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Authorial Design in *The Winter's Tale*: Evaluation of the Statue Scene from a Narrative Point of View

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1. Introduction

There has been much argument from several perspectives on the construction and dramaturgy of *The Winter's Tale*. Derek Traversi regarded the work's construction from a symbolic viewpoint, and says that the evil of Leontes' jealousy is set in contrast against the good of Hermione as the symbol of grace:

The contrast, in fact, implies that Shakespeare is once more using his unrivalled control of sensual imagery to set forth, through Leontes' jealousy and the reaction it produces, a contrast between good and evil, between the fullness of human maturity crowned by 'grace' and the vicious and disintegrating savagery of uncontrolled 'blood'.

The mention of 'grace' reminds us that the behaviour of Leontes throughout this scene, and indeed in the whole play, is only fully comprehensible in a context provided by the concept of family unity. Of that concept, in its full moral significance, Hermione is the gracious symbol.¹

Mahood follows Traversi's argument on the contrast of Leontes' sin

with Hermione's grace, but she develops the view further and sees in "grace" a symbolic role which works to regenerate and sanctify Leontes:

Disgraced also has further meanings for the play as a whole: Leontes is without the grace of heaven in sinning against Hermione; but because the irony of wordplay has a negative as well as a positive force, the word also foreshadows Hermione's symbolic role of Heavenly Grace which never deserts Leontes. . . . *Grace*, with *gracious* a keyword of the play, is frequently used in its theological sense of 'the divine influence which operates in men to regenerate and sanctify'.²

It seems to me that the views of these two critics, although they both treat symbolic significance in the play, relate closely to the dramatic construction of the play: Leontes' sin, which at the beginning of the play originates in his jealousy, develops over the first three acts, and after Leontes' sixteen years' penance is atoned for by Hermione's action of grace at the denouement.

When we consider the construction of the play functionally rather than symbolically, we observe a wide time gap between the end of Act 3 and the beginning of Act 4. But there is another gap in 3.3, as Northrop Frye points out, when the Shepherd finds Perdita while his son sees the shipwreck of Antigonus and his companions. It is noteworthy that Frye sees in this structure the functional pattern of dying Sicilia, regenerating Bohemia, and newborn Sicilia:

We notice that back in the scene where the shepherds find the baby, the shepherd who does find it says to the one who saw the bear eating Antigonus, "thou mettest with things dying, I with things newborn" (III. iii. 112). . . . The two halves of the play seem to be not just Sicilian winter and Bohemian spring, but a death-world and a life-world. . . . we begin with Sicilia dying and

end with Sicilia newborn.³

Therefore, if we consider the death-life theme of the play, it is appropriate to set the play's turning point at 3.3, and this view has been generally accepted.⁴

Tillyard sees the work's structure as an account of Leontes' spiritual progress, with hell in the first half of the play, purgatory at the end of Act 3 and at the beginning of Act 5, and in the statue scene the atmosphere of paradise:

It is almost as if he aimed at rendering the complete theme of *The Divine Comedy*. Indeed, it is not fantastic to see in *The Winter's Tale* Shakespeare's attempt to compress that whole theme into a single play through the direct presentation of all its parts: and it was with this notion in mind that I spoke of the country scenes as an earthly paradise. The motives of hell and purgatory in Leontes are obvious enough, while the statue scene is conducted in a rarefied atmosphere of contemplation that suggests the motive of paradise.⁵

Ernest Schanzer accepts Tillyard's view in his paper "The Structural Pattern of 'The Winter's Tale'" though only "if we make Leontes' spiritual experiences the centre of our concern."⁶ He also sets the turning point of the play at 3.3:

Shakespeare has divided the play into a predominantly destructive half and a predominantly creative and restorative half; into a winter half, concentrating on the desolation that Leontes spreads at his court, and a spring and summer half, concentrating on the values represented by the mutual love of Florizel and Perdita and the reunions at the finale.⁷

But he spends the rest of his paper concentrating on the concrete analysis of the contrast and the likeness between the two halves.

As to the statue scene, itself, Nevill Coghill admires its striking effect on the audience:

Of all Shakespeare's *coups de théâtre*, the descent of Hermione from her pedestal is perhaps the most spectacular and affecting; it is also one of the most carefully contrived and has indeed been indicted for its contrivance.⁸

But he does not explain how the statue scene is prepared for from the outset of the play to produce its full effect at the finale. Everything in the play finally converges upon the statue scene, and I believe that the analysis of the play's structure from this viewpoint is necessary to grasp the effect of the statue scene on the audience in the theatre. In this essay, therefore, I shall extract pre-echoes of the statue scene from earlier scenes where they are embedded in the speeches of various characters, and examine how these pre-echoes affect the audience's reception of the statue scene. After the turning point of the play, the plot begins to move towards full reconciliation during the statue scene. It may be true that the plot is carried by the interaction of the characters, but the plot itself moves with indifference to the intentions of the characters, especially in the last two acts, and I shall analyze this maneuver concretely. All these examinations of the pre-echoes and the plot movement of the play are based on the study of authorial design which is laid dimensionally upon the speeches of the characters'. The aim of this essay, therefore, is to analyze the authorial strategy by which the scenes and the characters' speeches are contrived so that they will produce the full effect on the audience at the final statue scene.

2. Leontes' Jealousy (Act 1 Scene 2)

Everything in the play actually begins to develop from Leontes'

jealousy, and, therefore, I should like to start the argument of this essay by an examination of how his jealousy is presented while Hermione's chastity remains quite unblemished.

It has been generally accepted that there are no tangible grounds for Leontes' jealousy, and I shall first compare it with the situation in Robert Greene's *Pandosto*, which is the main source of the play.

Bellaria (who in her time was the flower of curtesie), willing to show how unfaynedly shee looved her husband by his friends intertainment, used him likewise so familiarly, that her countenance bewraied how her minde was affected towards him: oftentimes comming her selfe into his bed chamber, to see that nothing should be amis to mislike him. This honest familiarity increased dayly more and more betwixt them; for Bellaria, noting in Egistus a princely and bountifull minde, adorned with sundrie and excellent qualities, and Egistus, finding in her a vertuous and curteous disposition, there grew such a secret uniting of their affections, that the one could not well be without the company of the other: in so much that when Pandosto was busied with such urgent affaires, that hee could not bee present with his friend Egistus, Bellaria would walke with him into the Garden, where they two in privat and pleasant devises would passe away the time to both their contents. This custome still continuing betwixt them, a certaine melancholy passion entring the minde of Pandosto, drave him into sundry and doubtfull thoughts.⁹

It is obvious that Pandosto is given cause enough to doubt Berallia's chastity and nurse jealousy: Berallia treats her husband and Egistus "likewise," she "oftentimes" comes "her selfe into his bed chamber," there grows "such a secret uniting of their affections," and they spends time in

the garden alone to the extent that it becomes a “custom.”¹⁰

On the other hand, it has been generally accepted that there is no justifiable motivation for Leontes' jealousy. Stephen Orgel, the editor of Oxford *The Winter's Tale*, quotes S. L. Bethell's explanation “the notoriously unmotivated jealousy of Leontes” to introduce his own argument of Leontes' jealousy.¹¹ H. C. Goddard compares Leontes with Othello, and explains that Leontes “is his own Iago,” maintaining that the cause of his insane jealousy is within himself.¹² Orgel explains the same idea, but he uses more explicit terminology:

The lack of any external motivation is, in this formulation, a defining feature of the passion, and Leontes' psychology in the opening acts consequently seems, in contrast with Othello's, strikingly modern in its dramatic recognition of the compulsiveness of *paranoid behaviour*, and more generally, of the self-generating and autonomous nature of consciousness itself (emphasis added).¹³

Leontes' description of Hermione “padding palms and pinching fingers” (1.2.114) must be his own paranoid conception, and it is not necessarily acted out on the stage in spite of his articulation of the behaviour.¹⁴ From this point on, the way in which the doubt within his own mind from this trivial action grows finally to a belief in adulterous sexual intercourse — “she has been sluiced in's absence, / And his pond fished by his next neighbour” (1.2.192-93) — is presented with metaphors of horrible expressiveness.

The reason for the lack of outward motivation for Leontes' jealousy, therefore, must be considered from another perspective, and Orgel's view that “Psychological motivation and dramatic motivation are two different things” suggests a principle to follow:¹⁵ apart from Leontes' psychological motivation, there must be a dramatic motive which necessitates

Leontes' "unmotivated" jealousy. Following this path, let us analyze the structure of the first half of 1.2:

ll. 1-27 Polixenes takes leave and Leontes persuades him to stay longer

l. 27 Polixenes asks for assistance to Hermione

LEONTES Tongue-tied, our queen? Speak you.

ll. 28-33 Hermione begins to persuade Polixenes

l. 33 LEONTES Well said, Hermione.

(There is no speech of Leontes' from l. 34 to l. 84)

ll. 34-55 Hermione continues her persuasion

l. 55 Polixenes accepts postponing his departure

POLIXENES Your guest, then, madam.

ll. 56-85 Conversation between Hermione and Polixenes

Hermione shows her affection to her husband

Full of equivocal words

ll. 85-86 LEONTES Is he won yet?

HERMIONE He'll stay, my lord.

LEONTES At my request he would not.

ll. 107-08 LEONTES(aside) Too hot, too hot!

To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods.

Leontes has no speech from l. 34 to l. 84, and if we gather together the content of the four speeches, "Well said, Hermione." (l. 33), "Your guest, then, madam." (l. 55), and "Is he won yet?" "He'll stay, my lord." (ll. 85-86), it is obvious that Leontes does not listen to their conversation. He may be present absent-mindedly, or stand apart from them and detach himself in reflective seclusion. Although we cannot specify the precise point where Leontes begins to feel jealous, the ambiguous speech of Leontes' "Is he won yet?" (l. 85) may suggest that he is already jealous. Anyway the lines 107 to 108 clearly show that he is jealous at this point

at the latest.

It is very significant here that Hermione's affection for her husband is shown to the audience before his jealousy is implied in l. 85:

HERMIONE Not your jailer, then,
But your kind hostess. *Come, I'll question you*
Of my lord's tricks and yours when you were boys.
You were pretty lordings then?

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? (1.2.58-65, emphasis added)

Orgel explains the meaning of "wag" as 'a mischievous boy (often as a mother's term of endearment)'.¹⁶ Her affection for Leontes is expressed in a very simple but charming way with motherly warmth. It is significant that Hermione's last line is a comparative sentence, showing her unquestionable preference for her husband.

There is no apparent cause for Leontes' jealousy, but after this expression of Hermione's love for Leontes we are given a fully contrived passage with equivocal exchanges between Hermione and Polixenes:

POLIXENES
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.

HERMIONE By this we gather
You have *tripped* since.

POLIXENES O my most sacred lady,
Temptations have since then been born to's, for
In those unfledged days was my wife a girl;
Your precious self had then not crossed the eyes
Of my young playfellow.

HERMIONE Grace to boot!
Of this make no conclusion, lest you say
Your queen and I are *devils*. Yet go on;
Th'*offences* we have made you do we'll answer,
If you first *sinned* with us, and that with us
You did continue *fault*, and that you *slipped* not
With any but with us. (1.2.66–85, emphasis added)

The words I italicized are used by the speakers with mutual understanding that they signify the original sin of sexual union, but if Leontes hears just these words without understanding the context, they might have some effect on his mind. Moreover, Hermione's last speech is ambiguous in that she uses "we" and "you" to mean Hermione to Leontes and Polixenes' wife to Polixenes separately although signifying them minglingly. I must, however, add that how much this conversation has influence over Leontes' mind is a question open to the audience's interpretation.

My analysis of this scene indicates that the process by which Leontes' doubt increases without any explicit ground is depicted without questioning Hermione's affection for Leontes. The view that Leontes' jealousy is unmotivated, which regardless of the dramatic motivation seems awk-

ward, is necessary to create both a chaste Hermione whose love for her husband cannot be doubted and the blind Leontes whose tyrannical nature will only come to the fore after this scene. The audience therefore has a sure sense of Hermione's chastity and Leontes' groundless jealousy from the outset of the play, and this knowledge is a prerequisite to our reception of the later scenes.

3. Leontes' Accusation against Hermione (Act 2 Scene 1)

In the first three acts Leontes clings to his suspicion and persistently accuses Hermione of adultery. Before his offense is finally atoned for in the statue scene, several pre-echoes of the scene can be heard. Ernest Schanzer points out one example in the trial scene(3.2), and contrasts it with the statue scene. He sees the former as Hermione's death, and the latter as her 'resurrection,' and maintains "Structural parallel and thematic contrast are here combined."¹⁷ René Girard finds another pre-echo in Act 5 Scene 1:

Scenes 1 and 3 of Act 5 stand in sharp contrast to each other. The author visibly intended to have a "false" resurrection of Hermione followed by a "true" one. The juxtaposition of the two is obviously intentional and confirms the pertinence of the word *resurrection*.¹⁸

I fully agree with these views, but apart from these two important examples so many pre-echoes sound pervasively throughout the play that it could be deduced that they are entrusted with a more fundamental function. I shall, therefore, examine the significance of the each one when set against the last and true statue scene.

The first pre-echo is heard in Act 2 Scene 1. When Leontes is

Yourself, your Queen, your son. (2.1.127-29)

Leontes, however, gives no ear to his advice, and turns himself into a tyrant:

LEONTES Why, what need we
Commune with you of this, but rather follow
Our forceful instigation? Our prerogative
Calls not your counsels, but our natural goodness
Imparts this; which if you or stupefied
Or seeming so in skill, cannot or will not
Relish a truth like us, inform yourselves
We need no more of your advice. The matter,
The loss, the gain, the ord'ring on't,
Is all properly ours. (2.1.161-70)

In this way, jealous and tyrannical features are allotted to Leontes, whereas Hermione becomes a symbol of justice and truth. Moreover, it is significant that the audience is able to recognize these things properly, for enough knowledge for a right judgment has already been given to the listeners.

Leontes' subjects firmly believe in Hermione's chastity, and try with every effort to persuade the mad king. But the scene ends with Antigonus' bitter aside:

ANTIGONUS To laughter, as I take it,
If the good truth were known. (2.1.198-99)

Although Leontes is loved by his subjects, he is becoming isolated from them, and they may come to mock him.

The next scene(2.2) serves to highlight the characteristics of the play's three main protagonists, Leontes, Hermione, and their daughter Perdita, and show them from another angle:

EMILIA

As well as one so great and so forlorn
May hold together. *On her frights and griefs,*
Which never tender lady hath borne greater,
She is, something before her time, delivered.

PAULINA

A boy?

EMILIA A daughter, and a goodly babe,

Lusty, and like to live. The queen receives
Much comfort in't, says 'My poor prisoner,
I am innocent as you.'

PAULINA

I dare be sworn.

These dangerous, unsafe lunes i'th' King, beshrew them!

(2.2.21-29, emphasis added)

Emilia's first speech attaches to Hermione her another symbolic feature, "Patience." Although Emilia is not certain about the future of the newborn baby, she talks of her as "like to live," whereas Paulina's speech "dangerous, unsafe lunes i'th' King" forebodes some disaster soon to come about. These views are given by the characters within the dramatic world, but they do not contradict the facts which have been presented up to this point, and serve to regulate and ascertain the audience's viewpoint. Thus before we reach the trial scene, which is another important pre-echo of the statue scene, Hermione's chastity and Leontes' tyrannical nature are accepted as indisputable fact.

4. The Trial Scene (Act 3 Scene 2)

The trial scene proceeds in the same vein as the accusation scene I have discussed above. Leontes declares the opening of the session in a

princely grand manner, though his kingliness is only superficial:

LEONTES Let us be cleared
Of being tyrannous, since we so openly
Proceed in justice, which shall have due course
Even to the guilt or the purgation. (3.2.4-7)

His own words “Let us be clear’d / Of being tyrannous” and “Proceed in justice” ironically emphasize his tyrannical nature. Similarly, in Hermione’s speech below, the effect is contrary to what she fears, and this effect is achieved by the audience’s accurate background knowledge:

HERMIONE
Since what I am to say must be but that
Which contradicts my accusation, and
The testimony on my part no other
But what comes from myself, it shall scarce boot me
To say ‘not guilty’; mine integrity,
Being counted falsehood, shall, as I express it,
Be so received. (3.2.21-27)

Leontes is the only person who doubts her chastity; his subjects and the audience totally trust her words. Hermione’s next speech presents the characteristics of Leontes and Hermione succinctly within a chiasmus:

HERMIONE But thus: if powers divine
Behold our human actions, as they do,
I doubt not then but innocence shall make
False accusation blush and tyranny
Tremble at patience. (3.2.27-31, emphasis added)

Moreover, with regard to the dramatic design of the play, this speech works as a pre-echo of the statue scene. The audience is able to judge her claim as trustworthy, and may perceive both Leontes’ diseased mind and Hermione’s Justice which far surpasses his. During this scene

Hermione always has an advantage over Leontes in spite of the fact that it is Leontes who directs the session. This is effectively shown in her use of imperative sentences. Even when Leontes threatens her with death, she defies him:

LEONTES — so thou
Shalt feel our justice, in whose easiest passage
Look for no less than death.

HERMIONE *Sir, spare your threats.*
(3.2.87-89, emphasis added)

In this trial scene Hermione values her honour above her life and is willing to accept her own death:

HERMIONE For life, I prize it
As I weigh grief, which I would spare; for honour,
'Tis a derivative from me to mine,
And only that I stand for. (3.2.41-44)

Her next speech seems to show the same idea with different wording, but, if we consider it from a dramaturgic viewpoint, it becomes clear that a sense of the thematic dimension is superimposed on her speech:

HERMIONE
My life stands in the level of your dreams,
Which I'll lay down. (3.2.79-80)

Hermione is talking about her present death, but by using the word “dream,” the extra effect of foreshadowing the future is here attached: in order for Hermione to be brought back to life, it is necessary for Leontes to awake from his bad “dream.” She repeats again and again that she values her honour above her life, but in every case a new functional element is attached to it:

HERMIONE
But yet, hear this — mistake me not: no life,

I prize it not a straw, but for mine honour,
Which I would free — if I shall be condemned
Upon surmises, *all proofs sleeping* else
But what *your jealousies awake*, I tell you
'Tis rigour and not law. (3.2.107-12, emphasis added)

This speech assures the audience that now they are in the situation where “all proofs” are “sleeping” and only Leontes’ “jealousies” are “awake,” and this would give the listener the expectation of another possible situation when all these problems are ‘cleared.’

But then Hermione hears about Mamillas’ death, swoons, and is carried from the stage; almost immediately Paulina informs us that she is dead:

PAULINA — O lords,
When I have said, cry woe! — the Queen, the Queen,
The sweet’st, dear’st creature’s dead, and vengeance for’t
Not dropped down yet. (3.2.197-200)

This little speech is also considered to be a pre-echo of the statue scene, for the vengeance exacted for her death has not yet been carried out, and her speech foreshadows the state when it is to be achieved (whatever the realization may be). Paulina’s next speech is also considered to be a pre-echo, for the steps by which Hermione receives “tincture” and “lustre in her lip, her eye, Heat outwardly” and “breath within” will be repeated by Leontes in the statue scene:

PAULINA
I say she’s dead — I’ll swear’t. If word nor oath
Prevail not, go and see; if you can bring
Tincture or lustre in her lip, her eye,
Heat outwardly or breath within, I’ll serve you
As I would do the gods. (3.2.201-05)

But before Leontes meets the warm and living Hermione again, he must suffer sixteen years' torment. Paulina forecasts Leontes' desolate inner world with vivid images:

PAULINA But O thou tyrant,
Do not repent these things, for they are heavier
Than all thy woes can stir; therefore betake thee
To nothing but despair. *A thousand knees,
Ten thousand years together, naked, fasting,
Upon a barren mountain, and still winter
In storm perpetual* could not move the gods
To look that way thou wert. (3.2.205-12, emphasis added)

But the audience is soon welcomed into a scene where the possibility of something new about to happen is suggested. On the Bohemian seaside, an old shepherd finds Perdita:

OLD SHEPHERD
... thou metst with things dying, I with things newborn.
(3.3.109-10)

“Things dying” is of the past, while now we find “things newborn” with the expectation of a happier future. In this sense, this speech serves as the turning point of the play, from dreary winter in Sicily to sun-shining Bohemia. And soon, in the next scene, although there is sixteen-years' gap inside the dramatic world which is only a blink of an eye for the audience, Bohemia's healing power is introduced with all its fascination.

5. The Bohemian Plot: Preparation for the Reconciliation in Act 5

Although Act 4 has its own unique attractiveness, especially the pastoral features with their soothing atmosphere, I shall rather concen-

trate on its dramaturgic function, how everything in the play is now contrived to mingle together so as to aim for the reconciliation in the next act.

5.1 The Function of the Chorus, Time (Act 4 Scene 1)

Just before Act 4 Scene 1, the Shepherd and his son have found Perdita wrapped in a luxurious robe. But soon in the next scene Time, as a chorus, appears on stage, and announces that we jump over sixteen years. First he describes himself as Time:

TIME

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. (4.1.1-4)

His explanation of himself as one “that makes and unfolds error” arouses the expectations of the audience, for hitherto he has made error with Leontes as an agent, implying that now something new will come about to “unfold” the error. This expectation is strengthened further by his own words:

TIME

Your patience this allowing,
I turn my glass, and give my scene such growing
As you had slept between; 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 remember well
I mentioned a son o'th' King's, which Florizel
I now name to you, and with speed so pace
To speak of Perdita, now grown in grace

Equal with wond'ring. What of her ensues
I list not prophesy, but let Time's news
Be known when 'tis brought forth. A shepherd's daughter,
And what to her adheres, which follows after,
Is th'argument of Time. (4.1.15-29)

This speech must entail the gesture of his turning an hourglass, which serves as a symbol to signify that the time changes now and something is to happen hereafter which will move in the opposite direction. In this small but significant speech, the state of all the main protagonists are mapped out succinctly. We will leave Leontes awhile, who now so grieves over “Th'effects of his fond jealousies” that he “shuts up himself.” Time's statement that he gives his “scene such growing / As you had slept between” enfolds Hermione's “sleep” in it, although this is not yet disclosed to the audience at this stage of the play. Then he introduces Florizel, Polixenes' son, and talks of Perdita as “now grown in grace / Equal with wond'ring.” She is believed to be “a shepherd's daughter” by her surrounding people, but the audience knows her true noble birth, which is expressed as “what to her adheres.” In this way, time and place change and the two young protagonists come to the centre of the play, giving a new sense of expectation to the audience.

5.2 Information from the Protagonists (Act 4 Scene 2)

Act 4 Scene 2 is composed of a conversation between Polixenes and Camillo. It presents the situation after a sixteen-years' gap of the time from the standpoint of the protagonists, and it also introduces the new plot of the young lovers, Florizel and Perdita.

The first half of this scene gives us information in connection to the events which have developed hitherto in the play:

POLIXENES I pray thee, good Camillo, be no more importu-

nate. 'Tis a sickness denying thee any thing, a death to grant this.

CAMILLO It is fifteen years since I saw my country; though I have for the most part been aired abroad, *I desire to lay my bones there*. Besides, *the penitent King, my master, hath sent for me*, to whose feeling sorrows I might be some allay, or I o'erween to think so, which is another spur to my departure.

POLIXENES As thou lov'st me, Camillo, wipe not out the rest of thy services by leaving me now. The need I have of thee thine own goodness hath made. Better not to have had thee than thus to want thee; thou, having made me businesses which none without thee can sufficiently manage, must either stay to execute them thyself or take away with thee the very services thou hast done; which if I have not enough considered — as too much I cannot — to be more thankful to thee shall be my study, and my profit therein the heaping friendships. *Of that fatal country Sicilia prithee speak no more*, whose very naming punishes me with the remembrance of that penitent, as thou call'st him, and *reconciled King my brother, whose loss of his most precious Queen and children are even now to be afresh lamented*. (4.2.1-25, emphasis added)

In this interaction three things are revealed to the audience: 1)Camillo has become Polixenes' most trusty counsellor; 2)Camillo wishes to go back to Sicily, and Leontes has asked for his return; 3)Polixenes now forgives Leontes and condoles with him for the death of his queen and his children. But as his own words “reconciled King my brother, whose loss of his most precious Queen and children are *even now to be afresh lamented*” show, they have not yet reached a true reconciliation.

The second half of the scene introduces the new plot of Florizel and

Perdita. Polixenes fears that a daughter of “a most homely shepherd,” who, however, is “of most rare note,” is the angle that plucks his son. A maneuver is here contrived that enables the audience to recognize this maid as Perdita for sure, after which Polixenes and Camillo agree to seek for the truth of the matter by disguising themselves. In this way the Bohemian plot in the forth act starts, arousing great expectations in the audience from a quite fresh angle.

5.3 The Plot Movement Aiming for the Reconciliation in Sicily

(Act 4 Scene 4)

In Act 4 Scene 4 Perdita appears on the stage for the first time, and with her the plot actually begins to aim for the reconciliation in Act 5. For the full appreciation of this scene we must recall the oracle in Act 3 Scene 2:

OFFICER (*reads*) ‘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.* (3.2.130-34, emphasis added)

We can expect that the article of an oracle *in a drama* would be eventually fulfilled. At the beginning of Act 4 Scene 4 the audience finds Perdita, whereas neither Leontes nor any other of the main protagonists have discovered her, or at least do not yet know her real identity. Under this condition the audience appreciates the whole action of Act 4 Scene 4.

When the scene opens, we see that Florizel loves Perdita with a strong determination never to break his oath whatever may happen, while she, though she fears the difference of their social status, returns his love with equal sincerity. All the people around her, both those who are on-stage and off-stage, admire her. Perdita herself shows attractiveness in her own speech (and also in her behaviour, which is suggested by her

words), which is both plain and noble at the same time. In this scene Perdita is given the title “queen” by Florizel and Camillo. They do not know her identity as a prince’s daughter, but its effect upon the audience is not trivial at all. As soon as the scene begins, Florizel awards her gracefulness with the title “queen”:

FLORIZEL

These your unusual weeds to each part of you
Does give a life; *no shepherdess*, but Flora
Peering in April’s front. This your sheep-shearing
Is as a meeting of the petty gods,
And *you the queen on’t*. (4.4.1-5, emphasis added)

She takes the hostess-ship of sheep shearing at her father’s bidding, that is the Shepherd’s, and so she is clad in a queen-like attire, in her “borrowed flaunts” according to her own wording(4.4.23). Her habit, however, is not “borrowed” at all, and what is really borrowed is her guise as a “poor lowly maid” (4.4.9). Soon after this Florizel gives her the same title again:

FLORIZEL Each your doing,
So singular in each particular,
Crowns what you are doing in the present deeds,
That all your acts are queens. (4.4.143-46)

It is true that Florizel acknowledges gentle nature in her behaviour, but it might also be in his mind that, if once he is married to her, she will become a queen indeed.¹⁹ In this speech, Perdita, crown, and queen are all combined together. Although on the level of Florizel’s intention how much he is certain about is open to question, the audience fully appreciates the fundamental sense of this contrived playing with the words.

In 4.4.160-61 Camillo also gives her the title “queen” in admiration, “she is / The queen of curds and cream.” The comical combination of

the title with “curds and cream” comes, of course, from his lack of knowledge about Perdita’s true identity.

The disguised Polixenes also addresses favourable words to her, “A fair one are you,” “gentle maiden,” and “sweet maid.” As the scene proceeds, he sees in her a noble nature which surpasses her nurture as a shepherdess, although her real identity remains outside his imagination:

POLIXENES

This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever
Ran on the greensward. Nothing she does or seems
But *smacks of something greater than herself*,
Too noble for this place. (4.4.156-59, emphasis added)

The fact that Polixenes thinks favourably about their love and marriage at the beginning of the scene leads finally to the reconciliation and their marriage contract in Act 5 Scene 2. Polixenes’ stance to praise Perdita and approve the young couple’s marriage at this stage is, therefore, quite important. After the conversation of less than a hundred lines, Polixenes implies in his metaphorical expression that he permits their marriage:

POLIXENES

You see, sweet maid, we *marry*
A *gentler scion* to the wildest *stock*,
And make *conceive* a bark of baser kind
By bud of *nobler race*. This is an art
Which does mend nature — change it rather — but
The art itself is nature. (4.4.92-97, emphasis added)

On the overt level Polixenes talks about grafting, but it is clear that the words connote the marriage of his son to Perdita. In order to cover both lines of meaning in a single expression, he mingles the terms for plants and for human beings together:

For plants: scion, stock, bark, and bud.

For human beings: marry, gentler, conceive, and race.

Moreover, both “scion” and “stock” have derivative meanings which can be applied to human beings, “scion” to mean “an heir, a descendant” (*OED* 2.) and “stock” “a line of descent; the descendants of a common ancestor, a family, kindred” (*OED* n.1 3.c). Although they are talking primarily about plants, we are able to interpret Polixenes’ utterance according to this line of reasoning, too: as a consequence of the marriage of his heir, Florizel, and Perdita, though she is from a baser family, she will have a nobler babe.

As the scene proceeds, it is Polixenes himself who prompts Florizel to make his marriage protestation: “But to your protestation — let me hear / What you profess.”(4.4.363–64.) Florizel’s protestation is extravagant for an heir to a kingdom, for he would treat his royalty as worthless without Perdita’s love, though he merges it with other items, such as his outward beauty and peerless knowledge:

FLORIZEL And he, and more
Than he, and men — the earth, the heavens, and all —
That *were I crowned the most imperial monarch,*
Thereof most worthy, were I the fairest youth
That ever made eye swerve, had force and knowledge
More than was ever man’s, *I would not prize them*
Without her love, for her employ them all,
Commend them, and condemn them to her service
Or to their own perdition. (4.4.365–73, emphasis added)

Polixenes, however, finds this exorbitant protestation quite satisfactory and answers, “Fairly offered.” (4.4.373).

Then Perdita gives her oath in her plain but charming manner, and the contract seems about to be concluded without their having any consultation with Polixenes. So he tries to persuade Florizel to let him know it:

POLIXENES

Methinks a father
Is at the nuptial of his son a guest
That best becomes the table. Pray you once more,
Is not your father grown incapable
Of reasonable affairs? (4.4.391-95)

The first three lines show that Polixene approves their marriage, and that he also wants to give an ample blessing to them. He continues in a rational manner in the next speech, too:

POLIXENES By my white beard,
You offer him, if this be so, a wrong
Something unfilial. Reason my son
Should choose himself a wife, but as good reason
The father, all whose joy is nothing else
But fair posterity, should hold some counsel
In such a business. (4.4.401-07)

Here he shows his rational way of thinking in that he admits Florizel's right to choose his own wife. Moreover in these two speeches, he uses the word "reason" twice, and its adjectival form "reasonable" once: this underscores Polixenes' sensible state of mind at this stage.

It is only after Florizel refuses to inform his father of the matter that he bursts into a furious rage and rejects their marriage. Florizel's hardheaded belief that the king would not grant their marriage, and the king's unexpected approval, which is unknown to Florizel, cause a clash:

POLIXENES Let him know't.

FLORIZEL

He shall not.

POLIXENES Prithee, let him.

FLORIZEL No, he must not.

Shepherd

Let him, my son; he shall not need to grieve
At knowing of thy choice.

FLORIZEL Come, come, he must not.

Mark our contract.

POLIXENES (*removing his disguise*) Mark your divorce,
young sir,

Whom son I dare not call — thou art too base
To be acknowledged, thou a sceptre's heir,
That thus affects a sheep-hook! (4.4.410-17)

The fact that Polixenes has been thinking favourably of Perdita and of the marriage of his son to her, and that Florizel's obstinate decision to exclude him from the nuptial members finally causes his anger, which in future develops into the reconciliation and the marriage contract in Sicily in Act 5 Scene 2. In other words, a happy wedding in Bohemia would shut off the way to the reconciliation in the last act, and that must be prohibited for the accomplishment of the dramatic design.

After this, Florizel's decision to put out to sea with Perdita in order to fulfil their marriage is united with Camillo's wish to go back to Sicily, and from now on the plot accelerates as it aims for the necessary reconciliation in Sicily.

There might be some alternative way for him to realize their marriage, but he suddenly chooses to make a voyage: the vessel is not prepared for this purpose, but is just introduced here abruptly as the situation requires.

FLORIZEL This you may know
And so deliver: I am put to sea
With her who here I cannot hold on shore,

And *most opportune to our need, I have*
A vessel rides fast by, but not prepared
For this design. (4.4.494-99, emphasis added)

Of course, he has no clear plan for the future nor of the destination of the voyage:

CAMILLO Have you thought on
A place whereto you'll go?

FLORIZEL Not any yet;
But as th'unthought-on accident is guilty
To what we wildly do, so we profess
Ourselves to be *the slaves of chance, and flies*
Of every wind that blows. (4.4.533-38, emphasis added)

Then an idea *flashes* into Camillo's mind. His idea is to send them to Sicily to fulfil their marriage, then persuade Polixenes to follow them to Sicily:

CAMILLO He's irremovable,
Resolved for flight. Now were I happy if
His going I could frame to serve my turn,
Save him from danger, do him love and honour,
Purchase the sight again of dear Sicilia
And that unhappy King, my master, whom
I so much thirst to see. (4.4.504-10)

Then Autolycus appears on stage, and by Camillo's *sudden* suggestion Autolycus and Florizel exchange their garments. Autolycus *chances* to hear about their plan of flight, but he decides not to inform the king by mere whim:

AUTOLYCUS The prince himself is about a piece of iniquity,
stealing away from his father with his clog at his heels. If I
thought it were a piece of honesty to acquaint the King

withal, I would not do't. I hold it the more knavery to
conceal it; and therein am I constant to my profession.

(4.4.673-78)

The Shepherd and Clown enter, on the way to the king to explain how they found Perdita. Autolycus, who is now clad in a courtier's attire, deceives them into believing that he would be able to mediate with the king, and sends them to Florizel's ship with a fardel which contains the evidence of Perdita's true identity.

In this way, the events fall to the characters as mere chance, but the plot moves forward, following the dramatic design that is aiming for the reconciliation in the last act. Thus Florizel and Perdita sail for Sicily in order to fulfill their marriage, the Shepherd and Clown are on the same ship carrying the evidence of Perdita's identity with them, while Polixenes and Camillo pursue them. Here all the conditions to the reconciliation are prepared and made ready, as the audience is welcomed into the last act, looking forward to the future developments.

6. The Act of Reconciliation (Act 5)

6.1 The Last Pre-echo: Leontes' Repentance (Act 5 Scene 1)

Act 5 begins with three different considerations combined together: 1) Courtiers encourage Leontes to marry again; 2) Leontes repents his sin and shows his unchangeable love to Hermione; and 3) Paulina prepares Leontes to see Hermione again. These are what are happening on the level of the characters, but I shall examine the same events from the perspective of the dramatic design.

At the end of the act the audience may pick up the hint that Paulina has given secret protection to Hermione for sixteen years, which is unknown to the audience at this point and which they may easily miss.

Therefore, throughout the act Paulina stands in a superior position to the audience, and she handles the other characters' actions and mental conditions, and operates on the audience's reception as well.

In Act 5 the scene moves from Bohemia to Sicily, and immediately we are reminded that the kingdom is heirless because of the king's sin:

CLEOMENES

Sir, you have done enough, and have performed
A saint-like sorrow. *No fault could you make*
Which you have not redeemed; indeed, paid down
More penitence than done trespass. At the last,
Do as the heavens have done, forget your evil;
With them forgive yourself. (5.1.1-6, emphasis added)

On the level of Cleomenes' consciousness, he is trying to broach the subject of a new marriage, although this is known to be so only at l. 23 with Paulina's speech, "You are one of those / Would have him wed again." When we come across this speech of Cleomenes', his own intention is hidden, and this works to underscore the dramatic design: the audience is reminded of Leontes' sin in the first three acts, and, moreover, the expression "No fault could you make / Which you have not redeemed" implies the possibility that Leontes' fault might be redeemed hereafter. Leontes' response to Cleomenes shows the situation of his kingdom succinctly with mere three phrases:

LEONTES

Whilst I remember
Her and her virtues, I cannot forget
My blemishes in them, and so still think of
The wrong I did myself, which was so much
That *heirless* it hath made my kingdom, and
Destroyed the sweet'st companion that e'er man
Bred his hopes out of. (5.1.6-12, emphasis added)

Here the use of a strong word “Destroyed” effectively shows Leontes’ deep repentance. This expression is succeeded by Paulina’s more direct word, “killed”:

PAULINA . . . she you killed
Would be unparalleled. (5.1.15-16)

After reflecting on his own deed Leontes admits that his groundless jealousy eventually brought about his wife’s death:

LEONTES I think so. *Killed?*
She I killed? I did so, . . . (5.1.16-17, emphasis added)

Leontes regrets that he has not followed Paulina’s advice, and the hypothesis if she were alive now creates the motif of her resurrection. Here two different pre-echoes of the statue scene are placed side by side, and the comparison of the two brings about a striking effect. First a similar, and therefore blissful, picture of the actual statue scene is depicted:

LEONTES Good Paulina,
Who hast the memory of Hermione,
I know, in honour, O that ever I
Had squared me to thy counsel! Then, even now,
I might have looked upon my Queen’s full eyes,
Have taken treasure from her lips —

PAULINA And left them
More rich for what they yielded. (5.1.49-55)

But soon the blissful atmosphere is quenched by a quite contrary version:

LEONTES Thou speak’st truth.
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,
Where we offenders now appear, *soul-vexed*,

And begin, 'Why to me?'

PAULINA *Had she such power,*

She had just cause.

LEONTES *She had, and would incense me*

To murder her I married.

PAULINA *I should so.*

Were I the ghost that walked, I'd bid you mark

Her eye, and tell me for what dull part in't

You chose her; then *I'd shriek, that even your ears*

Should rift to hear me, and the words that followed

Should be, 'Remember mine.' (5.1.55-67, emphasis added)

Here the repenting king creates “angry and sorrowful Hermione” with the help of all-knowing Paulina. By creating such a picture of Hermione, a self-criticizing voice is also awakened inside Leontes' mind. It is Leontes who imagines “soul-vexed” Hermione reproaching him, “Why to me?,” and his imagination is confirmed by Paulina's “she had just cause.” In the same way, Leontes' imagined picture of Hermione who “would incense me / To murder her I married.” is supported and strengthened by Paulina's “I should so.” Paulina furthers this view and threatens him with the idea that Hermione's shrieking voice would rift Leontes' ears. Her last word “Remember mine” has the double function of criticizing Leontes' sin and of preparing Leontes for their later encounter.

This pre-echo is quite different from the pre-echoes in Act 2 Scene 1 and Act 3 Scene 2 that I have discussed above: whereas, in the first two, Hermione righteously maintains her guiltlessness and criticizes Leontes' fault with justice, here Leontes himself admits that he deserves the punishment. This self-criticizing spirit in Leontes will make him really to receive the grace bestowed by Hermione in the statue scene.

issue, and so the sense of the promise to the future is heightened by the juxtaposition of the present “issueless” situation of Leontes’ and the later purification of his sin.

Act 5 Scene 2 does not consist of the actual actions of the characters, but the manner in which things are revealed and sorted out offstage is reported by three gentlemen. The revelation of Perdita’s identity has, we are told, brought about reconciliation among the main characters: reconciliation between Leontes and Camillo (ll. 9-19) and between Leontes and Polixenes (ll. 42-49). The young lovers, who have so far endured their hopeless situation, can now celebrate their marriage (l. 53). It has been argued that the reason that the scene is not acted out by the characters on stage is not to pre-empt the audience’s excitement at the denouement; I agree with the interpretation.

After this we learn of Hermione’s statue which the great renaissance sculptor Giulio Romano has supposedly created:

Third Gentleman No. The princess hearing of her mother’s statue, which is in the keeping of Paulina — a piece many years in doing and now newly performed by that rare Italian master, Giulio Romano, who, had he himself eternity and could put breath into his work, would beguile nature of her custom, so perfectly he is her ape. He so near to Hermione hath done Hermione that *they say one would speak to her and stand in hope of answer*. Thither with all greediness of affection are they gone, and there they intend to sup.

(5.2.92-101, emphasis added)

Although the fact that Hermione is alive is not revealed to the audience, this speech foreshadows her “resurrection” in the last scene. This new reference to the statue is followed by first gentleman’s “Every wink of an

eye, some new grace will be born” (ll. 108–09), which foretells the possibility of a new grace to come.

6.3 The Statue Scene: Resurrection from a Stone (Act 5 Scene 3)

In order to arrange an opportunity for the encounter of Leontes with Hermione, there is no need to contrive such an odd setting of a living person as a stone to come to life again. This, however, is invented for a dramatic purpose in order to present symbolically and visually the process by which Leontes’ sin is reprieved. The audience follows the process from Leontes’ perspective, together with him or a little faster than he does himself.

In this scene a quite different spectacle from the previous pre-echoes is presented slowly, keeping pace with the perceptions of Leontes and other characters. As the following speech of Leontes’ shows, it is Leontes himself and his soul that has been a stone, and not Hermione:

LEONTES Does not the stone rebuke me

For being more stone than it? (5.3.37–38)

Hermione has been *dead* as is presented here as a “stone,” and for her resurrection Leontes must awake from his dream, as I have explained in the analysis of the trial scene. In Act 5 Scene 1 Leontes’ repentance has been already presented, and the audience knows that he is now awake from his bad dream, just awaiting for its actual outcome. In the statue scene, the process by which Leontes’ sin is atoned is rendered visually as Hermione’s resurrection from a “stone.” The audience shares with him the moment that he learns she is alive, “O, she’s warm!”, and each member of the audience learns that his sin is at last atoned for.

7. Conclusion

In this essay, I have first argued how Leontes' groundless jealousy is presented without damaging the virtue of Hermione. His jealousy brings forth further sin in the later acts, until it is forgiven and atoned for in the last act. In the process of the play, pre-echoes of the statue scene are entwined in the characters' speeches, and they create their own significant dimension in contrast to, and in anticipation of, the actual one. Next I have examined how the plot moves in Act 4 and 5, aiming for the reconciliation at the denouement. Here the plot moves with indifference to the characters' intentions. The movement might seem odd, if we stop to think, but the quick forward movement prevents the opportunity to be suspicious. If we consider the phenomenon in view of the dramatic design, it becomes clear that this plot movement is necessary if everything in the play is to converge upon the final statue scene.

In the pre-echoes of Act 2 Scene 1 and Act 3 Scene 2, Hermione criticizes Leontes with justice; on the other hand in Act 5 Scene 1 Leontes blames himself and repents his own sin. The audience is able to judge each pre-echoes properly since it has been given enough knowledge for right judgment. Hermione's all-forgiving grace at the statue scene, however, goes beyond the expectation of the audience and, therefore, works to move each listener. All these authorial operations which I have analysed in this essay are embedded dimensionally in the characters' speeches in order to raise up one of the main themes of the play, "from sin to atonement."

Notes

- ¹ Derek Traversi, *Shakespeare: The Last Phase* (California: Stanford UP, 1955) 119.
- ² M. M. Mahood, *Shakespeare's Wordplay* (London: Methuen, 1957) 150–51.
- ³ Northrop Frye, *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare* (London: Yale UP, 1986) 160–61.
- ⁴ See Ernest Schanzer, “The Structural Pattern of ‘The Winter’s Tale,’” *Review of English Literature* 5 (April 1964) 72–82, especially 75, G. Wilson Knight, *The Crown of Life: Essays in Interpretation of Shakespeare's Final Plays* (London: Methuen, 1948) 98–99, and Nevill Coghill, “Six Points of Stage-Craft in *The Winter's Tale*,” *Shakespeare Survey* 11 (1958) 31–41, especially 35.
- ⁵ E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's Last Plays* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1968) 84.
- ⁶ Schanzer 72.
- ⁷ Schanzer 74.
- ⁸ Coghill 39.
- ⁹ Geoffrey Bullough, ed., *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol. 8 (London: Routledge, 1975) 158.
- ¹⁰ In *The Winter's Tale* it is Leontes who places Polixenes and himself “likewise”: he juxtaposes Hermione’s success in postponing Polixenes’ departure with her earlier acceptance of his marriage proposal both as “grace”! (1.2.87–107); by doing so he equates her ‘slippery trespass,’ though such a thing exists only in Leontes’ mind, with her oath of eternal love for him. Hermione takes up this equation, but she shows her own faultlessness by effective comparisons, “for ever” with “for some while” and “a royal husband” with merely “a friend.” (1.2.106–07)
- ¹¹ William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, ed. Stephen Orgel, The Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996) 18. All the quotations from *The Winter's Tale* are from this text.
- ¹² Harold C. Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare*, vol. 2 (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1951) 264.
- ¹³ Orgel 19.
- ¹⁴ Editors of this play have tried to give a consistency to Leontes’ speech and the text of the scene by inventing stage directions which were not included in the First Folio. For example, it is usual to insert a stage direction, “She gives her hand to Polixenes” and the like after Hermione’s speech “I have spoke to th’ purpose twice. / The one for ever earned a royal husband, / Th’other, for some while a friend.” (1.2.105–07) following Capell, but I think even this stage direction is

misleading and unnecessary.

¹⁵ Orgel 22.

¹⁶ Orgel 98.

¹⁷ Schanzer 78.

¹⁸ René Girard, *A Theater of Envy* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991) 336.

¹⁹ This view could be supported, if we pay notice to how the same word “queen” is used in Perdita’s speech, although in Perdita’s case she uses the word as a verb:

PERDITA This dream of mine
Being now awake, I’ll queen it no inch farther,
But milk my ewes and weep. (4.4.445-47)

Though Orgel explains the word as “behave like a queen” (Orgel, 191), David Crystal and Ben Crystal gloss as “aspire to being a queen” in addition to “act as queen.” This speech comes after the point when Polixenes rejects the proposed marriage, and I think that the Crystals’ interpretation is appropriate. See David Crystal and Ben Crystal, *Shakespeare’s Words: A Glossary and Language Companion* (London: Penguin Books, 2002) 357.