation and reunion at the end of Shakespearean romance depends primarily upon the act of identifying oneself in relation to another, then Antiochus' riddle is all the more perverse for withholding the daughter's name altogether.) Perhaps one explanation for the borderline-tedious, repeated requests for further and still further proof in the final scenes of Shakespeare's romances—demanded most often by the father characters of the plays, including Pericles and Cymbeline—is that these characters are trying to shore themselves up against the ever-present threat of incest. In its supercoherence, incest is the ultimate form of corruption, the opposite to the kind of open-ended, tested virtue that *Pericles* teaches us to value.

The 'problems' and inconsistencies that scholars and editors of *Pericles* have often tried to revise or explain away are fundamental features of the romance aesthetic that the play fashions, an aesthetic that valorizes a kind of corruption that is reconcilable with virtue—or rather, an aesthetic that demands that we recognize that corruption and virtue are inextricably linked. The vice against which romance is fighting is the supercoherence and purity that is represented by the incestuous relationship that opens Shakespeare's first dramatic romance. Instead of the self-limiting, hyper-consistent logic of incest and Antioch, romance offers a very different logic of expansion of time and place, one that is flexible, uncertain, open-ended, and generative. Inconsistency opens up the possibility of transformation and conversion that is so essential to the romance plays. But that logic of flexibility can be negatively perceived as inconstancy, as it is by scholars when they look at Lysimachus, and by Leontes when he looks at his wife Hermione, with near-tragic consequences. And while romance's logic of radical expansion increases the variety and capacity to put things together, it also, discomfortingly, reduces the possibility that everything could be neatly resolved and reunified by the end of the play. Such a resistance to full resolution often manifests as irrevocable loss, which is often papered over by the commonplace understanding of romance as wish fulfillment. Yet irrevocable loss, which I am describing as a defining characteristic of Shakespeare's romance aesthetic, resonates in Thaisa's haunting, quiet final line—"My father's dead" (V.iii.78)—and is

perhaps most fully registered in *The Winter's Tale*, which concludes as bittersweetly and nostalgically as it begins, as I will discuss in the following chapter. In drawing on the romance tradition, Shakespeare accentuates its inconsistency, irresolveability, and flexibility. As we have seen in the first four hundred years of *Pericles*' life, these strategies are risky, as they invite criticism and intolerance. Yet—as we can see by the play's enormous popularity with its first audiences and readers—these risky strategies also offer the possibility of great rewards.

NOTES

[1] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 225.

[2] All quotations from *Pericles* are from the Arden Third Series edition of *Pericles*, edited by Suzanne Gossett (London, 2004).

[3] For an overview of this critical commonplace, see David Skeele, "*Pericles* in Criticism and Production: A Brief History," in *Pericles: Critical Essays*, ed. David Skeele (New York: Garland Pub, 2000), esp. 19.

[4] We are introduced to the brothel in the bustling capital city of Lesbos through the brothel owners Pander and his wife the Bawd, who are instructing their servant Bolt to go to the market to buy "fresh" (IV.ii.9) virginal women, since their current supply of "poor three" (IV.ii.7) prostitutes cannot keep up with the city's demand. Not only are there too few prostitutes, the three they have are no longer desirable: "The stuff we have, a strong wind will blow it to pieces, they are so pitifully sodden" (IV.ii.16-17). Bolt fetches back from the market none other than our heroine Marina, who has been unlucky enough to be kidnapped by pirates from her foster family in Tarsus and brought to Mytilene to be sold into prostitution. Mytilene governor Lysimachus comes to the brothel as a customer who has paid to take Marina's maidenhead, just one of the many "gallants" that Pander says "Mytilene is full of" (IV.ii.3-4).

[5] Duncan-Jones, *Shakespeare: An Ungentle Life*, 241.

[6] Philip Edwards, "Introduction," in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 25.

[7] Margaret Healy, "*Pericles* and the Pox," in *Shakespeare's Romances*, ed. Alison Thorne (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

[8] Edwards, "Introduction," 31, emphasis mine.

[9] Suzanne Gossett, "Introduction," in *Pericles* (London: Arden Shakespeare, Third Series, 2004), 48, emphasis mine.

[10] Roger Warren, "Introduction," in *A Reconstructed Text of Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, ed. Roger Warren (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 78, emphasis mine.

[11] Edwards, "Introduction," 31.

[12] Warren, "Introduction," 78.

[13] Gossett, "Introduction," 48.

[14] "crux, n." OED Online. June 2015. Oxford University Press. www.oed.com/view/Entry/45327 (accessed July 30, 2015).

[15] For the most complete defense of this theory of *Pericles*' co-authorship, see Macdonald P. Jackson, *Defining Shakespeare:* Pericles *as Test Case* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[16] All three plays, perhaps not coincidentally, were co-authored.

[17] Jonson, "Excerpt from *Ode to Himself*," 34.

[18] Dryden, "Miscellany Poems: Containing a New Translation of Virgills Eclogues, Ovid's Love Elegies, Odes of Horace, and Other Authors, with Several Original Poems."

[19] Cleon denounces Dionyza when she tells him her wicked plot against Marina: "O Dionyza, such a piece of slaughter / The sun and moon ne'er looked upon … Of all the faults beneath the heavens the gods / Do like this worst … Thou art like the harpy, / Which to betray dost use thine angel's face / To seize with thine eagle's talons" (IV.iii.2–3, 20–1, 45–7). Cleon's fear and disgust of his wife is strongly reminiscent of Albany with his wife Goneril: "O Goneril, / You are not worth the dust which the rude wind / Blows in your face" (*King Lear,* IV.ii.30–2). Dionyza mocks her husband in response: "Ye're like one that superstitiously / Do swear to th' gods that winter kills the flies" (IV.iii.48–9). Dionyza, here, sounds unmistakably like Edmund: "This is the excellent foppery of the world … an admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition on the charge of a star!" (*King Lear,* I.ii.108–116).

[20] Leeds Barroll, *Politics, Plague and Shakespeare's Theatre: The Stuart Years* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 173.

[21] Unlike the prefatory letter "A neuer writer, to an euer reader" that was appended to the *Troilus and Cressida* First Quarto—printed in the same year as *Pericles*' First Quarto—the title page of *Pericles* presents the play's popularity in performance as a selling point.

[22] Hallett Darius Smith, "Introduction to *Pericles*," in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 1527.

[23] E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 335.

[24] Gossett, "Introduction," 4.

[25] "He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary … That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an excremental whiteness" (John Milton, "Areopagitica," in *John Milton: The Major Works*, ed. Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991], 247–48).

[26] Edmond Malone, "In Defense of *Pericles*," in *Pericles: Critical Essays*, ed. David Skeele (New York: Garland Pub, 2000), 41.

[27] Malone, 41.

[28] Edwards, "Introduction," 31, emphasis mine.

[29] Warren, "Introduction," 50.

[30] Edmond Malone, *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare* (London: H. Baldwin for J. Rivington and sons, 1790).

[31] In the preface to the volume of *Shakespeare Survey* that includes Edwards' "An Approach to the Problem of Pericles," editor Allardyce Nicoll asserts, "Through the diverse studies carried out in this field, a surer approach is being made towards the preparation of a text which shall come as close as may be to what Shakespeare intended; and, at the same time, we are being brought considerably nearer to an intimate appreciation of the author's meaning" ("Preface," *Shakespeare Survey* 5 [1952]: v).

[32] F. G. Fleay, "On the Play of *Pericles* (1874)," in *Pericles: Critical Essays*, ed. David Skeele (New York: Garland Pub, 2000), 59.

[33] Fleay, 60. The perfect and organic whole is precisely what Shakespeare is against in his romances—like incest, it is overly fitting, overly coherent, overly pure.

[34] Skeele, "*Pericles* in Criticism and Production: A Brief History," 5.

[35] Warren, "Introduction," 2.

[36] Warren, 49.

[37] Duncan-Jones, *Shakespeare: An Ungentle Life*, 237–41. Duncan-Jones' objection to Wilkins does not extend to the general notion of co-authorship; compare this description to her far more positive characterization of the playwright's relationship with another collaborator, John Marston: "In 1600 … Shakespeare had worked in friendly collusion and competition with a talented younger man, John Marston" (240).

[38] For more on how the texts of printed books in the Renaissance have been "transformed, even disfigured, by the twentieth-century editorial processes to which they have been subjected" (3), see Leah Marcus, *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton* (London: Routledge, 1996).

[39] Edwards, "Introduction," 23.

[40] In his textual note to the play in the 2nd edition of the Norton Shakespeare, Walter Cohen remarks, "For every other Shakespearean play … at least one early printed version apparently draws directly on either an authorial manuscript or a scribal transcript of it, such as a promptbook. … Since no reasonably authoritative text of *Pericles* exists, even the claim that Q1 is a report of a performance cannot depend on comparison with a presumably more accurate version but must rely on internal evidence alone" (Walter Cohen, "Textual Note to *Pericles*," in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al., 2nd ed., vol. 2 (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008), 997.).

[41] Gossett, "Introduction," 43.

[42] Gossett, 51.

[43] Gossett, 52.

[44] "In Marston's *Dutch Courtesan* (1605) Freevil is prepared to 'resign' the courtesan he has been maintaining because he is about to marry the pure Beatrice, who is happy to have him. … In *Philaster* (1608-10) the Spanish prince Pharamond's unsuitability as a husband for Princess Arathusa is demonstrated by signs that he will be unable to make the required transition from bachelor freedom to married fidelity. … In a sinister variant, Ilford, in Wilkins's *Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, learning of his father's death, announces his intention 'shortly to goe to Church, and from thence do faithfull seruice to one woman.' His friends object, 'Its impossible, for thou hast bin a whoremayster this seauen yeare'" (Gossett, 52).

[45] John Arthos, "Pericles, Prince of Tyre: A Study in the Dramatic Use of Romantic Narrative," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 4 (1953): 268.

[46] Fleay, "On the Play of *Pericles* (1874)," 60.

[47] Arthos, "A Study in the Dramatic Use of Romantic Narrative," 268.

[48] Frye, *The Secular Scripture*.

[49] Fredric Jameson, "Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre," *New Literary History* 7 (1975): 135–63; Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981).

[50] Parker, *Inescapable Romance*.

[51] David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[52] Margaret Doody, *The True Story of the Novel* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996).

[53] This definition of "literary" appears in Erne's preface to the second edition to his monumental study, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*. Reflecting on the reception of his book ten years after its initial publication, Erne is on the defensive when he offers up this definition of "literary," notable for the ways in which he defines the term by what it is not: "'Literary' does not mean 'untheatrical,' nor does the term save Shakespeare from the masses, 'the smoky breath of the multitude,' and claim him for the happy few. Nor, indeed, is 'literary' synonymous with 'print.' The phrase 'literary dramatist' encapsulates at once a style of writing, *an anticipated readerly reception*, a claim for generic respectability, and an authorial ambition. What it does not mean is that Shakespeare was not simultaneously a man of the theater" (Lukas Erne, "Preface to the Second Edition," in *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, 2nd ed. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013], 4, emphases mine).

[54] Skeele, "*Pericles* in Criticism and Production: A Brief History," 21.

[55] For a brief survey of critics who have described the "congruency between first scene and last," see Skeele, 19.

[56] Algernon Charles Swinburne, *Pericles and Other Studies* (London: Private Circulation, 1914), 15.

[57] Maxwell, "Introduction," xxix, emphasis mine.

[58] Skeele, "*Pericles* in Criticism and Production: A Brief History," 20, emphasis mine.

[59] Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Robert M. Adams (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), passim.

[60] "Come your ways, my masters. You say she's a virgin?" "O sir, we doubt it not" (IV.ii.37-9).

[61] In *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities*, Jonathan Goldberg makes a similar argument about the way in which critics have tended to misunderstand Prince Hal's relationship to Falstaff: "Serving this legitimizing function, Falstaff is not the infantilism or the bad father the prince leaves behind, as Bevington and so many others have claimed; for Hal's ultimate self-sufficiency is a self-love that incorporates Falstaff's desire, in much the same way as he acquires the mantle of Hotspur's honor" (*Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992], 150).

[62] From Edmund Spenser, "The Faerie Queene," in *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, ed. Andrew D. Hadfield and Anne Lake Prescott (New York: W.W. Norton, 2014):

> It fortunèd, out of the thickest wood
> A ramping lyon rushèd suddeinly,
> Hunting full greedy after salvage blood:
> Soone as the royall virgin he did spy,
> With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,
> To have attonce devoured her tender corse;
> But to the pray whenas he drew more ny,
> His bloody rage aswagèd with remorse
> And, with the sight amazd, forgat his furious forse.

> Instead thereof, he kist her wearie feet,
> And lickt her lilly hands with fawning tong
> As he her wrongèd innocence did weet.
> O how can beautie maister the most strong,
> And simple truth subdue avenging wrong! (III.10–23)

[63] From Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985):

> Suddenly there came out of a wood a monstrous lion, with a she-bear of little less fierceness, which, having been hunted in forests far off, had by chance come to this place where such beasts had never before been seen. … the sweet Philoclea no sooner espied the ravenous lion but that, opening her arms, she fell so right upon the breast of Cleophila … and so drawing her [Cleophila's] sword, waited the present assault of the lion who, seeing Philoclea fly away, suddenly turned after her. … she ran as fast as her delicate legs could carry her towards the lodge after the fugitive shepherds. Cleophila, seeing how greedily the lion went after the prey she herself so much desired, it seemed all her spirits were kindled with an unwonted fire; so that, equaling the lion in swiftness, she overtook him as he was ready to have seized himself of his beautiful chase … he fell down, and gave Cleophila leisure to take off his head to carry it for a present to her lady Philoclea. (42–3)

[64] Macbeth's first line of the play: "So foul and fair a day I have not seen" (I.iii.36).
[65] Anne Barton, "Shakespeare and the Limits of Language," *Shakespeare Survey* 24 (1971): 29.
[66] Maxwell, "Introduction," 162, IV.i.80n.
[67] William Shakespeare, *A Reconstructed Text of Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 177, 127–9n, emphases mine.
[68] Shakespeare, 177, 127–9n.
[69] The critical assumption that Marina does not change over the course of the play is part of the larger sexist assumption that only men learn, and that women exist as positive or negative examples for men's education. For more, see Jeffrey Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).
[70] Indeed, I cannot read Marina's speech without recalling Lear's deeply, profoundly moving appeal to Cordelia:

> No, no, no, no. Come, let's away to prison,
> We two alone will sing like birds i'th' cage.
> When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down
> And ask of thee forgiveness; so we'll live,
> And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
> At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
> Talk of court news, and we'll talk with them too—
> Who loses and who wins, who's in, who's out,
> And take upon 's the mystery of things
> As if we were God's spies; and we'll wear out
> In a walled prison packs and sects of great ones
> That ebb and flow by th' moon. (V.iii.8–19)

Whereas Marina imagines herself imprisoned both physically and psychically, able to escape only by a fantastical metamorphosis into a bird, Lear sees the possibility of transcendence and freedom in his reunion with his daughter. And it is no accident, I think, that the picture that Lear paints for Cordelia of their freedom in imprisonment centers on prayers, song, and the telling of "old tales"—the stuff, in other words, of romance.
[71] "The Bawd advises her in economic terms: 'You have fortunes coming upon you. Mark me, you must seem to do that fearfully which you commit willingly, to despise profit where you have most gain. To weep that you live as ye do makes pity in your lovers. Seldom but that pity begets you a good opinion, and that opinion a mere profit' (16.101–06). … With commerce almost reduced to the oldest profession, a profession widely practiced in the neighborhoods around

the theaters, the play implicitly links itself to the very activity that it simultaneously depicts Marina nobly resisting" (Walter Cohen, "Introduction to *Pericles*," in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al., 2nd ed., vol. 2 [New York: W.W. Norton, 2008], 994).

[72] This is Amelia Zurcher's claim, though as part of a very different argument about *Pericles* as a Stoic rejection of the Renaissance humanist notion of history's utility for the present: "Against utility *Pericles* does, after all, set truth-truth not in the sense of verifiable facts, but rather as sincerity, specifically sincerity of emotion in the face of real pain and exigency. This glancing condemnation of the present, perhaps particularly of contemporary theater, may suggest that *Pericles* owes more to the context of politic ideology than might at first seem the case. The problem with speech is that it may not reflect real feeling and may instead counterfeit passion. The solution is to invent a Stoicism so rigorous that it can be realized only in silence or death, effectively removing the subject from any context in which she might have self-interest" ("Untimely Monuments: Stoicism, History, and the Problem of Utility in *The Winter's Tale* and *Pericles*," *ELH* 70 [2003]: 921).

[73] Warren, "Introduction."

[74] See also Roger Warren, "Theatrical Use and Editorial Abuse: More Painful Adventures for *Pericles*," *The Review of English Studies* 49 (1998): 478–86.

[75] "Shakespeare unequivocally includes—indeed implicates—the audience in the action. The spectators are drawn into the process of storytelling and mutual enlightenment promised for the stage-characters by the responsibility thrust on them to 'express content.' The success or failure, acceptance or rejection of the 'happy ending' hinges crucially upon the approval of the observers" (Dennis Kay, "'To Hear the Rest Untold': Shakespeare's Postponed Endings," *Renaissance Quarterly* 37 [1984]: 218).

[76] Philip Edwards, "An Approach to the Problem of Pericles," *Shakespeare Survey* 5 (1952): 44.

[77] Warren, "Introduction," 50.

[78] Valerie Wayne, "Political and Textual Corruption in *Pericles*" (Unpublished paper for *Pericles* seminar, Shakespeare Association of America, 1999).

[79] Warren, "Introduction," 50.

[80] William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto*, ed. Michael J. B. Allen and Kenneth Muir (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 779.

[81] George Wilkins, "The Painful Adventures of Pericles Prince of Tyre (1608)," in *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough, vol. 6 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 536.

[82] Maxwell, "Introduction," xiv.

[83] Edwards, "Introduction," 22–26.

[84] Warren, "Introduction," 50–51.

[85] Antiochus' riddle is even easier than the riddle of the caskets in *Merchant of Venice*, because the answer is revealed to us before the riddle is actually told, before the play properly begins, in Gower's Prologue: "This king unto him took a fere / Who died, and left a female heir … With whom the father liking took, / And her to incest did provoke" (I.0.21–27).

[86] Lysimachus requests a virginal prostitute, in order to avoid contracting venereal disease: "Wholesome iniquity have you, that a man may deal withal and defy the surgeon?" (IV.v.33-4)

[87] Edwards, "Introduction," 26.

[88] Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia)*, 5.

[89] Sidney, 5–6.

[90] Sidney, 10.

[91] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 243–44.

[92] According to Edwards, "This line is the key to the play, and perhaps to the whole group of Shakespeare's late Romances" (188, V.i.196n).

[93] Cohen, "Introduction to *Pericles*," 995.

Chapter Two
"That wide gap": Disunified Time in *The Winter's Tale*

> Of time they are much more liberal [than of place]. For ordinary it is that
> two young princes fall in love, after many traverses she is got with child,
> delivered of a fair boy, he is lost, groweth a man, falls in love, and is ready to
> get another child—and all this in two hours' space, which how absurd it is in
> sense, even sense may imagine, and art hath taught, and all ancient examples
> justified, and at this day the ordinary players in Italy will not err in.—Sir
> Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*[1]

Midway through *The Winter's Tale*, Time himself strides onto the stage and announces:

> I, that please some, try all; both joy and terror
> Of good and bad, that makes and unfolds error,
> Now take upon me, in the name of Time,
> To use my wings. (IV.i.1–4)[2]

At first blush, Time looks like another Shakespearean Chorus, who comments metatheatrically on the play's action and bridges the occasional gap in the plot. The most famous example, of course, is from *Henry V*, which begins with the Chorus' appeal to the audience's imagination, asking us to close the gap between the great actions and persons of the English past and what's being presented to us now onstage:

> Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts …
> For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
> Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times,
> Turning th'accomplishment of many years
> Into an hourglass. (Prologue, 23–31)

In other words, *Henry V* asks its audience to smooth over its dramatic inconsistencies—"Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts." In so doing, the play suggests that unity and consistency, and our willingness to bridge any gaps in the play with our own imagination, are required to make the play "work." The obsequiousness of *Henry V*'s Chorus is typical of Prologues and Epilogues in Shakespeare's plays, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *As You Like It*, *Pericles*, and *The Tempest*, which request our patience, forgiveness, and imagination to amend the shortcomings of the stage.[3]

But while the Choruses of these plays flatter and defer to their audiences, Time in *The Winter's Tale* puts the audience in its place: "I, that please some, try all." In *Henry V*, we are the ones

who are "jumping o'er time" and "turning … an hourglass." In *The Winter's Tale*, Time claims that power solely for himself:

> Impute it not a crime
> To me or *my* swift passage that *I* slide
> O'er sixteen years, and leave the growth untried
> Of that wide gap, since it is in *my* power
> To o'erthrow law, and in one self-born hour
> To plant and o'erwhelm custom. …
> Your patience this allowing,
> *I* turn *my* glass, and give my scene such growing
> As you had slept between. (IV.i.4–17, emphases mine)

If other Shakespearean Choruses flatter us into believing that our active participation is required for the play to 'work,' Time insists on our passivity: "As you had slept between." His nominal gesture toward soliciting our forgiveness—"Your patience this allowing"—is more stern schoolteacher to her unruly class than humble artist to his patron. In sum, while *Henry V* calls attention to the artifice of drama in order to ameliorate drama's unavoidable shortcomings—by soliciting our forgiveness and imaginative participation—*The Winter's Tale* does so in order to compound its artifice, inconsistencies, and disunity. Time not only deliberately creates a "wide gap" of time in between Acts III and IV, he also does so unapologetically, ordering us to "Impute it not a crime."

In its treatment of time, *The Winter's Tale* closely resembles the English plays of the 1570s that Sidney disparages in the *Defence*:

> Of time they are much more liberal [than of place]. For ordinary it is that two young princes fall in love, after many traverses she is got with child, delivered of a fair boy, he is lost, groweth a man, falls in love, and is ready to get another child—and all this in two hours' space, which how absurd it is in sense, even sense may imagine, and art hath taught, and all ancient examples justified, and at this day the ordinary players in Italy will not err in.[4]

Sidney roundly criticizes these plays' treatments of time for the way they depict, in "two hours' space," events that span many years. This critique is part of Sidney's larger account of drama, which must obey the classical unities of time and place:

> Place and time [are] the two necessary companions of all corporal actions. … the stage should always represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be … but one day.[5]

But whereas unified time is *de rigueur* for drama, disunified time is the distinguishing structural feature of romance, with its endlessly wandering plots. Time, then, is the central problem for the romance dramatist, for the poetics of romance time—delay and deferral—and the poetics of theater time—bounded and unified—would seem to be utterly incompatible. That incompatibility between theater time and romance time is on full display in both Sidney's account of English drama in the

1570s and *The Winter's Tale*, in which sixteen years of "story time" pass in mere minutes of "stage time," to use Brian Richardson's language.[6] Thanks to Time, Perdita perfectly fulfills Sidney's description of the young prince, only as a young princess ("he is lost, groweth a man, falls in love, and is ready to get another child—and all this in two hours' space").

Why does Sidney insist on the unity of time? The common assumption is that Sidney wants drama to be verisimilar—for the stage's depiction of time to resemble "true" or "real" time as we experience it. This is perhaps what he means when he claims that the unity of time is understood by "common reason," and that disunified time is "absurd in sense." However, elsewhere in the *Defence*, Sidney argues explicitly that poesy is not in pursuit of verisimilitude at all:

> The poet never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writes. … What child is there, that, coming to a play, and seeing *Thebes* written in great letters upon an old door, doth believe that it is Thebes?[7]

It is telling that Sidney chooses to use a *theatrical* example to rebut the criticism that poesy "lies," for it is in the theater that the gap between our world and the poet's world is put in sharpest relief. Not even a child, Sidney tells us, could be fooled into believing that the theater's representation of Thebes is real—and indeed, poets do not seek to conjure such foolish belief. At the root of Sidney's account of the dramatic unities, then, is not a concern for verisimilitude, for he takes no issue with the gap between *what* is being represented (Thebes; sixteen years) and *how* it is being represented (an old door; two minutes).

Rather, Sidney takes issue with the *inconsistency* of theatrical representation that inevitably emerges when a play disobeys the unities: when a play forces its audience to see the stage as not just Thebes, but Asia *and* Africa *and* "so many other under-kingdoms" simultaneously; to imagine the same stage to be first a garden, then a rock, then a cave, then a "pitched field"; to understand that one character is being represented by two different actors: first by a boy actor, then by a man. "And then what hard heart will not receive it [as such]?" Sidney concludes rhetorically, sardonically: "How absurd it is in sense." If earlier the absurdity lay in the idea of anyone believing that a stage is *actually* Thebes, here the absurdity lies in the idea of anyone being able to follow all the rapid shifts in representation in a disunified play, which, as Sidney reminds us, can only be signaled within the play by "the player, when he cometh in, who must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived."[8] By unifying time, then, Sidney's theater empowers the playwright to maintain consistency and control of representation, and to avoid relying on players.

Sidney's intolerance of gaps in dramatic time is often echoed, if implicitly, by modern scholars of *The Winter's Tale*. In the first half of the twentieth century, scholars tended to see the character of Time as "a desperate attempt to tidy over the Romance breach of the unities,"[9] a crude and awkward solution to the problem of the play's temporal disunity:

> Sometimes the figure of Father Time is used as a mere device to indicate the lapse of months, years, or centuries, as in Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*, where Time appears as Chorus before the fifth act.[10]

> Having to skip sixteen years after Act 3, [Shakespeare] desperately drags in Father Time with an hour-glass ... which means on interpretation that Shakespeare, having proposed to himself a drama in which a wronged woman has to bear a child, who has to be lost for years and restored to her as a grown girl, simply did not know how to do it, save by invoking some such device.[11]

Beginning in the 1950s, however, scholars began to reevaluate the structure of *The Winter's Tale* in a more flattering light.[12] Today, scholars see Time's appearance in *The Winter's Tale* as something more intentional than a mere "substitute for a programme note of something like 'Act IV: Sixteen years later.'"[13] However, in the course of defending Shakespeare's artistic competence, scholars continue to take for granted, as Sidney does, that the play's violation of the unity of time is a problem that must be remediated. But whereas Sidney gives the responsibility of remediation to the playwrights, modern scholars give that responsibility to the play's audience.

One way that modern scholars smooth over Time's appearance onstage, and other gaps and inconsistencies in *The Winter's Tale*, is to suggest that such gaps open up a space to celebrate the unique power of theatrical illusion and poetic faith—often centering on Paulina's famous injunction, "It is required / You do awake your faith."[14] As Stephen Orgel puts it, "Leontes' ultimate salvation lies precisely in his ability to make metaphysical leaps of faith, to move beyond the immediacies of facts and evidence."[15] And just as the statue scene is a test of Leontes' faith, so, too, are the play's gaps and inconsistencies a test of *our* faith. In his recent study *Faith in Shakespeare*, Richard McCoy draws substantially on Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief" to interpret time and Time in *The Winter's Tale*:

> Proponents of the unities of space and time as well as genre do indeed regard their violation as a crime, but poetic license allows for greater latitude. Shakespeare's Time asks for our willing suspension of disbelief in a manifest illusion, and he reminds us this depends on our cooperation and imaginative participation.[16]

In other words, McCoy sees Time as just another Shakespearean Chorus that begs for and "depends on" our "imaginative participation."[17] Other scholars foreground genre—either romance or the medieval tradition of miracle plays[18]—as a way to explain the play's inconsistencies and contradictions, which, as John Pitcher puts it, "common sense tells us ... [are] impossible":

> [Some scholars] see in the contradiction—Hermione surpassing the deadness of the spectre and the statue, her life outdoing un-life—the grounds for a redemptive miracle, modeled on the Christian mystery of resurrection. Romance is the literary form in which contradictions like these thrive. ... Romance is the place for delusion.[19]

Yet, as Michael D. Bristol explains, such interpretations problematically require that the play's audience forgive anything and everything:

> *The Winter's Tale* is a tale of romance, and this amounts to a general warrant for the suspension of all norms of accurate history and geography, not to mention logical or

psychological consistency. … But why should such sweeping artistic license be demanded, and why should a reader grant any text such sweeping indulgence?[20]

Indeed, both lines of argument—theatrical faith and generic convention—imagine that *The Winter's Tale* needs the audience to "indulge" and "forgive" its gaps, in the same way that *Henry V* explicitly does. If gaps and inconsistencies are "absurdities" to be solved, then faith and acceptance of generic convention are the remedial forces that the audience must bring to the theater. Our faith, in this context, means bridging the gap between the literal and the figurative—willingly suspending our disbelief, to give ourselves over to theatrical illusion. And our acceptance of the generic conventions of romance and miracle plays means granting the play our "sweeping indulgence" of all logical inconsistencies. But such an interpretation requires, in effect, that we be even more naïve than the child who instinctively understands that the old door onstage isn't really Thebes.

It is true that the *The Winter's Tale* defies the unity of time and Sidney's view of theater. The play covers the longest span of dramatic time—sixteen years—of all of Shakespeare's plays, and puts Time himself onstage as an embodied, speaking character. But the play unequivocally tells us *not* to fix its ostentatious temporal gaps: "Impute it not a crime … [that I] leave the growth untried / Of that wide gap." Furthermore, the first half of the play parodies Sidney's unity of time: the breakneck pace of events in Acts I through III, which considerably condenses the plot of its prose source text *Pandosto* and outdoes *Othello* in its speed from the male protagonist's feelings of contented marriage to his murderous jealousy,[21] demonstrates the absurdity and the hazards of temporal unity.[22] Sidney wants everything to happen all at once, and Shakespeare represents that desire as pathological and tyrannical through the figure of Leontes, the "jealous tyrant" of the play. Furthermore, he represents the play's breaking of the unities, which opens up "that wide gap" of time, as precisely the cure for Leontes' pathology. The gap of time in the play, in short, *is* the remedy, not the thing that is in need of remedy.

I am certainly not the first to argue for the significance of time in *The Winter's Tale*.[23] However, my focus in this chapter and the dissertation is on the *formal* challenges of adapting the literary genre of romance to the stage, which have tended to be overlooked in traditional source study and genre study approaches to Shakespeare's romances, which focus more on Shakespeare's adaptation of romance's thematic motifs.[24] Romance, with its characteristic endlessness, poses the ultimate formal challenge to the dramatic unity of time. And in turning Sidney's model of unified drama upside down, *The Winter's Tale* dramatizes Shakespeare's opposition to Sidney, and exemplifies Shakespeare's defense of romance drama and its disunified temporality.

"Methoughts I did recoil / Twenty-three years": Mingling Times

Thematizing the 'problem' of disunified time, *The Winter's Tale* begins with the challenge of maintaining a long-distance relationship. The play opens with two courtiers, Camillo of Sicilia and Archidamus of Bohemia, describing the strong political alliance between their two kingdoms in spite of a "great difference betwixt" them (I.i.3–4). This unusually strong political bond is a direct result of the personal bond of their kings, Leontes and Polixenes, who grew up together. However, time

and "their more mature dignities and royal necessities" have since physically separated them—Leontes must rule Sicilia, and Polixenes Bohemia.

Yet the two kings have found an artificial solution to overcome the vast distance betwixt them, and to sustain their natural childhood bond into adulthood: surrogacy. As Camillo explains,

> Their encounters—though not personal—hath been royally attorneyed with interchange of gifts, letters, loving embassies, that they have seemed to be together, though absent; shook hands as over a vast; and embraced as it were from the ends of opposed winds. (I.i.26–31)

Through diplomatic conventions, or the artifice of political surrogacy, Leontes and Polixenes have remained closely coupled throughout the years, to the extent that Archidamus believes, portentously, that their bond will continue into the future: "I think there is not in the world either malice or matter to alter it" (I.i.32–3). The conversation then turns to the two kings' sons, implicitly suggesting that the sons will sustain the political alliance of the two kingdoms into the next generation. Surrogacy works by metonymy, where "gifts, letters, loving embassies" and children represent, stand in for, and act on behalf of the loved one, so that "they have seemed to be together, though absent." Leontes and Polixenes have thus found a solution to their problem of disunified time and place: the political surrogacy of diplomatic envoys, and the biological surrogacy of children, both of which act as artificial extensions of the two kings.

However, when the play begins, there is no apparent need for surrogacy, for the two friends are together in Sicilia. In fact, as Polixenes reveals, they have been together in Sicilia for the past nine months. Now, Polixenes says, he is anxious to return home to his "throne" and "burden" (I.ii.2–3). Leontes demurs; Polixenes demurs back. Rather than continue to press the issue himself, Leontes gives his wife the task of persuading Polixenes to stay—in essence, he has his wife act on his behalf as his surrogate. But because the three of them are in the same place at the same time, a very peculiar conversational dynamic ensues:

> POLIXENES. Press me not, beseech you, so.
>   There is no tongue that moves, none, none i'th' world
>   So soon as yours, could win me. …
> LEONTES. Tongue-tied, our queen? Speak you.
> HERMIONE.   … Tell him you are sure
>   All in Bohemia's well … Say this to him,
>   He's beat from his best ward.
> LEONTES.   Well said, Hermione.
> HERMIONE. To tell he longs to see his son were strong,
>   But let him say so then, and let him go;
>   But let him swear so and he shall not stay,
>   We'll thwack him hence with distaffs.
>   [*To Polixenes*] Yet of your royal presence I'll adventure
>   The borrow of a week. (I.ii.19–39)

In declaring emphatically that Leontes' "tongue" and no other ("none, none i'th' world") could move and win him over, Polixenes rejects surrogacy. But Leontes, perversely, responds by calling forth Hermione's "tongue" to stand in the place of his. Hermione initially tries to please both men, by indirectly telling Leontes what to say to Polixenes rather than speaking directly to her husband's friend: "Tell him … Say this to him." But again, perversely, Leontes does not address his friend in his own tongue, and praises his wife instead: "Well said, Hermione." He then falls silent for fifty lines, allowing Hermione to take up his charge to act on his behalf and engage in witty dialogue with his friend. Leontes finally reenters the conversation by asking, "Is he won yet?" (I.ii.86), as though he had been absent all this while,[25] and then it is Polixenes' turn to fall silent, as Leontes confers with his wife, and continues to ignore his friend.

Though there are five characters onstage at this point (Mamillius and Camillo are also present), the dialogue operates solely between pairs, which slide around easily—too easily, as we shall soon see—first Polixenes and Leontes, then Leontes and Hermione, then Hermione and Polixenes, then Hermione and Leontes again. In short, the scene operates as though the three of them were still separated by time and distance,[26] and had to communicate through surrogacy. Indeed, by insisting that Hermione act as his surrogate with Polixenes, Leontes betrays his excessive need for surrogacy. The point of surrogacy is to create a metonymic illusion of presence in absence, to collapse artificially the "wide gap of time" and distance through representation. However, surrogacy is unnecessary when there is no longer a gap of time and distance. So then, why does Leontes continue to insist on surrogacy when his wife, friend, son, and counselor are all with him in the same place and time?

To understand Leontes' strange insistence on surrogacy in this scene, we must understand the way that surrogacy not only artificially collapses distance, but also, paradoxically, maintains difference. Surrogacy invests someone or something else—gifts, letters, loving embassies, children—with the power to act on another's behalf across distances of time and space, even death. That is, surrogacy aims to generate an artificial unity—for two people to seem to be together "from the ends of opposed winds." But like the old door that stands in for Thebes, surrogacy is not intended to trick anyone into believing that the surrogate *is* the person it represents. Rather, surrogacy maintains a conscientious distinction between the representation and the represented, underscores the difference between the two. For Leontes, then, the use of surrogates to sustain his friendship with Polixenes is not merely a solution for artificially overcoming temporal and spatial distance. More importantly, surrogacy is a way for Leontes to distinguish himself from his friend who, in childhood, was indistinguishable from him.

Polixenes reminds him of this fact, when Hermione asks him to tell her about "My lord's tricks and yours when you were boys" (I.ii.61). He responds nostalgically:

> POLIXENES.   We were, fair queen,
>   Two lads that thought there was no more behind
>   But such a day tomorrow as today,
>   And to be boy eternal.
> HERMIONE.   Was not my lord
>   The verier wag o'th' two?
> POLIXNES. We were as twinned lambs that did frisk i'th' sun

> And bleat the one at th'other: what we changed
> Was innocence for innocence; we knew not
> The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dreamed
> That any did. Had we pursued that life,
> And our weak spirits ne'er been higher reared
> With stronger blood, we should have answered heaven
> Boldly, 'not guilty', the imposition cleared
> Hereditary ours. (I.ii.62–75)

According to Polixenes, the innocence of childhood is marked by a sense of indistinguishability—between oneself and another, and between one day and the next. In a single sentence, he slides from describing the two of them as "Two lads" to identifying them as a singular "boy eternal." When Hermione playfully asks him who was the more mischievous one, Polixenes reasserts their absolute equivalence and identicality: they were "twinned lambs" that frisked together, bleated together, and exchanged "innocence for innocence." Throughout his speech, he exclusively uses the first person plural, conjoining him and Leontes grammatically in every thought and action. The childish mind, according to Polixenes, experiences both time and the self as sameness and stasis, without change and without difference. Such a place, as Polixenes implies with his oblique reference to the Garden of Eden, is unmarked by change or death; is, in fact, endless, and outside of time.[27]

Furthermore, by casting young Leontes and himself in the role of the lambs, and not the shepherds, Polixenes accentuates the absolute difference between their twinned childhood and their mature, separate adulthood. Characterizing their maturation process as an interspecies metamorphosis from animal to man, Polixenes suggests that their past and present are completely separate. That their pastoral, prelapsarian twinned lamb-hood is irrevocably lost to the past is reiterated grammatically, in his use of the pluperfect subjunctive, contrary-to-fact ("Had we … we should have"). The remoteness of their innocent past compared to their postlapsarian present is echoed by Hermione, who teases him in the same allusive register: "By this we gather / You have *tripped* since" (75–6); "Of this [speech] make no conclusion, lest you say / Your queen and I are *devils* … with us / You did continue *fault*" (81–5, emphases mine). In other words, what finally transformed the twinned lambs into separate adult men was their encounter with women—"your queen and I." As Polixenes says proleptically, "In those unfledged days was my wife a girl; / Your precious self had then not crossed the eyes / Of my young playfellow" (78–80). This is the first time he uses the first person singular and the possessive to describe their childhood —"*my* wife," "*your* precious self," "the eyes of *my* young playfellow"—in anticipation of the moment that the two boys began to look in different directions with their own eyes, the beginning of their separation from one another, their burgeoning individuation.

Childhood, in Polixenes' account, is thus principally defined by the fantasies of that age, fantasies that seemed then to be not merely plausible, but simply true: to be a boy forever, twinned with your friend, "tomorrow as today." But this sense of being twins forever, with complete unity between one's self and one's friend, and between past and present, is a fantasy endemic to and appropriate only for children, as Polixenes recognizes. At the start of the play, his desire to return to Bohemia is occasioned by his nine months absence from his throne, his affairs, and his son. Polixenes explains, "I am questioned by my fears of what may chance / Or breed upon our absence,

that may blow / No sneaping winds at home to make us say / This is put forth too truly" (11–14). When Leontes asks him for one more week together, Polixenes insists, "'Twere needful I denied it [your request]. My affairs / Do even drag me homeward" (23–4). For Polixenes, the childish sense of indistinguishability between self and other, past and present is irrevocably lost to time, and is now only the stuff of nostalgic reminiscing.

For Leontes, however, that sense of indistinguishability persists threateningly. In the presence of his friend, son, and visibly pregnant wife all at once, Leontes watches, horrified, as distinctions begin to dissolve:

>   Looking on the lines
> Of my boy's face, methoughts I did recoil
> Twenty-three years, and saw myself unbreeched,
> In my green velvet coat; my dagger muzzled,
> Lest it should bite its master, and so prove,
> As ornaments oft does, too dangerous.
> How like, methought, I then was to this kernel,
> This squash, this gentleman. (I.ii.153–60)

He "recoil[s]" at the sight of his beloved son in both senses of the word: he returns—recoils—to the past, because his son looks just like he did at that age; and he is repulsed—recoiled—by the memory of himself at that age, knowing in hindsight the fall that was to come. The phallic "dagger muzzled" that he carried as a child is not a blunted "ornament" or child's toy, but a "dangerous" weapon that promises betrayal and self-inflicted violence—it is muzzled "lest it should bite its master." To Leontes, his son's likeness to himself is a fearful thing: it means that he is not adequately differentiated from his son. Similarly, Leontes fears that he is not adequately differentiated from his wife, who has asserted that she is his equal ("A lady's verily is / As potent as a lord's" [I.ii.50-1]), and who has acted successfully in his stead to convince his friend to stay. Nor does Leontes feel adequately differentiated from his friend, who has been living with him for the past nine months, and is now playfully, easily bantering with his wife. And later, when he recoils from his infant daughter, her resemblance to him is not comforting proof of her paternity, but is even more horrifying than his son's resemblance—she is a him that not only isn't him, but is a her:

> LEONTES.   This brat is none of mine. …
> PAULINA.   It is yours,
>   And might we lay th'old proverb to your charge,
>   So like you, 'tis the worse. Behold, my lords,
>   Although the print be little, the whole matter
>   And copy of the father—eye, nose, lip,
>   The trick of's frown, his forehead, nay, the valley,
>   The pretty dimples of his chin and cheek, his smiles,
>   The very mould and frame of hand, nail, finger. …
> LEONTES.   A gross hag! …
>   My child? Away with't! …

See it instantly consumed with fire. (II.iii.91–106, 130–2)

Tellingly, Leontes never participates in Polixenes' nostalgic recollection of their shared childhood. After all, Leontes doesn't want to return to the past, when he was a twinned lamb. He prefers to be the singular king, with "the matter, / The loss, the gain, the ordering on't … all / Properly ours" (II.i.168–70). Separation—and surrogacy—is his principal way of ensuring his singularity, his distinguishment, his dignity: "Since their more mature dignities and royal necessities made separation of their society" (I.i.24–6). Surrogates give the artificial appearance of unified time, but in a way that maintains difference and distinction. For Leontes, surrogacy has been a successful strategy for maintaining and underscoring distinction, and thus, his tyrannical sovereignty. But now, with everyone present, that sense of distinction has given way to a horrifying commingling of past, present, self, and other,[28] a threat to Leontes' self-sufficiency that is, ironically, exacerbated by his continued insistence on surrogacy in an effort to re-establish difference. That is, by perversely continuing to act through surrogates when there is no longer a need for them, Leontes ends up seeing threats of substitution everywhere he looks: of his friend for him, of his son for him, of his wife for him, in endlessly interchangeable and horrifying combinations. Past and present "mingle" dreadfully in his mind, just as he imagines his wife and friend "paddling palms and pinching fingers" (I.ii.115) in a wildly jealous vision that Paulina later disparages as beneath even the naïveté of children: "Fancies too weak for boys, too green and idle / For girls of nine" (III.ii.178–9).

In conforming to Sidney's structure of temporal unity in the first half of *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare makes unified time seem preposterous.[29] In fact, the first half of the play, which centers on Leontes even more insistently than *Othello* centers on its title character, is so closely and artfully knitted together that it may be surprising to many readers and audiences to know that Acts I through III cover at least twenty-three days of story time, as the following dialogue makes explicit:

> SERVANT. Cleomenes and Dion,
>   Being well arrived from Delphos, are both landed,
>   *Hasting to th' court.*
> LORD.   So please you, sir, *their speed*
>   *Hath been beyond account.*
> LEONTES.   Twenty-three days
>   They have been absent; *'tis good speed.* (III.i.193–7, emphases mine)

Here, the dialogue works hard to create the illusion of hyper-unity, even as it tells us that twenty-three days have gone by: each of the characters portrays twenty-three days not as protracted, but as inexplicably quick. The structure of the first half of the play also contributes to the play's sense of double time, by smoothing over—unifying—this three-week gap. As Inga Stina Ewbank points out,

> Although at least twenty-three days must have passed during the course of Acts II and III, the structure of events is shaped so as to give the impression that Leontes has not once stopped to think—'nor night nor day no rest.'[30]

To understand how the first half of the play achieves this illusion of unified time, as Ewbank claims, let us look briefly at the sequence of scenes leading up to this revelation. By the end of Act 1, Scene 2—a scene that effectively compresses three-quarters of the plot of *Othello*—Leontes has convinced himself of his wife's infidelity and asked Camillo to poison Polixenes; instead, Camillo and Polixenes flee Sicilia. At the end of the scene that directly follows (Act 2, Scene 1), Leontes announces that he has already "dispatched in post / To sacred Delphos, to Apollo's temple, / Cleomenes and Dion" (II.i.182–4). This announcement contributes to the illusion that some of Leontes' actions are happening "offstage." Leontes does not appear in Act 2, Scene 2 (a brief scene, only 64 lines), but he does in the next, and in the same emotional state as we last saw him in, suggesting that Leontes has not had any time to stop to think. That is, the continuity in his character contributes to our sense that not much time has passed since we last saw him. The announcement of the messengers' return comes at the end of that same scene, along with our uneasy realization that twenty-three days of "story time" have, invisibly, impossibly, already elapsed—"As [we] had slept between" (IV.i.17). In sum, the first half of the play's artfully constructed sense of unified time makes everything seem to happen *too* quickly. Our sense of the play's precipitousness amplifies our sense of Leontes' madness, just as it does in *Othello*, and makes Leontes' tyrannical decisions seem even more hasty, and thus even more absurd and intolerable.[31]

Leontes' need for distinction, his dependence on the artificial unity of surrogacy, and the incredible speed with which the tragic events of the first half of the play seem to us to take place, reveal the way that Sidney's account of dramatic unity requires artificially excluding and subordinating everything else. Like Leontes' need for surrogacy, which creates a sense of artificial unity only by preserving difference and distance—or, in Leontes' case, precisely in order to preserve difference and distance—Sidney's unity of time is tyrannical in its focus on a single action, place, and character. To understand this point, let us turn to the passage in the *Defence* in which Sidney describes how tragedy, unlike history, must "frame" its subject:

> [Tragedy is] not bound to follow the story, but having liberty either to feign a quite new matter or to frame the history to the most tragical conveniency … they must not (as Horace saith) begin *ab ovo*, but they must come to the principal point of that one action which they will represent.[32]

In other words, a play must begin *in medias res*, which means that the playwright must select the "one action" that his play will represent, rather than depict everything *ab ovo*. To illustrate his point, Sidney compares how the story of Polydorus' murder and Hecuba's revenge is rendered by Euripides—properly *in medias res*—to how a native English playwright might render it—*ab ovo*:

> Where now would one of our tragedy writers begin, but with the delivery of the child [Polydorus]? Then would he sail over into Thrace, and so spend I know not how many years, and travel numbers of places. … But where doth Euripides? Even with the finding of the body [of Polydorus], leaving the rest to be told by the spirit of Polydorus. This need no further to be enlarged; the dullest wit may conceive it.[33]

According to Sidney, Euripides' version is indisputably better because all of the action of his play (*Hecuba*) focuses on Hecuba's act of revenge in the wake of discovering the body of her murdered son. All the events prior to Hecuba's action are, as they should be, subordinated in a narrative account told by Polydorus' spirit. By contrast, the play written by Sidney's imagined English playwright (*The Trojan Tale*, perhaps?) would begin with the birth of Polydorus, then follow all his travels—"gross absurdities."

     In short, Sidney's objection to the English playwright's version, with its lack of focus on a "principal point," is that it fails to create distinction and hierarchy of action and character. Sidney's aversion to such failure of differentiation is underscored by one of the most famous passages of the *Defence*—a passage that, not coincidentally, directly follows his comparison of the English and classical playwrights—in which Sidney criticizes English playwrights for their "mingling":

> All their plays be neither right tragedies, nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns … to play a part in majestical matters with neither decency nor discretion, so as neither the admiration and commiseration, nor the right sportfulness, is by their mongrel tragi-comedy obtained. *I know Apuleius did somewhat so, but that is a thing recounted with space of time, not represented in one moment*; and I know the ancients have one or two examples of tragi-comedies, as Plautus hath *Amphitryo*; but, if we mark them well, we shall find that they never, or very daintily, match hornpipes and funerals.[34]

Acknowledging that even classical playwrights did not always represent everything at once, Sidney argues that in such a case, dramatic disunity was necessary to avoid "mingling" and maintain "discretion."[35] Sidney thus indicates that the dramatic unities are not important in and of themselves. Rather, the unities help to create and maintain hierarchical distinctions, upholding "decency," "discretion," and "daint[iness]."

     A parallel moment occurs in *The Winter's Tale*: a moment that reveals Leontes' true priorities, like the moment that Sidney criticizes "mongrel tragi-comedy." If Leontes seems to desire a sense of presence with his friend in the first scene of the play, which is devoted to describing how surrogacy creates artificial unity across temporal and geographical distance, Leontes' behavior in the second scene is telling. When he is faced with actual unity—when his friend, his wife, his children, and his courtiers are all physically present in Sicilia at the same time—he fears acutely that his power and liberty are under threat. Like Sidney, then, Leontes doesn't care about unity *per se*. He cares, above all, about distinction, which can be produced by an artificial unity that excludes and subordinates in order to center on a single thing: a king. Leontes' public shaming of Hermione later in the play vividly conveys his all-consuming desire for "distinguishment":

>   O thou thing,
> Which I'll not call a creature of thy place,
> Lest barbarism, making me the precedent,
> Should a like language use to all degrees,
> And mannerly distinguishment leave out
> Betwixt the prince and beggar. (II.i.82–8)

At the moment that Leontes is publicly condemning his wife for adultery, he talks about the way that decorum—"mannerly distinguishment"—importantly reinforces distinctions in social rank. He insists that it would be indecorous of him to call his wife what (he thinks) she is—an adulteress—because such "language" would not match her "place" as queen. Worse, if he were to fail to maintain "distinguishment," he would incite others to use "like language … to all degrees," erasing distinctions "betwixt the prince and beggar" and giving way to "barbarism"—recalling Sidney's description of the "mongrel tragi-comedy" that "mingl[es] kings and clowns." In his pathological need for artificial unity and "distinguishment" through surrogacy and decorum, Leontes exemplifies Shakespeare's opposition to Sidney's dramatic theory of temporal unity.

In sum, both Sidney and Leontes want unity of time in order to preserve power and control—their "liberty," to use Sidney's language. Sidney's unity of time looks capacious and comprehensive by containing everything at once, but it does so through exclusion and subordination. Leontes' need for surrogacy, with its use of representatives to maintain distance and difference but still create the illusion of unity, pointedly dramatizes the unity of time in Sidney's dramatic theory. *The Winter's Tale* thus demonizes Sidney's and Leontes' desire for unified time by linking that desire with their need for tyrannical, egotistical control, and showing that such hyper-unified time is contrary to how drama works. Leontes' surrogacy and Sidney's temporal unity avoid, or reduce as much as possible, embodied action, with the belief that a speaking spirit is usually preferable to an acting body. Indeed, by the end of the first half of the play, Leontes has driven away his friend, his son, his wife, his daughter, and his courtiers. The tyrannical fantasy, then, at the center of Leontes' grasping need for surrogacy—which distances him from others—and at the center of Sidney's account of drama in the *Defense*—in which the players' bodies are nuisances for the playwright to overcome through the unities—goes directly against how drama works, an art whose medium *is* the actor's body.[36]

What will loosen this tyrannical logic of unified time, it would seem, is the expansion of time.[37] And so we come to the widest gap of time in Shakespeare's oeuvre, a sixteen-year leap that is initiated by none other than Time itself. The play asks Leontes, and us, to bear conscious witness to time, not only by embodying it onstage but also by radically lengthening it—not by hours or days but by years, decades, even millennia. As Paulina says to Leontes,

> O thou tyrant,
> Do not repent these things, for they are heavier
> Than all thy woes can stir. … A thousand knees,
> Ten thousand years together, naked, fasting,
> Upon a barren mountain, and still winter
> In storm perpetual, could not move the gods
> To look that way thou wert. (III.ii.204–11)

To lengthen time on that scale is to insist on time's incommensurability and irreversibility, on *loss*, and to reject the logic of substitution on which surrogacy is predicated.

"That wide gap": Disunified Time

If the first half of the play takes pains to unify time, that strategy is overturned in the second half of the play as resolutely as Time turns his "glass." Whereas the first half of the play focuses on Leontes, Time explicitly displaces Leontes from the action of the second half of the play:

> Leontes leaving—
> Th'effects of his fond jealousies so grieving
> That he shuts up himself—imagine me,
> Gentle spectators, that I now may be
> In fair Bohemia ... and with speed so pace
> To speak of Perdita, now grown in grace.
>   ... A shepherd's daughter,
> And what to her adheres, which follows after,
> Is th'argument of Time. (IV.i.17–29)

Time justifies such displacement by pointing to the way that Leontes "shuts up himself." A passive kingdom of one at last, as Leontes has desired and pursued throughout the first half of the play, Leontes, and Sicilia, is no longer sufficient to sustain the play's focus and interest, and so Time moves the play, and our attention, to Bohemia and Perdita. (What "follows after" is the bravura sheepshearing festival scene, which, clocking in at nearly 800 lines, is the second-longest scene in all of Shakespeare's oeuvre, dazzling in its overstuffed mash-up of royals dressed as shepherds and shepherdesses, one unwittingly, dancing and singing alongside real ones in a "gallimaufry of gambols" [IV.iv.333], with a conman prowling at the margins.) And whereas the first half of the play created the illusion that actions were taking place in the "offstage" time and space, Time leaves "that wide gap" of sixteen years between Act III and Act IV deliberately "untried."[38] It is crucial that the gap is not filled in with narrative explanation, so that we feel the gap, as though we "had slept between," so that we feel a sense of what is lost and missing. As we shall see, the gap of time is the cure for Leontes' pathology.

That the play uses Time himself as a way to jump ahead by sixteen years is, to put it mildly, an unusual strategy. In fact, *The Winter's Tale* is the only Shakespeare play that features Time as a named, speaking character, complete with the familiar, iconographic trappings of Father Time with his "wings" and "glass."[39] The only play that comes close is overtly absurd: "The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby," the play-within-a-play of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which casts Robin Starveling in the role of Moonshine, a "man with lantern, dog, and bush of thorn" (V.i.134).[40] Just as earlier scholars imagined Shakespeare must have done while writing *The Winter's Tale*, the mechanicals agree they must reify the moon—put an actor onstage "to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine" (III.i.52–3)—because they think that doing so is the only way their audience will be able to perceive that time is passing in the play. *Dream* portrays both the mechanicals' skepticism about the audience's imaginative ability, and their utter belief in— and fear of—the allure of dramatic illusion, as foolish, unsophisticated, and deserving of the internal (and external) audience's open derision. After all, *Dream* is perfectly capable of signaling and marking the passing of "Four days" and "Four nights" (I.i.6–7) of story time during the course of its

three hours of stage time through conventionally theatrical and unobtrusive means: character dialogue that comments on the time of day and the passage of time. Yet *The Winter's Tale* goes the way of "Pyramus and Thisbe," putting Time onstage to move forward in time by sixteen years. That a play as celebrated as *The Winter's Tale* would have something uniquely in common with an overt travesty of a play like "Pyramus and Thisby" is telling. Both plays and their characters are intensely interested in how drama represents time.[41]

Time's speech is deliberately and overtly designed to resist normalization. He emphasizes disunity, not unity; discontinuity, not continuity; loss, not recovery:

> It is in my power
> To o'erthrow law, and in one self-born hour
> To plant and o'erwhelm custom. … I witness to
> The times that brought them in; so shall I do
> To th' freshest things now reigning, and make stale
> The glistering of this present as my tale
> Now seems to it. (IV.i.7–15)

This final image is particularly striking when set against the Choruses of other plays, which celebrate the theater's power to resurrect: "To sing a song that old was sung," Gower tells us, "From ashes ancient Gower is come" (I.0.1–2). Time in *The Winter's Tale*, however, boasts that he makes the "freshest things" "stale": *tempus edax rerum*. Lengthening time forces a confrontation with change, particularly as it's made palpable through decay and loss. Apollo's oracle supports this didactic point about loss, by concluding its litany of factual statements ("*Hermione is chaste, Polixenes blameless,*" et cetera) with the prophetic warning, "*And the king shall live without an heir if that which is lost be not found*" (III.ii.133–4, emphases in original). The oracle directly challenges the logic of inheritance, which makes no distinction between one child and another aside from birth order, and imagines children as interchangeable—if one dies, the next one can replace it. Instead, the oracle insists that *this* child, Perdita, must be recovered.

Paulina reinforces the oracle's lesson by extending it to the logic of marriage, which imagines wives as merely empty vessels that bear the "issue":

> DION. What holier, than for royalty's repair,
> For present comfort and for future good,
> To bless the bed of majesty again
> With a sweet fellow to't? (V.i.31–4)

Paulina counsels Leontes to reject his courtiers' advice that he remarry and produce a new heir, by asserting that no woman could be a substitute for Hermione:

> If one by one you wedded all the world,
> Or from the all that are took something good
> To make a perfect woman, she you killed
> Would be unparalleled. (V.i.13–16)

Paulina invokes and upends the conventions of Petrarchan love poetry—perfectly parodied in *As You Like It*[42]—to amplify Leontes' sense of irreplaceable loss. She insists that Hermione surpasses even an idealized woman made up of the best parts of all women, rejecting the prevailing standard of idealized, superlative perfection in favor of particular singularity.[43] To be "unparalleled" is to be incomparable, singular, set apart from the rest.[44] Leontes agrees:

> No more such wives, therefore no wife. One worse,
> And better used, would make her sainted spirit
> Again possess her corpse, and on this stage,
> Were we offenders now, appear soul-vexed,
> And begin, 'Why to me?' (V.i.56–60)

Leontes vows to remain devoted to his wife so completely that he imagines, grotesquely, being haunted by her reanimated corpse, rather than her disembodied spirit. And he agrees to Paulina's stipulation, that he not remarry unless Paulina bids him do so, which will only be when "another / As like Hermione as is her picture / Affront his eye" (V.i.73–5), and only "when your first queen's again in breath" (83). In this way, Apollo's oracle and Paulina challenges the surrogate logic of inheritance and marriage, which imagines that, like coins, individuals are freely exchangeable, that one is as good as another.[45] They demand instead that Leontes recover the precise thing that he lost, which requires him to value the particular over the generic, to view the world and all that's in it as incommensurable, not infinitely exchangeable and replaceable.

However, the thing that is found cannot be exactly the same thing that was lost sixteen years ago: it must, necessarily, bear the marks of time, the physical evidence of what has been irrevocably lost in that wide gap of time. Indeed, time's power to make the freshest things "stale" is exactly what Leontes must accept: he can have it all again, but it can't be the same as it once was. When Leontes remarries the woman who will be "As like Hermione as is her picture," Paulina insists that "she shall not be so young / As was your former" (V.i.78–9). And when Leontes recovers his daughter, her very name will serve as a constant reminder of the gap of time they spent apart, time that is forever lost.

Leontes' sense of loss in his experience of the gap of time is particularly crucial to what *The Winter's Tale* has to say about disunified time, because of time's other power: when time is expanded on a multi-generational scale, it can create an illusion of continuity and consistency, due to the cyclicality of nature. In other words, while time turns the freshest things stale, it also gives way to new, fresh things. In his landmark study, *The Renaissance Discovery of Time*, Ricardo Quinones argues,

> In his daughter Leontes can see his wife when young; and in his wife he sees what his daughter must endure. This vision is the product of sheer length of time: the perception of patterns of resemblance produces a growth of the understanding that works toward reunion.[46]

Quinones describes the essential paradox of lengthening time on this scale: it reveals generational "patterns of resemblance," contracting distance and difference even as it expands it. Like Sidney and

Aristotle, Quinones prizes "ordered continuity and lateral stability" in drama ("the values of fidelity and permanence … are always noble and heroic in Shakespeare"[47]), and considers the tragic events of Shakespeare's last plays to be a result of their discontinuity and instability.[48] He is right to observe that Leontes' vision of his wife in his daughter is enabled by the "sheer length of time" represented in the play, but Quinones' bias toward continuity causes him to overlook the dark side of such an artificial collapse of time and difference: incest.

This is, after all, the tragic conclusion of the source text for *The Winter's Tale*, Robert Greene's *Pandosto:* the Leontes character commits suicide after realizing to his horror that he has lusted for his own daughter, whom he has not seen for many years.[49] *The Winter's Tale* flirts with the possibility of ending in the same way when, in Act V, Leontes is finally reunited with his daughter. Like Pandosto, he is initially unaware that the sixteen-year old standing before him is his own daughter, whom he believes to be dead, having ordered Antigonus to abandon her on the coast of Bohemia as a baby. His misrecognition—the "perception of patterns of resemblance" that Quinones describes—is enabled precisely by romance's radical expansion of time. Leontes leers at his daughter:

> FLORIZEL. Step forth mine advocate; at your request,
>   My father will grant precious things as trifles.
> LEONTES. Would he do so, I'd beg your precious mistress,
>   Which he counts as a trifle.
> PAULINA.   Sir, my liege,
>   Your eye hath too much youth in't. Not a month
>   'Fore your queen died, she was more worth such gazes
>   Than what you look on now.
> LEONTES.   I thought of her
>   Even in these looks I made. (V.i.220–27)

Leontes' response to Paulina's sharp rebuke—"I thought of her / Even in these looks I made"—is double-edged. On the one hand, he sounds apologetic, chastened into recalling his wife. On the other hand, he sounds defensive, insisting that he sees this new woman as resembling his wife, and thus a possible substitute for his wife. Indeed, it is precisely Perdita's resemblance to her mother that ignites Leontes' long-dormant desire. Combined with the temporal disunity of romance drama, the Renaissance commonplace of a child's resemblance to the parent creates the threat of incest.[50]

Like surrogacy, incest means taking one thing for another: in this case, the child for the parent. Incest collapses together separate generations, into self-consuming cyclicality and hyper-unity ("*I mother, wife, and yet his child*"[51]). By bringing Perdita back before Hermione, the play opens up the possibility that Leontes may once again depend upon surrogacy as a way to solve his problems, and force his daughter into an incestuous relationship as a way to recover his wife. Indeed, Leontes' double vision of his wife in his daughter strongly recalls his double vision of himself in his son in the first half of the play. But if earlier that double vision was horrifying to Leontes, for the way it blurred distinctions between self and other, now that double vision is tempting: Perdita could be a perfect surrogate for Hermione, in an artificial collapse of time, and an artificial return to the past. Yet Perdita is a surrogate that Leontes may never accept. And Leontes' rejection of the logic of surrogacy is put on fullest display when father and daughter finally recognize one another: as the Steward

describes it, "Our king being ready to leap out of himself for joy of his found daughter, as if that joy were now become a loss, cries, 'O, thy mother, thy mother!'" (V.ii.48–50).[52] Leontes registers the "loss" of his wife at the same, joyful moment that he recognizes their daughter, so like his wife when she was young—but not his wife—that he cries out with the pain of knowing that Hermione can never be recovered. Confronting the gap of time is precisely what is required for his recognition, and in order to avoid the tragic conclusion of *Pandosto* that shadows his reunion with his daughter, the gap of time—and all of its attendant losses—is precisely what he must accept.

But Shakespeare makes this lesson exceptionally troublesome. If the play has asked that we value disunity, incommensurability, and loss, and that we reject the logic of exchangeability, surrogacy, and hyper-unity as tyrannical and incestuous, then the final moment of the play seems to undo it all, when Leontes and Perdita pledge their fidelity to a statue of Hermione,[53] and then watch in amazement as the dead woman is resurrected out of the marble, in apparent defiance of death and time.

"'Tis time; descend; be stone no more": Hermione's Return

"Did Hermione die and this is her reanimation? Or was she just hidden, waiting, numbed and dead to the world?"[54] John Pitcher, like most readers and audiences of *The Winter's Tale*, supposes that there are two ways of understanding the moment that Hermione's statue comes to life. The obvious choice—which is to say, the more rational one—is to imagine that Hermione never died: she was only pretending, and the "statue" coming to life was only a pseudo-resurrection.

This interpretation is not just the more rational choice, it also describes the ending of several Shakespeare plays: the conclusions of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest* are all structured around the pseudo-resurrection of a main character, usually the female heroine (Juliet; Hero; Marina and Thaisa; Imogen and Posthumus; and Ferdinand and Alonso). However, the pseudo-resurrections of these plays are unambiguously false, either deliberate deceptions, or unintended misunderstandings.[55] Most importantly, *we* are not deceived by these pseudo-resurrections; as the audience, we know that these characters have been alive all along. *The Winter's Tale*, by contrast, never explicitly tells us that Hermione has been alive all along—or, to put it another way, it never explains where Hermione has been for the past sixteen years, alive or dead.

The play's choice to conceal information from its audience has been troubling to many readers and audiences. Acknowledging our discomfort, Pitcher tries to explain it away by claiming that our gap in knowledge, created by the sixteen-year gap of time in the play, is a kind of test:

> If Hermione never actually died, and her death and statue were just faked, probably the most we can say is that the pretence was humane and benign … because it insisted that faith, channeled through art, is vital to us even when we don't believe in miracles. This is the prevailing modern view of the final scene of *The Winter's Tale*. No miracle happened, unless we think Hermione forgiving Leontes would be close to miraculous. … Not even a supreme artist can restore the dead to life unless he has complete faith in something.[56]

That is, the final scene forces us to choose between two scenarios to fill in the gap, either with our faith in art or our faith in miracles. For Pitcher, the obvious choice—the "prevailing modern view"—is the former. The play's statue scene, then, is designed to elicit from us a new kind of faith: a secular faith for a "modern" age that no longer believes in miracles, and seeks faith through art instead.[57]

Among the many interpretations of *The Winter's Tale*'s statue scene as a celebration of the power of art,[58] Leonard Barkan's article "Living Sculptures: Ovid, Michelangelo, and *The Winter's Tale*" ranks among the best, and indeed, the most influential. He argues that the play participates in the Renaissance *paragone* among the arts, and the rivalry of art and life. Because art, in its verisimilitude, can never beat nature at its own game, its winning strategy is to capture or "crystallize a true essence" in three-dimensional sculpture.[59] Barkan thus reads the statue scene as a draw between art and nature, made possible by Shakespeare's "art of four-dimensional sculpture": art wins with the statue of Hermione, which can defeat nature; and nature wins when "Hermione turns out to be life rather than art."[60]

However, the essential missing term in Barkan's argument is *time*. This lacuna gives rise to Barkan's strange hypothesis that "If Hermione were a statue, she would not, of course, have wrinkles," and that, in such a hypothetical statue, "the real-life changes in nature—wrinkles, the passing of time, jealousy born and cured—are fleeting superficialities." This claim is central to Barkan's argument that the statue scene is part of a long tradition of statues coming to life, including Ovid's Pygmalion tale and Michelangelo's artistic theory of sculpture. Both Ovid and Michelangelo, Barkan shows, think of sculptures as capturing "essence," which "neither grow old like human beings nor decay as readily as other works of art."[61] But in order to extend that claim to the final scene of *The Winter's Tale*, Barkan must efface time. His scenario "If Hermione were a statue" is, misleadingly, framed as a hypothetical, when it is actually counterfactual: he replaces the statue that appears in Shakespeare's play—a statue of Hermione that does have wrinkles, poignant reminders of all the time that has passed—with a statue of his own invention that, in its timeless "essence," neatly conforms to his universal theory of sculpture. But to take his theory to its logical conclusion, the one thing onstage in the final scene that is an unmarked, unwrinkled representation of Hermione's "essence" is not Hermione's statue, but—chillingly—Perdita.

Hermione's statue, by contrast, bears the marks of time; and Paulina points to the visible evidence of her age—not some idealized, transcendent "essence"—as proof of the sculptor Giulio Romano's "excellence":

> PAULINA. Comes it not something near?
> LEONTES.   Her natural posture.
>
>   .   .   .   .
>   But yet, Paulina,
>   Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing
>   So aged as this seems.
> POLIXENES.   O, not by much.
> PAULINA. So much the more our carver's excellence,
>   Which lets go by some sixteen years and makes her
>   As she lived now.

LEONTES.   As now she might have done,
         So much to my good comfort as it is
         Now piercing to my soul. (V.iii.23–34)

The past can never be recovered just as it was (which is what Barkan imagines with "essence"), nor can it be replaced by something else—nor, as the play has insisted all along, should it be. Such an interpretation would call for an incestuous relationship between Leontes and his daughter, Perdita, who is a perfect, physical surrogate for his wife when she was young ("I thought of her / Even in these looks I made"). To avoid this tragic conclusion, Leontes must accept the gap of time instead. Time makes his reunion with his wife and daughter possible, and renders their reunion so unbearably moving: though Hermione returns to her husband, she is "aged" and "wrinkled" (V.iii.28–9); their son is dead, as is Paulina's husband Antigonus, whose replacement by Camillo, as Leontes clumsily suggests in the final moments of the play, is laughably unsuitable; and all the characters' years of separation from each other are forever lost to time, and can never be remunerated.

In fact, the key to understanding the power of the statue scene is recognizing not only how the scene calls attention to the gap in time that was created by Time in Act IV, but also, and more importantly, how Shakespeare conspires to leave that the sixteen-year gap of time deliberately "untried." The play never explains how the statue comes to life. That gap is highlighted by the play's dialogue: although the characters beg for an explanation of the miracle of Hermione's resurrection, Paulina demurs, "There's time enough for that, / Lest they desire upon this push to trouble / Your joys with like relation" (128–30). Leontes pushes back:

         Good Paulina,
    Lead us from hence, where we may leisurely
    Each one demand an answer to his part
    Performed in this wide gap of time since first
    We were dissevered: hastily lead away. (V.iii.151–5)

And this is how the play ends, with the "wide gap of time" left conspicuously empty still. If Leontes implies that the wide gap could be mitigated by "Each one demand[ing] an answer to his part / Performed," it isn't in the play.

That the sixteen-year gap of time is left untried by the end of the play is underscored by the penultimate scene, in which characters do successfully "demand an answer" of each other in order to fill in the brief gap of time between Act 5, Scene 1, and Act 5, Scene 2. Act 5, Scene 1 ends with Leontes promising to help Florizel reconcile with his father. But when the next scene begins, it becomes rapidly, bewilderingly clear that the play has skipped over at least an hour of "story time"— as though we had slept between.[62] During this mini gap of time, Polixenes arrived at the Sicilian court in pursuit of his son, and reconciled with Leontes and Florizel; Leontes and Perdita at last recognized one another as father and daughter, and embraced. In Act 5, Scene 2, minor characters take turns describing what they each witnessed of the event—each person witnessed only one part, so the event is described piecemeal—which, effectively, fills in the gap in knowledge that has been

created by the gap in time. Yet the characters also continually bemoan the insufficiency of their narrative to evoke the powerful, unseen scene:[63]

> GENTLEMAN. I make a broken delivery of the business. (V.ii.9)

> ROGERO. Such a deal of wonder is broken out within this hour that ballad-makers cannot be able to express it. (23–5)

> STEWARD. You have lost a sight which was to be seen, cannot be spoken of. … I never heard of such another encounter, which lames report to follow it, and undoes description to do it. (41–2, 55–7)

> GENTLEMAN. Our absence makes us unthrifty to our knowledge. (109–10)

In this way, the play suggests that a gap of time can be partially filled in with storytelling, but can never be fully resolved.

However, if the gap in time between Act 5, Scene 1, and Act 5, Scene 2, *can* be mitigated by narrative, even if unsatisfactorily, nothing can mitigate the sixteen-year gap in time between Hermione's 'death' at the end of Act III and her 'resurrection' at the end of Act V. Indeed, Shakespeare has designed "that wide gap" to be impossible to explain. Barkan illustrates this point when he proposes, as an amusing thought experiment, a handful of more plausible alternatives for Hermione's return than her resurrection from a statue:

> Why could Hermione not have emerged from a conveniently placed convent, like the abbess in *The Comedy of Errors*; or why could not Paulina have restored Hermione directly, as Prospero restores Alonso and Ferdinand to each other in *The Tempest*; or why could not Hermione have restored herself, as Rosalind does in *As You Like It*?[64]

Yet none of these scenarios resolve the question of how and why Hermione deliberately and callously chose to hide herself away for sixteen years. Indeed, earlier in his article, Barkan points out that the very length of time of Hermione's absence is deeply implausible:

> Either Hermione died and was resurrected in marble, or else she spent sixteen years in a garden-shed on the grounds of her husband's palace, a solitude broken only by daily visits from her protectress—or jailer?—Paulina, all the while that this same worthy lady was encouraging Leontes into deeper paroxysms of grief over having in effect killed his wife. I restate these familiar perplexities of the play's narrative as a reminder that the sixteen-year absence of Hermione is distinct from the motif of the statue coming to life. Shakespeare can hardly be said to invoke the latter in order to rationalize the former; rather *he piles one extreme improbability on top of another*.[65]

In pointing out the extreme implausibility of Hermione's sixteen-year absence, and running through alternative scenarios that equally fail to rationalize her absence, Barkan powerfully implies that there

is *no* scenario for Hermione's return that can plausibly account for the wide gap of time. If Time intentionally leaves the gap "untried" in Act 4, Scene 1, Shakespeare contrives to leave that gap forever "untried."

When he offers his more plausible alternatives to the motif of the statue to bring about Hermione's return, Barkan is of course being playful. Most would agree with his assertion that "the impact and meaning of the play depend upon the significance of a statue that comes to life."[66] Yet not enough attention has been paid to one particular consequence of the inclusion of the statue: Hermione's return must unfold in two distinct stages, must unfold in time. First, we see the statue of Hermione, amazing to Leontes for its likeness to his wife:

> Chide me, dear stone, that I may say indeed
> Thou art Hermione—or, rather, thou art she
> In thy not chiding; for she was as tender
> As infancy and grace. (V.iii.24–7)

>   O, thus she stood,
> Even with such life of majesty—warm life,
> As now it coldly stands—when first I wooed her. (34–6)

> Would you not deem it breathed, and that those veins
> Did verily bear blood? …
> The fixture of her eye has motion in't. (64–7)

Then—"more amazement"—Paulina tells him that she can make the statue move:

> Resolve you
> For more amazement. If you can behold it,
> I'll make the statue move indeed, descend
> And take you by the hand. … It is required
> You do awake your faith. All stand still.
> … [*to Hermione*] *'Tis time*; descend; be stone no more; approach.
> Strike all that look upon with marvel. (87–100, emphases mine)

And so we witness the second wondrous sight, of the statue coming to life.

These two distinct stages of Hermione's return encapsulate the play's transition from its old logic of surrogacy and temporal unity—which is designed to create and maintain difference and distance through artifice and representation, in service of tyrannical control—to its new logic of temporal gaps, which requires a full reckoning with time and loss. Indeed, Leontes and Hermione both must rejoin the land of the living *in time* at the end of the play, in order to be reunited—Leontes, who has lived sixteen years of repetitive penitence, each day identical with the last:

> Upon them [the bodies of my queen and son] shall
> The causes of their death appear, unto

> Our shame perpetual. Once a day I'll visit
> The chapel where they lie, and tears shed there
> Shall be my recreation. So long as nature
> Will bear up with this exercise, so long
> I daily vow to use it. (III.ii.233–9)

—and Hermione, who describes herself as having been, effectively, frozen for sixteen years:

> Thou shalt hear that I,
> Knowing by Paulina that the oracle
> Gave hope thou wast in being, *have preserved*
> *Myself* to see the issue. (V.iii.125–9, emphases mine)

In sum, the two stages of Hermione's return—first as a statue, a surrogate of herself that can be hidden away behind a curtain, distanced and "apart" (V.iii.18) from the life of Sicilia; and then as her own fully embodied and speaking self—epitomize Shakespeare's critique of Sidney's unity of time, and his defense of romance drama and its disunified time.

Sidney's discussion of native English drama and the dramatic unities is but one part of his larger defense of the endeavor of poesy. All other arts, Sidney points out, have "the works of nature for his principal object … on which they so depend, as they become actors and players, as it were, of what nature will have set forth."[67] By contrast, as Sidney describes him in one of the most famous passages from the *Defence*, the poet,

> disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew, forms such as never were in nature … not enclosed within the narrow warrant of [Nature's] gifts, but freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit. Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done … nor whatsoever else may make the too much loved earth more lovely. Her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden.[68]

Though he never says so explicitly, it stands to reason that Sidney rejected drama both as an audience member and as a writer (with the exception of a single masque, *The Lady of May*) because he thought that its embodied medium placed objectionable limits on the range of the poet's zodiac-wit. The playwright—like the astronomer, geometrician, arithmetician, musician, natural philosopher, moral philosopher, lawyer, historian, grammarian, rhetorician, logician, physician, and metaphysic—nevertheless must "depend," like "actors and players," on what nature sets forth: on the bodies of *his* actors and players, on the physical stage, in time. The playwright is thus unavoidably subjected, too.

Shakespeare's response in *The Winter's Tale* is not to retreat into the "clayey lodgings"[69] of verisimilitude, nor fly off to some transcendent idea of faith. Instead, he turns theater's physicality and embodiment—which Sidney sees as a limitation on the poet's power to direct his reader's imagination as he wills it—into the centerpiece of the play, a thing of wonder, awe, and joy. He

turns dependence on others—which Sidney sees as a "subjection" to be disdained—into a necessity. And he takes all the characteristics that Sidney attributes to disunified time—"absurd," "very defectious," "inartificially imagined," and "unmannerly"[70]—and brings them to bear on unified time instead. For the audiences, readers, and characters of this play, time (with both a little t and a big T) does indeed "please some, try all."

NOTES

[1] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 243.

[2] All quotations from *The Winter's Tale* are from the Arden Third Series edition of *The Winter's Tale*, edited by John Pitcher (London, 2010).

[3] "If we shadows have offended, / Think but this, and all is mended, / That you have but slumbered here / While these visions did appear … Robin shall restore amends" (*Dream*, V.i.409-24); "What a case am I in, then, that am neither a good epilogue nor cannot insinuate with you in the behalf of a good play?" (*As You Like It*, V.iv.196–8); "The fearful passage of their death-marked love … Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage; / The which, if you with patient ears attend, / What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend" (*Romeo and Juliet*, Prologue, 9–14); "In your imagination hold / This stage the ship" (*Pericles*, III.0.55–9); "Release me from my bands / With the help of your good hands. / Gentle breath of yours my sails / Must fill or else my project fails, / Which was to please. … As you from crimes would pardoned be, / Let your indulgence set me free" (*The Tempest*, 9–20).

[4] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 243.

[5] Sidney, 243.

[6] Richardson defines story time as the time of the overall narrative being told, text time as the way that story time is represented—its order of presentation—and stage time as "the time it takes to enact a scene" (Brian Richardson, "'Time Is Out of Joint': Narrative Models and the Temporality of the Drama," *Poetics Today* 8 (1987): 300.). He concludes that, "For artworks of the drama, three analytical foci are needed: story time, text time and stage time. Since these are not aspects of the arrangement of 'the' story but independent and often battling forms, a fourth term, 'metatemporal,' may be used to designate narratives which bring incompatible time schemes into collision. In every play, three distinct clocks are set in motion. If they don't tell the same time, it is often because they are not intended to" (308).

[7] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 243.

[8] Sidney, 243.

[9] Inga Stina Ewbank, "The Triumph of Time in *the Winter's Tale*," *Review of English Literature* 5 (1964), 90. Here, Ewbank is inhabiting the position of earlier scholars who saw Time as a clunky theatrical solution. Her influential essay argues that the appearance of Time in the play dramatizes Renaissance commonplaces about time, including "Time the Revealer" (*Temporis filia veritas*) and "Time the Destroyer" (*Tempus edax*): "[Time] provide[s] a pivotal image, part verbal part visual, of the Triumph of Time … Shakespeare presses home the fact that the 'wide gap' of dramatically 'untried growth' is part of the universal process of time who 'makes and unfolds error' in his immutable onward flight" (90).

[10] Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York: Harper & Row, 1939), 81.

[11] Quiller-Couch and Wilson, "Introduction," xix.

[12] See Adrien Bonjour, "The Final Scene of *The Winter's Tale*," *English Studies* 33 (1952): 193–208; Nevill Coghill, "Six Pnts of Stagecraft in *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Survey* 11 (1958): 31–41; Clifford Leech, "The Structure of the Last Plays," *Shakespeare Survey* 11 (1958): 19–30; Inga Stina Ewbank, "The Triumph of Time in *The Winter's Tale*," *Review of English Literature* 5 (1964): 83–100.

[13] Ewbank, "The Triumph of Time in *The Winter's Tale*," 90.

[14] Richard C. McCoy, *Faith in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*; Stanley Cavell, "Recounting Gains, Showing Losses: Reading *The Winter's Tale*," in *Disowning Knowledge: In Seven Plays of Shakespeare*, Updated (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 193–221.

[15] Stephen Orgel, "Introduction," in *The Winter's Tale* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 34.

[16] McCoy, *Faith in Shakespeare*, 125.

[17] Matthew D. Wagner tempers McCoy's argument, agreeing that Time's speech is "plaintive," like "a standard apologia," but adding that his request to the audience is in part disingenuous: "[His address to the audience] not merely attributable to the theatrical convention of begging an audience's indulgence; it is also directly in line with the conception of Time as being both within and without human power. … We simultaneously see time as agent and object-containable within the human mind and governable by human faculties while also ever outside the reach of both. Time appears before us to tell us what he can do—indeed what he *is* doing—and to ask us to allow for it all at once" (Matthew D. Wagner, *Shakespeare, Theatre, and Time* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 106).

[18] Mimi Still Dixon, "Tragicomic Recognitions: Medieval Miracles and Shakespearean Romance," in *Renaissance Tragicomedy: Exploration in Genre and Politics*, ed. Nancy Klein Maguire (New York: AMS Press, 1987), esp. 77; Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Afterlives of the Saints: Hagiography, Typology, and Renaissance Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), esp. 177, 217; Michael O'Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early-Modem England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), esp. 141–4; Michael Wood, *In Search of Shakespeare* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), esp. 320; Phebe Jensen, "Singing Psalms to Horn-Pipes: Festivity, Iconoclasm, and Catholicism in The Winter's Tale," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 55 (2004): esp. 306; Sean Benson, *Shakespearean Resurrection: The Art of Almost Raising the Dead* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2009), esp. 159; Peter G. Platt, *Shakespeare and the Culture of Paradox* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), esp. 201; Sarah Beckwith, *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), esp. 144–5.

[19] John Pitcher, "Introduction," in *The Winter's Tale* (London: Arden Shakespeare, Third Series, 2010), 5–6.

[20] Michael D. Bristol, *Big-Time Shakespeare* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 149.

[21] "The arrangement of events is partly responsible for the hectic effect of these scenes. Shakespeare here greatly condenses the sequence in the source story. For example, in *Pandosto,* Egistus (Polixenes), having been told of Pandosto's (Leontes') intention to poison him, waits six days for favourable winds before he sets sail; whereas in *The Winter's Tale* the events up to the end of Act I, when Camillo urges Polixenes 'please your highness To take the urgent hour', would seem to happen in as little time as it takes to act them. … The child is no sooner born than it is doomed to suffer (probable) death. … The verdict of the Oracle is no sooner announced than flaunted. … Apollo has been 'sudden' in revealing the truth, but Leontes is even more sudden in rejecting it, thereby demonstrating to the full his perversion of truth and justice" (Ewbank, "The Triumph of Time in *The Winter's Tale*," 87–88).

[22] Perhaps not unintentionally, the first half of *The Winter's Tale* is also filled with references to and wordplay on horses and riders: John Pitcher identifies fourteen separate references to and wordplay about horses and riders in the play, thirteen of which appear in Acts I-III (Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, I.ii.94-6n, 96n, 242n, 274, 284n, 286n, 292n; II.i.134-5n, 147n, 182n, 186-7n; II.iii.50-1n; III.in; IV.iii.64n). Sidney's first name, as he obliquely and playfully reminds us in his opening to the *Defense*, means horse-lover—*Phil-hippos*.

[23] "[*The Winter's Tale* is] a dramatic exploration of the manifold meanings of Time" (Ewbank, "The Triumph of Time in *The Winter's Tale*," 84); "Time, in fact, is responsible for the whole action of *The Winter's Tale*" (Soji Iwasaki, *Icons in English Renaissance Drama* (Tokyo: Renaissance Institute, 1992), 10); "William Shakespeare's dramatic exploration of time reaches its most radical narrative emplotment in *The Winter's Tale*" (David Houston Wood, *Time, Narrative, and Emotion in Early Modern England* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 103); "No other play comes across as so deeply concerned with temporality—thematically, structurally, imagistically, and performatively—as this one" (Wagner, *Shakespeare, Theatre, and Time*, 98-9).

[24] David Scott Kastan's first book, *Shakespeare and the Shapes of Time*, suggests that different dramatic genres—comedy, history, tragedy, and romance—have distinct concepts of time and "man's role within it" (7). Although he notes in passing that "It is in this 'wide gap of time' that we discover the individuality of the romances" (30), his study of time and genre is focused not so much on the formal structure of time, but on the plays' endings. In particular, he describes the ending of Shakespeare's romances as "radically open-ended … bring[ing] both the characters and the audience through the tragic experience to a moment of time which, though admittedly not terminal, is certainly decisive" (31). In *From Story to Stage: The Dramatic Adaptation of Prose Fiction in the Period of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (1974), Max Bluestone does examine the formal differences between prose and drama that are revealed in dramatic adaptations of prose texts. He suggests that drama is particularly flexible in its treatment of time, compressing and manipulating time in its adaptation of narrative. However, he reads these flexible dramatic treatments of time as functionally in service of the unity of time, rather than defying it, arguing that these dramatic strategies can improve the sense of continuity, consistency, and flow of time.

[25] In fact, some critics assume that Leontes *has* been absent from, or out of hearing of, this whole dialogue.

[26] Matthew Wagner suggests that the sense of the characters' separation is enabled by the theatrical device of the aside, which "starkly separat[es] the characters onstage, to the point where they may be said to be occupying two different and utterly distinct moments in time." Wagner goes on to argue that the two distinct temporalities suggest that Hermione and Polixenes are in a prelapsarian state of time as eternal, while Leontes is postlapsarian, creating a "radical temporal shift. The time is decidedly out of joint after this moment" (*Shakespeare, Theatre, and Time* [New York: Routledge, 2012], 102).

[27] Wagner reminds us that the fall of man "in Christian cosmology … provides, in effect, the invention of time. It is the fall that transforms divine eternity into mortal finitude" (101).

[28] David Houston Wood reads this passage through a more vigorously psychoanalytic lens: "Leontes' struggle to assert an individuated subjectivity, one that distinguishes 'bourn,' or boundary, "'twixt his and mine' (1.2.134), thus appears to take inward shape as his bodily and intrapsychic reality can be seen to mirror in microcosm the social world that the play presents" (*Time, Narrative, and Emotion in Early Modern England* [Burlington: Ashgate, 2009], 122).

[29] Preposterous means, literally, back to front: *prae*, "before"; and *posterus*, "coming after."

[30] Ewbank, "The Triumph of Time in *The Winter's Tale*," 88.

[31] Indeed, trying to understand the reason behind Leontes' sudden jealousy—as much as trying to understand how we're supposed to understand Hermione's resurrection from the statue—is a preoccupation for many audiences and critics of the play.

[32] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 244.

[33] Sidney, 244.

[34] Sidney, 244.

[35] Tellingly, Sidney has no problem with "mingling" in mediums other than plays; earlier in the *Defence*, he defended hybrid genres with passion: "It is to be noted that some poesies have coupled together two or three kinds, as tragical and comical, whereupon is risen the tragi-comical. Some, in the like manner, have mingled prose and verse … [Some] matters heroical and pastoral … if severed they be good, the conjunction cannot be hurtful" (Sidney, 228–29.). I elaborate on this subject in Chapter Three.

[36] Oscar Wilde famously makes this point through the narrator of his short story "The Portrait of Mr. W. H.": "For all Art has its medium, its material … the Actor … is the medium through which alone the Drama can truly reveal itself" ("The Portrait of Mr. W. H," in *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Richard Ellman [New York: Random House, 1968], 182).Wilde's narrator goes on to offer his own version of the paragone debate, concluding that drama reigns supreme: "Looked at from one point of view, the common players of the saffron-strewn stage are Art's most complete, most satisfying instruments. There is no passion in bronze, nor motion in marble. The sculptor must surrender colour, and the painter fullness of form. The epos changes acts into words, and music changes words into tones. It is the Drama only that, to quote the fine saying of Gervinus, uses all means at once, and, appealing both to eye and ear, has at its disposal, and in its form colour, tone, look, and word, the swiftness of motion, the intense realism of visible action" (183).

[37] As Ewbank observes, "It is the first actual death to happen in the play [Mamillius'] which stops the mad onrush … and suddenly, in a deliberate contrast to what has gone before, time cannot be long enough" ("The Triumph of Time in *The Winter's Tale*," 89).

[38] Michael D. Bristol also highlights this unusual detail: "Although distortion, compression, and discontinuity in the time-scale are by no means uncommon in Shakespeare's plays, *The Winter's Tale* is unusual in that the gap in time is deliberately and ostentatiously foregrounded. … The chorus openly admits here that the passage of time is not only without duration in the ordinary meaning of that concept, but also without content. Sixteen years are missing, and to all intents and purposes they are empty. … The brute fact of change is dramatically foregrounded" (*Big-Time Shakespeare*, 148).

[39] For more on the iconography of Time in the Renaissance, see Frederick Kiefer, "The Iconography of Time in *The Winter's Tale*," *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme* 23 (1999): 49–64.

[40] Originally, Starveling was assigned to play Thisbe's mother—"Robin Starveling, you must play Thisbe's mother" (I.ii.50-1). At some point between the rehearsals that we see and the night of the performance, Starveling's role was reassigned, so that Thisbe's mother, effectively, metamorphosed into the moon.

[41] Richardson argues that *Dream* plays with "the conventions of temporal representation" by generating "two complete, internally consistent and utterly contradictory story times … one for the orderly city, the other for the enchanted forest. … The play is so constructed that, with a few minor alterations, Shakespeare could easily have had all

the events unfold within a period of twenty-four hours. Instead, he selected a much more arduous and audacious way of structuring time which paradoxically fulfills Sidney's imaginative theory while defying its temporal prescriptions" ("'Time Is Out of Joint,'" 302–3).

[42] Celia, reading one of Orlando's "false gallop," "bad fruit," "tedious homily of love" poems to Rosalind:

> "Therefore heaven nature charged
> That one body should be filled
> With all graces wide enlarged:
> Nature presently distilled
> Helen's cheek but not her heart,
> Cleopatra's majesty,
> Atalanta's better part,
> Sad Lucretia's modesty.
> Thus Rosalind of many parts,
> By heavenly synod was devised
> Of many faces, eyes, and hearts
> To have the touches dearest prized.
> Heaven would that she these gifts should have,
> And I to live and die her slave." (II.ii.129-142)

[43] Here, I extend Stephen Greenblatt's argument that Shakespeare creates a non-normative standard of beauty in the dark ladies of *Love' Labor's Lost*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Anthony and Cleopatra*. The emblem of such beauty is Innogen's cinque-spotted mole, "like the crimson drops / I'th' bottom of a cowslip," which Greenblatt describes as "a mark of all that Shakespeare found indelibly beautiful in singularity" ("Shakespeare's Beauty Marks," in *Shakespeare's Freedom* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010], 48).

[44] This language of singularity is repeated in the final scene, when Paulina leads the group into her house to see Hermione's statue:

> LEONTES. We came
>   To see the statue of our queen. Your gallery
>   Have we passed through, not without much content
>   In many singularities, but we saw not
>   That which my daughter came to look upon,
>   The statue of her mother.
> PAULINA. As she lived peerless,
>   So her dead likeness I do well believe
>   Excels whatever yet you looked upon,
>   Or hand of man hath done. Therefore I keep it
>   Lonely, apart. (V.iii.9-18)

[45] "Reading *The Winter's Tale* to study it, to find out my interest in it, was the second time in my literary experience in which I have felt engulfed by economic terms: I mean felt a text engulfed by them. …In *The Winter's Tale*—beyond the terms tell and count themselves, and beyond account and loss and lost and gain and pay and owe and debt and repay—we have money, coin, treasure, purchase, cheat, custom, commodity, exchange, dole, wages, recompense, labor, affairs, traffic, tradesmen, borrow, save, credit, redeem, and—perhaps the most frequently repeated economic term in the play—business. … [It is] the dominating thematic exchanges of the action, from suffering loss to being redeemed to paying back and getting even" (Cavell, "Recounting Gains, Showing Losses," 200).

[46] Ricardo Quinones, *The Renaissance Discovery of Time* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 437.

[47] Quinones, 436.

[48] "In the last plays, ordered continuity and lateral stability are broken. We are cast into a tragic world, one perhaps of comings and goings, rather than of rises and falls. … The emphasis is [on] the discovery of continuity and pattern" (Quinones, 435, 438).

[49] Peter G. Platt, reading this scene in *Pandosto*, notes that Greene "seems to question the power of [prose] fiction to represent such marvels … When Pandosto attempts to seduce Fawnia, the text changes genres and bursts into dramatic form, the power of the marvelous too potent to be contained by prose fiction," and that drama may be "the only form that can contain the marvelous" (*Reason Diminished: Shakespeare and the Marvelous* [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997], 75). By "dramatic form," Platt is referring to the way the text is uniquely formatted as dramatic dialogue, visually set off from the rest of the text.

[50] Paulina draws on this convention to defend Hermione's honor, when she describes Mamillius as a printed copy of Leontes to emphasize his parentage and, by proxy, his mother's fidelity: "Although the print be little, the whole matter / And copy of the father … And thou, good goddess Nature, which hast made it / So like to him that got it" (II.iii.97-103).

[51] *Pericles*, I.i.70, emphases in original., I.i.70, emphases in original.

[52] This notion that loss and gain, joy and sorrow go hand in hand is also a commonplace in Shakespeare, and is employed to particularly poignant effect in *Cymbeline* when Belarius, the exiled courtier and kidnapper of the royal sons, gives them back up to their biological father. In the midst of all the heightened, chaotic joy of the family reunion in this final scene, Belarius' acute sense of loss is haunting:

> These gentle princes—
> For such and so they are—these twenty years
> Have I trained up. … But gracious sir,
> Here are your sons again, and I must lose
> Two of the sweet'st companions in the world.
> The benediction of these covering heavens
> Fall on their heads like dew, for they are worthy
> To inlay heaven with stars. (V.iv.337-53)

Kastan goes a step further, and suggests that the idea of loss in gain is central to Shakespeare's romances in particular: "What seems central to the nature of what I, along with most critics, call the romances is the victory … of the comic over *and through* the tragic" (*Shakespeare and the Shapes of Time* [Hanover: University Press of New England, 1982], 29).

[53] LEONTES. Chide me, dear stone, that I may say indeed
> Thou art Hermione—or, rather, *thou art she*
> In thy not chiding (V.iii.24-6, emphases mine)

> PERDITA. And give me leave,
> And do not say 'tis superstition, that
> I kneel and then implore her blessing. *Lady,*
> *Dear queen, that ended when I but began,*
> *Give me that hand of yours to kiss.* (V.iii.42-6, emphases mine)

> PAULINA. I'll draw the curtain.
> My lord's almost so far transported that
> He'll think anon it lives.
> LEONTES. O sweet Paulina,
> Make me think so twenty years together.
> No settled senses of the world can match
> The pleasure of that madness. Let't alone. (V.iii.68-73)

[54] Pitcher, "Introduction," 1.

[55] For more on this Shakespearean convention, see Benson, *Shakespearean Resurrection*.

[56] Pitcher, "Introduction," 9–10.

[57] See Stephen Justice, "Did the Middle Ages Believe in Their Miracles?," *Representations* 103 (2008): 1–29.

[58] Ewbank, "The Triumph of Time in *The Winter's Tale*," esp. 99; Martin Mueller, "Hermione's Wrinkles, or, Ovid Transformed: An Essay on *The Winter's Tale*," *Comparative Drama* 5 (1971): esp. 238; Charles Frey, *Shakespeare's Vast*

Romance: A Study of The Winter's Tale (Columbia: Universiy of Missouri Press, 1980), esp. 93; Cavell, "Recounting Gains, Showing Losses"; Pitcher, "Introduction," esp. 10, 57.

[59] Leonard Barkan, "Living Sculptures: Ovid, Michelangelo, and *The Winter's Tale*," *ELH* 48 (1981): 664.

[60] Barkan, 664.

[61] Barkan, 664.

[62] Some scholars have suggested that Shakespeare chose not to stage the reunion of father and daughter because he had already plumbed the emotional depths of such a scene in *Pericles* and wanted to avoid repeating himself. Others suggest that the narrativized reunion sets us up to be even more dazzled by the staged reunion that follows, suggesting the superiority of drama to narrative. Nevill Coghill goes so far as to claim that "this scene is among the most gripping and memorable of the entire play. … it generate[s] that mounting thrill of expectation needed to prepare us for the final scene" ("Six Points of Stagecraft in *The Winter's Tale*," 39).

[63] For more on the 'unscene' in Shakespeare, see Marjorie Garber, "'The Rest Is Silence': Ineffability and the 'Unscene' in Shakespeare's Plays," in *Ineffability: Naming the Unnamable from Dante to Beckett*, ed. and Anne Howland Schotter Peter S. Hawkins (New York: AMS Press, 1984), 35–50.

[64] Barkan, "Living Sculptures," 641.

[65] Barkan, 640–1, emphases mine.

[66] Barkan, 640–1.

[67] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 215–16.

[68] Sidney, 216.

[69] Sidney, 219.

[70] Sidney, 243–46.

Chapter Three
"The same dead thing alive": Plural Perspective in *Cymbeline*

> But besides these gross absurdities, how all their plays be neither right
> tragedies, nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns, not because the
> matter so carrieth it, but thrust in the clown by head and shoulders to play a
> part in majestical matters with neither decency nor discretion, so as neither
> the admiration and commiseration, nor the right sportfulness, is by their
> mongrel tragi-comedy obtained. I know Apuleius did somewhat so, but that
> is a thing recounted with space of time, not represented in one moment.
> —Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*[1]

Cymbeline, Shakespeare's mixed-genre romance-history play, is infamous for its last scene, in which nearly all of the characters gather together onstage and take turns telling a story that facilitates the reunion and restoration of the royal family. The story is unknown in its entirety to any single character onstage because it narrativizes the plot of the play. Consequently, the audience is made to "hear all through" (V.v.381)[2] what was just enacted onstage, refracted through the contingent perspectives of multiple characters. This redundant, multi-perspectival, unsubordinated narrative, unsurprisingly, has been met with impatience and vitriol.[3] Lytton Strachey grumbles, "Could anything drag more wretchedly than the denouement of *Cymbeline*?"[4] Peter Hall, founder of the Royal Shakespeare Company, puts it less delicately:

> Now, he's being a real bugger, Shakespeare, in this scene, because I—I worked it out once, I
> think if you put [recognition] number 36 at number three, he didn't need any of the rest. I
> mean, he's deliberately made it so you recognize him, you recognize—go as long as possible.
> The consequence is that it's dreadful to stage.[5]

The excessive narrative mix of *Cymbeline*'s final scene, far from an anomaly, contributes to the general sense that the play is disunified and incoherent. Clifford Leech suggests that "we have no determined or patterned growth throughout the play," because events seem to happen by pure accident.[6] Harold Bloom describes the play as "a pungent self-parody" and "a mixed travesty"; accuses Shakespeare of "going beyond even his limits of expression"; and concludes that "no other play by Shakespeare … shows the playwright so alienated from his own art as *Cymbeline* does."[7] Samuel Johnson complains,

> To remark the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the names,
> and manners of different times, and the impossibility of the events in any system of life, were
> to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection, and too
> gross for aggravation.[8]

As I discussed in the previous chapter, *The Winter's Tale*, with its conspicuous gaps, puts its audience in the position of knowing too little. *Cymbeline* leaves us feeling like we know too much.[9] Deemed a "mishmash,"[10] a "mingle-mangle,"[11] a "mélange,"[12] *Cymbeline* is an overabundant, disorderly play of extremes and excesses.

The play's incorporation of diegesis into the mimetic mode of drama is not problematic because of the length of the story; after all, neither Egeon's story that opens *The Comedy of Errors* nor Prospero's in *The Tempest* have received comparable complaints. *Cymbeline*'s use of story is problematic, it seems, because the story does not unify the play. It achieves the opposite. Not only does the story retell the plot of the play, its position at the end of the play and the manner in which it is told—paratactically by multiple characters, each with only partial knowledge, and not by a single dominant perspective—amplify our sense of the play's disunity and excess. Similarly, audiences and scholars have also long been puzzled and dissatisfied with the play's classification as a tragedy in its first publication in the First Folio.[13] Alternative accounts of the play's genre have been suggested, some quoting Polonius to describe *Cymbeline* as an unsubordinated mix of the "tragical-comical-historical-pastoral" and a disunified "poem unlimited" (*Hamlet*, II.ii.326–7), but to little consensus. This highly inter- and intratextual play repeats motifs and episodes from Shakespeare's earlier plays, in a way that Valerie Wayne dubs "recapitulatory";[14] the play also repeats itself, sometimes literally word-for-word. Shakespeare makes *this* romance play "drag," not just defer and delay. He avoids clarity, unity, and decisiveness to the point of risking incoherence, to the point of turning his play into "a thing perplexed / Beyond self-explication" (III.iv.7–8). And so, scholars have accused the play of "structural ineptitude"[15] and Shakespeare of being in a "willful mood"[16] at the end of his career, or they have tried to invent unity and coherence out of the play's multiplicities.

But as I will show, the play's multiplicity—which we feel acutely in the play's lack of rigid generic classification, in its sense of "drag" that results in part from its mixed mode, and in its lack of decisive clarity—is precisely the point. By multiplicity, I refer to the play's minglings of multiple genres and modes, and the multiple perspectives that those genres and modes invite us to take, all at once, on what is being represented—what I will call "plural perspective." *Cymbeline*'s formal mixings, which have been read symptomatically as ineptly incoherent or willfully excessive, are intentional, strategic, and productive. They instantiate the play's radical accommodation of multiplicity, and they challenge the kind of false unity that operates through strategies of subordination and suppression. As we have already seen, the play's accommodation of multiplicity courts confusion and dissatisfaction from its audience. This, too, is the point. Multiplicity is essential to Shakespeare's staging of this very strange story of Ancient Britain's war with the Roman empire. Although the Britons defeat the Roman army, which invaded because Britain refused to pay tribute to Rome, Cymbeline promises his prisoner Caius Lucius that he will pay the tribute after all, a sudden and inexplicable reversal that occurs in the very last moments of the play.[17] The play's final image of the Roman and British flags flying "Friendly together" (V.v.480), in the wake of Britain's decisive victory over the invading Roman army, contains, simultaneously, multiple forms of relationality: Britain as equal to Rome, but also dominant; dominant, but also subordinate; successor, but also coeval.

My account of *Cymbeline*'s multiplicity solves a problem that has baffled the historicist approach to the play. Historicist criticism, which has dominated the last half century of *Cymbeline* criticism, treats the problem of the play's inconsistency, incoherence, and disunity as a political

problem, not a formalist one. In their effort to "discover or impose some form or cohesion" on the "apparent chaos"[18] that is *Cymbeline*, scholars have focused on the play's treatment of national identity and destiny at a multi-temporal moment of transition from "Roman-into-British" as well as "Tudor-into-Stuart."[19] They interrogate the play's ambivalence about the British empire's future as a second Rome—the *translatio imperii* topos—during the early years of King James I's reign. And they cast the villainous Queen and her brutish son Cloten as emblems of a stringently "narrow British nationalism,"[20] as Patricia Parker puts it, that must be rejected. Leah Marcus, for example, describes the play's concluding image of the two flags flying together as "a vision of harmonious internationalism and accommodation that mirrors James's own policy."[21] Historicist readings recast the play's anachronistic and improbable minglings of disparate times, places, and styles, its multiplicities and excesses, as a positive enactment of inclusivity over insularity in the emerging British empire. Historicist scholars have adduced politics in order to deduce form,[22] and their account of the play's political problem does shed light on the play's formal problem. In their discussions of the play's treatment of politics, historicist scholars reflect the same issues that I treat here: multiplicity and plurality. But in trying to locate unity in the play's multiplicity, they have effectively subordinated multiplicity to hegemonic unity.

Some have tried to recuperate the play's multiplicity. "Like all the translations of empire that precede it," Heather James argues, "*Cymbeline* finds strength in awkward inconsistency: its chronological, generic, and textual idiosyncrasies address the play's dominant preoccupation, which is the status of Britain's emergent nationhood."[23] Brian Gibbons similarly claims in *Shakespeare and Multiplicity* that the formal and stylistic heterogeneity and intertextuality of certain of Shakespeare's plays is the source of their strength. To write *Cymbeline*, Gibbons explains, Shakespeare "ransacked theatre high and low, recent and ancient, to present a whole variety of styles and genres, through which a history [of Britain] can be told," including "folk-plays, miracle plays, popular romances," "pageantry and its offshoots," "the court masque," "myth, recorded fact, legend, folk-tale, romance, his own earlier plays and poems, and miracle." He suggests that this mix reflects the play's "insistent concern with multiple possibilities of interpretation."[24] But ultimately, Gibbons argues, the playwright manages to order all of this material "into a compact and patterned form," "transforming prolix and disproportioned chronicle into a symbolic drama."[25] But the play's mix of different genres and modes does not take the form of the melting pot or the stable, ordered mosaic that Gibbons portrays here. Genres co-exist uneasily in the play, with no single genre dominating the rest, both at the level of the play's larger dramatic structure and at the level of dialogue and the stories that the characters tell. Janet Adelman puts her finger on the play's lack of a dominant genre when she explains why *Cymbeline* has seemed "a radically incoherent play":

> Despite the deliberate bravura of the recognition scene, in which all the plots are yoked violently together, the play does not cohere: that final scene, in which the emotional force of one recognition is constantly being interrupted by another, is diagnostic of the play as a whole, in which the focus of our attention continually shifts, in which we are hard-pressed to decide on the play's dominant action or even its dominant characters.[26]

In other words, Adelman suggests that *Cymbeline*'s incoherence stems from its demands on the audience to continually shift our focus and perspective. But this is what *Cymbeline* is after. Through

what I have called plural perspective—keeping multiple genres constantly in play through multiple characters and the stories they tell, by avoiding the domination of one genre, action, or character— *Cymbeline* rejects a kind of unity that is produced, reified, and justified by a logic of hegemony and subordination.

The romance plays—*Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest*—are unique as a group because they all foreground the formal risks that Shakespeare takes to dramatize romance, as I have been arguing throughout this dissertation. In *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare takes those risks to extravagant heights. Plural perspective is native to romance, which, as a narrative tradition, can easily depict actions happening in different places at the same time ("Meanwhile, back at the ranch…"). Romance revelation and recognition, moreover, works precisely by taking a new and different perspective on an event ("It turns out that…"). As Northrop Frye has suggested, romance is defined by that gyroscopic quality.[27] But plural perspective is alien to drama, which treats one action at a time. It's no wonder, then, that scholars have described *Cymbeline* as a "mingle-mangle" play, a word that captures its distinctly unordered, un-hierarchical minglings of times, places, genres, and modes. Shakespeare does so deliberately—one could say willfully—not merely to display "sheer virtuosity"[28] nor out of contempt for his audience. The play's formal particularity enables Shakespeare to imagine Britain's renegotiation of its national identity in relation to Rome beyond a relation of subordination or succession. *Cymbeline* gives us, instead, a structure of unstable entanglement that rejects absolute hierarchy. In what follows, I examine moments of heightened plural perspective in the play, moments that accrue around scenes of redundant narrative, which I argue are strategic rather than excessive.

"He yokes / A smiling with a sigh": Mingling Genres

Plural perspective in *Cymbeline* is distinct from other kinds of literary negotiations with perspective, such as the Ciceronian rhetorical technique of *in utramque partem*; dramatic irony, when we know more than the characters do; Keatsian negative capability, an intellectual capacity to remain "in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts"; the Brechtian distancing effect; and postmodern fiction's self-consciousness about the "inherent relativity of history itself,"[29] as in *Rashomon*. Distinct from these other kinds of literary perspective-making, plural perspective is a phenomenological experience on the part of the audience that is markedly embodied, more visceral and more immediate than perception and interpretation. And it is distinct, too, from the visual effect of anamorphosis, which requires that the viewer physically stand in a different place in relation to the two-dimensional art work in order to take a different perspective on it; for example, the death's-head that comes into view in Holbein's "The Ambassadors" when one stands at a particular angle to the painting.[30]

To be sure, *Cymbeline* is not the only art work that affords this complex embodied experience of simultaneous multiple perspectives. I see it reflected in Martine van Elk's account of the audience's experience of certain moments in *The Comedy of Errors* when we feel "momentarily transported from one mode to the other and back … a state that highlights the violence with which this play brings farce and romance together."[31] I see it particularly strongly in Ron Rosenbaum's description of his "ecstatic," "extraordinary, puzzling, almost mystical experience" of teaching

Shakespeare's Sonnet 45. I am reproducing the passage almost in full because I think Rosenbaum captures very well the experience that I am calling plural perspective:

> I recall standing at the blackboard in that seminar room on Prospect Street in New Haven attempting to unfold for my students this shifting, *this flickering-back-and-forth effect*, this dual prospect … in which embracing one aspect of a verbal ambiguity and then shifting back to its counterpart involves something more than a shift in meaning in the poem, but *a shift in the reader's being.* … But suddenly that day this became *more than an abstract insight.* I recall banging the chalk in my hand on the blackboard, back and forth from "present" to "absent" in the phrase "These present-absent with swift motion slide"—and suddenly experiencing something strange. … I was no longer reading alternative meanings into the Sonnet, I felt like the Sonnet was shifting me back and forth between alternative selves, almost physically. I was standing inside and outside myself. It wasn't an intellectual experience, or *it was disturbingly, mysteriously more than an intellectual experience.* An ecstatic experience in the original meaning of the word "ecstatic": standing outside oneself. It was almost an out-of-body experience, or an in-and-out-of-body experience.[32]

Beyond Shakespeare, beyond literary art, I also see plural perspective, or rather hear it, in the ambivalent finale of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5. In the horn blasts, and drums, and the insistent sawing of the strings, the finale elicits both the military triumphalism that the Soviet officials heard—and demanded—at the symphony's premiere in Leningrad, 1937, *and* the expression of pain and suffering that the populace heard, and wept to hear.[33] But I experienced plural perspective most powerfully when I saw *Cymbeline* staged at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse in 2016, at the moment when Belarius returns Guiderius and Arviragus to their biological father, Cymbeline:

> These two young gentlemen that call me father
> And think they are my sons are none of mine.
> They are the issue of your loins, my liege,
> And blood of your begetting.
> .   .   .   .   .   .
> Here are your sons again, and I must lose
> Two of the sweet'st companions in the world.
> The benediction of these covering heavens
> Fall on their heads like dew, for they are worthy
> To inlay heaven with stars. (V.v.327–51)

"I lost my children," Cymbeline echoes (353), binding him with Belarius in their shared experience of loss, past and present. At this moment, I experienced something entirely new and strange to me: I laughed and cried at the same time, feeling at once Cymbeline's present joy and past loss, and Belarius' present loss, and the amazement of the two young men, silent spectators of their own wondrous transformations. It's not that I laughed so hard that I cried, or cried and then laughed, both of which I have experienced before, and which subordinate or order one affective response after

the other. I experienced this moment from multiple perspectives simultaneously, in a way that felt, disorientingly, both self-divided and self-expanding—a phenomenological quality that unites all of these examples of plural perspective.

But *Cymbeline*'s "plural perspective" can also lead to grotesqueries, as when Imogen sees Cloten's headless corpse and believes it beyond doubt to be her husband's. "O Posthumus, alas," she wails, "Where is thy head? Where's that? Ay me, where's that?" (IV.ii.319–20). The scene puts the audience in a difficult position: moved by her grief, we also scoff at her confusion of her husband with a man she once derided as "too base / To be his [Posthumus'] groom" (II.iii.126–7). Then, the scene ratchets up our discomfort even further: Imogen dips her hands into Cloten's body and smears its blood onto her face, crying, "O, / Give colour to my pale cheek with thy blood" (328–9). When I saw the play performed, the audience laughed and groaned in shock and disapproval, not pity, at Imogen's gesture of profound grief. Our response—discomfiting, because laughter is an inappropriate reaction to Imogen's grief—is why Sidney insists in the *Defence* that laughter is proper only when we laugh with delight: "The great fault even in that point of laughter, and forbidden plainly by Aristotle, is that they stir laughter … in miserable [things], which are rather to be pitied than scorned."[34] To stage *Cymbeline*, modern directors will sometimes treat the play's more ambivalent moments as comical farce, to reduce the range of possible responses to a single, stable one, laughter. But at moments like this one, when we're faced with Imogen's grief before what she believes to be her husband's corpse, this solution falters. The play's instability, its plural perspective, evades such impositions of generic unity, clarity, and finality—to put it another way, the imposition of a single dominant "grand narrative." But this plural perspective risks making its audience feel uneasy and uncomfortable, precisely because it can feel divided against itself.[35]

To contextualize the play's plural perspective, its refusal of hierarchy in its mixing of genres, let us turn to contemporaneous theories about genre mixing: Sidney's *Defense of Poesy* and John Fletcher's prefatory letter to his "pastoral tragi-comedy" *The Faithfull Shepherdess*. Both caution against mixing genres in an unsubordinated manner and advocate for, essentially, a "single perspective." I will first outline how Sidney defines and distinguishes genres, or what he refers to as "kinds," and then examine Sidney's advice to mix genres in a hierarchical way, both in relation to his larger claim about how poesy teaches and delights. I will then take up a mixed-genre English play, *The Faithful Shepherdess*, that famously failed to delight its audiences. In the prefatory letter to the reader, Fletcher attributes the audience's angry reaction to the play to genre confusion, with the implicit lesson—as demonstrated in his subsequent and far more successful mixed-genre plays—that a proper tragicomedy must finally subordinate tragedy to comedy. With this context, we might better understand that Shakespeare does not ignore the lessons offered, and learned, in the theory and praxis of mixing genres that were available to him. He leans into them.

Since at least the mid-fourteenth century, there have been two principal methods for distinguishing and defining genres: what Sidney calls their "matter" and their "manner,"[36] the "matter to be expressed by words and words to express the matter."[37] For Sidney, matter, or content, matters far more than manner, or form. When he first lists the "notable" poetic genres "heroic, lyric, tragic, comic, satiric, iambic, elegiac, pastoral"—in hierarchical order—he observes that some are named "according to the matter they deal with" and others "by the sorts of verses they liked best to write in." But he immediately proceeds to discount verse as a distinguishing feature of poetry, describing it as mere apparel. "It is not rhyming and versing that maketh a poet," Sidney writes, "no

more than a long gown maketh an advocate."[38] In fact, both Xenophon's "heroical poem" and Heliodorus' "picture of love" are written in prose:

> For Xenophon, who did imitate so excellently as to give us *effigiem iusti imperii*, the portraiture of a just empire, under the name of Cyrus, (as Cicero said of him) made therein an absolute heroical poem. So did Heliodorus in his sugared invention of that picture of love in Theagenes and Chariclea; and yet both these wrote in prose.[39]

In short, verse does not a poem make; and manner is unimportant when it comes to distinguishing and taxonomizing poetic genres. When Sidney describes each genre's particular capacity to teach "virtuous action," he is intentionally silent about "manner," or formal features—what he dismissively calls, at one point, "the outside of it."[40] He defines and distinguishes poetic genres solely by their "matter": the actions they show and "the strange effects of this poetical invention" on us.[41]

By "effects," Sidney means the particular perspective that a genre leads its audience to take on a matter, and the didactic and affective consequences of that perspective, which he portrays as inexorable and universal, both in the *Defence* and at the beginning of *Astrophil and Stella*:

> Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
> That she (dear she) might take some pleasure of my pain;
> Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know;
> Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain.[42]

The *Defence* catalogs still more cause-and-effect chains: the Pastoral is a poem that, "under the pretty tales of wolves and sheep, can include the whole considerations of wrong-doing and patience"; the Elegiac is a poem that moves one to pity with "compassionate accompanying just causes of lamentations"; the Iambic is a poem that "rubs the galled mind, in making shame the trumpet of villainy"; and the Lyric is a poem "with his tuned lyre and well-accorded voice" that praises virtuous acts, "the chiefest kindlers of brave courage." Sidney defines the Comic as an "imitation of the common errors of our life, which he [the poet] representeth in the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be, so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one"; and the Tragic as a genre that "openeth the greatest wounds, and showeth forth the ulcers that are covered with tissue; that maketh kings fear to be tyrants, and tyrants manifest their tyrannical humours; that, with stirring the affects of admiration and commiseration, teacheth the uncertainty of this world." In each case, Sidney expects a genre's effects to be experienced *in the same way* by its various audiences. This is suggested powerfully by the language of "kind," the English Renaissance's term for genre: a genre takes a particular perspective on its matter and moves its audience to take that same perspective, what we might call a "single perspective."

This single perspective—the specific didactic and affective experience or "effect" of a specific genre—is crucial to Sidney's defense of imaginative literature, which he claims teaches "more *effectually* than any other art doth."[43] Some of the most memorable passages of the *Defence* describe how irresistible poetry's pleasures are to all kinds of people, which Sidney uses to justify his elevation of poetry as the best of all human learning:

> Of all sciences … is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it. … with a tale forsooth he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner.[44]

"Children" and "old men" are held alike by the poet's tale, which entices "any man." Poetry also moves "beasts": Aesop's "pretty allegories, stealing under the formal tales of beasts, make many, more beastly than beasts, begin to hear the sound of virtue," while "Amphion was said to move stones with his poetry to build Thebes, and Orpheus to be listened to by beasts, indeed, stony and beastly people."[45] And poetry moves otherwise unrepentant tyrants:

> The abominable tyrant Alexander Pheraeus, from whose eyes a tragedy … drew abundance of tears, who without all pity had murdered infinite numbers, and some of his own blood: so as he, that was not ashamed to make matters for tragedies, yet could not resist the sweet violence of a tragedy. … he, in despite of himself, withdrew himself from hearkening to that which might mollify his hardened heart.[46]

The only defense against poetry's "virtue-breeding delightfulness,"[47] this story suggests, is physical retreat, as the tyrant must do against his desire to hear more, "in despite of himself."[48] Likewise, Stella's indifference instead of "pity" toward Astrophil's "pain" indicates her tyrannical nature.

But although all poetry has this effect of delightful teaching, Sidney identifies the heroical as the "best and most accomplished kind"[49] because the actions that heroic poetry depicts are suitable for direct imitation—what Catherine Bates dubs an "idealist aesthetic."[50] Heroic poetry "doth not only teach and move to a truth," Sidney writes, "but teacheth and moveth to the most high and excellent truth," which makes it "that kind most capable and most fit to awake the thoughts from the sleep of idleness to embrace honourable enterprises." Its images of honorable actions *compel* imitation, even from the most idle and soporific men—its images don't just "inform with counsel how to be worthy," they also "stirreth" and "inflameth" the mind with "desire to be worthy."[51] Because it inspires individuals to virtuous action, poetry is essential to the work of nation- and empire-building. Sidney makes this claim most forcefully when he answers the charge that poetry "soften[s] us," who are "lulled asleep in shady idleness with poets' pastimes":

> They allege herewith, that before poets began to be in price our nation had set their hearts' delight upon action, and not imagination: rather doing things worthy to be written, than writing things fit to be done. … [But] never was the Albion nation without poetry. … Poetry is the companion of camps.[52]

To illustrate his nationalist claim for heroic poetry, Sidney points to Alexander the Great, "the phoenix of warlike princes," who preferred "dead Homer" to his schoolmaster, a "living Aristotle"; whose "chief thing he was ever heard to wish for was that Homer had been alive," even as he was putting "the philosopher Callisthenes to death"; and who "well found he received more bravery of mind by the pattern of Achilles than by hearing the definition of fortitude."[53] Sidney's "poetic nationalism," as Edward Berry calls it,[54] establishes a stable and inviolable hierarchy of human

learning in which poetry is at the top, and heroic poetry at the very top. The rises and falls of certain peoples and empires proves heroic poetry's nation-building power, which in turn justifies heroic poetry's place as the "best" of all human learning.

    All of this helps to explain why Sidney scorns native English plays that are "neither right tragedies, nor right comedies."[55] When scholars quote this now-famous passage, they tend to highlight the phrase that immediately follows, "mingling kings and clowns" (in no small part because it describes proleptically what we find so delightful about *Henry IV, Part 1* and *Part 2*). But the phrase "mingling kings and clowns" is not an explanation of why Sidney dislikes these mixed genre plays, as scholars have taken it to be; the phrase functions only as a description of these plays' unjustified and unjustifiable "matter." Sidney takes no issue with the act of mixing comedy and tragedy *per se*, as he explicitly states elsewhere in the *Defence*[56] (which has often been cited as an example of the *Defence*'s characteristic inconsistency[57]). Nor does he take direct issue with the act of mixing the highest and the lowest, as he suggests elsewhere when he defends poems that mix matters heroical, the "best" kind of poetry, and pastoral, the genre "where the hedge is lowest"[58] —as his own *Arcadia* does. Rather, Sidney takes issue with the *way* that these English plays have mingled together the high and the low: they have "thrust in the clown by head and shoulders to play a part in majestical matters with neither decency nor discretion." He adds, anticipating his critics, "I know Apuleius did somewhat so, but that is a thing recounted with space of time, not represented in one moment." Remember Sidney's emphasis on poetry's "effect," the particular didactic, affective experience that particular genres elicit from their audiences, which I have called single perspective. In their disorderly mix of genres, gathering together all of these matters simultaneously—"in one moment"—these English plays leave their audiences uncertain about how they ought to respond: with admiration? commiseration? delight? Put another way, they leave their audiences uncertain about *what* perspective they should take on the matter. Consequently, none of these, "neither the admiration and commiseration, nor the right sportfulness," is successfully elicited "by their mongrel tragi-comedy."[59] Worse, some of these English plays, in their depiction of certain matters, manage to elicit the exact opposite reaction that they intended:

> The great fault even in that point of laughter, and forbidden plainly by Aristotle, is that they [English playwrights] stir laughter in sinful things, which are rather execrable than ridiculous, or in miserable, which are rather to be pitied than scorned. For what is it to make folks gape at a wretched beggar and a beggarly clown; or, against the law of hospitality, to jest at strangers, because they speak not English so well as we do?[60]

Because these "mongrel" plays fail to have a single and universal effect on their audiences, they fail to achieve the end of poetry, and of all human learning, which is virtuous action. For this reason, Sidney regards these plays as "abuses" of poetry that should be cast out of England.

    Sidney's theory of how not to mix theatrical genres finds its greatest vindication two decades later in John Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess*. In a letter to the reader that was printed with the play's first quarto, Fletcher categorizes his play as a "pastoral tragi-comedy" and defines the mixed genre. He starts by saying what the genre is not by describing his audience's wrong expectations and "angry" reactions:

> The people seeing when it was played, having ever had a singular gift in defining, concluded to be a play of country hired shepherds in gray cloaks, with curtailed dogs in strings, sometimes laughing together, and sometimes killing one another; and, missing Whitsun-ales, cream, wassail, and morris-dances, began to be angry. In their error I would not have you fall, lest you incur their censure.[61]

He then defines the play's mixed genre part by part, so that his readers might not make the same "error" as his audiences. Pastoral, he writes, is "a representation of shepherds and shepherdesses with their actions and passions, which must be such as may agree with their natures, at least not exceeding former fictions and vulgar tradition."[62] Tragi-comedy is

> not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants death, which is enough to make it no tragedy, yet brings some near it, which is enough to make it no comedy, which must be a representation of familiar people, with such kind of trouble as no life be questioned; so that a god is as lawful in this as in a tragedy, and mean people as in a comedy.[63]

Note the syntactical differences between how Fletcher describes his audience's wrong expectations for the play's genre, and how he describes it. Fletcher's description of his audience's expectations for pastoral tragi-comedy is an unsubordinated list that goes on and on, potentially *ad infinitum*. It contains elements conventional to pastoral, tragedy, and comedy, but these elements are not set in any kind of relation to one another: sometimes Whitsun-ales, sometimes wassail; sometimes dancing, sometimes laughing, sometimes killing. Fletcher's definition of pastoral tragi-comedy, by contrast, is neatly partitioned. He defines pastoral first, then tragi-comedy, and his definition of tragi-comedy follows a parallel structure with subordinated clauses. It contains two sets of contrasts—not-tragedy and not-comedy, and tragedy and comedy—which both the play and the sentence that describes it set in perfect balance.

The first quarto of *The Faithful Shepherdess* was printed in the winter of 1609–10,[64] roughly around the time that *Cymbeline* was first performed at Blackfriars and the Globe; both plays were unsuccessful with their first audiences. (Wayne notes that after its initial performances, *Cymbeline* was not staged again until 1634;[65] in a commendatory poem to Sir Walter Aston, Fletcher writes that *The Faithful Shepherdess* "was never liked, unless by few."[66]) Indeed, Fletcher's motivation to write his letter is to defend his play against its unpopularity onstage, which he attributes to his audience's erroneous expectations for this mixed-genre play. Fletcher begins his letter to the reader on a strikingly aggressive note: "If you be not assured of your knowledge in this kind of poem, lay down the book." But he relents, hoping that his definition of pastoral tragi-comedy will properly orient the reader's perspective in the way that his audiences needed: "Or read this, which I would wish had been the prologue." By way of conclusion, he says, "Thus much I hope will serve to justify my poem, and make you understand it," but then adds, defensively, "to teach you more for nothing, I do not know that I am in conscience bound." *The Faithful Shepherdess*' reception history and Fletcher's letter reveal the great risk that poets face when they mix genres, a risk that Sidney understood when he denigrated the "mongrel" tragicomedies being staged in the London playhouses around 1580. If a playwright fails to guide his audience's perspective on the matters being staged, his audience will be

confused, even angry. For Sidney, this failure is an abuse of poesy, whose "ending end," as for all "earthly learning," is "virtuous action."[67] For Fletcher, this failure is a financial liability for an early-career playwright trying to put butts in seats. And lest we think that we are more sophisticated today when it comes to genre mixing, let me refer you to the firing of director Colin Trevorrow from *Star Wars: Episode IX* after his film *The Book of Henry* (2017) bombed at the box office. Reviewers' vicious takedowns of *The Book of Henry* as a generic and tonal "exquisite corpse," "the banana and mayonnaise sandwich of movies," resemble Sidney's and Fletcher's warnings about mixing genres.[68]

The solution is not to avoid mingling genres altogether, as scholars have incorrectly assumed of Sidney's critique of tragicomedy. After all, tragicomedy as a genre enjoyed immense popularity in England after and in spite of *The Faithful Shepherdess*' resounding failure. But the mixed genre's ascendency was not, or not merely, the result of English audiences finally catching up to the elite avant-gardism of the play, as G. K. Hunter has suggested.[69] Fletcher and other playwrights learned to mix genres by setting them in proper relation to each other, in a clearly hierarchical or subordinated order—not, as Sidney warned English playwrights against, all "represented in one moment." Fletcher's definition of pastoral tragi-comedy in the prefatory letter to *The Faithful Shepherdess* provides that very lesson, though inadvertently. He defines each part separately, first pastoral, then tragi-comedy; that is, he uses an additive style to combine genres. Similarly, to define tragi-comedy, he describes a mix of equal parts tragedy and comedy, not-tragedy and not-comedy. But to combine genres in a way that properly guides the audience's perspective, the playwright should *not* set them in perfect balance. One genre must be dominant.[70] This is essentially the plot of the most popular play of Shakespeare's time, *Mucedorus*, a mixed genre play that begins with Comedy and Envy betting on what will triumph in the end, tragedy or comedy. We can see this axiom at work, too, in the plot structures of Beaumont and Fletcher's tragicomedies *Philaster* and *A King and No King*, both of which appear to move toward a tragic conclusion but end comically. (The pastoral, non-native to the stage, drops out of the mix entirely.) A successful tragicomedy is not, as Fletcher initially imagined it in the prefatory letter to *The Faithful Shepherdess*, one that balances tragedy with comedy; a successful tragicomedy is one in which tragedy is, finally, subordinated to comedy.

With its distinctive "mingle-mangle" form, where does *Cymbeline* fit in this aesthetic debate about mixing genres? In the theory and praxis of the period, we have seen the additive style that combines elements by setting one after the other, as well as the subordinated style that combines elements by ordering them hierarchically. Both styles seek to maintain a single perspective at any given moment, within the scope of mixing genres, with the ultimate aim of audience clarity. *Cymbeline*, however, self-consciously and deliberately strives for genre confusion, the very thing Sidney urges poets to avoid and which Fletcher accidentally achieves with *The Faithful Shepherdess*, much to his dismay. In *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare seeks simultaneity, a plural perspective, by framing a single matter through multiple genres, by exploiting and showcasing the flexibility of genres, as I will show in greater detail in the following section.

"Rather to wonder at the things you hear / Than to work any": Genre Confusion

Scholars have long noted that *Cymbeline* blends together several genres, but they have limited their discussions of the play's generic mixing to the level of the play's dramatic form. This approach often

takes the form of recuperative reading that attempts to straighten out the play's confusion by identifying which genres predominate and prevail in the end. But in trying to fix the play's unstable plurality, the recuperative approach negates the generative possibilities of that plurality. It is my contention that by paying attention to individual storytellers and the particular genres and generic expectations of their 'redundant' stories, in addition to the play's macro structure, we can understand how *Cymbeline* attempts to mix genres outside of the usual structures of domination and hierarchy.

Cymbeline's 'redundant' stories is what makes its incorporation of narrative unique and strange, and why some have accused the play of redundancy and drag. After all, many English Renaissance plays incorporate scenes of storytelling. But *Cymbeline* juxtaposes different stories that *describe the same event*, including events that have already been staged for us. In doing so, the play calls our attention to the formal and ideological process through which narratives are constructed from the raw stuff of experience and perceived by audience-spectators. As modern readers who have encountered our fair share of unreliable narrators, we are accustomed to reading suspiciously, always aware that narratives are constructed from characters' points of view—the necessarily limited and biased perspective produced by their psychology, emotional state, conscious or unconscious motives, and misapprehensions. This is what Barbara Hardy suggests when she claims that Shakespeare incorporates acts of storytelling to reveal a teller's "personal character," and Jill Levenson when she says that Juliet's Nurse's stories in particular "reveal more of her personality than the event" she is describing.[71]

Acts of storytelling in *Cymbeline*, however, reveal more than the storyteller's character or personality. With its incorporation of what I have identified as redundant narrative, the play foregrounds the way that all narratives are socially and culturally produced. That is to say, all narratives are produced through and within genres, which Rosalie Colie defines as a system, "a set of interpretations, of 'frames' or 'fixes' on the world."[72] For example, when Cymbeline says to Imogen after her brothers are restored, "Thou hast lost by this a kingdom" (V.v.372), Imogen gently challenges her father's account of the event: "No, my lord, / I have got two worlds by't" (372–3). Cymbeline views the return of his sons through the lens of chronicle history, which seeks to establish an unbroken line of succession from the past to the present. Accordingly, he tells the recovery of the princes as a story of Imogen's lost inheritance. But Imogen reframes the moment through romance, rendering what her father perceived as her political loss of a "kingdom" into her familial gain of "two worlds." We can read acts of storytelling, then, not just as reflections of characters' 'personalities' and psychologies, but also as they are inflected by genres, which carry with them particular interpretive "frames" and perspectives.

As I have begun to sketch out with this brief exchange between Cymbeline and Imogen, individual storytellers in *Cymbeline* deploy different narrative genres—romance, chronicle history, and heroic—to shape and make sense of themselves in relation to others as well as the world, past, present, and future. As a result, we can track the play's generic mixing at the level of its inset narratives, as van Elk does to great effect with the opening scene of *The Comedy of Errors*, which stages a conflict between romance and farce.[73] The male Britons in particular give heroic poetry the same pride of place as Sidney does. They tell stories of heroic action to establish and confer individual and national identity and honor, and to inspire others to similar heroic action. In one of the first speeches of the play, a Gentleman tells the story of how Posthumus' father received his surname Leonatus:

> His father
> Was called Sicilius, who did join his honour
> Against the Romans with Cassibelan
> But had his titles by Tenantius, whom
> He served with glory and admired success,
> So gained the sur-addition 'Leonatus.' (I.i.28–33)

As the Gentleman explains, Sicilius served two kings; with Cassibelan, he fought the Romans, but it was from Tenantius that he gained his "titles" and "sur-addition." By describing Sicilius' service under two kings, not one, the story differentiates heroic action from recognition of heroic action in order to underscore that *recognition*—literally, to be known again—gave Leonatus his name, and not heroic acts alone. This lesson about the importance of recognition is explicitly articulated by Belarius later in the play, when he is reminding the kidnapped princes of his didactic "tales" of his time at court:

> You may then revolve what tales I have told you
> Of courts, of princes, of the tricks in war.
> This service is not service, so being done,
> But being so allowed. (III.iii.14–7)

Like the First Gentleman's story about Sicilius Leonatus, Belarius' didactic tales distinguish between service that is "done" and service that is "allowed," or recognized, by those in power. Only in its recounting does service count—hence Belarius prompts the princes to "revolve" the tales he's told, to return to tell them again and again.

Arviragus takes to heart Belarius' lesson about the importance of telling heroic stories: he responds by lamenting that he and his brother will lack their own stories to tell when they are older:

> What should we speak of
> When we are as old as you? When we shall hear
> The rain and wind beat dark December, how
> In this our pinching cave shall we discourse
> The freezing hours away? We have seen nothing.
> We are beastly: subtle as the fox for prey,
> Like warlike as the wolf for what we eat.
> Our valor is to chase what flies. Our cage
> We make a choir, as doth the prisoned bird,
> And sing our bondage freely. (III.iii.35–44)

Jodi Mikalachki describes this speech as a "protest" of "their exclusion from history": "They have seen nothing; they are barbaric. Confined to their pinching cave in Wales, they have, quite literally, no history to speak of."[74] Indeed, Arviragus claims that their lack of heroic stories renders them less than human. "We are beastly," he says, as "subtle" and "warlike" as the fox and the wolf who chase

only cowardly prey—"what flies." (This language is picked up later in the play when Posthumus is recounting the battle in the lane: "'Our Britons' harts die flying, not our men,'" he says, then doubles down on the nationalistic language; to fly is to be a Roman, like "'beasts which you shun beastly'" [V.iii.24–7], but to stand is to be a Briton.) Then Arviragus reverses the simile and compares them to the cowardly prey. Here, he picks up on Guiderius' earlier metaphor comparing them to baby birds in the nest—"We poor unfledged / Have never winged from view o' th' nest" (III.iii.27–8)—and bends the metaphor toward an expression of nationalistic pride by describing their "nest" as a prison, and themselves as birds who "sing our bondage freely."[75] In this language of bondage and imprisonment, we can hear distinctly the idea of English exceptionalism as the Englishman's freedom from bondage. Heroic stories humanize, and they evince national identity. With only stories of "bondage" to tell, Arviragus and Guiderius are un-English and less than human. The nationalist undercurrent of this language of bondage and liberty resurfaces in the play when Posthumus, in his Italian clothes, is captured as a prisoner of war. Hoping for death as a reckoning for taking Imogen's life, he says, "Most welcome, bondage, for thou art a way, / I think, to liberty" (V.iv.3–4).

These scenes in *Cymbeline* suggest that for the male Britons, telling stories of heroic action is as important as performing heroic action, if not more. At these moments, the male Britons promote Sidney's nationalist poetics, which instrumentalizes poetry, heroic poetry above all, by claiming that it leads individuals to virtuous action to the benefit of the nation. Thus, the poet goes "hand in hand with nature": nature's work is "essential" and can "make a Cyrus," Sidney acknowledges, while the poet's work "in imitation or fiction" can "bestow a Cyrus upon the world to make many Cyruses."[76] Through its single perspective, poetry renders us all 'in kind.'

But *Cymbeline* undermines Sidney's claim to poetry's "mechanical reproduction" of virtuous actions and actors[77] through the very same characters who valorize heroic stories according to the Sidneyan model. The play does so by juxtaposing different genres, their conventions, and their conventional audience responses, in a way that invites our plural perspective. Again, Sidney's defense of poesy rests on his claim that specific genres yield a single effect, or perspective, from their audiences. And Sidney puts heroic poetry at the top of all human learning because it does this best of all: by presenting an image of an action to be directly imitated, heroic poetry paves the most direct path to virtue with the least room for errancy and misinterpretation. *Cymbeline* challenges this presumption head-on. Multiple scenes consist of characters telling stories, including theoretically heroic ones, that yield multiple interpretations from its internal audience. In doing so, the play emphasizes the way that storyteller, listener, and context all play parts in "framing" a matter.[78] The play is highly narrative, and indeed, highly textual; it brims with scenes of reading and rereading, telling and retelling, interpretation and re-interpretation.[79] The Soothsayer's vision of the Roman eagle flying into the sun is interpreted by the Soothsayer twice over the course of the play, first in Rome's favor (IV.ii.345–51), and then in Britain's favor (V.v.466–75). Jupiter's tablet is also interpreted twice by two different characters, first by Posthumus, who interprets the text by refusing to attempt interpretation (V.iv.108–21), and then by the Soothsayer (V.v.434–57). And, of course, Iachimo wins the wager by framing his experience of seeing Imogen in her bedroom in a way that leads Posthumus to interpret that his wife has been unfaithful and leads his other listeners to doubt. (In fact, we hear Iachimo describe seeing Imogen in her bedroom *three different times* over the course of the play; the first time, in person, he takes written notes to help him construct his story later.) The

play thus stages the plurality of potential perspectives, interpretations, and generic "frames" for any "matter."

Two moments in the play stage the plurality of potential generic framings particularly vividly, moments when male British storytellers frame and reframe actions in ways that trouble the supposedly stable distinction between genres—and by proxy, between genders. When Belarius tells the princes the story of his wounded body, he gives it two frames in quick succession with conflicting aims. In doing so, he reveals the multiple affordances of the image of his wounded body, suggesting that heroic images and actions are heroic only through and because of particular framings, and are not inherently emulable. This lesson is continuous with his earlier claim that "service is not service, so being done, / But being so allowed," but suggests even more powerfully the contingent construction of such things as "honor" and "doing well." Gesturing to his marked body, Belarius tells the story of his long-ago feats in war, his reputation by Cymbeline, and his fall from grace:

> BELARIUS.   The toil o'th' war,
>   A pain that only seems to seek out danger
>   I'th' name of fame and honor, which dies i'th' search
>   And hath as oft a sland'rous epitaph
>   As record of fair act; nay, many times
>   Doth ill deserve by doing well; what's worse,
>   Must curtsy at the censure. *O boys, this story*
>   *The world may read in me: my body's marked*
>   *With Roman swords*, and my report was once
>   First with the best of note. Cymbeline loved me,
>   And when a soldier was the theme, my name
>   Was not far off. Then was I as a tree
>   Whose boughs did bend with fruit; but in one night
>   A storm or robbery, call it what you will,
>   Shook down my mellow hangings, nay my leaves,
>   And left me bare to weather.
> GUIDERIUS.   Uncertain favour. (III.iii.49–64, emphases mine)

The story that "the world may read" in Belarius' body, "marked / With Roman swords," is the generic story of the heroic wounded warrior, intended to inspire emulation. But the larger story that he frames around the image of his body—thematically as well as syntactically, as you can see by its position in the passage reproduced above—is a meta-story about the "uncertain" power of storytelling. This story suggests that images are inherently empty, are made meaningful only through narrative framings, and are therefore vulnerable to contradictory re-inscriptions and perspectives. Specifically, "the toil o'th' war" and "seek[ing] out danger" are not in themselves heroic actions; they can just as easily be framed by "th' name of fame and honour," "as record of fair act," as they can be retold and remembered by "a sland'rous epitaph" deserving "censure." Within such a system, as Guiderius rightly concludes, "favour" is contingent and "uncertain," as easily shaken as fruit and leaves from a tree.

Belarius' double-framed story of his wounded body can also be read as a masculinizing *and* feminizing tale. He describes his reputation—"with the best of note"—as a tree whose boughs "bend with fruit," and the loss of his reputation as a "storm or robbery" that leaves the tree "bare." This image of a fruitful burden and theft evokes a female body, pregnant and vulnerable to invasion. So does the image of his wounded body. In *Roman Shakespeare: Warriors, Wounds, and Women*, Coppélia Kahn analyzes *Cymbeline*'s ambivalent depiction of *virtus* as a wound, an image that evokes both masculinity and feminine vulnerability in a kind of plural perspective:

> The wound that signifies *virtus* remains an open wound in the sense of a persistent but unsuccessful attempt to fix, stabilize, delimit masculinity as a self-consistent autonomy free from the stigma of the feminine. Other contemporary versions of *romanitas* take it more or less at face value, as simply 'a set of virtues.' ... Shakespeare makes it, rather, a question of sexual difference—an open question, still.[80]

Sidney would object strenuously to Kahn's notion that "sexual difference" is an "open question." Toward the end of the *Defence*, Sidney summarizes the objections to poetry and his defenses by describing poetry as not "an art of lies, but of true doctrine; not of effeminateness, but of notable stirring of courage; not of abusing man's wit, but of strengthening man's wit."[81] Sidney's poetic theory is structured by such articulations of absolute binary difference and hierarchy, which he maps onto a gender binary.[82] *Cymbeline* destabilizes this approach to genre, by staging the plurality of potential generic framings for any "matter," the plurality of perspectives that even a single person could take toward a particular image.

Even more telling is the exchange between Posthumus and a Lord, who take turns narrativizing the same matter: the Britons' defeat of the Romans, which is staged in the previous scene. Their exchange, which effectively functions as a storytelling contest, challenges the gendered distinction and hierarchy of genres. Juxtaposed, the two Britons' stories dramatize the differences *and* commonalities between heroic poetry and romance; or, to use Sidney's language, between poetry that leads people to heroic action and "abused" poetry that leads them to idle imagination. Like Sidney, Posthumus defines poetry as that which has masculinizing and nationalistic effects. Both associate verbal manner, or style, with deception, a characterization that is indiscriminately applied to garments, cosmetics, women, foreigners, and aristocrats. "So is that honey-flowing matron Eloquence apparelled, or rather disguised, in a courtesan-like painted affectation," Sidney writes of English "versifiers," "prose-printers," "scholars," and "preachers."[83] Similarly, Posthumus hopes that Jupiter's tablet will prove to be unlike the guileful texts and "courtiers" of "our fangled world":

> A book? O rare one,
> Be not, as is our fangled world, a garment
> Nobler than that it covers. Let thy effects
> So follow to be most unlike our courtiers,
> As good as promise. (V.iv.103–7)

Posthumus tries again and again to distinguish and subordinate "the woman's part." But the play repeatedly challenges his and Sidney's account of the absolute, stable distinction between and

hierarchy of genres and genders. Significantly, the play stages this confusion of heroic for romance narrative immediately after the Britons beat back the Roman army, a moment we might otherwise imagine to be a crucial, nation-defining, Sidneyan moment for "our not-fearing Britain" (II.iv.19), the "swan's nest" "in a great pool" (III.iv.139).

  Fresh off of helping Belarius, Guiderius, and Arviragus defeat the Roman army, Posthumus encounters a British lord who had earlier fled the battle out of cowardice. The Lord asks him what happened, and Posthumus describes the battle—which we just saw enacted onstage—in the genre of heroic narrative, complete with rousing speeches and the reduction of the many to a graspable few:

>   All was lost,
> But that the heavens fought.
>
> . . . .
>
> 'Our Britons' harts die flying, not her men.
> To darkness fleet souls that fly backwards. Stand,
> Or we are Romans, and will give you that
> Like beasts which you shun beastly.'
>
> . . . .
>
>   These three,
> Three thousand confident, in act as many—
>
> . . . .
>
> —with this word '"Stand", stand' … gilded pale looks
>
> . . . .
>
> Some slain before, some dying, some their friends
> O'erborne i'th' former wave, ten chased by one,
> Are now each one the slaughterman of twenty. (V.iii.3–49)

As Heather James notes, Posthumus draws on "the techniques of heroic narrative—the speeches, hyperbole, epic similes, and catalogues, [which] establish the manly virtue."[84] But the British lord responds to Posthumus' story with amazement: "This was *strange chance*: / A narrow lane, an old man, and two boys" (V.iii.51–2, emphases mine). Posthumus reacts angrily, and after a sharp exchange, he runs the Lord offstage:

> POSTHUMUS. Nay, do not wonder at it. You are made
>   Rather to *wonder* at the things you hear
>   Than to *work* any. Will you rhyme upon't,
>   And vent it for a mock'ry? Here is one:
>   'Two boys, an old man twice a boy, a lane,
>   Preserved the Britons, was the Romans' bane.'
> LORD. Nay, be not angry, sir.
> POSTHUMUS.   'Lack, to what end?
>   Who dares not stand his foe, I'll be his friend,
>   For if he'll do as he is made to do,
>   I know he'll quickly fly my friendship too.

> You have put me into rhyme.
> LORD.   Farewell, you're angry. [*Exit.*]
> POSTHUMUS. Still going? This is a lord! (V.iii.52–64, emphases mine)

Notably, Posthumus' story portrays the British victory over the Romans as heroic and preordained. It was inevitable, not implausible, that three men could take on and defeat the Roman army. (That it was actually four men suggests that Posthumus is embellishing a bit—though, four men seems just as implausible as three.[85])

The lord, however, perceives Posthumus' story as romantic, not heroic, and in *his* story accordingly portrays the British victory as random and contingent, motivated by "strange chance" rather than ordered by "the heavens." The lord's perspective is intolerable to Posthumus, who intended his narrative to be a rousing tale of war and national pride ("'Stand,' stand").[86] "Nay, do not wonder at it," Posthumus says, perturbed that his heroic narrative has been perceived as romance, and reacted to as such. For Sidney and Posthumus, romance is an abuse of poesy; worse, it is dangerous, because it effeminizes its listeners, by leading them not to manly "work" but to idle "wonder": "'Lack, to what end?" Posthumus complains. Posthumus tries to separate himself from the lord and his romance narrative by satirizing the lord's retelling of the battle, rendering it into singsongy rhyme—"'Two boys, an old man twice a boy, a lane, / Preserved the Britons, was the Romans' bane'"—and accusing the lord of being "made / Rather to *wonder* at the things you hear / Than to *work* any." Posthumus strenuously tries to establish the distinction and hierarchy of heroic and romantic narrative, "work" and "wonder," providence and accident, masculine and feminine, by deeming the former appropriate to the nation, and the latter inappropriate, and, eventually, by pushing the lord, along with his feminine perspective and effeminizing narrative, offstage.[87] Enforcing hierarchy through separation, subordination, and exclusion is not only a matter of enforcing aesthetic decorum; it is necessary to revitalize the nation. But Posthumus does not succeed in trying to maintain an absolute hierarchical difference from the lord and his narrative style: "You have put me into rhyme," he says furiously near the end of their exchange.

Posthumus' desire to distinguish heroic narrative from romance narrative, and his anxiety that he cannot, mirrors an earlier moment in the play when he believes himself cuckolded. He desires to "find" and cut out "the woman's part" in himself, fearing that the two genders are inseparably mingled within him, that he is a "mongrel" like the English tragicomedy disparaged by Sidney: "Is there no way for men to be, but women / Must be half-workers? We are all bastards" (II.v.1–2). By the beginning of Act V, as Coppélia Kahn reminds us, Posthumus has forgiven his wife "without proof of her innocence," which is an "astonishing," "striking departure" from his jealous husband counterparts Claudio, Leontes, and Othello. She argues that Posthumus "internalizes that [woman's] part and cleanses it of sexual contamination," and interprets Posthumus' forgiveness as indicative of the play working "hard to enable Posthumus to accept 'the woman's part as to foster manly virtue in him."[88] However, Posthumus' exchange with the Lord, as I have elaborated above, comes after his supposed acceptance of the woman's part in him, which suggests that he has not quite achieved the equanimity that Kahn attributes to him. These two moments in the play display Posthumus' heightened anxiety about his failure to distinguish properly, to separate, subordinate, and exclude, as well as his anxiety about being misperceived, of others failing to

distinguish *him* properly. Put another way, Posthumus seeks the kind of single perspective that Sidney advocates for poesy, but at each moment encounters plural perspective instead.

We can learn much from moments when multiple characters tell stories about the same event, especially events that have already been staged for us. Rather than obstinately redundant or undramatic, these scenes of narrative excess give space to multiple stories and storytellers—which we experience at particularly heightened moments as plural perspective—and present a non-hierarchical way to mix genres, without privileging or isolating one genre over the rest. What we might reject as redundant helpfully juxtaposes genres and their conventions, putting into sharp relief their "frames" on the world and the ways in which they overlap and commingle. Sidney's poetics allows for mixing only insofar as it reproduces the hierarchy that he describes as essential and stable, a hierarchy that orders nations in relation to each other,[89] as well as social status, genders, and genres. In this way, Sidney's poetics is structured by and demands from us a single perspective. *Cymbeline* seeks a different paradigm. In its incorporation of the multiple voices and genres of its many storytellers, in its unordered, unsubordinated minglings, at times directly clashing, at times melting into each other, *Cymbeline* is just the kind of "mongrel" play that Sidney would push out of England: one that does not show us a clear path to virtue, because it rejects hierarchy as its ordering principle.

"This fierce abridgement": Collective Storytelling

Cymbeline's final scene offers us the most heightened and dizzying experience of plural perspective, a consequence of the scene's narrative structure, wherein multiple characters retell the plot of the play. The story they collectively tell is not owned by a single person, and thus is a story that must be communally told. That is, it is a story that not only refuses a single perspective, it cannot be made sense of from a single perspective. It requires the multiple points of view afforded by the staging of collective storytelling, which has of course made the final scene infamous. Because the story is collectively told in parts, the scene feels unsubordinated and disordered, and because it recapitulates the plot, it feels excessive and redundant.

The final scene's incorporation of narrative feels especially excessive within Shakespeare's oeuvre. Many of his plays, eleven by Dennis Kay's count,[90] end with requests for stories about the just-staged action, and deferrals of such stories to another time and place. This number includes the other romance plays. Toward the end of *Pericles*, someone asks why the king has become catatonic, and the reply is, "'Twould be too tedious / To repeat, but the main grief springs from the loss / Of a beloved daughter and a wife" (V.i.22–5). Paulina and Hermione evade and defer repeated requests for stories of past action at the end of *The Winter's Tale*: "There's time enough for that, / Lest they desire upon this push to trouble / Your joys with like relation" (V.iii.128–30). Similarly, Prospero denies the other characters' requests that he tell the "story of [his] life" at the end of *The Tempest*: "No more yet of this; / For 'tis a chronicle of day by day, / Not a relation for a breakfast nor / Befitting this first meeting" (V.i.313, 162–5). While the endings of Shakespeare's plays characteristically choose "fierce abridgment" (*Cym*, V.iv.383) or deferral of stories, *Cymbeline*'s takes the opposite strategy: full narrative unfolding onstage.

The Comedy of Errors offers an instructive counterpoint as the only other Shakespearean play that concludes with redundant storytelling, with characters narrativizing the action that has just been

staged. Shakespeare's early play, however, has not received the same critique as his late one. Although the two plays' final scenes run approximately the same length as they appeared in the First Folio— each clock in at around 450 lines—the incorporation of narrative in *The Comedy of Errors* does not generate the same sense of "drag" and disunity as it does in *Cymbeline*. Just the opposite, as we see in Michael Witmore's account of *The Comedy of Errors'* final scene:

> Adriana stops the Duke on his way to Egeon's execution, crying, "Justice, most sacred Duke, against the Abbess!" (5.1.134). The legal *narratio* that follows is meant, in good Ciceronian fashion, to describe the facts of the situation in a tight causal sequence. What is entertaining about the story is its brevity: it is remarkably short considering the amount of confusion that must be explained.[91]

Notably, Witmore is impressed with the "remarkabl[e]" narrative economy of Adriana's story. He goes on to explain that when it is Antipholus of Ephesus' turn to demand justice, like his wife, he similarly engages "in a formal procedure of legal and rhetorical invention":

> We get another studied *narratio* … complete with apologetic *exordium* that meets the accusation that he is 'mad' or 'disturbed.' Like Adriana's neat Ciceronian narration a few lines before, Antipholus' story consists of a pared down sequence of events all causally connected.[92]

As Witmore explains, the sense of "brevity" is achieved by the characters' ability to make "neat" causal connections between events.

Witmore's rhetorical analysis of Adriana's and Antipholus of Ephesus' stories illuminates a crucial distinction between *The Comedy of Errors'* incorporation of storytelling and *Cymbeline*'s. The characters of *The Comedy of Errors* are not just telling stories, they are presenting a particular kind of narrative account that Witmore identifies as *narratio*. (He also reminds us that the play was performed before an audience of law students at the Gray's Inn revels in 1594.) The storytellers structure their narratives according to the conventions of classical oration; Adriana even begins her speech with the boilerplate "May it please your grace" (V.i.136). First Adriana, then Antipholus of Ephesus, are given the opportunity to plead their case before the Duke in full. We receive each perspective in turn, in orderly sequence. When additional characters like Angelo and the Second Merchant interject to add their perspectives, they only mean to "witness with" (254) the perspectives, or cases, presented by the main two storytellers. Moreover, Duke Solinus presides over the action, authorizing each speaker to present their case, evaluating each person's account as a truth claim, and seeking more supporting evidence when he judges the need. "Knock at the abbey gate, / And bid the lady Abbess come to me," the Duke says after hearing Adriana's *narratio*, "I will determine this before I stir" (165–7). After Antipholus of Ephesus lays out his opening gambit, or *exordium*, reminding the Duke of "the service that long since" he did him and accusing his wife of having "abused and dishonored" him (191, 199), the Duke bids him to elaborate: "Discover how, and thou shalt find me just" (203). His interventions help to order the scene, which might otherwise feel chaotic with all of the misapprehensions and misrecognitions swirling onstage; the characters' multiple and conflicting perspectives are all subordinated to the Duke's judgment. More broadly, the

scene's strong legalistic framing, which governs and restricts the speech and actions of the characters onstage, including the Duke's, explains why we have not judged the superfluous stories at the end of *The Comedy of Errors* to be excessive, dis-unifying, or redundant.

Such judgments, of course, have been levied upon *Cymbeline*'s final scene. As I have begun to suggest, the scene does not have a single generic frame that, as Rosalie Colie puts it, would provide a "ready code of communication both among professionals and to their audiences."[93] Relatedly, it also does not have a single, controlling, unifying perspective, like the one that Duke Solinus offers in *The Comedy of Errors*' final scene. Throughout *Cymbeline*, but particularly in its final scene, Cymbeline exhibits a remarkable lack of discretion and discernment, which elsewhere in the play Iachimo defines as a failure of the "eye," "judgement," and "appetite" to "distinguish," to "partition make" (I.vi.32–46). Although Pisanio immediately recognizes Imogen who is cross-dressed as Fidele (V.v.127), Cymbeline fails to do the same (though we can easily attribute this particular failure of judgment to Renaissance dramatic convention). When Cornelius apologetically tells Cymbeline that the Queen "confessed she never loved you," he responds, "She alone knew this. / And but she spoke it dying, I would not / Believe her lips in opening it" (37–42). When he learns that the Queen confessed that she tried to poison Imogen, he says in continued bewilderment, "O most delicate fiend! Who is't can read a woman?" (48). When he learns that the Queen also confessed to poisoning *him*, he admits his own "folly," his lack of sense:

> Mine eyes
> Were not in fault, for she was beautiful;
> Mine ears that heard her flattery, nor my heart,
> That thought her like her seeming. It had been vicious
> To have mistrusted her; yet, O my daughter,
> That it was folly in me thou mayst say,
> And prove it in thy feeling. Heaven mend all. (V.v.62–8)

Unlike Posthumus, who (thinks he) knows all too well the gaps that exist between "her" and "her seeming," Cymbeline has hitherto acted unaware that there might be a difference between the two. As he expresses here, his eyes, his ears, and his heart are all easily deceived by "flattery" and "seeming." Only "heaven," he suggests, can judge and "mend." Later in the scene, when he has been reunited with his children, he says, "O, what am I? / A mother to the birth of three? / Ne'er mother / Rejoiced deliverance more" (367–9). Adelman characterizes this speech as a parthenogenetic "fantasy of pure male family from which women can be wholly excluded."[94] But there is another way of reading Cymbeline's exclamation, as indicative not of his desire to exclude, but of his inability to distinguish and judge properly—what Constance Jordan aptly describes as his "witlessness."[95]

Cymbeline is a poor judge, and not for the lack of opportunity to practice; he actively avoids inhabiting the position and perspective of a judge. He questions his prisoner Iachimo only after "Fidele" requests it, and even then, he tries to have "Fidele" take the lead:

> CYMBELINE. [*To Imogen*] Come, stand thou by our side,
>   Make thy demand aloud. [*to Iachimo*] Sir, step you forth.
>   Give answer to this boy, and do it freely,

> Or by our greatness and the grace of it,
> Which is our honour, bitter torture shall
> Winnow the truth from falsehood. [*to Imogen*] On, speak to him.
> IMOGEN. My boon is that this gentleman may render
>   Of whom he had this ring.
>
>   .   .   .   .
>
> CYMBELINE. [*to Iachimo*] That diamond upon your finger: say
>   How came it yours?
> IACHIMO. Thou'lt torture me to leave unspoken that
>   Which, to be spoke, would torture thee.
> CYMBELINE.   How, me? (V.v.129–40)

Unwilling to adjudicate, Cymbeline tries to remove himself from the conversation altogether. He positions this young page "by [his] side," and asks him to voice his demand directly to Iachimo: "On, speak to him." He also bids Iachimo to "Give answer to this boy" directly. In a further self-abnegating gesture, he tells Iachimo that "bitter torture," and not him, will distinguish "truth from falsehood" in his report. Neither Imogen nor Iachimo, however, speak directly to each other within this frame. Imogen addresses her request to Cymbeline, who restates it to Iachimo. Iachimo responds to Cymbeline, too, who seems startled to be the addressee: "How, me?" Although Cymbeline would prefer to be a silent spectator to this scene of revelations, the other characters onstage nevertheless treat him as judge and king—though in doing so, they must defy the king's bidding.

Iachimo's answer does end up "tortur[ing]" Cymbeline, though not so much by its matter as by its "tortuous" manner.[96] After several false starts, Iachimo begins his answer again with "Upon a time," putting us squarely in the realm of fairytales and romance. Here, I reproduce Iachimo's speech with some cuts to convey a sense of his disorderly, digressive narrative style, which Russ McDonald identifies as exemplary of Shakespeare's late "divagatory style"[97]:

> IACHIMO. By villainy
>   I got this ring. 'Twas Leonatus' jewel
>
>   .   .   .   .
>
>   Wilt thou hear more, my lord?
> CYMBELINE. All that belongs to this.
> IACHIMO.   That paragon, thy daughter,
>   For whom my heart drops blood, and my false spirits
>   Quail to remember—give me leave, I faint.
> CYMBELINE. My daughter? What of her? Renew thy strength.
>
>   .   .   .   .
>
>   Strive, man, and speak.
> IACHIMO. Upon a time—unhappy was the clock
>   That struck the hour; it was in Rome—accursed
>   The mansion where; 'twas at a feast—O would
>   Our viands had been poisoned (or at least
>   Those which I heaved to head); the good Posthumus—

(What should I say?)

.   .   .   .

Hearing us praise our loves of Italy

.   .   .   .

For condition,
A shop of all the qualities that man
Loves woman for; besides that hook of wiving,
Fairness which strikes the eye—
CYMBELINE.   *I stand on fire.*
     Come to the matter.
IACHIMO.   All too soon I shall,
     Unless thou wouldst grieve quickly. This Posthumus,

.   .   .   .

He began
His mistress' picture, which, by his tongue being made,
And then a mind put in't, either our brags
Were cracked of kitchen trulls or his description
Proved us unspeaking sots.
CYMBELINE.   *Nay, nay, to th' purpose.*
IACHIMO. Your daughter's chastity: *there it begins.*
     He spake of her as Dian had hot dreams
     And she alone were cold.

.   .   .   .

And to be brief, my practice so prevailed
That I returned with simular proof enough
To make the noble Leonatus mad

.   .   .   .

Whereupon—
Methinks I see him now—
POSTHUMUS.   Ay, so thou dost,
     Italian fiend! (V.v.142–210, emphases mine)

As with the earlier scene between the Lord and Posthumus, our perspective on Iachimo's narrative is modeled onstage by Cymbeline, who "stand[s] on fire" with impatience: "Come to the matter," he urges, "to th' purpose." Iachimo, however, does not alter his narrative manner to accommodate Cymbeline's demands; he even reprimands the king for wishing a quicker resolution to his tale: "All too soon I shall, / Unless thou wouldst grieve quickly." Cymbeline is as "constrained" (141) by Iachimo's act of storytelling as we are, unable to intervene in or redirect his story as we might desire. It is Posthumus, not Cymbeline, who finally cuts off Iachimo's story, with as much aggression as he did earlier with the Lord. In the chaos of actions and recognitions that follow, Cymbeline loses track of his Italian prisoner.

Once reunited with his daughter, sons, and Belarius, Cymbeline also loses his head, so to speak, granting a blanket pardon to all of his prisoners in order to bring them into the joyful fold.

"All o'erjoyed / Save these in bonds," Cymbeline observes of everyone gathered onstage, then decides magnanimously, impulsively, "Let them be joyful too, / For they shall taste our comfort" (V.v.400-2). Posthumus tries to rein in his father-in-law by modeling proper discretion and generosity, or "freeness":

> POSTHUMUS. Speak, Iachimo: I had you down and might
>   Have made you finish.
> IACHIMO. [*Kneels*]   I am down again.
>
>   .   .   .   .
>   Take that life, beseech you,
>   Which I so often owe.
>
>   .   .   .   .
> POSTHUMUS. Kneel not to me.
>   The power that I have on you is to spare you,
>   The malice towards you to forgive you. Live,
>   And deal with others better.
> CYMBELINE. Nobly doomed.
>   We'll learn our freeness of a son-in-law:
>   Pardon's the word to all. (V.v.417–21)

We might reasonably expect Posthumus to follow "Kneel not to me" with the command "Kneel to him," to Cymbeline. Instead, Posthumus proceeds to model the particular judgment and pardon of a sovereign *before* the sovereign. Of course, Posthumus does not have the power to judge or pardon, as he makes clear; he can only "spare" and "forgive" Iachimo. But when Cymbeline does exert the exclusive power and "pardon" that he has as king, he continues to lack discretion, granting pardon once again "to all" rather than to Iachimo in particular.

      Instead of a judge in a court of law dispassionately evaluating evidence and meting out justice, Cymbeline spends most of the scene inhabiting the perspective of a spectator watching an especially wonderful play. When he learns that the Queen gave Pisanio poison that he in turn gave to Imogen, the king says mildly, "New matter still" (V.v.242). When Belarius begins to confess to kidnapping the princes, Cymbeline is so disoriented that he can only echo scraps of Belarius' speech—reminiscent of that other Shakespearean romance patriarch, Pericles, who has the excuse of catatonic grief over the loss of his wife and daughter (*Pericles*, V.i.88):

> BELARIUS. First pay me for the nursing of thy sons.
>
>   .   .   .   .
> CYMBELINE.   Nursing of my sons?
> BELARIUS. I am too blunt and saucy.
>
>   .   .   .   .
>   They are the issue of your loins, my liege,
>   And blood of your begetting.
> CYMBELINE.   How, my issue? (V.v.321–30)

When the Soothsayer offers an overtly strained interpretation of Jupiter's tablet, Cymbeline muses, noncommittally, "This hath some seeming" (451). Cymbeline's lack of discretion can be read as a source of comic laughter that livens and lightens the scene. It is difficult to imagine an actor reading the line "Does the world go round?" (232), uttered at the moment of maximum tumult and confusion, any other way. But his lack of judgment, so unlike the heavy gravitational pull exerted by Duke Solinus' interventions and judgment on the final scene of *The Comedy of Errors*, is homologous to and enabling of *Cymbeline*'s formal multiplicity, which gives time and space to the multiple perspectives and frames offered by the many characters onstage.

In the absence of an imposing, dominant, single perspective, the collectively story unfolds in a distinctly spontaneous and contingent way. Characters speak up suddenly, picking up a stray thread from another character's account, and recalling a crucial detail here and there. When Posthumus, thinking that "Fidele" is mocking his grief, strikes him down, Pisanio blurts out the page's true identity: "O gentlemen, help! / Mine and your mistress! O my lord Posthumus, / You ne'er killed Imogen till now. Help, help!" (V.v.229–31). (He had recognized Imogen earlier, but like Belarius decided to "let the time run on / To good or bad" [127–8].) Soon after, Cornelius abruptly says, "O gods! / I left out one thing which the Queen confessed / Which must approve thee honest" (242–5), and then supplants that "one thing" that exonerates Pisanio. When Cymbeline says he doesn't know what happened to Cloten, Pisanio narrates his encounter with the revenging prince, but admits, "What became of him, / I further know not"; Guiderius then steps forward, bluntly: "Let me end the story: / I slew him there" (284–6). The collective-told story is structured by contingency: it is extended randomly, according to chance, but also extended in a way that depends on what has just been said or what has just happened. That contingency contributes to our sense of the disorderliness and disunity of the final scene, which as a result feels simultaneously headlong and dragged out.

And yet at one point in the storytelling extravaganza, Cymbeline complains that he has not heard enough:

> When shall I hear all through? This fierce abridgement
> Hath to it circumstantial branches which
> Distinction should be rich in. Where, how lived you?
> And when came you to serve our Roman captive?
> How parted with your brothers? How first met them?
> Why fled you from the court? And whither? These
> And your three motives to the battle, with
> I know not how much more, should be demanded,
> And all the other by-dependences,
> From chance to chance; but nor the time nor place
> Will serve our long inter'gatories. (V.v.381–91)

Astonishingly, Cymbeline complains that he has not heard enough, that what he has heard so far is a "fierce abridgement." His complaint draws our attention back to the story we have just heard and asks us to consider what kind of story it is. It prompts us to ask: what does Cymbeline want, and how is that different than what he has received? My initial reaction was that Cymbeline and

Cymbeline want, metadramatically, the kind of narrative that the stage cannot support. I took his last line in particular to mean that the theater is, as I have been suggesting throughout this dissertation, neither "the time nor place" for the proliferative, wandering, unsubordinated, contingent narrative of romance that Cymbeline desires, a narrative style of "by-dependences" that moves episodically "from chance to chance." But then, isn't that the kind of narrative we just heard?

Lorna Hutson's *Circumstantial Shakespeare* helped me realize that Cymbeline wants the exact opposite of what I had first assumed: order and coherence, not the multi-perspectival sprawl of the final scene's collectively-told story. Hutson explains that the circumstances were a rhetorical technique used by English dramatists and lawyers alike to bring before our eyes the "unscene" (a term she borrows from Marjorie Garber):

> 'Circumstances' were the topics that made any human action intelligible and able to be narrated and enquired into: '*causa tempus locus occasio instrumentum modus et cetera*', as Quintilian lists them, 'motive, time, place, opportunity, means, method and the like.' … Techniques were required for representing all that is not showable—past or distant occurrences, implied motives, habitual actions—the whole inferred or virtual 'world' which apparently subtends the performance we watch, but which, as we know, is actually an effect of our trying to make sense of it.[98]

"Trying to make sense of it"—this is what Cymbeline is reaching for unsuccessfully at this moment in the scene. Note his discourse here, distinct from his speech elsewhere in the scene: he desires the "circumstantial branches" that would explain the "where," "how," "when," "why," "whither," and "motives," which he would demand with his "long inter'gatories." That is, he wants what Hutson calls a "temporally, spatially, and psychologically coherent world,"[99] a sense of an orderly world. But he realizes that he can't discover that order from asking questions, because each question he asks is answerable only by a specific individual, who can offer him only fragments of an imagined whole. When Cymbeline admits that "nor the time nor place / Will serve our long inter'gatories," he acknowledges that the story that he longs to hear is one that cannot be given to him from the single, whole, and ordered perspective he desires.

In short, although Cymbeline's lack of discretion, as I have shown, does enable plural perspective in the final scene, he is uneasy with it. Stymied in his desire to find coherence and order from the individual stories he has heard, Cymbeline tries to supply that single perspective himself:

> See,
> Posthumus anchors upon Imogen,
> And she, like harmless lightning, throws her eyes
> On him, her brothers, me, her master, hitting
> Each object with a joy. The counterchange
> Is severally in all.
> .   .   .   .
> All o'erjoyed
> Save these in bonds. Let them be joyful too,
> For they shall taste our comfort. (V.v.391–402)

As we can see from this speech, Cymbeline can imagine order only as fixed homogeneity: to discover order out of multiplicity, he takes a single perspective that renders everyone the same. As usual, he tries to displace himself from the center. Narrating from Imogen's perspective for the second time in the scene ("O Imogen, / Thou hast lost by this a kingdom"), he describes how "her eyes" view everyone—Posthumus, Guiderius and Arviragus, Cymbeline, and Lucius—equally. The homogenizing force of her gaze, as he imagines it, is underscored by the lack of an ordering logic to the list of "object[s]" she sees, "each" "with a joy." Moreover, he uses deictic words—"him, her brothers, me, her master"—to refer to the people onstage. The meaning of deictic, or indexical, words depends on the identity of the speaker and their location;[100] by using deictic words rather than proper nouns, Cymbeline defines these individuals in relation to Imogen, further underscoring that he is focalizing the scene through her single, particular perspective. When he attempts to narrate the scene more broadly, he simply replicates Imogen's perspective, suggesting that everyone reciprocates everyone's gaze—"The counterchange / Is severally in all"—equally, homogeneously. And when he remembers his Roman prisoners who are "in bonds," he breaks their bonds to make them the same, to "be joyful too." He cannot take in and experience these multiple perspectives equally and simultaneously with their potential or real dissonances, and so he tries to reduce that multiplicity, dissonance, and disorder, through homogenization.

Compare Cymbeline's impulse toward homogeneity as order to Imogen's impulse toward heterogeneity and difference, especially when it comes to feeling. In her longest monologue in the play,[101] Imogen asserts that her longing for her absent husband cannot be compared to Pisanio's longing for the same man, as she imagines it:

> Then, true Pisanio,
> Who long'st like me to see thy lord, who long'st
> (O let me bate) but not like me, yet long'st,
> But in a fainter kind—O, not like me,
> For mine's beyond beyond—say and speak thick
> (Love's counsellor should fill the bores of hearing
> To th' smothering of the sense) how far it is
> To this same blessed Milford. (III.ii.52–9)[102]

Imogen recognizes the excessiveness of her speech, and even suggests she should 'abate' herself, to speak more moderately. But she bursts into hyperbolic, repetitive speech at the moment that she embraces and asserts the absolute difference of her perspective. Initially suggesting a likeness between Pisanio's longing for Posthumus to hers—"true Pisanio, / Who long'st like me to see thy lord"—she then suggests that they differ in "kind"—"but not like me, yet long'st, / But in a fainter kind." But she finally rejects comparison altogether: "O, not like me, / For mine's beyond beyond." By contrast, Cymbeline imagines that everyone feels the same "joy" toward all.

The play does offer up two versions of what the single perspective that Cymbeline desires might look like: Jupiter's tablet, which contains (according to Jupiter) "his [Posthumus'] full fortune" (V.iv.80), and the Soothsayer's flatfooted allegorical interpretation of the tablet, matching each element in the prophecy to a character onstage. If the former works as a compact narrative of

the play's plot, the latter works as a re-narrativization of a narrative of the play's plot, appearing at the end of a scene that is itself a re-narrativization of the play's plot—an overstuffed scene indeed! Jupiter's tablet reads:

> *Whenas a lion's whelp shall to himself unknown, without seeking find, and be embraced by a piece of tender air; and when from a stately cedar shall be lopped branches which, being dead many years, shall after revive, be jointed to the old stock, and freshly grow; then shall Posthumus end his miseries, Britain be fortunate and flourish in peace and plenty.* (V.iv.107–15)

Jupiter's tablet is one of the strangest of the Shakespearean riddles and prophecies, which are distinguished by how easy they are to solve. That Morocco and Aragon do *not* choose the casket with the inscription, "Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath" (*Merchant*, II.vii.9); and that Macbeth cannot fathom how anyone might be "none of woman born," nor how the "Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill / Shall come" (*Macbeth*, IV.i.79, 92–3)—however unfairly, we feel instinctively that these characters have gotten what they deserve for their profound lack of imagination. Antiochus' riddle, as I discuss in Chapter 1, is both too easy and impossible to solve, given what it reveals and conceals. Apollo's prophecy is the most transparent of all, leaving nothing for interpretation—"*Hermione is chaste, Polixenes blameless, Camillo a true subject, Leontes a jealous tyrant, his innocent babe truly begotten, and the king shall live without an heir if that which is lost be not found*" (*Winter's Tale*, III.ii.130–4)—although Leontes tries to interpret it anyway, as I discuss in Chapter 2. *Cymbeline*, however, offers us a riddle that mocks its interpreters,[103] even as it purports to describe events that we will have witnessed for ourselves by the end of the play.

Posthumus' refusal to interpret Jupiter's tablet is perhaps the most appropriate response to it:

> 'Tis still a dream, or else such stuff as madmen
> Tongue or brain not; either both, or nothing,
> Or senseless speaking, or a speaking such
> As sense cannot untie. Be what it is,
> The action of my life is like it, which I'll keep,
> If but for sympathy. (V.iv.116–21)

Posthumus recognizes the tablet as nonsense beyond even the speech and thought of madmen, and so does not attempt interpretation of it. But he does not dismiss its "senseless speaking" out of hand like Theseus does "the lunatic, the lover, and the poet" with their "seething brains … that apprehend / More than cool reason ever comprehends" (*Dream*, V.i.7, 4–6). Posthumus follows Hippolyta's response to "all the story of the night told over" by the lovers (*Dream*, V.i.23) instead, recognizing that the tablet shares a "sympathy" with his life as he understands it, and that it has "something of great constancy" about it (*Dream*, V.i.26), a certainty, a surety that he will continue to live by. In the final scene, Posthumus revisits the tablet with those gathered onstage:

> Good my lord of Rome,
> Call forth your soothsayer. As I slept, methought
> Great Jupiter, upon his eagle backed,

Appeared to me with other spritely shows
Of mine own kindred. When I waked, I found
This label on my bosom, whose containing
Is so from sense in hardness that I can
Make no collection of it. Let him show
His skill in the construction. (V.v.424–32)

Like his fellow waking dreamer Bottom, who refuses to "expound" his dream that is "past the wit of man to say what dream it was" (*Dream*, IV.i.202–3) and instead "will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream" (210), Posthumus refuses "collection" and "construction" as a solo act, and instead welcomes it as something to share and engage in with others. Sense-making, as the play takes pains to show, always works dialogically and pluralistically, always in a process of narrowing down then opening back out as stories are told, retold, circulated, recirculated, lost, and taken up again.

"Although the victor, we submit": Political Multiplicity

I began this chapter by claiming that a formalist approach to *Cymbeline*'s multiplicity can enhance our understanding of the play's confounding political plot, in which Britain and Rome are locked together in a struggle to define their relationship to one another. I could have put that claim another way, that the play's political plot clarifies the contours and stakes of Shakespeare's formal innovation in mingling genres. That political plot begins sometime before the play begins, when Cymbeline refuses to pay the annual tribute of "three thousand pounds" (III.i.9) to Rome; and it ends when the play does, when Cymbeline decides to pay the tribute after all. Audiences and scholars have long been puzzled by Cymbeline's decision, made after the Britons have defeated the Romans in a battle waged over its nonpayment. One way to solve that puzzle is to reconsider why Cymbeline refused to pay the annual tribute to begin with. The reason, as should by now be expected from this play, depends on who you ask. In yet another instance of the play staging redundant narratives, the Queen, Cloten, Cymbeline, and Lucius, in Act 3, Scene 1, all offer their own stories about the tribute and its nonpayment, which requires each character to interpret what the tribute meant in the first place. How each character justifies or criticizes the tribute and its nonpayment, then, is an index for how that character understands the relationship between Britain and Rome.

In a historiographical reading of the play, John E. Curran, Jr., portrays the redundant narratives of Act 3, Scene 1, as Shakespeare's presentation of "the Roman, and then the Galfridian, point of view on the history of Julius Caesar's invasion of Britain."[104] We diverge significantly on how we read these redundant narratives, in a way that I hope will clarify my methodological approach to the play's multiplicity, as well as its stakes and consequences. Similar to the way Barbara Hardy and Jill L. Levenson understand the function of inset stories in Shakespeare's plays, Curran reads the characters' stories about the tribute as a way to reveal their storytellers as good or bad, as true or false historians. He characterizes Lucius as "respectful" and "able to reach a standard of objectivity" and "integrity," because he "realizes that giving the enemy credit when it is due is the mark of the true historian." The Queen and Cloten, by contrast, are deemed "ungracious" with their "patriotic 'revisionist history'" that is "transparently calculated for self-glorification" and is

"childishly one-sided."[105] This approach leads Curran to interpret Cymbeline's decision to pay the tribute at the end of the play as "an acceptance of Roman historical authority and a repudiation of inadequate medieval concepts of history"—i.e., accepts Lucius' account and repudiates the Queen and Cloten's account—and an embrace of a Britain "in which a Roman domination is itself ennobling."[106] But to come to this conclusion, Curran must write his own 'revisionist history' of the play, which does not end in Roman domination, but with Augustus' army at the mercy of Cymbeline.

More than a demonstration of the potential multiplicity of interpretations for any sign or symbol, more than a demonstration of individual characters' 'character' as it impinges on their choice of historiographic method, the redundant narratives about the tribute and its nonpayment in Act 3, Scene 1, is a rich site for unfolding Britain's complex relationship to Rome, then, now, and in the future. Moreover, it sheds important light on Cymbeline's decision to pay the tribute to Rome at the end of the play. I argue that the political relationship between Britain and Rome is like the play's plural perspective in the way that both are unstable, productively so, and invite multiple, seemingly incompatible but nevertheless simultaneous interpretations. My central claim in this chapter is that the play's multiplicity is not a problem in and of itself, but a solution to an aesthetic challenge: how to put things in relation to one another in a way that avoids the domination of one element over the rest. Turning our attention now to the political plot, we can see that Shakespeare's formal innovation in mingling genres—seeking simultaneity and rejecting a stable hierarchy—is intimately bound up with the way that the play understands Britain in relation to Rome, preserving their complex, entangled, dynamic relationship and the various ways in which it can be understood, rather than reducing it to a question of who is subordinate to whom. Britain's relationship to Rome is under constant negotiation and redefinition in the play, by means of battle to be sure, but far more by seemingly redundant acts of storytelling and interpretation, as I will show.

Lucius is the first to describe the issue of the tribute and its non-payment, as well as the relationship between Britain and Rome, and does so in metaphorical, literary terms. He interprets the annual giving and receiving of the tribute as a living memorial of the mutual respect between Britain and Rome, which he reminds Cymbeline began with their ancestors, Julius Caesar and Cymbeline's great uncle Cassibelan:

> When Julius Caesar—whose remembrance yet
> Lives in men's eyes, and will to ears and tongues
> Be theme and hearing ever—was in this Britain
> And conquered it, Cassibelan, thine uncle,
> Famous in Caesar's praises no whit less
> Than in his feats deserving it, for him
> And his succession granted Rome a tribute,
> Yearly three thousand pounds, which by thee lately
> Is left untendered. (III.i.2–10)

According to Lucius, the tribute was from its origins freely "granted" by Cassibelan to Julius Caesar and "his succession." It honors both the giver and the receiver, and draws a continuous line through history, binding together Britain and Rome. The history of this binding, and its imminent break, is

powerfully enacted through Lucius' syntax: his entire speech is comprised of a single grammatical sentence that mingles past with present, Rome with Britain, and the action onstage with the theatrical audience. The subject of Lucius' sentence is Cassibelan, modified with two prepositional phrases that link him to Cymbeline, and his feats to Caesar's praise; the main verb of the sentence is "granted." What comes before this main action in a subordinate clause is Julius Caesar, modified with a prepositional phrase that links him to *our* present, now, as we listen to or read these lines: "Caesar—whose remembrance yet / Lives in men's eyes, and will to ears and tongues / Be theme and hearing ever." What comes after this main action—again, "Cassibelan granted"—is Cymbeline, in a prepositional phrase that modifies the "three thousand pounds": "which by thee lately is left untendered." This passage's complicated syntax is characteristic of Shakespeare's late style in the romances, which Russ McDonald argues we should think of as more than merely homologous to the romance plays' sprawling, convoluted dramatic structure.[107] Here we see one of those affordances. Grammatically, Lucius' speech is divided into three parts: Cassibelan and his act of granting the tribute at the center, with Julius Caesar and the past on one side, and Cymbeline and the present on the other. But within each part is entangled every other one; none is fully independent.

By contrast, Cloten justifies the non-payment by a business-like logic of *quid pro quo*: if Augustus is not giving the Britons anything, then the Britons needn't give him anything. "Why tribute? Why should we pay tribute?" Cloten asks rhetorically, "If Caesar can hide the sun from us with a blanket, or put the moon in his pocket, we will pay him tribute for light; else, sir, no more tribute" (III.i.42–5). But the point is, perhaps, moot. Britain is self-sufficient, Cloten claims, and needs nothing from Rome: "Britain's a world / By itself, and we will nothing pay / For wearing our own noses" (12–14). Britain might have been weak once, but no longer: "Our kingdom is stronger than it was at that time … We have yet many among us can grip as hard as Cassibelan" (40–1). His capitalist perspective that sees everything as an object that can be exchanged, bought, and possessed, extends to the isle itself, which he views without much sentiment; after Lucius pronounces war against Britain, Cloten says blusteringly, "If you seek us afterwards in other terms, you shall find us in our saltwater girdle. If you beat us out of it, it is yours" (78–80).

The Queen justifies the tribute's non-payment by a logic of dominance. In fact, she describes the tribute not as a payment at all, but as a theft, something "they [Rome] had to take from 's" (15). Not willingly given by Britain, but forcibly taken from them, the tribute is not so much a symbol of Britain's military inferiority to Rome as it is humiliating proof of it, year after year. But the Queen argues that the tribute, understood in this way, grossly misrepresents past events, because, as she tells it, Julius Caesar was "twice beaten" off the British coast "with shame" (III.i.27, 24). By resisting this annual theft, the Queen suggests, the Britons proudly reclaim their past victory against Rome, and assert the military power that they have had all along. That power inheres in Britain's kings and its geography: in the Queen's account, Caesar's ships failed to make landfall, rebuffed by the "terrible seas" and "cracked" "like eggshells" on the British isle's rocky coastline (27–8). (Like the Venetians' victory over the Turks in *Othello*, the Britons' victory over the Romans is accomplished by bad weather, and not in direct combat.) "Remember sir, my liege," she says,

> The kings your ancestors, together with
> The natural bravery of your isle, which stands
> As Neptune's park, ribbed and paled in

> With oaks unscalable and roaring waters,
> With sands that will not bear your enemies' boat. (16–21).

The Queen fairly welcomes war because, like the tribute, it will prove the physical strength of one nation over the other. For the power-obsessed Queen, the solution is to prove Briton's superiority by thwarting the theft. For the business-minded Cloten, the solution to the problem of the tribute is to rebalance the scales by not giving at all, so that neither owe the other anything. Both perceive the tribute as a zero-sum game, something that diminishes the giver and aggrandizes the receiver monetarily and militarily.

Cymbeline's account is the last one we receive in the scene; until that point he speaks only to ask Lucius what Augustus wants, and to chide Cloten for interrupting his mother—"Son, let your mother end" (III.i.39)—a moment of mild family drama strikingly at odds with the political tension brewing between Britain and Rome. I suggested earlier that Cymbeline's lack of discernment allowed for multiple perspectives to coexist onstage in the final scene, but that he nonetheless desires a single perspective. In that final scene, he uses homogenization as a strategy for bringing order and coherence to multiplicity. In Act 3, Scene 1, Cymbeline uses ideology to thread the needle, turning the question of the tribute into a question of Britain's freedom—what Amanda Bailey defines as the right to make commitments with one's equals.[108] This interpretation explains his apparent change of heart at the end of the play to pay the tribute.

Cymbeline portrays the tribute as an extortion that undermines Britain's freedom. "Till the injurious Romans did extort / This tribute from us," Cymbeline tells Lucius, "we were free. Caesar's ambition … Did put the yoke upon's, which to shake off / Becomes a warlike people, whom we reckon / Ourselves to be" (48–53). To tell this story about Britain's sovereignty, Cymbeline reaches back further into the past, before Cassibelan and Julius Caesar, to Mulmutius, "our ancestor" who

> Ordained our laws, whose use the sword of Caesar
> Hath too much mangled, whose repair and franchise
> Shall, by the power we hold, be our good deed,
> Though Rome be therefore angry. Mulmutius made our laws,
> Who was the first of Britain which did put
> His brows within a golden crown and called
> Himself a king. (III.i.54–61)

Cymbeline asserts Britain's status as a self-crowned nation independent of Rome on the basis of history and ideology. By extorting the tribute, Rome disenfranchises the Britons and "yoke[s]" them like beasts of burden. Cymbeline hopes to "repair" and "franchise"—set free—Britain's sovereign laws, which preceded Roman invasion, and will do so "by the power we hold," even if "Rome be therefore angry." Note that Cymbeline never quite says that he refuses to pay the tribute. For he does not object to the tribute itself, he objects to the myriad stories that are told around and about it, what the tribute has come to signify to others—Lucius, the Queen, and Cloten, as we see in Act 3, Scene 1—about Britain's relationship to Rome in the past and present. He wishes, that is, for a single story and perspective; as in the play's final scene, he wants order and coherence, not multi-perspectival sprawl.

This wish means that his behavior in the play's final scene, which concludes the play's political plot and which audiences and scholars have found perplexing in its apparent change of heart, is in fact consistent. The final scene begins with him in a vengeful mood toward Lucius and his fellow Roman prisoners:

> Thou com'st not, Caius, now for tribute. That
> The Britons have razed out, though with the loss
> Of many a bold one, whose kinsmen have made suit
> That their good souls may be appeased with slaughter
> Of you their captives, which ourself have granted. (V.v.69–73)

With that final word "granted," Cymbeline echoes Lucius' earlier speech about his ancestor Cassibelan who "granted" the tribute the last time Britain and Rome were at war. In Lucius' story, Cassibelan's grant shapes the conflict between Rome and Britain into a story about Julius Caesar's and Cassibelan's mutual respect, a story that—again, according to Lucius—Cassibelan intends to be told and retold year after year. Cymbeline hopes to begin telling a new story about Rome and Britain, and initially that story is one of revenge: a Roman life for a British one. He will replace Cassibelan's "grant," whose meaning cannot be agreed on, with one that uses Cloten's *quid pro quo* model to tell a new kind of story about British-Roman parity.

After a series of stories, revelations, and reunions, Cymbeline finds another way to tell that story of parity, by promising to pay the tribute to Augustus:

> My peace we will begin. And Caius Lucius,
> Although the victor, we submit to Caesar,
> And to the Roman empire, promising
> To pay our wonted tribute. (V.v.458–61)

Constance Jordan describes Cymbeline's decision to pay the tribute after defeating Rome as the "conscientious observance of a contract. Tribute paradoxically signals their freedom not their servitude."[109] I would go a step further and say that Cymbeline's promise to pay is not the "observance" of an existing contract—he considered the earlier tribute to be "extort[ed]"—but the creation of a new one on his own terms. This one will be a source of honor and pride like his memory of his youth spent under Augustus. Now freely "granted," "tendered" by Britain to Rome— or more precisely, by him to Augustus—the tribute finally symbolizes and performs the mutual respect between Britain and Rome in the way that Lucius' story suggested it always did. Now that Cymbeline can declare Britain, paradoxically, a victor in submission, he perceives the tribute as something that makes Britain equal to Rome, binding two sovereign nations together.

But there is one more ironic twist. Cymbeline, as I have suggested, seeks to replace the proliferating perspectives around the original tribute with a new, single story about the relationship between Britain and Rome, as captured in his promise to pay the tribute as well as in his description of the Roman and British flags waving "friendly together":

> Publish we this peace

> To all our subjects. Set we forward.
>
> .   .   .   .   .   .
>
> Our peace we'll ratify, seal it with feasts.
> Set on there. Never was a war did cease,
> Ere bloody hands were washed, with such a peace. (V.v.477–84)

Yet as the play's reception history suggests, Cymbeline's account is not as clear and singular as he evidently intended. And so the proliferating interpretations go on.

With *The Tempest*, Shakespeare gives us a play that, in its formal structure, seems opposite to *Cymbeline*. Shakespeare's last singly-authored play is overtly structured by dominance and a single perspective. More than any other Shakespearean character, Prospero controls the plot of the play, as the first two scenes of the play thematize. The deposed Duke of Milan aims to control everything and everyone by closing down any possibility of multiplicity and plural perspective through to the end. "What's past is prologue" (II.i.253–4) means imagining your life as a Sidneyan unified play, where everything that has happened thus far—"*ab ovo*"—has led up to, is subordinated to, your action—"the principal point of that one action which [the play] will represent."[110] The overwhelming multivocality and plural perspective that we experience at the end of *Cymbeline* yield to univocality and single perspective in *The Tempest*. But Prospero's anxiety about not being properly attended to suggests the play's skepticism about such a model of dramatic structure, as we will shortly see.

NOTES

[1] Sidney, 244.

[2] All references to *Cymbeline* come from Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, 2017. Throughout this dissertation, I have spelled the female protagonist's name "Imogen" as it appears in the First Folio, rather than "Innogen," as the Arden Third Series has chosen to do (Appendix 1, 391-8).

[3] I would be remiss if I neglected to mention the positive accounts of the play's final scene, which do exist, and which tend to invoke the term "virtuosic." G. K. Hunter describes the last scene as "extraordinary," "a theatrical *tour de force*" (*English Drama, 1586-1642: The Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 511). Russ McDonald calls Shakespeare's handling of the scene "dazzling," such that the audience "enjoys being conscious of the managerial virtuosity of the dramatist, particularly his skill at concealing, diverting, revealing, and above all controlling the multiple strands of the action" (*Shakespeare's Late Style* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006], 40). Valerie Wayne also marvels at the "technical virtuosity of its long final scene," adding that it "deserves the praise it receives from critics and the delight it elicits from audiences" ("Introduction," in *Cymbeline*, ed. Valerie Wayne [London: Arden Shakespeare, Third Series, 2017], 2).

[4] Lytton Strachey, "Shakespeare's Final Period," in *Books & Characters* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922), 64.

[5] *Peter Hall - Blocking the Last Scene of "Cymbeline,"* 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8Csnm930U4.

[6] Leech, "The Structure of the Last Plays," 23. He adds, "Posthumus' exile does not necessarily lead him to a meeting with Iachimo. Imogen's danger from her husband's wrath is accidentally relieved by her encounters with her brothers and with Lucius. The coming together of all the characters in Act V … is the contrivance of Fortune or of Providence, not the simple conclusion from the play's premises. Certainly Shakespeare was at some pains to suggest a finality, something more decisive than a mere tale's ending."

[7] Bloom, *The Invention of the Human*, 621, 636, 638.

[8] Samuel Johnson, "Johnson on Shakespeare," in *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, ed. Arthur Sherbo, vol. 8 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), 908.

[9] McDonald describes Shakespeare's late verse as a "combination of superfluity and omission" (*Shakespeare's Late Style*, 94). *The Winter's Tale* in its relation to the audience errs on the side of omission, and *Cymbeline* on the side of superfluity.

[10] Ros King, *Cymbeline: Constructions of Britain* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 1.

[11] Heather James, *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, Politics, and the Translation of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 151. Puttenham glosses "mingle-mangle" as incorporating "sundry languages" in speech, in a way that calls to mind *Cymbeline*'s wager scene, which gathers onstage the Italians Iachimo and Philario, the Briton Posthumus, "a Frenchman, a Dutchman and a Spaniard" (I.iv): "Another of your intollerable vices is that which the Greekes call Soraismus, and we may call the [mingle mangle] as when we make our speach or writinges of sundry languages vsing some Italian word, or French, or Spanish, or Dutch, or Scottish, not for the nonce or for any purpose (which were in part excusable) but ignorantly and affectedly" (*The Arte of English Poesy*, 259).

[12] "A capacious mélange of characters and events, *Cymbeline* is so full it almost overflows its own measure" ((Wayne, "Introduction").

[13] Margreta de Grazia observes that the plays categorized as tragedies—*King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and *Cymbeline*—all dramatize events before the Norman Conquest in 1066, while the plays categorized as histories depict events after the conquest (*Hamlet without Hamlet* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007], 52–60).

[14] "If the first play, *The Tempest*, can be read as Shakespeare's farewell to the stage, then *Cymbeline*, the last, deserves consideration as a farewell to his plays, given its highly recapitulatory character" (Valerie Wayne, "The First Folio's Arrangement and Its Finale," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 66 [2015]: 390). For a recapitulation of the ways that the play is recapitulatory, and the critics that have recognized it as such, see Wayne, "The First Folio's Arrangement and Its Finale," 404–7.

[15] "That *Cymbeline* exhibits a certain degree of structural ineptitude may be conceded, but this can be attributed to the experimental nature of the play. Shakespeare, who had proved himself the supreme master of both tragedy and comedy, was yet unpractised in the art of blending the two in the service of romance. He undertook now to present difficult, even intractable, narrative components in a form which was quite new to him and which would clearly test his native invention severely" (Nosworthy, "Introduction," xxx).

[16] "Everything about *Cymbeline* is madly problematical, as Shakespeare, in a willful mood, evidently intended" (Bloom, *The Invention of the Human*, 618).

[17] For an overview of how critics have tried to account for the ambivalence of *Cymbeline*'s ending, see Wayne, "Introduction," 56.

[18] Henry E. Jacobs, *Cymbeline*, ed. William Godshalk, The Garland Shakespeare Bibliographies (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982), xxii–xxiii.

[19] Willy Maley, "Cymbeline, the Font of History, and the Matter of Britain: From Times New Roman to Italic Type," in *Alternative Shakespeares 3*, ed. Diana E. Handerson (New York: Routledge, 2007), 160–85.

[20] Patricia Parker, "Romance and Empire: Anachronistic *Cymbeline*," in *Unfolded Tales: Essays on Renaissance Romance*, ed. George Logan and Gordon Teskey (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 196.

[21] Leah Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Readings and Its Discontents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 122. Marcus shows how *Cymbeline* can be read allegorically as supporting James I's vision of a unified England and Scotland, but also how the play actively deconstructs such a reading.

[22] With thanks to Dave Landreth for this compact formulation.

[23] James, *Shakespeare's Troy*, 151.

[24] Brian Gibbons, *Shakespeare and Multiplicity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 47.

[25] Gibbons, 24, 30.

[26] Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, 200.

[27] Frye, *The Secular Scripture*.

[28] Kenneth Muir, *Shakespeare's Sources* (London: Methuen, 1957), 238.

[29] Gibbons, *Shakespeare and Multiplicity*, 10–13, esp. 11.

[30] See Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 17ff.

[31] "The two genres present us with subjectivities made up of the same components but ask us to evaluate these components in opposed ways. At isolated moments, something more complex happens: a space between farce and romance is created in which the audience is momentarily transported from one mode to the other and back ... a state that highlights the violence with which this play brings farce and romance together and alienates the audience from the two genres in order to enable self-conscious reflection on their cultural implications" (Martine van Elk, "'This Sympathizèd One Day's Error': Genre, Representation, and Subjectivity in *The Comedy of Errors*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 60 [2009]: 52).

[32] Ron Rosenbaum, *The Shakespeare Wars: Clashing Scholars, Public Fiascoes, Palace Coups* (New York: Random House, 2006), emphases mine.

[33] Solomon Volkov, *Shostakovich and Stalin: The Extraordinary Relationship between the Great Composer and the Brutal Dictator*, trans. Antonina W. Bouis, 1st ed (New York: Knopf, 2004), 148–57. Volkov calls the last movement "the most disturbing and ambivalent music of the twentieth century" (148) and refers to the whole symphony as "a symphony-novel with several false bottoms" (150).

[34] "All the end of the comical part be not upon such scornful matters as stir laughter only, but, mixed with it, that delightful teaching which is the end of poesy. And the great fault even in that point of laughter, and forbidden plainly by Aristotle, is that they stir laughter in sinful things, which are rather execrable than ridiculous, or in miserable, which are rather to be pitied than scorned. For what is it to make folks gape at a wretched beggar and a beggarly clown; or, against law of hospitality, to jest at strangers, because they speak not English so well as we do?" (Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 245).

[35] Harley Granville Barker, taking scholars like Horace Howard Furness to task for suggesting that *Cymbeline* may have been written by someone else ("It is pretty poor criticism (Dr Furness owns it) to fasten all the faults upon some unknown collaborator and allow one's adored Shakespeare all the praise. Lackeying of that sort leads us first to the minor, then, if we are not careful, into the larger lunacies") nevertheless describes the playwright as "a Shakespeare who, for the moment, is somewhat at odds with himself" (*Prefaces to Shakespeare*, vol. 2, 2 vols. [London: B.T. Batsford, 1958]).

[36] Rosalie Colie uses the terms "topic and treatment" (Colie, 29); Daniel Javitch uses the terms "form" and "function" ("The Emergence of Poetic Genre Theory in the Sixteenth Century," 140). In his essay, Javitch revises our usual understanding of the relationship between the "new desire to define poetry according to the form and function of its genres" in mid-sixteenth Italy, and the "unprecedented interest in [Aristotle's] *Poetics*" (140). Rather than imagine the Renaissance's efforts to taxonomize and theorize about genres as perpetuating "inviolable ancient rules," Javitch argues that these writers hoped to modernize, not merely codify, ancient poetic kinds of the sort written about by Aristotle.

[37] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 242. Later he writes, "Although indeed the senate of poets hath chosen verse as their fittest raiment, meaning, as in *matter* they passed all in all, so in *manner* to go beyond them: not speaking (table-talk fashion or like men in a dream) words as they chanceably fall from the mouth, but peising each syllable of each word by just proportion according to the dignity of the subject" (219, emphases mine).

[38] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 218. Later, he acknowledges that verse has didactic affordances, as it is "best for memory, the only handle of knowledge" in its orderliness of "rhyme or measured verse" (234).

[39] Sidney, 218. Sidney again doesn't distinguish between heroic poetry and what we would call "romance" when he lists poetic figures worthy of imitation: "so true a lover as Theagenes, so constant a friend as Pylades, so valiant a man as Orlando, so right a prince as Xenophon's Cyrus, so excellent a man every way as Virgil's Aeneas" (216).

[40] Sidney, 246.

[41] Sidney, 227, 229–31.

[42] Sir Philip Sidney, *Sir Philip Sidney: The Major Works*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 153.

[43] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 228, emphasis mine.

[44] Sidney, 226–27.

[45] Sidney, 223, 213.

[46] Sidney, 230.

[47] Sidney, 249.

[48] This discussion reminds me irresistibly of the priest in *Don Quixote* who cannot bring himself to throw away certain chivalric romances when he hears their titles and recalls their delightful contents. Each time the priest orders the whole library to be cast out, he slows down again to examine each book one by one, to ensure that he doesn't

accidentally throw out "some that didn't deserve to be committed to the flames." The book burning comes to a halt only when Don Quixote calls the party to his room, thereby sparing the rest: "As a result it's believed that *Carolea* and *The Lion of Spain*, together with *The Exploits of the Emperor* by Luis de Ávila, went to the flames without any trial at all, because they must have been among the remainder; and perhaps if the priest had examined them they wouldn't have received such a severe sentence" (Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote de La Mancha*, trans. John Rutherford [New York: Penguin Books, 2001]).

[49] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 231.

[50] Bates, *On Not Defending Poetry*, vii. Leveraging new economic criticism, Bates upends the "prevailing view" of Sidney's *Defence* as promoting an "idealist model of poetry": "Working from an '*Idea* or fore-conceit' in his mind, the poet imitates ideals of human conduct that, in turn, inspire readers to imitate them. Poetry thus profits both the individual and the commonwealth to which he or she belongs by promoting ethical ideals of heroic love and political action" (vii). But this prevailing view, as she describes it, conflates poetry with a very particular kind of poetry—heroic—as Sidney makes clear in the section of the *Defence* that catalogues the various genres and their particular "matters." The "idealist aesthetic" that Bates aims to challenge, in short, accounts for just one model of poetry that the *Defence* describes.

[51] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 231.

[52] Sidney, 234, 237.

[53] Sidney, 237–38.

[54] "These three problems [of contemporary England]-national idleness, contempt for poetry, and the proliferation of base poets-are for Sidney interdependent. An active, warlike England is one that values and produces great poetry. ... To revitalize England, one must revitalize poetry, and to revitalize poetry one must turn to poets who are capable of inspiring the nation to heroic action" (Edward Berry, "Sidney's 'Poor Painter': Nationalism and Social Class," in *Literature and Nationalism*, ed. Vincent Newey and Ann Thompson [Savage: Barnes & Noble Books, 1991], 1, 2).

[55] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 244.

[56] Sidney defends poets who mix together different "kinds," "manners," or "matters": "Some poesies have coupled together two or three kinds, as the tragical and comical, whereupon is risen the tragi-comical. Some, in the like manner, have mingled prose and verse, as Sannazzaro and Boethius. Some have mingled matters heroical and pastoral. But that cometh all to one in this question, for, if severed they be good, the conjunction cannot be hurtful" (228–29).

[57] Catherine Bates argues that to resolve the 'problem' of the *Defence*'s inconsistency, we must recognize the dialogic nature of the work: "Many readers of the *Defence* have commented on the layeredness of Sidney's text: the sense that more than one 'voice' is speaking and that the various polemical positions taken are inconsistent or at odds with one another. None, however, has suggested that one of these 'voices' is directly contravening—indeed, terminally disrupting—the argument for an idealist aesthetic that the treatise officially makes. This book suggests exactly that" (*On Not Defending Poetry*, vii).

[58] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 229.

[59] Sidney, 244.

[60] Sidney, 245.

[61] John Fletcher, *The Faithful Shepherdess*, ed. F. W. Moorman (London: J. M. Dent and Co, 1897), 6.

[62] Fletcher, 6.

[63] Fletcher, 7.

[64] F.W. Moorman, "Preface," in *The Faithful Shepherdess*, ed. F.W. Moorman (London: J. M. Dent and Co, 1897), v.

[65] Wayne, "Introduction," 49.

[66] Fletcher, *The Faithful Shepherdess*, 2.

[67] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 220.

[68] David Sims, "The Book of Henry Is a Warped Nightmare of a Movie," *The Atlantic*, June 15, 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/06/the-book-of-henry-is-a-warped-nightmare-of-a-movie/530472/:

> There's a fundamental tonal miscalculation at the heart of this film that's further exposed as it goes on. … The mixing of family schlock with a revenge thriller is the kind of high-wire act that even a great director would struggle with—Trevorrow, unsurprisingly, falls face-first in his attempt, accidentally crushing some of the onlookers below. … *The Book of Henry* is the equivalent of eating a cake baked with salt instead of sugar, or

listening to a Beatles song where the lyrics are in Esperanto—you understand the idea of what Trevorrow was going for, but the end result is an appalling, irradiated mess, a Frankenstein's monster version of a feel-good classic.

Owen Gleiberman and Owen Gleiberman, "Film Review: 'The Book of Henry,'" *Variety* (blog), June 15, 2017, http://variety.com/2017/film/reviews/the-book-of-henry-review-naomi-watts-1202465743/:

> The film's muted yet still rather flamboyant terribleness derives from the fact that it seems to be juggling three or four borderline schlock genres at once. … It's not entirely clear whether you should be laughing, crying, or waving a white flag.

John DeFore, "'The Book of Henry' Review | Hollywood Reporter," accessed May 4, 2018, https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/book-henry-1013737:

> Complain all you want about Colin Trevorrow's *The Book of Henry* — one thing you can't say is that it's not enough movie. It begins as a kid-genius family picture, then abruptly becomes a terminal-illness melodrama; it winds up a bizarro thriller. … Here, the idiom of the wholesome family film makes no room for the cheap caper-flick stuff Hurwitz wants to sell us. And the compounding coincidences he requires in order to deliver a happy ending are almost disgustingly dishonest.

Austin Elias-de Jesus, "The Book of Henry Is About What?! An Explanation," *Slate*, June 20, 2017, http://www.slate.com/blogs/browbeat/2017/06/20/the_baffling_amazingly_wrong_headed_the_book_of_henry_explained.html:

> *The Book of Henry* is a tonal mix of *My Dog Skip* and *Rear Window*. It is the banana and mayonnaise sandwich of movies. It mixes two things that should never be mixed.

Emily Yoshida, "Review: The Book of Henry Is Terribly Unlike Any Other Terrible Film You've Seen," Vulture, 2017, http://www.vulture.com/2017/06/the-book-of-henry-movie-review-a-unique-kind-of-terrible.html:

> Trevorrow can't draw a single emotional through line out of the muck, leaving his cast stranded in a directionless jumble of half-arcs. There's a feeling of collage to the direction. Take any two- or three-minute segment out of context and it would seem recognizable enough as a movie: the heart-tugging score, the cute kid one-liners. But assembled as it is, the movie starts to feel like an exquisite corpse, a film that forgot what it was five minutes ago, both structurally and emotionally.

John Patterson, "The Book of Henry Is a Catastrophically Awful Film. Everyone Should See It," *The Guardian*, June 22, 2017, sec. Film, http://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2017/jun/22/the-book-of-henry-is-a-catastrophically-awful-film-everyone-should-see-it:

> Tonally it's all over the place: shrill here, lachrymose there, veering from brutal emotional manipulation to cuteness so sugary your fillings will want to leap from your teeth. … Don't worry about spoiler warnings (scroll south if you do): *The Book of Henry* arrived triumphantly pre-spoiled – it rotted in the box on the way over. To borrow from Hunter S Thompson on Richard Nixon, it is a triumph of the twisted gene and the broken chromosome, misconceived at a molecular-genetic level, ruined in the womb, born dead. Everything about it is lazy and ill-wrought.

Karen Han, "A Look Back at the Most Batsh*t Insane Movie of 2017," *The Daily Beast*, December 27, 2017, sec. entertainment, https://www.thedailybeast.com/a-look-back-at-the-most-batsht-insane-movie-this-year:

> Despite everything that I've written here, this is a movie that largely defies description. Each scene feels like it's picked out from a different movie to the point that their compilation is interminable. A movie this crazy should

be spellbinding, but as it is, *The Book of Henry* is just baffling.

[69] "The failure of *The Faithful Shepherdess* in the playhouse seems to show us that Italian avant-gardism had pushed the point beyond what London was prepared to tolerate. … Though *The Faithful Shepherdess* had been a flop, the literary and social avant-garde rushed to its rescue, attaching their poetic testimonials to the quarto publication (probably in the same year). So there was some approval of Guarinian tragicomedy among the cognoscenti. The thirty-eight poems set before the 1647 Folio of the Beaumont and Fletcher Comedies and Tragedies, written by all the most distinguished cavalier wits and poets of the time, tell us retrospectively that the King's Men had found a key to the taste of a newly self-conscious literary élite" (Hunter, *English Drama, 1586-1642: The Age of Shakespeare*, 500–501).

[70] Jane Hwang Degenhardt and Cyrus Mulready make a similar argument, that Fletcher "ultimately understood the integrity of the tragicomic plot to be achieved through the subordination of tragedy to comedy," but add, "It is perhaps curious, then, that *The Faithful Shepherdess* did contain death" ("Romance and Tragicomedy," in *A New Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney and Thomas Warren Hopper [Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017], esp. 426). What they miss, and what I illuminate in my discussion of Fletcher's prefatory letter, is that Fletcher did come to understand this structure as the solution to the problem of mingling genres, but that he hadn't yet worked that out in the writing of *The Faithful Shepherdess*.

[71] "To study his acts of narration is to recognize that Shakespeare is usually shaping speech to an idea or image of personal character" (Barbara Hardy, *Shakespeare's Storytellers: Dramatic Narration* [London: Peter Owen, 1997], 19). Jill Levenson similarly reads moments of narrative in *Romeo and Juliet*—moments when the "length and elaboration call attention to themselves"—as moments that primarily work to characterize the storyteller: "Several times the Nurse relates incidents which the audience has witnessed; each narration represents what happened in partial terms which reveal more of her personality than the event" ("Narratives of *Romeo and Juliet*," in *Shakespeare and Narrative: Shakespeare Survey*, ed. Peter Holland, vol. 53 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000], 42, 44).

[72] Colie, *The Resources of Kind*, 8.

[73] van Elk reads individual characters' manners of speech as evincing particular and conflicting generic expectations: "The play places Egeon in the mercantile setting expected in farce or other types of urban comedy. But hints of a secular dramatic setting and comic plot are offset by the language. Egeon opens with a line that ends in the loaded word "fall" to set the tone: "Proceed, Solinus, to procure my fall, / And by the doom of death end woes and all" (1.1.1–2). … The Duke's immediate response seems curiously, even comically, out of touch with these lines: "Merchant of Syracusa, plead no more" (l. 3). The play's first strange moment of generic merger occurs here: the Duke believes he is in a different generic world, one in which deceitful merchants try to talk their way out of an execution. … Generically, Egeon's speeches construct the realm of Christian romance, a realm in which Egeon's status as a merchant must be discarded before his gradual redemption can begin" (""This Sympathizèd One Day's Error,"" 52–53).

[74] Mikalachki reads this scene as a microcosm of Britain's place in history *because of* their fight against Rome: "This conflict between the princes and their presumed father comes to a head when the brothers want to enter the battle against the Romans. … It is equally, however, a sign of their desire to enter the world of history. … Without fighting the Romans, the princes will have no such marks to read by the winter fire when they are old. The masculine rite of passage such scars represent for them personally is a version of the national entry into history by means of the Roman invasion" ("The Masculine Romance of Roman Britain: Cymbeline and Early Modern English Nationalism," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46 [1995]: 314–15).

[75] In doubling the metaphor expressed by his brother, Arviragus approximates the thrillingly complex metaphors of the first stanza of Shakespeare's Sonnet 73, which doubles and trebles its initial metaphor of the speaker as autumn:

> That time of year thou mayst in me behold
> When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang
> Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
> Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang.

[76] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 216–17.

[77] Bates, *On Not Defending Poetry*, viii.

[78] While I was revising this chapter in Spring 2018, there was a kerfuffle in the media over Donald Trump's speech at the 2018 Conservative Political Action Conference, where he recited the lyrics of "The Snake" with a coercive

interpretive frame. "Think of it in terms of immigration," he began. "And you may love it or you may say, 'Isn't that terrible.' And if you say, 'Isn't that terrible,' who cares?" After his recitation, he glossed the text: "And that's what we're doing with our country, folks. We're letting people in. And it is going to be a lot of trouble. It is only getting worse." Vox, CNN Politics, and The Washington Post all reframed the moment as deeply ironic, recasting Trump in the role of the snake. (Dara Lind, "'The Snake': Donald Trump Brings Back His Favorite Anti-Immigrant Fable at CPAC," Vox, February 23, 2018, https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/2/23/17044744/trump-snake-speech-cpac; Dan Merica, "Trump Reads 'The Snake,' Repurposed as Anti-Immigrant Song," CNN Politics, accessed March 10, 2018, https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/23/politics/trump-the-snake-song/index.html; Eli Rosenberg, "'The Snake' at CPAC: How Trump Appropriated a Radical Black Singer's Lyrics for Immigration Fearmongering," The Washington Post, February 24, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2018/02/24/the-snake-how-trump-appropriated-a-radical-black-singers-lyrics-for-refugee-fearmongering/?utm_term=.35a2250662af.)

[79] On scenes of reading in *Cymbeline*, see Charlotte Scott, "'Sad Stories Chanced in the Times of Old': The Book in Performance in *Titus Andronicus* and *Cymbeline*," in *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 26–56.

[80] Coppélia Kahn, *Roman Shakespeare: Warriors, Wounds, and Women* (London: Routledge, 1997), 168–69.

[81] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 240.

[82] Wayne Rebhorn argues that Sidney cannot maintain his own distinction in the *Defence*: "Sir Philip Sidney provides a good example of the unintentional way in which Renaissance thinkers, on occasion, turn the art they cherish into the Circean magic they abhor. … he clearly wants to insist on [poetry's] masculinity, claiming that it guides us through life, befits the profession of arms, and stimulates true courage, and that the poets should share the laurels of victory with warriors. Yet consider how this heroic poet acts: 'He doth not only show the way [to knowledge], but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it. Nay, he doth as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the first give you a cluster of grapes, that full of that taste, you may long to pass further' (38). … Here Sidney does what so many Renaissance rhetoricians do: he starts out with a 'masculine' image of the rhetor-poet as a guide to life but slips into a characterization of that figure's behavior which evokes visions of Circe and her garden of delights" (*The Emperor of Men's Minds: Literature and the Renaissance Discourse of Rhetoric* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995], 178–79).

[83] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 246.

[84] James, *Shakespeare's Troy*, 181.

[85] It has often been remarked that Posthumus cuts himself out of his account of the battle. His soliloquy, after the lord has fled, seems to explain this curious lacuna: "For being now a favourer to the Briton / No more a Briton, I have resumed again / The part I came in. … Great the slaughter is / Here made by th'Roman; great the answer be / Britons must take" (V.iii.74-80). In deciding not to tell the battle as a story of self, Posthumus registers his lack of a stable national identity, as he has switched national allegiances and social classes multiple times: son of a British hero to Roman soldier to British peasant to Roman soldier again.

[86] My interpretation of the intention behind Posthumus' speech—to stir national pride in Britain—takes the direct opposite view of Michael J. Redmond's, which I find to be idiosyncratic: "After the cowardly lord's refusal to accept that the outcome was the result of 'strange chance', Posthumus introduces his rhyming couplet as a deliberate 'mock'ry' of the craving for a stirring narrative of national pride" ("'No More a Britain': James I, Jachimo, and the Politics of Xenophobia in *Cymbeline*," in *Shakespeare, Politics, and Italy: Intertextuality on the Jacobean Stage* [Burlington: Ashgate, 2009], 193). I see no evidence of the lord's "refusal" of the idea that the outcome resulted from "strange chance"—he says outright, "This was strange chance"—and I see evidence that Posthumus' original narrative of the battle *is* a "stirring narrative of national pride" that Redmond thinks he is mocking: "'Our Britain's harts die flying, not her men.'" However, I agree with Redmond's main argument that Posthumus "rejects any form of British mythmaking," in the sense that he does not want this British victory to be turned into a mythical, wondrous, *romantic* tale of "strange chance."

[87] Mikalachki reads the exchange between Posthumus and the lord very differently; where I read aggressive conflict between two different narrative frames on an event, she sees no ideological conflict between the two retellings: "As soon as the princes' stand with Belarius has been presented dramatically, Posthumus recapitulates it as a historical battle narrative, complete with citations of brave speeches and descriptions of the terrain and deployment of troops (5.3.1-51). His interlocutor responds by producing an aphorism to commemorate their action, 'A narrow lane, an old man, and two boys' (l. 52), which Posthumus improves into a rhymed proverb: 'Two boys, an old man twice a boy, a lane, / Preserved

the Britons, was the Romans' bane" (ll. 57-58). The transformation of the dramatic stand in 5.2 into narrative, aphorism, and proverb in 5.3 represents instant historicization" ("The Masculine Romance of Roman Britain," 316).

88 Kahn, *Roman Shakespeare*, 168.

89 To set off his example of Alexander, Sidney also retells the story of "certain Goths," "of whom it is written that, having in the spoil of a famous city taken a fair library." One Goth wants to burn the library, but the other says no, explaining, "Take heed what you do, for while they are busy about these toys, we shall with more leisure conquer their countries." This Goth's thinking, Sidney says scornfully, "is the ordinary doctrine of ignorance," "a chainshot against all learning" ("The Defence of Poesy," 237).

90 Kay calls this phenomenon "Shakespeare's postponed endings," and explains that "sometimes this procedure is little more than a tactful convenience that neatly forestalls tiresome reiteration on stage of information the audience already knows, with the attendant risk of dissipating the surprise, the 'wonder,' of the close ... [or] designed to mitigate the brusqueness of the ending" ("'To Hear the Rest Untold,'" 208). Barbara Hardy offers another effect of the postponed ending: that it "couples the audience's knowledge with the characters' ignorance, and combines closure with openness" (*Shakespeare's Storytellers*, 24).

91 Michael Witmore, "The Avoidance of Ends in *The Comedy of Errors*," in *Culture of Accidents: Unexpected Knowledges in Early Modern England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 74. He continues, "[The story] provide[s] the amusing sense that the complications of the story are testing the limits of her ability to press them into a spoken narrative. ... If Adriana were trying here to summarize what the audience itself has seen—accommodating all of the different circumstances that had to combine to create the situation she is now in—the narrative and rhetorical strain would probably be insurmountable" (74-5). This is, in a way, what the final scene of *Cymbeline* tries to do: to accommodate "all of the different circumstances."

92 Witmore, 75–76.

93 Colie elsewhere describes "the *social* force and function of the kinds" as "abbreviations for a 'set' on the world, as definitions of manageable boundaries, some large, some small, in which material can be treated and considered" (*The Resources of Kind*, 8, 115).

94 Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, 199.

95 Jordan, *Shakespeare's Monarchies*, 30.

96 Roger Warren describes Iachimo's account of the wager scene as not only "the most tortuous language in the play," but also as "carrie[d] to new extremes" (*Cymbeline*, ed. Roger Warren, The Oxford Shakespeare [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998], 249n153-60, 57).

97 McDonald, *Shakespeare's Late Style*, 108–28, esp. 114. McDonald describes Iachimo's speech as "flagrantly erratic and parenthetical," and "exceeded perhaps only by that of Leontes" (121-2). In his book, McDonald identifies a homology between "the notoriously challenging syntax of the romances" with their "difficult, circuitous style," and their "convoluted narrative syntax," "the sprawling, roundabout shape of the romance plot," both of which result from "a storyteller's manipulation of the audience's expectations" (114).

98 Hutson, *Circumstantial Shakespeare*, 2, 5.

99 Hutson, 12.

100 Shakespeare mines the comic potential of deictic words in *The Comedy of Errors*, particularly in this dizzying moment when Antipholus of Syracuse expresses his love for Luciana, who thinks he is Antipholus of Ephesus, her sister's husband:

> LUCIANA. Why call you me love? Call my sister so.
> ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE. Thy sister's sister.
> LUCIANA.   That's my sister.
> ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.   No,
>   It is thyself, mine own self's better part,
>   Mine eye's clear eye, my dear heart's dearer heart.
>
> .   .   .   .
> LUCIANA. All this my sister is, or else should be.
> ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE. Call thyself sister, sweet, for I am thee. (III.ii.59-66)

101 Her second-longest monologue is at IV.ii.290-331, when she discovers what she believes to be Posthumus' body.

[102] Bemusing her interlocutor with her flurry of questions ("And by th' way / Tell me how Wales was made so happy as / T'inherit such a haven. But first of all, / How we may steal from hence, and for the gap / That we shall make in time, from our hence-going / And our return, to excuse. But first, how get hence? / Why should excuse be born or ere begot? / We'll talk of that hereafter. Prithee speak, / How many score of miles may we well ride / 'Twixt hour and hour?" [(III.ii.59-68]), Imogen resembles that other garrulous Shakespearean heroine, Rosalind:

> ROSALIND. Alas the day! what shall I do with my doublet and hose? What did he when thou sawest him? What said he? How looked he? Wherein went he? What makes him here? Did he ask for me? Where remains he? How parted he with thee? and when shalt thou see him again? Answer me in one word.
> CELIA. You must borrow me Gargantua's mouth first: 'tis a word too great for any mouth of this age's size. To say ay and no to these particulars is more than to answer in a catechism. (*AYLI*, III.ii.223-32)

In this same speech, Imogen also resembles Lear when she compares herself to the meaner sort: "If one of mean affairs / May plod it in a week, why may not I / Glide thither in a day?" (III.ii.50-2). Lear, looking upon Cordelia's dead body, similarly says, uncomprehendingly: "Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life, / And thou no breath at all?" (F, V.iii.282-3).

[103] By framing the tablet as something that contains Posthumus "full fortune," Jupiter-as-author stipulates a particular reading of the tablet that Posthumus resists and the Soothsayer obliges:

> Thou, Leonatus, art the lion's whelp,
> The fit and apt construction of thy name,
> Being *leo-natus*, doth import so much.
> [*to Cymbeline*] The piece of tender air, thy virtuous daughter,
> Which we call *mollis aer,* and *mollis aer*
> We term it *mulier*; which *mulier* I divine
> Is this most constant wife, who even now,
> Answering the letter of the oracle,
> [*to Posthumus*] Unknown to you, unsought, were clipped about
> With this most tender air.
>
> .   .   .   .
>
> The lofty cedar, royal Cymbeline,
> Personates thee, and thy lopped branches point
> Thy two sons forth, who, by Belarius stol'n,
> For many years thought dead, are now revived,
> To the majestic cedar joined, whose issue
> Promises Britain peace and plenty. (V.v.442-57)

In his discussion of allegory in *The Anatomy of Criticism*, Northrop Frye helps to explains why we instinctively react to the Soothsayer's allegorical reading as hopelessly and comically flatfooted: "'The commenting critic is often prejudiced against allegory without knowing the real reason, which is that continuous allegory prescribes the direction of his commentary, and so restricts its freedom" (*Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957], 90).

[104] John E. Curran, Jr., "Royalty Unlearned, Honor Untaught: British Savages and Historiographical Change in *Cymbeline*," *Comparative Drama* 31, no. 2 (1997): 289.

[105] Curran, Jr., 289–90.

[106] Curran, Jr., 292.

[107] McDonald, *Shakespeare's Late Style*, esp. 114.

[108] Amanda Bailey, *Of Bondage: Debt, Property, and Personhood in Early Modern England* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 3.

[109] Jordan, *Shakespeare's Monarchies*, 106.

[110] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 244.

Chapter Four
"Single I'll resolve you": Unities and Endlessness in *The Tempest*

> There is no art delivered to mankind that hath not the works of nature for his
> principal object, without which they could not consist, and on which they so
> depend, as they become actors and players, as it were, of what nature will have
> set forth. … Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted
> up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature
> … so as he goeth hand in hand in nature, not enclosed within the narrow
> warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit.
> —Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*[1]

Shakespeare's romance plays flaunt their strange form as self-conscious dramatizations of a traditionally narrative genre. In the previous chapters, I showed how *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Cymbeline* employ metadrama as a form of ethical critique, to call into question dramatic techniques of unifying time, place, and action. By associating unity with hegemony, these plays reject both, and embrace instead the disunity and multiplicity of romance and the more expansive representational possibilities it affords.

But *The Tempest*, Shakespeare's last romance play and last singly-authored play, appears to embrace the dramatic unities of time, place, and action. The play's unified structure is often cited as its distinguishing feature but has remained insufficiently explained. The play is one of only two Shakespeare plays to fulfill Sidney's dictum that "the stage should always represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be, both by Aristotle's precept and common reason, but one day."[2] (The other play is *The Comedy of Errors*, written early in Shakespeare's career.) What's more, *The Tempest* is strangely precise in telling us that its events take place between roughly 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. on a single "bare island" (epil.8).[3] In its beginning and ending, the play is insistent that the unities have been scrupulously observed, calling our attention to the times, places, and actions that have been pushed offstage and replaced with retrospective and anticipatory report. Even stranger, not much at all happens in the play, as commentators have often observed. Nearly everything that occurs in the final scene is already in place by the end of the second scene: all the characters have been brought together on the island, and Ferdinand and Miranda have met, fallen in love, and pledged themselves to each other. The play's sense of stasis, or suspension, is underscored at the beginning of the play's final scene; when Prospero asks Ariel how the royal party fares, Ariel responds, "Confined together / In the same fashion as you gave in charge, / Just as you left them" (V.i.7–9).

Lacking the wide-ranging and multiple parallel actions that constitute the plots of Shakespeare's previous three romance plays, *The Tempest* locates much of its dynamic action in Prospero's mind and motivations. But his mind has remained intractably opaque to us. Barbara Howard Traister, John S. Hunt, Constance Jordan, and Mary Ellen Lamb, among others, argue that Prospero undergoes a profound conversion over the course of the play from "vengeance" to "virtue" (V.i.28), from self-sufficiency, self-mastery, and isolation because of (and enabled by) his magical

powers, to his voluntary renunciation of his magic and his isolation, his reconciliation with his enemies, and his humble embrace of his common humanity.[4] Stephen Orgel and Harry Berger, Jr., among others, have argued just as convincingly against this interpretation, which Berger dismisses as a "sentimental reading" of the play. They suggest instead that Prospero does not really have a change of heart, that he remains reluctant to renounce his authority, and that he instead retains his authority through and perhaps even beyond the end of the play.[5]

At some point in my review of the vast quantity of literature produced on the subject of Prospero's motives, I began to think that much of our interpretations of the play are influenced by what we want to see in it, what we project onto it (in the case of Prospero's motives in the play, a celebration of male creative artistry and mastery or a celebration of the community over the individual; continuity or break). Edward Dowden observed this quality in 1877, describing the way the play "solicits" and "baffles" our attempts at explanation:

> It remains to notice of The Tempest that it has had the quality, as a work of art, of setting its critics to work as if it were an allegory; and forthwith it baffles them, and seems to mock them for supposing that they had power to 'pluck out the heart of its mystery.' … It is certainly remarkable that this, the last or almost the last of Shakespeare's plays, more than any other, has possessed this quality, of soliciting men to attempt the explanation of it, as of an enigma, and at the same time of baffling their enquiry.[6]

Anne Righter, writing almost a century later in 1968, describes the play as remarkably hospitable to "any interpretation," to the point that the interpretation inevitably serves only to illuminate itself:

> What is remarkable … is the degree of superficial plausibility which even the wildest of such theories tends to possess. *The Tempest* is an extraordinarily obliging work of art. It will lend itself to almost any interpretation, any set of meanings imposed upon it: it will even make them shine. The danger of this flexibility, this capacity to illustrate arguments and systems of thought outside itself, is that it can lead critics to mistake what is really their own adaptation for the play. … Criticism of this play is often illuminating in itself, as a structure of ideas, without shedding much light on its ostensible subject.[7]

If *The Tempest* is notable for its strict unified structure, unusual in Shakespeare's oeuvre, its other notable feature is its uncommon openness to diametrically opposed interpretations, to the widest range of adaptations and retellings, critical methodologies and theoretical approaches. But the play's openness, as Dowden and Righter observe, goes hand in hand with our sense of the play as hermetically sealed.

My central claim in this chapter is a counter-intuitive one, that these two qualities of the play are related, that the play's unified structure *produces* its endlessness—the endlessness of our engagement with the play, our endless quest to "pluck out the heart of its mystery," to quote Dowden quoting *Hamlet*, but also its lack of closure, a sense of an ending. Endlessness, of course, is what romance has long been accused of, the way romance potentially goes on and on without end, and *to* no end, purposelessly, meaninglessly. As I will show, the play's endlessness is a direct consequence of Shakespeare's decision to use a character in the play to generate and artificially

constrain the play's time, place, and action. He casts the Sidneyan playwright in his play, turning him into a character in *The Tempest*'s imagined world: Prospero.

For the play's unified structure is achieved by Prospero. It is Prospero who takes on the task of unifying the play's time, place, and action; it is Prospero who calls our attention to that task. It is Prospero who brings the play "to the principal point of that one action,"[8] to recall Sidney's language: more than half of Act 1, Scene 2, is given over to Prospero's report of the events of two dozen years ago, including Ariel's imprisonment in the cloven pine by Sycorax on the island twelve years before Prospero and Miranda were driven out of Milan and onto the island, twelve years before the start of the play.[9] Prospero even takes to care to justify his extended storytelling by articulating the dramatic theory behind it:

> Hear a little further,
> And then I'll bring thee to the present business
> Which now's upon's, without the which this story
> Were most impertinent. (I.ii.135–8)

As he explains, his story will bring his listener up to the "present business," "now," and the present moment will justify his extended story, which would otherwise be "impertinent," an irrelevant, pointless digression. Throughout the play, it is Prospero who obsessively marks the passing minutes and hours, anticipating the time to come:

> PROSPERO. What is the time o'th' day?
> ARIEL.   Past the mid-season.
> PROSPERO. At least two glasses. The time 'twixt six and now
>   Must by us both be spent most preciously. (I.ii.239–41)

> PROSPERO.   The minute of their plot
>   Is almost come. (IV.i.141–2)

> PROSPERO.   How's the day?
> ARIEL. On the sixth hour, at which time, my lord,
>   You said our work should cease.
> PROSPERO.   I did say so,
>   When first I raised the tempest. (V.i.3–6)

At the end of the play, Prospero brings the action to a close and ushers the other characters offstage by promising—four separate times—that he will tell us the story of his life, but not yet. Unlike *The Comedy of Errors*, which justifies its observance of the unities through the Duke's observance of an Ephesian law barring Syracusian entry, *The Tempest* makes Prospero singularly responsible for the play's observance of the unities of time, place, and action, and for our awareness of it. In doing so, the play both heightens and estranges us from its unified structure and the strategies that facilitate it.

In this dissertation, I have suggested that we have largely misunderstood the unifying strategies for drama as writers in the English Renaissance theorized and practiced them. And I have

suggested that Shakespeare's romance plays are valuable sites for deepening and complicating our understanding of the unities, because these plays employ a high level of self-consciousness and metadrama about their formal structure and strategies. Put side by side with literary and theoretical texts written by Shakespeare's contemporaries, the romance plays give us a new perspective about the dynamic, ever-evolving, heterogeneous quality of not only Shakespearean dramaturgy but also the dramaturgy of the English Renaissance for which we have often taken Shakespeare as synecdochic. In Chapters Two and Three in particular, I endeavored to show how Shakespeare associates unity with hegemony in *The Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline* to reveal how unifying strategies limit what is represented in the play, and how things are represented onstage. In so doing, the plays suggest the ethical costs of those unifying strategies. Constraining what is represented, and how it is represented, is never a neutral business. My argument—that Shakespeare's romance plays show how the dramatic unities limit what (and who) is represented onstage—thus challenges our usual understanding of the dramatic unities, which is that they limit the *poet* and his otherwise unfettered imagination.

This is how we have understood *The Tempest*'s unified structure, as a bravura demonstration of Shakespeare's skill as a playwright, his ability to work his powerful effects even when he is restricted by the formal and physical limitations of drama,[10] which is metadramatically mirrored by Prospero's "art." As Traister describes it,

> Shakespeare has undertaken to demonstrate that he, too, can work within limits traditionally prescribed for drama by classical theory. Magic and dramatic creation are similar; form matches content; magician and dramatist both work gracefully within the boundaries of their art.[11]

Both Prospero and Shakespeare, so the argument goes, use their artful illusions to overcome or transcend any and all limitations: for Prospero the magician, the people around him; for Shakespeare the dramatist, the neoclassical unities that would restrict the range of his imagination and the representational capacities of the stage. Some have taken this argument a step further to suggest that Prospero is a version of Shakespeare himself. This biographical reading originated with the Romantic critics and found additional justification with the Victorianist critic Dowden, who set out to establish the chronology of Shakespeare's plays and was the first to group together the romance plays as romances. In the final pages of his monumental study *Shakspere: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art*, Dowden claims that we can "identify Prospero in some measure with Shakspere himself," because of the similarities in their art and their shared "temper":

> the grave harmony of his character, his self-mastery, his calm validity of will, his sensitiveness to wrong, his unfaltering justice, and with these, a certain abandonment, a remoteness from the common joys and sorrows of the world, are characteristic of Shakspere as discovered to us in all his latest plays. Prospero is a harmonious and fully developed *will*.[12]

With this irresistible pun, Dowden's study amplified the Romantic critics' biographical reading of Prospero-as-Shakespeare and authorized the teleological reading of *The Tempest* as Shakespeare's last singly-authored play. Today, whenever we take Prospero's revels speech—"Our revels now are

ended" (IV.i.148)—and Epilogue—"Let your indulgence set me free" (epil.20)—to be Shakespeare's own farewell to the stage,[13] we have Dowden to thank for it.

But our modern understanding of the unities as artificially limiting or binding the dramatist and his art misrepresents how writers in the Renaissance understood and deployed the unities, to the detriment of our evaluation of the drama of the period, including and especially *The Tempest*.[14] In what follows, I will first examine how the two most famous neoclassicists in Renaissance England, Sidney and Ben Jonson, justified the use of the dramatic unities based on very different paradigms about the relationship between the poet and nature, and between the poet and his audience. Then I will show how Shakespeare offers his own paradigm for understanding these relationships in his most tightly and overtly unified play, *The Tempest*, through a series of close readings of key scenes in the play that bookend the play and self-consciously give it its unified structure. To theorize about the relationship that drama produces among the poet, his audience, and his material, all three writers use language of freedom, liberty, bonds, constraint, subjection, and ends, and draw on romance and its conventions to set off their point.

In writing this chapter, I was inspired by the work of Patrick Gray and John D. Cox, who look to post-Freudian 'relational' psychoanalysis and philosophy to argue that people in the English Renaissance would have thought of themselves as "relational," "intersubjective" individuals:

> Each individual exists in a state of constant dialogue and interaction with other individuals … in a state of constant, ever-changing engagement with the other. … The relational concept of the self that tends to be associated today with the Hegelian tradition of moral philosophy … is much closer in spirit to Renaissance thought than either the untrammeled confidence of Enlightenment humanism or the reactionary cynicism of postmodern antihumanism. … The vision of the self most prevalent in Shakespeare's England … was that of an individual interacting with other individuals, each possessing some degree of agency and none having absolute autonomy.[15]

In all of his romance plays, Shakespeare makes the case for the virtue of community, of the "relational," "intersubjective" self, over individual autonomy and personal liberty. In his last one, Shakespeare claims that the intersubjective self is not just a virtue, it is inescapable—especially for the poet.

"Which to you shall seem probable": The Ends of the Unities

Although we have tended to see the unities as disabling for the poet, writers in the Renaissance, including Jonson and Sidney viewed the unities as enabling for the poet. But a closer look at these two poets' writings about the dramatic unities, unsurprisingly often bound up with their critique of romance onstage, reveals that they imagined different relationships of obligation among the poet, his material, and his audience. Because they disagree about the purpose, or ends, of the unities, they diverge in their explanation of why dramatists should observe the unities and avoid the conventions of dramatic romances. Whereas Jonson claims that the unities brought the poet and his art closer to nature, Sidney insists that the poet's power inheres in his and his art's autonomy from nature.[16]

Whereas Jonson, following Horace, valued the unities for their verisimilitude, Sidney, following continental Aristotelian theory and commentary, valued the unities for their coherence and plausibility.[17] Whereas Jonson's ideal audience was the elite, learned reader, Sidney's ideal audience was the widest possible one, not only the learned but "any man," especially "stony and beastly people."[18]

Jonson believes neoclassical decorum and popular taste to be antithetical. For his own plays, he unhesitatingly chooses the former, to the point where he prefers to see his plays in print rather than performed onstage. For the playwright who would bend and bow and debase himself to appeal to common tastes—particularly those who draw their plots and conventions from the popular Greek and chivalric narrative romances that were circulating in print—he has only contempt. The prologue to *Every Man in His Humour* (added when the play was printed in the 1616 Folio) rejects the artificial dramaturgical strategies used by Shakespeare's romance plays, among others. These strategies include their disunified time wherein a "child, now swadled" becomes a man "past threescore yeere" before our eyes, as well as their use of mechanical devices to lower and raise gods on "creaking throne" from the heavens, and drums to mimic a "tempestuous "storme."[19] But Jonson reserves his greatest contempt for the people who crowd the public theaters, who prefer and even expect such unnatural artifices and impossibilities to neoclassical decorum and verisimilitude. In "Ode to Himself," written in the wake of the notorious flop of *The New Inn* (1629) onstage, Jonson calls upon himself to leave the "loathed stage, / And the more loathsome age," in which people whose "palate's with the swine" can't tell the difference between "the best order'd meale" and the "stale" "crusts" of a "mouldy tale / Like *Pericles*"[20] (as I discussed in Chapter One). But a few years later, nearing the end of his career, Jonson calls upon his audience to leave the theater. In a metadramatic scene that occurs after the first act of *The Magnetic Lady* (1632), a character identified by the speech prefix "Boy" denigrates "the people" for "defraud[ing] themselves," because they expect and are pleased by plays that depict "impossible" things "beyond nature":

> BOY. So, if a child could be born in a play, and grow up to a man i'the first scene, before he
>   went off the stage, and then after to come forth a squire and be made a knight, and that
>   knight to travel between the acts and do wonders i'the holy land, or elsewhere: kill
>   paynims, wild boars, dun cows, and other monsters; beget him a reputation and marry
>   an emperor's daughter for his mistress; convert her father's country; and at last come
>   home, lame and all-to-beladen with miracles.
> DAMPLAY. These miracles would please, I assure you, and take the people. For there be of
>   the people that will expect miracles and more than miracles from this pen.
> BOY. Do they think this pen can juggle? I would we had Hocus-pocus for 'em, then, your
>   people. … Or that your expecters would be gone hence now, at the first act, or expect no
>   more hereafter than they understand. … Because who expect what is impossible or
>   beyond nature defraud themselves. (Chorus 1.15–21)[21]

This scene inverts *The Winter's Tale*'s final scene—also set in a female domestic space—in which Paulina bids any in the audience who refuse to believe in miracles to "depart": "Either forbear, / Quit presently the chapel, or resolve you / For more amazement," she says; "It is required / You do awake your faith … Or those that think it is unlawful business / I am about, let them depart"

(V.iii.85–97). In Jonson's last city comedy, which he presented as the capstone to his playwriting career,[22] the Boy calls upon the audience to depart if they expect miracles.

Like John Fletcher, Jonson pins his hopes on his readers when he believes his plays have been misunderstood by their audiences. The title page of the 1631 octavo of *The New Inn* blames its actors and its audience for its failure onstage, describing the play as "neuer acted, but most negligently play'd, by some, the Kings Seruants. And more squeamishly beheld, and censured by others, the Kings Subiects," but ends with the hopeful "Now, at last, set at liberty to the Readers, his Maties Seruants, and Subiects, to be iudg'd."[23] The prefatory material to *Sejanus* similarly looks to its more educated readers to discover its merits and thus be "liberated." (It is one of those wonderful quirks of history that Shakespeare played a principal role in *Sejanus*, as the cast list printed in the 1616 folio tells us.) In the dedication to Lord Aubigny in the 1605 quarto of *Sejanus*, Jonson reminds him of the Globe audience's "violence" toward the play, and defiantly observes that the play in print has "outlived their malice."[24] The last commendatory verse to appear in the quarto's prefatory material, a direct address to Jonson by one "Ev. B.," also recalls the audience's negative response to the play and looks to the play's "Publication" to set Jonson "free":

> I veiw'd the Peoples beastly rage,
> Bent to confound thy graue, and learned toile,
>
> .   .   .   .
>
> And many there (in passion) scarce could tell
> Whether thy fault, or theirs deseru'd most blame;
>
> .   .   .   .
>
> From whence, this Publication setts thee free:
> They, for their Ignorance, still damned bee.[25]

By putting his plays in print, Jonson hoped they would find the audience they deserved: learned "Readers," not "Auditors."[26]

It is to these learned readers that Jonson makes his clearest case for the opposition between neoclassical decorum and popular delight. In an epistle addressed directly "To the Readers,"[27] Jonson apologizes for *Sejanus*' treatment of time (the plot spans nine years):

> First, if it be obiected, that what I publish is no true Poëme; in the strict Lawes of Time. I confesse it: as also in the want of a proper Chorus, whose Habite, and Moodes are such, and so difficult, as not any, whome I haue seene since the Auntients, (no not they who haue most presently affected Lawes) haue yet come in the way off. Nor is it needful, or almost possible, in these our Times, and to such Auditors, as commonly Things are presented, to obserue the ould state, and splendour of Drammatick Poëmes, with preseruation of any popular delight. But of this I shall take more seasonable cause to speake; in my Obseruations vpon Horace his Art of Poetry, which (with the Text translated) I intend, shortly to publish.[28]

Jonson insists that he wants to abide by the classical rules that he knows his readers expect, rules that he calls "the ould state, and splendour of Drammatick Poëmes" of the "Auntients." But, he complains defensively, the classical reverence for such "Lawes" is not shared "in these our Times, and

to such Auditors,"[29] and so he confesses that he has capitulated to their tastes on this count. (That he did so, and the play was still rejected by its audiences, explains the particularly passionate fury of *Sejanus*' paratexts.) Jonson is anticipating the objections of a specific audience, not the mass audience weaned on disunified plays of "the publike Stage," but a learned readership that expects that plays observe the unities of time, place, and action. Indeed, "none but the learned," as Jonson described his readers, would have the education and wealth to be able to track down the editions of the Latin texts that he cites with page numbers in the extensive marginalia that surrounds the play text. In short, Jonson values the unities for their verisimilitude, their closeness to nature, but also because they have classical justification; and he views the "observance" of classical laws as incompatible with the "preservation of any popular delight."

Sidney offers a polar opposite justification of the unities in the *Defence*, that neoclassical strategies encourage and support popular delight. Using *Gorboduc* and disunified romance plays as counter-examples, Sidney argues that the unities help a playwright maintain the coherence of his imagined world and therefore sustain the audience's attention:

> [*Gorboduc*] is faulty both in place and time, the two necessary companions of all corporal actions. For where the stage should always represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be, both by Aristotle's precept and common reason, but one day, there is both many days, and many places, inartificially imagined. But if it be so in *Gorboduc*, how much more in all the rest … [Now] we must believe the stage to be a garden … then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock … then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave. … then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field? … how absurd it is in sense.[30]

The disunified time and place of romance plays not only are "absurd" "in sense," they also disrupt the theatrical illusion, by demanding that the audience continually adjust and readjust their understanding of what the stage is meant to represent at any given moment. By limiting the stage to "one place" and the time in it to "one day," the playwright avoids placing too great a burden on his audience's imaginative capacity. The neoclassical style, like the so-called "classical Hollywood style" that was its successor in twentieth century film—a set of aesthetic norms that directs the audience's attention and response through narrative and visual conventions and techniques[31]—enables the playwright to maintain his hold on even the most naïve members of his audience.

Sidney cares about delighting the widest possible audience because of the argument that he is mounting in poesy's defense. As I discussed in Chapter Three, Sidney calls poesy "virtue-breeding delightfulness" for the way it moves readers and audiences to enact the virtue that it teaches, which is the end of all learning. Poesy's "delight," Sidney argues, "doth draw the mind more effectually than any other art doth," by giving "so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it."[32] Jonson imagines that appealing to the masses is a degrading capitulation, a loss of "integrity," as he puts it in the epistle to the reader of *Sejanus*:

> to shew my integrity in the *Story*, and saue my selfe in those common Torturers, that bring all wit to the Rack: whose Noses are euer like Swine spoyling, and rooting vp the *Muses*

Gardens, and their whole Bodies, like Moles, as blindly working vnder Earth to cast any, the least, hilles vpon *Vertue*.[33]

But for Sidney, appealing to "popular delight" for Sidney is precisely what makes the poet "the monarch" "of all sciences," capable of bringing the worst men to virtue:

> Even those hard-hearted evil men who think virtue a school name, and know no other good but *indulgere genio*, and therefore despise the austere admonitions of the philosopher, and feel not the inward reason they stand upon, yet will be content to be delighted—which is all the good-fellow poet seemeth to promise—and so steal to see the form of goodness (which seen they cannot but love) ere themselves be aware, as if they took a medicine of cherries.[34]

According to Sidney's argument, the more broadly popular the poem—the more it can equally "holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner"—the more effective it is at breeding virtue, and therefore the more supreme the poet.

For the Sidneyan playwright, the unities also allow the playwright to avoid depending on his actors to convey the plays' settings. That dependence, as I suggested in Chapter Two, is objectionable to Sidney because it strikes at the very heart of what he identifies as poetry's unique power: its independence from nature, "without which [other arts] could not consist, and on which they so depend, as they become actors and players, as it were, of what nature will have set forth."[35] It is to this phrase, "actors and players," that I anchor my claim. "*Only* the poet," Sidney insists in the much-quoted passage,

> disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or quite anew, forms such as never were in nature … so as he goeth hand in hand with nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging *only* within the zodiac of his own wit.[36]

Sidney describes the poet as "peerless"[37] because of his independence from nature, from history, from others. Not an actor or a player himself, the poet subjects others, turns them into his actors or players: not just the Cyrus that he "bestows" on the world through his actor onstage, but also, and more importantly, the "many Cyruses" that he will entice his readers and audiences to become by imitating his imitation:

> So then the best of the historian is subject to the poet; for whatsoever action, or faction, whatsoever counsel, policy, or war strategem the historian is bound to recite, that may the poet (if he list) with his imitation make his own, beautifying it both for further teaching, and more delighting, as it please him: having all, from Dante's heaven to his hell, under the authority of his pen.[38]

Sidney's theory of drama, then, is anything but proto-democratic. Far from seeing plays as collaboratively imagined and produced by playwright, actor, and audience, as we have tended to think about English Renaissance dramatic theory, Sidney would have the playwright control all.

To be sure, Jonson and Sidney agree that the unities, far from placing artificial limits on his representational abilities, liberate the playwright. Both writers imagine that the neoclassical playwright's supremacy and power inheres in his and his poetry's independence, autonomy, and freedom from subjection, as we see in this imagined conversation between Sidney and his fellow English poets:

> But they will say: How then shall we set forth a story which containeth both many places and many times? And do they not know that a tragedy is tied to the laws of poesy, and not of history; *not bound* to follow the story, but *having liberty* either to feign a quite new matter or to frame the history to the most tragical conveniency?[39]

In other words, the neoclassical playwright uses the dramatic unities to overcome limitations and subjection, which are suffered by the romance playwright and his disunified plays. (It's worth noting here that these are the terms by which we have imagined Shakespeare as playwright when it comes to his writing of *The Tempest*, but perfectly inverted: Shakespeare is capable of achieving his supreme effects, of exercising his autonomous will, in spite of the limitations imposed by the dramatic unities.) But Jonson and Sidney disagree about what the playwright needs liberating *from*: for Jonson, it's liberty from the mass audience to bring his play closer to nature; for Sidney, it's liberty from nature to bring his audience closer to virtue.

It is Sidney's version of neoclassical playwriting that Prospero follows, not Jonson's. Prospero is the Sidneyan poet who wishes to transcend nature and its physical limits, and incorporates into his art the hybrid fantasy creatures, the "Cyclops, Chimeras, Furies,"[40] that Jonson explicitly keeps out of his plays: as the title page of the 1605 quarto of *Sejanus His Fall* promises, "*MART. Non hic Centauros, non Gorgonas, Harpyasque / Inuenies: Hominem pagina nostra sapit.*"[41] But as I will show in the following section, Shakespeare challenges Sidney's notion of the poet's autonomy through constraint of his material and audience, by casting the Sidneyan playwright in *The Tempest*, a play that begs even as it resists our interpretive efforts to make it whole. Through the figure of Prospero, *The Tempest* suggests that everyone, including and especially the Sidneyan playwright who imagines himself to be uniquely *un*-bounded and limitless in his imaginative capacity and power, is bound to others.

"Canst thou remember?": The Unities

Shakespeare's plays, like many of his contemporaries', tend to display a high degree of self-conscious metadrama. *The Tempest* is unusual for the way that it makes its form, and the producing of its form, a part of its fiction. *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry V*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Pericles*, and *The Winter's Tale* incorporate "extradiegetic" Choruses who comment on, facilitate, produce, and at times apologize for their plays' formal structure, their time, place, and action. *The Tempest* is unified at the hands of one of its characters, so that the play's formal unity and its unifying strategies are, strangely and

vertiginously, made a part of the play's "diegesis," or imagined world. Shakespeare's Epilogues often invite our judgment—and forgiveness—of the play we have just seen, breaking us out of the theatrical illusion. Prospero invites us to judge *him*, even as he sustains the play's fiction: "Now 'tis true / I must be here confined by you, / Or sent to Naples," he entreats us from his assumed position of abjection; "As you from crimes would pardoned be, / Let your indulgence set me free" (epil.19–20). Prospero—like that other Shakespearean charismatic tyrant, Richard III—displays the uncanny awareness that he is, as Orgel puts it, "not an actor in a play but a character in a fiction."[42] One consequence of the play's unusual metadrama, is that we come to experience the play's unified structure as contrived and coercive, not natural, verisimilar, or otherwise familiar. We *notice* its unifying strategies, which are associated with Prospero's will to dominate, to constrain others' experiences of time and space, both the characters onstage and us.

Prospero constrains all others by employing recognizably dramatic strategies for unifying a play, recommended by Sidney in the *Defence* to avoid absurdity and sustain coherence and plausibility. Sidney considers embodiment to be the foremost obstacle to be overcome by the playwright in the theater, but also by all humans. He declares that "the final end" of all learning is "to know, and by knowledge to lift up the mind from the dungeon of the body to the enjoying of his own divine essence," and he identifies poets as chief among those who can "lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by our clayey lodgings, can be capable of."[43] Prospero, too, disdains embodiment as degrading, and the body as a clayey dungeon. His mastery, his magic, is most vividly demonstrated and enacted by subjecting others' bodies to make them intensely *aware* of the fact of their bodies, and by promising to lift them from that lowness, to release them from that neediness. Prospero raises the storm that forces Trinculo to seek shelter,[44] puts Miranda, the royal party, and the mariners to sleep; pinches, stings, cramps, and racks Caliban's body;[45] forces Caliban and Ferdinand to carry wood for fuel;[46] and puts Ferdinand in shackles and withholds food and water.[47] Prospero envies the disembodied Ariel—"a spirt too delicate / To act her [Sycorax's] earthy and abhorred commands" (I.ii.273–4)—and so the worst punishment he can imagine for Ariel is physical imprisonment. This time, Prospero threatens, he will imprison Ariel in the "knotty entrails" of the oak, famous for its hardness and durability, and not the pine from which Prospero freed him twelve years ago.[48]

Above all, Prospero seeks to manipulate and constrain others' experience of time, which is Sidney's most urgent recommendation for playwrights to control their material and direct their audience's attention. To begin *in medias res* rather than *ab ovo*, as the historian must, is the poet's prerogative; to behave, as Antonio puts it to Sebastian, as though "What's past is prologue, what to come / In yours and my discharge" (II.i.253–4). One way to bring the play "to the principal point" is to render earlier events as narrative report rather than direct enactment through a messenger or *nuntius*. In this way, the poet may "frame the history to the most tragical conveniency," to sharpen and intensify the response he means to elicit from his audience with his play.

In *The Tempest*, Prospero is the *nuntius* describing and framing past events—including, significantly, the events portrayed in the play's first scene, which we and Miranda witnessed for ourselves. We saw Shakespeare use this strategy of redundant narrative in *Cymbeline* to call our attention to how characters use stories and particular generic conventions to make sense of events for themselves and for others. In Act 1, Scene 2, of *The Tempest*, Shakespeare uses redundant narrative to underscore the way Prospero uses stories to assert control over others. Throughout *The Tempest*'s

opening storytelling scene, Prospero seeks to portray the past as inaccessible except through him, through his story, to make others dependent on him for their understanding. *Only* he can reach back into "The dark backward and abysm of time" (I.ii.50). But Prospero's stories and his sole claim to the past are repeatedly challenged by his interlocutors who were there, too. The play's storytelling scene thus heightens our awareness of the artificial construction of any story about the past, as well as our awareness of the artificial, specifically dramaturgical means by which Prospero seeks to control others' experience of time, their memory of the past as it impinges on the present.[49]

Prospero's first story means to reframe Miranda's and our memory of the ship caught in the storm, turning it from a natural phenomenon into a work of artifice entirely under his control. Act 1, Scene 2, opens with Miranda overwhelmed with "virtue of compassion" (I.ii.27) for the people onboard, and already suspicious that the storm was caused by her father:

> If by your art, my dearest father, you have
> Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.
> The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch
> But that the sea, mounting to th' welkin's cheek,
> Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffered
> With those that I saw suffer—a brave vessel
> (Who had no doubt some noble creature in her)
> Dashed all to pieces. O, the cry did knock
> Against my very heart! Poor souls, they perished. (I.ii.1–9)

"Be collected, / No more amazement," Prospero says to Miranda, "Tell your piteous heart / There's no harm done." He tries to redirect Miranda's attention away from her own memory of the tempest, to replace her turbid pity and amazement with "collected" calm. But Miranda will not be redirected—"O woe the day," she wails—and he repeats, "No harm!" (I.ii.13–15). He tries another strategy:

> PROSPERO. I have done nothing but in care of thee,
>   Of thee, my dear one, thee my daughter, who
>   Art ignorant of what thou art, naught knowing
>   Of whence I am, nor that I am more better
>   Than Prospero, master of a full poor cell,
>   And thy no greater father.
> MIRANDA.   More to know
>   Did never meddle with my thoughts.
> PROSPERO.   'Tis time
>   I should inform thee further. (I.ii.16–23)

Prospero turns Miranda's attention away from the "poor souls" on the vessel, and toward themselves—from outwardly directed compassion to inwardly directed contemplation of their identities. And he does this quite literally, commanding her to turn her body away from the horizon and toward him:

> Lend thy hand
> And pluck my magic garment from me. So,
> Lie there my art. (I.ii.23–5)

Miranda obeys, still sniffling in thought of the shipwreck. Her tears—"Weighed between loathness and obedience" (II.i.131)[50]—will not do for Prospero, and so once again he means to turn her attention from the wreck to him. "Wipe thou thine eyes, have comfort," he commands her:

> PROSPERO. The direful spectacle of the wreck which touched
>   The very virtue of compassion in thee,
>   I have with such provision in mine art
>   So safely ordered, that there is no soul—
>   No, not so much perdition as an hair,
>   Betid to any creature in the vessel
>   Which thou heard'st cry, which thou sawst sink. Sit down,
>   For thou must now know further.
> MIRANDA.   You have often
>   Begun to tell me what I am, but stopped
>   And left me to a bootless inquisition,
>   Concluding, 'Stay, not yet.'
> PROSPERO.   The hour's now come. (I.ii.25–6)

Prospero reframes the shipwreck from something Miranda perceived deep in herself ("O, the cry did knock / Against my very heart!") to something beyond her perception and understanding. In effect, he tells her *and us* that we cannot trust our own senses to know what has happened ("Which thou heard'st cry, which thou sawst sink"); he makes us entirely dependent on him to understand even events we have witnessed for ourselves. Thus, both the "direful spectacle of the wreck" and our knowledge of it, our sense-making of it, are Prospero's invention ("mine art"). Prospero then guides Miranda's attention back to her ignorance of her own identity to justify launching into his next story: who Miranda is. Prospero's "report" thus forcibly brings Miranda to the present and the play "to the principal point."

Shakespeare's other tightly unified play, *The Comedy of Errors*, begins on superficially similar grounds, with an extended act of storytelling that brings us to the play's main action. Egeon talks almost uninterruptedly for more than 100 lines, and when his listener does break in, it is only to urge him, spellbound, to continue to "dilate" his story "at full":

> EGEON. But ere they came—oh, let me say no more!
>   Gather the sequel by that went before.
> DUKE. Nay, forward, old man. Do not break off so. (I.i.94–7)

> EGEON. Thus have you heard me severed from my bliss,
>   That by misfortunes was my life prolonged

> To tell sad stories of my own mishaps.
> DUKE. And for the sake of them thou sorrowest for,
>   Do me the favor to dilate at full
>   What have befall'n of them and thee till now. (I.i.118–23)

Egeon's story has an internal motivation in the play: the Duke has commanded him to explain why he has come to Ephesus in defiance of the law, which would condemn him to die. Moreover, Egeon's story, unknown to the Duke and the Ephesians gathered onstage as well as to us, evidently enthralls his listeners, and successfully delays his execution, Scheherazade-like.

Prospero's storytelling in *The Tempest* is not as clearly motivated, as we will shortly see. His stories are, strangely, as much stories about his interlocutors' past as they are about his own; as we have already seen, many of the events he describes are ones they witnessed or experienced for themselves. As a result, Prospero's stories are actively resisted and challenged by his listeners, so that acts of storytelling in *The Tempest* are equally struggles for domination. If Prospero does have a motivation, a personal reason to tell stories at the start of the play, it is that he wishes to reframe his listeners' memory of the past, in order to justify his actions in the present. By controlling stories, Prospero endeavors to make the characters in the play, proxies for the audience, dependent on him for knowledge of the past, present, and future.

Both Egeon and Prospero interrupt themselves out of concern that their audiences are uninterested in their story. But unlike Egeon, who interrupts his story to spare his audience, Prospero interrupts his story to harangue his audience and demand their attention anew. Throughout his story about the events in Milan that led to him and Miranda to the island, Prospero interrupts himself—often midsentence—to demand Miranda's attention. She, in turn, grows exasperated:

> PROSPERO. Obey and be attentive. (I.ii.38)

> PROSPERO. My brother and thy uncle, called Antonio—
>   I pray thee mark me, that a brother should
>   Be so perfidious— (I.ii.66–8)

> PROSPERO.   Thy false uncle—
>   Dost thou attend me?
> MIRANDA.   Sir, most heedfully. (I.ii.77–8)

> PROSPERO. And sucked my verdure out on't. Thou attend'st not!
> MIRANDA. O, good sir, I do.
> PROSPERO.   I pray thee, mark me. (I.ii.87–8)

> PROSPERO. Hence his ambition growing—
>   Dost thou hear?
> MIRANDA.   Your tale, sir, would cure deafness. (I.ii.105–6)

Prospero is also staunchly suspicious of Ariel as his interlocutor when he tells the story of the events on the island two dozen years ago, this time questioning Ariel's memory:

> PROSPERO.   Dost thou forget
>   From what a torment I did free thee?
> ARIEL.   No.
> PROSPERO. Thou dost. …
> ARIEL.   I do not, sir.
> PROSPERO. Thou liest, malignant thing; hast thou forgot
>   The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy
>   Was grown into a hoop? Hast thou forgot her?
> ARIEL. No, sir.
> PROSPERO. Thou hast! (I.ii.250–60)

We could read Prospero's suspicion as falsified, constructed to justify his storytelling. Prospero claims repeatedly that Miranda is not paying attention, and that Ariel has forgotten his debt to Prospero, not (necessarily) because those lapses are true, but because it gives him just cause to continue telling his stories. But Prospero's incessant self-interruptions and repetitions also call our attention to the laboriousness with which he must rationalize his acts of storytelling. Prospero's stories that open *The Tempest* involve their teller as much as their listeners, which means that Prospero can only justify his storytelling by insisting—unconvincingly, as I will show—on a gap in his interlocutor's memory or attention.

Miranda challenges the grounds for Prospero's story almost right away, when she tells him that she *can* remember their shared past:

> PROSPERO.   Canst thou remember
>   A time before we came unto this cell?
>   I do not think thou canst, for then thou wast not
>   Out three years old.
> MIRANDA.   Certainly, sir, I can. (I.ii.38–41)

Miranda directly contradicts Prospero's claim that she was too young to remember a time before the island. He challenges her: "By what? By any other house or person? / Of any thing the image, tell me, that / Hath kept with thy remembrance" (42–4). Miranda admits that her memory is a distant one, more insubstantial than memory: "'Tis far off, / And rather like a dream than an assurance / That my remembrance warrants" (44–6). But then, something coalesces in her mind: "Had I not / Four or five women once, that tended me?" Prospero, thrown off by Miranda's memory, seizes on and aggrandizes her admittance that she feels some distance from the past, then challenges her memory again:

> Thou hadst, and more, Miranda. But how is it
> That this lives in thy mind? What seest thou else
> In the dark backward and abysm of time?

> If thou rememb'rest aught ere thou cam'st here,
> How thou cam'st here thou mayst. (I.ii.47–52)

Again, Miranda is forced to admit, "But that I do not" (51–2). From that point on, Miranda dutifully responds to Prospero's story about their shared past as something beyond her own memory:

> O, my heart bleeds
> To think o'th' teen that I have turned you to,
> Which is from my remembrance. Please you, farther. (I.ii.63–5)

> Alack, for pity.
> I, not rememb'ring how I cried out then,
> Will cry it o'er again. (I.ii.132–4)

> Alack, what trouble
> Was I then to you? (I.ii.151–2)

By insisting that Miranda's memory is feeble, and by demanding her attention anew every few minutes, Prospero forcefully turns Miranda's thoughts toward him and his story, and away from her own "remembrance," to discover her past and her identity. And he does so successfully; Miranda takes the same distanced, pitying stance toward herself and her own past as she did toward the experience of the men aboard the ship in the tempest. Put another way, Miranda obligingly turns herself into a character in her father's story, as something to marvel at.

Prospero's justification for telling the story of how he freed Ariel is more sharply attenuated: unlike Miranda, Ariel resists Prospero's interpellation at every turn. He flatly rejects Prospero's repeated insistence that he has forgotten these events: "No," he says. "I do not, sir." "No, sir." Strangely, part of Prospero's justification for telling this story is that he must retell it once a month, because—as he claims—Ariel keeps forgetting it:

> PROSPERO. Where was she born? Speak; tell me.
> ARIEL. Sir, in Algiers.
> PROSPERO.   O, was she so? I must
>   Once in a month recount what thou hast been,
>   Which thou forget'st. (I.ii.260–3)

But in fact, Ariel is the one who first brings up the past, asking Prospero to remember certain events. After assuring Prospero that he has "performed" his bidding "to every article" (I.ii.194–5), Ariel asks,

> ARIEL. Is there more toil? Since thou dost give me pains,
>   *Let me remember thee* what thou hast promised,
>   Which is not yet performed me. … *I prithee
>   Remember* I have done thee worthy service,
>   Told thee no lies, made thee no mistakings, served

> Without or grudge or grumblings. Thou did promise
> To bate me a full year.
> PROSPERO.   Dost thou forget
> From what a torment I did free thee? (I.ii.242–4, 246–51, emphases mine)

Even stranger, we come to realize that Prospero is describing events that he could not have seen with his own eyes and must have heard secondhand from Ariel. Prospero's story seems to acknowledge this twice: "Thou, my slave, / As thou report'st thyself, was then her servant" (I.ii.270–1); "Thou best knowst / What torment I did find thee in" (286–7). None of this, however, deters Prospero from laying sole claim to the past. As with Miranda, Prospero responds to evidence of his interlocutor's memory of the past by doubling down on his claim that they have forgotten—or, as we see in the following exchange, by ignoring them altogether:

> PROSPERO. Then was this island
>   (Save for the son that she did litter here,
>   A freckled whelp, hag-born) not honoured with
>   A human shape.
> ARIEL.   Yes, Caliban, her son.
> PROSPERO. Dull thing, I say so—he, that Caliban,
>   Whom now I keep in service. (I.ii.281–6)

As a last resort, Prospero warns Ariel against continuing to contradict his story ("If thou more murmur'st") by threatening to imprison Ariel in an oak until he has "howled away twelve winters" (I.ii.294, 296). At this threat of physical confinement, Ariel is finally chastened: "Pardon, master" (I.ii.296).

But Prospero has no such leverage left over Caliban, whom he has made his slave, not time-bound servant. Caliban, Miranda, and Prospero all tussle for control of the story of their time together on the island in linking causes with effects and identifying who is the usurper, and who the usurped, who the victim, and who the aggressor. The story that Caliban tells about the events of the past twelve years—in direct response to Prospero promising to punish Caliban for cursing him—gives him claim to the island, the past, and himself:

> PROSPERO. For this, be sure, tonight thou shalt have cramps.
>
> .   .   .   .
> CALIBAN.   I must eat my dinner.
>   This island's mine by Sycorax, my mother,
>   Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first
>   Thou strok'st me and made much of me; wouldst give me
>   Water with berries in't, and teach me how
>   To name the bigger light and how the less
>   That burn by day and night. And then I loved thee
>   And showed thee all the qualities o'th' isle:
>   The fresh springs, brine pits, barren place and fertile.

> Cursed be I that did so! All the charms
> Of Sycorax—toads, beetles, bats—light on you,
> For I am all the subjects that you have
> Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me
> In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
> The rest o'th' island. (I.ii.326–45)

With this story, Caliban rejects Prospero's claim that he is the legitimate king of this island and, accordingly, that Prospero's ill treatment of him is appropriate punishment for his crimes. With recourse to his richly detailed memory, Caliban describes an initial relationship of mutual care, of teaching and learning, of *kind*-ness, and describes his "confinement" as an act of political usurpation by an interloper, not punishment by a superior.

Moreover, Caliban's story makes him his own victim first and foremost, not Prospero's. Caliban describes how he allowed himself to be seduced by their mutual intercourse of teaching and learning, lulled into giving his "confidence sans bound" to Prospero:

> My trust,
> Like a good parent, did beget of him
> A falsehood in its contrary as great
> As my trust was, which had indeed no limit,
> A confidence sans bound. He being thus lorded,
> Not only with what my revenue yielded
> But what my power might else exact, like one
> Who, having into truth by telling of it,
> Made such a sinner of his memory
> To credit his own lie, he did believe
> He was indeed the duke, out o'th' substitution
> And executing th'outward face of royalty
> With all prerogative. (I.ii.93–105)

This speech, you'll have realized, is Prospero's, describing to Miranda his fall from power in Milan. Significantly, Prospero makes the same claim as Caliban, blaming himself for his own fall. Prospero describes how his boundless "trust" in Antonio—"He, whom next thyself / Of all the world I loved" (I.ii.68–9)—"awaked an evil nature" (I.ii.93) in his brother, "beget … a falsehood" that led to his own usurpation. According to Prospero, this falsehood took such root in Antonio's mind that he revised his memory to "credit his own lie," "to believe / He was indeed the duke." Stephen Orgel observes that Prospero's story about his usurpation is

> a strange mixture of guilt and blame. In it, his usurping younger brother is represented as the villain, but he is also described as acing essentially as Prospero's agent … and Prospero even declares himself responsible for Antonio's dereliction. … The primary dereliction, in this account, is Prospero's; the abandonment of royal responsibility is the source of much greater evils in the state and in the human condition.[51]

Both Caliban and Prospero tell stories to claim responsibility for their own falls from power. "And then I loved thee," Caliban says to Prospero, and "Cursed be I that did so," referring to his ingenuous treatment of Prospero that led to Caliban's usurpation, and challenging Prospero's revisionist history that portrays himself as the legitimate king of the island and Caliban as his subject, kept animal-like from what's rightfully his.[52]

The stories told by Prospero and Miranda, however, contradict Caliban's claim to the island. "Thou most lying slave," Prospero spits, and describes Caliban as one "Whom stripes may move, not kindness" (I.ii.345–6):

> I have used thee
> (Filth as thou art) with humane care and lodged thee
> In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate
> The honour of my child. (I.ii.346–9)

Prospero's story casts himself as benevolent caretaker, as patriarch, and Caliban as sub-human "filth." Miranda tells the same story of paternalistic "pity" for a "brutish" "savage":

> Abhorred slave,
> Which any print of goodness wilt not take,
> Being capable of all ill; I pitied thee,
> Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
> One thing or other. When thou didst not, savage,
> Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like
> A thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes
> With words that made them known. But thy vile race
> (Though thou didst learn) had that in't which good natures
> Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou
> Deservedly confined into this rock
> Who hadst deserved more than a prison. (I.ii.352–63)[53]

Both Prospero and Miranda portray Caliban's confinement and enslavement as just punishment for his attempted "violat[ion]" of Miranda. Remarkably, Caliban does not contradict this particular detail of their story. He admits freely, even proudly, to it:

> O ho, O ho! Would't had been done;
> Thou didst prevent me, I had peopled else
> This isle with Calibans. (I.ii.350–52)

For Caliban, what Prospero prevented was not his possession of Miranda so much as his possession of the island, which he wishes to populate with his progeny, a royal line of "Calibans." He repeatedly claims that Prospero has taken, stolen, kept the island from him, including to Trinculo and

Stephano. But his story is always contested; in the following exchange, Caliban is challenged by Ariel speaking in Trinculo's voice, serving as Prospero's mouthpiece:

> CALIBAN. As I told thee before, I am subject to a tyrant,
>   A sorcerer, that by his cunning hath
>   Cheated me of the island.
> ARIEL (in TRINCULO's voice). Thou liest.
> CALIBAN. Thou liest, thou jesting monkey, thou.
>
>   .   .   .   .
>
>   I say, by sorcery he got this isle.
>   From me he got it. If thy greatness will
>   Revenge it on him—for I know thou dar'st,
>   But this thing dare not—
>
>   .   .   .   .
>
>   Thou shalt be lord of it, and I'll serve thee. (III.ii.40–55)

Again, Caliban casts Prospero into the role that Prospero cast his brother Antonio, as deceitful usurper, and casting himself into the role that Prospero gave himself, as rightful king of the island. Just as Prospero tells his story of usurpation and forced exile to justify taking revenge on his brother (and, later, to justify enslaving Ferdinand), so too does Caliban use *his* story of usurpation and forced exile to justify to Stephano and Trinculo that killing Prospero will be a justified act of revenge.

   Notably, Caliban seeks revenge on Prospero not by trying to restore himself as king of the isle, but by trying to serve a new master, as we see in his speech above and in the song he sings to himself:

> Ban' ban' Ca-caliban,
> Has a new master, get a new man.
> Freedom, high-day; high-day freedom; freedom high-day, freedom. (II.ii.179–82)

It is tempting to see Caliban's desire to serve Stephano and install him as the new king of the island—"I prithee, be my god. … I'll kiss thy foot. I'll swear myself thy subject" (II.ii.146–9)—as a failure of imagination, or a sign of his subjugation. But here, once more, Caliban is using the same strategies as Prospero does. Orgel, challenging the view that Prospero renounces his magical powers to embrace his shared humanity and mortality, argues that Prospero actually preserves his power, by incorporating other identities—Sycorax, Caliban, Antonio—into his own. As a part of this scheme, Orgel argues, Prospero seeks to usurp his brother's throne, though not for himself:

> In order to prevent the succession of his brother, Prospero is marrying his daughter to the son of his enemy. This has the effect of excluding Antonio from any future claim on the ducal throne, but it also effectively disposes of the realm as a political entity: if Miranda is the heir to the dukedom, Milan through the marriage becomes part of the kingdom of Naples, not the other way around. Prospero recoups his throne from his brother only to deliver it over, upon his death, to the King of Naples once again. … *Prospero has not regained*

his lost dukedom, he has usurped his brother's. … he has now arranged matters so that his death will remove Antonio's last link with the ducal power. His grave is the ultimate triumph over his brother. If we look at the marriage in this way, giving away Miranda is a means of preserving his authority, not of relinquishing it.[54]

Caliban, too, seeks to usurp Prospero as king of the isle but not for himself, through murder as well as marriage. At one point, Caliban suggests that Stephano, once king, will procreate with Miranda; their children will inherit the island:

> CALIBAN. And that most deeply to consider is
>   The beauty of his daughter; he himself
>   Calls her a nonpareil. I never saw a woman
>   But only Sycorax, my dam, and she;
>   But she as far surpasseth Sycorax
>   As great'st does least.
> STEPHANO.   Is it so brave a lass?
> CALIBAN. Ay, lord, she will become thy bed, I warrant,
>   And bring thee forth brave brood.
> STEPHANO. Monster, I will kill this man. His daughter and I will be king and queen—
>   save our graces—and Trinculo and thyself shall be viceroys. (III.ii.98–108)

Using the same strategies of storytelling and vengeance as Prospero does, Caliban challenges Prospero's attempts to render and reduce him as the irredeemably "barbaric" other to his own civility, which is one way that Prospero legitimizes his claim on the island and his maltreatment of Caliban.

Miranda, too, attempts to produce a marked sense of difference between her and Caliban, to portray him as essentially inferior and so to cast doubt on his claims. She recounts the time and "pains" she took to teach him her language as proof of his incorrigibility: "Thy vile race / (Though thou didst learn)," she says, "had that in't which good natures / Could not abide to be with" (I.ii.359–61). He retorts, "You taught me language, and my profit on't / Is I know how to curse" (I.ii.364–5). Kim F. Hall argues that in this moment Caliban "controls the language rather than be controlled by it … he subverts the language just as he is said to attempt to corrupt Miranda."[55] But Hall goes on to suggest that neither Miranda's nor Caliban's language matches Prospero's:

> Curses (or spells), while seemingly powerful weapons for Sycorax, have no efficacy for Caliban. In this new linguistic economy, powerful curses and spells are located in Prospero's book. This triangulated linguistic community, with Prospero at the apex, serves to enforce both a racial hierarchy and patriarchal authority.[56]

To be sure, in the linguistic economy of the play, which depicts a world in which magic exists and curses have efficacy, Prospero is supreme. But in the linguistic economy of Shakespeare's theater, Caliban's language exceeds Miranda's and rivals Prospero's. In one of the most sublime speeches in

all of Shakespeare's oeuvre, Caliban supports his claim to the island by describing with intimate knowledge the island's noises, which sound beyond the range of his understanding:

> Be not afeard. The isle is full of noises,
> Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.
> Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
> Will hum about my ears; and sometimes voices,
> That if I then had waked after long sleep,
> Will make me sleep again; and then in dreaming,
> The clouds, methought, would open and show riches
> Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked
> I cried to dream again. (III.ii.135–43)[57]

In a play defined by its radical compression of plot and syntax,[58] Caliban's speech stands out for its languid lyricism. Against Prospero's hyper-condensed language ("sea-sorrow," "hag-seed," "cloud-capped"), his contorted and spiky syntactical style, Caliban's speech hums in our ears and lull us with its beauty, like the noises of the island that soothe him to sleep. All beauty has a persuasive power, and Caliban's speech persuades us of his claim to the island.

On the face of it, the extended storytelling scene of Act 1, Scene 2 (at 3680 words, the longest scene in the play by far), allows the play to begin, as Sidney urged his fellow English poets, *in medias res*, to bring the play's action to its "principal point." This is the effect of the "story of my life" (I.i.137) that Egeon tells in the first few minutes of *Comedy of Errors*, the only other Shakespeare play that observes the unities of time, place, and action. But throughout the opening storytelling scene of *The Tempest*, Prospero's interlocutors resist to varying degrees his account of the past, foregrounding the way that Prospero's stories enact and depend upon the subordination of others and their memories, which threaten to reenact past events in their own way. With their own stories to tell, Miranda, Ariel, and Caliban above all, ensure that Prospero is not our only access to the imagined world of *The Tempest*, despite the magician's desire to make it so. In the end, the question isn't whose account of the past we should believe, Caliban's or Prospero's, whose claim to be the legitimate king of the island we find more persuasive. What's important is that the question is raised at all about Prospero's will to dominate and about the play's unifying strategies, which Shakespeare makes one and the same.

As several scholars have observed, *The Tempest* feels like the second half of a longer play: the first half an Italian political tragedy of usurpation, the second half a revenge plot that gives way to reconciliation. (This feeling led to a persistent scholarly conjecture, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, that the play that we have today is a late-career revision of an early-career play that resembled Shakespeare's other romances in its disunified structure.[59]) But what a curious thing to feel! We do not feel the same way about *The Comedy of Errors*, which also uses storytelling to cover twenty-five (or perhaps it is thirty-three) years of *fabula* before the start of the play's *syuzhet*;[60] nor about *As You Like It*, which also begins after the usurpation of the dukedom by the younger brother. Our abiding sense that *The Tempest* is a radical abridgment of a longer work, whether or not that longer version ever actually existed, reflects our uneasiness about the strange way that

Shakespeare has chosen to observe the dramatic unities in this play—through Prospero—an uneasiness that we share with the characters in the play, as I will discuss in the final section.

"I'll deliver all": The End

I began this chapter with the claim that the two most distinctive qualities of *The Tempest*—its unified structure and its sense of endlessness—are interdependent, and I attributed this paradox to Shakespeare's decision to make Prospero the agent of unifying the play's time, place, and action. The Sidneyan dramatic strategies that Prospero employs in the play are designed to give the playwright maximum independence and control over his material, his actors, and his audience, so that he can bring maximum coherence and plausibility to his play. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare takes that relationship between playwright and audience to its logical conclusion, creating a Sidneyan-playwright character who seeks to make us entirely dependent on him for our access to and understanding of not only what Lorna Hutson calls the "unscene," the "pasts, futures, and elsewheres" of offstage time and place,[61] but also of the events that we *do* see. Combined with Prospero's reticence, our dependence on him for understanding creates the sense of endlessness that Edward Dowden and Anne Righter have observed of criticism about *The Tempest*. We are at Prospero's mercy, both the characters and us.

Prospero values coherence and plausibility, the qualities that Sidney advocates in drama, and that Hutson describes as the "enduring achievement" of English Renaissance drama, thanks to neoclassical strategies.[62] But like Sidney, Prospero values these things only insofar as he makes them so. As I have suggested, Prospero seeks to control others' experiences, to make those around him distrust their perception and depend on him for understanding. This is sharply registered in the play by characters remarking that things seem "strange" to them. Variants of the word "strange" appear twenty-nine times in *The Tempest*, more than in any other Shakespearean play, although *The Tempest* is his second shortest play.[63] Characters typically invoke the word to react to what is happening around them. When much of the royal party around him suddenly falls asleep (thanks to Ariel), Sebastian exclaims, "What a strange drowsiness possesses them!" and, believing Antonio to be asleep, too, muses, "This is a strange repose, to be asleep / With eyes wide open – standing, speaking, moving, / And yet so fast asleep" (II.i.199, 213–5). When Gonzalo awakes from his artificial sleep, he tells Alonso, "I heard a humming, / And that a strange one too, which did awake me. / I shaked you, sir, and cried" (II.i.318–20). When the spirits disappear from the banquet table, Francisco observes, "They vanished strangely!" (III.iii.40). In each case, "strange" registers a character's sense of astonishment, shading into skepticism, about a sudden, unexpected, typically supernatural event contrived by Prospero.

Alonso—whose daughter Claribel has just been married off, whose son he believes is dead because of the part that he played in Prospero's usurpation, whose brother is now plotting his usurpation—is the most uneasy about what is happening around him. As the rival master to Prospero, the only one in the play (the shipmaster notably disappears at the start of the tempest, much to Alonso's chagrin), Alonso bears the brunt of Prospero's attack.[64] When Alonso finally meets Prospero in the play's final scene, he says agitatedly,

> Whe'er thou be'st he or no,
> Or some enchanted trifle to abuse me
> (As late I have been), I not know.
>
> .   .   .   .   .
>
> This must crave—
> An if this be at all—a most strange story.
>
> .   .   .   .   .
>
> But how should Prospero
> Be living, and be here? (V.i.111–20)

Prospero ignores his question, and addresses Gonzalo, Sebastian, and Antonio, instead. Alonso, undeterred, repeats, "If thou be'st Prospero, / Give us particulars of thy preservation, / How thou hast met us here, whom three hours since / Were wrecked upon this shore" (V.i.134–7). Prospero encourages everyone to continue to mistrust their "senses," assures Alonso that he is who he says he is, and defers the "chronicle," or narrative account, that Alonso "crave[s]":

> I perceive these lords
> At this encounter do so much admire
> That they devour their reason and scarce think
> Their eyes do offices of truth, their words
> Are natural breath.—But howsoe'er you have
> Been jostled from your senses, know for certain
> That I am Prospero and that very duke
> Which was thrust forth of Milan, who most strangely
> Upon this shore where you were wrecked, was landed
> To be the lord on't. No more yet of this,
> For 'tis a chronicle of day by day,
> Not a relation for a breakfast, nor
> Befitting this first meeting. (V.i.153–65)

Instead of the explanation that Alonso desires, Prospero "bring[s] forth a wonder to content" him: Ferdinand, the son that Alonso believed to be dead, alive and well and in love (V.i.170). Alonso rightly remains suspicious: "If this prove / A vision of the island, one dear son / Shall I twice lose" (175–7). Only after Ferdinand sees his father and speaks to him does Alonso believe his eyes, but again he demands an account: "Arise and say how thou cam'st here" (181). When he sees Miranda, he seizes on her as a divine explanation: "Is she the goddess that hath severed us / And brought us thus together?" (187–8). When the Boatswain reports that, despite the terrible storm, the ship and its men are safely docked "as when / We first put out to sea (V.i.224–5), Alonso insists, "These are not natural events; they strengthen / From strange to stranger," and bids him "Say, how came you hither?" (227–8). The Boatswain answers, but Alonso is unsatisfied:

> This is as strange a maze as e'er men trod,
> And there is in this business more than nature

> Was ever conduct of. Some oracle
> Must rectify our knowledge. (V.i.242–5)

And he remains unsatisfied through to the end of the play: "I long / To hear the story of your life," he tells Prospero, "which must / Take the ear strangely" (V.i.312–4).

Besides "strange," Alonso describes what he has experienced on the island as "not natural," as "more than nature." To go beyond nature is, of course, the poet's "business" according to Sidney's theory of imaginative literature ("*only* the poet … doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or quite anew, forms such as never were in nature"). Ferdinand, Miranda, and the Boatswain cannot account for what has transpired since the tempest in Act 1, Scene 1. Nor will an oracle or a god descend from the rafters or send a message to provide an explanation, as we receive in *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Cymbeline*. In *The Tempest*, only Prospero can "rectify our knowledge"—amend its errors and imperfections—and only at a time of his choosing:

> Do not infest your mind with beating on
> The strangeness of this business. At picked leisure,
> Which shall be shortly, single I'll resolve you
> (Which to you shall seem probable) of every
> These happened accidents. Till when, be cheerful
> And think of each thing well. (V.i.246–51)

It is an essential part of Prospero's "project" to create a sense of strangeness in everyone around him, to make us distrust our own perception and forgo our own endless, hopeless attempts to make meaning of these events: "do not infest your mind with beating on / The strangeness of this business," he tells Alonso and us. It is just as essential a part of Prospero's project to make us rely on him to untangle their mysteries. In good Sidneyan fashion, Prospero promises to "resolve" the "strangeness" of the events that have transpired, the twists and turns of "these happened accidents"—which he has engineered—through a story that he will make "seem probable" by giving it the logical coherence that his interlocutors crave.

But Prospero never tells that story. The play ends with him twice promising future stories and travels, which he leaves here untold and unstaged:

> Sir, I invite your highness and your train
> To my poor cell, where you shall take your rest
> For this one night, which (part of it) I'll waste
> With such discourse as, I not doubt, shall make it
> Go quick away—the story of my life,
> And the particular accidents gone by
> Since I came to this isle—and in the morn
> I'll bring you to your ship, and so to Naples,
> Where I have hope to see the nuptial
> Of these our dear-beloved solemnized;

> And thence retire me to my Milan, where
> Every third thought shall be my grave.
>
> .   .   .   .   .   .
>
> I'll deliver all,
> And promise you calm seas, auspicious gales
> And sail so expeditious that shall catch
> Your royal fleet far off. (V.i.301–17)

In deferring the story for offstage, after the play's conclusion, Prospero participates in a long Shakespearean tradition of what Dennis Kay calls the "postponed ending":

> Eleven of Shakespeare's plays end with what looks like a fairly straightforward demand … the characters resolve to retire to some other place after the conclusion of the stage action in order to share information and (sometimes) experiences. It is evidently the role of the audience first to imagine that the retirement and discussion take place, and then that they do so in ways broadly consistent with the preceding text.[65]

Prospero's deferred story, though, is notably distinct from the rest. Whereas Shakespeare's other postponed endings relieve their audiences from the tedious redundancy of a story that retells the plot of the play we have just watched, as Kay suggests, this one withholds the information that would "rectify" or "resolve" our sense of the play's strangenesses. Like the characters, we have seen many of these events firsthand, but they exceed our "reason" and our "knowledge." To explain the events of *The Tempest* requires projecting causality and motive, which Prospero has deliberately concealed from us throughout the play.[66] *The Tempest*, and Prospero, have made us "scarce think / [Our] eyes do offices of truth." The final scene of *Cymbeline*, I argued in Chapter Three, suggests that a multi-perspectival story told by multiple characters is required to narrativize the plot of this radically unsubordinated hybrid play, and that the single perspective that Cymbeline craves would be insufficient.[67] But the way that *The Tempest* is plotted and formally unified—by a single character, Prospero, who seeks to assert dominance over those around him to unclear ends—means that its plot can be narrativized only through Prospero's single and particular perspective. Prospero tells us that explicitly: "Single I'll resolve you."

The slide of Prospero's promises in the play's final scene is revealing, going from promising to "resolve you … of every / These happened accidents," to promising to tell "the story of my life," to promising to "deliver all." Resolve, as in "to free (a person) from doubt or perplexity; to bring to a clear understanding; to provide with definite information."[68] Deliver, as in "to declare, communicate, report, relate, narrative, tell, make known … to express in words, set forth, describe," which would make Prospero's "all" the events that have happened. But also deliver, as in "to set free, liberate, release," which would make Prospero's "all" the characters onstage and us.[69] For Prospero, these promises are the same. To bring us to a clear understanding by telling us the story of his life— his purpose and motives, his ends—would be to release us from the play's mysteries; withholding the story and directing us in the meantime to "be cheerful / And think of each thing well" keeps us endlessly dependent on him.

But the prospect of our endless dependence on him is an unwelcome one. Our endless dependence on him, after all, means that he will be endlessly bound to us. And so in the epilogue Prospero turns the tables, portraying the relationship between him and the audience as one of his complete dependence on us. Prospero submits himself to us, begging our "good hands," our "gentle breath," our "pardon," our "indulgence" to set him "free":

> Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
> And what strength I have's mine own,
> Which is most faint. Now, 'tis true
> I must be here confined by you,
> Or sent to Naples. Let me not,
> Since I have my dukedom got
> And pardoned the deceiver, dwell
> In this bare island by your spell;
> But release me from my bands
> With the help of your good hands.
> Gentle breath of yours my sails
> Must fill, or else my project fails,
> Which was to please. Now I want
> Spirits to enforce, art to enchant;
> And my ending is despair,
> Unless I be relieved by prayer,
> Which pierces so that it assaults
> Mercy itself, and frees all faults.
> > As you from crimes would pardoned be,
> > Let your indulgence set me free. (epil.1–20)[70]

Instead of a story, Prospero offers himself to our judgment and mercy. Unlike Shakespeare's other Epilogues, Prospero asks us to judge not the play, but him. With our applause, we set him free, leaving us to our endless conversation.

In *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest*, Shakespeare revives the older dramatic tradition of romance, which had been discarded as archaic and absurd and superseded by a dramaturgy of mastery, control, and constraint. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare deploys those strategies for unifying a play as a way to critique them. By transmuting those dramaturgical strategies into a magician king's strategies for controlling others' access to the past, their stories, their time, and their own bodies, Shakespeare makes explicit his project, across all four of his romance plays, to show how unity functions as hegemony. Resisting and rejecting both, his romances offer in their place a kind of drama that is uncommonly open-ended and polyvocal, one that invites its audience to surrender to its pleasures and wonder at its rich strangeness. Shakespeare's contemporaries criticized romance for its endlessness. In romance's endlessness, Shakespeare discovers endless pleasures for his audiences.

NOTES

[1] Sidney, 215–16.

[2] Sidney, 243.

[3] All references to *The Tempest* are taken from the Arden Shakespeare Third Series, edited by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan.

[4] Barbara Howard Traister, "Prospero: Master of Self-Knowledge (1984)," in *William Shakespeare's The Tempest*, ed. Harold Bloom, Modern Critical Interpretations (New York: Chelsea House, 1988), esp. 126; John S. Hunt, "Prospero's Empty Grasp," *Shakespeare Studies* 22 (1994): 277–313; Jordan, *Shakespeare's Monarchies*, esp. 147, 207; Mary Ellen Lamb, "Virtual Audiences and Virtual Authors: *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, and Old Wives' Tales," in *Staging Early Modern Romance: Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare*, ed. Mary Ellen Lamb and Valerie Wayne (New York: Routledge, 2009), esp. 135–6.

[5] Stephen Orgel, "Prospero's Wife," *Representations*, no. 8 (1984): 1–13; Harry Berger, "Miraculous Harp: A Reading of Shakespeare's *Tempest* (1969)," in *William Shakespeare's The Tempest*, ed. Harold Bloom, Modern Critical Interpretations (New York: Chelsea House, 1988), 9–41.

[6] Dowden, *Shakspere: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art*, 423, 425.

[7] Anne Righter, "Introduction," in *The Tempest*, ed. Anne Righter, The New Penguin Shakespeare (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), 22.

[8] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 244.

[9] "*Twelve year* since, Miranda, twelve year since, / Thy father was the Duke of Milan" (I.ii.52–3, emphases mine); "She did confine thee … / Into a cloven pine, within which rift / Imprisoned thou didst painfully remain / A *dozen years*, within which space she died / And left thee there" (I.ii.274–80, emphases mine). That Prospero measures out years by the dozen is no mere caprice of providence. When he threatens to imprison Ariel for impertinence, he says it will be for another twelve years: "If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak / And peg thee in his knotty entrails till / Thou hast howled away *twelve winters*" (I.ii.294–6, emphases mine).

[10] Valerie Wayne recently proposed that the placement of *The Tempest* at the start of the First Folio and *Cymbeline* at the end is an intentional display of Shakespeare's virtuosity and versatility as a playwright, given the two plays' radically different structures and styles—*The Tempest*'s neoclassical unities, and *Cymbeline's* copia (Wayne, "The First Folio's Arrangement and Its Finale," esp. 390–1).

[11] Traister, "Prospero: Master of Self-Knowledge (1984)," 128.

[12] Dowden, *Shakspere: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art*, 417. Dowden was the first to group *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest* under the category "Romances" in 1877, as a part of his project to determine the chronology of Shakespeare's plays. To explain the placement of the romances near the end of Shakespeare's career, Dowden suggested that the mood of these plays, with their plots of reconciliation, reflected the mood of their author. "In his last period of authorship," Dowden tells us, "Shakspere remained grave … but his severity was tempered and purified. … His present temper demanded not a tragic issue,—it rather demanded an issue into joy or peace" (406).

[13] This opinion is so popular that the phrase "Shakespeare's own farewell to the stage" has itself become a commonplace. A casual search in Google Books turns up several pages of results; the earliest one I could find comes from a 1910 Macmillan volume *An Introduction to Shakespeare*.

[14] Hutson, *Circumstantial Shakespeare*.

[15] Gray and Cox, "Introduction," 8–9.

[16] Puttenham takes Sidney's perspective about art's relationship to nature: "Arte is as it were an encountrer and contrary to nature, producing effects neither like to hers, nor by participation with her operations, nor by imitation of her paternes, but makes things and produces effects altogeher strange and diuerse, and of such forme and qualitie (nature alwaies supplying stuffe) as she neuer woud nor could haue done of her selfe" (Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesy*, 310).

[17] The most influential treatises in the period were Scaliger's *Poetices* (1561) and Castelvetro's commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*, *Poetica d' Aristotele vulgarizzata et sposta* (1576).

[18] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 213.

[19] Ben Jonson, *Every Man In His Humour (1616)*, ed. David Bevington, The Cambridge Works of Ben Jonson Online (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[20] From Jonson, "Excerpt from *Ode to Himself*":

> COME leave the loathed stage,
> And the more loathsome age:
> .   .   .   .
> If they love lees, and leave the lusty wine,
> Envy them not, their palate's with the swine.
> No doubt some mouldy tale,
> Like Pericles; and stale
> As the Shrieve's crusts, and nasty as his fish—
> Scraps out of every dish
> Throwne forth, and rak't into the common tub,
> May keepe up the Play-club:
> There, sweepings doe as well
> As the best order'd meale.

[21] Ben Jonson, *The Magnetic Lady, or Humours Reconciled (1632)*, ed. Helen Ostovich, The Cambridge Works of Ben Jonson Online (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[22] Helen Ostovich makes this claim about *The Magnetic Lady* in the context of Jonson's career: "Partly paralysed and in poor health by 1632, Jonson planned *The Magnetic Lady* as the ultimate work that would integrate his dramatic activity … Jonson describes all of his plays as following the same principle, with 'some recent humours still, or manners of men, that went along with the times' (Ind. 78–9). Having stirred up and exposed the foibles of his age throughout his career, he planned this play, 'finding himself now near the close or shutting up of his circle' (Ind. 79–80), as a way of coming to terms with the predominantly urban and sophisticated world he had been depicting for more than thirty years. The subtitle, *Humours Reconciled*, emphasizes his goal as closure, the debates and practices of his lifetime now at an end. But it was not the end of his dramatic production; it was only the end of Jonson's experiments in city comedy" ((Helen Ostovich, "Introduction," in *The Magnetic Lady, or Humours Reconciled (1632)*, ed. Helen Ostovich, The Cambridge Works of Ben Jonson Online [Cambridge University Press, 2014]).

[23] Ben Jonson, *The New Inn, or The Light Heart (1631)*, ed. Julie Sanders, The Cambridge Works of Ben Jonson Online (Cambridge University Press, 2014). Sanders notes that *The New Inn* was the only one of Jonson's plays to be printed in octavo, a smaller and therefore cheaper format.

[24] "It is a poem that, if I well remember, in Your Lordship's sight suffered no less violence from our people here than the subject of it did from the rage of the people of Rome; but with a different fate, as (I hope) merit: for this hath outlived their malice" (Ben Jonson, *Sejanus His Fall (1605)*, ed. Tom Cain, The Cambridge Works of Ben Jonson Online [Cambridge University Press, 2014]).

[25] Jonson.

[26] For more on the dynamic of page and stage in *Sejanus'* publication history, see J. Gavin Paul, *Shakespeare and the Imprints of Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), esp. 56–9.

[27] Tom Cain identifies *Sejanus'* epistle to the reader as "The first of Jonson's introductory epistles, and only the second from author to reader in any English play" (Tom Cain, "Introduction," in *Sejanus His Fall (1605)*, ed. Tom Cain, The Cambridge Works of Ben Jonson Online [Cambridge University Press, 2014]).

[28] Jonson, *Sejanus His Fall (1605)*. Cain notes that although two versions of Jonson's translation of Horace were published in 1640, neither included the preface that he promises in this epistle.

[29] He continues: "Lastly I would informe you, that this Booke, in all nu[m]bers, is not the same with that which was acted on the publike Stage, wherein a second Pen had good share: in place of which I haue rather chosen, to put weaker (and no doubt lesse pleasing) of mine own, then to defraud so happy a Genius of his right, by my lothed vsurpation." Anne Barton suggests that the "second Pen" belonged to Shakespeare (*Ben Jonson, Dramatist* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984], 93–94).

[30] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 245.

[31] David Bordwell, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

[32] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 226, 228.

[33] Jonson, *Sejanus His Fall (1605)*.

[34] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 227.

[35] Sidney, 216.

[36] Sidney, 216, emphases mine.

[37] Sidney, 221.

[38] Sidney, 225.

[39] Sidney, 244.

[40] Sidney, 216.

[41] "MARTIAL. Here, neither centaurs, nor gorgons, nor harpies / You will find: Our page savors of mankind" (my translation) (Jonson, *Sejanus His Fall (1605)*).

[42] Stephen Orgel makes this point about Prospero's Epilogue: "Prospero's epilogue is unique in the Shakespeare canon in that its speaker declares himself not an actor in a play but a character in a fiction. The release he craves of the audience is the freedom to continue his history beyond the limits of the stage and the text" (*The Tempest*, ed. Stephen Orgel [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987], 204).

[43] Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," 219.

[44] When we first see Trinculo, he is trying to find shelter from the indifferent storm: "Here's neither bush nor shrub to bear off any weather at all, and another storm brewing … If it should thunder as it did before, I know not where to hide my head. Yond same cloud cannot choose but fall by pailfuls. … My best way is to creep under his [Caliban's] gabardine; there is no other shelter hereabout. … I will here shroud till the dregs of the storm be past" (II.ii.18–40).

[45] Prospero threatens Caliban: "Tonight thou shalt have cramps, / Side-stitches, that shall pen thy breath up; urchins / Shall forth at vast at night that they may work / All exercise on thee; thou shalt be pinched / As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging / Than bees that made 'em" (I.ii.326–31); "I'll rack thee with old cramps, / Fill all they bones with aches, make thee roar" (I.ii.370–1). Caliban gives as good as he gets: "As wicked dew as e'er my mother brushed / With raven's feather from unwholesome fen / Drop on you both. A southwest blow on ye / And blister you all o'er" (I.ii.322–5).

[46] Ferdinand explains, "I must remove / Some thousands of these logs and pile them up, / Upon a sore injunction" (III.i.9–11) but adds that he does not experience such soreness in his own body. The idea that his "mean task" is as "heavy" as it is "odious," that his "sinews" are cracking and his "back" breaking, that the "flesh-fly blow[s]" his mouth (4–5, 26, 63), are only hypotheticals, for he has only "sweet thoughts" for Miranda (14). Similarly, in spite of the chaos aboard the ship in the storm at the start of the play, Gonzalo speaks in a remarkably detached way about the Boatswain's complexion and the weather, without any sense that his own body is under siege.

[47] Prospero threatens Ferdinand, "I'll manacle thy neck and feet together; / Sea water shalt thou drink; thy food shall be / The fresh-brook mussels, withered roots, and husks / Wherein the acorn cradled" (I.ii.462–4).

[48] Prospero reminds Ariel, "It was a torment / To lay upon the damned, which Sycorax / Could not undo. It was mine art, / When I arrived and heard thee, that made gape / The pine and let thee out. … If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak / And peg thee in his knotty entrails till / Thou hast howled away twelve winters" (I.ii.289–96). Later, in his Medea speech, Prospero reminisces how, with his "so potent art," he "rifted Jove's stout oak / With his own bolt," and "by the spurs plucked up / The pine and cedar" (V.i.50, 45–6, 48).

[49] Vaughan and Vaughan also note the play's opening story as a strategy for unifying the play's time, and call it "problematic": "Shakespeare's adherence to the unity of time is particularly problematic. Instead of evolving his plot across the vasts of time and space so common in Greek romance, the dramatist insists that his characters merely *remember* the events of the twelve years preceding. … Caliban and Ariel do remember early events on the island; Caliban's recollections, in some particulars, challenge his master's, leaving the audience to speculate as to what really happened" ("Introduction," in *The Tempest*, ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan [London: Arden Shakespeare, Third Series, 1999], 15).

[50] Sebastian describing Claribel's ambivalence toward marrying the King of Tunis—she is repulsed by him, but is also obedient to her father Alonso.

[51] Orgel, "Introduction," 1987, 15.

[52] Complaining about Prospero withholding what's rightfully his, Caliban echoes Orlando's complaint about his brother Oliver, which begins *As You Like It*: "As I remember, Adam, it was upon this fashion bequeathed me by will: but poor a thousand crowns and, as thou say'st, charged my brother on his blessing to breed me well—and there begins my sadness. … he keeps me rustically at home or, to speak more properly, stays me here at home unkept. For call you that

keeping for a gentleman of my birth that differs not from the stalling of an ox? … his animals on his dunghills are as much bound to him as I. … This is it, Adam, that grieves me; and the spirit of my father, which I think is within me, begins to mutiny against this servitude. I will no longer endure it, though yet I know no wise remedy how to avoid it" (I.i.1–21).

[53] This speech is a famous textual crux. Although F1 gives the speech prefix to Miranda, editors from Dryden through the early twentieth century regularly reassigned it to Prospero; editors since the mid-twentieth century have given it back to Miranda. For justifications of both editorial decisions, see Vaughan and Vaughan, "Introduction," 135–36. I'm interested in this debate because it suggests the thematic consonance between this speech and Prospero's just before it, the total alignment between Miranda's and Prospero's account of their relationship to Caliban and the island.

[54] Orgel, "Prospero's Wife," 12.

[55] Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 144.

[56] Hall, 144–45.

[57] Earlier in the play, when he first meets Stephano and Trinculo, Caliban promises to show them the sweetest, most tender parts of the island, "every fertile inch o'th' isle":

> I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries;
> I'll fish for thee, and get thee wood enough.
> . . . .
> I prithee, let me bring thee where crabs grow,
> And I with my long nails will dig thee pignuts,
> Show thee a jay's nest, and instruct thee how
> To snare the nimble marmoset. I'll bring thee
> To clust'ring filberts, and sometimes I'll get thee
> Young scamels from the rock. (II.ii.145, 158–9, 164–9)

[58] See Righter, "Introduction," 12–13; McDonald, *Shakespeare's Late Style*, 77–107; Frank Kermode, *Shakespeare's Language* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000).

[59] Kermode, *The Tempest*, xv–xxiv.

[60] By Egeon's account, twenty-five years have passed since the birth of the two sets of twins: he says that his son "At *eighteen years* became inquisitive / After his brother" (I.i.125–6, emphases mine); when Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus fail to recognize him at the end of the play, he says despairingly, "O time's extremity, / Hast thou so cracked and splitted my poor tongue / In *seven short years* that here my only son / Knows not my feeble key of untuned cares?" (V.i.308–11, emphases mine). But by Emilia's account, thirty-three years have gone by: "Thirty-three years have I but gone in travail / Of you, my sons" (V.i.402–3).

[61] Hutson, *Circumstantial Shakespeare*, 8.

[62] "Early modern English dramatists' most enduring achievement—that of the coherently imaginable dramatic fabula—would have been unthinkable without the classical and humanist or neoclassical conception of reading and writing (including the reading and imitation of Seneca) as a process of the rhetorical and dialectical invention of arguments" (Hutson, 7).

[63] I arrived at this conclusion by searching for the words "strange," "strangely," "strangeness," "stranger," "strangers," and "strangest," on the Open Source Shakespeare's Concordance, hosted by George Mason University (http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/concordance). In descending order, "strange" and its variants appear most often in *The Tempest* (27 times), *Cymbeline* (24), *Macbeth* (19), *Henry VIII* (16), and *Antony and Cleopatra* (14): two romances, two tragedies, and one history. The bottom three are *Henry VI, Part 1*; *Richard III*; and *Henry V*, with only one instance of "strange" or "stranger" apiece: histories all. *Henry VI, Part 1*, I should note, is somewhat of a false positive: "strange" appears as a name, "Lord Strange of Blackmere."

[64] With thanks to Jeff Knapp for this keen observation.

[65] Kay, "'To Hear the Rest Untold,'" 207–8.

[66] Righter observes, "Prospero, its most dominant and fully displayed figure, is curiously opaque. The theatre audience may be privileged to overhear his soliloquies and asides ... but it is never really allowed to penetrate his consciousness. Prospero's great speeches ... are strangely externalized utterances. They do not offer what the equivalent

speeches of a Hamlet, an Angelo, or a Macbeth offer: an interior landscape, a delineation of the private workings of a mind. In the course of the play, Prospero's words reflect a variety of emotions: irritation, compassion, amusement, bitterness, regret. The feelings themselves are transmitted powerfully by the verse Shakespeare gives him to speak. Their causes, however, at a number of important moments, remain hidden and unexplained. From this distancing of the central character spring many of the problems of the play" (Righter, "Introduction," 11).

[67] Recall that Cymbeline rejects the extended, multi-perspectival narrative that he has just heard from the other characters as insufficiently explanatory, lamenting, "When shall I hear all through? This fierce abridgement / Hath to it circumstantial branches which / Distinction should be rich in" (V.v.381–3).

[68] "resolve, v." OED Online. June 2018. Oxford University Press. www.oed.com/view/Entry/163733 (accessed June 29, 2018).

[69] "deliver, v.1." OED Online. June 2018. Oxford University Press. www.oed.com/view/Entry/49470 (accessed June 29, 2018).

[70] Shakespeare's other Epilogues address the audience about the play we have just watched, and often take a defensive, even aggressive, tone toward us. Puck staves off any accusations of offense or reprehensibility by insisting on *Dream*'s inconsequentiality:

> If we shadows have offended,
> Think but this, and all is mended,
> That you have but slumbered here …
> this weak and idle theme,
> No more yielding but a dream,
> Gentles, do not reprehend,
> If you pardon, we will mend. (V.i.409–415)

Rosalind charges the men and women in the audience to assume any work of appeasement for themselves ("I charge you, O women, for the love you bear to men, to like as much of this play as please you. And I charge you, O men, for the love you bear to women ... that between you and the women, the play may please" [*As You Like It*, V.i.200–4]), and begs off the task by saying she will not beg: "I am not furnished like a beggar; therefore to beg will not become me" (198–9). *Troilus and Cressida* ends the most aggressively, with Pandarus interpellating the audience as "Traitors and bawds," "Good traders in the flesh," and "Brethren and sisters of the hold-door trade," with "aching bones" from syphilis (V.xi.36–40). For more on theater's inconsequentiality, see Paul Yachnin, *Stage-Wrights: Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, and the Making of Theatrical Value* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

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