

The Greening of Will Shakespeare

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Abstract

In *The Winter's Tale* (1611), those presumed dead repeatedly return to new life. At the end of the play, the "statue" of Hermione moves through an old stage trick. Similarly, a moldy tale, a genre, and an old enmity are all revived. As Hermione descends from her pedestal, in her movements hoping to move us, so does Shakespeare implicitly extend the same treatment to *Pandosto* and its author, Robert Greene. The statue trick almost seems to be a metaphor for the larger contrivance that is the play itself: the necromantic way Shakespeare has with an old text like Greene's as he coaxes it to move and breathe through the lively art of theater. The play as a whole bears a resemblance to the cony-catching tricks described in rogue pamphlets by Greene and others, with Greene cast alternately as Shakespeare's partner in a con game to catch the more literate part of the play's audience and as a forced lender to the borrower Shakespeare, who once again beautifies himself with the feathers of the rival who had famously accused him of intellectual property theft.

"When he speaks of fools he is one; when of kings he is one, doubly so in misfortune. / He is a woman, a pimp, and prince Hal — / Such a man is a prime borrower and standardizer — No inventor." William Carlos Williams, "The Descent of Winter" (1928), 11/13

When William Shakespeare arrived in London, most likely sometime in the late 1580s, he walked into a theatrical world dominated by six men, all university educated and instrumental in the remarkable transformation of English drama that took place in the decade from 1580 to 1590. These were the so-called "university wits": Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe, and Thomas Nashe, all graduates of Cambridge; and Thomas Lodge, John Lyly, and George Peele from Oxford. Their eccentric center was Greene, a man who was to become as famous for his dissolute life as for his diverse writings, which included euphuistic novels, imitations of Greek romances, plays, numerous semi-autobiographical pamphlets, and cony-catching pamphlets that vividly depicted life in London's underworld. What remains of his fame today derives in large measure from the lines in his rancorous deathbed pamphlet, *A Groats-Worth of Witte*, that were directed at the "upstart Crow" Shakespeare (Greene 1966a).

Shakespeare, it is well known, drew his plot and most of his characters for *The Winter's Tale* (1611) from Greene's popular romance *Pandosto* (1588).¹ Even when Shakespeare seems to deviate from his source, the influence of the dead author's hand may be felt. Autolycus, perhaps the character who seems most independent of the play's primary source, bears the unmistakable fingerprint of Greene.² To be sure, Autolycus is developed far beyond the unprepossessing Capnio, servant to the King of Sicilia's son Dorastus in Greene's romance. But that does not make him Shakespeare's free, unfettered invention, for he seems to have stepped right out of the pages of Greene's cony-catching pamphlets and other rogue literature. William Carroll observes that the "language of Autolycus . . . reveals a strong indebtedness to the conny-catching pamphlets of Robert Greene" (Carroll 1996, 168).³ According to Lori Newcomb, "Autolycus's ruses are drawn directly from Greene's *Second and Third Part of Conny-Catching*" and would have been recognized as such by Shakespeare's audiences (Newcomb 2002, 123). In her reading, Autolycus catches the reflection not only of Greene's underworld figures, but also of Greene himself. She speculates that the false beard that Autolycus removes (*The Winter's Tale*, 4.4.714) might have recalled Greene's flamboyant red beard, and she compares the rogue's downward social mobility to Greene's: "Greene, too once 'wore three-pile' and then scraped by in borrowed 'lesser linen,' could ooze 'court-contempt' but then 'compasses a motion of the Prodigal Son' and ran through 'knavish professions'" (4.3.14, 24, 93-94, 96, quoted in Newcomb 2002, 123).

Reminiscent of both Greene and his cony catchers, Autolycus is also frequently regarded as a front for Shakespeare himself, as critics as diverse as Robert Adams, Stephen Greenblatt, and Harold Bloom have all maintained (Adams 1989, 102-103; Bloom 1998, 652; Greenblatt 2004, 371).⁴ These contrary identifications of Autolycus as a surrogate for both Greene and Shakespeare are not merely unrelated, divergent alternatives of the kind that inevitably proliferate over centuries of criticism. Rather, these opposed readings obey a logic whose principles are set forth by the play itself. From its opening scene, *The Winter's Tale* is virtually a paean to the practices of borrowing and lending that supported so many theatrical and literary careers in early modern London, including Shakespeare's own. Literary borrowing was as crucial to the flourishing of Elizabethan theaters as moneylending was to England's burgeoning mercantilism.

One dimension of the aging playwright's borrowing from his erstwhile detractor involves the cunning plotting of the *The Winter's Tale*, which like the charismatic figure of the rogue himself, owes much to Greene's cony-catching pamphlets. The ending of the play has attracted a language of religious experience to characterize the living statue of Hermione. Editors and commentators seldom fail to note the Pauline aspects of Paulina. Marjorie Garber writes, "In this moment Paulina

is a true descendant of her namesake, the Apostle Paul, who spoke to the Ephesians and the Romans of awakening out of sleep to redemption, and to the Corinthians of the natural body and the spiritual body, the earthly and the heavenly. . . . The scene is a visibly Christian one, transforming the diurnal and cyclical into the redemptive" (Garber 2004, 850).⁵ Balancing the piety of the play's ending, I would suggest, is an impish, if not impious, analogy more consistent with the spirit of Autolycus. The entire play is a ruse to catch the unaware, an elaborate exercise in cony-catching, which, like the swindles Greene exposes in his pamphlets, trades on the confidence of those who pride themselves on possessing an insider's knowledge.

Bleating Hearts

No Shakespearean comedy or romance better illustrates the economy of borrowing and lending than *The Winter's Tale*, a veritable feast of filching. Shakespeare's is an open theft, practiced by day like Autolycus' craft. That is, it openly advertises its extensive debt to Greene's romance. Kenneth Muir has noted, "There are more verbal echoes from *Pandosto* than from any other novel used by Shakespeare as a source" (Muir 1957, 257). Arden editor J. H. P. Pafford observes that "The picture is inescapable of a Shakespeare who, having closely studied the story and made his plot, had *Pandosto* at his elbow as he wrote, . . . using it sometimes almost verbatim" (Pafford 1963, xxxi). Because Shakespeare borrowed his plot from a long dead rival who had accused him of intellectual property theft, it is curious that criticism of the play has tended to ignore the ways in which *The Winter's Tale* play mirrors the circumstances of its own production, not only in the prominent part it gives the itinerant peddler and thief Autolycus, but also in exchanges at the beginning of the play that borrow heavily from the language of moneylending. Patricia Parker has recently shown how the play's language "combines gestation or pregnancy with a series of contractual, commercial, and legal terms" as it "moves between older aristocratic models of social place and reminders of the new economy of contract and credit" (Parker 2004, 25, 29). The language of that new economy would have particularly suited an occasion when Shakespeare borrowed so extensively from his dead rival. In opening dialogue resembling a courtly dance, Shakespeare sets the terms of his own late-life reflections on how, in the winter of his career, he plays both borrower and lender to Greene.

As the play begins, King Polixenes and his retinue are winding up their nine-month stay in Sicilia. The Bohemian lord Archidamus projects a complementary visit of the Sicilian court to Bohemia, which would ostensibly repay the debt owed Sicily by Bohemia. In making the visit, Archidamus advises the Sicilian lord Camillo, "You shall see . . . great difference betwixt our Bohemia and your Sicilia" (*The Winter's Tale*, 1.1.3-4). In his reply, Camillo inverts the order of the kingdoms set forth by Archidamus: "I think, this coming summer, the King of Sicilia means to pay

Bohemia the visitation which he justly owes him," Camillo assures the Bohemian lord (1.1.5-7). This chiasmic series — "Sicilia . . . Bohemia . . . Bohemia . . . Sicilia" — not only anticipates Sicily's reciprocal visit to Bohemia, but also reflects the mutual, reversible economy of hospitality itself. The current host Leontes may "owe" the overdue debt of a visit to his guest Polixenes, even while Polixenes feels a burdensome obligation, one that lies virtually beyond repayment, to his host, accrued during his nine-month stay at the Sicilian court:

Time as long again
 Would be fill'd up, my brother, with our thanks;
 And yet we should, for perpetuity,
 Go hence in debt. (1.2.3-6)

Borrower and lender, apparently, are roles as indistinguishable as "twinn'd lambs" (1.2.67).

Not only is Polixenes a borrower without reasonable hope of ever emerging from his host's debt, but he is also a lender whose principal commodity is none other than his own person. Hermione's successful entreaties for him to remain in Sicily maintain the language of borrowing and lending introduced by Archidamus and Camillo, language that now begins to yield interest:

Yet of your royal presence I'll adventure
 The borrow of a week. When at Bohemia
 You take my lord, I'll give him my commission
 To let him there a month behind the gest
 Prefix'd for's parting. (*The Winter's Tale*, 1.2.38-42)

Hermione jestingly proposes to repay a one-week loan of Polixenes with a one-month extension of her husband's term in Bohemia, an exchange rate that is less than flattering to Leontes. Further, she playfully grants Polixenes an alternative to his steadily accumulating debt as their guest at the Sicilian court, debtor's prison:

Force me to keep you as a prisoner,
 Not like a guest: so you shall pay your fees
 When you depart, and save your thanks? How say you?
 My prisoner? or my guest?" (1.2.52-55)

Imprisonment, Hermione implies, represents the only possible means of escape from the ongoing sense of reciprocal obligation felt by host and guest.⁶

The language of borrowing and lending extends to the Bohemian half of the play as well. The Clown's meeting with Autolycus seems almost a reprise of the opening, trading as it does in the language of lending. "Lend me thy hand, I'll help thee: come, lend me thy hand," the Clown urges, unaware that Autolycus is about to "borrow" more than his hand and the money he offers (*The Winter's Tale*, 4.3.68-69). Autolycus' peddling of the ballad of the usurer's wife, "brought to bed of twenty money-bags" (4.4.264), reinforces the theme, as does Leontes' sense of an immense debt to the memory of Hermione, which Cleomenes insists that he has paid down with his penance: "indeed, paid down / More penitence than done trespass" (5.1.3-4). Florizel seems to think he can cancel his debts to his father, though the disguised Polixenes advises him that "a father / Is at the nuptial of his son a guest / That best becomes the table" (4.4.395-97). Finally, the Shepherd's fond recollection of his dead wife, who on the feast day "was both pantler, butler, cook, / Both dame and servant; welcom'd all; serv'd all," and chastisement of Perdita, who behaves like a "feasted one" rather than "the hostess of the meeting," recalls the language of Archidamus and Camillo at the beginning of the play on the ambiguous and reversible identities of host and guest (4.4.56-57, 63-64).

In a reading of *The Comedy of Errors*, Patricia Parker notes how the narration of the shipwreck in the play's opening scene, an event that sunders Egeon from his wife and his twins from one another, is dominated by the figure of chiasmus. She further shows that the device by means of which Egeon tries to save his family is the visual equivalent of the rhetorical figure. Egeon divides the twins and places them on opposite sides of the ship's mast, so that he and his wife could "Fix . . . our eyes on whom our care was fixed" (*Comedy of Errors*, 1.1.84). This visual chiasmus, according to Parker, is an emblem of "the sense of crossing or exchange which dominates the play right from this opening scene . . . an emphasis appropriate in any case to a scene where this father faces death precisely because he has crossed an absolute dividing line" between the antagonistic towns of Syracuse and Ephesus (Parker 1987, 79). Like *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Winter's Tale* is a story of twins — "twinn'd lambs," as Polixenes rather innocently characterizes his boyhood friendship with Leontes (*The Winter's Tale*, 1.2.67).⁷ — built on a series of chiastic exchanges: of Sicilia for Bohemia, and of Leontes, King of Sicilia for Pandosto, King of Bohemia in Shakespeare's adaptation of Greene's romance; of Sicilia for Bohemia as the play's setting shifts; of the characteristics of the more northern Bohemia, the setting of the summery part of the play and the southern Sicilia, setting of the wintry acts;⁸ and of the tragedy of the first three acts for the romance of the final two. These exchanges or reversals, in turn, help produce the play's iterative structures that have been extensively analyzed by James Siemon and Richard Proudfoot (Siemon

1974, 10-16; Proudfoot 1976, 67-78). As youths, because of their "twinning," what Leontes and Polixenes "changed / Was innocence for innocence" (1.2.68-69). The phrase conjures a form of exchange that was no exchange because difference — including gender difference — had not yet slithered into their paradise of sameness. Innocence, as Polixenes conceives it, is a freedom from chiasmus and the crossness it may produce. The epithet "twinn'd lambs" pairs innocence with sameness, suggesting that innocence lasts only until the wolf of difference (partnered, inevitably, with Time) discovers the sheepcote. Polixenes describes their prelapsarian youth to Hermione — "Your precious self had not yet cross'd the eyes / Of my young play-fellow" (1.2.79-80) — the word "cross'd" signaling the introduction of gender difference and an elaborate economy of exchange based upon that difference. In the postlapsarian world of the play, the first of two sea crossings from Sicilia to Bohemia will result in a different sort of "change" or exchange: not of innocence for innocence, but of experience (in Blake's sense) for experience; one Greene-like, volcanic outburst for another; injuries to an innocent wife for new ones to an innocent daughter.

Chiasmus, a figure predicated on difference, carries a potentially leveling force, with rich implications for the exchange of identities and places. Even the chiastic series with which *The Winter's Tale* begins — "Sicilia . . . Bohemia . . . Bohemia . . . Sicilia" — may be seen as an attempt to overcome (adult) difference and to recapture (childhood) sameness, to reverse time and to recapture the putative fullness of their youth. Chiasmus is also a figure of social advancement and the verbal twin to the exchanges of clothing and costume in the play. (Given the nature of the trope, it is not surprising that it should trade places with itself, as it were, and alternately serve the ends of social leveling and advancement.) As if trying to overcome the great gap in their social rank, Florizel and Perdita join the economy of chiastic exchange in the sheepshearing feast as Prince Florizel adopts the appearance of a country swain, and Perdita becomes "poor lowly maid, / Most goddess-like prank'd up" (*The Winter's Tale*, 4.4.9-10). Greene's romance was the site of a similar exchange. In her splendid account of Greene's changing readership, Lori Newcomb shows how much anxiety was caused in early modern England by a readership that included a growing number of artisans, apprentices, and servants, and the degree to which Greene's texts participated in the "cross-marketing" of texts across social classes (Newcomb 2002, 103). It is as if the play, with its multiple exchanges of costume and social rank, is telling the tale of its wintry and aged source-text as well as recounting the tale within that text.

Later in the feast scene, in order to escape Florizel's wrathful father a parallel "exchange" of outward appearances takes place, which is engineered by Camillo as he addresses Autolycus: "Yet for the outside of thy poverty we must make an exchange; therefore discase thee instantly, — thou must think there's a necessity in't — and change garments with this gentleman" (*The Winter's Tale*,

4.4.633-36). Although the exchange is advantageous to Autolycus, Camillo sweetens the deal with "some boot" — presumably some money to help persuade him to part with his clothes. Left alone to muse upon the exchange that has allowed him to change outward appearances with a country gentleman (for so Prince Florizel was disguised before his exchange with Autolycus), Autolycus resorts to the rhetorical figure of exchange, the antimetabole or chiasmus: "I see this is the time that the unjust man doth thrive. What an exchange had this been without boot! What a boot is here, with this exchange!" (4.4.673-76).⁹ That it is Autolycus who uses the figure of antimetabole and participates in its visual equivalent, the costume exchange, should not be surprising. Named for the son of Hermes and maternal grandfather of Odysseus, the wolfish Autolycus is linked with the god Hermes and his mercurial changes: He was "littered under Mercury," he informs us (4.3.25).¹⁰ A virtual figure of difference, he also exemplifies the powers of exchange that meet in the figure of chiasmus. Autolycus seems to have been produced by an imaginative process similar to the garment exchange we witness in act 4, scene 4. In writing *The Winter's Tale*, Will Shakespeare changes garments with Robert Greene, as it were, and the results are a character that critics tend to identify alternately with Shakespeare, Greene, and Greene's cony-catchers, and a play in which, on the one hand, Shakespeare takes a Greene-like turn into the world of urban conies and cony-catchers, and on the other, Greene's text is tailored to the ends of Shakespearean romance, with its stress on reconciliation, renewal, and forgiveness.

In spite of a name that boasts a proud independence, Autolycus is virtually a figure of interdependence and exchange, and not merely as a peddler of commodities. During the sheepshearing, Autolycus hopes to make "the shearers prove sheep" (*The Winter's Tale*, 4.3.117) — a phrase that suggests more than Autolycus intends, as those ultimate dupes, the Shepherd and Clown, acquire wealth and status while retaining the innocence implied by the imagery of sheep. In a manner similar to Greene's cony-catchers, who frequently get cozened or undone in his pamphlets, Autolycus will fall victim to another crossing or exchange. For in *The Winter's Tale*, it is the wolf — Autolycus, a "lone wolf" as his Greek name would have us believe — who ultimately gets fleeced.¹¹ When Autolycus, hoping for advantage by turning the fleeing Florizel and Perdita over to the King, unwittingly serves as vehicle for the revelation of Perdita's identity and the reunions and reconciliations of the final act, he also causes the advancement of his former victims, the Shepherd and Clown, who receive the rich pickings that Autolycus expected to pluck. The cony-catcher proves to be a sheep in wolf's clothing. Since Shakespeare makes his cony-catcher so irresistible to audiences, his play, like Greene's pamphlets, has a way of making audiences feel

sheepish, by coaxing — or conning — us into identifying with a cozener who ultimately gets cozened.

In act 5, greeting Leontes after the crossing from Bohemia to Sicilia and pursued by his bear-like father Polixenes, Florizel represents Perdita as coming from Libya: "We have cross'd, / To execute the charge my father gave me / For visiting your highness" (*The Winter's Tale*, 5.1.160-62). In representing their "crossing," Florizel boldly crosses an imaginative boundary between Europe and Africa. In so doing, he produces a Perdita who, already suspected of being one of "nature's bastards" by her biological father Leontes (4.4.83), becomes for us increasingly "pied" or variegated, like the gillyvors she despises. An African Perdita is the essence of inter-breeding or cross-fertilization, improbably and momentarily produced in the garden of our imaginations by grafting Europe onto its other. The play, too, is a product of grafting, as I will argue in the next section, and, like Autolycus and Florizel, it changes garments, as it were, as it seesaws between (low) comedy and (high) romance, sometimes registering both in a single line, as in the Clown's remark about his sister Perdita: "There is no other way but to tell the King she's a changeling, and none of your flesh and blood" (4.4.687-89). Autolycus and Florizel's exchange of garments is a metatheatrical emblem of the pied genre of *The Winter's Tale*. Most broadly, *The Winter's Tale* represents the chiasitic exchange of borrowing and lending. Like Autolycus, Shakespeare is a creature of disguise and a master of the con. One of Shakespeare's most Hermes-like feats in *The Winter's Tale* involves his disguising his borrowing from Greene as something else: in particular, as a form of restoration and rebirth akin to those that take place at the end of the play. Shakespeare is, in other words, an Autolycus in the guise of a Paulina.¹²

Not exactly a "mouldy tale" (as Ben Jonson called *Pericles*), Greene's romance appears to take on that coloring and odor from the many references in Shakespeare's play to "tales" as "old" (Jonson 1975, 355). A popular and often reprinted text well into the Jacobean era, *Pandosto* had no cause to be rescued, no desperate need of being "greened" or revived through a triumph over time, even though critics persist in referring to it as an "old-fashioned piece."¹³ And yet, if one were to credit the view promoted within *The Winter's Tale* itself, tales in general are as wintry and decrepit as the figure of Time and stand in dire need of resuscitation. Stanley Cavell notes, "Three times an assertion is said to sound like an old tale — that the king's daughter is found, that Antigonus was torn to pieces by a bear, and that Hermione is living — and each time the purpose is to say that one will have trouble believing these things without seeing them, that the experience of them 'lames report,' 'undoes description,' and lies beyond the capacity of 'ballad-makers . . . to express it' (5.2.61-62, 26-27)" (Cavell 1987, 199). Early modern theater bore the capacity to

rejuvenate the prose tales on which its plots were frequently based by bringing the past — in the form of an old tale, but also the past tense in which the tale was written — into the present tense of live performance. In addition, theater can add the semblance of proof, validating dubious reports by adding seeing — and thereby believing — to the recounting of improbable events.¹⁴ Greene's romance thereby incurs a mighty debt to the sticky-fingered playwright who filched it. *The Winter's Tale* does credit to Greene's text, but it also takes credit. Recounting the reconciliation of fathers and children to the very seller of absurd tales, the ballad-monger Autolycus, three Gentlemen speak of "such a deal of wonder . . . broken out within this hour, that ballad-makers cannot be able to express it" (*The Winter's Tale*, 5.2.23-25). The Third Gentleman adds details of a "sight which was to be seen, cannot be spoken of"; an "encounter, which lames report to follow it, and undoes description to do it" (5.2.43-44, 58-59). The last line in particular reveals a fascinating subplot of retribution when read in light of the play's relation to the tale that spawned it. Report lamely follows sight. The tale limps after the "deal of wonder" that it is ill-fitted and ill-equipped to serve. The weakness of a projected report (by the Third Gentleman) reflects a putative weakness in Greene's prose romance in the face of Shakespeare's visual-theatrical deal of wonder. Shakespeare "undoes description," including his descriptive-narrative source, with the feast of visual "encounters" that is *The Winter's Tale*: a play that begins to look like a greened version of his rival's tragic, wintry romance. A wondrous aspect of *The Winter's Tale* is the way it "lames" its source, and so appears to give life to that which gave it life.¹⁵

In the course of fleecing Greene's romance, stripping it bare, Shakespeare, by harping on the secondary and belated aspect of tales, makes the play seem to come before its source, the prose romance seemingly a poor, disfigured telling of that which Shakespeare shows.¹⁶ By writing *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare places Greene eternally in his debt. In other words, Shakespeare robs his most spectacular act of borrowing as a lending. It is a trick worthy of Autolycus himself. And it is augured by the play's first lines, which chiasmatically represent Polixenes, the guest, as a lender as well as a borrower, and the host Leontes as a lender who is paradoxically in debt to his guest.

Graft and Corruption

Lending his clothes a living presence through apostrophe, Lear exclaims in his mad lucidity, "Off, off, you lendings: Come, unbutton here," on the way to experiencing what it means to be "the thing itself," "unaccommodated man" (*King Lear*, 3.4.104-107).¹⁷ Lear's clothes are "lendings" because they are borrowed from the beasts and also because they represent so many layers of obligation to a network of social meanings. The social network of mutual obligation

having ostensibly collapsed through the cruelty, filial ingratitude, and inhospitality of his daughters, Lear seeks (impossibly, of course) to be free altogether of obligation, including debts to the natural world.

William Carroll has shown how much this putative figure of the "thing itself," Poor Tom, apparently beyond obligation and without "lendings" of any kind — "Thou ow'st the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume," Lear observes (*King Lear* 3.4.101-103) — owes to contemporary stereotypes of the Bedlam madman and of the Abraham man, or fraudulent mad beggar. The very figure of "unaccommodated man" is, paradoxically, indebted to the widespread representation of the Poor Tom figure "in plays, archival documents, and particularly in the rogue pamphlets" (Carroll 1996, 102).¹⁸ Nevertheless, the austere vision of tragedy struggles to get around the inevitable circuitry of borrowing and lending that lies at the core of social identity and all forms of cultural production. Shakespearean tragedy continually reminds us of its basis in borrowed identities, fashioned largely by the lendings of "borrow'd robes," the cast-off clothes of the court that the King's Men and other theatrical companies of the time required in order to plausibly represent their social betters. The phrase is Macbeth's, of course, in response to Rosse's addressing him as Thane of Cawdor (*Macbeth*, 1.3.109).¹⁹ Characters in Shakespeare's tragedies and histories, like actors, are acutely self-conscious that their identities are fashioned by what Lear terms "lendings," and, like those of the actors that play them, these identities are merely borrowed for the nonce.

Tragedy represents the frustrations of characters who strive to move beyond the lendings of inky cloaks and borrowed robes. Characters in Shakespearean comedy, by contrast, accommodate themselves to the economies of borrowing and lending that were essential to Renaissance self-fashioning. "Accommodate" derives from Latin *accommodatus*, "suitable," past participle of *accommodare*, "to fit." Shakespeare's comedians accommodate or fit themselves not only to particular roles, but also to the need to play a role, the awareness of which produces more often than not a sense of freedom and happy advantages. They stop well short of the desire to circumvent the network of borrowing and lending on which the theaters, like social relationships in general, were founded. Shakespearean comedy moves toward the enrichment of personhood through the robings and robbings of personae: Portia's borrowing of a male identity, for example, is perfectly suitable to the discoveries and expansions of personae and makes a better "fit" with her enlarged personae than her previous, corseted role as passive and obedient daughter to a dead father. "Sure this robe of mine / Does change my disposition," the queenly Perdita remarks at the sheepshearing feast (*The Winter's Tale*, 4.4.134-35). The borrowings of comedy extended to language as well: Stephen

Greenblatt observes, "Shakespeare's plays from the 1590s are sprinkled with sly parodies of the words of his erstwhile rivals" (Greenblatt 2004, 215). Comedy calls attention to the widespread economy of literary borrowing and lending that helped produce the booming economy of the Elizabethan theaters. Shakespearean tragedy, by contrast, explores the terrible desire to be debt-free by repeatedly enacting the stripping away of "lendings" or mere contingencies. Curiously, Lear admires Poor Tom in terms that echo his mendacious ideas about kingship as existing in a sphere beyond mutual obligation. Kingship and need, he believes, are mutually exclusive. He can acknowledge need only after ceasing to be king — after abdicating the throne he planned to place himself under Cordelia's "kind nursery" (*King Lear*, 1.1.139). Cordelia's ominous "nothing" both mirrors and mocks Lear's implicit idea of kingship as a debt-free condition.

A botanical equivalent of the Elizabethan practice of textual borrowing and lending is "grafting," a term used both by Shakespeare in *The Winter's Tale* and in various texts by and about Robert Greene. The metaphor is itself a way of grafting the social practices of borrowing onto the natural world. It evokes the geographical mobility of the play, which transplants us, so to speak, from Sicilia to Bohemia; the social mobility of both playwrights; and Shakespeare's grafting of his imagination onto that of his old rival in composing *The Winter's Tale*. When Leontes tallies the possible reasons for Camillo's blindness toward Polixenes' alleged perfidy, he says, "Or else thou must be counted / A servant grafted in my serious trust, / And therein negligent" (*The Winter's Tale*, 1.2.245-47). Leontes' metaphor anticipates Perdita's later association of grafting with corrupting the purity of a particular stock. Early in the festival scene, striving to match flowers with their recipients' ages, Perdita takes pride in having no "streak'd gillyvors, / Which some call nature's bastards" in her garden (4.4.82-83). When Polixenes asks, "Wherefore, gentle maiden, / Do you neglect them?" she responds that she has heard, "There is an art which, in their piedness, shares / With great creating nature" (4.4.87-88). For Perdita, who seems unaware of the extent to which the play that contains her is a product of literary graft, grafting represents a corruption that extends well beyond the particular instance in question. It corrupts nature itself by transgressively joining it with something that lies outside of nature. Botanical grafting, in short, grafts art onto nature. Polixenes, by contrast, views art as an outgrowth of nature. Though his argument implicitly affirms the marriage he is about to oppose, Polixenes famously replies that the art of grafting, "an art / Which does mend nature . . . itself is nature" (4.4.95-97). The issue, of course, is breeding, and whether good breeding may be achieved by grafting the stocks, say, of the seemingly lowborn shepherdess Perdita and of Prince Florizel.

Grafting was also the metaphor used by Nashe in a preface to Greene's late romance *Menaphon* (1589), complaining of the ambitions of uneducated dramatists from "the engrafted overflow

of some kill-cow conceit": a probable reference, Greenblatt suggests, to Thomas Kyd, another playwright who, like Shakespeare, lacked the advantages of a university education (Greenblatt 2004, 203). It is an image particularly well suited to describe socially mobile playwrights such as Shakespeare and Greene. It is also the image Greene used to describe himself in his deathbed pamphlet "Repentance" when deploring his dissolute life in Cambridge. Growing acquainted "with notable Braggarts, boon companions, and ordinary spend-thrifts, that practiced sundry superficial studies, I became as a Sien grafted into the same stocke, whereby I did absolutely participate of their nature and qualities" (Greene 1966a, 20). The metaphor bears a double aptness to Greene's collegiate years, which yielded two Master's degrees, since it was precisely his university education that allowed him to raise himself from humble beginnings in Norwich. Greene, the son of parents of modest means, managed to attend university on scholarship. In this respect, he was like at least two other of the university wits: Marlowe, a cobbler's son, and Nashe, son of a curate. Like Falstaff, however, Greene characteristically inverts the narrative, pretending that his "grafting" was of a corrupting kind. By nature he was virtuous, becoming debased only when joined unto collegiate braggarts and boon companions.²⁰

Autolycus "blends into Shakespeare" (Bloom) and into Greene. He may be the hardest product of this grafting of two imaginations, and the surest sign that Shakespeare saw his play as a kind of partnership with this rival from his past: not a full partnership, to be sure, but just the kind Autolycus himself would have relished, one in which profits need not be shared. Shakespeare uses Greene to pick the pockets of a credulous crowd, to adopt Greenblatt's metaphor for the statue scene (Greenblatt 2004, 371). Autolycus is at once Shakespeare, pilfering from his old rival in order to turn a profit; and Greene as Shakespeare's rival, the worldly figure undone by Shakespeare's unprepossessing and unlettered rustics the Shepherd and his son the Clown, as the urbane Greene's sad tale is both undone and "newborn" (*The Winter's Tale*, 3.3.113) by the rustic Shakespeare, a scenario also borrowed from Greene's cony-catching pamphlets;²¹ and Greene as Shakespeare's agent, the two playwrights collaborating together to work the crowd, as it were, like cony-catcher and accomplice. He is the surest sign that the green world of act 4 of *The Winter's Tale* is also a Greene world: That is, at its most pastoral moment, in the sheep-shearing feast, Shakespeare's play bears unmistakable traces of the London underworld that Greene knew so well, having left a respectable wife and child to take up with the sister, Em, of a notorious underworld figure by the name of Cutting Ball.

Shakespeare's romances focus our attention on the enactment of forgiveness, a subject that drifts center stage even or especially when it is withheld: for instance, in the recognition scene

where Hermione never explicitly forgives Leontes, or when Prospero withholds explicit and public pardon from Caliban. In a phase of Shakespeare's career when he was thinking so extensively about forgiveness, it is hard to imagine that Greene, no less than his romance, was not on Shakespeare's mind when he crafted his scenes of reconciliation. When one considers details of the two men's lives and careers, comparisons spring up like pied gillyvors. Greene was an Antonio to Shakespeare's Prospero, or a Leontes to Shakespeare's Polixenes. In some respects "twinned" like the two kings (*The Winter's Tale*, 1.2.67), they were also embodiments of "great difference."

Each playwright, borrower and lender, had a son who died in his youth. Shakespeare's only son Hamnet died at the age of eleven in 1596; Greene's bitter enemy Gabriel Harvey reported the death in 1593 of a son, Fortunatus Greene, borne to Greene by Em Ball. Like young Prince Mamillius in the play, neither Fortunatus Greene nor Hamnet Shakespeare would live to make "old hearts fresh" by fulfilling the desire "to see him a man" (*The Winter's Tale*, 1.1.41-43). Greene abandoned a wife and child after spending his wife's dowry and went to London to seek a theatrical career; if Shakespeare did not exactly abandon Anne and their three children in quite the same way, he certainly stretched the idea of being "away on business" to its limits. In their varying degrees of disregard for family ties, as well as in their literary cunning, each may be aptly described as an Autolycus or "lone wolf."²² In his late pamphlets, Greene repeatedly and extravagantly renounced his earlier works and deeds; Shakespeare staged a less self-indulgent, but nonetheless memorable renunciation in his final play *The Tempest*, in which Prospero vows to "abjure" his "rough magic," break his staff, and "drown [his] book" (*The Tempest*, 5.1.50-57). Above all, the two shared certain theatrical trademarks and practices, as critics have frequently noted, including a penchant for strong, intelligent, loyal, sympathetic, courageous, and frequently stoic heroines (Viola in *Twelfth Night* and Rosalind in *As You Like It* may have owed a debt to Greene's Margaret of Fressingfield in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* [1594] and to Dorothea in *James IV* [1598]); a delight in blending history and comedy; a skill in weaving subplots with main plots; and the practice of combining tragedy and comedy, as Greene does at the end of *Pandosto*. Like Leontes and Polixenes, Shakespeare and Greene are "twinned" enough for Greene's faults to seem exaggerated versions of the other's, and Shakespeare a redeemed version of his rival: an Elizabethan prodigal who, exercising financial care and prudence throughout his long absence, eventually returned home.

In creating such a composite character as Autolycus, I have been arguing, Shakespeare grafts himself onto Greene, as he has been doing implicitly while writing his winter's tale of revenge and recognition. He also draws a Greene-like character, a cony-catcher from London's underworld

who is caught in his own trap while his gulls or marks, the shepherd and his clownish son, prosper at his expense. It is a scenario that might have suggested to its very author, the prosperous man from Stratford — now a gentleman made though not a "gentleman born" (as the shepherd's son improbably claims on the basis of their new garments [*The Winter's Tale*, 5.2.129-35]) and without the benefit of a university education — the final undoing of his clever rival.

In *A Groats-Worth of Witte*, Greene tells the tale of the dying usurer Gorinius and his two sons: the scholar Roberto, about whom Greene later reveals, "Heereafter suppose me the saide Roberto," and the son he hopes will follow in his miserly and usurious footsteps, Lucanio (Greene 1966a, 39). Upon the latter, the dying father bestows his blessing: "Because I hope thou wilt as thy father be a gatherer, let me blesse thee before I dye. Multiply in welth my sonne by any meanes thou maist" (11). As E. A. J. Honigmann has suggested about this tale and about the fable of the grasshopper and the ant that follows, Shakespeare's quality as a "gatherer" may have irked his rival as much as his meteoric rise in London's theatrical world (Honigmann 1982, 1-6). On at least two occasions, Shakespeare's father John had faced accusations that he lent money at usurious rates, and Shakespeare himself appears to have done likewise later in his career.²³ Whether or not the playwright ever did so during Greene's abbreviated lifetime, Greene would likely have recognized in the upstart crow he maligned at the end of the same pamphlet the personality traits that the father projects onto "Roberto's" brother and rival Lucanio: namely, those of the gatherer aiming to improve and enlarge his estate rather than squander a patrimony.

In *The Winter's Tale*, those presumed dead repeatedly return to life. At the end of the play the living statue of Hermione moves under the influence of Paulina's careful dramaturgy. As Hermione descends from her pedestal, in her movements hoping to move us, so does Shakespeare implicitly extend the same treatment to *Pandosto* (1585) and its author, Robert Greene. The statue trick may serve as a metaphor for the larger contrivance that is the play itself: the necromantic way Shakespeare has with an old text like Greene's as he coaxes it to move and breathe through the lively art of theater, making a wintry narrative green again in the fullness of his stagecraft.²⁴ Largely through the figure of Autolycus, *The Winter's Tale* slyly reveals the extent to which that most brilliant of theatrical careers was built on literary grafting and even outright theft. At the same time, the play justifies its roguish behavior by demonstrating that its author never steals from the dead without reviving, never lifts without elevating.

A Man Walks into a Bar

It is more than a little curious that Shakespeare worked exceptionally closely with the text of a man who famously accused him of intellectual property theft in his deathbed pamphlet, *A Groats-*

Worth of Witte. The well-known passage excoriates the interloper as an "upstart Crow . . . that with his *Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and . . . is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a country" (Greene 1966a, 45-46).²⁵ Greene's line may refer to Shakespeare-as-actor, robing himself in the university-trained playwrights' elegant rhetoric and well-turned lines, or to the upstart playwright who, without benefit of a university degree, pretends to follow the profession then dominated by the so-called University Wits. Either way, there is a strong suggestion of Shakespeare as confidence man, though this celebrated and widely quoted passage is not usually read in the context of Greene's cony-catching pamphlets.

The continued popularity in Jacobean England of Greene's romance from the 1580s makes it even more surprising that Shakespeare hewed so closely to Greene's original. The printing press assured a long and vigorous afterlife for the text. *Pandosto* had run through no fewer than six editions between its first printing and the premiere of *The Winter's Tale* in 1611, the most recent dating from 1609. In addition, imitations in prose and verse adaptations had sprung up well before Shakespeare penned his stage adaptation, as Lori Newcomb records in her detailed study of the afterlife of Greene's romance (Newcomb 2002, 82).²⁶ Shakespeare presumably worked so closely from the printed text of *Pandosto* for reasons other than a desire to honor his bitter predecessor. Shakespeare, I would suggest, is setting up his audience, and in so doing revives the dead spirit as well as the letter of Robert Greene. Early modern theaters were notorious haunts for cony-catchers, as Greene was fond of reminding his readers (see, for example, "The Second Part of Conny-Catching," in Greene 1966b, 30, 32, 34). As in other large assemblies of Londoners and visitors to the capital, these members of London's underworld performed little "scenes" of pick-pocketing and purse-cutting away from the stage, among the jostling crowds of distracted spectators. The con I want to describe, however, takes place on the stage, its perpetrator none other than the celebrated playwright himself.

In his 1591 pamphlet "A Notable Discovery of Cozenage," Greene exposes an elaborate swindle that urban cony-catchers practiced on unsuspecting visitors to the capital. To begin with, a man walks into a bar: presumably a man not unlike Shakespeare when he arrived from rural Warwickshire. Conies or marks, Greene notes, were frequently men from the country who had journeyed to London for the sitting of the assizes: "The poor man that cometh to the Term to try his right, and layeth his land to mortgage to get some Crowns in his purse to see his Lawyer, is drawn in by these devilish Cony-catchers that at one cut at Cards loseth all his money, by which means he, his wife, and children [are] brought to utter ruin and misery" (Kinney 1990, 164). The

trick involves a "Setter," or "partie that taketh vp the Connie," and the "Verser," or "he that plaieth the game," and the success of the trick depends on the setter and verser's getting the cony to believe that he is being let in on trade secrets. After the setter lets the victim in on a card-marking trick, a "barnacle" appears: another swindler who appears to wander in from the outside and either asks or is asked to play at cards. The verser then offers to play "a game at which there can be no deceit, . . . mum-chance at cards," a simple game that involves both the barnacle and the cony calling a card. That player wins whose card shows up first. The elegance of the trick derives from the verser's pretending to enlist the cony's aid to deceive the barnacle. The setter would deal the cards in such a way that the cony would catch sight of a card near the top of the deck and ask the cony to call a card for him against the barnacle. After several rounds at which the cony succeeds at the apparent expense of the barnacle (the cony has by this time decided to stake his own money), and after the stakes have had time to double and redouble, the trick would unaccountably go awry for the cony: the card he called would fail to turn up before the one called by the barnacle, and he would lose all that he had wagered.²⁷ It is more than the cony's innocence and susceptibility to urban predators that have been exposed, for the swindle's success also entails the exposure of the cony's greed and willingness to swindle others. Thus, the cony-catchers strip the victim of not only his cash, but also his dignity. Any claim the cony might make to moral superiority, any ability to play the part of the outraged and victimized innocent, has been unwittingly wagered and lost along with the cony's purse.

An audience member who was familiar with *Pandosto*, leaving the theater after a performance of *The Winter's Tale* in 1611, might very well have felt him- or herself playing the part of a cony in an artistic form of the swindle Greene had exposed in his popular cony-catching pamphlets. Such a spectator, lured to predict, silently or otherwise, various plot twists as well as the eventual outcome of the play, implicitly "wagered" and "won" repeatedly — until the end. It is likely that at least a few of those in Shakespeare's audience who knew Greene's highly popular and widely circulated story even proudly displayed their foreknowledge, revealing to nearby spectators the turn the play was about to take and ignoring the warning of Autolycus on catching sight of the Shepherd and his son, the Clown: "Here is more matter for a hot brain: every lane's end, every shop, church, session, hanging, yields a careful man work" (*The Winter's Tale*, 4.4.684-86).

For these, Shakespeare's ending would have yielded considerable surprise. Until this point, there have been slight modifications of Greene, like the reversal of Bohemia and Sicilia, and embellishments that any spectator would have expected in a stage adaptation: the long sheep-shearing feast, for example, developed from a glancing reference in Greene; or the addition of

characters such as Paulina, Autolycus, and Antigonus with little or no equivalent in *Pandosto*. To those who knew their Greene, the appearance of a bear chasing Antigonus must have seemed a temporary rout of their expectations, doubling the onstage action. But none of Shakespeare's alterations before the denouement would have prepared audience members for Shakespeare's radical departure from his source at the end of the play, as sudden as the volcanic eruption of Leontes' jealousy and Polixenes' departure from Sicilia. In *The Winter's Tale*, Hermione is revealed to be alive and to have been sequestered over a broad expanse of time, allowing for a reunion and reconciliation of sorts among Hermione, Leontes, and Perdita. In Greene's romance, by contrast, Bellaria (Hermione) dies following her trial. Furthermore, Pandosto (Leontes) is drawn into what he does not recognize as an incestuous desire for his daughter Fawnia (Perdita). Shakespeare's play takes only a hesitant step in this direction when Leontes momentarily entertains the idea of marrying Perdita at the end of act 5, scene 1. When Florizel assures him that "at your request, / My father will grant precious things as trifles," Leontes responds, "Would he do so, I'd beg your precious mistress, / Which he counts but as a trifle," a remark that earns a rebuke from Paulina: "Your eye hath too much youth in it" (*The Winter's Tale*, 5.1.220-24). In a play about rejuvenation, about the power to make "old hearts fresh" (1.1.39), as Camillo says about the young Prince Mamillius, Shakespeare has Leontes take a hesitant step on a perverse, unnatural, and mendacious path to this end.

For those who knew Greene's romance, this exchange would likely have produced the expectation of a prolonged fit of (incestuous) desire, mirroring the fit of jealousy at the romance's beginning, and confirmed that, after the long intermezzo of the sheep-shearing feast, the play is back on track and traveling towards its tragic outcome. Greene's romance ends with Pandosto's fall "into a melancholy fit" and suicide, triggered by his having lusted "after his own daughter," his betrayal of Egistus (Polixenes), and his having caused Bellaria's death (Pafford 1963, 225). The point at which Shakespeare departs most dramatically from Greene is marked by a chorus of references to the inability of an "old tale" to command or compel belief: "That she is living, / Were it but told to you, should be hooted at / Like an old tale" (5.3.115-17). Furthermore, the play's final scene is built upon what Richard Proudfoot has characterized as a "thirst of seeing," as "the motif of seeing is revived in a series of sights" and "Paulina stresses to Leontes the importance of visual proof" (Proudfoot 1976, 74, 77).²⁸ The theater can partly assuage that thirst and provide such proof; Shakespeare's print source cannot. Thus, at the very moment when Shakespeare's play swerves away from the content of Greene's prose romance, it also vigorously asserts the superiority of its own theatrical medium.

Because the play-text follows Greene's romance so closely until the end, the spectator is effectively set up. Like any skilled confidence man, Shakespeare leads his spectator to believe that, armed with a superior knowledge of Greene's text, he or she is an insider, privy to the playwright's tricks and knowing the outcome in advance, only to have that confidence exposed as a con by the sudden divergence of play from print source. For the cony/spectator of *The Winter's Tale* who knew Greene's romance, the anticipated "card" would unaccountably fail to turn up at the end. Paradoxically, by suddenly departing from Greene at the end of the play, Shakespeare hewed ever closer to him: specifically, by enacting a ruse like those that Greene was famous for exposing. By effectively tricking those literate spectators who prided themselves on their knowledge of Greene's prose romance, he causes his play to resemble nothing so much as an episode from a pamphlet by Robert Greene and, further, Greene's rhetorical method itself.

As Arthur Kinney shows in his commentary on Greene's first cony-catching pamphlet, "A Notable Discovery," Greene does not simply record cony-catching practices, but also reenacts them in the shifting rhetoric and vagaries of his own text: "In many examples Greene sets us up to see that those who seek to outcozen the cozeners are only themselves cozeners at heart and therefore deserve what they get even as the cozeners do . . . We are constantly forced into situations where we are shown that our own sympathies are either ambiguous or downright immoral." Greene tricks us into sympathizing with those who deserve no sympathy. Like that of the conies in his stories, "our own earnestness provides grounds for our own deceptions; and in exposing the ugliness of the farmer who is willing to prey on others he exposes our baser traits." Thus, Greene's "book is designed not to reveal cony-catchers but to play games with the language as cony-catchers do; the author is transformed by the pamphlet into a cony-catcher himself; and we are in turn teased into becoming conies by buying this book, tricked into thinking it was the exposé it proposed to be" (Kinney 1990, 158-59).²⁹ Like the cony who is led to think of himself as an insider, Greene's reader is set up to fall into the same confidence trap (of feeling overconfident), since "A Notable Discovery" begins by making the reader feel, like the cony, an insider who is in on the most elaborate swindles of London's underworld. Like his dead rival, Shakespeare enacts the very ruses and tricks he exposes in the figure of Autolycus — with the crucial difference that Shakespeare's "victims" are not country bumpkins, but largely an elite drawn from London's literate classes. This difference may in part explain Shakespeare's exchanging Bohemia for Sicilia, country for court, in his adaptation of Greene.³⁰

The resemblance of Shakespeare's play to a cony-catching trick lends an added dimension and level of intrigue to his title. Those who remembered Greene's popular pamphlets might have

heard in Shakespeare's title, in addition to the usual meaning of a trivial old tale useful mainly for whiling away a long winter's evening (see Pafford 1963, liii-liv, for a discussion of the meanings of the title), the echo of a promise made by Greene's cony-catcher as he pretends to take the cony into his confidence: "Ile learne you a trick worth the noting, that you shall win many a pot with in the winter nights" (Greene 1966b, 25). Like Greene's cony-catcher and like Greene himself, Shakespeare pretends to take his audience into his confidence with Mamillius' line to his mother, "A sad tale's best for winter" (*The Winter's Tale*, 2.1.25). Seeming to give us a cue for interpreting the play's title, the line is a deliberate miscue, masking the sudden turn toward restoration and reunion behind the expectation of a sorrowful ending, an expectation that would have been even stronger for those who recalled *Pandosto*. The title itself serves the ends of the playwright-trickster, who no doubt gleaned many a pot with his play in the winter nights of 1611. Beneath one level of confidence — the attentive spectator's pride in connecting the title with Mamilius' apparent cue that this play will prove to be a tragedy — the title winks a second time, imparting a sense of the gentle confidence game that is afoot through its echo of Greene's cony-catching pamphlet.

The Winter's Tale is an elaborate cony-catching trick in which Greene and Shakespeare play setter and verser, with the literate portion of Shakespeare's audience unwittingly cast as conies. Autolycus, the character who wanders into Shakespeare's Greene-world from outside the romance-text, much like the barnacle who pretends to wander in from outside the tavern, also, like a barnacle, seems to lose, tripped up as he is by his own actions and by the competent bungling of the Shepherd and Clown. Like that of any effective barnacle, however, Autolycus' presence is a distraction, designed to build the confidence of the cony-spectator. Watching the barnacle's undoing, he fancies himself to be his superior in wit, and invulnerable to a more cunning and advanced craft. But the rogue spirit of the play is not subdued with the defeat of Autolycus in act 5, scene 2. Rather, it goes underground. As in Greene's pamphlets, after the barnacle's apparent undoing there remains one more level to the con, one more undoing in the offing. The spectator who looks for it onstage misunderstands his or her own part in the play, as the cony invariably does.

At another level of deception, *The Winter's Tale* is a confidence game between partners. "At some moment in the late 1580s, Shakespeare walked into a room — most likely, in an inn in Shoreditch, Southwark, or the Bankside — and quite possibly found many of the leading writers drinking and eating together": So begins Stephen Greenblatt's vividly imagined account of Shakespeare's introduction to the group of London's leading playwrights (Greenblatt 2004, 200). Shakespeare, of course, was a young man from the Warwickshire countryside, precisely the sort that Robert Greene imagined walking into the London taverns that served as warrens of cony-catchers in his rogue pamphlets. His position vis-à-vis this group is in part indicated by Greene's

complaint in his deathbed pamphlet about the "upstart Crow." *The Winter's Tale* is, among other things, Shakespeare's demonstration of the utter — call it confidence — that he has achieved over his career as a playwright. This confidence is underscored both by the playwright's close adherence to Greene's text, knowing full well his ability to outstrip his dead rival in language, characterization, and even plotting, and by his implicit demonstration, like that of a student to his former tutor, that he has thoroughly mastered the art that Greene repeatedly exposed in his popular and notorious pamphlets.

All of Shakespeare's romances feature examples of improbable reunions. Perhaps the most unlikely is that between Shakespeare and the bitter man who excoriated the actor-poseur. The thriving survivor calls back from the dead his old rival across a gap in time, nineteen years, roughly comparable to the sixteen-year stretch that separates the first three acts of the play from the last two. In this play of forgiveness and reconciliation, Shakespeare and Greene "shake hands, as over a vast; and embrace, as it were, from the ends of opposed winds" (*The Winter's Tale*, 1.1.29-31), but not to enact a sentimental reunion between the successful playwright and his irascible and intensely jealous bohemian rival.³¹ Immobile as a statue, Greene, we may imagine, doubles as both cony-catching partner and gull or "fool, / That seest a game play'd home, the rich stake drawn, / And tak'st it all for jest" (1.2.247-49), as Leontes says of Camillo. He is at best a reluctant collaborator with the upstart crow who has once again beautified himself with his rival's feathers.

Notes

1. References to *The Winter's Tale* come from J. H. P. Pafford's second Arden edition of the play (Shakespeare 1963). The date for Greene's romance is traditionally given as 1588, but Lori Humphrey Newcomb argues for an earlier date for the first edition of *Pandosto* in her recent and thorough study of the lives and afterlives of Greene's text, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England* (Newcomb 2002, 56). Though it may be mere coincidence, the gap between the commonly accepted date of 1588 and the likely premiere of Shakespeare's play, 1611 — namely, twenty-three years — may account for the curious recurrence of the number twenty-three in *The Winter's Tale*. It is the difference in ages between father and son, Leontes and Mamillius: "Looking on the lines / Of my boy's face, methought I did recoil / Twenty-three years" (*The Winter's Tale*, 1.2.153-55). Cleomenes and Dion have been away twenty-three days on their sojourn to Apollo's oracle (2.3.197-98). And the number marks the beginning of mature adulthood according to the Shepherd, who wishes "there were no age between ten and three-and-twenty, or that youth would sleep out the rest; for there is nothing in the between but getting wenches with child, wronging the ancientry, stealing, fighting —" (3.3.59-63). In *The Winter's*

Tale, it seems to be the number of regeneration, truth, and maturation. Might it be Shakespeare's calculated way of implying that *The Winter's Tale*, which like Mamillius is twenty-three years younger than its source, is a renewed and reanimated *Pandosto* that is both artistically more mature (for it is, in another sense, exactly twenty-three years older than its infant source) and truer to nature than Greene's romance? For an account of other critics who have noticed this particular numerical pattern in the play, see Turner and Haas (2005, 82-83n). The only other explanation for the pattern that has been advanced, as far as I know, is that of Emrys Jones: "The number twenty-three . . . was possibly felt to have symbolic value: Being one short of twenty-four it is expressive of a state of being almost complete and is comparable to . . . 'the eleventh hour'" (cited in Turner and Haas, 83n).

2. There are several other characters in the play with little or no correspondence to characters in Greene's source, notably Paulina, Antigonus, Emilia, the Clown, Mopsa and Dorcas, and Time. As to the latter, Greene has no need of an equivalent figure in his prose romance, whose conventions allow Fawnia to grow up in the space of a page without any such awkward intervention. Still, he seems to have given Shakespeare the cue for his rare allegorical turn in the subtitle of his romance, "The Triumph of Time." Even more apposite, since Shakespeare's Time seems more decrepit than triumphant, the figure may owe something to the proverbial opening of Greene's first cony-catching pamphlet, "A Notable Discovery": "Time refineth men's affects, and their humors grow different by the distinction of age" (Robert Greene, "A Notable Discovery of Cozenage," in Kinney 1990, 163). Likening himself to Diogenes, Ovid, and Socrates, Greene postures at the beginning of this pamphlet as a repentant and self-reformed wanton, as he does throughout his works, arguably providing the model for Shakespeare's penitent Leontes, who, unlike his suicidal counterpart Pandosto in Greene's romance, is tempered by time and experience.
3. Arthur Kinney points out how Autolycus, in his meeting with the Clown, borrows a page from the early rogue pamphlet by Thomas Harman, *A Caveat or Warning for Common Cursetors* (1566): "Autolycus follows Harman's description of the Counterfeit Crank [epileptic] as if it were a rule-book" (Kinney 1990, 26).
4. See especially Bloom, "As parodistic song writer, Autolycus blends into Shakespeare, immensely enjoying his fantasies of usurers' wives (Shakespeare himself being a usurer)" (Bloom 1998, 652); and Greenblatt, "Where is Shakespeare in this strange story, a story lifted from his old rival Robert Greene? In part, he seems playfully to peer out at us behind the mask of a character he added to Greene's story, the rogue Autolycus" (Greenblatt 2004, 371).

5. Garber goes on to note the classical and Ovidian dimensions of the scene, particularly its references to the Pygmalion and the Proserpina stories. In his Oxford Shakespeare edition of the play, Stephen Orgel explains Paulina's name in terms of the Pauline faith in "things not seen, the primacy of the spirit over the letter" (Orgel 1996, 59-60, n2). Richard Proudfoot refers to the "ripple of that association between art and divine providence which culminates in the statue scene" (Proudfoot 1976, 71). Patricia Parker points out that Paulina's "name recalls the Pauline definition of faith as the evidence of things unseen" (Parker 2004, 44). Giving a geographical turn to the frequent linkage of Paulina with St. Paul, Richard Wilson writes, "It may be no coincidence that *The Winter's Tale* is perhaps the first of Shakespeare's plays to be written or revised specifically for the Burbages' enclosed Blackfriars Playhouse, in the monastic quarter on the opposite bank of the Thames to the Globe amphitheatre, in the shadow of St. Paul's." With a mistress like Paulina to control the entrances and exits, the Blackfriars Playhouse was "fulfilling the historic function of this 'little Rome' or foreign corner of the Square Mile, which was as the gateway to London's recusant underground" (Wilson 2004, 258).
6. In an elaborate homonymic pun linking "gest," "jest," "guest," "gestation," and "guess," Hermione unwittingly partners guess-work and gest-work, or storytelling, with the economics of hospitality, or what might be called guest-work. The gest or duration of Polixenes' visit happens to coincide with the gestation period of an infant and of the wild story or gest that Leontes has conceived. The polyphony sounded by the many-layered, homonymic pun "gest" echoes throughout the remainder of the play. It would be no exaggeration to say that *The Winter's Tale* as a whole represents a miraculous dilation of this single word. "Gest" evokes "jest" (OED, "gest," sb1.3), the courtly playfulness of Hermione, Leontes' fear of being made a mockery, as well as Leontes' serving, like Lear, as his own unwitting court jester; "to gest" in the sense of "to tell a tale, to recite a romance" (OED, "gest," v1), evoking the play's larger identity, its tendency to reflect on tales, and the mad tale of adultery conjured by Leontes' imagination, a "gest" that, like Hermione's child, has a "gestation" period of exactly nine months; "gest" as "the time allotted for a halt or stay" (OED, "gest," sb4b), as projected extensions of the gests of the two men are measured against one another by Hermione; "to gest" in the sense of "to perform" and the related sense of "gest" as deed or exploit (OED, "gest," v2 and sb1), both of which raise the shadow of the exploit of which Polixenes is suspected; "gest" as "bearing, carriage, mien" and "a movement of a limb: an action, gesture" (OED, "gest," sb3.1-2); and Leontes' misguided attempts to read his wife's "gests"; "guess," specifically the mad guesswork of Leontes, which, I shall try to show later, is duplicated by the erroneous guesswork of the spectator who is ultimately misled by his or her knowledge of Shakespeare's source; and

"gestation," both of the infant girl and of what Patricia Parker deems "the play's gestational plot of loss and return" (Parker 2004, 31). It is echoed by Hermione's word "guest" fourteen lines later (*The Winter's Tale*, 1.2.55), referring to Polixenes' status as a visitor and debtor who owes his presence to Hermione and her husband, and subsequently by Leontes' reference to Camillo, in his refusal to acknowledge Polixenes' treachery, as "a fool, / That seest a game play'd home, the rich stake drawn, / And tak'st it all for jest" (1.2.247-49), as well as by Polixenes' "guess" (1.2.403). The larger gest ("a story or romance in verse: also simply [in later use] a story, tale" [OED, "gest," sb1.2]) that is *The Winter's Tale* requires of us, as Hermione does of Polixenes, a gest or stay of a certain length of time. As the title of the play suggests, Shakespeare's gest, the time allotted for *The Winter's Tale*, resembles that of a tale or narrative (gest) more than a play. Shakespeare's Time, announcing as he does a sixteen-year, temporal gap, mimics techniques of narrative compression that are apparent in Greene's gest or romance. The gest of the play is a compressed form of the unusually long, sixteen-year gestation period before it comes to term. Sounding in both heroic and satiric registers, the word summons and summarizes the compound nature of the play and calls attention to the play's origins and gestational development from Greene's romance.

7. Like the boys whose closeness it describes, Polixenes' phrase is itself twinned. In the Folio text, as editors Susan Snyder and Deborah Curren-Aquino point out in their recent New Cambridge Shakespeare edition of the play, the word is spelled "twyn'd," "a variant of 'twined' = entwined, interwoven" (Snyder and Curren-Aquino 2002, 89n). In the two-word phrase "twinn'd lambs" the faunal metaphor of twinning entwines with the botanical metaphor of twining with which the play opens: "They were trained together in their childhoods, and there rooted betwixt them then such an affection which cannot choose but branch now" (*The Winter's Tale*, 1.1.23-25), Camillo observes in an expression that elaborately twines sameness and difference. As has often been noted, the metaphor of branching suggests both proliferation, the fullness of the two kings' adult friendship, as well as separation and divergence, rootedness or stasis and movement or change, a dyad also implicit in the faunal-botanical "twinn'd"/"twyn'd." The twinned/twined pair anticipates what Susan Snyder has described as Leontes' pathological aversion to change, even during the period of "frozen, iterative mourning," similar to the phenomenon of "blocked mourning" analyzed by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. "If the mourning process is not allowed to go its course," writes Snyder, "a process of incorporation may take place, which instead of working through loss and change seeks to deny them by secretly 'encrypting' the lost loved one, perfect and fixed, within the psyche. This (delusory) recuperative magic of incorporation is distinct from, and opposite to, introjection, the normal process by which the

ego expands and transforms itself by taking in internal and external changes" (Snyder 2002, 204-205).

8. Patricia Parker has noted the chiasmus behind the odd difference in season and setting between the wintry but southern Sicily, ruled by a king whose name "suggests 'Leo,' the zodiacal sign of summer" and the Arcadian or pastoral, but more northern Bohemia (Parker 2005, 189).
9. See Snyder and Curren-Aquino 2002, 253n for a discussion of the crux of the exchange of clothes. Richard Proudfoot is particularly astute on the question of exactly what clothing Autolycus receives in his exchange with Prince Florizel: a shepherd's disguise or the more courtly clothing that would allow him to pass himself off as a courtier (Proudfoot 1976, 75-76).
10. The attributes of Hermes — patron of wealth, of trade, of travelers, of thieves, of eloquence, and of increase in the animal world — curiously connect the diverse elements of act 4, scene 4. But in a sense, Shakespeare works against the Hermes-like spirit of the scene — the name Hermes means "the hastener," and he was noted for his swiftness — in setting a slow and deliberate pace. Following on the heels of the swift spatio-temporal movement across sixteen years and the watery gap between Sicilia and Bohemia, the dilated feast scene slows time to a crawl.
11. Among the meanings of "fleece" current in Shakespeare's day, according to the O.E.D., were "2. To pluck or shear (the wool) from a sheep. Hence fig. to obtain by unjust or unfair means. Also, to take toll of, take pickings from. 3. To strip (a person, city, country, etc.) of money, property, etc., as a sheep is stripped of its fleece; to make (anyone) pay to the uttermost; to exact money from, or make exacting charges upon; to plunder, rob heartlessly; to victimize." Parker notes that "'sheep-shearing' and 'fleecing' were . . . part of the lexicon of usury, equated with both theft and the proverbial wolf among sheep" (Parker 2004, 31).
12. The Shakespeare of *The Winter's Tale* has been likened to both characters. Greenblatt observes that the Shakespeare of *The Winter's Tale* is no less a Paulina than an Autolycus: "Shakespeare is somewhere else onstage, peering out from behind a different mask — that of the old woman who arranges the whole scene of the statue's coming-to-life" (Greenblatt 2004, 371). Mowat argues that Autolycus can shift according to the intertexts he evokes: As a trickster figure, he "can be seen as a stand-in for the artist himself, endowed with Mercury's gifts of eloquence and illusion-making, a kind of earlier-day Felix Krull"; as a rogue, he "speaks more of social and economic struggle, of counterfeiting, of acting, if you will, as Autolycus first licks the sweat off the true laborer's brow and then exits to change his costume for his next actorly role" (Mowat 1994, 70).
13. The phrase is Greenblatt's, who writes that "near the end of his career, when he wanted to stage an old-fashioned piece, a 'winter's tale,' [Shakespeare] dramatized Greene's by-now-forgotten

story of irrational jealousy, *Pandosto*" (Greenblatt 2004, 207). Newcomb shows how in the early Stuart era romance, including Greene's text, had begun to be denigrated, "discounted by Rowlands as reading for the countrified and by Jonson as reading for women" (Newcomb 2002, 119), but Greene's romance was hardly forgotten by the time Shakespeare staged his revival.

14. Cavell writes that Shakespeare's play asserts "the competition of poetic theater with nontheatrical romance as modes of narrative, and especially claiming the superiority of theater (over a work like his own 'source' *Pandosto*) in securing full faith and credit in fiction" (Cavell 1987, 199).
15. In a manner related to this point, Shakespeare puns on the word "grave" in the sense of what is written or inscribed, what is sculpted, and what is dead in act 5 of the play. In an apostrophe to Hermione following the Servant's praise of the peerless Perdita, Paulina laments,

As every present time doth boast itself
Above a better gone, so must thy grave
Give way to what's seen now! Sir, you yourself
Have said, and writ so; but your writing now
Is colder than that theme. (*The Winter's Tale*, 5.1.96-100)

"Thy grave" condenses Hermione in her grave, having yielded to the sight of Perdita, and what the Servant has written of her, which has also given way to "what's seen now," and looks ahead to the revelation of the sculpted or graven statue of Hermione in act 5, scene 3. Hermione's statue seems, among other things, an emblem of the lively art of the theater which rescues what is written — for example, Greene's prose romance — from "the grave," from death as well as from a condition of being merely written or graven.

16. Patricia Parker has shown how the rhetorical figure of hysteron proteron, which entails the "reversal of proper or natural order," informs *The Winter's Tale* (Parker 1987, 67-69). I would add to her wonderful remarks that the relation of play to source, Shakespeare to Greene, is also governed by this trope.
17. All citations from *King Lear* refer to the Arden Third Series edition (Shakespeare 1997).
18. Carroll does not make this point about indebtedness himself, but I freely lend it to him, even as I borrow from his wonderful analysis of the Abraham man.
19. Citations from *Macbeth* refer to the Arden Second Series edition (Shakespeare 1984).
20. Greenblatt has recently advanced the controversial argument that Shakespeare modeled Falstaff in part on Robert Greene (Greenblatt 2004, 216-25).
21. See, for example, "The Second Part of Conny-Catching" (Greene 1966b, 18, 26, 28).

22. The son of Hermes and Chione, Autolycus inherited from his father his gifts for thievery, cunning, and salesmanship. He was the maternal grandfather of Odysseus.
23. On Shakespeare's moneylending activities, see Honigmann 1982, 12. For a recent summary of Shakespeare and his father's activities as moneylenders, see Greenblatt 2004, 271.
24. Stephen Greenblatt notes the necromantic aspect of this scene: "There is something deliberately witchlike about the dead queen's friend Paulina, for there is something potentially illicit about this resurrection, something akin to the black art of necromancy" (Greenblatt 2004, 371). Arden editor J. H. P. Pafford describes Shakespeare's stagecraft in *The Winter's Tale* in terms that might suggest necromancy: "He gives life to characters and does everything he can to give credibility to the plot" (Pafford 1963, xxxi).
25. The sources of much of the biographical material we possess about Greene — his three "repentance" pamphlets, written on his deathbed, one of which ("The Repentance of Robert Greene") contains a short autobiography entitled "The life and death of Robert Greene Maister of Artes" — are of questionable authenticity. Indeed, their authorship began to be questioned immediately on their publication after Greene's death. Even in the twentieth century, there are strong partisans on both sides, claiming authorship both for Greene and for his friend and publisher Henry Chettle. For a discussion of the authenticity of the deathbed pamphlets, see Crupi 1986, 32-35. Crupi's discussion of Greene's life (1-35) pays judicious attention to disputed facts.
26. See Newcomb 2002, Appendices, 262-65 for detailed lists of prose and verse versions of *Pandosto*.
27. The definitions are Greene's own and may be found in "A table of the words of art, vsed in the effecting these base villanies," in Greene 1966b, 39.
28. Shakespeare's "reliance on visual spectacle," Proudfoot contends, increases "from *Macbeth* to *The Tempest* to *The Two Noble Kinsmen*" (Proudfoot 1976, 77).
29. Karen Helfand Bix notes how the rogue pamphleteers in general "slyly celebrate the cony-catchers' cunning, resourcefulness, and aggressive individuality, demonstrated within the fray of urban life" (Bix 2004, 172). Lori Newcomb, by contrast, contends that it is Greene's enemy Gabriel Harvey who "resignifies his notorious writing career as calculated coney-catching" (Newcomb 2002, 29).
30. On a related note, some editors gloss Florizel's line after the couple's exposure, "The odds for high and low's alike" (*The Winter's Tale*, 5.1.206) as a reference to false or loaded dice, though this explanation has been disputed. See Turner and Haas 2005, 503n for a summary of arguments for and against this interpretation.

31. According to the O.E.D., in France, at least since the fifteenth century, the terms "bohémien" and "bohême" were regularly applied to gypsies, who were thought to have originated in Bohemia. It seems plausible that, when Shakespeare read the name "Bohemia" in *Pandosto*, it might have evoked for him elements of the gypsy-like life of Robert Greene. Indeed, a French translation of *Pandosto* from 1615 claims that the work was originally Bohemian, having been translated first "en Anglois, de la langue Bohême, et de nouveau mis en François" (cited in Newcomb 2002, 83).

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