"Gentleman-like Tears": Affective Response in Italian Tragicomedy and Shakespeare's Late Plays
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I GENRE, HISTORY, AND AUDIENCE

What's Shakespeare to the Italians, or the Italians to Shakespeare, that they should speak for him? The argument of this essay, that late Cinquecento theories of tragicomedy are relevant to the affective dimensions of Shakespeare's late plays, is less profitably begun by excavating direct Italian-to-Shakespeare influence than it is by considering a middle term: the famous title page to the 1616 Workes of Ben Jonson (Figure One). The title page features emblematic representations of tragicomedy, tragedy, comedy, pastoral, and satire, and draws on common and widely disseminated Renaissance assumptions about genres and modes. These assumptions were readily amenable to individual bricolage, especially with a freewheeling figure like Shakespeare, but still constituted an important general repertoire for writers of the period. What connects Shakespeare to the Italians are largely independent but strikingly parallel dramaturgical practices that the title page can begin to illuminate: independent because it is unlikely that Shakespeare suddenly felt a need to consult Italian theory at the end of his career; parallel because the English playwright was working with the same generic and modal configurations as the Italians, writing plays for a Blackfriars theater audience that, despite its wider social and economic net, resembled Italian courtly audiences in some important respects.

At the bottom left of the Jonson engraving, the muse of "Tragoedia" stands over a wagon or plastrum, which is drawn by a horse.¹ Barely dis-

¹ Barely dis-
cernible, an actor gesticulates inside the wagon to which a goat (the legendary prize for victory at primitive tragicomic competitions) and wine flask (the lees of which were presumably used for make-up) are attached.\(^2\) Across from Tragoedia stands the muse of “Comoedia,” who presides over an ancient outdoor theater or \textit{visorium}, in the middle of which a chorus of men and women circles a sacrificial fire. The two prestigious classical genres support an arch, at the top of which stands “Tragicomoedia.” The hybrid form ingeniously mixes the costumes of the earlier genres; she bears the tragicomic crown and scepter, but her tragicomic jeweled robe covers the comedic \textit{cliton} and tunic, and she wears the cloak and \textit{socci} of comedy. She presides over an architecturally developed, urban \textit{theatrum}, probably modeled after the Roman Theater of Marcellus, with three arced orders and a stage with returning wings. Tragicomoedia is flanked by the two representative figures of Renaissance pastoral: the wild goatman, or satyr, who carries a reed-pipe and a stave; and the countrified shepherd, replete with crook and cornet and dressed in jerkin, breeches, hose and boots. The title page, then, indicates a relationship—one oddly lacking in the Jonsonian corpus but theorized by the Italians and supremely exploited by Shakespeare in his late plays—between the genre of tragicomic and the mode of pastoral.\(^3\) (Historical and historically conditioned \textit{genres} are identified by both “external” features such as structure and “internal” features such as attitude and tone, whereas historically vagrant \textit{modes} are principally constituted by “internal” characteristics.\(^4\)) If we consider the felicitous etymological confusion between “satyr” and “satyre” in the period, and remember that Renaissance writers could imagine the wild, extra-urban satyr an apt satirist of courtly and city vices, the engraving may also indicate a relationship between the satiric mode and the tragicomic genre.\(^5\)

The illustration depicts a historical relationship between the three major forms.\(^6\) Tragoedia came first, performed in the primitive \textit{plaustrum} by itinerant actors like Thespis. Comoedia’s apparent regard of tragedy could plausibly indicate historical retrospection, for she performs in a more historically advanced playing space: the fixed amphitheater. Tragicomoedia occupies with its sophisticated Vitruvian \textit{theatrum}, a markedly later historical period, and is appropriately grouped with pastoral and satire: modes which originated in the Hellenic and Roman periods, respectively. If the last form combines the sartorial codes of the early forms, it is also their historical offspring and stands with the romance epics of Ariosto and Spenser as new Renaissance forms made by combining earlier classical and medieval genres. The illustration also suggests that historical generic changes are conditioned by changing theatrical
playing spaces and, by extension, the audiences which frequent them. One might conjecture from the illustration that the urban, historically belated audiences of tragicomedy might be especially adept at deciphering the mixture of tragic and comedic codes emblematized in the costume of the hybrid genre.

The chief Renaissance theorist of tragicomedy, the Ferraran courtier and poet Battista Guarini, indeed claimed to have developed the new hybrid genre in response to historical changes in genres and audiences. Moreover, not only his famous play Il pastor fido but also his theory of tragicomedy were developed with a specific kind of theatrical space in mind, the courtly pastoral set for which late sixteenth-century Ferraran scenic artists (working with Sebastiano Serlio's Vitruvian codification of the "satyric scene") had achieved renown. In the spirit of the Jonson title page, Guarini's tragicomedy adroitly mixes tragic and comedic codes in ways that the sophisticated courtly audiences of northern Italy would have recognized. Of interest in the present study is a Guarinian practice not suggested in the Jonson title page, although one that thrives on the conjunction of tragicomedy and pastoral: the careful manipulation of emotional audience responses. In Guarini's theory and practice, tragicomedy in the pastoral mode explores "pathetic" registers of sentiment intermediate between those of tragic horror and comedic laughter.

This dramaturgical notion does not come from thin air, but responds to contemporary theatrical practices. A kind of elegiac, bittersweet pathos was the major key played by the new, famous actresses of the commedia dell'arte such as Vincenza Armani and Isabella Andreini, who played not only comedy, but also tragedy and especially pastoral. The erotic and plaintive registers of pastoral nicely exploited the actress' musical and poetic skills. For Guarini (whose plays were eventually performed by the commedia dell'arte despite his professed objection to the new professionals), these generically intermediate emotional registers seemed especially appropriate to the tastes of Counter-Reformation audiences in northern Italian courts, who were tired of the atrocities and horrors of Senecan-style tragedy, and who saw in their revered Terence a refined, morally substantive instrument that would redeem the ancient art of comedy.

Comparison of Guarini's play, Shakespeare's late plays, and the Jonson title page might well be challenged, for they are separated by some thirty-five years. Although Jonson was aware enough of Guarini to satirize English infatuation with him, it would be foolhardy to claim that the title page owes its implicit generic theory to the direct influence of the famous Ferraran. Comparison is rather justified by the collective, almost impersonal nature of generic transmission—and we must remember that
genre was a more significant and functional notion to Renaissance writers than to modern writers. Much of the generic information in the illustration derives from Horatian and neo-Horatian theory, an international inheritance of Renaissance writers and disseminated through myriad, unchartable passageways. In fact, the illustration encourages us to look beyond direct transmission, as it might be examined by positivistic source-and-influence studies, to general but salient homologies of generic development in Italy and England. If, as I will argue, “gentlemanly” audiences in northern Italian courts and Shakespeare's Blackfriars theater were thought by playwrights to be sensitive to pleasures more refined than those of tragedic horror and comedic farce, this is due to homological cultural and generic developments, not direct influence.

Guarini, of course, did directly influence three English playwrights contemporary with Shakespeare. Unlike Shakespeare, two of these playwrights—Samuel Daniel and John Fletcher—tied pastoral to external and generic structures. John Marston's The Malcontent (1604) more freely responds to Guarini by writing tragicomedy in the satiric mode, thus anticipating a possibility suggested in the Jonson title page. In Marston's play, the “satyrist” Malevole presides over a courtly scene utterly devoid of the elegiac and pathetic pastoral strains which, I believe, indirectly connect Shakespeare with the Italians. Along with Francis Beaumont, Fletcher went beyond the Guarinian, theatrically unsuccessful The Faithful Shepherdess (1608–1609) to develop, in plays like Philaster (1609) and A King and No King (1611), a breed of tragicomedy that would dominate the English stage for thirty years. But whereas pastoral in The Faithful Shepherdess is a symbolically resonant modal world in the manner of Shakespearean pastoral, referred to as “purged,” “holy,” and “virtuous,” Fletcher all but abandoned pastoral in his collaborations with Beaumont. The court satirists accompanying the king on his hunt in Philaster (4.1) quickly remake the country into the court, as the analogously satiric figures Antonio and Sebastian do not successfully do in The Tempest, countered as they are by Gonzalo's not-so-foolish pastoral and utopian vision. More so than the hybrids of his younger colleagues, Shakespeare's late tragic-comical creations dramaturgically refer back to Italian pastoral tragicomedy, if, of course, going far beyond the Italians in dramatic tension and psychological depth. Unlike Daniel and Fletcher, but in the spirit of Guarini's theory if not his practice, 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. In the Wales scenes of
Cymbeline and in the Bohemian scenes of The Winter's Tale, Shakespeare uses the mode selectively and expressively. In The Tempest, he uses pastoral as a kind of "landscape of the mind" and as a licensed space of imagination and magic congruent, in fact, with the contemporary practice of the commedia dell'arte.¹⁶

The late plays were performed at the Globe as were Shakespeare's earlier plays, but were also performed in the new venue of the Blackfriars theater, which must have conditioned their composition at least to some extent.¹⁷ Because its minimum admission was six times the cheapest entrance fee to the Globe, the Blackfriars catered to theatergoers decidedly wealthier and more sophisticated than those of the outdoor theater, including courtiers, lawyers, and gentry. Private theaters drew upon the new influx of prosperous Londoners to the fashionable residential areas west of the squalid and crowded city.¹⁸ As Keith Sturgess argues, "'Gentlemen' is the characteristic address of the private theatre prologue, and the 'gentle audience' is technically one composed of gentlemen" (Sturgess 17). Although the reality did not always match the gesture, playwrights of the private theater could at least flatter their audiences with references to their good breeding, their sophistication, and their subtle judgment.

The more intimate playing conditions of the English private theaters facilitated the calibration of nuanced registers of emotional response between those of low comedy and high tragedy. The Blackfriars was roughly one-half the size of the Globe and held one-third the audience capacity, about one thousand people. The furthest carry from actor to audience was sixty feet at the Blackfriars compared to ninety feet at the Globe. Candles were used to illuminate the performances, sometimes in conjunction with natural daylight, sometimes to provide the sole lighting for evening performances. The expansive physical gestures and heightened vocal delivery required at the large and often noisy Globe theater could modulate into more subtle, nuanced registers at the private theater. Instead of staging the grand tragicomic style of a Lear or an Othello, the private theater might explore varieties of passion and sentiment. Granville-Barker's hypothesis about playing conditions in the indoor theaters points towards tragicomic dramaturgy as theorized by Guarini:

The plots of the new plays might well grow more elaborate and their writing more diffuse, for it would be easier to keep an audience attentive and see that no points were missed. If violence is still the thing, noise will not be. The old clattering battles may gradually go out of favour; but processions will look finer than ever, and apparitions and the like will be twice as effective. Rheto-
There is, in fact, an insistent register of sentiment in Shakespeare's late plays, which can be seen in the extended "funeral" mounted for Imogen/Fidele by the pastoral characters in Cymbeline; the pathetic responses to the narrated and enacted recognitions in The Winter's Tale; and the emotional reversal scene of The Tempest, in which Prospero forgoes his tragic revenge. Whereas Shakespeare could not have ignored the fact that the plays would also be performed at the Globe and at court, it may very well be that the new performance venue encouraged this kind of nuancing of affective response. Like the 1580s private theater audiences attending the pastoral, avant-garde plays of John Lyly, the Blackfriars clientele was a testing ground for generic innovation—sometimes receptive, sometimes not. If the private theater audiences of the 1575–90 and the 1599–1605 periods dependably went in for the pleasures of wit, satire, and "girds at citizens," private theater taste from around 1607 to 1613 seems to have been less certain, judging from the independent failures of first Beaumont (The Knight of the Burning Pestle) and then Fletcher. Therefore, it was a time when Shakespeare might well have been interested in testing out new varieties of audience response.

II CINQUECENTO THEORY

The practice of late Cinquecento tragicomedy emerged from a long theoretical debate about the emotional responses proper to various genres. Cinquecento commentators like Minturno and Castelvetro inherited Cicero's addition of an affective dimension to the Horatian "docet et delectat" desideratum. The ideal model for the Renaissance playwright became the Ciceronian orator, who "dicendo animos audientium et docet et delectat et permovet" ["in speaking at once teaches and delights and moves the souls of those listening to him"] (De Optimo Genere Oratorum 1.3, emphasis mine). Because of Aristotle's emphasis on the tragic responses of pity and fear, the neo-Aristotelian tradition actually placed great emphasis on the emotional responses generated by the play on the audience. If Aristotle only directly addressed the emotional responses proper to tragedy, Italian commentators were licensed to speculate about the affective registers of other genres or modes: wonder for epic, a kind of civilized delight for the more respectable forms of comedy, and so on.
The emotional effects of genres like tragicomedy that mix different modes could then be extremely varied and complex.

In his theoretical writings and, effectively, in *Il pastor fido* itself, Guarini was the chief theoretician of Italian tragicomedy, codifying theories relevant to much late Cinquecento theater that was at once pastoral and tragicomedic. Guarini largely conceives tragicomedy in terms of the emotional responses elicited in the audience. He seeks a form that would mediate between the horror elicited by the atrocities of Senecan tragedy and the laughter of farce (as produced by the *commedia dell’arte* troupes who were less prestigious, but more representative than Isabella Andreini’s Gelosi company). Tragicomedy does not discard but sublimes the historically-prior genre of tragedy, replacing the violent external actions of Senecan tragedy with various internal responses on the part of the “internal audience”: characters within a play who function as audience members to other characters and actions.23 Similarly, low farce gives way to “higher” comedic registers such as those of erotic pathos. The historically belated genre (if we remember the implicit historical narrative of the Jonson title page) appropriates and then adjusts dramaturgical practices of the earlier genres.

Guarini analyzes techniques of audience manipulation which may illuminate the “unwritten poetics” of Renaissance plays that maintain far greater appeal to twentieth-century audiences than *Il pastor fido*.24 For Guarini, tragedy, comedy, and tragicomedy all operate according to the same system, one not based on literary structure but on audience reception and the dynamics of the theater experience. In distinguishing their audience functions, Guarini contrasts the psychological effect of comedy to that of tragedy, but the terms of description are the same for both genres, and key dramaturgy to biophysical rhythms. Comedy works centrifugally, loosening the soul that has become constricted by serious concerns. Tragedy achieves a centripetal effect, reclaiming the overly relaxed soul. As Guarini puts it, “l’un [comedy] rilassa, e l’altro [tragedy] rstringe . . . l’uno va dal centro alla circonferenza, e l’altro cammina tutto all’opposto” [“one (comedy) relaxes, and the other (tragedy) constricts . . . one goes from the center to the circumference, and the other moves in the opposite direction” (*Il Verato; Opere* 2:258)]. In reality, Guarini does not employ distinct, firmly bounded generic categories that are set in stone but assumes a fluid, flexible generic continuum with a hypothetically infinite number largely established by the kind of emotional effect elicited in the theater audience. The playwright may move along the continuum as he pleases. The modalities of the “tragic” and the “comic” can be finely tuned along a variable scale: “nella Tragedia il terrore più e men temperato costituisce i gradi del più, e meno Tragico; così il
riso, più e men dissoluto fa la favola più, e men Comica” [“in tragedy, terror that is more and less tempered constitutes degrees of more and less tragic quality; similarly laughter that is more and less dissolute renders the play more and less comic”] (Il Verato; Opere 2: 260). Contra his conservative opponent Denores, in Guarini’s scheme immutable generic structures do not constrain the playwright, who rather adjusts generic registers according to perceived audience responses.

III TRAGICOMEDIC TECHNIQUES

Tragicomedy, then, explores intermediate gradations of emotion between the extremes of tragédie terror and comédie relaxation. Various techniques for eliciting tragicomedic responses may now be explored, with a view to Shakespeare’s late plays.

Pastoral Pathos. According to Guarini, the emotional tonalities of pastoral temper the emotions of both tragédie and comédie extremes and generate a wide range of emotional registers. The sweet (“dolce”) style proper to the pastoral mode tempers tragic intensity (Il Verato; Opere 2: 274). The traditionally passive suffering of pastoral speakers generates the emotion of pity without terror, or what might be called “pathos”: a plaintive, elegiac register of grief. In the case of Italian pastoral tragicomedy, Petrarchan-style erotic complaints usually supply this register, but this is not the only possibility. With a diminished strength relative to his or her world compared with the protagonists of epic or tragedy, the pastoral figure (not necessarily a shepherd in Shakespeare’s capacious use of the mode) tends to suffer more than act. The young pastoral speakers of Cymbeline nicely evoke a nuanced, tragicomedic blend of contrapuntal emotions in their portrait of the androgynous Fidèle:

Arv. Nobly he yokes
   A smiling with a sigh; as if the sigh
   Was that it was, for not being such a smile;
   The smile mocking the sigh, that it would fly
   From so divine a temple, to commix
   With winds that sailors rail at.
Gui. I do note
   That grief and patience, rooted in them both,
   Mingle their spurs together.

(Cymbeline 4.2.52–58)
Sighing is mixed with smiling, as opposed to the rough laughter elicited by the farcical characters of Shakespeare's late plays acted by Robert Armin: Cloten, Autolycus, and Caliban. Grief, as opposed to tragic anger, mingles with patience. Shakespeare certainly does not reject the pleasures of coarse laughter in his late plays, but the more genteel and sophisticated audience of the Blackfriars seems to tip the hand slightly in favor of pathos. 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. In addition to the anonymous gentlemen (5.2.1–112), the shepherds are accorded an opportunity to recount the pathos-filled recognition of Leontes and Perdita. So the young shepherd: "and so we wept; and there was the first gentleman-like tears that ever we shed" (5.2.144–45). Autolycus, who in Act 4 has provided much of the theatrical pleasure with his commedia dell' arte-like lazzi, becomes subdued and overshadowed in the new context of pastoral pathos. Of course, because the comic mode is infused, in Shakespeare's theater, with the vibrant, grotesque body of Armin, it is never marginalized as much as it is in Italian tragicomedy, and actors can find many ways to infuse Autolycus with comédie life up to his last moment. But Shakespeare's generous capacity to include both grotesque and pathetic strains should not blind us to the dramaturgical importance of the latter.

**Simulacra of Terror; Fictionality.** In the Verati, Guarini explores ways by which the tragicomedic playwright may modulate terror. Guarini contests Denores' claim that terror admits of no gradation, arguing thus:

_E siccome ogni cosa terribile non purga il terrore (ciò si pruova nelle viste delle pitture quantunque orribili, e spaventose, e nelle cose della medesima qualità narrate semplicamente, e senz' arte alcuna dramatica) così ogni rassomiglianza del terribile non produce Tragedia, s' ella non vien condotta con l' altre necessarie parti, che ci concorrorno (Il Verato; Opere 2: 259)._  
[And just as every terrible thing does not purge terror (this is proven in viewing paintings of horrifying and frightening events, or by narrating the same kinds of things simply and without dramatic art), so every likeness of the terrible does not produce tragedy, if it is not accompanied by the other necessary and converging parts.]

Guarini distinguishes between three gradations of terror: actual, tragic, and tragicomic. Actual terror experienced in real life disturbs us physically (creating a "batticuore," or palpitation) and emotionally (Il Verato
The fully purgative terror of tragedy seems to take a physical form, as it is “imprinted” or “impressed” upon the soul with “force,” but it also entails a rational operation: the fear of the “death” of the soul causes one to believe that it is better to die than to live with dishonor. But there are other forms of terror, or “fear” (“spavento”) that are less forcefully pressed onto the soul because they are mediated in various ways—and these can be exploited by the dramatist of tragicomedy. In general, tragicomedy seems to be based on constructing “rassomiglianze del terribile”: simulacra of terror that yield less than the full tragic catharsis.

For Guarini, as in Aristotle’s Poetics, the cognitive faculties of the audience moderate emotional response. This is true for the terror of tragedy, but even more so with that of tragicomedy. To be a spectator of the fictive danger or terror of someone else (“spettatori dello altrui finto pericolo”) rather than fully participating in terror (“con le proprie loro persone partecipa[ron] del vero”) generates terror of a specifically tragicomic register (Il Verato secondo; Opere 3:191). The awareness of fictionality (as with a painting) or the indirect mediation of a terrifying event (as with narration) both diminish what might otherwise be full tragic terror. Tragicomedy, then, often makes the theater audience aware of the fictionality of events that might be perceived, by the characters within the plays, as real. Prospero’s storm is the supreme Shakespearean example, as Miranda’s tragic pity and terror are modulated into tragicomic registers by her father’s revelation of his artifice.

The Rhetoric of Tragedy. Tragicomedy also modulates terror by deploying the rhetoric and not the actions of tragedy. Its fictional deaths are usually meant to transform the internal audience of the play, and are announced in tragically-coded rhetoric. Torquato Tasso’s pastoral play Aminta, which decisively shaped Guarini’s Il pastor fido, is a paradigmatic case. “La falsa morte” [“false death”] (4.2) is crucial to Tasso’s play, which tempers terror by means of aesthetic distance and by a rhetorical (as opposed to actual) deployment of tragedy. Tragedy enters the play via the narrations of the nuncius, not direct enactment. The attention of the theater audience is given more to the reception of the tragic narration than to the substance of the story itself—to first Aminta’s, then Silvia’s emotional responses of terror and pity to the false reports of the other’s death. The narration of a terrifying and pitiable event, distilled into the rhetoric of tragedy, is compared to “knives”—“coltei pungenti / che costui porta ne la lingua”—[“piercing knives that he holds in his tongue”] (4.2.1654–55) that will purge Silvia and prepare her for the comedic ending. The point is not the external action (which may or may not be
true) but her internal transformation. She vows to bury the supposedly dead Aminta and perform offices of grief, just as Leontes does in *The Winter's Tale* after hearing Paulina as a kind of tragicomic *nuncius* deliver a false, but transformative account of Hermione's death (*The Winter's Tale* 3.2.i.172–214).

**Tragicomic Dreams.** Dreams, frequently deployed in Italian and Shakespearean pastoral, focus attention on inner experience, which is especially the province of the pastoral mode in the Renaissance. They allow an expression of the fantastic or marvelous that does not violate verisimilitude (a concern of neo-Aristotelian playwrights like Tasso and Guarini). And for Guarini, they provide another simulacrum of terror, which may temper grief, eliciting nuanced emotional registers and transforming tragic into tragicomic horizons of expectation. In *Il pastor fido*, the shepherd Montano recounts to Titiro the painful memory of the terrifying flood that bereft him of his son: the Arcadians were “sepolti / nel terror, ne le ténèbre e nel sonno” [“buried in terror, darkness, and sleep”] (1.4, emphasis mine).29 But Montano soon modulates generic registers. He recounts a dream of tragicomic tonality that appropriates the storm *topos* only to temper its terror. In a fluvial *locus amoenus*, an old man rises from a river holding an infant and warns Montano not to kill his son. The original trauma, the mortal storm that had carried his child away, begins to repeat itself in the dream only to give way to a comforting oracle. And the “gentle image of the dream” [“l’imagine gentil di questo sogno”] later prevents him from ritually sacrificing his son Mirtillo, as Montano himself later explains (5.5).

In Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, a dream of tragicomic tonality also prevents the enactment of a tragic sacrifice. The dream Antigonus describes in 3.3 tells him that he should, weeping himself (3.3.32), deposit the crying baby in Bohemia, where, we soon discover, shepherds save it from what would have been certain death. Antigonus recounts the dream in the “desert shore” of Bohemia scene, one which is crucial in swinging the play from tragedy to comedy. If the mortal bear and the Clown's homespun account of Antigonus' death provide a grotesque tragicomic register, the dream itself explores gradated tragicomic tonalities in the manner of Guarinian dramaturgy. The dream evokes the tragically-coded emotions of pity and fear only to temper or modulate them. Antigonus is “affrighted much” by the dream, but adds that he "did in time collect [himself]" (3.3.37–38). Various verbal devices mitigate tragic intensity to the reader/playgoer as well. Hermione's apparition is not a Senecan-style specter that actually takes the stage—a figure
of significant tragic power in Hamlet—but is tempered for being narrated by Antigonus in a “collected” state. (Comparable is Paulina’s later verbal invocation of Hermione’s ghost to Leontes, in which the words “Remember mine” distinctly recall Hamlet’s ghost, only to underscore the tragicomic, rather than tragic register in Paulina’s rather shrewish depiction of Hermione [The Winter’s Tale 5.1.63–67].) With baroque exaggeration anticipating the three gentlemens’ pathetic account of the Leontes-Perdita recognition, Antigonus emphasizes the dream’s pathos much more than its terror: Hermione is a “vessel of . . . sorrow,” whose eyes become “two spouts,” as she struggles to speak. As terror is modulated, so is extreme grief: her fury becomes “spent.” Also tempering tragic terror is the ritualistic patterning of Hermione’s movements, which lends the dream a solemn, not terrifying tone: she holds her head on one side, then another and bows before him three times. The false death of Perdita is represented in an elegiac tone which recalls the illusory death of Imogen/Fidele in Cymbeline.

The subject, characters, tone, and diction of Posthumus’ dream in Cymbeline similarly befit a tragicomic decorum. As in Il pastor fido, the dream provides riddling comfort to assuage the grief of familial loss. Under the false belief that Imogen is dead, Posthumus expresses the pathos and penitence typical of tragicomedy in his open-air “prison.” “Death,” or really the felicitously false belief in Imogen’s death, serves him as a “physician” (5.4.7). The plaintive, “poor ghosts” of the dream, which Posthumus later takes to be fairies, mark a falling-off in tonality and power from the terrifying Senecan ghosts of tragedy. Sicilius Leonatus, Posthumus’ father, begins the dream by banishing the horrible prospect of tragedy, allusively reprising and generically revising King Lear: “No more thou thunder-master show / thy spite on mortal flies” (5.4-30-31). Posthumus’ family expresses pathos for him—“A thing of pity!”—and protests the events that have befallen him in a register of post-tragedic regret: “Why did you suffer Iachimo, / slight thing of Italy, / To taint his nobler heart and brain / with needless jealousy; / And to become the geek and scorn / o’ th’ other’s villainy?” (5.4.63–68). Iachimo is reduced to a “slight thing,” inflicting “needless” jealousy on a Posthumus rendered less a victim of tragedy than of comedy (“geck”). As in Il pastor fido, the dream yields an ultimately benign but riddling oracle, leaving the dreamer to question the truth status of his oneiric vision. Still, the dream is a grandsire to Posthumus, conforming to the pastoral pattern of healing dreams experienced while sleeping in the open air.
The insistently pathetic register of Shakespeare's late plays may be further examined in the terms of late Cinquecento tragicomedy.

In Cymbeline, the prolonged, curiously aestheticized "death" and funeral of Fidele (4.2) provides a fine example of tragicomic gradation under the aegis of pastoral. The scene explores and adjusts various levels of aesthetic and emotional response. As in the plays of Tasso and Guarini, tragicomedy replaces the imitation of a confirmed tragédie action with an exploration of cognitive, aesthetic, and emotional responses to supposed tragic events. The funeral the boys perform for Fidele itself is resumptive, employing the same music and language that they have used for rites regularly performed for their dead "mother" Euriphile. As a repeated mourning ritual, it resembles an elegiac pastoral complaint rather than a decisive tragic transition ritual. From the first solemn note of Belarius' strange musical instrument, the pastoral speakers display a curious concern with decorum, with the tonalities of their response to Fidele's death. Of the solemn music played by Arviragus, Guiderius asks,

What does he mean? Since death of my dear'st mother
It did not speak before. All solemn things
Should answer solemn accidents. The matter?
Triumphs for nothing, and lamenting toys,
Is jollity for apes, and grief for boys.

(4.2.190–94)

Evoking Sidney's neo-classical censure of the mixing of "hornpipes and funerals," Guiderius criticizes mungrell stylistic mixtures and the inappropriate matching of subject and emotional expression. But when Arviragus enters with Imogen dead in his arms, Belarius confirms that the subject, or the "occasion" matches the expression. The scene here begins to shift to a solemn, elegiac decorum, and all three speakers are concerned to strike the proper notes. The solemn music suggests a new genre about to appear on the horizon, but it is as if the boys must debate and work out the particulars for themselves. Should flowers be strewn? Should there be singing or not? In what tone should one sing? In what direction should the deceased's head be lain? "Grief for boys" describes both the subject and the generic challenge of the scene: how to find gradated tonalities adequate to the generically intermediate subject of the boys' grief for the false death of Fidele.
Arviragus’ plaintive litany of allegorized flowers that will be strewn over Fidele’s grave constitutes a pastoral theatergram, deployed by Bellario in Beaumont and Fletcher’s tragicomedy (*Philaster* 1.2.113–42), by the “nymph” Ophelia before she meets her watery death (*Hamlet* 4.5.173–83; 4.6.165–82), and, more festively, by Perdita (*The Winter’s Tale* 4.4.73–108). Arviragus thus casts himself in a female, elegiac role, attempting to “sweeten [the] sad grave” of Fidele. Of course, merely as a boy actor often playing female roles, the actor playing Arviragus is a gender-ambiguous figure, and he calls attention both to this ambivalence and to the corresponding liminality in vocal tonality: “though now our voices have got the mannish crack, sing him to th’ground” (4.2.235–36). The less feminized and more heroic Guiderius contests the decorum of his brother’s response: it is too delicate, too “wench-like,” inappropriate to the seriousness of the event which is, after all, death. At first, Guiderius equates aesthetic and moral dimensions and says he will not sing but merely weep—“For notes of sorrow out of tune are worse / Than priests and fanes that lie” (4.2.241–42)—later to be persuaded by his brother that singing is acceptable. In the pastoral funeral of *Cymbeline*, the boys negotiate nuanced gradations of aesthetic response, both gender-coded and genre-coded.

The rhetoric of all three pastoral speakers tempers, softens, and attenuates the sting of death. Belarius concludes that Fidele died, not of violent causes, but of melancholy, an emotion appropriate for a pastoral key. Arviragus imagines Fidele laughing—not even at “death’s dart,” but at sleep. Guiderius imagines the grave as a bed, frequented with only benign, female fairies, unvisited by worms (for *Hamlet*, a powerful image of the grim physicality of death [*Hamlet* 4.3.19–25]). As a pastoral ritual, the funeral dirge ritually wards off various materials of tragedy: the lightening and thunder of the tempest, sign of political, moral, and cosmic chaos; the disfavor or oppression of the tyrant, typical protagonist of tragedy; and the supernatural agents of tragédie horror:

Gui. No exorciser harm thee!
Arv. Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Gui. Ghost unlaid forbear thee!

(4.2.276–78)

Instead of being censored as a sentimental and unfortunate decline from tragic intensity, the funeral of Fidele should then be explored in the terms of late Cinquecento tragicomic dramaturgy.
The three gentlemen's extended narration of *The Winter's Tale*’s first recognition is often considered an example of the dramaturgical naivété of the late plays, or as Shakespeare's way of saving his best for the second recognition scene. But in a curious way, third-party narration allows an extremely nuanced, detailed account of audience response consonant with tragicomedic dramaturgy. Autolycus' secondary, diminished role in the scene anticipates the comeuppance he will receive at the hands of the newly-gentled shepherds. Tragicomedic wonder and "gentleman-like tears" pervade the narration, even experienced by the newly-gentle shepherd, who is said to stand "like a weather-bitten conduit of many kings' reigns" (5.2.56–57). Unlike the grotesque, ambivalent coincidence of emotion evoked by the bear, the deliberate, baroque mixture of emotion described by the gentlemen follows something like Guarini’s idea of tragicomedy, as the response of Paulina is described as an equal poise of tragic and comedic registers: “But O, the noble combat that 'twixt joy and sorrow was fought in Paulina! She had one eye declined for the loss of her husband, another elevated that the oracle was fulfilled” (5.2.72–76). The third gentleman carefully describes Perdita’s emotional response to the false news of her mother’s death; in the tragicomedies of Tasso and Guarini, response is at least as important as the truth of its object.

The second, enacted recognition scene presents a tragicomedic theatergram of "resurrection," with due adjustments for verisimilitude. Proscriptions of superstition and witchcraft (5.3.43, 89–91) preserve the verisimilitude of Guarinian tragicomedy even as they recall the fantastic maga figure popular in much late Cinquecento pastoral drama (Club 93–123). A tone of ritual solemnity similar to the endings of Italian *commedia grave* replaces the festive (if complex) endings of Shakespearean comedy. Wonder and pathos are again the major keys. As a tragicomedic physician and Leontes’ purgatorial “comfort,” Paulina administers bittersweet “affliction” (5.3.76). As theatrical director, Paulina is intensely focused on Leontes’ internal response, in the manner of tragicomedy. She continually gauges his responses and prepares him for each stage of the spectacle. Paulina’s "dramaturgy" is keyed to the spectator, who is an active participant in the theatrical process.

Prospero still irresistibly evokes Shakespeare himself but he also resembles the playwright of tragicomedy according to the general practices of Guarinian dramaturgy as discussed here. As recommended by Guarini, he continually enacts the illusions, not the reality of tragedy: false deaths and "rassomiglianze del terrible." Like the playwright of tragicomedy, Prospero is intensely concerned with audience response, exploring tonalities intermediate between generic extremes. Revenge is not consum-
mated in the typical tragicomic, external action of murder, but takes the form of internal pathos. The Tempest continually veers away from the imitation of external, tragic action—political conspiracy, murder, revenge—towards the exploration and reformulation of inner states. As playwright/rhetorician, Prospero intends to “persuade toward an attitude,” that of contrition and repentance. The entire action of the play turns on audience response: the emotional and ethical reactions of the court party to Prospero’s mnemonic spectacles. And registers of pathos without terror appropriate to a pastoral decorum dominate the emotional landscape of the play.

Prospero elicits the tragicomic extremes of fury, passion, and terror in his subjects only to temper, or modulate those responses into tragicomic registers. In her terror (“the cry did knock / Against my very heart” [1.2.9–10]), pity (“Oh, I have suffered / With those that I saw suffer” [1.2.5–6]), and wonder Miranda experiences the affective responses of Aristotelian tragedy. Prospero soon modulates this affective response by pointing out the fictionality of the apparently tragicomic event. The “amazement” caused by terror modulates into the “wonder” elicited by Prospero’s art. Prospero tempers the extremity of Miranda’s terror and pity by thus enjoining her: “Be collected: / No more amazement: tell your piteous heart / There’s no harm done” (1.2.13–15). Ferdinand experiences the false illusion of his father’s death, and responds in tragicomic kind by weeping, fury, and passion. Ariel’s song modulates these extreme responses into tragicomic tonalities, “allaying” the fury and passion of the waters (and implicitly, Ferdinand’s heart), with its “sweet air.” This resembles the “sweet style” appropriate to the madrigalesque set pieces of the plays of Tasso and Guarini, often set to music in late Cinquecento performance. In the song itself, death does not take the form of the grimly physical, tragicomic body, but the aestheticized object: “Of his bones are coral made; / Those are pearls that were his eyes: / Nothing of him that doth fade, / But doth suffer a sea-change / Into something rich and strange” (1.2.400–404). The thunder and lightning, the sudden disappearance of the marvellous banquet, and the harsh speech of the Ariel, as harpy and “minister of fate,” all suggest a tragicomic register, and the purpose of this spectacle is to recall to the court party the tragicomic act of usurpation twelve years past. The tragedically-coded terror elicited in Alonso, however, is curiously aestheticized, and musically modulated into a tragicomic register: “The winds did sing it to me; and the thunder, / That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounc’d / The name of Prosper: it did bass my trespass” (3.3.97–99). Gonzalo constitutes, in many ways, the perfect spectator of tragicomedy: responding with wonder to the dangerous but not mortal
shipwreck, and to Prospero's other spectacles. As Ariel reports to Prospero, Gonzalo reacts to the plight of the court party with tragicomedic pathos, "brimful of sorrow and dismay" (5.1.14).

The neoclassicism of The Tempest does not stop with the notorious observance of the unities but includes a distinctively Aristotelian reversal: the moment when Prospero decides to forgo revengeful action on Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio. As befits tragicomedy, the reversal consists of an internal "action," an emotional response to a theatrically deployed event. Curiously, the playwright Prospero finally becomes the pathetic audience in the last of an extended series of emotional responses. To Prospero's inquiry about Alonso and the court party, Ariel responds:

The King,
His brother, and yours, abide all three distracted,
And the remainder mourning over them,
Brimful of sorrow and dismay; but chiefly
Him you term'd, sir, "The good old lord Gonzalo";
His tears runs down his beard like winter's drops
From eaves of reeds. Your charm so strongly works 'em
That if you now beheld them, your affections
Would become tender.
Pros. Dost thou think so, spirit?
Ariel. Mine would, sir, were I human.
Pros. 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?
Though with their high wrongs I am struck to th'quick,
Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
Do I take part: the rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance: they being penitent,
The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
Not a frown further.

(5.1.11–30)

I have quoted at length in order to emphasize the sustained tonality of pathos that infuses one of the pivotal moments of the play. The play turns on emotional response, not tragic action. The vectors of spectacle and audience response, moreover, are extremely complicated. Prospero's inner reversal responds to Ariel's emotional response to
Gonzalo’s tears at the sight of Alonso’s contrite response to a spectacle (the harpy banquet) that referred to a past tragic action: four orders of emotional responses. Action, then, is heavily mediated and modulated through internal registers. Tragicomic fury gives way to the affective, intermediate registers of tragicomedy, as vengeance modulates into forgiveness. Prospero’s affections, at least with those who have responded to his spectacles, “become tender.” If not with Caliban, Antonio, and Sebastian, then with Alonso and Gonzalo Prospero is capable of an affective kindness (“kindlier moved”) occasioned by the recognition that he is “one of their kind.”

Prospero, of course, admits no more than a grudging or patronizing “kindness” with Antonio, Sebastian, and especially Caliban (“This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine”), who manifestly do not provide the invited emotional responses to his spectacles. Prospero is not a successful tragicomic playwright with all of his intended audience, and this diversity of response surely renders the play more compelling for twentieth-century audiences than it otherwise would be. The Prospero-Alonso-Gonzalo-Ariel-Prospero circle of compassion stands out in higher dramatic relief for being partial and voluntary. Still the dramatization of tragicomic tonalities as theorized by Guarini constitutes a crucial dramaturgical practice of the late plays, one which shows Shakespeare operating in the context of international Renaissance dramaturgy, and not as a solitary genius. The many and manifest differences between Shakespeare and the Italians should not blind us to the similarities between them, which this essay has attempted to illuminate.

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NOTES


4. I use Alastair Fowler's distinction between genre and mode. For Fowler, genre is a group-term that directs itself to formal as well as substantive considerations: features such as structure, size, style, meter, and plot as well as values, emotional mood, and attitude. A less historically bound term, though still conditioned by historical changes, "mode" does not normally involve a realized external form. It rather emphasizes features such as tone, attitude, effect, and point of view in its identification and may be briefly announced by a characteristic formula (e.g., Lear's pastoral tag in his "Nature's above art in that respect." [King Lear 4.6.86]). Modes are more flexible and historically vagrant than genres and capable of surprising incarnations. Whereas genre terms are usually expressed in the nominal form, modal terms are expressed adjectivally. See Fowler's *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1982) 106–29. *King Lear* citation refers to *King Lear*, ed. Kenneth Muir (London: Methuen, 1972).


7. Guarini's extremely popular and influential pastoral tragicomedy, *Il pastor fido*, was written between 1580 and 1585 and circulated in manuscript before its first publication in 1590. In 1586, the Paduan professor of rhetoric Giason Denores presented his theories of genre and criticized tragicomedy and pastoral (without explicitly naming Guarini) in his *Discorso di Iason DeNores intorno à que' principii, cause, et accrescimenti, che la comedia, la tragedia, et le poema eroico ricevono dalla philosopha morale, e civile, e da' governatori delle repubbliche* (Padua, 1586). In 1588, Guarini responded in his *Il Verato ovvero difesa di quanto ha scritto M. Giason Denores contra le tragicomedie, et le pastorali*, in *un suo discorso di poesia* (Ferrara, 1588). Denores sallied back in his 1590 Apeologia contra l'autor del Verato di Iason De Nores di quanto ha egli detto in un suo discorso delle tragicomedie, et delle pastorali (Padua, 1590). Guarini countered with *Il Verato secondo*, ovvero replica dell'attizzato accademico ferrarese in difesa del pastorfido (Florence, 1593). Finally, in 1601 Guarini published a work incorporating the major points of his two earlier treatises, the *Compendio della poesia tragiocomica, tratto dai duo Verati, per opera dell'autore del pastor fido, colla giunta di molte cose spettanti all'arte* (Venice, 1601). A good account of the quarrel has been given by Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1961) 2: 1074–1105. The five exchanges of the quarrel, treatises relevant to the quarrel by Angelo Ingegneri, Faustino Summo, Giovanni Pietro Malacreta, Paolo Beni, and Giovanni Savio and Guarini's principle literary works are collected together in *Delle opere del cavalier Battista Guarini*, 4 vols. (Verona: Giovanni Alberto Tumermani, 1738). All of my citations of Guarini include the volume number of the eighteenth-century edition, and include an abbreviated title of the treatise. *Il Verato secondo; Opere 3*: 100, then refers to a citation from the second *Verato*, which may be found in volume three, page 100 of the eighteenth-century edition. *Il Verato* refers to the first *Verato*. For Guarini's argument that genres are conditioned by historical changes, see *Il Verato; Opere 2*: 260.


9. In a mythologizing encomium of the commedia dell'arte actress Vincenza Armani written in 1570, the actor Adriano Valerimi praises both her musical ability and her capacity, in the context of performing pastoral plays, to elicit refined feelings in her audience. See the "Orazione d'Adriano Valerimi" in *La Commedia dell'Arte e la società*...
AFFECTIVE RESPONSE IN TRAGICOMEDY


10. See Jonson's Volpone (3.4.87-92) for this satiric dig, probably directed at Samuel Daniel. I cite from Ben Jonson, Volpone, ed. Philip Brockbank (New York: Norton, 1968).


12. In his discussion of the "courtly aesthetic" surrounding the writing and production of The Tempest, Gary Schmidgall argues that the theatrical innovations of Guarini and other Italians markedly influenced the early Stuart court. My interest in Italian drama-turgy is meant to fill out the account of Schmidgall, who mainly addresses Italian theater architecture and technology. See Shakespeare and the Courtly Aesthetic (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981) 140-42.

13. Daniel's The Queenes Arcadia was performed in 1605 and published in 1606. Fletcher's The Faithful Shepherdess was first performed in 1609 and probably published (the first edition is undated) in 1609-10.


Schoenbaum, generally skeptical of Bentley's case that the new theater radically affected the late plays, does concede that "the significance of the Blackfriars move lies more in its social and economic dimension, from which (needless to say) the aesthetic is not entirely separable" (Schoenbaum 266).

21. Because of the frequent appearance of the term and its importance in contemporary Renaissance theory, critics have understandably tended to emphasize "wonder" as the audience response most sought after in Shakespeare's late plays. Verna Foster even sees wonder as central to tragicomic dramaturgy, in her valuable article "The 'Death' of Hermione: Tragicomic Dramaturgy in The Winter's Tale," Cahiers Elizabethains 43 (1993): 43–56. Certainly the late plays are meant to elicit wonder in both the internal and external audience, but to neglect the importance of pathos, in my view, insufficiently distinguishes tragicomic dramaturgy from that of the masque and of tragedy, which are also designed to generate wonder. A sustained examination of dramaturgy and affective response in the late plays is important because the political line of criticism so dominant today tends to focus on plot and thus shortchanges dramaturgical subtleties. The road from conflict to resolution in tragicomedy is complex and subtle, especially in the mediatory use of pastoral, and needs to be carefully studied in its own terms before (or while) formulating political readings. Whereas I agree that the nuanced adjustment of audience response constitutes an important tragicomic technique, interesting in its own right, Marxists dismiss the pathos of tragicomedy as merely emotional pandering, or as "symptomatic" of political mystification. Walter Cohen, for example, reduces pathos to "tearful aristocratic reconciliation" in "Prerevolutionary Drama," The Politics of Tragicomedy: Shakespeare and After, Gordon McMullan and Jonathan Hope, eds. (London: Routledge, 1992) 136.

Studies of Renaissance tragicomedy have, in fact, never given sufficient attention to dramaturgy and affective response, concentrating either on the genre's virtuosic and surprising resolution of conflict (plot) or on the artful display of its own theatrical mechanisms (metatheater). Eugene Waith's invaluable study, whose subject justifies its emphasis on virtuosic plot resolution, has rendered Beaumont and Fletcher the informing paradigm of the genre, thus unfortunately obscuring Shakespearean tragicomedy. Many studies of Renaissance tragicomedy date from the 1970s and early 1980s, at the height of the "metatheatrical" approach to theater, and argue that tragicomedy is distinguished by its artifice, self-consciousness, and the display of its own theatrical mechanisms. See, for example, R.A. Foakes, "Tragicomedy and Comic Form," in Braunmuller and Bulman 74–88; Arthur Kirsch, Jacobean Dramatic Perspectives (Charlottesville: The U P of Virginia, 1972), and Barbara Mowat, The Dramaturgy of Shakespeare's Romances (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1976). This approach also provides a limited, and perhaps anachronistic, account of tragicomedy's dramaturgy. Studies of the late plays as "romances," too numerous to list here, tend to miss late Renaissance, international dramaturgical practices by applying a late nineteenth-century critical term. The plots of the late plays, including Pericles, are of course largely drawn from classical, medieval, and Renaissance romance narrative, but the translation of romance plot to the dramatic stage involved dramaturgical technologies beyond the purview of romance.

23. Jan Mukarovsky discusses the notion of "internal audience": "After all, the roles of the actor and the spectator are much less distinguished than it might seem at first glance. Even the actor to a certain extent is a spectator for his partner at the moment when the

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31. Philaster's account of the androgynous Bellario is one of the few instances, in Beaumont and Fletcher's tragicomedies, of the tragicomedic and pathetic use of pastoral. That it is a cameo moment, little developed elsewhere in the play, confirms the relative unimportance of this technique in Beaumont and Fletcher. Hamlet citation refers to Hamlet, ed. Harold Jenkins (London: Methuen, 1982). The theatergram may be traced to Angelo Ingegneri's Danza di Venere (Vincenza, 1584) and other Italian pastoral plays.


35. My own experience of this scene is indebted to the brilliant and humane unpublished essay of the late James A. Luguri: "One of their Kind: The Humanizing of Prospero."