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# “With what’s unreal thou coactive art”: Gender and the Forces of Illusion in *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest*

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## **“With what’s unreal thou coactive art”: Gender and the Forces of Illusion in *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest***

Mark S. Rideout, *University of Tulsa*

**E**arly modern English culture drew careful distinctions between male and female forms of magic, onstage and off. In William Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale*, for instance, Paulina is reviled as “a mankind witch” (2.3.67)<sup>1</sup> by the king, marking her as an anomaly while underscoring a gender norm that was widely accepted and exploited in Jacobean drama, a norm against which Leontes asserts she is transgressing. In contrast, Prospero’s magical prowess in *The Tempest* draws praise from those who logically should fear him. In the face of intimidating displays of the sorcerer’s power, for instance, Ferdinand nevertheless deems Prospero “so rare a wondered father” (4.1.123). This essay thus explicates, through analysis of two very different but chronologically contiguous plays, some of the ways in which learned male magic and witchy, demonic female magic were differentiated in early modern drama—a distinction typified by Leontes’s epithet. It then exposes some ways in which the culture constructed and perceived those distinctions, or (to use Stephen Greenblatt’s term) the ways they were *circulating*.<sup>2</sup> In *The Winter’s Tale* (c. 1609-11) and *The Tempest* (c. 1610-11), both Paulina and Prospero create illusions in order to manipulate the perceptions of others; both do so to rectify old wrongs, repair broken families, and reestablish normative political order. Yet they contend with radically different expectations about magic: while a male mage can impose states of mind on his victims without question, a female witch (or a woman who resembles one) must anticipate challenges for attempting the same thing. Consequently, this essay investigates the ways in which the characters of Paulina and Prospero reflect the gendering of magic in early modern English culture, and the ways in which gender influences the impact of the illusions they create. This gendering, I suggest, reflects the early modern desire to maintain the integrity of the gender divide and draws attention to the anxiety generated when that boundary is challenged.<sup>3</sup>

The vogue for portraying magical figures onstage took shape in the late 1580s with two plays about learned male magicians, Christopher

Marlowe’s *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* and Robert Greene’s *The Honorable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. Both these plays and those that followed owe something to the reputations of actual learned men and their deep investment in what Frank Klaassen provocatively terms “illicit learned magic” (Klaassen 1). Such figures include the thirteenth-century Franciscan friar Roger Bacon, Queen Elizabeth’s court astrologer Dr. John Dee, and Henry Percy, the ninth Earl of Northumberland, known as the “Wizard Earl.” Shakespeare’s Prospero thus shares a tendency with these and other scholar mages to be “transported / And rapt in secret studies,” while “all dedicated / To closeness and the bettering of my mind” (1.2.76-77, 89-90). Education and intense esoteric study were, in fact, respectable occupations in early modern England for men of certain social classes.<sup>4</sup> A university education was a pathway to gainful employment for younger sons, typically, though not always, leading to a career in law or in the church. Although he is a duke, Prospero, like Bacon and Faustus, obtained an advanced education and possesses (or possessed) the cultural and economic wherewithal to acquire occult knowledge. Since such learning was almost exclusively the province of men in early modern England, the magic that stems from it also is exclusively male.

Early modern critiques of advanced or esoteric scholarship, however, often focused on the ways in which study encouraged men to question or challenge doctrine and authority or led them into spiritual error. In his treatise *Daemonologie*, published in 1597 and 1603, King James I devotes an entire chapter to learned magic. The argument for book 1, chapter 3, reads in part: “The Description of the Rudiments and Schoole, which are the entresses to the Arte of Magie” (James 158). Here James explicitly makes magic an educational process through which the devil can mislead the learned. One need only recall the fate of Doctor Faustus to grasp the implications of James’s argument. However, two decades after Marlowe’s play was first performed, Shakespeare created a scholar mage less susceptible to demonic influence and thus less a man to be reviled or pitied. While such a portrayal registers a shift in attitude toward this particular type of magical character, Prospero nevertheless makes claims that hew closely to the kind of sorcery against which James is warning. Addressing his various powers in act 5, Prospero declares, “Graves at my command / Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let ‘em

forth / By my so potent art” (5.1.48-50). This is necromancy, which Barbara Mowat asserts is signified by Prospero’s reliance on a magical manuscript and which distinguishes his powers from Cabalistic magic and witchcraft: “his book as grimoire takes us to a tremendously important third category, that of ‘magician’ or ‘necromancer’” (Mowat 25).<sup>5</sup> In this period, necromancy was expressly associated with the demonic, yet Prospero does not appear to receive infernal aid; rather, he characterizes his agency as “my so potent art.” Here, as elsewhere in the play, Prospero asserts power for himself, claiming an independence and control that demon-dependent sorcerers like Faustus could not.

Control in fact defines male magic, and Prospero displays an unprecedented level of it. While the precise source of his power remains equivocal, Prospero evidently has mastered the elements and spirits that do his bidding. Ariel, a spirit who is not identified or portrayed as serving the devil (even clandestinely), fulfills many of Prospero’s magical commands, but the mage also demonstrates his autonomy through apparently unmediated control over the behavior of others. For instance, after relating the story of how they came to the island, Prospero charms Miranda into a deep sleep: “Tis a good dulness, / And give it way—I know thou canst not choose” (1.2.185-186). Insisting on Ariel’s obligation to him, the wizard claims, “It was mine art, / . . . that made gape / The pine and let thee out” (1.2.291-293). Likewise, he can inflict physical pain on others, or cause his spirits to, as Caliban often complains. Through Ariel and his other “weak masters” (5.1.41), Prospero manipulates the weather as well. In addition to conjuring the initial tempest, he promises Alonso a smooth journey home at the end of the play, and a private wind “so expeditious that shall catch / Your royal fleet far off” (5.1.315-316). Notably, Prospero makes this claim after he has “abjured” what he calls “rough magic” (5.1.50-51), suggesting that he has chosen to retain a more refined part of his magical ability, a strategy that may stem from the manner in which he acquired his skill and the importance he attaches to all forms of power. In an early modern male, such power attachment may be both natural and virtuous. As Stephen Orgel notes, “Power, as Prospero presents it . . . is not inherent but self-created. It is magic, or ‘art,’ an extension of mental power and self-knowledge” (Orgel “Wife” 8). The exercise of mental power to which Orgel refers privileges male magic and underscores its maleness, since women theoretically were incapable of or

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unsuited to intellectual rigor and emotional self-discipline, nor were they encouraged to pursue and exercise most kinds of power. Despite social, economic, and political constraints, men therefore had greater license than women did to see themselves as autonomous, empowered, and under their own control.

Power and control in the world of a Renaissance mage are multiform; Prospero spends much of the play managing a variety of simultaneous projects of overt magical manipulation. Less often noted, however, is the way that Prospero also controls women’s narratives in yet a further, sometimes magically inflected, attempt to secure his status and protect his male privilege. From Prospero, for instance, Miranda learns only that her mother was “a piece of virtue, and / She said thou wast my daughter” (1.2.56-57), a jocular reply which is frustratingly uninformative as well as unfunny. Miranda laments that her father has “often / Begun to tell me what I am, but stopped, / And left me to a bootless inquisition” (1.2.33-35). Ignorant of her heritage, Miranda here mirrors Prospero’s language, who calls her “my daughter, who / Art ignorant of what thou art” (1.2.17-18). Not *who* but *what*: an intimation of Miranda’s purloined royal status, no doubt, but also an effort to objectify and thereby manipulate her. In more than one sense, Prospero intends to construct his daughter during the course of the play; he scripts Miranda’s future in the hope of securing her happiness. At the outset, however, Prospero fixates on what she recalls of early childhood and, confirming that her memory is mostly a blank, provides Miranda with an origin story, within which the shadow of her mother is enfolded. Such a maneuver not only enhances the illusion that Prospero is the sole source of his daughter’s existence, but also further concentrates his control over her. Miranda sees what Prospero’s magic can do. By simultaneously positioning himself at the center of her self-knowledge, he reinforces the sway of the magician-father and effaces that of the invisible mother.

At the same time, Prospero is concerned with a more threatening shadow mother, whose narrative he attempts to control as well, although Caliban hampers his efforts. Prospero’s affinity with the witch Sycorax, Caliban’s mother, becomes apparent when he reminds Ariel of the punishment she visited upon the spirit, for Prospero promises similar afflictions if he is not obeyed. He relates the conditions under which Sycorax came to the island as if he has intimate, first-hand knowledge of

her history, which is unlikely since she was dead when the Milanese castaways arrived. Moreover, whereas Prospero condemns Sycorax in act 1 as a “foul witch” and “damned witch” guilty of “mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible” (1.2.256, 264-65), his tone in the fifth act is appreciably less denunciatory. When he identifies Caliban as one of the conspirators, Sycorax in Prospero’s estimation is no longer foul or damned but a witch “so strong / That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs, / And deal in her command without her power” (5.1.269-271). We may recall that earlier Prospero claims similar authority for himself: “I have bedimmed / The noontide sun, called forth the mutinous winds, / And ‘twixt the green sea and the azured vault / Set roaring war” (5.1.41-44). He asserts also that he has raised the dead, an act of necromancy the likes of which he strangely does not attribute to Sycorax, although he notes that her commands were “earthy and abhorred” (1.2.273). By appropriating her narrative—and subsequently appropriating her son (“this thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine,” 5.1.275-276)—Prospero neutralizes, contains, and transcends Sycorax’s ostensible claim to power, both as a mother and as a witch. The emphasis is not on eliminating the incidence or effects of magic but rather on limiting the influence women could have over others, thereby consolidating power into morally authoritative male hands.

Such bold attempts to negate any sense of women’s agency bring us back to Leontes’s stream of invective against Paulina in *The Winter’s Tale*, in which he manages to include most of the insults a man in the early modern period could muster about a woman who refuses to be silent and obedient. His oaths and curses conform to a standard misogynistic pattern that characterizes women as morally suspect, gossipy busybodies, but where his previous diatribes against Hermione are disjointed and illogical, Paulina’s presence gives Leontes’s outrage focus and structure. As she appeals to reason and to his presumed paternal instincts, Leontes deflects Paulina’s argument by reacting instead to her effrontery, denouncing her as an “audacious lady” (2.3.42)<sup>6</sup> and “A callet / Of boundless tongue” (2.3.90-91). He implies that she has in fact acted as a go-between for Hermione and Polixenes, calling her “A most intelligencing bawd!” (2.3.68) and “Lady Margery, your midwife there” (2.3.159).<sup>7</sup> “Lady Margery-prater” and “Dame Partlet” (2.3.75) were nicknames for hens and therefore were contemptuous terms for a woman, but we should note

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that Leontes’s thinking takes an interesting turn toward magic during this encounter. An assertive wife could be ridiculed for stepping outside her appropriate role, but Leontes escalates the tenor of his diatribe by invoking images that not only make Paulina appear transgressive but also dangerous.

The association between midwives, bawds, and witches on which the king draws has a long and complex pedigree. Thomas Szasz, a professor of psychiatry, was one of the first to position witchcraft as a conflict between social groups, conflict he ultimately links to the social damage still being done by modern institutional psychiatry. He asserts that “the Inquisition [i.e., witch hunt] constitutes . . . an early instance of the ‘professional’ repudiating the skills and interfering with the rights of the ‘nonprofessional’ to minister to the poor” (Szasz 91). Social critics Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English extend this argument, contending that the demonization of a certain class of women, many of whom were indeed healers and midwives, stemmed from a larger systematic effort at suppression that began in medieval Europe and spread to England, reaching its peak in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In their analysis, the “witch-craze” was “a ruling class campaign of terror directed against the female peasant population. Witches represented a political, religious and sexual threat to the Protestant and Catholic churches alike, as well as to the state” (Ehrenreich 5). Like Szasz, they trace the animus against women healers to the nascent conceptualization of medicine as a profession, promulgated and populated by educated men. Less than a decade after Ehrenreich and English’s treatise appeared, Mary Chamberlain produced a detailed historical study of the evolution of perceptions of such women healers, their subsequent relegation to the status of “old wives,” and their exclusion from medical practice. While Chamberlain, too, notes the political facets of women’s persecution, she asserts that “the prime motivation of witchcraft prosecutions was not to eliminate women in healing. . . . Nevertheless, it was during this period that theological arguments against women in medicine became conflated into the more familiar intellectual and social arguments of today, and physicians began . . . to demand protection to ensure that a monopoly be guaranteed and preserved” (Chamberlain 36). According to Chamberlain, repression was achieved easily enough through exploitation of women healers’ traditional association with

religion, magic, and witchcraft dating back to classical antiquity and the Roman Empire.

Recent scholarship, in contrast, has focused on the ways in which developments in midwifery both parallel the emergence of male medical professionals (before being overtaken by them) and shadow male acquisition of esoteric knowledge. In her study of older women as medical providers in early modern London, Margaret Pelling notes that “None of these female practitioners . . . quite fits the stereotype of the wandering, isolated old crone, gathering her medicines from the hedgerows, excluded from the cash economy, and indeed cut off from society except for her dubious practice” (Pelling 76).<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, as Caroline Bicks asserts, the realm in which these women operated and the ways in which they came by their expertise made them suspect and put them at odds with male-dominated, authorized practices: “The women who attended births served an important legal and educational function for women at a time when their rights in both areas were virtually nonexistent. . . . Barred in most European countries from the book- and theory-centered education available to men, the women attending births taught each other or learned through semi-formal apprenticeships” (Bicks 10). The distinction between male and female methods of learning about female anatomy is one reason midwives could seem so threatening. That is, according to Bicks, “Whereas the midwife learned her trade by touching and talking to living women, medical men gained their knowledge and stature from those already dead” (Bicks 45). Here Bicks is referring to male education that depended on reading often ancient medical texts and on the dissection of corpses. Women learning from other women was something done in secret, not according to any standardized pedagogy, and therefore was not easily controlled or monitored by men.

In this sense, then, Paulina, like Prospero, embodies the role of the “professional.” Although he means it in a pejorative sense only, Leontes is not entirely incorrect in referring to her as a midwife. While she was not, like a true midwife, present in the birthing chamber, Bicks asserts that “[Paulina] holds, in effect, the ‘office’ of midwife by virtue of her testimonial role, one that is intimately bound up with her access to a maternal utterance and a paternal audience” (Bicks 33). As Bicks notes, this is imminently threatening to Leontes because “she openly declares an alternative tale about Perdita’s paternity and Hermione’s chastity” (Bicks



35). Leontes cannot afford to allow Paulina to control the narrative he has constructed and thus must find an effective way to discredit her and her words. Therefore, just as Prospero’s professional/political male status empowers him to fashion his daughter’s narrative, Leontes’s status as male sovereign authorizes him to nullify his wife’s, his daughter’s, and Paulina’s.

Hence, in addition to berating Paulina for her impertinence, the king also belittles her as a “crone” (2.3.76) and “A gross hag!” (2.3.107), terms usually reserved for women of lower social class, especially midwives. However, if we recall that “Margery” (as in “Margery-prater”) is the first name of the witch in Shakespeare’s *Henry VI, Part 2* (“Margery Jourdain”) and that witches, too, were routinely described in the very words Leontes has used for Paulina, a pattern emerges. The king’s speech may be coarse and irrational, but he is deliberately extending here a perception of the “lewd-tongued” (2.3.171) midwife/bawd to include terms that characterize Paulina in a quite specific manner and that will have greater repercussions later in the play.<sup>9</sup>

The most revealing epithet from Leontes’s outburst, however, is “mankind witch.” While this insult can be read on one level as just another attempt to demean and intimidate Paulina, the unusual gendering of the term deserves attention. Leontes clearly finds her aggressive and vocal behavior threatening, a fact that he seems to have anticipated. Like a fretful child, he chides Antigonus for permitting Paulina to approach him: “I charged thee that she should not come about me; / I knew she would” (2.3.43-44). In his mind, she would only be bold enough to confront her king like this if she were under the sway of the devil and therefore a witch. Yet even this accusation must be qualified, because she is not acting like a typical female witch and thus transgresses against more than one socially defined role at a time. In order to neutralize the argument Paulina puts forth, Leontes must find a way verbally to set her outside the bounds of the moral order he allegedly tries to maintain. Up to this point, magic has not been part of the discourse of the play, yet in his aggravated attempt to denigrate Paulina, to redefine her and co-opt her narrative along with those of his wife and daughter, Leontes invokes the specter of witchcraft. Magic, however tangential at this early stage, is part of his emotional landscape.

Consequently, when Apollo's oracle declares that everything Leontes has asserted as fact is instead jealous error, the king defies the word of the god and then, at the sudden news of Mamillius' death and Hermione's collapse, belatedly repents—to no effect. Leontes's abrupt, dramatic reversal is elicited by what Linda Woodbridge calls "magical thinking," which she defines thus: "though the conscious mind may have freed itself in large measure from true belief in magic or the efficacy of charms and rituals, all this has gone underground; it is unconscious" (Woodbridge 13). Here the disruptive, preternatural powers of magic and illusion have been summoned and activated, constituting a pre-Freudian "return of the repressed." Thus, the shattered king who tried like Prospero to control women's unsettling or threatening narratives now resorts to making a woman the overseer of his "shame perpetual" (3.2.236). Also like Prospero in the backstory of *The Tempest*, Leontes, through his insistence on the irrational, has created a dysfunctional, fragmented family and a political situation that is dangerously unstable.

As in *The Tempest*, a period of gestation must pass between the introduction or invocation of magic and its overt manifestation in a volatile environment. Leontes's courtiers fret about the sixteen-year absence of an apparent successor to the throne, yet against their insistence that he find a new wife, Paulina cautions the king to wait until the terms of Apollo's prophecy are fulfilled, as unlikely as that outcome may seem. With the restoration of Perdita, however, Paulina appears to be prescient or in possession of secret knowledge, which increases her influence. On the strength of this occurrence, she reveals that she keeps a sculpture of Hermione in a private gallery and arranges a viewing. While Paulina here is mysterious, circumspect, even humble, Leontes once again makes explicit the possibility of magic. Marveling at the statue's verisimilitude, he addresses it: "O royal piece! / There's magic in thy majesty, which has / My evils conjured to remembrance, and / From thy admiring daughter took the spirits" (5.3.38-41). The language he uses echoes witchcraft accusations—conjuring evil and stealing a victim's spirit—and Leontes ascribes this power to the effigy, which Paulina affirms is hers. According to Huston Diehl, the onstage viewers' equivocal responses express "communal anxieties about magic and witchcraft (an unholy mingling of the human and demonic) aroused by Paulina's statue" (Diehl 69), anxieties that Paulina strives to allay. By invoking the shadow of

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witchcraft, however, the king reiterates a key difference between male and female magic, a demarcation of which Paulina seems acutely aware: she cannot safely acknowledge that she possesses or employs occult learning and arcane skills. While a man like Prospero can openly display and use his unique powers with little fear of repercussions, Paulina has no social structure or personal and/or political authority on which to rely for protection.

In these circumstances, it is a given that Paulina cannot boast of a library of rare books, a cabinet of potent talismans, or a career of esoteric study; she cannot claim the accoutrements of learning that a man like Prospero can. Yet in her years as confidant to the king, Paulina has accrued a more subtle kind of persuasive power that she now uses to capitalize on Leontes’s predilection for supernatural explanations. Paulina possesses a collection of images, visual texts that have meaning and can be read by the adept, plus a deep knowledge of how Leontes thinks, both of which fall within her socially acceptable purview as a woman. When she reveals the queen’s image, Paulina therefore is careful to distance herself from the appearance of the kind of magic that Prospero openly claims: raising the dead. Gareth Roberts notes that “the animation of statues is usually described as a feat of male priests or male magical technicians” (Roberts 133), a fact that further complicates Paulina’s position. Thus at the point at which she declares that she can make the statue move, she already has offered three times to stop the viewing and draw the curtain. Three times more she asserts that her “spell is lawful” (5.3.105), while Leontes continues to absolve her of culpability. When Hermione descends, the startled king again shields Paulina, at once taking control of her narrative and redefining the act: “If this be magic, let it be an art / Lawful as eating” (5.3.110-111). David Schalkwyk asserts that in both *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest*, “A woman’s word cannot be taken at face value; it needs to be justified by some harder currency, namely the man’s word that what the woman says is indeed true” (Schalkwyk 246). Consequently, Paulina responds warily to Polixenes’s and Camillo’s subsequent demands, saying that were she to give them an explanation for Hermione’s reappearance, it “should be hooted at / like an old tale” (5.3.116-117). There nonetheless is a truth, she cagily insists, and that truth—however implausible—clears her of any taint of witchcraft. This is not to say that there are no witches in old tales but that the unlikelihood of the truth in

this case might invite the kind of scorn Sir Philip Sidney reserves for romantic plots and “mongrel tragicomedy” (Sidney 46). Paulina’s equivocal stance implies that witches, on the other hand, are *too* plausible and require only a man’s word to indict them.

While Paulina achieves much the same result as Prospero, she is fully aware that as a woman her actions occur outside her prescribed social role and therefore are suspect; at any moment, others may declare them “unlawful.” Prospero creates elaborate illusions with the help of real spirits but seems unconcerned with lawfulness, for he operates from a position of socially sanctioned learning and his own political, male authority. He maintains this moral high ground despite the fact that he traffics with supernatural beings, uses occult knowledge and skills, and even claims to have performed necromantic acts. The distinction between illusions created through magic—as Prospero’s are—and illusions that only look as if they are—as Paulina’s seem to be—may therefore be of less consequence in these texts than is the gender of those who produce them.

The ambivalent representation of Paulina and Prospero is underscored in a difficult passage early in *The Winter’s Tale*, in which Leontes declares (arguably) to disembodied “affection”: “Thou dost make possible things not so held, / Communicat’st with dreams ... / With what’s unreal thou coactive art, / And fellow’st nothing” (1.2.138-141). This soliloquy has been subject to various interpretations and is one of the knottier Shakespearean textual cruxes, due in some measure to erratic punctuation and syntax. Jean Howard, for instance, posits that Leontes is addressing himself in this speech and that “affection” is “probably the passion of jealousy” (*WT* Howard 1163 n8), but she does not probe the passage for deeper coherence. John Pitcher notes that the term “affection” (from the Latin *affectio*) had multiple meanings during the Renaissance, including “a kind of severe mental sickness, a seizure with recognizable physical symptoms: agitation followed by palpitations, feverish sleeplessness and exhaustion, all of which Leontes experiences” (*WT* Pitcher 41). Pitcher concludes, however, that simply because Leontes says he is mad does not mean that he is and, in a telling observation, notes that the king “knows he is probably hallucinating, but chooses to believe the delusions, and from this convinces himself that only he knows what the truth is” (*WT* Pitcher 42). Stephen Orgel, on the other hand, argues for what he sees as the intentional lack of clarity in this and other speeches in

“WITH WHAT’S UNREAL THOU COACTIVE ART”: GENDER AND THE FORCES OF ILLUSION IN *THE WINTER’S TALE* AND *THE TEMPEST* the play, rejecting what he calls “quite unnecessary repunctuation” (*WT* Orgel 9). I suggest, however, that Leontes is on one level struggling to express his sense of the numinous at work throughout the play, placing particular emphasis on that slippery word “unreal.” Consequently, Paulina in the statue scene embodies what Leontes earlier has intuited. Both Paulina and Prospero are, in fact, working in similarly “unreal” situations for similarly tangible results, making actual what was once inconceivable while informing or manipulating the imaginations and perceptions of others.

Given the pressures exerted on these illusionists, it is instructive to note that neither of them fully accomplishes their analogous goals. Old grievances are overlooked or suppressed; former losses are not entirely recouped or compensated. Future amity is not guaranteed: a usurping brother neither expresses remorse nor begs forgiveness; a beloved son and heir moulders in his grave; a spurned wife speaks no words of absolution. Prospero may retake his dukedom and secure a politically advantageous marriage for his daughter, allegedly abandoning precious possessions and relinquishing former powers, but he must implore the audience for approval, indulgence, and release. Yet while Prospero exults in the manner in which his straightforward, male magic brings about reunions and the restoration of order through the power of illusion (“Now does my project gather to a head. / My charms crack not, my spirits obey,” 5.1.1-2), Paulina must be subtle and suggestive, constantly reframing and qualifying her actions. She banishes unbelievers and warns those who remain, “It is required / You do awake your faith” (5.3.94-95). A woman in such a position treads at the edge of forbidden territory. Being a witch is always negative; the designation automatically implies that a woman is consorting with demons and marks her as irredeemably transgressive. In this reading, Paulina can be viewed as Sycorax *in potentia*.

In the final lines of the play, however, Leontes and Paulina work in concert to eradicate misgivings that she is a witch. Paulina resigns herself at last to widowhood, inviting the court’s pity while suggesting that she is a harmless “old turtle[dove]” (5.3.133).<sup>10</sup> The king, meanwhile, seizes the chance to get out from under Paulina’s influence. Silencing her with “O peace, Paulina” (5.3.135), Leontes prudently contains her in an arranged marriage to the steadfast Camillo. The implication here is that Camillo is capable of maintaining effective control over his wife where the late

Antigonus was not. At the same time, the king can reward his two most faithful servants with the potential for unexpected, late-life marital bliss.

In both *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*, as insubstantial pageants fade and newly constituted families are hastily led away, the illusionists—a man and a woman—withdraw to either side of a socially determined line. Prospero can proudly take his reputation for male magic with him, knowing it will increase his singular prestige upon his return to Milan. In contrast, Paulina, her patient sixteen-year subterfuge concluded and herself subsumed in a second marriage, must shed the appearance of witchcraft. A comparison of *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* therefore exposes the extent to which the culture perceives magic as contingent on and defined by gender. Taken together, these plays reflect broader cultural currents concerned with shifting gender roles and the boundary between them that seems to be increasingly permeable.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> All quotations from *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* are from Stephen Orgel's Oxford World's Classics editions unless otherwise noted. See Works Cited. Subsequent references will be cited in-text by act, scene, and line numbers.
- <sup>2</sup> I borrow this term from Greenblatt's discussion of representations of the culture of the other, in which he states, "Any idea, however orthodox, can be challenged. Any representation can be circulated." Although Greenblatt develops this concept in the context of the English colonial project, I find it here useful in considering images of magical figures, particularly of the female witch as other. For a fuller discussion, see Ch. 5 "The Go-Between" in Greenblatt's *Marvelous Possessions*, p. 121.
- <sup>3</sup> While prior critics have discussed magic in terms of its interplay with religion and with social and gender issues in general, none have engaged with the specific gendering of magic in drama as I do in this essay. For important historical and critical background, see individual studies by Keith Thomas, Stuart Clark, Diane Purkiss, and Linda Woodbridge in the Works Cited.
- <sup>4</sup> Frank Klaassen describes the "corporate identity of the learned," which he asserts "mythologized the ideals that educated men commonly held,

“WITH WHAT’S UNREAL THOU COACTIVE ART”: GENDER AND THE FORCES OF ILLUSION IN *THE WINTER’S TALE* AND *THE TEMPEST* such as moral purity, regular participation in church rituals, celibacy, and emotional or sexual self-control” (Klaassen 117).

- 5 Although “grimoire” is a 19th-century term according to the OED (from the French *grammaire*), it has increasingly been used to describe a magical manuscript or collection of manuscripts from any historical period. See Davies, *Grimoires*.
- 6 “Audacious.” Cf. OED, sense 2: “Unrestrained by, or setting at defiance, the principles of decorum and morality; presumptuously wicked, impudent, shameless.”
- 7 Midwives were charged by law with confirming a newborn’s paternity. See Forbes, *The Midwife and the Witch*, p. 145.
- 8 Lynette Hunter and Sarah Hutton edited a collection of essays on the impact of women who studied and wrote about medicine in the early modern period and helped to redefine the concept of the medical professional. See *Women, Science and Medicine 1500-1700* in the Works Cited. My thanks to one of my readers for directing me to this valuable scholarship.
- 9 In an earlier play, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (c. 1597-1598), we see similar language from another irrational, jealous man directed at an allegedly transgressive woman whom he labels a witch. The outburst occurs when Master Ford thinks his wife has invited into their home the “old woman of Brainford.” Cf. *Wiv.* 4.2. Thanks to one of my readers for pointing out this connection.
- 10 The monogamy of turtledoves is proverbial; cf. Florizel’s comment to Perdita: “Your hand, my Perdita—so turtles pair, / That never mean to part” (WT 4.4.154-155).

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