EARLY MODERN LITERARY STUDIES

Preserving Women: Hospitality, Birth, and Healing in *The Winter's Tale*

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In Act 5 of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (1611), Paulina pulls back a curtain to reveal what the other characters and the audience believe to be a statue of Hermione. Before she does so, she tells her onstage audience, '[Hermione's] dead likeness […] / Excels what ever yet you look'd upon, / Or hand of man hath done' (5.3.15–17).[1] By the end of the act, Hermione 'stirs'; 'embraces' her husband, Leontes; and speaks to her daughter, Perdita (5.3.103, 111, 123–28), demonstrating that the 'statue' Paulina has revealed is neither dead nor an imitation but rather evidence of Hermione's preservation over sixteen years.

This depiction and reanimation of Hermione has generated a variety of scholarly interpretations. Focusing on the gaze the statue invites, Lynn Enterline, Kathleen Kaplin, and Bradin Cormack have argued that Hermione embodies the problematic patriarchal ideal of a silent, aged woman who no longer threatens the societal order with her voice or body,[2] while Peter Goldman and Frances Dolan have identified the depiction as part of a

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[1] All references to Shakespeare's plays in this article come from *The Riverside Shakespeare* 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997). Future mentions will be listed parenthetically in the text.

[2] Lynn Enterline, *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 223. Kathleen Kalpin, 'Framing Wifely Advice in Thomas Heywood's *A Curtaine Lecture* and Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*', *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900*, 48.1 (2008), 131–46; Bradin Cormack, 'Shakespeare's Other Sovereignty: On Particularity and Violence in 'The Winter's Tale' and the Sonnets', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 62.4 (2011), 485–513 (p. 497).

larger cultural debate about the value of art and nature.[3] Walter Lim, Ruth Vanita, and others have alternatively couched this moment in a conversation about Catholic and Marian iconography, pointing to the statue's ability to effect miracles despite its lack of magical properties.[4] These disparate interpretations speak to the powerful metaphorical value that emerges as the result of Hermione's preservation.

And yet, few have focused on the physical conditions that enable Hermione's preservation over sixteen years. When Paulina's or Hermione's own labors are mentioned, the attribution is often presented as a sidenote or afterthought. Drawing from the play's own language in his analysis of 'the problem of knowledge', Daryl Palmer, for instance, briefly acknowledges that the women's 'labors do excel what the "hand of man hath done"'.[5] In her generic analysis of the play, Joan Hartwig names 'the second gentleman's comments about Paulina's activities in connection with the statue' – i.e., that 'she hath privately twice or thrice a day, ever since the death of Hermione, visited that removed house' (5.2.105–107) – as a 'clue' that Hermione is not 'an objet d'art'.[6] Focusing on the wonder of the scene, Madeleine Doran similarly describes the 'feigned statue' as 'the result of the faithful Paulina's ministrations and preparations'.[7] Mary Ellen Lamb is more explicit in her observation of the same passage: 'Paulina's visits to the statue "twice or thrice a day" (5.2.105) were clearly designed to feed Hermione'.[8] These scholars make clear that what one of the play's gentlemen once attributed to 'that rare / Italian master, Julio Romano' (5.2.97) is better understood as the product of Paulina's care and

[3] Peter Goldman, '*The Winter's Tale* and Antitheatricalism: Shakespeare's Rehabilitation of the Public Scene', *Anthropoetics: The Journal of Generative Anthropology*, 17.1 (2011), np; Frances Dolan, 'Taking the Pencil out of God's Hand: Art, Nature, and the Face-Painting Debate in Early Modern England', *PMLA*, 108.2 (1993), 224–39 (p. 228).

[4] Walter S. H. Lim, 'Knowledge and Belief in *The Winter's Tale*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 41.2 (2001), 317–34 (p. 317). Ruth Vanita, 'Mariological Memory in *The Winter's Tale* and *Henry VIII*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 40.2 (2000), 311–37 (p. 320). Phebe Jensen, 'Singing Psalms to Horn-Pipes: Festivity, Iconoclasm, and Catholicism in *The Winter's Tale*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 55.3 (2004), 279–306 (p. 282). Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Afterlives of the Saints: Hagiography, Typology, and Renaissance Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 216. Maurice Hunt, 'Syncretistic Religion in Shakespeare's Late Romances', *South Central Review*, 28.2 (2011), 57–79 (p. 72).

[5] Daryl Palmer, 'Jacobean Muscovites: Winter, Tyranny, and Knowledge in *The Winter's Tale*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 46.3 (1995), 323–39 (pp. 337–8).

[6] Joan Hartwig, 'The Tragicomic Perspective of *The Winter's Tale*', *ELH*, 37.1 (1970), 12–36 (p. 34).

[7] Madeline Doran, 'The Idea of Excellence in Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 27.2 (1976), 133–49 (pp. 143–4).

[8] Mary Ellen Lamb, 'Engendering the Narrative Act: Old Wives' Tales in *The Winter's Tale*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest*', *Criticism*, 40.4 (1998), 529–53 (p. 536).

Hermione's own preservation. Apart from Palmer and Lamb, however, these writers do not elaborate on the work completed by women in the play.

In this article, I extend these previous observations about 'Paulina's ministrations', reading the depiction of Hermione in this final scene as part of a larger constellation of images in the play that are predicated on early modern understandings of women as preservers. In early modern England, women were expected to preserve belongings, health, food, and lineage. In *The Winter's Tale*, Paulina, Hermione, Perdita, and other unnamed women participate in the time- and labor-intensive tradition of preservation. And yet, in real life and in the play, this work is often overlooked, discounted, or disparaged to the detriment of both the preserver and the preserved. Shakespeare criticizes this dismissal of female contributions through the extended metaphor of disease and healing. Leontes demonstrates a 'diseas'd opinion' (1.2.297) when he rejects the interventions of the women around him, and the eventual restoration of Leontes' health, his friendships, and his lineage hinges on his acceptance of female agency. In *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare uses depictions of hospitality, childbearing, and nursing to encourage the audience to accept women's natural proclivity for preservation and thus avoid the 'diseased' thinking that proves harmful in the play.

Women as Preservers

Outlined in treatises on memory, manuals for husbands and housewives, and records kept by women, assumptions that women could and should preserve spanned tasks such as management of household resources, maintenance of health, preparation of food, and even confirmation of lineage. Tied together by their location in the home and their time-intensive nature, these tasks revolved around the belief that women were intrinsically more qualified to complete the work of preservation than men. Focusing on early modern beliefs and practices related to preservation helps illuminate the significance of its portrayal in *The Winter's Tale*.

The responsibility of 'keeping house' exemplifies the early modern woman's role as a preserver.[9] In *A Preparatiue to Marriage* (1591), Henrie Smith defines this duty through

[9] I do not mean to imply here that all women stayed home. Amy Erickson, Susan Amussen, Tim Stretton, Peter Laslett, Amy Froide, Laura Gowing, Alexandra Shepard, and others have shown women played an essential role in the early modern English economy. Amy Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993); Susan Amussen, 'The Contradictions of Patriarchy in Early Modern England', *Gender and History*, 30.2 (2018), 343–53; Tim Stretton, *Women Waging Law in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Amy Froide, *Never*

the metaphor of 'two birdes'. He explains, 'the one is the cocke, and the other is the dam: the cocke flieth abroad to bring in, and the dam sitteth vpon the nest to keep all at home'.[10] For Smith, 'keeping at home' and 'keep[ing] all at home' are one in the same, responsibilities codified in the term 'house wife'.[11] In *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622), William Gouge clarifies that the housewife must 'as the thread or wier whereon pearles are put, […] keepeth them from scattering', recalling the quantity and location of those things which her husband has entrusted to her.[12] Early modern manuals for husbands and housewives consistently assign the responsibility to 'kepe yt [her husband] doeth gayne', or to preserve what her husband has earned, to the housewife.[13] These late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century texts reinforce the household as the domain of women and emphasize the wife's duty to maintain the family's belongings within this space. Although some of the referenced works were published after the initial production of *The Winter's Tale* in 1611 (but before the play's publication in the 1623 Folio), all the texts capture discourses and understandings already in circulation and the late texts reinforce sentiments presented in the earlier mentioned texts.[14]

Domestic manuals often extend this responsibility of 'keeping' to the maintenance of health through the preservation of food and administration of household remedies. In *The English Huswife* (1615), Gervase Markham identifies 'the preseruation and care of the familie touching their health and soundnesse of bodie' as 'one of the most principall vertues which doth belong to our English hous-wife'.[15] She must 'preserue [her] body' and the bodies of her family from disease and treat illness when symptoms arise.[16] Within

Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Laura Gowing, 'Girls on Forms: Apprenticing Young Women in Seventeenth-Century London', *Journal of British Studies*, 55 (2016), 447–73; Alexandra Shepard, 'Crediting Women in the Early Modern English Economy', *History Workshop Journal*, 79 (2015), 1−24.

[10] Henrie Smith, *A Preparatiue to Mariage the Summe Whereof was Spoken at a Contract, and Inlarged After* (London: R. Field, 1591), p. 43.

[S] Ibid., pp. 43 and 62.

[12] William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties Eight Treatises* (London: Printed by Iohn Haviland, 1622), pp. 4–5. See also Natasha Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), p. 50.

[13] Juan Luis Vives, *The Office and Duetie of an Husband*, trans. Thomas Paynell (London: Iohn Cawood, 1555), p. U2r; Smith, p. 64.

[14] In his dedication, Gouge reminds readers that 'these *Domesticall Duties* were first vttered out of the pulpit', and thus consist of ideas previously communicated in sermons.

[15] Gervase Markham, *The English Huswife: Containing the Inward and Outward Vertues which Ought to be in a Compleat Woman* in *Covntrey Contentments* (London: R. Iackson, 1615), p. 4. Markham describes his work as a collection of 'approued medicines, and old doctrines which haue beene gathered together' (p. 5), indicating the ideas in his work are already in circulation.

[16] Ibid., p. 8.

this larger category of preservation and care, Markham claims 'the first and most principall to bee a perfect skill and knowledge in Cookery'.[17] As the main preparer of food, the housewife must 'preserue, conserue, candy and make pastes of all kinds'.[18]

The preparation and preservation of food were inseparable from tasks of healing. As Wendy Wall details, the belief that foods influenced one's humoral balance meant that 'the housewife manipulated the diet as part of medical care'.[19] Consequently, as Louise Hill Curth notes, the majority of medical intervention occurred at home and was provided by women.[20] Texts like Isabella Whitney's *Sweet Nosegay* (1573), Anne Wheathill's *A Handfull of Holesome (Though Homelie) Hearbs* (1584), Elizabeth Buckley's *A Booke of Hearbes & Receipts* (1627), and numerous diaries including those of Lady Grace Mildmay and Elizabeth Isham confirm this convention was in place both prior to and after the publication of *The Winter's Tale*.[21] Even though male authors, like Markham and Gouge, are in places dismissive of women's skills, in the same texts they often praise the unique set of 'secrets […] belonging vnto curious House-wiues', which allowed women to attend to the medical needs of those around them.[22] Practicing 'kitchen-physick', wives preserved and restored the health of their families and neighbors.[23]

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[17] Ibid., p. 36.

[18] Ibid., p. 78.

[19] Wendy Wall, *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 3.

[20] Louise Hill Curth, English Almanacs, Astrology, and Popular Medicine: 1550–1700 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 19.

[21] For examples of women as practitioners, see: Isabella Whitney, *A sweet nosgay, or pleasant posye* (London: R Jones, 1573); Anne Wheathill, *A handfull of holesome (though homelie) hearbs gathered out of the goodlie garden of Gods most holie word* (London: H. Denham, 1584); Elizabeth Buckley 'A Booke of Hearbes & Receipts' (1627). For more on Buckley's collection, see Wellcome Ms. 169, available: https://wellcomecollection.org/works/sdnzy6we. See also Rebecca Laroche, *Medical Authority and Englishwomen's Herbal Texts: 1550–1650* (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2009).

[22] Markham claimed 'the depth and secrets of this most excellent art of phisicke, is far beyond the capacitie of the most skilfull weomen' but many of his recipes require extensive knowledge of ingredients, processes, and humors (p. 4). Similarly, although Gouge advises husbands must 'prouid[e] such things [that] are needfull to preserue health, as competent food, raiment, and the like necessaries', his text reveals that women prepared this food, sewed or mended this clothing, and completed other tasks associated with preservation and healing (p. 399).

[23] Curth, p. 19. Margaret Pelling affirms, 'a bulk of healthcare' was completed by women in 'Thoroughly Resented? Older Women and the Medical Role in Early Modern London', in *Women, Science, and Medicine, 1500–1700*, ed. by Lynette Hunter and Sarah Hutton (Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1997), pp. 63–88 (p. 70).

Women's role in preservation also encompassed the perpetuation of lineage. While women were not always credited with providing 'seed', or genetic material, during generation, the womb played a special role as the answer to questions about paternity.[24] As Mary Fissell explains, the womb, 'actively transformed and developed tiny amounts of […] seed into a new person'.[25] In their descriptions of offspring, both Paulina and Leontes describe such transformation as 'print[ing]'. In her attempt to convince Leontes of Perdita's legitimacy, Paulina says, 'Although the print be little', the newborn is a 'copy of the father' (2.3.99–100). Paulina's language echoes Leontes' earlier comment that others say Mamillius' nose is 'a copy out of mine' (1.2.122). Although Leontes distances him from the observation, prefacing it with the phrase 'they say', and Paulina does not mention Hermione's role in her plea, Leontes' recognition of a parallel example of printing in the last act confirms Paulina's comments as a reference to women's agency. Leontes says to Florizel: 'Your mother was most true to wedlock, prince; / For she did print your royal father off' (5.1.124–5). Leontes thus confirms the role Florizel's mother played in reproduction. Even if the child was an exact 'copy' of the father, the womb necessarily transformed the seed into the copy, preserving the family's lineage.

The tasks required to preserve household goods, family health, and lineage highlight the connection between preservation and time. The term 'preservation' implies an extension of livelihood or usefulness. When a woman keeps goods and money at home, she makes those resources last longer. When a woman preserves, conserves, or candies food, she extends its shelf life.[26] When a wife restores the health of her family members, she ensures they live longer. And, when a mother preserves lineage, she allows the family name, legacy, and power to continue.

In addition to making the object of preservation last longer, these tasks required time-intensive preparations or labor. For example, recipes for preserving and candying included multiple steps to be completed over many days. To candy pippins, a type of apple, a housewife needed to '[t]ake two pounds of Barbarie Suger, great grained, clarified with the whites of two egges, and boyle it almost as hie as for Manus Christi, the[n] put it into a Pipkin […], then put in [her] flowers, fruits, and spices, and so put [her] Pipkin into a still, and make a small fire of finall coales vnder it'. She then had to

[24] Nancy Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2009), p. 110. Katherine Park, *Secrets of Women: Gender, Generation, and the Origins of Human Dissection* (Cambridge, MA: Zone, 2006), p. 27.

[25] Mary Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies: The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 3.

[26] *A Closet for Ladies and Gentlevvomen, Or, The Art of Preseruing, Conseruing, and Candying* (London, 1608), pp. 8, 65.

wait ‘twelue days’ until the ‘rocke candied’.[27] Of course, the twelve days in which the candy hardened did not include the time and labor for growing the flowers, fruits, and spices used in the recipe. Similarly, the process to produce herbal waters or syrups used in preventative and curative medicines often included weeks of steeping and many separate steps.[28] The weeks of labor helped sustain the family’s livelihood in the winter or periods of sickness.

The Winter’s Tale underscores the connection between time and preservation through the embodiment of time at the beginning of Act 4. Although Shakespeare follows convention in assigning Time the male pronoun of ‘he’, references to ‘growing’ connect Time’s work to that of women who grew children in their wombs and herbs and other plants in their gardens. As Time remarks, ‘I turn my glass, and give my scene such growing / As you had slept between’ (4.1.16–17), he invites the audience to consider the time-intensive work that remains unseen. As Robert Reeder notes, the figure of Time reinforces the notion that the world ‘does not die when we sleep’.[29] The sixteen years that pass, invisible to the theatergoer, stand in for the time that passes as women complete work out of view.

Domestic texts additionally assigned these time-intensive and highly skilled tasks to women based on the expectation of experiential knowledge derived from culturally designated roles. Cultural beliefs defined women in relationship to marriage and insisted their place was in the home. Where men might be defined by class, by occupation, or by the ‘seven ages of man’, early modern writers almost exclusively portrayed women in relationship to marriage, defining them as virgins, wives, mothers, or widows.[30] In these roles, women were expected to draw upon their apparent natural abilities and learned skills to care for those around them.

In *The Winter’s Tale*, women in the roles of virgins (daughters), wives, mothers, and widows perform acts of preservation. Hermione provides hospitality to Bohemia with the purpose of maintaining the long-held friendship and political alliance between her husband and Polixenes. In court, she reminds Leontes that she is daughter of the Emperor

[27] Ibid., p. 19

[28] Elaine Leong, ‘Making Medicines in the Early Modern Household’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 82.1 (2008), 145–168. Leong, drawing on Elizabeth Freke’s (1641–1714) manuscript, describes a recipe for syrup of saffron, which required steeping for twenty days (p. 162).

[29] Robert W. Reeder, ‘Siring the Grandchild in *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Fawn*’, *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900*, 48.2 (2008), 349–71 (p. 368).

[30] Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 4th edition (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 63. See also Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

of Russia (3.2.119–21), implicitly evoking the role she has played in furthering her father's lineage and preserving his alliances. Finally, once she is banned from executing the obligations of a housewife, she 'preserv[es] / [Her]self to see [Perdita]' (5.3.127–8). Perdita's identity as a 'copy of [her] father' (2.3.100) represents not only a continuation of her father's bloodline but also of the work Hermione and her adoptive mother began. Perdita's acceptance of the tasks once performed by her late adoptive mother eventually reunites Leontes and Polixenes, with Perdita serving as the potential bearer of an heir to both kingdoms. Additionally, as a widow, Paulina sustains the memory of Hermione in her speech to Leontes, her guidance of his repentance, and her preservation of Hermione's body. In each of these examples, the women work from culturally determined positions to sustain relationships, preserve lineage, and maintain health.

In what follows, I explore how male judgment shapes the effectiveness of three areas of preservation dominated by women: hospitality, childbearing, and nursing. Shakespeare highlights the male tendency to overlook, reduce, and fear female contributions. However, as women navigate the pressures placed upon them, Shakespeare illuminates the necessity of their work and shows that acceptance of such tasks is crucial for the preservation of the women and of those in their care. The fates of Hermione and Perdita demonstrate that 'that which is lost' may be 'found' (3.2.135–6) if men turn toward the preservers in their lives and recognize their contributions.

Hospitality

The Winter's Tale begins with a description of hospitality that excludes the contributions of women. Archidamus insists that it would be impossible for Bohemia to return the hospitality of Sicilia; instead, if granted a royal visit, they would provide 'sleepy drinks' to render the 'senses […] unintelligent of [their] insufficience' (1.1.14–15). As David Ruiter, James Kearney, and Sandra Logan have suggested, Archidamus illuminates the way practices of hospitality relate to generosity, gift giving, and reciprocation.[31] However, his omission of women's roles in hospitality exemplifies the subtle ways that women's work is simultaneously erased and demonized. In this way, Archidamus' observations about hospitality pave the way for Leontes' later rejection of Hermione's

[31] David Ruiter, 'Shakespeare and Hospitality: Opening *The Winter's Tale*', *Mediterranean Studies*, 16 (2007), 157–177. James Kearney, 'Hospitality's Risk, Grace's Bargain: Uncertain Economies in *The Winter's Tale*' in *Shakespeare and Hospitality: Ethics, Politics, and Exchange*, ed. by Julia Lupton and David Goldstein (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 89–111; Sandra Logan, *Shakespeare's Foreign Queens: Queenship and Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 111–57.

work as a hostess. Shakespeare shows, however, that such rejection is dangerous and portrays Leontes' thinking as a disease that affects individual livelihoods, relationships, and the health of both nations. As the women take up and reference hospitality, both their work and the acknowledgment of it become remedies for the illness.

Although many historical accounts of hospitality focus on the generosity of male householders or the identity of those served, the responsibility of hosting largely fell upon those whose work remained out of view. Tasks crucial to hosting were those most often assigned to and completed by women in households and communities: the preparation and presentation of food, the brewing of beer and other drinks, the arrangement of flowers, the creation of costumes for entertainment, and even the preparation of medicines for neighbors. In addition, Felicity Heal observes an increase in the percentage of female household servants in the early 1600s, reflecting a realization that women 'could perform tasks effectively that had previously been allocated to men'.[32] Therefore, as Palmer has detailed, while men often received credit for hospitality, the exclusion of women from accounts does not necessarily indicate a lack of contributions.[33] In *The Winter's Tale*, Archidamus' exclusion of women from his discussion of hospitality replicates the exclusion found in official records but does not capture the realities of hospitality.

Descriptions in household manuals show how the role of hostess merged the preservation of food and health with the preservation of relationships. Markham links entertainment, preparation of food, and preservation of health as he describes the process of preparing 'a more humble Feast […] for the entertainment of [a host's] true and worthie friends'. After detailing a 'sixteene' course meal, 'which will be both frugall in the spender, contentment to the guest, and much pleasure and delight to the beholders', Markham says, 'When our *English Hous-wife* is exact in these rules before rehearsed, […] shee shall then sort her mind to the vnderstanding of other House-wifely secrets'. He then immediately describes the processes 'for the distillation of all kindes of Waters […] meete for the health of her Houshold'. The examples he provides cure 'the stone', general 'infection', 'sore eyes', 'itchings', 'Fistuloes', and various pains and illnesses in other parts of the body.[34] Similarly, alongside guidance for what to serve at particular events, *The good Huswifes Handmaide for the Kitchin* provides recipes 'for a sicke bodie' and 'purgation', as well

[32] Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Clarendon, 1990), p. 116.

[33] Palmer, *Hospitable Performances: Dramatic Genre and Cultural Practices in Early Modern England* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1992), p. 17.

[34] Markham, *Countrey contentments, or The English husvvife Containing the inward and outward vertues which ought to be in a compleate woman*. (London: I[ohn] B[eale], for R. Iackson, 1623), pp. 128–9.

as ‘sundrie necessarie Conceits for the preservation of health’.[35] The connection between hospitality and healing was not merely one of proximity. As Patricia Fumerton explains, ‘the ingredients of banqueting stuffs and cordials were especially praised in “medical” treatises for their powers to restore and preserve the body’.[36] Through hospitality, a housewife played a crucial role in maintaining friendships, satisfying her guests, preserving the resources of the household, and ensuring the health of family, friends, and neighbors.

The version of hospitality that Archidamus presents, however, is not centered on preservation. Even if his goal is to maintain a relationship between the two countries, he suggests the means to this goal is erasure. The ‘sleepy drinks’, which Archidamus offers to serve Camillo and his countrymen, embody his methodology and draw on the ambiguity of early modern pharmacy. As Tanya Pollard reminds us, the word *pharmakon*, the root of pharmacy, could mean ‘poison, remedy, or love potion’.[37] In rendering ‘senses […] unintelligent of our insufficience’, Archidamus’ theoretical concoction walks the line between a remedy and a threat. Realizing Bohemia will be unable to fulfill the debts incurred, Archidamus reduces hospitality to something that is potentially dangerous. Leontes’ later suggestion that Camillo ‘mightst bespice a cup, / To give [Polixenes] a lasting wink’ echoes the symbolism of the opening scene and reinforces the threatening undertones implied in Archidamus’ offer (1.2.316–17). Rather than deny the possibility of this perverted hospitality, Camillo confirms ‘I could do this, and that with no rash potion, / But with a ling’ring dram that should not work / Maliciously, like poison’ (1.2.319–21). In both cases, the cup offered to the guest threatens to erase hospitality. In the first case, the ‘sleepy’ drinks erase the memory of Leontes’ generosity, while in the second the contents of the cup erase evidence of their power. The ‘sleepy drinks’ or the ‘bespice[d] cup’, then, serve simultaneously as an indication of the threat of hospitality, which is later mapped onto women who take up its work, and as a metaphor for the erasure of this same work.

Archidamus’ ‘sleepy drinks’ pave the way for to Leontes’ parallel failure to recognize and legitimate Hermione’s role as a hostess and preserver in the next scene. Leontes initially seems supportive of Hermione’s role in hosting, requesting her help in

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[35] *The good Huswifes Handmaide for the Kitchen* (London: 1594), pp. 2r–v, Title Page, 53v. (Note: There is a pagination error in the text with two pages labeled ‘51’. The page I have labeled 53v falls immediately before 54r.)

[36] Patricia Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 134.

[37] Tanya Pollard, *Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 4.

persuading Polixenes to extend his visit as he urges, 'Speak you' (1.2.27). Leontes even praises her effective words telling Hermione she has 'never spok'st / To better purpose' (1.2.88–89). However, as if he has already been dosed with sleepy drinks, Leontes immediately pivots, translating Hermione's success to infidelity. Leontes' use of the metaphor of a spider in a cup to describe his supposed knowledge of Hermione's unfaithfulness links his observations with the experience of being poisoned. In this metaphor, the spider remains harmless until noticed, at which point the drinker 'cracks his gorge, his sides / With violent hefts' (2.1.44–5). Leontes confirms, 'I have drunk, and seen the spider' (2.1.45). In his poisoned state of mind, Leontes fails to recall his own intimacy with his wife and the responsibilities he has assigned her, thus erasing Hermione's own contributions to his family lineage and preservation.

Both Archidamus' allusion to dangerous practices of hospitality and Leontes' assumptions about Hermione echo suspicions about and disregard for the work of women expressed in early modern literature and laws. Despite the cultural expectation that women serve as preservers of their families because of their natural proclivity for and proximity to these tasks, the spaces in which they conducted this work drew a variety of criticisms because they 'inverted' the 'typical gendered power relations'.[38] Although women often worked outside the home, contributing financially to the family, their income was often 'characterized as private gain that damaged the common good'.[39] Midwives, given authority over paternity, faced criticism in literature and from male physicians who challenged the midwives' claims of expertise.[40] Additionally, accusations of witchcraft were used to account for unexplained occurrences that happened in female spaces. As Merry Wiesner-Hanks explains, women 'watched over animals that could die mysteriously, prepared food that could become spoiled unexplainably, nursed the ill of all ages who could die without warning, and cared for children who were even more subject to disease and death than adults'.[41] Because women inhabited these essential but often ignored spaces, their actions were subject to suspicion and misrepresentation. In

[38] Caroline Bicks, 'Midwiving Virility in Early Modern England', in *Maternal Measures: Figuring Caregiving in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Naomi Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000) pp. 49–64, 47. See also, Adrian Wilson, 'The Ceremony of Childbirth and its Interpretation' in *Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial England: Essays in Memory of Dorothy McLaren*, ed. by Valerie Fildes (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 68–107 (p. 86).

[39] Eleanor Hubbard, *City Women: Money, Sex, and the Social Order in Early Modern London* (Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 190.

[40] See Patricia Crawford, 'The Construction and Experience of Maternity in Seventeenth-Century England' in *Women as Mothers*, pp. 3–38 (p. 3). See also, Viviana Comensoli, *'Household Business': Domestic Plays of Early Modern England. The Mental and Cultural World of Tudor and Stuart England* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 112–13.

[41] Wiesner-Hanks, p. 286.

The Winter's Tale, Leontes expects the women in his life to fulfill their responsibilities as daughters, wives, or mothers but simultaneously refuses to accept the legitimacy of this work. Not only does Leontes refer to his own wife as 'an adult'ress' and 'bed-swerver' (2.1.88, 93), but he accuses Paulina of being a 'mankind witch' and 'most intelligencing bawd' (2.3.68–9). These accusations imply that the female characters have violated the natural order.

Leontes' suspicions undermine the preservative qualities of hosting. While hospitality is meant to preserve relationships, solidify political alliances, and ensure the comfort of guests, Leontes' reaction to Hermione's hospitality results in the severing of his friendship with Polixenes, a corresponding dissolution of the political alliance between Sicilia and Bohemia, and the immediate departure of his former childhood companion. Furthermore, while hostesses ensure the health and well-being of their guests, Leontes spreads his illness to others at court. As Leontes stews in his suspicions, Camillo urges him to 'be cur'd / Of this diseas'd opinion' (1.2.296–7). Although Polixenes, like Camillo, recognizes Leontes' thinking as diseased, referring to his 'ill-ta'en suspicion' (1.2.460), he soon becomes infected with the same. Camillo, tells Polixenes, 'There is a sickness / Which puts some of us in distemper, but / I cannot name the disease, and it is caught / Of you that yet are well' (1.2.384–7). Although in this moment, Camillo seems to refer to the immediate threat against his and Polixenes' lives, Polixenes' threats against Perdita in the second half of the play provide proof that Polixenes has caught the long-lasting disease. In rejecting Hermione's role as a hostess, Leontes has spawned a disease that destroys everything and everyone in its path.

Even before Leontes expresses suspicion, Hermione prepares the audience to recognize the absurdity of his claims by contrasting her role as Polixenes' 'kind hostess' with the less natural, more masculine, role of 'jailer' (1.2.59–60). Following Leontes' demand that she 'Speak' (1.2.27), Hermione initially defers to Leontes, insisting she had intended to wait 'until [Leontes] had drawn oaths from [Polixenes] not to stay' (1.2.27–9). However, she soon follows Leontes' orders and asks her husband's friend if he will be her 'prisoner' or her 'guest' (1.2.52–3). Agreeing to stay as her 'guest', Polixenes remarks, 'To be your prisoner should import offending' (1.2.57). Through contrast, this exchange establishes the role of hostess as natural and inoffensive. Once accused of infidelity, Hermione reasserts the naturalness of this role, claiming she 'lov'd [Polixenes] as in honor he requir'd; / With such a kind of love as might become / A lady like me; with a love even such, / So, and no other, as yourself commanded' (3.2.63–6). Hermione reminds Leontes (and the audience) that her legitimacy as hostess derives from codes of honor, her position as a queen, and Leontes' own command. Failure to adhere to such expectations would be 'disobedience and ingratitude' (3.2.68). Leontes has placed Hermione in a double bind in

which she must choose to be obedient and suffer false accusations of infidelity and thus treason or to disobey the king and still be accused of treason. Hermione shows that the perspective of male judges rather than the actions of women determines their legitimacy as hostesses.

In contrast to Leontes' diseased suspicion and Archidamus' destructive hospitality, Hermione's speeches and actions exemplify the work of a preserver. Hermione persuades Polixenes to extend his trip by prompting him to remember, at least partially, his relationship with Leontes. As she asks Polixenes to recall his and Leontes' 'tricks […] when [they] were boys' (1.2.61), she encourages the preservation not only of his memory but also of the friendship and alliance between the two men. Moreover, through Hermione's absence, Shakespeare shows the role that she played in maintaining the health of her family and guests. After being separated from Hermione, Leontes, Mamillius, and Polixenes grow ill. Although the work is invisible on stage, the effects of Hermione's hospitality are clear: preservation of alliances, friendships, lineage, and health.

Hermione's establishment of hosting as natural and preservative additionally paves the way for her daughter's more overt role as hostess in the second half of the play. As Perdita takes on the role of 'mistress of the feast' (4.3.40), she participates in a lineage of women's hospitality. Prior to Perdita's sheep-shearing, the shepherd calls attention to the informal and often unrecognized roles that women played in hosting as he recalls his late wife's contributions to the feast: as 'hostess of the meeting', she once served as 'pantler, butler, cook [...] dame and servant', 'welcome'd all, serve'd all', 's[a]ng her song and dance[d] her turn' (4.4.56–8). He emphasizes her efforts and her generosity noting, 'her face o' fire / With labor, and the thing she took to quench it / She would to each one sip' (4.4.60–2). The shepherd's acknowledgment of his wife's many roles exemplifies the recognition Hermione looks for but does not receive at court and at her trial.

Although the shepherd's expectation that Perdita take on these same roles partially echoes Leontes' demand that Hermione 'speak' in Act 1 (1.1.27), here the role of hostess is alleviated of its dangerous associations and framed as a way to remember his late wife. The shepherd's list illuminates the skilled labor required of the hostess, and the shepherd's son affirms that Perdita has accepted these roles as he reflects, 'my father hath made her mistress of the feast, and she lays it on' (4.3.39–40). The list of ingredients he carries indicates Perdita's role in planning the festival meal. As he questions, 'what will this sister of mine do with rice?' (4.3.38–9), he not only exposes his lack of knowledge but also highlights the unique expertise she possesses as a woman. As the shepherd and his son accept Perdita's role as hostess, they enable her to preserve a lineage of expertise passed down through both her biological and adopted mothers.

Perdita's distribution of flowers during the feast further reinforces her expertise and displays the connection between hostess and preserver. As Jennifer Monroe notes, Perdita's 'knowledge' and use of the plants connects her with the figure of 'the English housewife'.[42] Women gathered flowers, herbs, and vegetables out of their gardens to fulfill their responsibilities in the home. Early modern medical writers including William Bullein, Timothy Bright, and Paracelsus stress the importance of molding cures to the individual's humoral complexion and environmental situation.[43] By distributing the flowers based on her guests' ages, Perdita shows her awareness of the plants' medicinal properties as well as their uses in hospitality. To the disguised guests, Perdita gives 'rosemary and rue', herbs of preservation that 'keep / Seeming and savor all the winter long' (4.4.74–5). Associating the herbs with '[g]race and remembrance', she categorizes them by their medical purposes (4.4.76). Additionally, she adapts both remedies and tools of hospitality as she substitutes 'flow'rs / Of middle summer' for the 'men' she now refers to as 'middle age' (4.4.106–8).[44] Revising her selection in accordance with her older guests' individual needs, Perdita uses herbs and flowers associated with youthfulness and a change in perspective: lavender, mint, and marjoram. Physician Robert Boyle maintains marjoram be used in cures for the head or eyes, along with the 'Flowers of Sage and Rosemary'.[45] Mint, lavender, and rosemary are ingredients in 'Imperial Water', which can 'maketh one seem Young'.[46] Perdita, then, attempts to alter the men's perspective by reminding them of their youth. Polixenes' recollection that 'when [he] was young', he 'load[ed]' his lover 'with knacks' (4.4.347–9) proves Perdita is at least partially successful. Because humoral medicine stressed that a patient's health depended on a balance of the humors created by such individual selection, Perdita's role of hostess is inseparable from her role as preserver.

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[42] Jennifer Monroe, 'It's all about the Gillyvors: Engendering Art and Nature in *The Winter's Tale*', in *Ecocritical Shakespeare*, ed. by Lynne Bruckner and Dan Brayton (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 139–154 (pp. 143 and 150).

[43] William Bullein, *A New Boke of Phisicke* (London: Printed by John Day, 1559), pp. 13 and 26. Timothy Bright, *A Treatise Wherein Is Declared the Sufficiencie of English Medicines* (London: 1580), p. 18. Paracelsus, *Paracelsus: Selected Writings*, ed. by Jolande Jacobi and Norbert Guterman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 50.

[44] Here, I accept Jensen's claim that Perdita continues addressing Polixenes and Camillo instead of turning to other guests. Jensen provides as evidence: 'Polixenes's initial reaction to the 'rosemary, and rue' (4.4.74), Perdita's response, and the fact that she is still clearly talking to these two by line 103' (p. 300).

[45] Robert Boyle, *Medicinal experiments, or, A collection of choice and safe remedies for the most part simple and easily prepared, useful in families, and very serviceable to country people* (London: 1693), p. 100.

[46] Hannah Woolley, *The Accomplish'd lady's delight in preserving, physick, beautifying, and cookery* (London, 1675), p. 59.

While Perdita's hospitality receives more stage time and overt recognition than Hermione's, much of her labor still occurs offstage. Like the work Hermione performs in the nine months prior to the commencement of the play, Perdita's labor as a hostess is time-intensive and thus rendered partially invisible by the constraints of the theater. The growing and picking of flowers and herbs she uses to greet her guests, the planning for the feast, and the preparation of food cannot be practically displayed on stage. The play's depiction of hospitality, then, risks committing the same mistake as Leontes: erasing the very work necessary for preservation.

That Perdita resists the responsibilities thrust upon her, then, is not surprising. Although Monroe contrasts 'Perdita's role as festival hostess [...] with the discomfort of Hermione's playing hostess' in Act 1,[47] Perdita is initially uncomfortable with her role. The shepherd tells us that she is 'retired' and 'blush[ing]' at the idea of entertaining her guests (4.4.62, 67). As Perdita questions how she will 'in these [...] borrowed flaunts, behold / The sternness of [Polixenes'] presence', she reminds the audience of the ways that Hermione and women's work in general have been misread (4.4.23–4). Like Hermione was reminded by Leontes of her responsibilities, Perdita must be prompted to fulfill her obligations by Florizel and the Shepherd. Once Perdita accepts the role, she emphasizes to the disguised Polixenes, 'It is my father's will I should take on me / The hostess-ship o' th' day' (4.4.71–2). Again, like Hermione, she attempts to remind her male audience (Polixenes) that she acts in accordance with her responsibilities.

Although Florizel chides her for her worry and insists 'With these forc'd thoughts I prithee darken not / The mirth o' th' feast' (4.4.41–2), Perdita's concerns prove not only valid but also essential to preservation. Polixenes' violent reaction to Perdita replicates Leontes' accusations and threats against Perdita's mother earlier in the play. Referring to Perdita as a 'fresh piece / Of excellent witchcraft', Polixenes denies the role of women's hospitality, substituting it with a less desirable alternative (4.4.422–3). He further threatens to 'have [her] beauty scratch'd with briers' referencing a punishment designed for 'whores' (4.4.425).[48] As if to further mimic Leontes' threats, Polixenes adds 'death' to the punishments he will employ 'if ever, henceforth', Perdita 'hoop[s] [Florizel's] body more with [her] embraces' (4.4.437–40). In response, Perdita reminds Florizel of her early discernment, telling him 'I told you what would come of this' (4.4.447). Like Hermione's initial silence toward Polixenes, Perdita's response to the duties of hospitality serves as a form of self-preservation. And yet, she is not the only one threatened by Polixenes'

[47] Monroe, p. 150.

[48] Gowing, 32.

disregard for her. Her role in providing for those around her means that a threat against her is a threat against those that she hosts. While Perdita's distribution of the flowers makes visible some aspects of female labor and expertise, when such expertise is disregarded or rendered invisible, the consequences are immense. By denying Perdita's ability to host, Polixenes disrupts her ability to preserve friendships, the health of her guests, and even his own lineage. The depiction of hospitality in the second half of the play, then, reinforces the role women play in preservation, demonstrates the cost of refusing to recognize such work as legitimate, and acknowledges the need for women to cautiously accept the work of preservation.

Childbearing

In *The Winter's Tale*, the male dismissal and disregard for hostesses is paralleled by a refusal to accept the legitimacy of child bearers and the women who aid them. If Leontes' suspicions about Hermione are prompted by male inability to see and accept female contributions to hospitality, they are exacerbated by the hidden nature of the womb and the birth room. As Katherine Park and Naomi Miller have established, the secretive and hidden nature of the womb led to its portrayal as a 'potential disruption of patriarchal order'.[49] The removal of Hermione from court and from stage in her 'plight' (2.1.118) mirrors cultural practices of enclosing the mother, the midwife, and female companions in a room with no male presence during childbirth. Like Archidamus' 'sleepy drinks', this removal makes invisible the contributions of women. And yet, much in the same way that Hermione and Perdita shine light on legitimate contributions of women to hospitality, Paulina, Hermione, and the other women remind Leontes and the audience members of the work of childbirth, the expertise required, and the connection to preservation.

When Leontes accuses Hermione of carrying Polixines' child, he expresses a common anxiety about the impossibility of knowing paternity and the resulting reliance on women and the female body. As Park explains, uncertainty about fatherhood 'centered on the uterus, the dark, inaccessible place where the child's tie with its father was created, its sex determined, and its body shaped'.[50] Because such processes occurred out of sight, male writers often resorted to fear-driven stories to explain what they could not understand. For instance, the seventeenth-century equivalent of tabloids published exaggerated tales of monstrous babies and printed accusations against 'witches and

[49] Naomi Miller, 'Mothering Others: Caregiving as Spectrum and Spectacle in the Early Modern Period', in *Maternal Measures*, pp. 1–28 (p. 5). See also Park, esp. p. 27.

[50] Park, p. 25

infanticidal mothers'.[51] Even more reputable texts, like Jacob Rueff's *The Expert Midwife* (1637), warned about the possibility of monstrous births arising from 'the judgement of God' or the 'mother's fright' when pregnant.[52] In *The Winter's Tale*, Leontes similarly creates his own truth, inventing an affair between Polixenes and Hermione, to resolve the impossibility of knowing paternity.

And yet, the play emphasizes the danger in such thinking. Like the fantastical stories of reproduction, Autolycus's ballad about 'a usurer's wife' hyperbolizes the misunderstandings that arise from the concealment of the womb. In the ballad, the wife births 'twenty money-bags' instead of a human infant (4.4.262–4). The ballad exposes such thinking as outrageous, despite some of the characters' eagerness to believe it is 'true' (4.4.266).[53] Leontes' 'truth', like the unbelievable stories in the ballads, fails to recognize what happens in the female body. Gouge criticizes such behavior, calling accusations of infidelity 'in the time of childebirth whether just or unjust, a thing too spightfull and revengeful', and warns that '[s]ome wives are so farr overcome thereby [...] as they are not able to beare it, but even faint and die under the reproach'.[54] Although the death of her son is the catalyst for her collapse, until her reappearance at the end of *The Winter's Tale*, the audience must suspect Hermione has succumbed to such a fate. The consequences of refusing to acknowledge the legitimacy of child bearers can be as severe as death.

Much as Leontes' accusations against Hermione emerge from male anxieties about the inability to know the secrets of the female body, his refusal to believe Paulina's confirmations of paternity arises from the hidden nature of the birth room. Consistent with traditional practice, Hermione's birthing space is 'physically and symbolically enclos[ed]' and dominated by female decision making.[55] In the early modern birth room, men were rarely present. Female friends, neighbors, and a midwife joined the mother in the birth room to offer support and serve as witnesses to the birth.[56] Although, as Caroline Bicks points out, Paulina is never actually in the jail cell where Hermione gives birth,[57]

[51] Fissell p. 74.

[52] Ibid., p. 65. See also Jacob Rueff, *The Expert Midwife, or An Excellent and Most Necessary Treatise of the Generation and Birth of Man* (London: E. G., 1637). Although the English version of this text was published in 1637, Rueff originally published the work in Latin and German in 1554.

[53] Regarding monstrous or unnatural birth, see Korda, *Labors Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern English Stage. Philadelphia* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p. 55; Park, p. 35; and Fissell, p. 3.

[54] Gouge, pp. 401–2.

[55] Wilson, 73.

[56] Ibid., 70.

[57] Bicks, 52.

Leontes' references to her as a 'midwife' and '[a] mankind witch' resonate with contemporary male suspicions about what went on in the birth room (2.3.160, 2.3.68). Descriptions of Paulina as both 'midwife' and 'witch' coincide with increased accusations of witchcraft in the seventeenth century against midwives and other women who were seen as disrupting 'the divine order'.[58] The midwife's license illustrates and reinforces fears associated with the birth room as it explicitly prohibits 'any manner of witchcraft, charms, [and] sorcery'.[59] In addition to echoing legal concerns about midwives, Leontes replicates the early modern categorization of the speech in the birth room as 'gossip' when he claims that 'women [...] will say anything (1.2.130–1).[60] While the term 'gossip' originally referred to the 'god-sibling', or godparent of a child, it eventually came to signify 'what women did when they got together', evoking the mysterious circumstances of the birth room.[61] Although many male authored texts acknowledge the legitimacy of midwives and gossips, others reveal an assumption that female conversation revolved around complaints about male 'sexual inadequacy' and plots to withhold sex or steal money from husbands.[62] Like many male writers in the period, Leontes is hesitant to believe that legitimate work takes place in this hidden location. He thus refuses to accept Paulina's ability, as a midwife, to confirm legitimacy and rejects the women's claim that he and Mamillius 'are / Almost as like as eggs' (1.2.129–30).

As they perform the tasks of midwives and gossips, Paulina, Emilia, and Hermione's other women embrace the very roles that Leontes hurls at them as insults and refigure them to legitimize the paternity Leontes sees them as disrupting. In the early modern birth room, the midwife 'took charge as soon as she arrived', remained in charge for the birthing process, administered medical intervention '[i]f the child seemed faint or weakly', and even conducted emergency baptisms when necessary, while gossips, or the other women at the birth, assisted with a variety of tasks.[63] As Hermione pleads for her women to come with her because her 'plight requires it', she fashions a birth room in her

[58] Comensoli, 112.

[59] Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1968; 1919), p. 278.

[60] Crawford, 27.

[61] Wilson, 71.

[62] Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540–1620* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), p. 231.

[63] Crawford, 21. Wilson, *Ritual and Conflict: The Social Relations of Childbirth in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 159. Wiesner-Hanks points out that the 'husband was not present unless his wife was dying' and notes midwives 'were allowed to perform emergency baptisms on children they thought might die' (pp. 94, 97).

cell, inviting the women to take part in the birthing process as gossips or midwives (2.1.118). When Emilia emerges from the jail cell and reports the 'daughter' is 'lusty and like to live' despite being born 'before her time' (2.2.24–5, 23), she evokes the midwife's responsibility of testifying as to whether a 'child was born alive'.[64] Paulina then takes up the role of midwife as a 'testifier to paternity': noting the 'print' of Leontes on the child's 'eye, nose, lip, / [...] forehead [...] hand, nail, finger' (2.3.99–103), she performs the work of examining the 'features' of the newborn 'for the evidence of dubious paternity'.[65] Midwives were bound by oath to interrogate 'illegitimately pregnant women' during labor and 'sworn to threaten the refusal of [their] services if the name of the father of an illegitimate child was not divulged'.[66] Although the actions in the birth room are not shown on stage, Paulina's testimony regarding paternity alludes to such practices and the role midwives played in confirming and thus preserving lineage. Finally, Paulina's claim that she brings Leontes 'needful conference / About some gossips' (2.3.40–1) emphasizes that knowledge of the female tradition is necessary for altering Leontes' perspective. She claims her words are 'as medicinal as true' and will 'purge him of that humor / That presses him from sleep' (2.3.37–9). Accepting this counsel means not only elevating women's work but also preserving the health of those tempted to deny it.

Despite the expertise demonstrated by the female characters in and near the birth room, the women's effectiveness as preservers is limited by those who refuse to accept the birth room's legitimacy. Leontes not only denies Hermione and Paulina's expertise, but also removes Hermione from the space in which the women perform their work. By interrupting Hermione's recovery and forcing her to court for what he calls 'a just and open trial' (2.3.205), Leontes violates her right to privacy and recovery, which was necessarily dependent on a women's 'perception of her physical strength' and usually included a progression through various stages of 'lying-in' before reintegration of the mother into society through churching.[67] Hermione calls attention to this violation when she says she was 'with immodest hatred / The child-bed privilege denied' (3.2.102–3). Through what Gail Kern Paster calls a 'clearly unwanted intrusion of patriarchal power', Leontes aligns himself with English Puritan men who claimed churching was 'a Catholic holdover' even as their wives 'continued to demand it'.[68] Because of Leontes'

[64] Gowing, 'Language, Power and the Law: Women's Slander Litigation in Early Modern London' in *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England*, ed. by Jenny Kermode and Garthine Walker (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), pp. 26-47 (p. 31).

[65] Bicks, 50.

[66] Gowing, 'Language, Power and the Law', 31. See also *The Oath of Midwifery* (1567).

[67] Wilson, 76.

[68] Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 273. Wiesner-Hanks, 99.

intervention, the women are unable to perform the work of preservation, bringing Hermione back to full health and preserving the health of the newborn child.

Leontes' actions destroy the very bonds, lineage, and life that the women work to preserve. Cutting off his own 'most innocent' daughter (3.2.100) and insisting the 'brat is none of mine' (2.3.93), he refuses to accept his only remaining lineage. His condemnation of the newborn child 'to the fire' (2.3.8) and his claim he will '[t]he bastard brains with these [his] proper hands […] dash out' (2.3.140–1) if Antigonus does not follow through with this command demonstrate the permanence of his decision. His ultimate compromise to send the child, '[t]o some remote and desert place […] / Where chance may nurse or end it' (2.3.176–83) replaces legacy with loss, a substitution remembered in the bestowing of the name Perdita, 'the lost one', on the infant. Replacing women with 'chance', Leontes demonstrates his disregard for the role women play in his own life and lineage.

Nursing

In *The Winter's Tale*, unfounded suspicions about women's roles in hospitality and birthing extend to spaces of childrearing and to the nurses and mothers who care for their families. Much like today, nursing in the early modern period encompassed several different tasks: wet nurses breastfed infants, dry nurses cared for babies in the nursery, and medical nurses provided preventative and curative remedies. Because women performed the bulk of these nursing tasks in female-dominated spaces, their work was often rendered invisible. In *The Winter's Tale,* male characters, including Leontes and Polixenes, misattribute and misremember the contributions women made to their care as children and the contributions women continue to make to their well-being and preservation in adulthood. As with misattributions of hospitality and disregard for the labor of childbirth, Leontes and Polixenes' misremembering produces misinformed judgments against potential preservers. Leontes' removal of children from caregivers and rejection of the care of women produces tragic consequences: illness and even death. The women in the play respond by making visible what was once hidden, emphasizing that care by women extends past childhood and includes preserving the health, property, and food of adult family members.

Much like discussion of hospitality, references to childhood in *The Winter's Tale* omit the essential presence of women. While scholars such as Robert Reeder, Lamb, and Paster recognize Leontes and Polixenes' desire to return to a 'place of [...] comforting closeness

to women', Leontes and Polixenes do not explicitly acknowledge this female presence.[69] Polixenes describes their childhoods as existing in a timeless idyll, where they remain 'boy eternal' (1.2.64). In this nostalgic childhood, '[t]emptations' had not 'been born […] for', as Polixenes claims, 'In those unfledg'd days was [his] wife a girl; / [Hermione] had then not cross'd the eyes / Of [his] young playfellow' (1.2.77–80). Polixenes' comparison of Hermione and his 'most sacred lady' with Eve implies that the exposure to women introduces males to suspicion and temptation. Yet this implication inverts the actual conditions of childhood dominated by female presence. In fantasizing about a male-only world where they do not have to worry about questions of paternity or faithfulness, Leontes and Polixenes draw on incomplete recollections of their childhood friendship, erasing memories that might contradict their nostalgic picture of youth. A form of forgetting, Isabel Karremann tells us, nostalgia relies on the dismissal of the present for 'a very selective version of the past'.[70]

Discussions about Mamillius similarly exemplify the way that male-dominated discussions simultaneously idealize and reject the influences of early childhood. Camillo observes that those 'on crutches' now want to live 'to see [Mamillius] a man' and would otherwise 'be content to die' (1.1.39–42). Insisting Mamillius 'physics the subject, makes old hearts fresh', Camillo implies the child serves as an innocent counterpart to the travails of adulthood (1.3.38–9). However, the wish 'to see him a man' indicates a desire to escape the female influence of early childhood, where male children were dressed identically to their female counterparts and cared for by women.[71] At five or six years of age, Mamillius is yet unbreeched, still wearing the 'bib and tucker' of early childhood – a fact suggested here and confirmed as his appearance prompts Leontes' recollection of his own 'unbreech'd' youth (1.2.155).[72] This, and the fact that the name Mamillius is 'derived from the Latin word for "breasts"', enforces that Mamillius is not yet 'a man' and 'trap[s]' him 'between identifications with father and mother', or the male and female.[73] Further reinforcing Mamillius' place in this liminal space is the assumption that young boys, like the women who cared for them, are not 'fully rational'.[74] At breeching,

[69] Reeder, 353. See also Paster and Lamb.

[70] Isabel Karremann, *The Drama of Memory in Shakespeare's History Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 34.

[71] Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 1, 13.

[72] Philip Arias, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. by Robert Baldick (New York: Knopf, 1962), p. 52.

[73] Lamb, 533 and T.G. Bishop, *Shakespeare and the Theatre of Wonder* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 131.

[74] Lamb, 530.

male children were 'introduced to a private tutor' or sent to school 'to learn Latin' and thus 'the ability to reason abstractly and present logical arguments'.[75] Because Mamillius is still situated in this female space, he is aligned with female characteristics. Thus, despite the idealization of childhood, Camillo and Mamillius both portray the escape from female influence as desirable.

Camillo and Mamillius' subtle rejection of the female space makes way for Leontes' more explicit misattribution of the role of the mother and female caregiver. Leontes' concern that Hermione has 'too much blood in [Mamillius]' although she 'did not nurse him', resonates with early modern medical theories that maintained a mother's blood not only 'nourished the child in her womb', but along with her thoughts, passed on her character and 'shape[d] the child's features' (2.1.58, 56).[76] Through breast-feeding, the mother or nurse continued to 'transmit her qualities of character'.[77] For this reason, Thomas Raynalde explains nurses must:

> be good and honest of conuersation, neyther ouer hastye or yrefull, ne to sadde or solome, neyther to fearfull or tymorous: for these affections and qualities be pernitious and hurtfull to the mylke, corruptying it, and passe foorth through the mylke into the chylde, makyng the chylde of lyke condition and manners'.[78]

While these cultural beliefs might appear to justify Leontes' concerns and his separation of Mamillius from his mother, there is no evidence to suggest Hermione possesses the immorality he attributes to her. One may even consider how, through nursing, she might have transmitted more of her positive characteristics to Mamillius.

In forbidding her nursing of Perdita, Leontes disrupts a natural process that ensured preservation of lineage, household resources, and health. Although some later texts, including Nicholas Culpeper's *A Directory for Midwives* (1671), advocate for weaning at a particular time to avoid unnatural attachments to the mother, the vast majority of texts published around the time of the *Winter's Tale* portray breastfeeding as natural and

[75] Lamb, 530. See also Marie Rutkowski, 'Breeching the Boy in Marlow's *Edward II*', *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 46.2 (2006), 281–304 (p. 285).

[76] Crawford, 7. Rachel Trubowitz, '"But Blood Whitened": Nursing Mothers and Others in Early Modern Britain' in *Maternal Measures*, pp. 82-101 (p. 84).

[77] Crawford, 8.

[78] Thomas Raynalde, *The birth of mankynde, otherwyse named the womans booke* (London: R[ichard] I[ugge], 1572), pp. 101–2.

preserving, recommending that a mother nurse her own children for some time.[79] Raynalde, for example, writes, 'it shalbe beste that the mother geue her child sucke her selfe, for the mothers mylk is more conuenient and agreeable to the Infante, then anye other womans'.[80] Maternal nursing both maintains the 'genealogical transmission of identity' and the household income.[81] In *Fiue hundreth pointes of good husbandrie* (1593), Thomas Tusser writes, 'one thing I warne thee, let huswife be nurse, least husband doo find thee, too franke with his purse'.[82] Furthermore, breast milk was used as a remedy for the pain of childbirth and a cure for common ailments.[83] Although it was common for elite women to hire nurses, Hermione's complaint that Perdita was 'from [her] breast / (The innocent milk in it most innocent mouth) / Hal'd out to murther' (3.2.99–101) shows that the decision was not necessarily her own. Leontes prevents Hermione and the women around her from using their knowledge and natural ability and in doing so threatens his legacy.

On stage the idealized visions of childhood and accusations against female caregivers are juxtaposed with the visible interactions between Mamillius and the women at court. As Hermione hands off care of Mamillius to his nurses, claiming 'he so troubles me' (2.1.1), the First Lady turns to Mamillius and asks, 'Shall I be your playfellow?' (2.1.3). The resulting conversation simultaneously illustrates the ways in which Mamillius has already adopted some of the male attitudes toward women and demonstrates the role that women play in raising the child. Mamillius echoes his father's criticisms of women, commenting on the shape and color of his nurses' brows and claiming his knowledge comes from 'women's faces' (2.1.12). His focus on what he sees in his caretakers' appearances emphasizes a tendency to focus on what is seen and to ignore the work which occurs out of sight. Mamillius additionally resists the care of the First Lady, claiming she will 'kiss [him] hard and speak to [him] as if / [he] were a baby still' (2.1.6). However, she chides that once his mother has given birth, the women 'shall / Present [their] services to a fine new prince / […] and then [Mamillius]'ld wanton with [them]', (2.1.16–18). This and

[79] Nicholas Culpeper, *A Directory for Midwives* (1671) argues that healthy children should be weaned at a year in Mary Thomas Crane, '"Players in Your Huswifery, and Huswives in Your Beds": Conflicting Identities of Early Modern English Women' in *Maternal Measures*, pp. 212–23 (p. 216). John Dod and Robert Cleaver (1606) call a mother's nursing 'so naturall a thing that euen the beasts will not omit it' (quoted in Crawford, 11).

[80] Raynalde, 100.

[81] Trubowitz, p. 85.

[82] Thomas Tusser, *Fiue hundreth pointes of good husbandrie* (London: Richard Yardley and Peter Short, 1593), 139 (London: Richard Yardley and Peter Short, 1593), p. 139. See also Trubowitz, p. 85 and Crane, 216.

[83] Markham (1615), p. 32. See also Mary Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge, Science, and Gender on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 15–16.

Hermione's claim that she has cared for the boy until he is 'past enduring' (2.1.2) evokes the labor that mothers and nurses exert in raising a child. Here, the women point to the important, overlooked role that they play in caring for the child, one that is dismissed by Mamillius himself and by Leontes' and Polixenes' misremembering of their own childhoods. Accurately remembering childhood means coming to terms with the female influence in childhood in a society that, as Lamb points out, defined masculinity through 'rejection of the feminine and the corporeal'.[84]

The consequences of Leontes' refusal to accept Hermione's role as a nurse and mother illuminate her importance as a preserver. Mamillius' quick death following his separation from his mother makes clear that he, and the other characters in the play, rely upon the female influence they reject. When Leontes takes one child away from her, resulting in the child's death and sends the other child to die, Leontes prevents Hermione from preserving his own children, lineage, and power. The end of the men's innocence is not prompted by a tempting Eve, but by their departure from female space and entrance into the world of rational maleness, where Polixenes and Leontes learn '[t]he doctrine of ill-doing' and develop suspicion (1.2.70). The shepherd stresses this point in his wish that 'there were no age between ten and three-and-twenty [...] for there is nothing in the between but getting wenches with child, wronging the ancientry, stealing, fighting' (3.3.59–63). Boys, according to this perspective, do not enter the world of sin until they leave the safe space of the female dominated nursery. Ultimately, as Helen Wilcox argues, it is not 'Eves who spoil[...] [the] Eden of boyhood innocence', but instead 'irrational male anger [that] threatens the happy lives [at] court'.[85] Paulina's call following Hermione's collapse to 'Look down / And see what death is doing' (3.2.148–9) emphasizes the spiraling costs of Leontes' refusal to accept women's care.

In addition to illustrating the dangers of refusing to recognize the role of mothers and nurses, *The Winter's Tale* demonstrates that males must admit that female care extends to adulthood. Leontes' jealousy exposes anxieties about the continued dependence on female caregivers, a point many scholars recognize indirectly when they link Leontes' nostalgia with jealousy of Mamillius' closeness with his mother.[86] Yet, texts like Markham's *The English Huswife* stress the housewife's responsibility to care for and preserve 'adult members of the household and surrounding community', often, as Mary

[84] Lamb, 530–1.

[85] Helen Wilcox, *1611: Authority, Gender and the Word in Early Modern England* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), p. 104.

[86] Reeder, 353; Paster, 264; Valerie Traub, *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 26–7.

Thomas Crane points out, in place of children.[87] Leontes' refusal to recognize the need for female labor becomes evidence of what Monroe refers to as his 'poor "husbandry"'.[88] Leontes' misjudgment reveals that he, and not Hermione, has failed in his obligations to the home. If the failing health of the adults at court can be attributed to the refusal to recognize women as preservers, the only way to cure such infection is to accept the care that comes from these same women.

Throughout *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare associates the rejection of women and their work with disease. As the men in the play disparage women and push aside female work, their physical bodies and relationships become corrupted. Leontes develops a 'diseas'd opinion' (1.2.297) which models Robert Burton's descriptions of melancholy. Like many of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, Leontes experiences the symptoms of 'much waking' and 'restless thoughts', evident in his assertion that if Hermione were 'gone / Given to the fire, a moi'ty of [his] rest / Might come to [him] again' (2.3.7–9).[89] His complaint of '*tremor cordis*', or a 'heart [that] dances, / But not for joy' describes melancholy's 'palpitation of heart' (1.2.110–11). Furthermore, his disease is associated, as Stephen Greenblatt argues, with 'male nausea at the thought of the female body', or in Burton's words, 'ill digestion'.[90] Leontes' reaction also accords with Burton's description of psychological symptoms, or what Leontes calls the 'infection of [his] brains' (1.2.145): 'without just cause', Leontes grows suspicious, accuses his wife and his closest friend of infidelity, and withdraws from others as he refuses to take counsel.[91]

Paulina's care for Hermione and treatment of Leontes reinforce the essential role of women as preservers. Not only does Paulina feed and preserve the queen, but she also serves as a nurse, facilitating Leontes' healing. While the deaths of Mamillius and Hermione following the oracle's predictions prompt Leontes to reevaluate his conclusions, his actual remedy occurs because of Paulina's care over sixteen years. Paulina positions herself for this role when she swears that she 'come[s] with words as medicinal as true, / [...] to purge [Leontes] of that humor / That presses him from sleep'

[87] Crane, 219.

[88] Monroe, 150.

[89] Robert Burton lists 'ill digestion [...] much waking, [...], and palpitation of heart, leaping in many places' as physical symptoms of melancholy. *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford: Printed by Iohn Lichfield and Iames Short, 1621), 'The Synopsis', Part 1, B Section 3.

[90] Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), p. 132. Burton, Part 1, B Section 3.

[91] Burton explains melancholy leads to '[f]ear and sorrow without a just cause, suspicion, jealousy' (Part 1, B Section 3).

(2.3.37–9). Like a nurse or home practitioner attempting to preserve or restore health, Paulina employs a time-intensive, individualized treatment plan. Recognizing that 'tender' care will do little to evoke recovery and gentle advice '[w]ill never do him good' (2.3.128–9), Paulina uses methods that evoke unpleasant and painful medical practices. Despite the danger to herself, Paulina diagnoses Leontes as 'mad' and refers to his 'tyrannous passion' (2.3.28). Her harsh language suggests common cures like purging, 'pouring lemon juice into open sores, lancing boils, serving up urine-based concoctions, or sticking oil-infused feathers deep into a patient's nostrils'.[92] These painful practices were seen as necessary to preserve a balance in the humoral state of a patient. Furthermore, Paulina's repetition of 'good queen' five times in just eight lines functions like a medicinal charm (2.3.58–65). A widely accepted form of cure in medieval England, charms were increasingly linked with witchcraft in the early modern period.[93] However, Paulina's successful use of the charm reminds the audience of the female tradition of medicine and demonstrates her competence as a nurse. Paulina's intervention makes it possible, at least partially, to restore what has been lost.

Paulina's success hinges on Leontes' rejection of his earlier categorization of Paulina as a witch and his current acceptance of her as a healer. Leontes does not abruptly 'awake [his] faith' in the final act but is led to belief through Paulina's guidance and preparation (5.3.95). As Wilcox and Goldman both recognize, Leontes is 'remorse[ful]' and 'sincere' once he receives word of Mamillius's death, and yet full recovery requires more than 'a simple change of heart'.[94] Where Leontes perceives Paulina's earlier words as scolding, he gradually interprets them as a remedy: 'Go on, go on', he says, urging her 'bitt[er]' speech (3.2.214–16). Although Leontes still perceives her words as 'bitter' in the final scene and her tongue as 'strik[ing]' him, he notes that had he 'squar'd [himself] to [Paulina's] counsel' earlier he might 'even now, [...] have look'd upon [his] queen[...]' (5.1.17–18, 52–3) and he refers to Paulina as she 'Who hast the memory of Hermione' (5.1.50).

This change in perspective, which scholars have connected with a reversal in authority, an alignment with nature, and even 'reintegration' into society is more completely understood as a cure for earlier diseased judgments.[95] Leontes' progression to this transformation is additionally analogous to an ill person's acceptance of their role as

[92] Wall, p. 3.

[93] Louise M. Bishop, *Words, Stones, and Herbs: The Healing Word in Medieval and Early Modern England* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2007), p. 12.

[94] Goldman, 10 and Wilcox, p. 101.

[95] Monroe, 152 and Greenblatt, p. 132.

patient. Medieval and early modern medical writers stressed that medicine or surgery would not work without the patient's consent. For example, Guy de Chauliac insists that patients must be willing to suffer and obey their surgeons before successful surgery can occur, and William Clowes lists the 'Patient' as one of the four parts to effective medicine, alongside God, Surgeon, and Nature.[96] When Leontes cedes his authority, accepts his role as patient, and allows Paulina to apply her expertise, he begins his transformation.

As Paulina remedies the diseased judgment of Leontes, the play shows how by turning toward and recognizing the preservative expertise possessed by women, the audience can also be cured of their own diseased opinions. At the same time, Paulina warns of the risk to women if such transformation does not occur. Leontes' previous accusations that Paulina is '[a] mankind witch', (2.3.68), '[a] most intelligencing bawd' (2.3.69), 'Dame Partlet' (2.3.76), and a 'crone' (2.3.77) are still fresh in the audience's mind, occurring, in the theater, minutes and not years before the final scene. His threat that he will 'ha' thee burnt' (2.3.114) underscores the potential cost of Paulina's care. Distinguishing her work from witchcraft, Paulina displays warranted caution despite her earlier bold criticism of Leontes. Paulina directly challenges critiques of witchcraft and enchantment by insisting that her powers are not 'wicked' or 'unlawful' (5.3.91, 96). In doing so, she reveals that 'anxiety about women's influence over men […] is far from resolved',[97] and suggests a turn towards women's work to continue to allay such fears. By accepting women's competence to complete the preservative tasks assigned to them, audience members can contribute to the preservation of those around them.

Conclusion

Throughout *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare exposes the flaws in and cost of male representations of female work, especially as they revolve around tasks of preservation. At the same time, he guides the audience toward recognition of the labor of preservation. From Hermione's references to and Perdita's demonstration of hospitality, to Paulina's evidence of and from the birth room, to the first and second lady's care of Mamillius and Paulina's care of Hermione and Leontes, the women in the play resist disparagement of their positions and their work to complete and make visible tasks of preservation. While the depictions in Acts 1 though 4, for the most part, involve work that takes place in female-centered spaces represented offstage, the presentation of Hermione as statue in

[96] Guy de Chauliac and Björn Wallner, *A Middle English version of the introduction to Guy de Ghauliac's [sic] 'Chirurgia magna'* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1971), p. 13.

[97] Lamb, 536–7.

Paulina's 'poor house' in the final scene (5.3.6) demonstrates a reorientation towards women's labor and spaces.

Although Paulina's reference to her 'poor house' primarily helps distinguish her abode from that of the royal family, the term also connects her to the many women who performed preservative tasks across various segments of society. The term 'poor house' may, for instance, evoke for the audience the recently instituted poorhouses that offered relief for the 'impotent poor', or those who were unable to work.[98] Such institutions fulfilled the need to care for the poor, responsibilities embodied in the tasks of both nursing and hospitality.[99] Although hospitality increasingly became a practice of reciprocity in the early modern period, medieval writers stressed 'that hospitality was to be given first to the poor and needy'.[100] Like their male counterparts, wives and widows were expected to provide for guests and even for 'the poore'.[101] Heal notes that biographies and sermons often praised 'the giving of alms and the ministration to the sick and needy' as a 'paradigm[…] of virtuous female behavior'.[102] Funeral sermons for and memoirs, diary records, and letters of women such as Lady Margaret Beaufort, Lady Montague, Margaret Cavendish, Lady Anne Clifford, and even Queen Elizabeth provide evidence for such practices.[103]

Furthermore, Paulina's 'gallery' of 'many singularities' (5.3.10–12) indicates an ability to preserve belongings, consistent with the housewife's responsibility to 'keep all at home'. As a widow, Paulina continues to fulfill such responsibility in her own space. But whereas the housewife preserves belongings that her husband brings in, Paulina collects various statues, even claiming responsibility for the commission of the faux statue of Hermione. Like most widows in early modern England, Paulina demonstrates increased agency in her role as a widow;[104] however, she remains committed to the preservative tasks assigned to women across marital status. The placement of the action in her space rather than a room in Leontes' palace or court of justice, represents the reorientation

[98] The National Archives, *An Act for Relief of the Poor* (1601), <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/humanrights/1500-1760/doc-poorlaw-transcript.htm> [accessed 17 February 2022].

[99] Heal, pp. 131–2.

[100] Heal, p. 14. See also pp. 19–20.

[101] See, for example, Tusser who advises housewives to 'REmember the poore' (fol.37v).

[102] Heal, p. 179.

[103] Heal, pp. 3, 170. On women's hospitality, see also Palmer, *Hospitable Performances*, pp. 17–19.

[104] See Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner (eds.), *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Longman, 1999) and Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe, 1500–1800* (New York: Knopf, 1996).

toward women's spaces anticipated, but not fully completed, by Perdita's hosting of the festival near the Shepherd's cottage.

Despite such reorientation, Perdita's rhetoric makes it clear that her successful preservation and presentation depends on external acceptance of her labors. As Virginia Lee Strain reminds us, Paulina 'is not fully exonerated [...] until the on- and offstage audiences appreciate that the Queen's apparent revivification is the achievement of human agency'.[105] Paulina expresses caution that Leontes will believe she is 'assisted / By wicked powers' and urges 'those that think it unlawful business' to 'depart' (5.3.90–91, 96–7). Paulina's insistence that her 'spell is lawful' (5.3.105) forces the recognition that Hermione's awakening is 'not really an animation or a resurrection'.[106]

Earlier in the play, Time prepares the audience to recognize and reform their own faulty opinions about what is unlawful or wicked. Urging that the audience 'impute it not a crime / […] that [he] slide[s] / O'er sixteen years' (4.1.4–6), Time clearly anticipates concerns about the play's violation of time and place unities. These concerns, however, also align with Paulina's own worries that what occurs out of sight may be misunderstood and disparaged. Because the audience cannot see what happens in the time that occurs offstage, they must accept Paulina's claim of lawfulness as they have accepted Time's actions at the end of Act 3.

As Hermione stands in Paulina's 'poor house' and appears as part of her 'gallery', the play provides an opportunity for the characters and audience to reexamine previous assumptions. Leontes' reaction to Hermione models for the audience a new orientation towards women and the work of preservation. As Leontes looks closely at the figure he assumes to be a statue, he notes the 'wrinkled' skin (5.3.28), the 'veins' which appear to 'bear blood' (5.3.64–65), and the 'motion in [her eye]' (5.3.67). In doing so, he identifies Hermione as a product of preservation. Much like a fruit which has been canned, Hermione's body exhibits evidence of aging and transformation, while also retaining the essence that compelled her preservation. Leontes' careful observations contrast with his earlier hasty assumptions and prompt self-reflection: Leontes admits that he is 'ashamed', and asks, 'does not the stone rebuke me / For being more stone than it?' (5.3.37–8). Unlike the Leontes of Acts 1 through 3, this reformed king is observant, slow to judgment, and self-reflective. Once Hermione descends, Leontes exclaims, 'O, she's warm! / If this be magic, let it be an art / Lawful as eating' (5.3.109–11). Leontes recognizes the legitimacy of the product of Paulina's work even as he admits, through his reference to magic, that

[105] Virginia Lee Strain, '*The Winter's Tale* and the Oracle of the Law', *ELH*, 78. 3 (2011), 557–84.

[106] Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 237.

he does not fully understand what has happened behind the closed doors of Paulina's home. His reaction demonstrates what is now expected of audience members who have similarly been prepared to acknowledge the legitimacy of unseen work through allusions to and depictions of preservation throughout the play.

The play's resolution depends on the restoration of females to the position of wives or caretakers: Hermione is reunited with Leontes, Perdita paired with Florizel, and Paulina married to Camillo. Yet, the 'harmony' that we find in these final moments is more than a return to the status quo.[107] Instead, the role of the woman as housewife is elevated, as women gain or regain recognition as healers and hostesses. Rather than seeing Hermione and Perdita as 'whore' and 'bastard', Leontes learns to recognize them as wife and daughter and to appreciate the necessity of their contributions. Perdita, who Leontes once 'condemn'd to loss' (2.3.192), is not only found but also reintegrated into society, where she recovers the lost bond between Sicilia and Bohemia. A friendship once based on the elimination of female influence is now bound together through recognition of the women once ignored. In other words, Perdita's role goes beyond a simple exchange of women as property. The play portrays this reorientation towards women as a cure for the fatal judgments of the first two acts, which like the work of a housewife or the recovery after childbirth, requires time, arduous work, and female skill.

I want to end by suggesting that the focus on women and preservation in the play not only extends to those in the traditional roles of daughter, wife, and widow, but also to the women who have made the production of the play possible. Like hostesses, child bearers, and nurses, female theater workers were often overlooked because their labors occurred offstage, in spaces dominated by women. However, Natasha Korda, Ann Jones, Peter Stallybrass, and others have brought to light the extensive impact of female labor on early modern theatrical production.[108] Our traditional portrayal of the 'all-male' stage, they show, does not account for the many ways that women contributed to the early modern theater.[109] Through the creation of costumes, attiring of boy actors, collection of entrance fees, making of foodstuffs sold in the theater, and contributing funding, women influenced the way that audience members encountered the experience of playgoing. The statue of Hermione merges traditional means of preservation with female theatrical artistry, since her clothes, makeup, and positioning highlight the ways that Paulina has

[107] Peter Erickson, 'Patriarchal Structures in *The Winter's Tale*', *PMLA*, 97.5 (1982), 819–829 (p. 825).

[108] Ann Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[109] Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1996, reprinted 1997).

used her skills and labors not only to preserve her friend's life but also to present her as art.

The emphasis on storytelling in the final scene further emphasizes the connection between the preservative work of women and of the theater. Although scholars, including James Knapp and Lim, have traditionally read the references to 'tales' in the play as commentary on truth and triviality, these references also parallel the reorientation towards women's work.[110] Lamb explains that storytelling took place in the nursery and was disparaged as a female activity, the implication being that 'a man would have had something more useful to do'.[111] In the first half of the play, the 'sad tale' that Mamillius whispers to his mother is quickly interrupted by Leontes' entrance and demand that Hermione 'Give [him] the boy' (2.1.56). However, in this final scene, the male characters ask for an explanation. Polixenes urges Hermione to 'make it manifest where she has liv'd, / Or how stol'n from the dead' (5.3.114–15), demonstrating his desire to know how preservation takes place in invisible spaces. The stories are less the '[i]mpostors to true fear', which Lady Macbeth associates with 'A woman's story at a winter's fire' (*Macbeth*, 3.4.63–4) and more an essential mechanism to preserve what otherwise may be lost.

Hermione's repetition of 'preserv'd' in this conversation draws attention not only to the preservation that has already occurred but also the preservation of their stories through storytelling and the play itself. Hermione asks Perdita, 'Where hast thou been preserv'd? where liv'd? how found / Thy father's court?' (5.3.124–5). In her insistence that she '[has] preserv'd / [Her]self to see the issue' (5.3.127–8), Hermione invites her on- and offstage audiences to consider the work that has been performed out of view. Whereas Sarah Beckwith argues, 'It is not how Hermione has survived that is important but *that* she has', I think the opposite is true.[112] Asking Paulina to 'Lead us from hence, where we may leisurely / Each one demand, and answer to his part / Perform'd in this wide gap of time, since first / We were dissever'd', Leontes points to this importance and reveals that there is still more work needed to recover what has occurred in the hidden spaces women occupy (5.3.152–5). Here the women become the authorities on their own stories and the men must trust what they say to fill in their gaps of knowledge. Through the stories told on and off stage, the play insists that women are essential to the process of preservation whether it happens in the home or in the theater. Hermione's silent figure at the end of

[110] James Knapp, 'Visual and Ethical Truth in *The Winter's Tale*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 55.3 (2004), 253–278. Lim, 317–334.

[111] Lamb, 532.

[112] Sarah Beckwith, *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011), p. 130.

the play provides visual evidence that such labor may produce something that ‘Excels what ever yet you look’d upon, / Or hand of man hath done’ (5.3.16–17).