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Parodying Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* in Jeanette Winterson's *The Gap of Time* (2015)

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ABSTRACT: This paper attempts to examine how Jeanette Winterson's *The Gap of Time* (2015) employs Hutcheon's model of parody in her rewriting of William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. In contrast to the classical view of parody, Hutcheon (2003) reconceptualizes the definition for parody that dies not confine only in a farcical frame, but it can also take the parodied work's literary dimension even further. Such modal of rewriting was applied constantly in postmodern writing. In her *The Gap of Time* (2015), Jeanette Winterson chooses to parody William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (1611). With thorough analysis to the novel, the parodical novel reveals. To be carrying no attack against Shakespeare, but rather criticizing both the theatrical conventions and the societal scepticism towards some issues that were considered taboo at that time. Such taboos were social judgmental assumptions against themes that had to do with sexuality such as homoerotism, female sexuality and sexuality, etc. In this regard, The Gap of Time engages in this parody at both aesthetic and thematic levels. On the one hand, *The Gap of Time* would alter and distort both temporal linearity and bardic language of *The Winter's Tale*. On the other hand, the novel would shed more light on some hidden themes in Shakespeare's work such as homosexuality and women's trauma. Such critical way of parodic writing can only be carried on through the application of postmodern techniques, which include: intertextuality, hyperreality, minimalism and temporal distortion.

KEYWORDS: Feminist rewriting, Jeanette Winterson, literary techniques, Parody, postmodern literature, William Shakespeare.

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Introduction

The period of the seventies and eighties in the United Kingdom was a turning landmark for the literary field. This period was witnessing not only sociocultural changes that brought new narratives to British literature and drama, but added also new perspectives and styles of writing. Of course, this was marked by the integration new literary voices came from various racial, societal and political backgrounds. The change not only occurred at the level of literary themes and subjects, but it also called for a reinvention of conventional styles and techniques of writing. The narratives, that these writers introduced, were also new to English literature. Simultaneously, the Women's Liberation Movement as well as the Lesbian Liberation Movements was two notorious movement during this era. These two movements centered their objectives around having equality with in both economic opportunities as well as sexual freedom. Theorists and scholars affiliated with these movements called for reclaiming women's experiences and herstories that have been marginalized by patriarchal discourses.

These feminist calls for women's assumption of their representation and subjectivity echoes in the writings of women novelists and dramatists of that time. They dedicated their texts to attack how the literary as well as historical discourses obliterated women's voices and experiences. Such texts tackled themes that had to do with female sexuality and agency. Other writing by lesbian writers advocated for the freedom of homosexual women to experience sexuality outside heteronormative conventions. Furthermore, the historical parallelism of these social movements with the emergence of postmodernism aided these writers to adopt to innovative techniques of writing.

Like those writers, Jeanette Winterson tends to employ feminist rewriting by using new writing techniques in order to discuss topics related to feminism and gender politics. Some of her famous novels are evident examples of her literary style demonstrated through her use of postmodern literary techniques to tackle the concepts of womanhood and homosexuality. In previous novels of hers, Winterson chooses canonical texts and classical literary genres and subjects them to lesbian rewriting. Her novel which is to be studied in this article provides another example. *The Gap of Time* (2015), was a part of a project called the Hogarth Shakespeare project; a literary project assigned by Hogarth Press to a group of postmodern novelists to produce adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, and it was Jeanette Winterson who initiated the project with her novel *The Gap of Time*, which she subtitles as a cover version of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (1611).

Therefore, this paper aims to analyze Winterson's application of Linda Hutcheon's model of parody in rewriting William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* in her novel, *The Gap of Time*. The critical effect in Hutcheon's parodic model functions at both spectra, as it carries the element of ridicule and of literary tribute the to the work that it parodies (Hutcheon 37). In this context, Hutcheon's model of parody applied in *The Gap of Time* is not only restricted to the satirical aspect of parody, as it also conveys a reverential rewriting attributed by Winterson to Shakespeare's play. In that respect, this article attempts to answer two research questions. The first one is: does Winterson's use of parody in *The Gap of Time* is exclusively satirical, is it a reverential tribute, or is it both? The second question is: what postmodern techniques did Winterson employ to supply her parodic rewriting of *The Winter's Tale* by Shakespeare?

At first, Winterson's use of postmodern techniques in her feminist rewriting of *The Winter's Tale* may be interpreted as a parody in its general definition. Yet, a thorough reading of the novel would reveal that its parodic style is more of a postmodern tribute more than it is a satirical rewriting of the play. Winterson's objective, in this respect, was to reincarnate the play and adapt it to a more postmodernist stage Such postmodern setting does not stand against Shakespeare himself, but it rather shows refusal the societal and cultural stage, where some themes were not supposed to be discussed. In this respect, Winterson's

parodic adaptation is tangible at both aesthetic and thematic aspects. Firstly, *The Gap of Time*'s parody is scaffolded by other postmodern techniques such as: temporal distortion, intertextuality, hyperrealism, etc. Secondly, the novel may have maintained the story from *The Winter's Tale*, but it expanded it further with a psychological approach that brought to light themes that were considered taboo and offensive during Shakespeare's time such as homoerotic love, women's self-agency and toxic masculinity.

1. Linda Hutcheon's Theory of Parody

In her book *A Theory of Parody* (2000), Linda Hutcheon attempts to revise the usual definition of parody, and she explains, in this regard, how these definitions only granted a partial conceptualization to the concept. One definition trace back etymologically the term to *parodia:* a Greek word which means "counter-song," entailing that parodic writings are solely intended for ridiculing the previous writings targeted in their texts. As she redeemed this definition as not comprehensive of the whole concept, Hutcheon suggested an alternative reading of such definition. As she explains, the etymological definition contains the prefix para- in *parodia,* which insinuates also "beside". Therefore, the meaning of parody does not necessarily have to signify the idea of ridicule or objection, but it can entail as well a "suggestion of an accord or intimacy instead of a contrast" (Hutcheon 32). Accordingly, this would signify that parody can also be a recreation of the original work that is intended to demonstrate the adaptor's reverence to the original work. A result, she defines parody as "repetition with difference." The type of parody that Hutcheon discussed does not only approaches the source text it parodies with irony, but can also pay tribute to it, as Hutcheon confirms by saying that:

> "By this definition, then, parody is repetition, but repetition that includes difference […] it is imitation with critical ironic distance, whose irony can cut both ways. Ironic versions of "trans-contextualization" and inversion are its major formal operatives, and the range of pragmatic ethos is from scornful ridicule to reverential homage." (Hutcheon 37)

Usually, Parody is mistaken for satire. However, Hutcheon believes that the former does not necessarily have to convey a ridiculing intention, whereas the latter's main purpose is to deliver a negative statement on the work it satirizes. In this respect, Hutcheon's model of parody is not repetition for the sake of mimicry, but rather a repetition with the parodist's ironic touch. Yet, even this "ironic" writing is not intended only for mimicry as it can also carry a homage to the parodied work. Hutcheon's parody, therefore, can either be ridiculing or reverential or both (Hutcheon 60). Hutcheon continues by considering parody to be the spirit that constitutes the spirit of postmodernism, as she believes that it "signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from both continuity and difference" (Hutcheon 94). The model of parody that Hutcheon suggests exceeds the state of being a sarcastic textual mimic to become a way to explain and expose how representations are ideological, and of course it is this parody's function to deconstruct and acclimate these ideological constraints of the text to be adapted in a contemporary setting. Such model of parody puts in criticism the form and content of the original work the adaptor is going to parody. At the level of form, the parody would bring in innovative devices of literary writing to replace conventional ones, as these are considered outdated or ideological in a certain way. At the level of content, the parody may target a literary classic by either making fun of its story or criticize the sociocultural setting where it takes place (Hutcheon 35-36). The parody does not stop here, as it goes even further by calling out some metanarratives in the original work.

Feminist literature the second half of the twentieth century was also influenced by the postmodernist theory; feminist writers became equipped with the necessary tools for their critique of patriarchal discourse. Unlike modernism, postmodernism advocated plurality in representation. Also, postmodernism displayed an acute rejection of the idea of absolute truth and knowledge, and thus criticized metanarratives such as

history, religion, capitalism, etc. These discourses, which are oppressional in their core, were conceived as not objective in the lens of postmodernist thought. For the feminists, the tenets of postmodernist theory proved useful in deconstructing the patriarchal notions of gender divisions, as well as in exposing the heteronormative discourse that was exclusionary of sexual differences such as lesbian and gay people. One of the postmodernist techniques that feminist used was parody. As parody reflects a postmodernist defiance to metanarratives, feminist writers and dramatists resorted to use it in their writings. With such technique, these writers would recreate literary classics for the sake of including women's voices in the parodied works' narratives. The same parodic writing would adjust as well the original works' themes and writing techniques and devices to recreate the same works in a more feminist frame.

Jeanette Winterson, an English feminist and lesbian writer, is known for her constant use of parody in her novels. *The Gap of Time* would not be the only work where Winterson used parodic writing. *The Passion* (1987), Winterson contests to imperialism and colonial discourse by parodying historical figures such as Napoleon and therefore criticizing the false ideas of nationalism that had innocent people forced out of their homes into the carnages of war. In *Sexing the Cherry* (1989), she parodies classical fairytales by replacing female characters that are submissive and obedient with a monstruous gigantic woman that is near in its character to that of an evil witch. Such parodic writing is intended to reverse the classical literary painting of female monsters as villainous and despicable. The examples aforementioned are therefore examples of how Winterson bends literary convections on characters and plot to fit her texts into a more postmodern setting.

2. Parodying Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* in Winterson's *The Gap of Time*

The postmodernist influence on feminist writings was characterized by a feminist urge to rewrite classical works as well as historical narratives that embodied patriarchal discourse. This rewriting aimed at reclaiming women's experiences that were erased from history. This exclusion has historically secluded women to positions inferior to men, and thus these women were not granted representation. A similar form of exclusion targeted narratives that depicted sexual identities that did not belong to the heterosexual matrix. Such exclusion, once again, was normalized by the historical metanarrative. Jeanette Winterson belongs to the symposium of feminist writers who conveyed a feminist critique in their works against those exclusionary metanarratives. Her novel *The Gap of Time* (2015) was not the first instance of Winterson's parodic writing.

According to Bolchi (2017), the parodic frame in *The Gap of Time* (2015) is not limited to the ridiculing effect, for Winterson would offer both an expanded version of *The Winter's Tale* and a critical discussion of themes that were current during its sociohistorical context. Unlike most of parodic works that target the original ones, Hutcheon's model parody used in *The Gap of Time* is more oriented towards the reverential aspect of parody than to its satirical effect. In this sense, *The Gap of Time* reincarnates and highlights the importance of the themes that the play while bending the literary conventions by shifting from the genre of play into the novel, re-arranging the play's events into a non-linear plot and replacing the medieval world of court and kingdom with a postmodern one of banks and capitalist enterprises (Bolchi 63)

Winterson maintained the core elements of *The Winter's Tale*, yet she rearranged them to fit a literacy frame that is postmodern. Carney (2022) detects such alteration at two levels: characters and setting. The plurality of narratives extends further to include subplots of secondary characters whose contribution in the stories of both works cannot be left out. In this regard, Carney mentions that this can be considered as a parodic criticism to the focus that Shakespeare's play placed on main characters at the expense of other characters (Carney 101).

Those characters, of course, belong to marginalized categories whose obliteration from literary and theatrical representation has been normalized throughout history. The critical effect of Winterson's parody

is double-edged, as she is voicing characters that were put aside due to their classist and economical status and recreated as members of a racial minority to add a touch of cultural diversity to her novel. Accordingly, she ridicules the obliteration of lower-class people in Shakespeare's play, and giving an interracial stage for the story by recreating them as African American characters that have influence on the events of her novel. At the spatial level of the story, the story changes the play's setting from the world of Medieval royalism into a contemporary one dominated by capitalism (Carney 82).

Despite that the ridiculing effect is present, it does not target Shakespeare himself, but rather the entire literary convention of that time that justified the censorship of a number of issues such as: women's voice and experience (in the case of Hermione/MiMi's traumas); the homoerotic relation between Leontes and Polixenes; and the exclusion of secondary characters that the play marginalized like Shephard and Clown. These alterations that Winterson made on the play's original plot were significant to accomplish the critical element of her rewriting, as well as to adjust the play into a more postmodern setting.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Shakespeare in a Postmodern Frame: Thematic Rewriting of *The Winter's Tale* in *The Gap of Time*

In her novel, Winterson felt the necessity to highlight the psychological sides of the characters from *The Winter's Tale* and the non-discussed psychological struggles they were having. These issues were brought up by *The Gap of Time* throughout a number of themes such as: emotional insecurity, trauma, self-agency and forgiveness. Therefore, the critical aspect of parody will manifest in the novel's discussion of these themes. Since the parody is somehow a critical stand that the adaptor takes personally towards the original work, Hutcheon characterizes parody as self-reflective (Hutcheon 70). Experiences of emotional insecurity and being unable to be in good terms with one's sexuality is also where Winterson relates herself to both Leo and Xeno, as she as well underwent a period in her life when she couldn't express her homosexuality freely due to the severe Christian environment where she grew up (Carney 102). Simultaneously, Winterson elates her own life story with that of Perdita, as they were both character and writer were adopted children. Another instance of that is Winterson's reference to women's experiences of trauma and self-reliance presented in the story of MiMi, who is both a vilomah and a rape victim. This section will discuss as well the theme of fragmentation by analyzing how Xeno's alienation Leo's sexual anxiety had a crucial impact on their personalities.

3.1.1. Trauma and Women's Agency

Percec (2019) stresses out how trauma is a central theme in Winterson's novel. In *The Winter's Tale*, the first part of events is closed with both Mamillius and Hermione's deaths as the Oracle predicted and then followed by a sixteen-year time gap. This temporal gap was a "chronological breach" that Shakespeare inserted to let Leontes contemplate the "diseased judgment" he inflicts on the innocent Hermione (Percec 136). Yet, Adanur (2018) stresses that the play focused only on Leontes's story of repentance without doing Hermione justice, as she underwent a traumatic state during that gap of sixteen years (Adanur 474). Consequentially, Winterson decided to react to that by narrating Hermione's trauma in her novel through MiMi's experience. In *The Winter's Tale*, Queen Hermione was unjustly tried in public for adultery. In *The Gap of Time,* not only that MiMi suffered the loss of both of her children, but she was also a rape survivor.

Drost (2018) drew a comparison on how *The Gap of Time* and *The Winter's Tale* carried narratives of trauma. In both works, both MiMi and Hermione were victims deprived of their voices by their husbands, and such forced silencing was what initiated their traumatic states (Drost 35). In *The Winter's Tale*, Hermione's voice was discredited by Leontes in a public sphere after being accused of adultery in court.

At the end, she delivered her speech in a ceremony that took place in the king's private sphere. Hermione may have demonstrated a powerful moment by speaking and turning her back to the past, but she reduces herself back to be a part of her patriarch's private sphere (Drost 29). Historically, dismissal of women's voices at trials was recurring at Medieval times, and Hermione's case was no different from her women peers. For example, witch hunts took the souls of millions of women who were persecuted who, despite claiming their innocence, were tortured and executed regardless of them being not guilty.

In *The Gap of Time*, Leo sexually assaults MiMi at their house (Winterson 81). By doing so, Leo views his wife as his property and tries to take her voice from her in their private sphere. Due to this, MiMi's voice was muted and she was reduced to the private circle of trauma. When she shows up at the end, MiMi breaks that circle of privacy and even if she remains silent, she shows agency. Unlike Hermione, MiMi leaves the private sphere into the public one. With this, MiMi restores her honor and her agency as she goes back to the stage once again (Drost 30-31).

In the play, Hermione resurrects after Leontes's repentance. In the novel, MiMi comes back from her phantom existence after she meets with her daughter that she once lost. Yet, unlike Hermione's use of speech, MiMi remains silent. In a comparison between Hermione and MiMi, Hermione demonstrated more strength by speaking after her resurrection. Winterson, on the other hand, comments on this by saying that MiMi's choice of remaining silent can be considered an empowering moment as well (Drost 29). In Winterson's own words, MiMi decides "not to entertain the situation at all or legitimize it" by remaining quiet. This moment may also mean that MiMi, even after meeting her daughter, is not yet ready to reconcile with Leo who abused her once.

In the play, Leontes's reconciliation was fulfilled and his pain resolved after seeing his wife embracing forgiveness. Meanwhile in the novel, Leo's tears are sign of him realizing his wrongdoing, so maybe MiMi's silence can be considered a form of sweet revenge. That silence is MiMi's way of refusing to legitimize Leo's behavior. Therefore, it is unknown if MiMi and Leo would get back together or know. MiMi's role is also to "educate through survival" (Drost 32). Drost (2018) suggests her own reading of the resurrectionist moment of both Hermione and MiMi. In Hermione's case, Hermione's speech does nothing but to return her to the position of the obedient wife and therefore restoring Leo's patriarchal order (Drost 30). MiMi, however, goes back on stage from her phantom state (Drost 35). Another point of contrast, the novel was concluded with an opened ending whereas the play's final resolution is the reconciliation between Leontes and Hermione. While Hermione embraces the path of forgiveness, MiMi choses a different option to deal with the harm that Leo has caused her (Adanur 475). As the parody is applied, the close end of classical novel is jotted aside by the parody in *The Gap of Time*, and the 'happy ending' of a wife returning to the sphere of her husband, or rather the patriarch, is no longer regarded as an option.

Instead of being held down by her trauma, MiMi also established her agency as a survivor. In *The Winter's Tale*, the female characters were but mere pillars to support the two kings' salvation at the final act (Carney 100-101). In here, Winterson parodies two things: the linearity of time on the one hand and the myth of the men always being the saviors for women. Firstly, Winterson parodies the linear plot of *The Winter's Tale* and gives MiMi her own time gap, as she portrays MiMi's trauma in details. She then makes her female characters the ones who would save and guide both of Xeno and Leo towards their salvation (Drost 31-32).

3.1.2. Adoption and Self-reflexivity

Beside from showing strong traits of agency, female characters of *The Gap of Time* also help the male characters in their process of reconciliation. Sundelin (2020) explores this notion by analyzing the very character Winterson circled her novel around: Perdita. Beside her traits of beauty and innocence, Perdita

demonstrates more character development as she appears to be confident and self-aware in the novel (Sundelin 05). Such traits equip Perdita with the potential to inflict positive change on the lives of the other characters. In an unlikely narrative, most stories of foundlings go back to how they were found and adopted, but the novel's story initiates with Perdita herself as a character rather than with her adoption story (Sundelin 08). In *The Winter's Tale*, Perdita's presence in the play only serves as a way of redemption to her father Leontes. The novel, on the other hand, empowers Perdita by rendering her into a female character that is more charismatic and self-determined; such characteristics the Shakespearean Perdita does not seem to have. Also, Winterson carries on making Perdita's talents more exceptional. One, she is a talented musical performer; a trait she inherited from her mother MiMi and was sharpened by Shep's teaching to her. Also, she is pretty articulate about subjects thanks to her being a reader. Perdita also enacts agency in her relationship with Zel: not only does she take the initiative, but she also asserts her independence to be telling Zel that she is "not [his] possession". Therefore, it is this confidence that differentiates Perdita from the Shakespearean Perdita (Carney 105).

Another point of contrast from the Shakespearean Perdita is that Perdita's role places her as a major contributor in other characters' struggle with establishing intimacy and human bounding (Drost 28). One example, Perdita convinces Zel to reconcile with his father Xeno and forgive him for his negligence. Leo is another character whose healing is helped by Perdita's presence, and this is evident in the moment he met her that he was obliged to cancel a project he had to construct of a luxurious condominium over a public space. This moment did not only teach Leo how to be a better person, but also to reconsider his reckless behaviour and self-absorbed personality (26). Not to mention another example which is of Shep, who considered that the moment he found Perdita in that BabyHatch was a gift from God to compensate for his wife's death. Therefore, Perdita is confirmed in the novel to be an agent of change, as her presence proved that the malaises of the past can be healed even if they cannot be undone (29).

Furthermore, Winterson dedicated a part in the story for both Shep and Clo. In *The Winter's Tale*, Perdita's adoptive family was excluded from the ending resolution, and even Perdita's background among the family that raised her was not fully developed. In *The Winter's Tale*, both Shepherd and Clown are only invited to the reunion of the two royal families, and since the play's plot focuses on the main characters, the other two are excluded at the end since more light is shed on just the main characters (Carney 105). The recreation of Shepherd and Clown's story in the postmodern writing was done through their remaking as African-American family from the middle class. Such rewriting contests the biased literary norms that were influenced by classist and racist discourses that did not grant marginalized communities the privilege of linguistic representation. In addition, the epic change of Clo and Shep's story is in their happy endings: Shep and Pauline fall for each other, whereas Clo meets Lorraine, Leo's assistant, and the two become lovers (Carney 101).

Unlike most of foundlings, Perdita is aware of herself being adopted; a truth that she is living at ease with instead of being ashamed of. The novel also shows an alternative perspective that those around her give about her adoption (Carney 100). For instance, when Zel knows she is adopted, he sympathizes with her, to which Perdita responds by saying that she is neither ashamed nor sorry for being adopted. Also, when Perdita learns of her true parents, she doesn't abandon her adoptive family but rather acknowledges what Shep gave to her. Perdita is not the only one who gives Shep credit for what he has done, but also Pauline who asserts him that her taking care of Perdita actually saves her from a life where she would suffer not only from the sorrow of her parents' divorce, but also because of the death of her brother Milo (Carney 101). Once again, Perdita's strong personality comes to light when she stands up to her father Leo, who rushed into blaming Shep for losing his daughter. But once Perdita steps in and takes Shep's hand. At that moment, Leo recognizes his misbehavior and shakes Shep's hand in appreciation for him raising Perdita. With her interference, Perdita makes herself an agent of reconciliation between her two families. Perdita is

not just a part of the resolution, but she is the one who defines it and has the final say in it (102). Therefore, Winterson gave Perdita the agency in controlling the enrollment of events.

In all, Winterson offers a new reading of the adaption plot by saying that foundling stories do not necessarily have to be full of abuse and trauma, as they can also be open for hope and self-invention. Instead of being adopted by an abusive family, Perdita grew up with one that granted her care and affection. Shakespeare gives a hint to the emotional care that Perdita received with Shepherd and Clown, yet Winterson expands it by detailing the intensive care both Shep and Clo dedicated for Perdita (Carney 103). Perdita's adoption story is placed at the first chapter of the novel, unlike *The Winter's Tale* where it was placed in the middle. Leo, thinking Perdita is not his child, orders his gardener Tony to take the baby with an amount of cash to have them delivered to Xeno in New Bohemia. A group of delinquents start chasing after Tony to rob him and he is forced to place Perdita in a BabyHatch until his return. All this happens in front of Shep who spots a light coming from the BabyHatch. Shep takes the baby because he does not to leave her for an unknown fate (Winterson 121-123). This rearrangement of the chronological lining of events is another example of the novel's rejection to temporal linearity.

3.1.3. Fragmentated Masculinity in *The Gap of Time*

Beside exploring the theme of trauma through MiMi's experience, the novel discusses the theme of alienation. Leo and Xeno's stories are evident examples of fragmented characters. First, there is Xeno, Leo's childhood friend and lover. Xeno channels his relationships through his alcoholism and his videogames. Xeno's alienation and detachment drive him to take refuge in the surrealist world of the videogame he designed. In his videogame, Xeno sets up a virtual reality where he offers choices that he could make to prevent his real-life sorrow. One, the main character of his game is Time; which can be controlled to stop some actions from happening or pause them for later. This ability to control time in his real world was unfortunately not present otherwise he could have been able to bring the old Leo and Mimi back (Winterson 203). The game, therefore, lets Xeno expresses his resentment to this issue and to echo Winterson's critical position towards it as well. Xeno may have designed the game with an optimistic intention to create a parallel universe with better options, but he still alienated himself from the real world that he lived in (Sundelin 13-14).

Drost (2018) pointed at the theme of sexual anxiety as the crossroad between Winterson's own story and the narratives of Leo and Xeno, as both characters had to keep their intimacy "in the closet" at a time homosexuality was not tolerated (Drost 32). Such sentiment of anxiety is evident with Leo, who demonstrated his inability to develop bonds with people around him. Before, Leo had a homoerotic relationship but it felt apart after Xeno's injury in a biking accident. Such event made both characters distant not only from each other but also from their surroundings, especially Leo who was incapable of constructing an intimate bond with people especially his wife (Drost 33). Another example of this issues that Leo has is when he had to consult a Wikipedia article on MiMi because he felt he doesn't know her anymore. Not to mention that it was this lack of intimacy that has pushed him to ask Xeno to propose to MiMi for him (Winterson 42).

In this respect, the fresh material that Winterson included in her novel consisted of highlighting the characters' sexual anxieties and tensions that were hidden in *The Winter's Tale* (Carney 88). For example, Winterson gives the readers a glimpse on Leo's childhood, suggesting that this would have an explanation for his alienated and toxic personality. Like Shakespeare's Leontes, Leo demonstrated a resistance to aging. In the play, Leontes reminisces about his childhood every time he plays with his son Mamilius, as he wishes to be a child again so that he gets is relieved from his duties as a husband and a king. Leo, on the other hand, attempts to escape any attempt to build an emotional tie with anyone, and this what MiMi confirms when saying that Leo "being afraid of [getting] close to anyone" (Winterson 64).

In their childhood, both Leo and Xeno lacked intimacy in their love relationship. This of course would hunt them later on during their adulthood, as they will be struggling in their relations since they are unable to build an intimate connection with others (Zajac 335). This is more evident in Leo's behavior, who appears as he doesn't want to grow up, and this probably shows up in his sexist view against women; from his disdain to his mother for abandoning him; and his sexist remarks on his assistant Pauline; to his mistreatment of his wife MiMi. Probably, Leontes throws the blame on his heterosexual patrimony for distancing his childhood lover from him (Zajac 336). Instead of working to develop emotional ties and bonds, they exhibit anxious and frustrated behaviour. For Xeno, he channels his relationships through his alcoholism and videogames. Whereas Leo mediated his relationship to women through pornography, and this made him develop a sexist view toward women (Drost 36).

Ștefan (2020) further examines Leo's story as a character and his homoerotic relation to Leo to understand his toxic behaviour through the novel. Consequentially, the story offers a detailed description of the characters' psychological worlds and how these affect their actions and decisions, especially Leo who had appeared to be the problematic figure in the novel. In Ștefan's belief, Leontes's jealousy is due to an "unconscious homosexual desire for Polixenes" (Ștefan 190). This assumption is further extended when Winterson sets a homoerotic backstory to the friendship between Leo and Xeno, and by doing so she surfaces Leontes's homosexuality that was slightly hinted but not fully expressed in *The Winter's Tale*. The novel tells on how Leo had a troubled childhood marked by his parents' absence and how he was obliged by societal norms of that time to suppress his homoerotic feelings to Xeno (Ștefan 198). Of course, such story would explain Leo's frustration and jealousy that resembles Leontes. Through Leo, the novel shades Leontes's lust for control and domination and recreates it in a compelling and cinematographic way and this occurs in the first chapter, when angry Leo attempts to kill Xeno by running him over and then returns home to rape his pregnant wife. With such graphic details, the novel puts Leo's psychosis and mental instability to display. However, Leo proves to be much worse as attempts to justify his wrong decisions succumbed by his jealousy rather than admitting his wrongdoing, in contrast to Leontes who comes to terms with his misjudgments (Ștefan 199).

While Winterson pays respect to *The Winter's Tale*'s morale on forgiveness and penitence, she also parodies how those powerful men characters were portrayed in classical literary works, as she replaces the two mighty and wealthy kings with businessmen who struggle with their masculinity (Ștefan 196). Yet, this ridiculing aspect is not harsh as Winterson gives both of Leo and Xeno a chance for salvation. Yet, Leo and Xeno's salvation is only brought to them by the younger generation, that is, Perdita and Zel. Another point is that Winterson criticizes the idea of power and wealth and how it can corrupt and alienate its holders, and of course she is somehow ridiculing of money and power being guarantees of one's emotional satisfaction (Ștefan 196).

As it tackled themes like trauma, intimacy and self-agency, *The Gap of Time* presented psychological analyses of each character and depicted the emotional struggles that they were having. These characters are no longer a theatrical cast, but rather a group of human beings that have become emotionally alienated and even distanced from time because of the emotional injuries inflicted to them. To grant readers with accurate depictions of such emotional sorrow, Winterson resorted to a set of postmodern techniques of writing; a set that would allow her to draw how was every character feeling in their state of sorrow they were undergoing (Drost 25).

3.2.Postmodern Techniques and Parody in *The Gap of Time*

Postmodern literature underwent a process of reform that resulted in the introduction of innovative techniques and devices at the expanse of the conventional methods and ways of literary writing. Such innovation was deemed necessary for voicing and writing experiences of marginalized communities and to

expose the injustices that they suffered because of their gender, race, social class, etc. Consequently, postmodernist writers resorted to numerous literary devices to establish innovative styles at the level of writing. Not only that these techniques revolt against previous classical literary paradigms, but they also criticize their ideological foundation and their biased ways of writing (Al Faqih, Thalia and Maghfiroh 50). These techniques allowed to take a critical stand on canonical texts in literature. Examples of these techniques can include: temporal distortion, metafiction and parody.

The break from classical literary conventions in *The Gap of Time* was also apparent in the novel's language: unlike the play's refined and complex jargon, the novel's language was simple, more contemporary, and even vulgar and obscene in some passages. The parody that Winterson opted for, attempted to represent a different angle of the events of *The Winter's Tale*. Like most of classical plays, The *Winter's Tale* was operating on the principle of the Aristotelian Hero, it had in fact two heroes: Leontes and Polixenes. The entire plot of the play carried the objective of telling the stage how these two characters found salvation. However, *The Gap of Time* does not grand Leo and Xeno such courtesy, as it holds them both accountable for their negligence towards the other characters and forces them into showing more maturity. Also, when *The Winter's Tale* would disregard the stories of other characters that do not belong to the 'rich men' category. Consequentially, *The Gap of Time* would introduce the readers into these marginalized characters, by telling more details about their background as characters. All of these instances of deconstructing *The Winter's Tale*'s narrative are what characterizes Winterson's parodic rewriting. Therefore, when *The Winter's Tale* presents its characters and stories as a mere theatrical cast, *The Gap of Time* reminds its readers that its characters are human beings by having the former access into the psychological realms of the latter. To reinforce the parodic tone of her novel, Winterson resorted to a number of postmodernist devices of writing. Sharma and Chaudhary (2011) list a number of techniques that are usually applied in postmodern rewritings of Shakespearean plays. The following section would define an illustrate some of the techniques applied in *The Gape of Time*, namely: Intertextuality, hyperreality, minimalism, temporal distortion (Sharma and Chaudhary 190).

3.2.1. Intertextuality

The first postmodern technique of rewriting is intertextuality. Intertextuality, defined as "reference or parallel to another literary work, an extended discussion of a work, or the adoption of a style", is used in the novel (Sharma and Chaudhary, 2011, p. 194). The technique is evident in the association that Winterson made between Leo and another Shakespearean character: Othello. Bolchi (2017) highlights the resemblance between the two characters since each character succumbed their judgment to their paranoia rather than listening to their wives' claims of innocence. Yet, in her novel, Winterson makes a twist where "the heroine doesn't have to die in the service of the hero's delusions" (Bolchi 70). Like Othello, Leo assaults MiMi and attempts to strangle her, but unlike Desdemona, MiMi gives birth to her child instead of dying. Instead of being subject to death, MiMi goes with Life by giving birth to her baby. Another common point between Othello and Leo is that both of them twist the evidence presented before them to satisfy their own paranoia (Bolchi 68). When Leo was watching a webcam recording of MiMi, Pauline and Xeno in a dressing room. Despite nothing happened there that would prove his suspicion and because the surveillance video was mute, Leo only twisted what he saw in front of him and started having twisted fantasy scenarios in his head about the three of them having an intercourse (Winterson 49-54).

The second instance of intertextuality would be Winterson's reference to the French poet Gérard de Nerval in her novel. Xeno, as well, sets his videogame's plot to be inspired by a dream that Gérard de Nerval had before he committed suicide (Percec 138). The poet's dream was about an angel who fallen from the heaven before his wings get trapped in a narrow yard of one of the houses of Paris's poor slums. Then, he becomes a friend with a young girl who comforts him in his suffering. The angel cannot free

himself: if he doesn't move his wings he will perish, but if he moves them, they will make the entire house collapse and therefore kill his human friend, the girl (Winterson 203-206). That video game that Xeno designs is nothing but a simulation of the sorrowful events that he had gone through. All of these events were replicated by Winterson in her novel to tackle the themes of pain and loss.

3.2.2. Hyperreality

In *The Gap of Time*, Winterson transforms the element of fairytales that *The Winter's Tale* had into the virtual world of videogames. In contrast to Polixenes's kingdom in the play, Xeno built his 'kingdom' thanks to his videogame company. Percec (2019) analyzes videogames as a literary motif though which Winterson recreates the temporal gap that Shakespeare inserted in *The Winter's Tale*, as well as the surrealist world from the play which she rendered into a virtual one in the novel. Not only that Xeno designs the game, but he also recreates himself and his personal life as the story of the game. Then, he sets it up in a temporal setting that combines three levels inspired by three time periods in three cities: Elizabethan England during which Shakespeare wrote his peace; contemporary city of London where Winterson rewrote the play; and Paris which presents the setting of Xeno's game (Percec 135). The game's story is about a war between Parisians defending their city against the angels' attempt of controlling Paris. At the fourth level, the player can control time and manipulate to their wish; as they can stop it, move it forward or backward or even pause a certain moment and come back to it later. The idea of time wrap was heard once from Leo who told Xeno of a scene from Richard Donner's movie *Superman* (1978), where Superman tries to save Lois from drowning by flying around the world's axis to rewind time in backwards (Winterson 60). In the game, MiMi is represented as a ghost, because nothing has been heard about her for years and this led Xeno to believe that she was dead. For Xeno, the videogame he designed was the magical parallel universe in which he took refuge to escape his harsh real life (Percec 137).

The sorrowful theme of Xeno's game was a reflection of his alienation and detachment from both Leo and MiMi. In his videogame, he sets up a virtual reality where he offers choices that he could not apply on his sorrowful real life. One, the main character of his game is Time; which can be controlled to stop some actions from happening or pause them for later. This ability to control time in his real world was unfortunately not present otherwise he could have been able to bring the old Leo and Mimi back. Somehow similar to the novel's plot, the game's events also tell of how a group of fallen angels try to seclude power by make the people of the city fight each other (Winterson 203-206). This is a reference to how capitalism and accumulation of wealth can corrupt and destroy people. The game, therefore, lets Xeno expresses his resentment to this issue, and the same feeling is shared by Winterson. (Sundelin 13-14). The hyperrealist world is also what Winterson uses to voice her feminist critique to capitalism. Somehow similar to the novel's plot, the game's events also tell of how a group of fallen angels try to seclude power by make the people of the city fight each other (Winterson 204). This is a reference to how capitalism and accumulation of wealth can corrupt and destroy people .

3.2.3. Minimalism

This device is applied by the writer's use of characters, events and even a language that are normal and unexceptional (Sharma and Chaudhary 198). Beside recreating the events of *The Winter's Tale* into a postmodern setting and a non-linear plotline, Winterson takes her parodic writing to a bit further by rewriting both the play's language and characters. First, the Shakespeare's sophisticated bardic language transforms into one that is common, more contemporary and even profane (Sundelin 08). Whereas for the characters, Winterson changes both their names and even gives them backstories to understand them as characters. In the novel, Hemione becomes MiMi, a French dancer and singer; Leontes becomes the self-absorbed Leo who manages a hedge-fund; as for Polixenes he becomes the introverted Xeno who owns a videogame enterprise. Winterson adopts another critical reversal of characters that is ethnically and sexually

diverse by turning Shepherd and Clown into African American Shep and Clo (Sundelin 12-13). For the setting, the novel moves from the medieval world of kinghood into a contemporary one controlled by the capitalist market, as Winterson replaced Leontes's kingdom of Sicilia and court with the contemporary money market (Sundelin 14). Here, both monarchy and capitalism represent authoritarianism and seclusion of power. In the novel, Leo is an owner of a financial company (Bolchi 63). Whether is it royalty or capitalism, Winterson would criticize both for the moral corruption and tyranny that each of them causes.

3.2.4. Temporal Distortion

This technique is most used in both modern and postmodern literature, and it is used for the sake of parody and irony. Examples of this device are non-linear narratives and fragmentation. In *The Winter's Tale*, the play's acts and events follow a chronological order starting from the feud between Leontes and Polixenes because of the former's jealousy; the trial of Hermione and her supposed death after giving birth to Perdita; Perdita being raised by Shephard and his son and falling in love with Florizel till the end with Perdita's return to her parents and the reconciliations of both old Leontes and Polixenes. *The Gap of Time* would dismantle the same events into a non-linear plot (Bolchi 63). The very first chapter of the novel starts with a flashback that Shep has of himself finding Perdita in a BabyHatch; moving to Leo's memory of the day his son Milo died in an accident, and then this accident reminds him of another one that Xeno had that made them put an end to their childhood love affair (Winterson 112-113). After these flashbacks, the events of the novel go back to their actual course only to be resolved with an open ending of the novel where Winterson herself turns out to be a spectator within the novel.

4. Results and Discussion

In *The Gap of Time*, Winterson managed to balance between the two ends of the parodic spectrum, as she applied both satirical and the reverential sides of Hutcheon's model of parody. In regards to the ridiculing affect, the novel pertained the same events of *The Winter's Tale*, but it played with their linear chronology. The content was affected as well, as brought to light themes that the play kept hidden; such as Leontes and Polixenes's homoerotic bonds. Yet, the findings of this paper demonstrate that the reverential part of the parody is the most prominent in Winterson's novel through the expansion of Shakespeare's novel for a more postmodern narrative. In overall, The Gap of Time renders the events of The Winter's Tale into a more postmodern setting. The same postmodern tone of the novel opens the play's events to a plurality of subplots and narratives. In this regard, Winterson's parody also tends to give a voice to some characters whom the play did not shed light on, especially female ones -like Perdita-, whose role in altering the stage of events is evident. As a postmodern work, *The Gap of Time* applies literary techniques that would allow the audience to have a glimpse into the characters' psyches. For example, Winterson casted her own experiences through Perdita's story as a foundling; fragmentation to talk about Leo and Xeno's struggle with intimacy. Winterson used intertextuality as well to make the analogy between Leo and Othello on their paranoid jealousy. Finally, Xeno's hyperrealist getaway from his life through his videogames. The parody in *The Gap of Time* also carries Winterson's pertinence to her socialist beliefs which were worded in her criticism to power and wealth and how they corrupt and alienate people. To fulfil for the reverential aspect of parody, Winterson pays respect to the way *The Winter's Tale* teaches the virtues of forgiveness and penitence. Therefore, this ridiculing aspect is not taken to its fullest, as Winterson gives both of Leo and Xeno a chance for salvation. The ridiculing effect does make its presence in the novel, yet it is the reverential side of the parody that is the most prominent. Winterson's playfulness in her rewriting of *The Winter's Tale* should not be misread as an attack on Shakespeare, but rather as an attempt to expand his work even further and reform it in a way that it can converse with a contemporary audience.

5. Conclusion

As a conclusion, this article focuses on studying how Winterson applied Hutcheon's model of parodic writing. Such model does not confine itself in the effect of satiric ridiculing, but can also convey as well a literary tribute to the work it parodies. What Winterson parodied in her rewriting was rather the outdated social norms that hindered the parodied play's tackling of themes that were considered taboos during Elizabethan era. Winterson also resorted to a psychological lens to bring to light the mental alienation characters suffered from. What Winterson displayed in her novel stands as a quintessential instance of postmodernist rewriting. Here, she rendered The Winter's Tale's original plot into one that carries a plethora of different voices and experiences; a feature that celebrates postmodernist advocation of the plurality of narratives.

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