

ABSTRACT

Lamentation in the Late Plays of Shakespeare

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This thesis will consider portrayals of lamentation and weeping in *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, and *Cymbeline*. These late plays of Shakespeare identify and assess various motivations behind affective response. In *The Winter's Tale*, a clear hierarchy of moral lamentation emerges based on the extent to which instances of weeping adhere to the preferences of a morally central character. Next, this thesis will consider *The Tempest*, which upholds the hierarchy established in *The Winter's Tale* and which emphasizes the effectual value (as opposed to the moral value) of repentant weeping. Lastly, I argue that *Cymbeline* adheres to and modifies this hierarchy, demonstrating that the bodily nature of weeping interferes with higher expressions of grief, such as song. The framework that emerges from these three plays, then, is one that prizes penitence, discourages self-pity, and maintains a realistic vision of the limitations of embodied lament.

Lamentation in the Late Plays of Shakespeare

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Representations of affective response in both the Early Modern period broadly and in the work of Shakespeare specifically have received a great deal of critical attention in recent years. Perhaps the most noteworthy contribution to the discourse surrounding emotive expression in Early Modern writing is found in the collection, *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotions*, by Paster, Rowe, and Floyd-Wilson. The collection's introduction argues for the importance of critical writing about emotion in narrative, claiming,

Writing about the emotions tells a long and complex story involving the history of rhetoric, the history of science and religion, the social role of the arts, and the aesthetic role of pleasure, and employing a variety of discourses from the medical to the religious to the aesthetic (Paster 3).

While such a hefty list of academic disciplines and discourses argues well for the importance of writing about emotion, it also argues well for the immense difficulty of it. If so many disciplines are required to understand emotion well, how can any one scholar responsibly take it up as her subject?

Alternatively, if affective response shows up in such a wide range of critical approaches, would it not seem frivolous to specify emotion as one's subject since it is almost inevitable that the scholar will bump into it in the course of her writing? This seems especially true of the literary scholar, whose subject is the human condition and representations thereof. Since this includes emotionality by its very nature, what does it mean to take up affective response as one's focus? In other words, since emotion is so

ubiquitous in narrative, how can the literary scholar meaningfully say that emotion is her focus?

The difficulty of this question is not lost on Paster, Rowe, and Floyd-Wilson. They acknowledge the complexity of writing critically about emotion, and further complicate the question by pointing out, “There is little agreement on what constitutes the cardinal or core emotions, on how to rank emotions on a scale of complexity, on which creatures experience them, or on whether emotions are more pan-cultural than they are local and culturally specific” (Paster 3). Not only is it difficult to write about emotion generally, but also to discern which specific emotions warrant critical attention.

Despite the lack of clarity surrounding the critical value of and boundaries between various emotions, in most scholarly works that consider emotive response, “Sadness...takes center stage” (Paster 13). The collection’s editors attribute this critical preference for sadness and its expressions as reflective of a “discursive privilege of melancholy in Western philosophy” (Paster 13). This “discursive privilege of melancholy” is confirmed in (or, perhaps, gave rise to) this project, which has as its central focus expressions of grief and lamentation in the late plays of Shakespeare.

Let us start by taking up the definitional question of what constitutes affective response for the purposes of this project. The Oxford dictionary defines “affective response” as “the emotional response to a situation,” and includes such examples as “the feeling of pride and satisfaction a person obtains when winning” and “the feeling of disappointment on losing.” This definition is much broader than is useful for this project. Since grief and lamentation are up for consideration, “affective response” here will almost always refer to those emotions and expressions thereof.

Using disparate terminology in reference to emotional expression is, apparently, controversial, and has been since the period under consideration. As the editors of *Reading the Early Modern Passions* point out, “Some Early Modern writers treated passions and affections as synonyms, whereas others drew careful distinctions between the two terms” (2). In critical writing today, there is a range of vocabularies for describing emotional expression. For the purposes of this project, unless otherwise indicated, terminology such as “emotion” and “emotive response” will essentially function as a stand-in for “affective response” and “lamentation.” If this seems too liberal an application of a word that can refer to any number of feelings, consider these colloquial uses of “emotion” that connote grief or weeping; “She’s so emotional” or “He was overcome by emotion” both imply lamentation, even though neither sentence actually specifies which emotion is at play.

Notice, too, that I often accompany references to “emotion” with references to “expressions thereof.” This project is interested in grief that is not merely felt, but also expressed physiologically or verbally. Most commonly, this is accomplished through weeping, crying, tears, or some other variant of the same process. Much of the action of the late plays—reconciliations achieved, threats made, vengeance unexacted—hinges on the show of tears. In fact, in her chapter “‘Sociable’ Tears in *The Tempest*,” Heather Kerr points out that what’s at stake in instances of weeping in the late plays is not merely plot points, but rather, the very humanity of a character. She cites the long history of this idea, saying, “The idea that weeping defines the human is a feature of (for example) pseudo-Aristotelian and pseudo-Hippocratic medical texts, and of rhetorical writings by Aristotle, Horace, Cicero and Quintilian employed in the Early Modern period” (Kerr 165). She

draws, too, on Matthew Steggle’s argument that weeping “is peculiar to humans, largely uncontrollable, and [seems] to be [a] reaction to some inner movement of the soul” (Steggle 11). For these critics, weeping is an essential element of emotional display, because it is what distinguishes human beings from animals.

However, weeping is not the only physiological expression of lamentation—there are other physical indicators of grief worth considering in Shakespeare’s late plays. For instance, in *Cymbeline*, when Imogen discovers the headless corpse of the man she believes to be her husband, her grief manifests itself in her body through “trembl[ing]” and “pale cheek[s]” (IV.ii.302, 329).¹ These signifiers are also physiological changes brought on by and expressive of grief.

Perhaps the parameters set out above—that grief must be expressed physiologically or verbally—seem too broad to be meaningful. After all, aren’t we considering plays here? By nature of the medium, aren’t dialogue and physical expressions prompted by stage directions the only way the audience can learn anything about the characters’ internal states? It is a good objection, to which I reply that the sort of dialogue this project recognizes as expressive of grief or sadness is not dialogue which merely recounts or reports the emotion, but rather, dialogue which in some way participates in it. For example, when Miranda sees the tempest-tossed ship sink in the distance, she exclaims “Oh, woe the day!” (I.ii.15). This is an outburst clearly prompted by and participatory in Miranda’s grief, not a lofty, removed speculation about it. Similarly, the dirge that Arviragus and Guiderius perform over the grave of Fidele is

¹All quotations of Shakespeare’s plays are from *The Norton Shakespeare*, 3rd edition.

worthy of consideration as an expression of grief because it is itself a lament—a song designed to satisfy their sorrow.

Having established the scope of affective response that this project will consider, as well as the synonymous language with which it will refer to affective response, let us turn our attention to the plays themselves and the reason for their inclusion in this project. The three plays that I will examine through this lens of emotive expression are *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, and *Cymbeline*. Each was composed in the last four or five years of Shakespeare's career as a playwright and is therefore considered a "late play" or a "last play."

Robert Henke's article "'Gentleman-like Tears': Affective Response in Italian Tragicomedy and Shakespeare's Late Plays," is the most significant critical exploration of these plays and their treatment of emotional expression. Henke, too, is interested in sorrow and weeping, and his article serves as a compelling precedent for considering these three late plays in conjunction with one another. His reasons for selecting *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, and *Cymbeline* include the fact that their use of the tragicomic mode allows for a more nuanced consideration of emotional expression than do the purer comedic and tragic registers of some of Shakespeare's earlier works. Of the complexity afforded by the late plays, Henke writes, "Tragicomedy replaces the imitation of a confirmed tragic action with an exploration of cognitive, aesthetic, and emotional responses to supposed tragic events" (340). He further identifies a "consistent register of sentiment" that warrants exploration in these three plays. Indeed, the often-unsatisfying, incomplete, or unconvincing resolutions of *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, and *Cymbeline* make for a complex emotional territory. Henke's primary

concerns in his article are the influences from and similarities with Italian drama, and while this project does not take up questions of Shakespeare's intellectual inheritance from the Italians, it certainly owes a debt to Henke's work.

Although the chronological order of the three plays' publication is *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, this project will consider *The Winter's Tale* first, as it most clearly establishes a rule that the other two plays modify. Then, I will move on to a consideration of *The Tempest*, which adheres most neatly to the pattern established in *The Winter's Tale*, and I will conclude with *Cymbeline* which, while compatible with the pattern demonstrated by the other two, functions as a sort of check or counterbalance to their argument. It is only because the conversation between the plays is most logical when arranged in this way that I take license with their order.

In the chapter "Tears and Tragicomedy in *The Winter's Tale*," I consider Hermione's role of moral authority within the play, and demonstrate that she expresses morally-binding preferences and prescriptions for weeping in some situations as opposed to others. In fact, a consistent pattern emerges throughout the play, wherein Hermione condones and rewards weeping that is motivated by penitence, responds neutrally to lamentation motivated by pity for others, and condemns sorrow motivated by self-pity. I will primarily consider Hermione's interactions with her jealous, irrational husband, Leontes, as well as her appearance to Antigonus on the eve of his desertion of the princess, Perdita.

In addition to considering how Hermione responds in various cases of adherence or nonadherence to her hierarchy of moral weeping, I also argue that the play's genre is sensitive to its characters' alignment with Hermione's ideal of affective response. When

characters commit the most egregious violations of her hierarchy, the play as a whole veers towards tragedy. Conversely, when characters adhere to Hermione's prescriptions for moral weeping, or, at the very least, orient themselves trajectoryally to adherence, they usher in the play's traditionally comedic elements. I argue that because the first half of the play sees obstinacy and pity that stops short of penitence, and the latter half sees genuinely repentant tears, *The Winter's Tale* operates in a decidedly tragicomic register.

Hermione's hierarchy—that is, one that privileges penitence, allows pity of others, and forbids pity of self—informs the presentation of weeping in *The Tempest* as well. In the chapter “The Effectiveness of Affective Response in *The Tempest*,” I argue that whereas *The Winter's Tale* demonstrates the *morality* of weeping according to Hermione's hierarchy, *The Tempest* demonstrates the relative *effectiveness* of weeping according to the same schema. In other words, those instances of weeping which are most aligned with Hermione's moral judgments are also most likely to induce Prospero to act. In the same way that Hermione serves as the moral center of her play, Prospero serves as the center of his, in terms of his power, quasi-omniscience, and ability to effect change.

Specifically, I will consider Prospero's denial of Miranda's pleas, which are motivated by a sincere pity of others and accompanied by weeping. The chapter also considers Prospero's (mis)apprehension of the complaints of Ariel and Caliban, and argues that it is Prospero's interpretation of their appeals, not the servants' intentions, that determine their effectiveness. This distinction becomes crucial when we consider Prospero's interaction with his band of enemies. It is precisely because he reads repentance into their conduct, and attributes Gonzalo's sorrow to the group as a whole that the play ends in forgiveness (however unsatisfying) instead of massacre. Thus, I hold

that *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* forward the same hierarchy of appropriate lamentation, and emphasize its morality and effectiveness respectively.

Lastly, in the chapter “‘All is Outward Sorrow’: Grief, Sensation, and Song in *Cymbeline*,” I demonstrate that *Cymbeline*, while still compatible with the hierarchy espoused by Hermione and enforced by Prospero, argues for a view of the limitations of weeping, the restraints that emotive response places on the faculties of vision and song, and the insufficiency of tears alone to express human grief. The preoccupation of *Cymbeline* with lamentation is neither with its morality nor its rhetorical might, but rather, with the implications of its bodily locus. In fact, the only instance in *Cymbeline* in which tears participate in and do not detract from the faculties that a character wishes to express is in the expression of joy.

This chapter will primarily consider Imogen’s juxtaposition of vision and weeping as the dual and mutually exclusive functions of the eye, as well as Arviragus’ and Guiderius’ inability to sing their dirge for Fidele because of their tearfulness. It will also argue that sorrow has such a prohibitive effect on the full exercise of one’s humanity that it even interferes with the natural aversion to death and the dead. Lastly, this chapter considers the final scene of recognition and reconciliation, in which the king declares to his daughter, “My tears that fall prove holy water on thee!” (V.iv.268-269).

This, then, is the argument of this project as a whole: that the late plays of Shakespeare establish and enshrine a hierarchy of affective response which privileges repentance, allows pity of others, and discourages pity of self; that the plays argue for both the morality and the effectiveness of adherence to this hierarchy; that in light of this hierarchy, the plays acknowledge the embodiment and therefore insufficiency of weeping

to express human grief; and that the plays recognize and celebrate the role of tears in expressing human joy.

CHAPTER TWO

Tears and Tragicomedy in *The Winter's Tale*

Hermione's perspective on the propriety of tears in different situations, as well as the extent to which she actually adheres to this perspective, suggests that in the moral universe of *The Winter's Tale*, corruption constitutes a greater loss than tragic circumstance, and virtue a greater good than favorable circumstance. Hermione's perspectives and practices regarding weeping establish a sort of moral hierarchy of lamentation, espoused by the play as a whole, in which it is best to weep over evil, good to weep for the circumstances of others, and inappropriate to cry for one's own circumstances. The tragicomedy of *The Winter's Tale* hinges on the transition toward a rightly-ordered lamentation, in which first the object of weeping shifts from one's circumstances to one's sin, and finally, the weeping subject shifts from the characters to a personified sorrow.

In order to demonstrate that this shift is both endorsed by the play and essential to its tragicomedy, this chapter will first consider Hermione's principles regarding weeping, as expressed upon her arrest, and the degree of her adherence to them, complicated by Antigonus' vision of her. Furthermore, Hermione's moral centrality to and authority within the play must be established, in order to demonstrate that her parameters for weeping constitute an actual moral standard and not merely the whim of a single character. Next, this chapter will consider the moments in which we see a shift toward or away from a rightly-ordered lamentation. Specifically, it will look at Antigonus' abandonment of the baby Perdita, in which Antigonus expresses pity without penitence

immediately preceding his own tragic death. Next, it will consider the completion of Leontes' shift from pity to penitence for the fate of his wife, which I contend makes possible Hermione's restoration and the play's comedic conclusion.

Existing treatments of *The Winter's Tale* have tended either to neglect the connection between affective expression and the tragicomedy genre, or view emotional extremes as merely responsive to the genre's circumstantial lows and highs. Arguments that attempt to construct an anatomy of tragicomedy without reference to lamentation have most commonly identified the importance of elements such as the pastoral scene. Robert Henke, for example, writes that "Shakespeare unhitches pastoral from generic constraints in his late plays and uses it as a kind of hinge between tragedy and comedy, one that strikes a middle register between tragic and comedic affective registers" (331). Henke rightly notices the presence and the importance of the pastoral in three of Shakespeare's last plays—namely, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest*. This is echoed by Robert Uphaus, who writes that in the pastoral Act IV of *The Winter's Tale*, "Shakespeare sets up replacements for the preceding acts within the new context of pastoral comedy," thus ushering in the romance of the play's latter half (84). For William Babula, the genre of romance itself is inherently tragicomic. He understands tragicomedy to involve a great deal of chance, often resulting in ill fortune, on which "providential justice operate[s] to right the situation either in time or eternity" (Babula 47).

Janet Spencer, on the other hand, identifies royal pardons as a common element of tragicomedy. She writes that "when publicly staged by the state, pardon scenes were dignified, solemn affairs which ended in a celebration of royal clemency," thus mingling a grave mood with a cheerful circumstance (56). I would add that, in the same way that

tragicomedy can hinge on these elements in Shakespeare's late plays generally, it can hinge primarily on the extent to which grief is rightly felt and expressed in *The Winter's Tale* specifically.

Cyrus Hoy, in a more general consideration of the elements of comedy, tragedy, and that nebulous middle ground, tragicomedy, envisions a slightly different set of parameters for each genre. He writes, in an article which includes but is not limited to Shakespearian tragicomedy, that in order to live up to an unattainable vision of what man ought to be,

Man persists in despite of all the odds, and in his persistence he may appear as nobly enduring, stubbornly unyielding, foolishly blind, or a combination of all three. The more forcibly and apparently these diverse qualities are linked in combination, the more surely sounds the note of tragicomedy (Hoy 110).

While this definition serves as a helpful rubric for *identifying* tragicomedy, it will be the business of this chapter to determine what ushers in the tragic and comedic elements respectively. In other words, what emotional preoccupations lead people to misjudge their situations? What leads a character ultimately to realize (or fail to realize) his or her culpability, and how does he or she emotionally respond to such a realization?

Those arguments which do connect the genre of tragicomedy with emotional expression tend to take the genre for granted and consider emotional response as *merely* response—that is, as reactive to and not formative of the play's drama. Henke, for instance, moves from a consideration of the hallmarks of tragicomedy generally, which does not necessarily include what he calls "affective response," to a consideration of the expression of strong emotion in *The Winter's Tale*. For Henke, tears function in this play as indicative of a shift in social status, not as catalytic of a shift in genre. He writes, "As

the shepherds of *The Winter's Tale* are raised to gentlemanly status and translated to a courtly venue in the last act of the play, they also seem elevated to new emotional registers" (Henke 336). While I agree with Henke's analysis here, I hope to expand upon his consideration of the function of tears, and put emotional expression in conversation with the genre itself. Whereas he views tears primarily as "affective response," I will consider the extent to which they function as a sort of "affective cause" in the play.

Upon her arrest in Act II scene i for Leontes' baseless suspicion of her unfaithfulness, Hermione expresses her position on the propriety of tears for each of the parties present. She begins by considering her own plight, which is marked by both innocence and ill fortune. To Leontes' accusation of adultery, she responds, "You, my lord, do but mistake," unwaveringly affirming her own blamelessness (II.i.81-82). As regards her circumstance, she comments, "There's some ill planet reigns. I must be patient till the heavens look with an aspect more favorable" (II.i.106-108). Her assessment of her situation, then, rightly holds that her circumstance is not warranted by her behavior.

However, despite the injustice that has been done to her, Hermione does not cry in this scene. In an address to the lords present at her arrest, she explains, "I am not prone to weeping as our sex commonly are" (II.i.109-110). Lest the reader believe that Hermione is merely expressing an amoral difference in constitution or personality from most women, she goes on to call womanly tears over one's own circumstances "vain dew" (II.i.110). While it may be tempting to read the word "vain" as "ineffective" here, which would again be a nonmoral pronouncement about the tendency to cry over one's own circumstances, the context of the expression suggests otherwise. After stating that she is

not given to weeping, Hermione says, “the want of which vain dew perchance shall dry your pities” (II.i.110-111). In other words, she believes that her *lack* of tears may render her case unconvincing or unsympathetic, and that if she were to cry, her argument for her innocence would actually be more effective. “Vain,” then, cannot be meant in the sense of rhetorical impotence, but rather, in the sense of self-flattery. Hermione is issuing a moral judgment here: to cry for one’s own fate, no matter how undeserved, is inappropriate.

That is not to say that Hermione is not grieved by her circumstance. She goes on to say, “I have that honorable grief lodged here which burns worse than tears drown” (II.i.111-113). She deeply feels the affront to her reputation and does not hesitate to defend her honor. But weeping, as an emotive and performative act, has no place in her attempt to vindicate herself. Hermione neither sanctions nor performs weeping motivated by self-pity.

More complex, perhaps, than Hermione’s stance on weeping for self-pity, which she practices as faithfully as she preaches, is her stance on weeping out of pity for others’ circumstances. In the same scene as she denounces crying for one’s own fortunes, Hermione asserts that one ought not to cry for the foul fortunes of others. Specifically, she tells the lords, who are presumably lamenting her arrest, “Do not weep, good fools; there is no cause” (II.i.119-120). This makes it seem as though Hermione does not consider the unjust suffering of others a good enough reason to weep.

However, in Act III scene iii, Antigonus has a vision in which Hermione weeps for the fate of her infant daughter Perdita, whom Antigonus has been instructed to abandon. My reading of this chapter does depend on the belief that the spirit of

Hermione, who has died in the previous scene, really does appear to Antigonus, and that his vision is not merely a dream conjured by his own imagination.

This is a controversial position. The status of Antigonus' vision has been hotly contested among scholars, who have tended to categorize it as either an ordinary dream in which memories are compiled into the semblance of reality, or a dream that is predictive of the future. Jennifer Lewin, for example, takes for granted that Antigonus' vision of Hermione is a figment of his dreaming mind. Lauren Robertson offers a more robust treatment of the interpretive possibilities. She acknowledges that, at first glance, Antigonus' vision seems to be either a compilation of waking memories or predictive of future events, but some of the details of his recollection render "what initially appears to be either a prognosticatory dream vision or the mere repetition of past events something else entirely unclear" (299). It is that "something else" for which I argue here—that Antigonus' experience of the dreamlike Hermione is a vision of his waking life.

While Robertson could have more strongly affirmed the likelihood of this possibility, her assessment of Antigonus' credulity about his vision is more plausible than Lewin's. Robinson recognizes that Antigonus comes "to the reluctant conclusion that Hermione's appearance was a true experience to be obeyed" (300). Lewin, on the other hand, only cedes that Antigonus "admits to having imaginative faith in the sensual reality of his own mind and acting on the impulses it urges him to accept as truth" (198). In other words, Lewin believes that Antigonus acts on his fictive dream in full knowledge of its fictiveness, out of a trust that his subjective experience will faithfully instruct him to engage with an objective world. But Antigonus makes clear his belief in the dream's reality, stating "I do believe" in the truth of the events prerequisite to the vision's reality

(most notably, the queen's death) and he says "I will be squared by this" (III.iii.40).

Antigonus believes that the figure of his vision was, in fact, Hermione.

Antigonus says of the Hermione in his vision, "I never saw a vessel of like sorrow so filled and so becoming" (III.iii.20-21). Indeed, he goes on to attest that "her eyes became two spouts" (III.iii.24-25). But by what is this sorrow motivated? Certainly not her own death. After all, she has already professed and demonstrated that she is not prone to crying for her own misfortunes. Instead, Hermione's speech to Antigonus makes it clear that she is weeping for the misfortune of her innocent daughter. She proceeds to plead for Perdita's life, entreating,

Good Antigonus,
Since fate, against thy better disposition,
Hath made thy person for the thrower-out
Of my poor babe, according to thine oath,
Places remote enough are in Bohemia (III.iii.26-30).

Not only does Hermione cry out of pity for her daughter's circumstances, but she also instructs Antigonus to cry as well. After directing him to leave the baby in Bohemia, she tells him, "There weep, and leave it crying" (III.iii.31). This seems to contradict her directive in Act II Scene i that the lords not cry over the circumstances of another. So stark is the contrast in her reasoning that some may use it as evidence that the Hermione of Antigonus' vision is not the Hermione of reality.

My response to such a reading is twofold. First, it is not entirely clear, though at first glance it seems very likely, that Hermione is instructing Antigonus to weep out of *pity*. She only tells him "There weep," not "There weep for the child's suffering." The other possibility—that she wants him to weep penitently rather than pityingly—will be explored in greater depth shortly.

Second, if we assume that Hermione is, in fact, instructing Antigonus to weep for pity, her position here can still be reconciled with her position in the scene of her arrest, in that the “other” being pitied in Act III Scene iii is truly another—that is, a character that is other than both the addressee and herself. By contrast, in Act II scene i, when she is instructing the lords not to weep out of pity for another, that “other” is herself. We may read her instruction to the lords in Act II Scene I, then, as an extension of Hermione’s feeling that she herself ought not to be pitied, and not as a blanket moral pronouncement against weeping for the suffering of others.

The final category of lamentation, which receives Hermione’s unqualified blessing, is weeping over evil, both in oneself and in others. Following her explanation that the lords ought not to weep for her circumstances, she says, “When you shall know your mistress deserved prison, then abound in tears as I come out” (II.i.120-122). In other words, the lords would be more justified in their crying for Hermione if in fact she were guilty of the adultery of which she was accused.

While she unequivocally supports weeping for the moral corruption of another, she even more fervently supports penitent weeping for one’s own moral failures. When Leontes levels his groundless accusations against Hermione, she answers, “How will this grieve you when you shall come to clearer knowledge, that you thus have published me” (II.i.97-99). She anticipates that, when the truth of her innocence is known, Leontes will respond with grief over his irrational, unjust treatment of his wife.

Not only does Hermione hold that penitent grief is the natural result of such evil conduct, but also that there is actually something fitting or morally appropriate about it. After she consents to her arrest, Hermione says, “I never wished to see you sorry; now I

trust I shall” (II.i.124-125). The syntax of the sentence leaves some room for interpretation as to which verb the “shall” is in reference to. That is, does Hermione trust that she shall see him sorry, or does she trust that she shall *wish* to see him sorry? The latter reading is plausible, since the material following the semicolon is clearly meant to oppose what precedes it, and since the primary concern of the sentence’s beginning is Hermione’s desire for his sorrow, and not her estimation of its likelihood.

But even if the former reading is taken as true—that is, that Hermione trusts that she shall in fact see him sorry—there is some degree of hope in her use of the word “trust.” If indeed she never wished to see him sorry, and if she persisted in that position in the present scene, then certainly she would have said, “Now I fear I shall” or “Now I regret I shall.” Thus, whether Hermione means to express her confidence that she will *wish* Leontes’ sorrow or that she will *witness* it, she clearly means to present his future penitence as a good thing.

We may now return to the ambiguous instruction that Hermione gives Antigonus through his dream: “There weep, and leave it crying” (III.iii.31). Does she want him to weep because of the abandonment the child must suffer, or because Antigonus must be the instrument of the abandonment? It seems almost too fine a distinction to make. In all likelihood, Hermione has both motivations in mind here—pity for the child’s suffering, and penitence for Antigonus’ role in bringing that suffering about.

On the one hand, Hermione seems strangely dismissive of Antigonus’ culpability in his horrific task. She addresses him as “Good Antigonus” and says that “fate, against thy better disposition” has made him the disposer of Perdita “according to thine oath”

(III.iii.26-28). She exhibits an unsettling resignation to the child's abandonment and makes no attempt to persuade Antigonus against it.

On the other hand, Hermione does not entirely deny Antigonus' agency in carrying out this heinous deed. She acknowledges that, although he is bound to it by oath, he must suffer the consequences of the evil deed he performs. Specifically, she says, "For this ungentle business put on thee by my lord, thou ne'er shalt see thy wife Paulina more" (III.iii.33-35). It seems then, that in instructing him to weep, Hermione is calling for both pity and penitence, and the reason that penitence is not more heavily emphasized is that Hermione understands Antigonus to be acting with a compromised agency.

Based on the principles Hermione articulates regarding the propriety of weeping in various situations, as well as the extent to which she adheres to these principles herself, the reader gets a clear sense of Hermione's moral hierarchy of lamentation. This hierarchy privileges weeping for one's own evil and the evil of others as morally best. Next, it considers weeping for the circumstances of others as morally good, and lastly, it holds weeping for one's own circumstances to be vain, womanly, and immoral.

This is not merely the preference of an ordinary character, but that of a character so imbued with virtue as to hold a position of moral centrality and authority within the play. The queen's virtue is agreed upon unanimously, with the exception of her suspicious husband. Camillo, for instance, is so convinced of Hermione's goodness that he dares to tell Leontes that he does not believe his accusation of adultery. He says, "I cannot believe this crack to be in my dread mistress, so sovereignly being honorable" (I.ii.321-323). Camillo is so convinced of Hermione's goodness that he calls Leontes'

accusation a “sin as deep as that” which Leontes believes Hermione to have committed (I.ii.283-284).

In fact, all of the lords present at Hermione’s arrest risk incurring the king’s anger in order to defend the queen’s honor. Antigonus, for example, is extremely vocal about his belief in Hermione’s goodness. He struggles to do justice to his admiration for the queen’s virtue, offering the bizarre promise that if Hermione has been unfaithful, he will sterilize his young daughters (II.i.144-147). After all, if the virtuous Hermione has not been true to her husband, Antigonus figures, no woman on earth will be. Another lord actually stakes his life on Hermione’s married chastity, pledging, “For her, my lord, I dare my life lay down, and will do’t, sir. Please you t’accept it that the Queen is spotless” (II.i.130-132).

But perhaps the strongest advocate for Hermione’s honor is found in Paulina, who dares to confront Leontes about the baby Perdita’s physical resemblance to him. When Leontes challenges Paulina’s assertion that Hermione is virtuous, Paulina insists that she is a, “Good queen, my lord, good queen. I say good queen, and would by combat make her good” (II.iii.59-60). Paulina’s conviction that the queen is a paragon of virtue persists during the sixteen years between Hermione’s death and her restoration. In Act V Scene i, she even goes so far as to assert that if Leontes combined the best characteristics of all the women in the world, Hermione “would be unparalleled” among them (V.i.16).

Hermione’s perspective on the right ordering of lamentation, then, should not be read as a subjective preference, but as an authoritative moral pronouncement by the play’s most virtuous character. That she is recognized as such by every other character—

including Leontes, when he comes to his senses—suggests that her moral judgments carry real weight and are endorsed by the play as a whole.

Let us make a transition, now, from this somewhat conceptual consideration of the moral categories and constraints governing weeping in this play, to a more practical consideration of their application: specifically, where the trajectory of a character's lament moves against the moral grain outlined above, tragedy ensues, as is the case with Antigonus. On the other hand, Leontes' trajectory from a place of wrongly-ordered, pity-driven lamentation toward a rightly-ordered, penitent lamentation, makes possible the play's comedic conclusion.

Antigonus' sorrow fails to move from pity to penitence, and instead, ossifies in a place of halfhearted pity and self-justification. When Antigonus is first tasked with abandoning the newborn princess, he expresses pity for the child's fate. He says, "I swear to do this, though a present death had been more merciful" (II.iii.183-184). He includes several expressions of sorrow for Perdita's fate in his speech to Leontes, calling her "poor babe" and "poor thing, condemned to loss" (II.iii.184, 191). Recall that pity for another is not an inherently bad thing in the moral universe of the play—in fact, it is a good thing. However, *mere* pity where there is some degree of personal responsibility for the other person's suffering is not condoned.

Antigonus does not allow his pity to dissuade him from abandoning Perdita, nor does he experience an appropriate level of penitence for the act. He is clearly troubled by the task he has been set, lamenting as he lays the child down, "The storm begins, poor wretch" (III.iii.48). However, his sorrow for the wretchedness of her state does not move him to amend his course or to accept an appropriate amount of responsibility. Instead, he

attempts to console himself on the grounds that Perdita is, as he claims to believe, an illegitimate child. He says, in a monologue to Perdita, “For thy mother’s fault [thou] art thus exposed to loss and what may follow” (III.iii.49-50).

It is curious how quickly Antigonus has changed his mind about the likelihood of Hermione’s unfaithfulness. A few scenes earlier, he was prepared to swear on the bodily integrity and fertility of his daughters that Hermione had been faithful to Leontes. The only new information that Antigonus has since been privy to is the physical appearance of Perdita, which by all accounts confirms Leontes’ paternity, and his dream of Hermione. But the Hermione of his vision never confesses to adultery. Antigonus justifies his belief in Perdita’s illegitimacy by citing Hermione’s request that she be left in Bohemia, the home of Leontes’ friend Polixenes (III.iii.30). This is suspect, too; Antigonus reports this dream when his ship “hath touched upon the deserts of Bohemia” and he says that he had the dream “last night” (III.iii.1-2, 17). In other words, he could not have gone to Bohemia *because* of Hermione’s request in his vision. Instead, Antigonus interprets Hermione’s request as evidence of her unfaithfulness because he is desperate to appease his own conscience.

The question of whether Antigonus’ pity will stay his hand, progress to penitence, or regress to self-pity comes to a head at the moment of Perdita’s abandonment. Having been instructed by Hermione to weep, as discussed previously, for both pity *and* penitence, Antigonus finds that he is unable to. “Weep I cannot,” he says, “But my heart bleeds” (III.iii.50-51). That is, while he deeply and sincerely pities the child’s suffering, he cannot bring himself to weep for his role in bringing her suffering about. This is confirmed in the following line, when he laments, “Most accursed am I to be by oath

enjoined to this” (III.iii.51-52). This may be the most rhetorically brilliant line in the play—it has the savor of penitence, but its substance is self-pity. He acknowledges that he is “accursed” for what he is about to do, but in seeming to lament this accursedness, he is careful to absolve himself of any real moral responsibility, mentioning again the oath under which he is acting. Antigonus very subtly attempts to share in Perdita’s victimhood, and as such, fails to move from pity to penitence. Instead, through all his rhetorical maneuvering, Antigonus actually regresses from pity of another to pity of self.

The tragic retribution for this moral regression is swift. Antigonus’ self-recusing monologue has hardly left his lips when the executor of his doom draws near. “This is the chase,” he says, as a bear approaches, “I am gone forever” (III.iii.56-57). His death is as gruesome as it is bizarre. The clown who witnesses it reports “how the bear tore out his shoulder bone, how he cried...for help” (89-90). So tragic is this death, R. A. Foakes points out, that it functions as “a climax to the sequence of disasters in the first part of the play” (129). In the case of Antigonus, it is evident that a lamentation which moves from the pity of others to the pity of self invites tragic consequences.

Leontes, on the other hand, does move from a wrongly-ordered lamentation to a rightly-ordered one. Specifically, his anger with Hermione at the beginning of the play is accompanied by pity for himself, and sorrow for the damage his reputation must suffer as a result of his wife’s alleged unfaithfulness. So much of the injury he perceives himself to suffer is not merely the betrayal of an unfaithful wife, but the public’s resultant opinion that he is a cuckold.

Leontes confronts Camillo about this suspicion. He demands, “Didst note it?” and “Didst perceive it?” (I.ii.212, 214). While it may seem that Leontes’ interrogation of

Camillo is aimed at discovering the truth about his wife's conduct, it soon becomes apparent that Leontes' mind is made up and cannot be changed by even the most trustworthy of counsellors. Instead, his interrogation of Camillo is intended to gauge the extent to which gossip of the queen's unfaithfulness has infected the court. He says as an aside, "They're here with me already, whisp'ring, rounding, 'Sicilia is a so-forth.'" (I.ii.215-216). As Maydee Lande points out, doubts about Leontes' sovereignty in his marriage figure as "an all-inclusive attack upon his power to rule, to order experience, to control, to demand submission" (59). As a result, his preoccupation with such whispers borders on paranoia here, and it becomes clear that Leontes is far more concerned with the integrity of his reputation than the integrity of his marriage.

Leontes' initial repentance of his unfounded suspicion comes so abruptly that one may be tempted to call it cheap, if not insincere. During the trial of Hermione, Leontes persists in his belief that she is guilty, even in the face of the most compelling evidence for her innocence. Even the oracle of Apollo, which Leontes himself requested, and whose counsel he swore to accept, does not convince Leontes of his wife's innocence. The oracle declares, "Hermione is chaste," and Leontes responds, "There is no truth at all i'th' oracle...This is mere falsehood" (III.ii.130, 137-138). There are two ways to read Leontes' rejection of the oracle. First, it is possible that he is truly so convinced of his wife's guilt that he refuses to listen to sense. Second, since in addition to confirming Hermione's chastity, the oracle confirms Leontes' tyranny, he is convinced of his wife's innocence but must deny the oracle outright in order to save face. Either way, he is clearly still inordinately concerned with maintaining his own reputation.

However, a mere ten lines later, Leontes completely changes his tune. What inspires the change is not the introduction of new evidence for his wife's innocence—Leontes has already had plenty of that, and to no avail. Instead, his repentance is initiated by a change in circumstance. A servant rushes in to inform the king that the prince, Mamillius, has died, and in response to the terrible news, Hermione faints. Only then does Leontes confess, “I have too much believed mine own suspicion” (III.ii.148). While this realization is certainly a step in the right direction, its abruptness and the fact that it was brought on by loss render it incomplete. Indeed, the reader gets the impression that Leontes' repentance is initially inspired by grief over his misfortune rather than grief over his own vicious conduct. Judith Wolfe points to the insufficiency of Leontes' abrupt change of heart, arguing that “though he surrenders all accusations against his wife” Leontes quickly constructs a new, reductive narrative about her virtue and his fault (93).

When Leontes learns that the queen has not merely fainted but died, his grief and the expression of his guilt deepens. Paulina, in a fit of righteous anger, declares, “I say she's dead. I'll swear it” (III.ii.200). But her declaration does not stop there. Instead of merely relaying the queen's death, as the servant earlier relayed Mamillius', Paulina actually accuses Leontes for it. She orders, “Do not repent these things, for they are heavier than all thy woes can stir. Therefore betake thee to nothing but despair” (III.ii.205-207). In the same way that the Hermione of *Antigonus*' vision calls him to a rightly-ordered despair, Paulina invites Leontes to understand the scope of his wrongdoing, and to grieve rightly for the queen that he has killed.¹

¹ Paulina's instruction that Leontes should succumb to despair ought to be read as a hyperbolic expression of the severity of Leontes' crime, not as a sincere expression of her belief that Leontes is beyond redemption. Paulina's conduct later in the play makes it clear that she thinks Leontes' penance is an appropriate response.

Unlike Antigonus, who is unable to weep as Hermione instructs him, Leontes heeds Paulina's words and expresses his grief in emphatic, self-loathing terms. He says, "Thou canst not speak too much. I have deserved all tongues to talk their bitt' rest" (III.ii.212-213). While his repentance may initially smack of sorrow for his own circumstance, at Paulina's prompting, Leontes gradually comes to a fuller realization of his responsibility for his wife's demise.

It will take Leontes the full span of sixteen years to come into a complete knowledge of and sorrow for his guilt. While he certainly initiates his penitent trajectory during the trial scene, his penitence is still imperfect at the end of it. He says of his wife's and son's grave, "Upon them shall the causes of their death appear, unto our shame perpetual" (III.ii.233-235). The declaration is certainly motivated by a penitent impulse, but the use of the word "our" seems a strange choice for someone who has singlehandedly caused the death of his wife and son. In the midst of his movement toward penitent grief, some instinct for deflection, for self-defense, for the protection of his own reputation lingers yet.

This impulse must be snuffed out, not by any quick, manufactured feeling of selflessness, but by Leontes' longsuffering practice of penance. He promises,

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 (235-239).

By all indications, Leontes makes good on his promise to perform this duty for sixteen years, because Cleomenes tells him in Act V Scene i, "Sir, you have done enough and have performed a saint-like sorrow" (V.i.1-2). Leontes' penitence is not a feeling

mustered up in a moment of loss. As J. H. P. Spafford points out, the chaos of the play “is resolved only by deep and prolonged effort” (lv). Leontes’ penitence both inspires and is inspired by a daily practice; it bears and is born of discipline, not of the maudlin tears of the trial scene.

The play’s comedic ending is ushered in when Leontes’ sorrow is not merely rightly-oriented but fully realized. Paulina tells Leontes that if he were to consider all the women in the world, “She you killed would be unparalleled” (V.i.15-16). His response will serve as a kind of litmus test for the progress of his penitence. Whereas in the trial scene Leontes implies some sort of joint shame for the death of the queen, in the final act he accepts full responsibility for it. He responds to Paulina’s accusation, “I think so. Killed? She I killed? I did so” (V.i.16-17).

Leontes admits this not only to Paulina, but also to his recovered daughter and to the spectators of their reunion. An onlooking gentleman reports that when the queen’s death was announced to Perdita, “the manner how she came to’t [was] bravely confessed and lamented by the King” (V.ii.79-80). This is the decisive moment in the right-ordering of the King’s lamentation. Philip Lorenz cites Leontes’ expression of shame in Act V as a “renewal” of Leontes’ shame during the trial, and as an indicator that Leontes “will not free himself from shame” (226). However, the shame of Act V is unlike the shame of Act III, if only because Leontes claims it as entirely his own and not communal. On a more profound level, Leontes’ professed shame in Act V has been tested, proven, and has in some ways grown into maturity.

While the king’s admission of guilt certainly ushers in the play’s comedic finale, it isn’t lightly received. It stirs up a considerable sorrow in Perdita and onlookers. The

gentleman recounts that Perdita progressed “from one sign of dolor to another” and “with an ‘Alas,’ ...[bled] tears” (V.ii.81-82). The pathos of the scene moves the gentleman himself to tears. He admits that the king’s confession of his guilt “angled for mine eyes—caught the water though not the fish” and that “I am sure my heart wept blood” (V.ii.77-78, 82-83). In fact, nobody present is immune to the king’s affective admission of guilt. The gentleman goes on, “Who was most marble there changed color. Some swooned, all sorrowed. If all the world could have seen’t, the woe had been universal” (V.ii.83-85). He presents a scene of communal, purgative grief over the king’s past evil and its consequences. This, then, is the culmination of Leontes’ arc from pity to penitence: he confesses to and suffers over his wrongdoing in a painful, public, costly way.

In the very same scene as Leontes expresses his perfect penitence, he experiences joy over his reunion with his daughter. While the audience does not witness the joyous reunion, another gentleman recounts, “The King’s daughter is found. Such a deal of wonder is broken out within this hour that ballad-makers cannot be able to express it” (V.ii.21-22). The paradoxical coexistence of such joy and sorrow in the same scene, which Robert Henke calls a “deliberate, baroque mixture of emotion” is a hallmark of Shakespeare’s tragicomedy (342).

The comedic mood of the reunion is heightened and brought to completion in Hermione’s restoration. Indeed, as Saenger points out, perhaps one of the purposes in conveying the scene of Leontes’ and Perdita’s reunion through the onlooking gentlemen is to postpone the full comedic effect of the play’s ending until the restoration of Hermione. He writes that if the audience were to have witnessed the first reunion directly,

There would be a series of very serious scenes, whose consistency of tone would leave them vulnerable to

inappropriate laughter. In particular, the very silly marginal gentlemen protect the following scene's believability; because they estrange us from the court, we are more prone to desire a return to the protagonists (116).

Just as Shakespeare withholds from his audience the satisfaction of witnessing the royal family's reunion, Paulina has judiciously kept Hermione's survival a secret until the princess has been found and Leontes' penitent sorrow is complete. She reveals Hermione's statue, and when it begins to move, Paulina gives the entire family her blessing. "Go together, you precious winners all," she tells them, "Your exultation partake to everyone" (V.iii.130-132). Thus, Paulina only orchestrates the play's comedic conclusion upon the right ordering and full expression of Leontes' lamentation.

In fact, so complete is Leontes' transition toward a virtuous lament (and so central is this transition to the play as a whole) that sadness itself is banished, and with it, the play's tragic thread. One of the gentlemen who witnessed the royal family's reunion recounts that he saw, "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" (V.ii.42-44). Not only has the object of weeping shifted, but indeed the weeping subject has shifted from the characters to a personified sorrow. While Saenger denounces the effectiveness of the metaphor, he writes that in this scene "The transition from danger to redemption that typifies tragicomedy is figured as joy wading in the tears of the departing sorrow" (116). So complete is sorrow's departure from the play that when a character weeps after the reunion scene, he weeps for joy.

The redemption of weeping in this play extends beyond the royal plotline to the pastoral. Initially, weeping is portrayed among the pastoral characters as either manipulative or pathetic, and in either case, undignified. The crafty Autolycus, for

example, beckons the men at the sheep-shearing, “Come buy of me, come; come buy, come buy; buy lads, or else your lasses cry” (IV.iv.224-225). Tears in this utterance are reduced to the scare tactic of a greasy salesman. Later in the same scene, when Perdita implores Florizel to leave her behind and resume his royal state, she says, “I’ll queen it no inch farther, but milk my ewes and weep” (IV.iv.440-441). While the audience pities Perdita here, there is also something undeniably pathetic about the image of crying while milking ewes. It lacks the dignity which usually attends Perdita’s character, even before she is restored to her royal status. Thus, weeping among the play’s pastoral characters is initially undignified and unbecoming.

However, after the king fully repents and the royal family is reunited, the weeping of the pastoral cast is redeemed as well. The clown, for instance, fondly reflects on the king’s ennobling and welcoming of him and his father into the royal family. The clown recalls that when they were called brother and father of royalty, “We wept, and there was the first gentleman-like tears that ever we shed” (V.ii.133-134). His father, the shepherd, responds, “We may live, son, to shed many more” (V.ii.135). It is a humorous exchange, to be sure, but also indicative of the redemptive movement of the play regarding weeping. So entirely have tears become an expression of joy that the clown and the shepherd hope that they may shed more tears in the future. Their tears, while certainly still amusing to the audience, have been imbued with a dignity that earlier presentations of pastoral characters’ weeping lacked.

Thus, the tragicomedy of *The Winter’s Tale* hinges on the extent to which lamentation is virtuously felt and rightly expressed. When characters, such as Antigonus, move from a neutral pity of others to an inappropriate pity of self, the play’s tragic

elements ensue. However, when Leontes' initial self-pity transforms into his ultimate repentance, he ushers in the comedic elements of the play's latter half. So central is Leontes to the play that his transition away from prideful sorrow to appropriate contrition effects reunion, restoration, and dignity in the lives of others. His redemptive arc of lamentation deposes the play's tragic beginning, and ushers in its comedic conclusion.

CHAPTER THREE

The Effectiveness of Affective Response in *The Tempest*

In *The Tempest*, we find an unlikely parallel to Hermione's authority within and centrality to *The Winter's Tale*. Prospero, hardly the defamed Hermione's double, nevertheless functions similarly to the beloved queen of Sicilia in his own remote isle. Prospero, like Hermione, has been gravely wronged by those he loved and trusted, and is consequently isolated from the court to which he has a right. The two are also alike in that they become the primary arbiters of forgiveness and punishment in their respective plays, and, even more striking, both temporarily allow a belief in their own death in order to effect a penitent response in the parties that wronged them.

In dealing with his enemies, Prospero adheres to the moral hierarchy espoused by Hermione, as outlined in the previous chapter. Like the virtuous heroine of *The Winter's Tale*, Prospero is not moved to forgiveness by tears of pity, but rather, he withholds mercy until he perceives a penitent emotional display on the part of his enemies. Furthermore, the genre of *The Tempest*—to be explained fully later—is equally responsive to its characters' adherence or nonadherence to this hierarchy. This supports my controlling argument that the late plays of Shakespeare express a clear preference for affective response motivated by penitence rather than pity. However, because Prospero enjoys an authority based on his power rather than his virtue, the central act of forgiveness in *The Tempest* does not primarily emphasize the *moral* value of repentance, but rather, its *effectual* value.

Observing this pattern in *The Tempest* is a worthwhile enterprise because, while it may be argued that we see the “efficacy” or “potency” of repentance to some extent in *The Winter’s Tale*, this claim is weakened by the fact that Hermione has a great deal to gain from her forgiveness of Leontes, and that her character, a generally agreeable one, may be more naturally inclined to forgiveness than the blunt and unapologetic Prospero. As such, this chapter will begin with a consideration of the differences between the authorities of Hermione and Prospero—namely, that his is derived from physical power whereas hers is derived from virtue. Having established that Prospero has the ability to inflict real harm on his enemies, and thus, the ability to issue a meaningful pardon, this chapter will next consider the appeals that attempt to induce him to do so. These include the ineffectual, pitying pleas of his daughter, Miranda, as well as the supposedly self-pitying protests of Ariel and Caliban. Lastly, it will consider the effectual, penitent grief of Gonzalo on behalf of his companions.

The point on which Prospero’s character most diverges from Hermione’s is in the nature of his authority. Whereas Hermione’s is moral, derived from her unparalleled virtue and confirmed by the unanimous admiration of the Sicilian court, Prospero enjoys an authority derived from his “rough magic” (V.i.50). Arthur Kirsch points out that Prospero is “A figure of supernatural as well as patriarchal authority” who possesses “godlike attributes, including a disquieting measure of the kind of irritability and wrath that often characterizes the Lord God” (342). In the play’s first act, we learn that he has the power to command lightning that rivals Jove’s, and “dreadful thunderclaps” to answer it (I.ii.202). Prospero stirs up a powerful tempest which crashes the ship of the men who betrayed and exiled him from Milan. “The fire and cracks of sulfurous roaring” called

down by Prospero upon the unfortunate vessel are reported to “besiege and make [Neptune’s] bold waves tremble” (I.ii.205).

Prospero is empowered to exercise such control over the natural elements through his mastery of the art of magic. While still in Milan, he became “transported and rapt in secret studies,” and he persists in these arts when he and Miranda reach the island (I.ii.76-77). He wears magic robes, carries a staff imbued with magical qualities, and refers often to his book of spells. The power of Prospero, by which he dims “the noontide sun” and summons “mutinous winds” far surpasses that of the cloistered Hermione (V.i.42). Hers is a hidden power, exercised in secret; his, a spectacular one, exercised in as grand a display as the play’s catastrophic namesake.

In addition to the differences in their power’s magnitude, Prospero’s authority differs from Hermione’s with regards to their methods of delegation. Hermione relies on (and for that matter, is entirely at the mercy of) her willing friend Paulina. On the other hand, Prospero relies on the indentured labor of his servant Ariel and of his slave Caliban, the difference in whose stations lies in the relative amity of their relationship to Prospero and the length and terms of their servitude. It is by force that Prospero procures the service of both, and by threats that he maintains it. For instance, Prospero warns Caliban that in consequence of his mumbling, “tonight thou shalt have cramps, side-stitches that shall pin thy breath up” (I.ii.325-326). Even Ariel, with whom Prospero is on friendlier terms, is subject to his master’s rule. In response to Ariel’s complaint, Prospero threatens, “I will rend an oak and peg thee in his knotty entrails till thou hast howled away twelve winters” (I.ii.294-296). They are not bound to him by feelings of loyalty, as Paulina is bound to Hermione, but by fear of punishment.

The final and most significant difference between the authorities of Hermione and Prospero is the manner in which they plan to use their authority to punish their enemies in the event of their unrepentance. If Leontes never fully repented, the extent of Hermione's vengeance would have been her continued absence and her allowance of Leontes' continued, though uncompounded, sorrow. Hermione's would-be vengeance is a passive one.

Prospero, on the other hand, has the capacity to pursue an active, aggressive campaign of vengeance against his enemies if they do not repent of the wrong they have done to him. The play's inciting incident, the dreadful tempest, is not an act of vengeance against them, so much as a pragmatic summoning of his enemies to his island. If such a display of power is only incidental to Prospero's purposes, his calculated revenge would surely be even more destructive.

But, with the power to destroy his enemies comes the power to pardon them from his own wrath. While Hermione's pardon of Leontes is a deeply affecting act of forgiveness, she has spared him sorrow, not death. Prospero, who may easily bring about the deaths of his betrayers, may just as easily offer them life. Thus, whereas Hermione's is an authority of morality, Prospero's is an authority of might, and his interaction with affective response serves primarily as commentary about the potency, and not the morality, of penitence.

Not every emotional display in *The Tempest* is capable of effecting change in the same way that Gonzalo's tears are. Miranda, frequently moved to tears throughout the course of the play, is almost never able to alter her father's course through her emotive behests, because she is consistently motivated by pity for the plight of others. In the

opening lines of Act I Scene ii, Miranda observes the storm-tossed vessel from afar, and attempts to intercede on behalf of the men on board. She begs her father, “If by your art, my dearest father, you have put the wild waters in this roar, allay them” (I.ii.1-2). She goes on to specify by what feeling she has been moved to intercession, claiming, “O, I have suffered with those that I saw suffer!” (I.ii.5-6). It is an expression of deeply-felt sympathy, and a surprising one, given Miranda’s limited human contact.

Nevertheless, her entreaty is sincere, and the rhetoric she employs to plead her case is ingenious. She knows to appeal to Prospero’s great power, saying, “Had I been any god of power, I would have sunk the sea within the earth or ere it should the good ship so have swallowed and the freighting souls within her” (I.ii.10-13). By equating power with the suppression of the storm, not its conjuring, and by implicitly challenging her father’s ability, Miranda hopes to move him to mercy.

Lest the reader believe that Miranda’s request consists of cold, calculated rhetorical appeal, her argument is also a deeply emotional one. Even after Prospero assures her that no one has died, she laments, “O, woe the day!” (I.ii.15). Furthermore, it is clear that Miranda’s plea is accompanied by weeping, because her father instructs her, “Wipe thou thine eyes. Have comfort” (I.ii.25).

Prospero seems to be at least somewhat moved by his daughter’s request. He praises Miranda for her pity of the men, noting that the wreck has “touched the very virtue of compassion in thee” (I.ii.26-27). While that compassion may be sufficient to earn Prospero’s admiration, it is insufficient to persuade him to quell the storm. How are we to account for the dissonance between his professed admiration for his daughter’s

sympathetic plea and his failure to respond accordingly? What renders her affective response so impotent?

One possible explanation is that Miranda is operating from a position of incomplete knowledge about her father's designs for the men's safety. Prospero explains that Miranda should not weep for the men aboard the ship—and that he will continue with the deluge—because in his sovereignty over the elements, he has provided for the men's survival. Prospero explains:

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 saw'st sink (I.ii.28-32).

Notice the switch in the implied tense of his reassurance. Prospero begins by mentioning his provision, which implies a kind of foresight. Before the event, he claims he “safely ordered” that none should be harmed. But then, midsentence, he switches to an account of what actually happened, not merely what he intended to bring about. The past tense “betid”, as well as “heard'st” and “saw'st” indicate that the ship has already sunk. His response to Miranda, then, is not merely that he was careful to arrange for the men's survival, but that the men did, in fact, survive.

This is problematic because, while Miranda may be pleading from an incomplete knowledge, Prospero's knowledge of the tempest's outcome is also incomplete at the time he refuses to heed his daughter's request. He does not know whether the men have actually survived until he interrogates his servant Ariel later in the same scene. He asks, “Hast thou, spirit, performed to point the tempest that I bade thee?” (I.ii.193-194). It seems a silly question for Prospero to pose, having witnessed the tempest himself from

the shore, unless the “point” referred to is not the tempest’s might, but its relative restraint. Ariel boasts of the tumult he stirred up at Prospero’s command, detailing not only the uproar of the elements, but also the uproar of the men. Ariel reports that “Not a soul but felt a fever of the mad and played some tricks of desperation” (I.ii.208-210). Prospero clarifies his meaning, and asks his servant, “But are they, Ariel, safe?” (I.ii.217).

It is only after Ariel assures him, “Not a hair perished”, that Prospero is satisfied and praises his servant, “Ariel, thy charge is exactly performed” (I.ii.217, 237-238). His relief suggests that he was, at best, uncertain and, at worst, doubtful about the survival of the men. The uncertainty revealed in Prospero’s conversation with Ariel indicates that Prospero exaggerated his confidence when reassuring his daughter that none had perished. Thus, the argument that Miranda’s tears are ineffectual because Prospero knows that they are unnecessary is unconvincing.

It could also be suggested that Miranda’s tears are ineffective because the outcome they aim to effect is in conflict with Prospero’s larger end of confronting his old enemies. Prospero is, for much of the play, at an impasse between revenge and forgiveness, and the ineffectiveness of Miranda’s tears is certainly a testament to the strength of his desire for revenge. But upon closer inspection, this reading does not amount to much. What does it mean that an appeal is ineffective because it contradicts the will of the arbiter? It is the function of such an appeal to *change* the will of the arbiter. So, this suggestion amounts to little more than a tautology: “Perhaps Miranda’s appeal is ineffective because it is ineffective.” Or, put otherwise, “Perhaps Miranda’s

tears do not change Prospero's will because they aim to effect an action contrary to his will." It may be true, but it isn't particularly insightful.

The third, and, I think, most likely possibility is that while Prospero may admire Miranda's compassion, pity—even pity augmented by tears—categorically does not carry the persuasive weight needed to convince him to amend his course. In the same way that pity carries relatively little moral weight in Hermione's schema, pity also has relatively little capacity to effect meaningful change in Prospero's.

And, if true, this is unfortunate for Miranda, who expresses pity frequently throughout the course of the play. For instance, when Prospero recounts to her the harrowing tale of his betrayal and exile by his brother, Antonio, Miranda expresses pity for her father's suffering. She laments, "O, my heart bleeds," when she thinks of how painful it must be for Prospero to relay his tragic past to her (I.ii.63). It is worth noting that the language used here ("my heart bleeds") matches the lament of Antigonus for the baby Perdita, word for word. In both cases, the phrase is used to express pity for the suffering of another, but is ultimately of little effect.

Prospero continues with his tale, relaying the involvement of Alonso, the King of Naples, in expelling Prospero and Miranda from Milan. When Prospero recounts how Miranda, a baby at the time, cried, Miranda laments:

Alack, for pity!
I, not remembering how I cried out then,
Will cry it o'er again. It is a hint
That wrings my eyes to't (I.ii.132-135).

The language here indicates that Miranda's weeping is not volitional, but rather, painfully compelled by her very nature. Prospero's story serves as the agent that "wings [her] eyes," and Miranda weeps for suffering that is twelve years past. Not only does she weep,

but she envisions her weeping as a reenactment of her babyish tears. Oddly, this doesn't entirely come across as self-pity. Instead, Miranda's pity reads as pity for the plight of others. She is so far removed by the intervening years and by the insufficient reach of memory from the pain she experienced, that she is effectively rendered another person from the Miranda of twelve years earlier.

But Miranda's renewed weeping for the sufferings of her father and younger self is not intended as an appeal *per se*. Let us turn our attention to Miranda's more direct expressions of sympathy for the purpose of altering Prospero's will, the next of which we encounter when Miranda intercedes on behalf of Ferdinand, the son of the King of Naples. She cites pity by name, and identifies it as both the emotion she personally feels for Ferdinand, and that which she hopes to inspire in her father. Upon learning that Ferdinand believes his father to have died in the tempest, Miranda laments, "Alack, for mercy!" (I.ii.435). She says as an aside, "Pity move my father to be inclined my way!" (I.ii.445-446). When Prospero expresses his intention to enslave the young prince on a feigned suspicion that he means to usurp his authority, Miranda makes an impassioned appeal on Ferdinand's behalf. She cries, "Sir, have pity! I'll be his surety" (I.ii.473-474). While there is no indication in the text that Miranda weeps here, her outburst demonstrates how consistently Miranda is inclined towards pity—and how consistently ineffectual pity is to bring about the desired response in Prospero.

Furthermore, her initial sympathetic appeal for Ferdinand foregrounds a later emotive display on his behalf in which Miranda does weep. When Prospero sets the young man to work hauling logs, Ferdinand reflects on the labor he has been set. He says of Miranda, "My sweet mistress weeps when she sees me work, and says, such baseness

had never like executor” (III.i.11-13). So intense is the pity Miranda feels for her beloved that she actually attributes an imagined penitence to the inanimate object whose burden he bears. In a pun about the sap emitted from the log, Miranda anticipates, “When this burns, ‘twill weep for having wearied you” (III.i.18-19).

As during the storm, Miranda’s sympathetic affective response is sufficient to evoke the delight of the island’s patriarch, but not to amend his course. When he witnesses the great affection and pity that his daughter expresses for Ferdinand, and the couple’s subsequent engagement, Prospero exclaims, “Fair encounter of two most rare affections! Heavens rain grace on that which breeds between ‘em!” (III.i.74-76). Again, his appreciation for his daughter’s sympathetic nature is excited, but the action for which the weeping serves as a tacit argument—namely, the granting of Ferdinand’s freedom—is not performed. Instead, Prospero insists that Ferdinand perform hard labor, so that he may appreciate Miranda more for having “earned” her.

This chapter, I realize, has referred to affective response in unusually rhetorical terms. In the previous paragraph, I refer to weeping as an “argument,” and have elsewhere called such emotive display an “appeal.” But is it possible for sincere affective response to have an agenda? Can weeping serve a hidden end, or is emotional expression necessarily an end unto itself?

Part of the strangeness of this language stems from the largely disinterested nature of weeping in *The Winter’s Tale*. There would be no sense in saying that Antigonus’ heart bleeds for Perdita in an attempt to win Hermione’s approval; Hermione is physically absent at the time of the baby’s abandonment, and can exercise no agency in favor of or against Antigonus’ interests. In the same way, it would be silly to argue that

Leontes eventually weeps penitently in order to procure his wife's forgiveness—he believes her to be dead! The characters in *The Winter's Tale* have nothing to gain by weeping, because the arbiter of the morality of lamentation in that play is absent for much of it, and is considered utterly powerless to effect any change that may be suggested by their tears.

This is why the distinction between the two plays and their central characters is so important. Whereas Hermione is absent and largely unable to enact her will, Prospero is powerfully, inescapably present, and empowered to effect change on an alarming scale. While the act of weeping itself can perhaps have no hidden motive, unless the tears are maudlin and contrived, the sympathetic weeping in this play tends to accompany verbal requests for Prospero's action that he actually has the power to enact. It is in that sense that this chapter refers to sympathetic affective response as a "plea" or "appeal."

Miranda is not the only one to make such an appeal to Prospero. Ariel, too, expresses pity in order to elicit a particular action from Prospero, and like Miranda, he is unsuccessful. Significantly, whereas each instance of Miranda's pity is one of pity for another, Ariel pleads his cause in a manner that Prospero interprets as self-pitying. As such, he is met with not only a passive refusal to grant his request, but also Prospero's angry backlash.

On the heels of Prospero's praise of Ariel's performance regarding the tempest, Ariel humbly requests, "Since thou dost give me pains, let me remember thee what thou hast promised, which is not yet perform'd me" (I.ii.242-244). Ariel goes on to specify that what he wants from Prospero is his freedom. His appeal is not overly emotional—Ariel provides a level-headed account of his faithfulness as a servant, saying, "I have done thee

worthy service; told thee no lies, made thee no mistakings” (I.ii.247-248). To the reader, Ariel’s request does not seem particularly unreasonable. Ariel himself addresses the calm and objective manner in which he has performed his duties and presented his requests. Ariel says that he has “served without or grudge or grumblings” (I.ii.249).

There is a disconnect here between Prospero’s and the reader’s encounter of Ariel’s appeal. Whereas Ariel’s appeal strikes the reader as a justified insistence upon the terms of his service, and not a dissatisfied, self-pitying complaint, what matters here is Prospero’s interpretation of the plea, and not the reader’s. No matter how the reader may apprehend Ariel’s appeal, Prospero interprets Ariel’s request as an expression of discontentment, ingratitude, and self-pity. In response to Ariel’s first indication of his desire for liberty, Prospero snaps, “How now? Moody?” (I.ii.244). And, instead of engaging with Ariel’s claims of the faithfulness of his service, Prospero reminds him of the horrid state from which Prospero rescued him. He reminds his servant that when Sycorax had him imprisoned in a cloven pine,

Thy groans
Did make wolves howl and penetrate the breasts
Of ever angry bears: it was a torment
To lay upon the damn'd, which Sycorax
Could not again undo (I.ii.287-291)

The nature of this response gives us further insight into how Prospero interprets Ariel’s request. Because Prospero is quick to remind Ariel of the miserable state from which he was freed, it is reasonable to assume that Prospero interprets Ariel’s request as an expression of self-indulgent dissatisfaction, rather than an insistence upon their agreed-upon terms. In other words, because Prospero responds by comparing Ariel’s present

state to his previous one, it is clear that he interprets Ariel's petition to be a venting of grievances rather than a disinterested call for justice.

In response to this perceived self-pity, Prospero issues Ariel not only a denial of his appeal, but an additional threat. He warns, "If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak and peg thee in his knotty entrails till thou hast howl'd away twelve winters" (I.ii.294-296). It is a harsh threat, and one that he never issued in response to Miranda's pleas on the behalf of others.

An observant reader may object that, while Prospero doesn't grant Miranda's sympathetic requests, he does promise and eventually grant Ariel his freedom. However, it should be noted that this is performed entirely on his own terms, and, significantly, is not impacted by Ariel's initial request for freedom. In fact, Prospero's offer of freedom, "after two days I will discharge thee," comes only after Ariel has expressed penitence for his ingratitude (I.ii.298-299). The dejected Ariel begs, "Pardon, master; I will be correspondent to command and do my spiriting gently" (I.ii.296-298). Only then, after Ariel has repented of asking for his freedom in the first place, is it offered. So it is not self-pity at all, but penitence, which hastens the timeline of his liberation.

Whereas the nature of Ariel's request may be a matter of interpretation, there is little doubt that Caliban's interactions with Prospero are informed by self-pity. His complaints are transparent and rightly understood by his master. Caliban gripes,

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' the island (I.ii.341-344)

Caliban is abundantly clear about his dissatisfaction with Prospero's rule of the island.

Although the question of whether or not that dissatisfaction is justified has been taken up

by many scholars, it is not our present concern. Caliban compounds his self-indulgent protest, saying, “You taught me language; and my profit on't is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you for learning me your language!” (I.ii.362-364). Whether or not Caliban has a valid argument about Prospero’s intrusion and unwelcome imposition of language and literacy on his wretched subject is of little import in determining his master’s response. Prospero responds to Caliban’s gripe with a furious,

If thou neglect'st or dost unwillingly
What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps,
Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar
That beasts shall tremble at thy din (I.ii.367-370).

The ferocity with which Prospero responds to Caliban’s complaints demonstrates that, in the hierarchy by which Prospero operates, there is little distinction between a justified expression of self-pity and an unjustified expression of self-pity. They are both, to him, equally detestable, and equally ineffective.

The threat Prospero issues Caliban is reminiscent of the one issued to Ariel, but there’s an argument to be made that Prospero deals much more generously with his servant spirit than with his slave. For one, Prospero follows his threat to Ariel with an offer to shorten his term of service, whereas no such offer is ever extended to Caliban. It is important to note that Prospero’s loathing and mistreatment of Caliban is motivated by the slave’s attempted rape of Miranda. Not surprisingly, then, Prospero also relates to Ariel in more endearing terms after his supposedly self-pitying breach than he relates to Caliban. For instance, Prospero later says, upon witnessing the love between Ferdinand and Miranda, “Delicate Ariel, I’ll set you free for this” (I.ii.440-441). Caliban is (understandably) never addressed in such terms of endearment.

While it is true that Prospero understands both Ariel and Caliban to vent grievances based on self-pity, it would be a mistake to assume that he deals gently with Ariel because of any recognition of his own misapprehension of Ariel's motives. Instead, he deals mercifully with Ariel because Ariel, unlike Caliban, repents for his ingratitude and resubmits himself to Prospero's authority. It is Ariel's repentance, and not any qualitative difference in the complaints of Ariel and Caliban that accounts for the difference in their treatment.

Thus, Prospero's dealing with pity of self and pity of others is in keeping with the hierarchy established in the previous chapter: he is harshest in his response to self-pity and neutral in his response to the pity of others. Let us turn, now, from these ineffectual modes of affective response to the effectual: namely, lament motivated by penitence.

The central question for most of this play—and indeed, its main source of suspense—is whether Prospero will meet his old enemies with vengeance or forgiveness. “Enemies,” to be fair, is a reductive moniker for the group in question. The group contains not only Prospero's betrayers, Antonio, Alonso, and their accomplice Sebastian, but also Prospero's old friend and helper, Gonzalo. Furthermore, they are accompanied by a miscellany of lords who are even further removed from the injustice Prospero suffered. The portrayal of this band as a monolithic group of betrayers contributes, in conjunction with the very real possibility that Prospero may exact a bloody revenge upon them, to much of the anxiety that underlies *The Tempest* as a whole.

For much of the play, the grief displayed by members of the group is mainly sympathetic, as they do not immediately have any reason to connect the island to the former Duke of Milan. Alonso, who believes his son Ferdinand to have perished in the

storm, does more than his share of the group's weeping. When first we meet this group, the men are occupied trying to divert and discourage Alonso's paternal grief. Gonzalo attempts to reframe the outcome of the shipwreck such that Alonso sees their survival as something to be celebrated, rather than seeing Ferdinand's loss as something to be mourned. In the opening lines of Act II Scene i, Gonzalo comforts,

Our hint of woe
Is common...
but for the miracle,
I mean our preservation, few in millions
Can speak like us: then wisely, good sir, weigh
Our sorrow with our comfort (II.i.3-9)

Whereas Gonzalo attempts to temper the King's sadness with joy and gratitude, Sebastian takes the tactless and equally unsuccessful approach of attempting to replace Alonso's grief for the death of his son with guilt for the marriage of his daughter. Sebastian says,

Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss,
That would not bless our Europe with your daughter,
But rather loose her to an African;
Where she at least is banish'd from your eye,
Who hath cause to wet the grief on't (II.i.118-122)

As one might expect, this approach is not particularly effective. Nor is Francisco's suggestion that Ferdinand may have survived the wreck. He recalls that the young prince, "trod the water, whose enmity he flung aside" and that he "oared himself with good arms in lusty stroke to th' shore" (II.i.110-111,113-115). Alonso dismisses this as wishful thinking, and glumly responds, "No, no he's gone" (II.i.117). And so, despite the various attempts by his companions to assuage or redirect his sympathetic lamentation, Alonso remains inconsolable.

As for the other members of this party, they seem remarkably untroubled, either by loss or by the crimes of which they are guilty. While their companions fall into a deep

sleep brought about by the watchful Ariel, Sebastian and Antonio discuss their prospects if they were to murder the others in their sleep. During this discussion, Sebastian asks whether Antonio's conscience is troubled by the injury he did to his brother, Prospero.

Antonio responds to this question as if it were a sign of Sebastian's prudery. He mocks,

Ay, sir; where lies that?...
But I feel not
This deity in my bosom: twenty consciences,
That stand 'twixt me and Milan, candied be they
And melt ere they molest! (II.i.269-273)

Antonio makes it clear that he hasn't suffered in the slightest for the wrong that he has done to his brother. While Antonio's scheme to murder Alonso and Gonzalo is frustrated by Ariel's intervention, the scene reveals an important truth about Antonio's character—he is remorseless, unacquainted with contrition, irreverent of the "deity" of conscience.

Soon, the party as a whole is made to recall and confront their complicity in the exile of Prospero and Miranda. In Act III Scene iii, Ariel lures the men to a feast with unearthly music. Just as the men are about to partake in the feast, Ariel appears to them in the fearsome shape of a harpy. After ensuring the men that they are "'mongst men...most unfit to live" and that their weapons are useless against him, Ariel reminds them of their guilt (III.iii.58-59). He says,

But remember—
For that's my business to you—that you three
From Milan did supplant good Prospero;
Exposed unto the sea, which hath requit it,
Him and his innocent child: for which foul deed
The powers, delaying, not forgetting, have
Incensed the seas and shores, yea, all the creatures,
Against your peace (III.iii.69-76)

Note that Ariel singles out three men of the group—namely, Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio. There is no mention of Gonzalo in Ariel’s proclamation of their guilt.

Ariel concludes his speech as the harpy by calling the guilty men to “heart’s sorrow and a clear life ensuing” (III.iii.82-83). It is important to note that this line is not a pronouncement that the men have actually achieved this, but rather, a warning that unless they achieve it, they will be condemned to “ling’ring perdition” (III.iii.78). Furthermore, it is clear that “heart’s sorrow” refers to penitence and not pity, because its pairing with a “clear life ensuing” suggests that the men must actually change their villainous ways—an outcome which could reasonably be expected to attend repentance, not pity.

Alonso, to his credit, is deeply moved by the experience. He is horrified at the mention of the rightful Duke of Milan and says,

O, it is monstrous, monstrous:
Methought the billows spoke and told me of it;
The winds did sing it to me, and the thunder,
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounced
The name of Prosper: it did bass my trespass (III.iii.96-100)

It seems that Ariel’s appearance has had its intended effect, and that in recalling the wrong he has done to Prospero, Alonso is moved to something like guilt. But the lines are a bit blurry here—if indeed he is guilty, his guilt is accompanied by a lingering pity for his son’s supposed fate. Alonso laments, “Therefore my son i’ the ooze is bedded” (III.iii.101). Still, his grief is motivated in large part by pity for the fate of his son. However, it may well be that because of his pity for Ferdinand, coupled with the reminder of his complicity in betraying Prospero, he is experiencing the beginnings of penitence. Alonso’s grief is so intense that he expresses his intention to drown himself alongside his son, and “with him there lie mudded” (III.iii.103).

Sebastian and Antonio, predictably, feel neither shame nor grief in response to Ariel's proclamation. Instead, they persist in the foolhardy belief that they may, by force, destroy the harpy. Sebastian exclaims, "But one fiend at a time, I'll fight their legions o'er" (III.iii.103-104). Antonio concurs, "I'll be thy second" (III.iii.104).

Gonzalo's reaction is perhaps the hardest to read, as he responds more to his companions' confusion than the content of Ariel's message. He observes, "All three of them are desperate. Their great guilt, like poison...Now 'gins to bite the spirits," and he sends the remaining men to prevent his companions from drowning themselves (III.iii.105-107). This is significant because Prospero has exited the stage and has presumably chosen not to intervene in Alonso's suicide attempt. It is Gonzalo who ultimately ensures the safety of his companions. He is, I think, more generous in his estimation of their responses than is warranted, attributing to their mourning and outrage a fitting guilt for the wrong done to Prospero. In fact, his interpretation of their responses may speak more to Gonzalo's character than to theirs.

But the extent of each man's response to the grim message of the harpy is not fully developed in Act III Scene iii. In fact, the extremities of their responses are not even shown on stage, but reported by mouth in what proves to be the play's pivotal exchange. In Act V Scene i, Prospero asks Ariel for a report of how the men have been affected by his dreadful appearance to them. Ariel dutifully conveys,

The king,
His brother and yours, abide all three distracted
And the remainder mourning over them,
Brimful of sorrow and dismay (V.i.11-14).

Ariel interprets Alonso's, Sebastian's, and Antonio's responses to be "distraction," or what we may term confusion or confoundment. He does not attribute penitence (or really,

sorrow of any sort) to those three men. And the sorrow that he attributes to “the remainder”—that is, Gonzalo, Francisco, Adrian, etc.—is not technically penitence either, but pity for the condition of the distracted others.

Then, in what is perhaps the most moving account of affective response in Shakespeare’s late plays, Ariel details the manner in which Gonzalo weeps for his companions. He says that while many of the men weep,

Chiefly
Him that you term'd, sir, 'The good old lord Gonzalo;'
His tears run down his beard, like winter's drops
From eaves of reeds (V.i.14-17)

It is no accident that Ariel details Gonzalo’s tears in such descriptive and pitiable terms. Not only does the vivid description tug on Prospero’s (and the audience’s) heartstrings, but they also serve to demonstrate the sincerity of the weeping by a character who has little to weep about. Matthew Steggle notes that in Early Modern drama, “the presence...of wet tears is sometimes invoked as a distinguishing mark between sincere and insincere weeping” (51). The description of the tears themselves in this passage, and not merely the emotion producing them, is suggestive of Gonzalo’s sincerity. The sensory description of his tears invites both Prospero and the audience into Gonzalo’s unseen grief.

In Ariel’s description of Gonzalo’s tears “run[ning] down his beard,” Ariel doesn’t ascribe any particular motive to Gonzalo’s lament (V.i.16). However, Ariel’s earlier description of Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio “abid[ing] distracted” while the “remainder [mourn] over them” indicates that Ariel interprets Gonzalo’s affecting display as driven by pity for his companions (V.i.11-13). Ariel concludes his report of Gonzalo’s lament with a brief editorialization about the emotional impact of the display. He says,

“Your charm so strongly works 'em that if you now beheld them, your affections would become tender” (V.i.17-19).

Prospero replies—and this is the pivotal exchange— “Dost thou think so, spirit?” (V.i.19). That Prospero calls Ariel “spirit” here is significant. He means to emphasize Ariel’s non-human nature, and to therefore question his capacity to empathize with the men. Ariel answers, “Mine would, sir, were I human” (V.i.20).

This expression of deep sympathy—and make no mistake, it *is* sympathy—is what moves Prospero decidedly away from vengeance and toward forgiveness. He says to his servant spirit,

And mine shall.
Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,
One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,
Passion as they, be kindlier moved than thou art? (V.i.20-24)

But how is the efficacy of Ariel’s sympathy and the lack of repentance to be reconciled with Prospero’s hierarchy of affective response, which has heretofore privileged penitence as that which is effective and dismissed sympathetic expression as ineffectual? Does Prospero’s response to Ariel’s pity prove void the schema by which this chapter has attempted to make sense of Prospero’s values?

The answer, I argue, is contained in the remainder of Prospero’s speech, in which he makes an unexpected interpretive move regarding the motivations of his “enemies.”

Prospero concludes,

The rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance: they being penitent,
The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
Not a frown further. Go release them, Ariel:
My charms I'll break, their senses I'll restore,
And they shall be themselves (V.i.27-32).

Prospero reads into their sorrow a penitence that is, by the audience's observation and Ariel's testimony, a fiction. The idea that Sebastian and Antonio are repentant, as we shall see later in this scene, is laughable. While Alonso's repentance is not out of the question, we have already seen that he is primarily consumed with grief for the supposed death of his son than for the wrong done to Prospero. That leaves Gonzalo, who has nothing to repent.

Yet, as we have seen with Prospero's earlier misapprehension of Ariel's protestations, it isn't what we may call the objective motivations behind affective response that matters in determining its effectiveness. Instead, it is Prospero's *interpretation* of the reasons underlying emotional display that determine the manner in which he responds. With this in mind, Prospero's reaction to Ariel's account of Gonzalo's weeping accords with his hierarchy of affective response's potency. Because he believes the men to be weeping with contrition or penitence, and not with confoundment or pity, Prospero grants a full pardon of their crimes.

Let us return now to the fact that it is, in large part, Ariel's pity, in conjunction with the perceived repentance of the men, that moves Prospero to forgive them. We must be very careful in how we think about the effect Ariel's pity has on Prospero. It would be a mistake to believe that Ariel's sympathy is effective because Prospero is moved to honor or alleviate the pain that Ariel feels on the men's behalf. This is the sense in which this chapter has considered the success or (in every case besides this final one) failure of sympathy in the play as a whole. Miranda's intercession on behalf of the men at sea is considered ineffective because it doesn't move her father to undertake the action which could alleviate her "suffer[ing] with those [she] saw suffer" (I.ii.5-6). Ariel's supposedly

self-pitying appeal for his freedom is considered ineffective because it does not impel Prospero to do that which could assuage Ariel's dissatisfaction.

The pity Ariel expresses for Prospero's confused and mourning enemies functions differently than any of the earlier expressions of sympathy in this play intend to. Prospero is not moved by Ariel's sympathy in the sense that he wants to *resolve* his servant's grief, but in the sense that he wants to *emulate* it. This relationship between Ariel's and Prospero's sympathy has received a great deal of critical attention. Heather Kerr, for instance, identifies Prospero's response to Ariel's report of Gonzalo's weeping as one of "mimetic contagion," and of "imitative yet authentic" emotional display (164, 166). Indeed, Margreta de Grazia would add that since Ariel's report is just that—a report—and one delivered by a nonhuman speaker, "the report could hardly be less compelling" (250).

Ariel's sympathy is not effective because his emotional display is such a successful intercession on the men's behalf, but rather, because his emotional display is so exemplary of how a human ought to respond to the grief of others. His pity does not move Prospero to mercy per se, but rather, models what rightly ordered mercy should look like. Because of this distinction, I maintain that it is Gonzalo's supposedly penitent weeping, and not primarily Ariel's sympathetic intercession, that ultimately persuades Prospero to forgive his enemies.

Perhaps the greatest testament in this play to the effectiveness of penitent grief comes not when Prospero decides to pardon his old enemies, but when he actually confronts and forgives them. It is not a warm forgiveness by any means, but he does spare them from his wrath. Through Ariel's intervention, Prospero draws the men, still

charmed and entranced, into a circle where he recounts to them their virtues and their sins. He begins by addressing the most virtuous among them, Gonzalo, and says that it is Gonzalo's tears that have moved him to mercy. Prospero says, "Holy Gonzalo, honorable man, mine eyes, e'en sociable to the show of thine, fall fellowly drops" (V.i.62-64). That is, Gonzalo's tears, which Prospero earlier identified as expressing a sort of penitence despite his innocence, have moved Prospero himself to tears and to mercy.

Indeed, it is a mercy which extends not only to Gonzalo, but to all of the men in the party—even those whom Prospero identifies as guilty. For instance, he continues, "Most cruelly didst thou, Alonso, use me and my daughter" (V.i.71-72). He accuses Sebastian of being a "furtherer in the act," and lastly, acknowledges Antonio's evil and unrepentant spirit, saying, "You...that entertained ambition, expelled remorse and nature, whom...would here have killed your king" (V.i.73, 75-78). Prospero's forgiveness of his brother is undeniably an acerbic one. And yet, Prospero is so deeply moved by the substitutionary weeping of Gonzalo that he says, even to his traitorous brother, "I do forgive thee" (V.i.78).

When the charm is broken and Prospero reveals himself to the men, their reactions are, predictably, diverse. Prospero begins by addressing Alonso, and introduces himself as "The wronged Duke of Milan" (V.i.107). After a show of amazement, Alonso says, "Thy dukedom I resign, and do entreat thou pardon me my wrongs" (V.i.118-119). It is a satisfactory repentance, though not nearly as affecting as Gonzalo's. Prospero greets Gonzalo warmly, calling him a "noble friend," and one "whose honor cannot be measured or confined," to which the old man responds with an expression of wonder (V.i.120-122).

Prospero then turns to the two unrepentant men, Sebastian and Antonio, and reminds them what sort of vengeance is within his power. He says, “were I so minded, I here could pluck His Highness’ frown upon you and justify you traitors” (V.126-128). Even when confronted with the possibility of Prospero’s revenge, neither Sebastian nor Antonio repents of the wrong that they have done to him, or of their plot against the king. Still, Prospero pardons both. He says to his treacherous brother, “For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother would even infect my mouth, I do forgive thy rankest fault—all of them” (V.i.130-132). While he spares Antonio from his wrath, he does not acknowledge their brotherhood. The faults are forgiven, but the relationship is not restored.

It is Gonzalo’s weeping, then, perceived to be a sort of vicarious penitence on behalf of his companions, which procures forgiveness for all of them. This is a compelling testimony of the potency of penitent affective response in this play—that it is not merely sufficient for the procurement of one’s own forgiveness, but that it is sufficient to procure forgiveness for those who are themselves obstinate and unrepentant.

Although the play ends in forgiveness and not in the exercise of wrath, critics have noted its lack of closure. Perhaps the most thorough consideration of the play’s lack of satisfying resolution comes in the work of Sarah Beckwith, who writes that “the silent Antonio, the ambiguous response of Sebastian, the premature consolation of Gonzalo which does not seem to sum up the play we ourselves have seen,” all make “any definitive closure impossible” (171). For Beckwith, the reconciliation at the play’s conclusion is “disappointing because it returns us to inescapably human horizons, and we long for more than those” (171).

Much like in *The Winter's Tale*, it is not only the central character's reaction to weeping that is significant, but also the sensitivity of genre to characters' adherence or nonadherence to the hierarchy of lamentation previously established. Recall that, in *The Winter's Tale*, tragedy ensues (as is the case with Antigonus' death) when characters fail to express a rightful contrition, and instead stagnate in a state of pity for others—or worse, regress to a state of pity for self. Conversely, the play's comedic ending is made possible when Leontes expresses a sincere and rightful guilt.

The Tempest defies simple genre categorization. While most critics can comfortably identify *The Winter's Tale* as a tragicomedy, *The Tempest* is typically considered a last play or a romance. Among those who note the difficulty of classifying *The Tempest* is Lawrence Danson, who writes, “Whether romance or tragicomedy,” *The Tempest* knows “the difference between comedy and tragedy well enough to want to override it” (102). While Danson seems eventually to land on something like romance as the best category for *The Tempest*, his arrival there feels uncertain and unsatisfactory—indeed, for Danson, it seems that the last plays are best categorized by what they are not, rather than what they are. Similarly reluctant to place *The Tempest* in neat, existing genre categories, Paul A. Cantor makes the interesting move of categorizing the play as a “post-tragedy.” He writes, “*The Tempest* is Shakespeare's attempt to place tragic experience within a larger context and in that sense to reveal the limits of tragedy” (Cantor 2).

Robert Henke notes *The Tempest's* resistance to genre classification, and even views Prospero as a conscious participant in this obfuscation. He writes, “Like the playwright of tragicomedy, Prospero is intensely concerned with audience response exploring tonalities intermediate between generic extremes” (Henke 342). Indeed, for the

majority of the play, it is unclear whether it will end in a vengeful bloodbath, unmitigated forgiveness, or something in between.

It ends, as we have seen, in forgiveness. Despite a widespread critical reticence to classify *The Tempest*, Diana E. Henderson cites the folio's classification of the play as a comedy, and points to the play's ending as a satisfactory reason for honoring its original categorization. She writes, "So long as resurrection trumps death, *The Tempest* belongs in the comedies, at least, from the unsubjected position of the crown" (Henderson 144). She is right, I think, to assign so much weight to the play's ending in determining its generic classification, even if a simple description of the play as a comedy seems a bit reductive. After all, if the central question or suspense of the play is whether Prospero will avenge or forgive, and the play's ending answers resolutely in favor of forgiveness, should that not be a primary determinant of the play's genre? As L.C. Knights points out, "The main movement of the play...is Prospero's movement towards restoration, renewal of the self," and I would concur that that redemptive arc is the taste left in the audience's mouth after the final curtain (25).¹

Whatever genre you like—late play, tragicomedy, romance, or comedy—the outcome of *The Tempest* is an unquestionably positive one, and this redemptive, restorative ending hinges on the extent to which some characters express rightly-ordered grief. Gonzalo's tears allow for the reconciliation of Prospero and his enemies, Prospero's restoration to his dukedom, and the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda.

Finally, let us consider the implications of *The Tempest's* characterization of penitent affective response as that which is most capable of effecting change, sympathetic

¹ For further discussion of the relationship between forgiveness and genre in the late plays, see Robert G. Hunter's *Shakespeare and the Comedy of Forgiveness*.

affective response as somewhat effective, and self-pitying emotive display as both ineffective and worthy of rebuke. It would be a mistake, I think, to read this hierarchy as the subjective preference of Prospero, especially because it aligns so neatly with Hermione's moral hierarchy of affective response. The argument of *The Tempest* is not in support of an attempt to win the favor of the powerful through an adherence to arbitrary preferences. Instead, the argument of *The Tempest*—and of this chapter—is that those instances of affective response that carry significant moral weight, carry a corresponding capacity to effect real change.

CHAPTER FOUR

“All is Outward Sorrow”: Grief, Sensation, and Song in *Cymbeline*

Early on, *Cymbeline* shows its hand as a play preoccupied with sorrow and outward expressions thereof. The play’s first sentence, spoken by a gentleman of Cymbeline’s court, declares, “You do not meet a man but frowns” and is closely followed by the same gentleman’s musing that “all is outward sorrow” (I.i.1, 8-9). These statements immediately orient the reader not only to the sadness *felt* in the court, but also to the physical, observable signs that make the sadness known.

Unlike *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest*, *Cymbeline* does not seem to be interested in classifying instances of affective response on the basis of their morality or efficacy. For one thing, not all categories previously identified in Hermione’s and Prospero’s hierarchies of virtuous and effectual weeping are represented in this play. Though repentance makes a cameo in *Cymbeline*, it isn’t explicitly accompanied by weeping, and self-pity doesn’t make much of an appearance at all. The vast majority of weeping in this play is done out of pity for others, upon their banishment or death.

Instead of stressing the various motivations behind it, *Cymbeline*’s interaction with affective response seems intended to convey the extent to which weeping interferes with and places limitations on some of humans’ other faculties. The play functions as a sort of counterpoint to the other last plays in that it serves as a reminder that no matter how moral or effective at procuring their intended ends, tears are ultimately a physical expression of an internal grief, and that inherent to their physicality is a set of restrictions to the one doing the weeping.

Of the last plays of Shakespeare, *Cymbeline* demonstrates the most robust recognition of weeping as a bodily act that is at odds with other bodily and spiritual capacities. As such, this play presents affective response as something that is both limiting of our sensory functions, and limited in its capacity to accomplish or satisfy human grief. In fact, the only instance of weeping in this play that does not hamper the exercise of a higher faculty, but actually accomplishes it, is when tears are wept for joy. *Cymbeline*, then, recognizes and allows for the paradoxical nature of weeping as both participatory in and interfering with the full exercise of human faculties.

Much of the weeping in this play is done by Cymbeline's daughter, Imogen, and for good reason. After Imogen's marriage to the "poor but worthy" Posthumus Leonatus rather than her wicked oaf of a stepbrother, Cloten, to whom she had been promised, Cymbeline banishes Posthumus from Britain. Imogen, in response, spends most of the first act in her bedchamber, lamenting her husband's absence. We know that Imogen's grief for Posthumus' banishment is accompanied by weeping because, before he leaves, Posthumus implores her, "My queen, my mistress! O lady, weep no more, lest I give cause to be suspected of more tenderness than doth become a man" (I.i.92-95). Posthumus worries that if Imogen continues to weep, he will succumb to weeping as well and that it will reflect poorly on his masculinity.

In addition to Posthumus' comment about Imogen's weeping, the Queen herself remarks about her stepdaughter's emotional response to the banishment, although she finds her stepdaughter's tears significantly less moving than Posthumus does. In response to the servant Pisanio's entrance and quiet conference with her, the Queen demands,

“Weeps she still, sayst thou?” (I.v.46). The audience gets the impression that Imogen’s weeping has been an ongoing affair—longer, certainly, than the Queen expected.

The Queen follows her first question—which is a matter of observable fact—with a second, predictive question. She asks Pisanio, “Dost thou think in time she will not quench, and let instructions enter where folly now possesses?” (I.v.46-48). The use of the word “quench” here refers to a physical cooling down; it is, as Martin Butler points out, Shakespeare’s only use of this sense of the word with a person as the referent. While the Queen also attributes Imogen’s weeping to the more abstract “folly,” her choice of the word “quench” demonstrates a recognition of weeping as an action that is both situated in and accomplished by the body.

Imogen herself expresses an understanding of affective response that is dependent on the body generally, and the eye specifically. Furthermore, according to Imogen, insofar as weeping relies upon the eye, it also precludes the simultaneous use of the eye to sensory ends. Scholars have long noted the play’s interest with the body generally and the senses specifically. Cynthia Lewis, for instance, argues for the centrality of visual misperception to the play as a whole. She claims that “the play’s language constantly underscores the matter of sight,” and that it reveals the limitations thereof (Lewis 344). “A love based on sight,” she continues, “Can only come to ruin...because the concrete things of this world are mutable and because human vision is too short to perceive anything other than this world” (Lewis 356). Indeed, *Cymbeline* reveals the limitations of human sight and, as this chapter will argue, limitations *to* human sight as well.

Peggy Muñoz Simonds echoes Lewis’ identification of the senses and their weaknesses as one of the play’s central focuses. On the topic of vision, Simonds writes,

“partial blindness is endemic to the human condition” and that therefore, sight is unreliable as a sole source of information (311). However, Simonds’ primary concern in both her article about aural imagery and her chapter on sensory perception, is Shakespeare’s “emphasis on the sense of hearing in *Cymbeline*” (138). She claims that Shakespeare “demonstrates that verbal and musical sound can elevate, even save, the human soul” and that, as a result, “the human condition requires the sense of hearing to restore measure into behavior and harmony into the soul” (137, 314). More broadly, scholars have identified *Cymbeline* as a play deeply concerned with the body and bodily integrity. Maurice Hunt, for instance, links the integrities of the physical bodies in *Cymbeline* to the relative integrity of the British body politic and the body royal. William Barry Thorne uses the image of “Lopp’d branches,” or, in the case of Cloten, lopped heads, to make sense of the holistic regeneration achieved at the play’s end.

Cymbeline treats vision as an indispensable bodily function upon which weeping has a prohibitive effect. This is best demonstrated in Imogen’s conversation with Pisanio about Posthumus’ departure. Imogen interrogates Pisanio about what he observed as Posthumus’ boat sailed away, and the entire conversation reveals Imogen’s preoccupation with the senses. She begins by asking about what Pisanio heard, and he faithfully reports that the last thing Posthumus spoke of was “his queen, his queen” (I.iii.5). Satisfied by the report of what Pisanio heard, Imogen turns her attention to what Pisanio saw, asking, “Then waved his handkerchief?” (I.iii.6). Her mention of this detail perhaps suggests that she has already gotten this information from Pisanio and is asking for clarification, or to hear the story again.

When Pisanio adds that Posthumus “kissed it, madam,” Imogen declares, “Senseless linen, happier therein than I!” (I.iii.6-7). The meaning of “therein” is a bit muddy in this context; while it is possible that Imogen means “happier to be kissed by Posthumus,” it is also possible that she means “happier in its senselessness.” Either way, she seems disturbed by and in some ways jealous of the insensate handkerchief. This is the expression of a person deeply troubled by her senses.

Pisanio continues with his story, and continues to emphasize the visual and aural details of Posthumus’ departure. He reports,

For so long
As he could make me with this eye or ear
Distinguish him from others, he did keep
The deck, with glove or hat or handkerchief
Still waving, as the fits and stirs of’s mind
Could best express how slow his soul sailed on,
How swift his ship (I.iii.8-14).

Here, we not only see a reference to the senses themselves, but of the vessels by which Pisanio exercised the senses of sight and sound, namely the eye and the ear. As such, Pisanio identifies his experience of Posthumus’ departure as something located in and performed by the body, rather than as something external to himself. Imogen is not satisfied by the effort Pisanio made to see him off, and chastises him, “Thou shouldst have made him as little as a crow, or less, ere left to after-eye him” (I.iii.14-16). Like Pisanio, and perhaps primed by his speech to do so, Imogen recognizes the eye as the active agent in Pisanio’s experience of Posthumus’ embarkation. However, unlike Pisanio, the agency she ascribes to the sensory organ is remarkable. Consider the difference in the language they use about the eye: whereas Pisanio reflects on how Posthumus “[made Pisanio] with this eye or ear distinguish him from others,” Imogen

says that Pisanio should have “made him as little as a crow.” In Pisanio’s conception of the eye’s function, the thing observed (namely, Posthumus), exercises a degree of force over the organ by which it is observed (namely, Pisanio’s eye). For Imogen, however, the eye actually exerts control over the object of its observation. And while her expression is a figure of speech meant to mimic the experience of watching something shrink with distance, the degree of agency it attributes to the eye is fascinating. For Pisanio, the eye is *made to* distinguish; for Imogen, the eye *makes* small.

In response to Imogen’s rebuke, Pisanio insists, “Madam, so I did” (I.iii.16). Apparently still unsatisfied, or perhaps, taking no notice of his response at all, Imogen continues,

I would have broke mine eye-strings, cracked them, but
To look upon him till the diminution
Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle;
Nay, followed him till he had melted from
The smallness of a gnat to air, and then
Have turned mine eye and wept (I.iii.17-22)

Here, Imogen finally identifies and juxtaposes the dual functions of the eye—namely, vision and weeping. She begins by considering the extent to which she would strain her eyes in order to keep her husband within her sight, and the descriptors she employs to this end are so visceral that they border on the grotesque. Her claim that she would be willing to break or crack her “eye-strings,” presumably referring to the optic nerve, is itself a visually evocative image. Particularly noteworthy here is Imogen’s characterization of the relationship between the two functions of the eye. Specifically, she envisions a necessarily chronological relationship between the two, in which vision must finally give way to weeping. In other words, Imogen recognizes that one cannot simultaneously see well and weep well.

It is important to remember that Imogen's argument here is not limited to a point about the mutual exclusivity of seeing and weeping. Instead, that distinction comes at the end of a long and vivid description of how Imogen would intentionally prolong vision for as long as possible before giving way to weeping. She is not merely making a point about the two functions' incompatibility, but rather, how she would conduct herself *in light of* their incompatibility—sustaining the one and postponing the other.

For Imogen, then, since the act of weeping is an inherently bodily one, it threatens to interfere with another bodily function which shares the same locus. And, in the case of watching her husband's departure, Imogen deems it appropriate to exercise the faculty of vision and suppress the faculty of weeping for as long as possible. The thrust of Imogen's argument when she declares she would have "broke [her] eye-strings" and then "turned [her] eye and wept" does not come across as one particularly concerned with morality so much as with gratifying a desire to know. In other words, Imogen does not seem to be issuing a judgment about the circumstances in which it is morally permissible to weep, but merely, how and when she would prefer to do so.

It is important to note that, while she shares many characteristics with Hermione of *The Winter's Tale*, Imogen does not function in the same morally authoritative capacity that Hermione does. For one thing, Hermione is a unanimously-respected matriarch who is functionally omniscient, and while Imogen is undoubtedly good and faithful, she is prone to miscalculations and—most unfortunately—misrecognition. As such, her judgment on weeping in her speech to Pisanio does not, and does not seem intended to, serve as a moral prescription about weeping's proper scope, but rather, an insightful recognition of the ways in which the senses and weeping place limitations on

each other, and a compelling speculation about how she would navigate the two in light of these limitations.

In addition to the play's recognition of the ways in which affective response limits the exercise of sensation, *Cymbeline* also demonstrates that weeping can interfere with the exercise of higher forms of grief. This is seen most clearly in the conversation between Guiderius and Arverigus preceding the delivery of their funeral dirge. The two brothers, sons of the king who were kidnapped by the disgraced servant Belarius as children, have just discovered the lifeless body of Imogen, disguised as the boy Fidele. Guiderius and Arviragus, who experienced an inexplicable sense of fraternity with Fidele, now presume him to be dead, and set about the business of memorializing him in song.

They agree that they ought to mourn for Fidele as solemnly and in the same manner as they grieved for the woman they believed to be their mother. Arviragus, who goes by the name Cadwal, says to his brother,

And let us, Polydore, though now our voices
Have got the mannish crack, sing him to th'ground
As once our mother; use like note and words,
Save that 'Euriphile' must be 'Fidele' (IV.ii.234-237)

Scholars are unsure of what to do with Arviragus' reference to the "mannish crack" of their voices here. Martin Butler argues that this reference "underlines the boys' status as adolescents on the cusp of manhood" (192). However, the fact that both boys are already in their early twenties would seem to suggest otherwise. Another alternative that has not been critically considered is that Arviragus is referring here to a cracking of the voice brought on by grief, and befitting a man who has lost a brother. If this is true, then it would seem that Arviragus and Guiderius actually have a conception of the relationship

between grief and masculinity that pushes back against that expressed by Posthumus in Act I, where he feared that a display of emotion would threaten his manhood.

Indeed, Guiderius does not have trouble admitting how the loss of Fidele is affecting him physiologically. In response to Arviragus' statement that they should sing for Fidele in the same way that they sang for Euriphile, Guiderius protests,

Cadwal,
I cannot sing. I'll weep, and woe it with thee;
For notes of sorrow out of tune are worse
Than priests and fanes that lie (IV.ii.238-241).

Guiderius' admission that he is incapable of singing the funeral dirge for Fidele is very telling. In much the same way that Imogen considers weeping as mutually exclusive with and limiting of the senses, Guiderius considers weeping as interfering with a person's capacity to sing well. Not only does affective response interfere with the body's sensory input, but also with its expressive output in the form of song.

But, is Guiderius' refusal to sing "notes of sorrow out of tune" a purely aesthetic consideration or also a spiritual one? It is important to consider whether Guiderius resists singing the funeral dirge out of fear that his voice will sound bad, or that in its sounding bad, it will constitute a failure to properly mourn the dead. In other words, we must discern whether Guiderius' primary consideration here is aural or moral.

If his concern is aural—that is, limited to the quality of his voice, and not its implications for the memorialization of Fidele—Guiderius' position accords with the view expressed by Imogen earlier in the play. Singing, after all, is accomplished by the body—the participation of lung and tongue and diaphragm. And, since the play identifies weeping as so inextricably linked to the body as well, it makes sense that the one would interfere with the other.

However, Guiderius' statement here moves beyond a consideration of the quality of his voice and to a consideration of the sort of memorial due to the boy whom he treated as a brother. The best evidence of this is the comparison that Guiderius makes to express the undesirability of songs disfigured by sadness. Specifically, he argues that "notes of sorrow out of tune are worse than priests and fanes that lie" (IV.ii.240-241). One might expect Guiderius to make a purely aesthetic comparison here—a claim that notes sung out of tune are worse than muddied rivers or mountains cloaked in fog—some natural, beautiful thing, corrupted in its beauty but morally neutral.

Instead, Guiderius compares a poorly sung funeral dirge to someone whose corruption is moral rather than aesthetic. A priest should represent the pinnacle of moral virtue, suggesting that a well-sung funeral song is something inherently virtuous. Similarly, a lie represents a clear breach of virtue, and the implication is that to sing a dirge poorly is not merely to produce something off-putting or to embarrass oneself at the funeral, but rather, to disrespect the memory of the dead in a grievous way.

If this is the import of Guiderius' speech—that to sing poorly is to memorialize poorly—this has profound implications for the play's interaction with weeping and grief. If indeed the interference of weeping with song is a condemnable moral failure, then it is reasonable to conclude that weeping does not merely preclude the exercise of other physical functions (such as sight), but that it also precludes the exercise of higher, spiritual functions (such as memorializing the dead). It is not merely grief interfering with sensation, but grief interfering with a higher sort of grief than itself.

Arviragus, as a concession for his brother's inability to sing through tears, resolves, "We'll speak it then" (IV.ii.241). He agrees with his brother about the

impropriety of dirges marred by tears, and proposes an alternative: a dirge spoken rather than sung, and impossible to be put out of tune. The brothers, then, are in accord about the importance of memorializing Fidele well, and about the interference of weeping with song—that is, the interference of a lower grief with a higher one.

Indeed, following Arviragus' concession for his brother's inability to sing, Belarius says, "Great griefs, I see, med'cine the less" (IV.ii.243). He is speaking about the death of Fidele driving out concern over the death and decapitation of Cloten which, by comparison, is no great tragedy. However, his observation is doubly apt. In the same way that the objects of grief—in this case, Fidele and Cloten—cannot simultaneously occupy the full attention and lament of the griever, so the vessels of grief—in this case, tears and song—cannot simultaneously occupy the griever's body. Belarius recognizes the mutual exclusivity of both the people grieved and the means by which grief is embodied. He rebukes the boys for neglecting Cloten's body on account of his royal status, and goes to fetch the headless body while his sons begin Fidele's dirge. Although a fair amount of dialogue has occurred between Arviragus' resolution that they should speak the lament and the lament's actual commencement, there is no reason to assume that Guiderius' weeping has ceased or that the lament is sung.

There is a near unanimity among scholars that the dirge is spoken rather than sung. The one exception to this position is that of J. N. Wysong, whose claim that "the dirge [is] sung by Guiderius and Arviragus" comes across less as an intentional argument and more as an oversight in his summary of the scene. That he further misidentifies the dirge as being sung "over the open grave of Cloten," whose body is offstage during its

performance, reveals that Wysong's focus is analysis of the dirge itself and not the manner in which it is delivered.

Among scholars who recognize that the dirge is spoken, there are numerous interpretations of both Shakespeare's motivation for this choice and its implications for the scene. Butler points out, "Many editors have felt that this passage...may signal a change of plan, with Shakespeare wanting the dirge sung but finding himself without actors who could do it justice" (249). Of the dirge itself, he writes that it "is all the more sonorous for being spoken: its simplicity and materialism contrast starkly with the often overelaborate artifice of the pastoral scene in which it is embedded" (Butler 249). While Butler's analysis of the relationship between the dirge's form and content is insightful, his analysis of the broader significance of its mode of performance is questionable. He writes, "The boys' inability to sing their dirge emphasizes that their grief is tragically serious, and that singing would be too affected a response to such intense feelings" (Butler 249). Certainly, their inability to sing reveals the depth of their grief, but nothing in the text indicates that readers are meant to regard singing as too superficial or ostentatious to do grief justice. Instead, we see the exact opposite—Guiderius' comparison of music to the role of priests actually elevates the status of music in this scene, and suggests that their bodily expressions of grief prohibit them from engaging in a higher, holier sort of lamentation.

Wilfrid Mellers also weighs in on the function of the dirge, suggesting that its simplicity and lyricism "makes it possible for Shakespeare to 'begin again'" (77). In fact, Mellers identifies the dirge's opening line, "Fear no more" as the distillation of Shakespeare's message not only in *Cymbeline*, but within the body of his later works. Of

the fact that the dirge is spoken, Mellers writes, “Music was Shakespeare’s prime agent of holiness; yet the most magical song he ever invented makes no claim to songful holiness” (Mellers 83-84). Indeed, the lower functions of bodily grief interfere with a mode of mourning which is not only aurally pleasant, but holy.

The content of the dirge is in keeping with the play’s focus on the body and its senses. Guiderius begins,

Fear no more the heat o’th’ sun,
Nor the furious winter’s rages
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone and ta’en thy wages.
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney sweepers, come to dust (IV.ii.257-262).

The register of the lament’s beginning is positive insofar as it recognizes the cessation of the body’s capacity to experience unpleasant sensations. The invocation to “fear no more” is warranted by the fact that the dead cannot physically suffer the “heat o’th’ sun” or the brutal cold of winter. In the same way that Imogen laments that Posthumus’ handkerchief is “happier therein than [she],” Guiderius suggests that, in being insensate to the cruel physical conditions of the world, Fidele is happier in death than he. Arviragus continues,

Fear no more the frown o’th’ great,
Thou art past the tyrant’s stroke.
Care no more to clothe and eat,
To thee the reed is as the oak.
The scepter, learning, physic, must
All follow this and come to dust (IV.ii.263-268).

Here, too, the dirge offers comfort in the death of sensation. In addition to the physical elements, this portion of the lament lists the abuses of tyrants and the pressure to feed and

clothe oneself as trials from which the dead are spared. Guiderius and Arviragus deliver the remainder of the dirge by alternating lines, saying,

Fear no more the lightning flash,
Nor th'all-dreaded thunder-stone.
Fear not slander, censure rash.
Thou hast finished joy and moan.
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee and come to dust (IV.ii.269-274)

Here, we see the first concession in the dirge that joy must die along with suffering.

Again, the boys list the physical elements that no longer pose a threat to Fidele, but they acknowledge that in the same way physical pain must cease, so too must the joy that life makes possible. The dirge, which has been overwhelmingly directed at giving comfort, here incorporates a clear thread of lament as well. The dirge concludes,

No exorciser harm thee,
Nor no witchcraft charm thee.
Ghost unlaid forbear thee.
Nothing ill come near thee.
Quiet consummation have,
And renowned be thy grave (IV.ii.275-280).

Overwhelmingly, the dirge invokes negation as a source of comfort and benediction for the dead. There is no mention of heaven or hope for an afterlife. Instead, the dirge finds consolation in what the dead *cannot* experience, and indeed, hopes that this insensateness will not be disturbed by “exorciser” or “witchcraft.” The dirge, then, is both a lament for the loss of a life, and a celebration of the loss of the ability to suffer. Upon its conclusion, Guiderius is satisfied that the spoken dirge has sufficiently accomplished the memorialization of the dead. He notes, “We have done our obsequies,” and without delay, the three men depart from the bodies of Fidele and Cloten (IV.ii.281).

While the headless Cloten remains very much dead once Belarius, Guiderius, and Arviragus take their leave, Fidele—the disguised Imogen—does not. After waking and mistaking the headless body of her wicked stepbrother for that of her husband, Imogen laments over the body. By her own description and behavior, her grief is a deeply visceral one. She laments,

Our very eyes
Are sometimes like our judgments, blind. Good faith,
I tremble still with fear; but if there be
Yet left in heaven as small a drop of pity
As a wren's eye, feared gods, a part of it! (IV.ii.300-304).

Again, we see Imogen's preoccupation with the eye as both the sensory vessel which invites grief and the emotive vessel which participates in grief. Her reference to the blindness of eyes and judgments indicates that she believes her encounter with Belarius and her two brothers was a dream, and that Pisanio has drugged her to carry out the murder of her husband. She also employs the metaphor, "a drop of pity" to invite the sympathy of the gods, indicating that she wants heaven to grieve for her in the same way that she grieves for her husband. Additionally, note the attention Imogen gives to the physical manifestations of lamentation in her own body. She says that she "tremble[s] still with fear," and in her lament's conclusion, she says to the headless body beside her, "Give color to my pale cheek with thy blood" (IV.ii.328-329). Imogen's grief over the supposed death of her husband is situated in her body, and made evident by both her trembling and the paleness of her cheek.

Perhaps the most disturbing form of Imogen's grief is not her spoken lament, but rather her actions after its conclusion. The stage direction indicates that Imogen "smears her face with blood and falls on the body" (IV.ii.331). It is a grotesque, disturbing move,

undertaken precisely because of its grotesqueness. Imogen says that she colors her cheek with the dead man's blood "that [they] the horrider may seem to those which chance to find [them]" (IV.ii.330-331). And, when a passing Roman troop does find Imogen and Cloten, they are appropriately horrified by the spectacle. A Roman named Lucius remarks,

How, a page?
Or dead or sleeping on him? But dead rather,
For nature doth abhor to make his bed
With the defunct, or sleep upon the dead (IV.ii.354-357).

So unnatural is Imogen's posture atop the headless man that Lucius assumes she (as the page boy) cannot be alive. Here, we see the ultimate example of lamentation's interference with humanity's higher faculties: bodily grief interferes with a natural human revulsion for the dead. Not only does *Cymbeline* demonstrate that physical lament prohibits the faculties of sensation and of song, but also that it interferes with nature itself.

When the Roman troop realizes that Imogen is still alive, they invite her (still disguised as Fidele) to join them, and she agrees out of desperation. The battle that follows is a scene of confusion—the captured king, Cymbeline, is rescued by Belarius, Guiderius, and Arviragus. Posthumus—who believes Imogen to be dead on his orders—fights on Britain's side, driven by a death wish. When the British are victorious and Posthumus finds himself still, inexplicably, alive, he changes into Roman costume, hoping to be put to death as a surviving Roman soldier. While Posthumus is in prison, he is moved to lamentation over the supposed death of his wife. He cries,

My conscience, thou art fettered
More than my shanks and wrists. You good gods, give me

The penitent instrument to pick that bolt,
Then free for ever. Is't enough I am sorry? (V.iv.8-11).

Posthumus' grief in prison is one of the only examples (and I would argue, the only sincere example) of repentance in *Cymbeline*. And, in much the same way that Imogen's grief over the headless body beside her compromised the natural human revulsion for the dead, Posthumus' penitent grief over the wrong he has done to his wife compromises the natural human affinity for life and aversion to death. His sadness is so intense that it has driven him to suicidality, or at least a desire to die.

Recall that penitence is, according to Hermione's framework, the most morally legitimate form of lamentation. However, in the absence of a morally central character akin to Hermione, the recognition and acceptance of Posthumus' penitence falls to the gods, namely Jupiter. After hearing Posthumus' impassioned repentance and desire for death, coupled with the intercessions of the ghosts of Posthumus' family, Jupiter declares,

Whom best I love, I cross, to make my gift,
The more delayed, delighted. Be content:
Your low-laid son our godhead will uplift;
His comforts thrive, his trials are well spent...
He shall be lord of Lady Imogen,
And happier much by his affliction made (V.iv.71-78).

In keeping with the framework espoused by Hermine in *The Winter's Tale*, Jupiter recognizes and accepts Posthumus' penitence as a legitimate form of lament. Furthermore, Jupiter expresses a redemptive plan for Posthumus' suffering. Notice the difference between the comfort promised in Jupiter's proclamation and the comfort offered in Guiderius' and Arviragus' dirge. Whereas in the dirge, the consolation is based on the cessation of suffering, in Jupiter's announcement, the consolation is based on a

repurposing of suffering to serve Posthumus' good. In this play as in *The Winter's Tale*, where lamentation has penitence as its motivation, it is honored and resolved by those in positions of authority.

Nevertheless, as the play approaches its conclusion, it teeters on the edge of tragedy. In the final scene, we learn that the Queen is dead. Hers is the second death in the play, after her son Cloten's, and while both are the deaths of wicked characters, the setup of the final scene does not bode well even for the heroes. The surviving Romans are brought before Cymbeline, who feels inexplicably drawn to the still-disguised Imogen, his daughter. In rapid sequence, and before any retribution is exacted against the surviving Romans, all of the play's secrets are laid bare—Iachimo's deception regarding Imogen's chastity, Fidele's identity, the Queen's murderous designs on her stepdaughter, the death of Cloten, and the identities of Belarius and his sons, to name a few. Remarkably, husband is restored to wife and daughter to father, and the play which had all the makings of tragedy ends in a place of reunion, restoration, and peace.

Not all critics are satisfied by this conclusion. Cesarea Abartis, for instance, argues that Cymbeline unconvincingly attempts to resolve plots that are incompatible with both mythicized history and the conventions of tragicomedy. Abartis writes, "Cymbeline does not fail because it is a tragicomedy, which some might consider an inferior species, but because it is an inferior tragicomedy, unable to accommodate the demands of the plot and the demands of the genre" (82). The scope of the redemption and reconciliation at the play's conclusion is broad and certainly susceptible to the criticism that it feels rushed or implausible.

Even tears, which have heretofore been presented as impediments to the faculties of sensation and grief, here enjoy a sort of redemption of their own. Upon his recognition of and reunion with his daughter, Cymbeline says to Imogen, “My tears that fall prove holy water on thee!” (V.iv.268-269). Finally, tears are presented as participatory in a holy sort of emotiveness rather than an obstacle to it. They are granted a legitimacy and an appropriateness that they have been denied up to this point in the play.

What accounts for this shift from the play’s presentation of tears as interfering with higher and more desirable functions to its presentation of tears as serving a welcome, reconciliatory function? It is important to note that all previous instances of weeping explicitly mentioned in the play have accompanied separations, either in the form of a departure or a death. In the case of departure, tears interfere with the ability to see the one departing, and in the case of death, tears interfere with the ability to properly mourn the one who has died. However, the revelation of Imogen’s identity in the play’s final scene serves as a perfect reversal of both of these examples. Rather than a departure, the discovery of her identity constitutes a returning home. Similarly, it functions as a sort of reversal of death itself, since Posthumus, Belarius and his sons believed her (as Fidele) to be dead. The revelation of Imogen’s identity then, perfectly parallels and counteracts the events which have heretofore caused weeping in the play.

Cymbeline—in this case, both the play and its namesake—express a preference for tears as an embodiment of joy rather than sorrow. It is only when Cymbeline is reunited with his daughter that tears are compared to “holy water” and, as such, likened to an agent of both moral and utilitarian import. It is in joy, and not in sorrow, that tears accomplish the appropriate emotion in the body, and do not impede it.

The play's view of weeping, then, is that in cases of death and departure, tears are at best a sort of inconvenience, and at worst, an improper form of lament. In the case of reunion, restoration, and redemption, tears find their appropriate outlet. In such cases—ones marked by joy and not by sorrow—tears do not impede the proper bodily response, but actually accomplish it.

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