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## Responsables scientifiques

André LASCOMBES & Richard HILLMAN

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## *“No longer shall you gaze on’t, lest your fancy / May think anon it moves” : Seeing and Believing in the Moving Statue in The Winter’s Tale*

Armelle Sabatier

Université de Paris II—Assas

According to Aaron Landau, “Hermione’s ‘revival’ marks the culmination and most provocative phase of the transition from inquisitive rationalism at the beginning of the play to a total and willing suspension of disbelief later on” (p. 36). This “suspension of disbelief” lies at the core of the final scene of *The Winter’s Tale* and is more than necessary for seeing and believing that Hermione’s statue actually turns to life, that marble can become human flesh. It is achieved through a kind of education, and even re-education of human perception. Éliane Cuvelier has stressed the vital role of sight in this play: “The world of *The Winter’s Tale* is obsessed with the senses of sight; the source of it is the unsettling of Leontes’ own vision” (p. 39). She also demonstrates the impact of Leontes’ wild imagination on his own perception by showing that his jealousy derives from melancholy, a disease that in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance was thought to distort the relation and the interaction between perception and imagination.<sup>1</sup> In the first acts of the play, Leontes’ infected vision leads him to imagine his innocent wife Hermione is committing adultery with his long-

<sup>1</sup> Cuvelier builds her analysis upon the theory of the three ventricles explained in Thomas Vicary’s *The Anatomie of the Bodie of Man* (1548).

standing friend Polixenes. This misreading of the signs paves the way to a tragedy, with Hermione's trial and death at the end of Act Three. Act Four introduces a complete reversal of the plot, thanks to the character of Time, who indicates to the spectators that they have to imagine that sixteen years have gone by:

I turn my glass, and give my scene such growing  
As you had slept between. Leontes leaving  
Th'effects of his fond jealousies, so grieving  
That he shuts up himself, imagine me,  
Gentle spectators, that I now may be  
In fair Bohemia... (IV.i.16-21)

Even though the intervention of Time on stage is used to justify the huge gap in time between Acts Three and Four, this short interlude adumbrates the complete change in the dramatic plot of *The Winter's Tale*. From Act Four, the world of the play seems to have been turned upside-down: the original deathlike atmosphere that pervaded the first three acts is metamorphosed into its opposite, the idyllic pastoral world, bathed in the warmth of springtime, foreshadowing the renewal and the rebirth of Hermione.

After the rigour of the cruel tragedy that was displayed to the audience in the first acts, the main action of the last two acts is centred on some of the characters' attempts to cure Leontes' sight in order to prevent his imagination from distorting his perception of reality. The scene of the moving statue dramatizes the redemption of Leontes' perception when Paulina cures and heals his sight and imagination so he can actually see Hermione's statue move. While in the first acts Leontes could only see what his wild imagination made him believe, in the final act he has to use his imagination in the right way to see and interpret reality properly, in other words to believe that his wife's statue can actually move and become human. The restored harmony between perception and imagination in the final scene is also imbued with a metadramatic dimension, insofar as the final show of the moving statue encapsulates the vital role of imagination in Renaissance drama: spectators have to use their imagination, their inward eyes, actually to see the dramatic action and believe in it.

Sixteen years after his wife's supposed death, Leontes is still mourning, until Paulina stages the resurrection of the Queen of Sicily in the gallery of her house:

But we came  
To see the statue of our Queen. Your gallery  
Have we passed through, not without much content  
In many singularities; but we saw not  
That which my daughter came to look upon,  
The statue of her mother. (V.iii.9-14)

Paradoxically enough, when welcoming the visitors to her gallery to show the statue of the dead queen of Sicily, Paulina first deludes their senses and stimulates their imagination, the better to restore their perception of reality and their ability to read signs. The term “gallery” could refer to the galleries in some Elizabethan houses, which were decorated with paintings and sometimes with statues. In the preface to his translation of Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo’s treatise *A Tracte Containing the Artes of Curious Painting, Carvinge and Buildinge* (1598), Richard Haydocke indicated that noblemen bought Italian, and German works of art to ornament their houses: “many noblemen then furnishing their houses with the excellent monuments of sundry famous and ancient masters, both Italian and German” (p. 6). In Jacobean England, the most famous example was Lord Arundel, who had two galleries built in his mansion, one for paintings and another for his statues.<sup>2</sup> In Elizabethan English, “gallery” could also refer to the balcony built above the stage where musicians used to sit or where other actors could stand, such as Juliet in the well-known balcony scene.<sup>3</sup> This detail underlines the vital role of perspective on the Elizabethan stage, in that a scene can be seen from a multiplicity of angles, depending on the position of the actors on stage. The polysemy of this particular term, which mingles visual arts, architecture and drama, may suggest that Paulina’s gallery has been built in order to play on perspective and multiply different angles to see the works of art she exhibits in her gallery, thus preparing the visitors’ eyes for tricks of perspective. The characters have gone through and left the gallery when they arrive on stage in Act Five, Scene Three (“Your gal-

2 From 1613 to 1614, this art collector visited Italy along with Inigo Jones, becoming familiar with the works of Italian masters such as Titian and Veronese, and studying the architecture of Palladio. Upon his return to England, he had two galleries built in his mansion situated between the Strand and the river Thames, near Somerset House, where the Queen lived. Two portraits made by Daniel Myrtens in 1618 show Lord Arundel’s galleries. The one depicting his wife Aletheia reveals his collection of paintings, which were exhibited in his gallery on the ground floor. In the second one, which is the better known, Lord Arundel, sitting in an armchair in the left corner, points to his collection of antique statues situated in a refined gallery overlooking the Thames.

3 In architecture, “gallery” is also synonymous with “corridor”, as is indicated in the *OED*: “A long narrow apartment, sometimes serving as a means of access to other parts of a house, a corridor”.

lery / Have we passed through . . .”), to reach a chapel where Hermione’s statue stands, as Paulina reminds the visitors before the statue actually moves: “Quit presently the chapel, or resolve you / For more amazement” (V.iii.86-87). This chapel is probably different from the one mentioned by Leontes at the end of Act Three, when he swears he will visit his dead son’s and wife’s tombs: “Once a day I’ll visit / The chapel where they lie, and tears shed there / Shall be my recreation” (III.ii.237-39). This theatrical space is fraught with a religious atmosphere, since Perdita is tempted to kneel in front of her mother’s statue: “And do not say ’tis superstition, that / I kneel and implore her blessing” (V.iii.43-44). Before unveiling the statue to the visitors’ eyes, Paulina comments on the work of art by insisting upon some details, as if she was attempting to influence the spectators’ perception of the statue:

As she lived peerless,  
 So her dead likeness I do well believe  
 Excels what ever yet you looked upon,  
 Or hand of man hath done. Therefore I keep it  
 Lonely, apart. But here it is. Prepare  
 To see the life as lively mocked as ever  
 Still sleep mocked death. (14-20)

While insisting on the spectators’ sight (“what ever yet you looked upon”, “Prepare / To see”), Paulina stimulates their imagination before they can actually see the theatrical illusion. They are invited to imagine a funerary statue (“her dead likeness”), which is in keeping with the style of Elizabethan and Jacobean funerary sculpture (“To see the life as lively mocked as ever / Still sleep mocked death”). In the English Renaissance, funerary statues looked as if they were live.<sup>4</sup> At the time, colours were used to make them look more realistic—here

4 In the Renaissance, changes in style in funerary sculpture arise from a new function of funerary statues. While in the Middle Ages the tomb was used to remind beholders of their ultimate fate, in the Renaissance, the funerary monument turns into a kind of living portrait of the dead, helping the aggrieved family to remember their beloved as they were in their lifetime. As John Weever underlined in *Ancient Funerall Monuments* (1631), the tomb recorded the actions of the dead when he or she was alive: “A monument is a thing erected, made, or written, for a memoriall of some remarkable action, fit to bee transferred to future posterities” (p. 1). For instance, funerary masks were used to carve the features of the dead person’s face. Another trend in the Renaissance was the funerary statues carved in a reclining position, and the statues represented as sitting—the first one in England was carved by Maximilian Colt for Lady Margaret Legh’s tomb in 1605—or, as if praying, facing each other. Lady Saville’s tomb, carved in the 1630s, reveals the dramatization used to represent the dead on monuments: Lady Saville is kneeling in prayer at the centre of the monument, and her family is depicted on each side. The links between the living and the dead are thus preserved in this petrified dramatic scene.

Hermione's statue is painted ("the colour's not dry"). The confusion between death and sleep is another prominent feature of the sculpture of this period: statues were carved in such a way that the effigy looked asleep.<sup>5</sup> Thus, by giving details to the spectators to assist them in imagining Hermione's statue, Paulina teaches the audience how to see it. However, once the statue is revealed to the visitors, Leontes' vision first seems to have been restored, in that he notices the statue's wrinkles: "Hermione was not so much wrinkled" (28). This detail, which threatens the illusion Paulina is trying to create, clearly indicates that without being fully aware of it, the king of Sicily sees reality as it is, that the statue is only the old queen who is standing still. Thus, Paulina is now the one who distorts reality, who tries to make it look different to dramatize Hermione's resurrection. Despite Leontes' remark about the statue's wrinkles, Paulina manages to sustain her play-within-the-play by continuing to delude her visitors into believing it is a real statue.

The perception of the statue is altered by the use of perspective, since the object is seen from different angles. The main prop in this scene is probably placed at the back of the stage between the two doors, where the curtain hiding it must have been fixed. The columns on the Elizabethan stage reinforce the trick of perspective, as the stage is split into different levels. The play on different perspectives is also heightened by the different positions of the characters on stage. They become spectators looking at a "dumb and frozen show" and are observed by other characters. Paulina's play-within-the-play is multiplied by a series of short embedded plays within her own show. Once she has unveiled the statue, she observes and describes Leontes' reaction in front of the statue, of her show: "I like your silence; it the more shows off / Your wonder" (21-22). When facing his dead wife's statue, Leontes is momentarily turned into a statue, as he stands still and speechless. Thus for a moment the audience and the other characters can see two statues on stage. This embedded play is strengthened a few lines later, when Leontes is petrified for more than twenty lines while Perdita and other characters are commenting on the statue. The contamination between the spec-

5 The best-known example is the statue of Night carved by Michaelangelo, which is part of the De Medici funerary monument in Florence. This statue, with its closed eyes, looks asleep, as if on the verge of waking up. When the De Medici chapel was opened in 1544, Giovanni Strozzi described it as a living statue: "La Notte, che tu vedi in si dolti atti / Dormir, fu da un Angelo scolpita / In questo sasso; e, perché dorme, ha vita: / Destala, se nol credi, e parleratti". This is cited by Gross, p. 92, who translates as follows: "Night, which you see sleeping in such sweet attitudes, was carved in this stone by an angel; and because she sleeps, she has life. Wake her, if you don't believe it, and she will speak to you".

tacle, namely the statue, and the spectator, namely Leontes, is complete, since the king of Sicily has become the frozen reflection of the statue, as Paulina brings out in her speech: “If I had thought the sight of my poor image / Would thus have wrought you” (57-58). Here the term “image”, which meant statue in Elizabethan English, and the verb “wrought”, which could refer to what is carved, reinforce the reverberation between the statue and the spectator. Accordingly, on stage, two scenes are presented to the audience simultaneously, a frozen, dumb show and an animated one.

The tricks of perspective used by Paulina seem to be highly efficient, since the spectators’ sight is completely deluded by the artificial double of Hermione—they believe that the statue is alive: “Would you not deem it breathed, and that those veins / Did verily bear blood?” (V.iii.64-65). In this case, the trick of perspective is natural. By respecting the veins in the marble, the sculptor would have created the illusion that the statue has veins just like a human being. The confusion between the marble statue and a human body is further sustained by the signs of life which seem to be present in this block of marble. Polixenes perceives warmth in this lifeless body (“The very life seems warm upon her lip” [66]), while Leontes imagines the statue’s eyes are moving: “The fixture of her eye has motion in’t, / As we are mocked with art” [67-68]). These hesitations and the deluded visions the characters have in front of the statue are highly reminiscent of the myth of Pygmalion, which partly inspired the scene of the moving statue.<sup>6</sup> In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid underlined Pygmalion’s distorted perception of his own work of art, when he could not tell the difference between ivory and flesh: “he often toucht it, feeling if the woork that he had made / Were verie flesh or Ivorye still” (bk. 10, ll. 273-74). Nevertheless, in *The Winter’s Tale* Leontes’ apparent delusions are ironic, in the sense that what he imagines is what he actually sees—the statue is alive, since it is the real Hermione. When Leontes claims that “No settled senses of the world can match / The pleasure of that madness” (V.iii.72-73), he is still unaware that these tricks of perspective have been implemented to restore the harmony between his senses and his fancy. Because his melancholy has been cured, he can interpret signs and perceive reality and even recognise his own sins. When he discovers Hermione’s statue, he is amazed by its inanimate condition:

6 Many critics have studied the impact of the myth of Pygmalion in this play, such as, to name but a few, Mueller, Rico, and Barkan (“Living Sculptures”). Chapters are devoted to *The Winter’s Tale* and Pygmalion by Bate and Gross.

Does not the stone rebuke me  
For being more stone than it? O royal piece!  
There's magic in thy majesty, which has  
My evils conjured to remembrance. . . ." (37-40)

Leontes can read Hermione's heart beyond her artificial posture and make-up, and even the theatrical show put on by Paulina. The statue acts as a frozen mirror, reflecting what Leontes used to be in the first acts of the play—a man with a heart of stone. The man who used to think he could see the evils of others and punish them now sees his own evils in the lifeless reflection of his dead wife. This new awareness plays a part in the process of redemption, which can be achieved only when the statue starts moving, as it does with the help of the spectators' imagination.

The quotation in my title ("No longer shall you gaze on't, lest your fancy / May think anon it moves" [60-61]) appears half-way through the scene, when Paulina calls upon the imagination of the visitors and of the audience, so that her final show, the moving statue, can actually be implemented. The spectators can see the statue coming to life only because they are willing to believe it can actually move. The imagination of the spectators endows the statue with the breath of life. The vital role of imagination in the play has been highlighted in the scene before, when secondary characters narrated scenes which took place offstage and revealed the name of the sculptor who carved Hermione's statue: Giulio Romano. In this scene, three Gentlemen depict scenes of reunion between some of the main characters of the play, such as Leontes, who meets his daughter Perdita. Their narrations suspend the dramatic action, as the scenes which they describe were not shown to the audience or even related: "Then have you lost a sight which was to be seen, cannot be spoken of" (V.ii.42-43). The audience have to use their imagination to see what happened offstage. These imagined scenes foreshadow the following scene, in that the characters have the same attitudes. Camillo and Leontes stand speechless: "There was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture" (V.ii.13-14). This meaningful silence adumbrates Leontes' silence when he is facing the statue in Act Five, Scene Three, where his reaction betrays his emotion: "I like your silence; it the more shows off / Your wonder" (V.iii.20-21). This echoing between the two scenes is sustained by the third Gentleman, when he depicts the emotion felt at the narration of Hermione's death: "Who was most marble there changed colour" (V.ii.89). The metaphor of the marble hints at the statue, which has colour, sup-



posedly because it is painted, and which resembles a living body. These echoes between the last two scenes reveal the articulation between the word and the image, since Scene Two is entirely verbal, while the statue scene is highly visual. Barkan has pointed out that these two scenes were built around a chiasmus: “the verbal without the visual is empty while the visual without the verbal is frozen” (*Gods Made Flesh*, p. 286).

While the spectators’ imagination is required to see scenes which cannot be seen and to perceive what is beyond belief, that is to say, a moving statue, other ingredients are also necessary for Hermione’s resurrection to happen. Imagination without emotion is useless. Leontes can believe in the moving statue because he first experiences wonder: “I like your silence, it the more shows off / Your wonder”. This strong emotional reaction to a work of art is reminiscent of the emotion felt by the sculptor Pygmalion when discovering the statue he has just carved in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (bk. 10). When Ovid described the sculptor’s gift, he used the phrase “mira feliciter arte”, translated by Golding as “by wondrous Art” (10.265). Thus the emotion of wonder cannot be dissociated from the act of artistic creation. A few lines further, the sculptor seems to be experiencing the emotion he is trying to induce in the spectators, as he regards his own work of art with fascination: “He woondreth at his Art” (10.271). Accordingly, the sculptor is trapped by the emotion he attempted to create. These echoes between the two texts reveal the vital role of emotion in sculpture but also in drama.

To conclude, the “suspension of disbelief” mentioned by Landau turns out to be the very first step in the process of restoring the harmony between imagination and perception in *The Winter’s Tale*. The audience’s sight, both that of the characters looking at the statue coming to life and that of the public of the Globe, is educated and altered by different tricks of perspective, while their imagination is constantly stimulated. However, even though Paulina reminds the beholders that faith is necessary to believe in a moving statue (“It is required / You do awake your faith” [94-95]), wonder has turned out to be a vital element in the success of Paulina’s dramatization of Hermione’s resurrection. As Hymen reminds the spectators in the final scene of *As You Like It*, this emotion cannot be dissociated from the dramatic experience: “Feed yourselves with questioning, / That reason wonder may diminish / How thus we met, and these things finish” (V.iv.133-35).

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