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STOMACH AND WOMB:
EARLY MODERN RECIPES FOR THE PERINATAL WOMAN

by

GRACE E. BEACHAM

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Master of Arts in English at
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Arlington, Texas

Supervising Committee:

Amy L. Tigner, Supervising Professor
Desirée Henderson
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ABSTRACT

Stomach and Womb:

Early Modern Recipes for the Perinatal Woman

Grace E. Beacham, M.A.

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2024

Supervising Professor: Amy L. Tigner

Stomach and Womb examines the recipes from early modern obstetrical treatises and midwifery manuals, revealing an ontology of parturiency that winds through the concurrent Shakespearean plays, *Twelfth Night* and *The Winter's Tale*. Gynecological and obstetrical texts from the era detail how pregnant women were to order themselves after conception with utmost concern for their diet, governing the outputs of their bodies by managing the inputs, the foods they ingested before, during, and after pregnancy and childbirth. Further, the associated images of the stomach and the womb during this time present an essential link between foodways and a construct of femininity that has heretofore been understudied. This thesis shows the ambivalent yet prevailing understanding of reproductive authorities that believed women to be passively and inherently maternal, while exposing anxieties about women's powers over reproduction, namely in the agency and autonomy of eating. From diverse pregnancy cravings to purging medicines used in the midst of labor and delivery to the postpartum prescriptive recipes both alimentary and topical, this thesis argues that understanding the physiological and fundamental transitions of the early modern perinatal woman relies on also knowing what she consumed.

Fig. 1

Brown, Mather. "Birth of Shakespeare." 17--?, Folger Digital Image Collection, https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGERCM1~6~6~352467~129638:Birth-of-Shakespeare--graphic-----M%3Fsort%3Dcall_number%252Cmpsortorder1?qvq=q:birth;sort:call_number%2Cmpsortorder1&mi=28&trs=826

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Finally, I thank God my Savior, who gives beautiful life to all.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Billy, who held me when I gave birth to our children, who holds those children so their mom can chase her dreams, and who upholds our family with wisdom, care, and strength.

> What you do,
> Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet,
> I'd have you do it ever…
> …Each your doing,
> So singular in each particular,
> Crowns what you are doing…
>
> —*The Winter's Tale*

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Introduction: Food for Parturiency

In an anatomy of the vessels of the female reproductive system, *Aristotle's complete and experienced midwife* (1691) conveys the interconnectedness of the organs related to childbearing:

> As touching the nerves, they proceed from the brain, which furnishes all the inner parts of the lower belly with them, which is the true reason [the womb] hath so great a sympathy with the stomach, which is likewise very considerably furnished from the same part; so that the womb cannot be afflicted with any pain, but the stomach is immediately sensible thereof; which is the cause of those loathings, or frequent vomitings which happen to it.[1]

While in a Galenic model of the body the heart autonomously performed many of the roles we now attribute to the brain, here the relationship of brain, stomach, and womb interact in a way that exposes the early modern ontology of parturiency, that the perinatal woman is differentiated from the "one-sex" model by her being a system of vessels as she herself is a vessel.[2] According to this gynecological and obstetrical treatise, the brain-stomach-womb triad facilitated a twinship between womb and stomach, reproduction and eating, that was informed by the "senses" of the brain and could also inform the brain through a feedback loop of food or sex, per an "intake-discharge" theory of the body. The reproductive woman, different from the female child or post-menopausal woman, occupied a liminal space, in which her physiological potential to bear young endowed her with a permeability both contained within her own body and in her body's articulation with the external world. Just as we still place emphasis on diet during pregnant and postpartum phases, during the early modern era, how a woman "governed" herself regarding

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[1] William Salmon, *Aristotle's complete and experienced midwife*, 14th Edition (London, 1782), 17.

[2] In early modern anatomy, the "one-sex" theory of the body posited that males and females possessed corresponding reproductive organs, women's the subverted and internal counterparts to the external standards of men's. See Thomas W. Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Boston: Harvard UP, 1992).

what she ingested before, during, and after childbearing spoke volumes of the kind of woman she was and the quality of progeny she could engender.

The early modern concept of parturiency presupposed the function of engendering as an essential feature of being female. Women past the age of their first "flowering" were seen as static in their always already utility for childbearing, yet they matriculated through the stages of perinatal embodiment fluidly, evidenced by their sexual activity and desire, their shifting appetite for or loathing of food, and their bodily emissions – fluid, blood, or babies. When a woman who was of age exhibited signs of unwellness – or, as obstetrical treatises often metaphorically figured the woman with child, her ship, amid such fluidity, drifted awry – her reproductive function was always as much at risk as it was to blame. Moreover, aligning her reproductivity with acceptable femininity by managing diet and other inputs as they related to fertility was the primary mode of care. Tracing the recipes embedded in gynecological and obstetrical treatises as well as in midwifery manuals, this thesis examines the early modern assumption that the reproductive female body as merely a system of vessels could be understood, regulated, and contained by what she put in or on her body – that is, food or foodlike substances. I incorporate early modern literature with Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and *The Winter's Tale* to capitalize on the junction of two major aspects of female embodiment: eating and birthing. Because Shakespeare's work so often reframes existential binaries like male/female, eating/being eaten, or birthing kingdoms/birthing chaos, these dramas work well as guideposts alongside early modern perinatal recipes. Reading within this contextual framework, I argue that *Twelfth Night* and *The Winter's Tale* unsettle the grounds of early modern female reproductive authorities about the permeable, vascular embodiment of pregnancy, labor and delivery, and motherhood. In particular, these manuals, recipes, and plays allow readers of the 21st century to reimagine early

modern birth practices through the foods administered to parturient women, showing an essential connection for all natal experience regardless of outcome: internment and displacement.

The first part of the academic discourse surrounding this work is early modern women's studies, particularly medicinal, midwifery, and obstetrical scholarship, for which I have many forbearers.[3] Early modern obstetrical treatises bring to light early modernity's ambivalent estimation of female difference and agency in a realm where women – mothers, midwives, and female attendants – were the active players in a patriarchal society. Scholars have demonstrated that midwifery manuals like Jane Sharp's *Midwives Book* (1671) disrupt the notion of female passivity in the birthing chamber as well as the stereotype of the incompetent or overly aggressive midwife. Caroline Bicks examines this female-authored manual, arguing for a subversion of the rhetorical ornamentation typical of obstetrical texts. Sharp's book is an anomaly, however, and the dominating texts like *Aristotle's complete and experienced midwife* (attributed to William Salmon [1692] and hereafter *Aristotle's experienced midwife*) reinstate patriarchal ideals into the male-exclusive space of the birthing chamber and, further, into the world of nursing and motherhood. In this thesis I show how the goals of gynecological and obstetrical authorities were both upheld and disrupted by the running strand of recipes they espoused. The recipes ground the manuals in a tradition that seems to have existed long before

[3] Among early modern obstetrical and women's studies, see the seminal works of Audrey Eccles, *Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Routledge, 1982); Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Helen King, *The Disease of Virgins: Green Sickness, Chlorosis, and the Problems of Puberty* (London: Routledge, 2004); Helen King, *Midwifery, Obstetrics and the Rise of Gynaecology: The Uses of a Sixteenth-Century Compendium* (London: Routledge, 2007); Wilson, Adrian. *Ritual and Conflict: The Social Relations of Childbirth in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 2016); Kathryn R. McPherson and Kathryn M. Moncrief, eds., *Performing Maternity in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 2007). For more on midwives in Shakespearean drama, see Caroline Bicks, *Midwiving Subjects in Shakespeare's England* (London: Routledge, 2003).

the texts themselves, authorizing the medical advice as much as they suggest a preeminent female knowledge of childbirth. At the same time, the power to control food and consumption has always been the power to control people, and authors like Salmon, Sharp, Gervase Markham (1615), Nicholas Culpeper (1652), Françios Mauriceau (1668), and Jacques Guillemeau (1609) generally operate within a canon of recipes that they use to manage perinatal women despite their unique needs.

Previous studies of early modern foodways and medicine have been well established in the field.[4] Scholarship pertaining to food studies offers a lively and complex probe into the material lives of early moderns from the peasantry to the royals. Recipes from 1500-1800 reveal a transmutable understanding of the body, and the persuasion of most people was that food imbued its properties to eaters in very real ways.[5] During this era, the overlap of food and medicine was encompassing; each constituent ingredient represented a metaphysical truth about the world and could be ingested to metonymically confer its traits, both gustatory and medicinal, through eating. Food was the means by which the external world became internal, a person's interior disposition and even morality fleshing the physical body. The writing of recipes also communicates a belief in the almost supernatural ways food allows us to know, to experience, and to partake. To author a recipe was to assume agency over the natural world, and recipe writing was a literary genre open to lay persons, to the serving class, and to women alike.

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[4] Among early modern food studies, see David B. Goldstein and Amy L. Tigner, eds., *Culinary Shakespeare: Staging Food and Drink in Early Modern England* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 2016); Robert Appelbaum, *Aguecheek's Beef, Belch's Hiccup, and Other Gastronomic Interjections: Literature, Culture, and Food among the Early Moderns* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Michelle DiMeo and Sara Pennell, eds., *Reading and Writing Recipe Books, 1550-1800* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2013); Joan Thirsk, *Food in early modern England: phases, fads, fashions, 1500-1760* (New York: Hambledon Continuum Press, 2007); Richard Sugg, *Mummies, Cannibals and Vampires: The History of Corpse Medicine from the Renaissance to the Victorians* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011).

[5] In addition to the obstetrical manuals, I use the manuscript transcriptions collection from the Folger Shakespeare Library for this project.

Additionally, the employment of recipes written or endorsed by famous doctors or nobles transferred power to those who made and used them. Recipes could also be an access point for evaluation and criticism: where an ingredient could be extolled to near magical efficacy, where running lists of ingredients became narratives in their own right, or where divergent cooks or practitioners could find themselves incidentally chastised. Early modern food studies, especially with more recent scholarship on digitized recipe transcriptions, has contributed to our understanding of early modern life and culture in which Shakespeare wrote.

Shakespeare was no doubt aware of the highly fraught position of the parturient woman, and he capitalized on the complexities of pregnancy and childbearing in his plays. I use *Twelfth Night* and *The Winter's Tale* to contextualize the early modern perinatal woman and how her society classified her. While the patriarchy's insistence was chaste-yet-fecund wives, willing and able for sex and childbearing, Shakespeare disturbs this ideal by casting two unmarried, sexually divergent women as the socially adept lead roles of *Twelfth Night*. In his later play, *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare subverts the typical erasure of parturient women by making a pregnant body the catalyst for conflict and the defilement of a birthing ritual the defining mark against the antagonist's character. In both plays, as well as across his corpus, Shakespeare places parturiency at integral crossroads within his plots, contradicting contemporary tropes of effacing pregnancy and childbirth or of a stereotypical characterizing of the flighty, unintelligent housewife and of the base, gossiping midwife. His plots feature eating and appetite as topics for philosophical conversations and as the very model for the characters' movement from scene to scene. Characters who "hunger" for one another show the contention between the morality of sexual desire and the desire to marry and procreate. Interring and expelling work metaphorically on the line level as well as literally when characters are either admitted or denied entry to certain

symbolic places. Additionally, the language of ingesting and purging – of food, and of issues, persons, and folk remedies – makes Shakespeare's plays a prime theoretical topography for parsing the immaterial of the real matters of reproduction, what we consume and what we beget.

Each of the following chapters begins from the early modern conceptual framework of perinatal womanhood; to be female was to be either prenatal, natal, or postnatal. Chapter one examines the treatment of prenatal appetitive function and dysfunction, the loathing and longing of certain foods. In obstetrical treatises of the period, the term "depraued" or "liquorish" appetite of pregnant or potentially pregnant individuals referred to pica, the eating disorder of craving nonfood objects.[6] Helen King's seminal text *The Disease of Virgins: Green Sickness, Chlorosis, and the Problems of Puberty* (2004) gives a thorough background of the major cause of pica, "green sickness," an ailment "not only gendered as feminine, but also linked to virginity," further establishing a link between disordinate appetites and reproductive status (19). Early modern midwifery texts described pica in great detail, often with case studies and recipes for its treatment. One example is from Guillemeau's treatise, the story of a woman with child who died because she could not stop eating the plastering of walls.[7] A maladaptation common to many pregnancies, pica presented the early modern mindset with grave obstacles in terms of understanding boundaries: what was appetite's role in determining and controlling illicit food behaviors like surfeiting or consuming nonfood or food-like substances? Prenatal women, especially those whose childbearing status could not be immediately and visibly ascertained, challenged a static categorization of the female reproductive body, and this patriarchal anxiety brought about the enforcement of dietary protocols for childbearing women. A woman whose body provided a vessel for another human life had a greater caloric need than a non-pregnant

[6] Guillemeau, 35; Sharp, 89.
[7] Ibid., 35.

person; on the same grounds of acting as a vessel were her rights restricted pertaining to what and how much she could eat. Interestingly, although midwifery manuals attached moral significance to appetite, particularly in its "strange" or perverted manifestations, treatment of deviant appetite almost always involved food. Physicians might have prescribed a moderate, cooling diet, or they might have made accommodations for the woman's cravings, allowing her to partake in small doses with the intention of curbing her appetite. Treated thus, the paradoxical nature of appetite parallels the early modern view of the asexual-yet-sexed prenatal body as a fragile and ambiguous state tipping with ease from normative and salubrious to excessive and depraved.

Twelfth Night is a play about appetite from its first, infamous lines spoken by Duke Orsino: "If music be the food of love, play on, / Give me excess of it, that surfeiting, / The appetite may sicken, and so die" (1.1.1-3). In addition to its thematic discourse of hunger and desire, both alimentary and romantic, *Twelfth Night* also showcases two dynamic and independent women, both having one foot in the realm of sexual and marriageable potential and one in the male-coded world of imperviousness to sexual targeting. Lady Olivia is a woman of her own estate, doubly impregnable now that her father and brother have died and left her in mourning. Lady Viola only believes her brother and male patron to have passed away; yet, to find a suitable husband, she disguises herself as a boy, which performs the same function of excluding her from the marriage pool. In both examples, women who by early modern standards should be married, pregnant, or desiring pregnancy are existing untethered in a society that would have them pinned to one specific state, defined by their appetites. To the contrary, the male characters are the ones whose appetites figure prominently – Orsino, mentioned above, Sir

Toby, and Malvolio. Chapter one delves into how those role-reversals, read alongside midwifery recipes, deconstruct unbounded appetites.

Chapter two focuses on the natal woman and the phenomena of labor and delivery by analyzing purgative recipes for giving birth. Already an evacuation of its own, the labor and delivery of the early modern woman were often marked with purgation via medical interventions. At the onset of labor, midwives and physicians administered purgative recipes that were designed to rid the woman of a perceived excess of fluids, excrement, and blood so that her body may then more easily expel a child. Blood is a conspicuous and nebulous signifier often appearing with, and sometimes synonymous to, purgation in the birthing chamber. The birth of the baby itself is a bloody business, from the first "shows" when a woman's delivery approaches, to the "second birth," or afterbirth of the placenta. However, hemorrhage, the body's losing too much blood, boded ill for the puerperal woman. Midwives and attending physicians attempted to mitigate blood's inherent violence by letting blood to relieve her of bad humors or to draw her blood to other areas of the body. With a similar rationale to treating inordinate appetite with food, professionals treated the malady of too much blood with more bleeding, and the grand purging of childbirth with more purging. The end, I argue, was to ascertain the largely invisible products of birth – among others, paternity, the mother's survival, and the efficacy of her labor – by the visible issues of her body. If the early modern conscious placed a high premium on status, then the shift from prenatal (not-a-mother) to postnatal (mother) was an almost imperceptible (other than its being one of the most dramatic events a person could undergo) transition that wanted definition.

A play that hinges on a precarious childbirth, *The Winter's Tale* capitalizes on the idea of purgation in the successive displacement of characters from geographic and symbolic locations.

In the obstetrical sense, purgation occurs when Hermione gives birth to a child her husband, Leontes, a suspicious and jealous king, does not accept to be his own. Her imprisonment effaces her labor and delivery, and the dramatic situation calls into question the meaning and ethics of hospitality – whether opening one's home to others, accommodating (laboring) women in safe and respectful ways, or the literal being-home to a fetus. While childbirth remains invisible, the issues of reproduction are evident, both the figurative problems of ascertaining and repopulating a quality people and the literal, visible evidence of things that have taken place, the countenance of the newborn child or of the newly delivered and deceased mother. The imprisonment/hospitality dyad also gives light to what it could mean in early modern language to "purge the mother." Beyond the evidence of the birthed baby, fluids, and blood, the mother's own presence and story testify to the plights of all women as both prisoners and hosts. With Hermione's apparent death at the end of the third act, patriarchal intervention has not only erased the childbirth, but it has also rid the narrative of the mother.

Moving on to the postnatal phase of reproduction, chapter three examines early modern postpartum rituals and the integrated plastering recipes for the mother after birth. In this chapter I argue that the early modern "lying-in" period was as much about "laying-on," the application of poultices, cataplasms, and other coverings responsible for the woman's recovery. While some have argued that the early modern birth and its proceedings constituted a ritual for the new mother, I further suggest that the topical treatment of her body was a rite akin to ancient embalming practices or concurrent effigy sculptures as part of a death-to-life transformation for the mother who survived childbirth. Another role of laying-on practices was to purify the woman in a religious sense, and the stages of her lying-in worked in tandem with these interventions to bring her back to a right standing in her church and community. Finally, plasters of the breasts,

belly, and nether-region also functioned as the patriarchal management of her body to re-cover and return her to a pre-parturient state.

The second half of *The Winter's Tale* – arguably a separate play altogether from the first half in its genre, characters, and plot structure – recalls these methods in its representation of the ideal female in Hermione's statue. Read together with laying-on practices, early modern lying-in rituals frame the structure of the play insomuch that original audiences would have seen Hermione's miraculous return not only as a death-to-life transformation, but also as a childbirth-to-rebirth recovery story. In addition to Hermione's story told at the beginning and ending of the play, I also examine the "winter's tale" of her daughter, Perdita, who has grown to womanhood in the pastoral land of Bohemia. Used as a mirror in infancy for her father's anxiety over paternity, Perdita is also the mirror of courtly femininity, the backdrop of plain country life and shepherdess trappings the catalyzing foils for her character. In her portrayal, the pastoral imagery of flowers and sheep evoke the ideal Renaissance vision of the "tabula rasa," or blank slate, in which proper femininity may be embodied. Following Perdita back to Silicia, chapter three highlights the essential relationship between these two women and the cleansing and sculpting powers of plasters in the postpartum space. Hermione's sixteen-year absence, some scholars suggest, acts as the childbed privilege Leontes denied her; as such, her reappearance as a statue must necessarily be analogous to the early modern tradition of swathing women with sheepskins, poultices, and cerecloths after birth. Tracing these highly symbolic recipes, this chapter deals with the liminality of the lying-in chamber, that nebulous zone demarcating the significant shift of womanhood between pregnancy and childbearing. The woman that reemerges, though she outwardly appears the same, has experienced an invisible interior change evidenced in part by the recipes that feed, purge, and cover her.

That much of my research dates two decades ago or more (before I myself was a reproductive human) indicates not only a gap in timely discussions on this topic, but also a comfortable assessment of early modern obstetrics I hope to defamiliarize. We can glaze over appellatives such "gynecological," "obstetrical," and "midwifery"; we can draw harsh boundaries of genre or vehicle such as "treatise," "manual," and "book." Admittedly, I use these modifiers more or less interchangeably throughout this thesis, though not thoughtlessly. Much like Jennifer Scuro argues in her autotheoretical graphic novel, *The Pregnancy [does-Not-equal] Childbearing Project: A Phenomenology of Miscarriage*, I would like to delink the common notion of early modern women's medicine *as* the conglomerate of gynecology/obstetrics/midwifery. Instead, I read and understand these texts always within a unique context or phenomenon of female life. For, while it is impossible, and perhaps unhelpful, to know exactly what any given early modern woman would have thought of these texts, of herself, or of reproductive rights at all, we should nonetheless keep in mind the particular cultural and historical setting, in which we imagine her reading them. For some, these treatises represented the indisputable, near-divine (many going so far as to invoke God or Scripture as evidence for female anatomical inferiority) wisdom of Galenic and Paracelsian medical authorities. For others, these manuals were reference texts from which to cherry-pick passages for the best practices for conception, pregnancy, and childbirth. For still others, these books constituted, I would imagine, a great deal of entertainment; many households would have contained a text like Gervase Markham's *The English Housewife*, or Sharp's *Midwives Book* replete with personal anecdotes that read similarly to watching a scene from *Grey's Anatomy*.

Another purpose for reading obstetrical texts, I would argue, was as recipe books. While the general early modern cook may not have perused Nicholas Culpeper's *The English Physician*

for a baked cod or a lemon cream, the recipes therein offered alternative foodways for the households, which more likely than not included a parturient woman. Lists of recipes in long, enumerative sequences, often many for the same ailment, give reason to believe a reader may have spent time poring over the pages, imagining flavor profiles, taking stock of ingredients, and calculating the labor and cost required, much as they would any cookbook. The recipes are often the same across obstetrical treatises, suggesting not only that the texts borrowed from one another, but also that the food was informing the practice and not always the other way around. Some of the books such as *Aristotle's experienced midwife* survived in subsequent editions and reprintings for decades, which meant that people would have been cooking and eating the same foods during pregnancy and childbearing for many generations, a case that is rapidly changing in First World modernity. For the scope of this thesis, though, I am interested in what these recipes, alongside the two Shakespearean plays, have to tell us about early modern perinatal embodiment.

Diverse as the audiences and reading purposes may have been, these texts also share some features and a common structure that helps categorize them. For example, they are all organized into explicitly titled chapters starting with the anatomical treatises we call "gynecological" despite lengthy descriptions of *both* male and female reproductive organs.[8] Most include sections detailing the vessels that link reproductive function to the rest of the body and to the essence of the person, as I suggested at the beginning of this introduction. Moving through the art of conception, management of pregnancy, and the practical advice (and directly addressed admonitions) for midwives and nurses at the time of delivery and postpartum recovery and

[8] Although many of these texts were directed to midwives or women who were presumably too embarrassed to see a male practitioner, the "gynecological" sections center male anatomy as the standard to which they compare the female body. The disproportionate use of metaphorical language for male reproductive organs, as Caroline Bicks argues, along with the fact that "andrology" came into being, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter, *OED*), nearly half a century after gynecology, attests to the "othering" of women's bodies perpetuating from antiquity. Today, no board certification programs exist for andrology.

breastfeeding, these gynecological, obstetrical, and midwifery books not only seek to encompass the female reproductive experience, but can also be seen as the collected knowledge of the static phases of female embodiment to be deployed each in due time. Similarly, I organize this thesis in respect to the gynecological/obstetrical/midwifery structure with the three chapters treating the prenatal/natal/postnatal woman. While this may seem antithetical, I use the early modern framework of femininity in order to subvert it and, of equal importance, to exemplify the women who also worked within it and managed to give birth to new ways of being.

Chapter One: "Depraued Appetites"
Pica and the Early Modern Prenatal Diet

> It is not enough for a Woman to be certain she hath conceived, and to yield and receive her Seed with the Man's into her Womb, unless it close at that instant and retain it. There is an Article amongst the *Customs of Paris*, in which it is said, *That to give and keep is not good*: but it is not so in Conception; for a Woman gives and casts her Seed into her Womb, and there retains it.
> – Francios Mauriceau, 1668

> I will not open my lips so wide as a bristle may enter.
> – *Twelfth Night* (1.5.1-2)

> What I am, and what I would, are as secret as maidenhead: to your ears, divinity; to any other's, profanation.
> – *Twelfth Night* (1.5.210-11)

Introduction: Appetitive Function in the Early Modern Era

Secrecy, divinity, and profanity converge in the First Act of *Twelfth Night*, *Or What You Will*, when Viola, disguised as a man, invokes maidenhead to gain an audience with the elusive and mourning Lady Olivia. Her intense, sexually charged rhetoric prevails, resulting in the lady allowing the messenger entry and subsequently barring all others from the room in a literal manifestation of her anatomical metaphor of sexual inclusion and exclusion. Gaining admittance secures Viola's intention to woo Olivia on behalf of Duke Orsino and also succeeds in garnering Olivia's unwanted love for Cesario, Viola's male alter ego. A play about romantic pursuit, its motivations, and its acceptance, *Twelfth Night* features two female main characters, both of ripe age and status for marriage and childbearing. Each woman is a lady in her own right, without, presumably, attachment to a male benefactor such as a father, husband, or brother, and yet the drama capitalizes on the tenuousness of their sexual futures. Olivia, whose mourning for her departed father and brother signals her openness and need for male authority to Orsino who seeks to wed her, at the same time cloisters her figuratively, barring his sexual advances. Viola,

similarly, after the perceived death of her twin brother, finds herself precariously open to society's caprice for unmarried women, but in assuming a male disguise for her own self-defense, she walls herself off from even ingenuous opportunities for marriage. Shakespeare frames romantic interests through the themes of inclusion/exclusion, or admittance/rejection, throughout the play. Olivia's drunk uncle, Sir Toby, justifies his uncouth behavior with a chivalrous toast to his niece – "I'll drink to her as long as there is a passage in my throat" (1.3.38-39). The introduction of the clown Feste by way of the lady's handmaid Maria – "Nay, either tell me where thou hast been, or I will not open my lips so wide as a bristle may enter" – denotes a preoccupation with what, if anything, is permitted into a body (1.5.1-2). These examples serve to contextualize the major romantic plot of the play with the ideas of openness and closedness alongside the early modern ideals of femininity.

To be a woman in early modern England, one could neither be too closed, nor too open. Although women of the period were characterized, as Gail Kern Paster has notably argued, as "leaky vessels" whose physiological qualities represented the more essential traits of moral incontinence, gossiping, and idleness, a "closed" woman was equally suspect for being barren, costive, or as in our female characters' cases, unattainable. Openness as it emerges in anatomical treatises of the female reproductive body, along with their various recipes, references bladder control, menstruation, and the personified womb's "eagerness" to conceive. Adversely, a cloistered or closed woman could either elicit the virginal and divine, or the secret and the threat to regeneration and community.[9] Maria's description of a bristle unable to enter harkens to Jane Sharp in *The midwives book* (1671) as she writes about the theoretical "mouth" of the womb that although in coition and childbirth lies open, after conception "is alwayes shut…so close that no

[9] Significantly, Jacques Guillemeau uses the phrase "Maiden cloister" as a euphemism for female anatomy. See Guillemeau, 109.

needle…can find entrance" (79). Elsewhere in early modern medical practices, as Gabriella Zuccolin and Helen King note, physicians used boar bristles to cause nosebleeds in women whose menses had stopped, further linking Maria's word choice metonymically with her womanly prerogative of reproductive gatekeeping. More than simply reinforcing the "closed" system of inclusion vs. exclusion, these texts show the continuum, or passage, from either extreme that exists within the parturient woman in respect to the physical orifices of the mouth and womb, interpolated by the fetus. Although *Twelfth Night*, much like many of Shakespeare's plays, does not offer a representation of a pregnant character, its central conflict deals with the visual, empirical, and epistemological ways a woman's reproductive status is ascertained, whether it be by her male counterpart, by her garb, such as mourning weeds or "masculine usurp'd attire," or by her appetite (5.1.246). Robert Appelbaum elaborates on the early modern conception of "appetitive function" with that of the stomach "merely the most obvious example of all the appetitive functions of the body and for that matter the soul" (231). Consistent with early modern medical and religious cultures, *Twelfth Night* conceives of appetitive function as illustrative of a person's moral constitution and as encoding sexuality in the characters. While Sharp and other early modern authorities on female anatomy draw a distinct connection between the roles of the reproductive organs (receptacle and childbearing) and those of the mouth (ingestion and speech), Shakespeare further links *all* appetitive functions — gustatory, socioeconomic, and sexual. In *Twelfth Night*'s dramatic representations of inclusion and exclusion, appetite and lack figure prominently in relation to questions of masculinity and femininity, particularly as femininity intersects with maternity.

Early modern midwifery treatises both upheld patriarchal ideals about women's function in society as receptacles of male seed and as propagators of the human race, and also expanded

the boundaries of what women could be by cataloguing their strange pregnancy cravings and the recipes to mitigate them. While ample research centers on the Aristotelian intake-discharge model of the body and its analogous implications on morality, civility, and selfhood, I occupy a gap where early modern understandings of parturient bodies approach what Peter Kanelos calls "the conjunction between desire and necessity," that is, eating (61). The pregnant woman evades this definition by problematizing both acceptable manifestations of desire and normative definitions of what is necessary. As both a biological stage and an epistemological state, pregnancy is unique in that it is untethered to social strictures and hegemonic regulation; it blurs the lines between open and closed, public and private, and divine and earthy. Through the recipes and dietary passages of midwifery treatises, we discover how early moderns grappled with temperance and moderation, hallmarks of good character, when it came to treating people who may have transgressive or unbounded appetites or fall sick because of their loathings and their lack. This chapter conjoins the research of early modern midwifery practices (Caroline Bicks and Audrey Eccles), early modern food studies, especially that which centers on appetite and transgressive eating (Robert Appelbaum, Tobias Döring, Peter Kanelos, Amy Tigner), and early modern gender studies (Gail Kern Paster and Caroline Bicks). With these diverse fields for a discursive landscape, I argue that the interplay of appetite, gustatory and sexual, in *Twelfth Night* converges with concurrent midwifery manual recipes in their paradoxical understanding of parturient appetite as both causative and symptomatic of transgressive eating behaviors. Further, I explore, through a double-reading of the word "vessel," how the play and midwifery texts accommodate women's appetites by offering agency in the face of implicit necessity and overt desire.

This chapter draws parallels between the recipes and evaluative comments of early modern obstetrical texts and *Twelfth Night*. I examine the treatment of parturient appetite across six gynecological and obstetrical treatises and from the manuscript transcriptions collection of the Folger Shakespeare Library. An elusive concept for pre- and early modern thought, the appetite signaled morality, linked as it was to a person's overall openness or closedness, loose behavior or contained; therefore, the treatment of an excessive, transgressive, or nonexistent appetite by these texts, whether they advised forgoing the particular food, allowing the patient a little, or giving alternatives, offers insight to the early modern notion of women as the "weaker vessels," both in body and soul. In particular, these texts' figuring of the condition of pica, or the eating disorder of craving nonfood objects, especially those with a chalky or burnt mouthfeel, works to reinscribe patriarchal gender assumptions. These treatises suggest the way a pregnant woman conducts herself – both by what she puts into her body, whether food, medicine, or nonfood substances, and also by what she produces, her presence in society as a new and indefinite entity and ultimately, her baby – is within the power of the woman, yet they paint the portrait of the always already pregnant woman as the passive object of her female anatomy and its presumed physical and spiritual frailty evidenced by appetite. Conversely, the appetite is a grounds for male characters to prove their masculinity by displaying their mastery of, or resistance to, their desires, and I read a philosophy of appetite through the men of *Twelfth Night* that is largely contingent on gender.

Pregnancy Cravings: The Un/Natural and the Non/Food

In each of their midwifery treatises, Jane Sharp (1671), William Salmon (1691), Gervase Markham (1615), Nicholas Culpeper (1652), Françios Mauriceau (1668), and Jacques Guillemeau (1609) all warn against pica, or the "depraued or immoderate appetite" wherein

women with child "desire to eat things…that are wholie contrarie to Nature, as eating *raw* or *burnt* flesh" (Guillemeau 35). Guillemeau catalogues the non/food items women may crave such as "Mans flesh, Ashes, Coles, and old Shoes, Chalke, Waxe, Nutshels, Morter, and Lime," and he also recounts how "the daughter of *M. Forges* died, with eating the plastering of walls" (35). Along with Samantha Katz Seal, who argues that the "physiological normativity of pica perhaps made it a less threatening system within which to verbalize shameful and transgressive desire," I also link pica with female sexual desire; however, I read the rhetoric of pica in these medical texts as an exaggerated conflation relegating *all* female appetite to the realm of sin (286). In a culture that privileged the "eyewitness" accounts of these experts as a way to validate their professional authority, providing strange and specific details undergirds the assumptions that the threat of this disease is real and that any overly open pregnant woman is susceptible to it. The afterwords for many of these warnings, on the other hand, make allowances for the prenatal dietary protocol, opening a path for women that may not have been considered "wholesome" in the strictest definition of early modern foodways, as well as complicate ideal eating in what Amy Tigner describes as the "delicate modulations between licit and illicit food" ("Eating with Eve"). Early moderns may not have considered human flesh, ashes, or plaster to be food *per se*, but the close relationship these non/food items have with actual food calls into question the categorizing of food into salutary and harmful, appropriate and taboo.

Each of the un/natural, non/food examples listed above finds an ordinary counterpart on the early modern table. The gastronomic association of char not only exists in early modern recipes that call for food to be placed directly onto coals, but it also would have been a daily, literal substance eaten in the form of toasted bread (a common yet peripheral food to which I return at the end of this chapter), roasted meats, or charcoal powdered and mixed into medicinal

concoctions.[10] A form of limestone, chalk or calcium carbonate came from the ground and was used in making liquor like in manuscript W.a.111, "for sour Ale."[11] Quicklime was used in salves to treat burns or itching scabs, such as in Thomas Sheppey's receipt for an unguent to which he attaches the evaluative addendum, "Thibourell the ffrench Chirurgeon saies there hath not been such a great secret left to posterity."[12] Wax would have been harvested from animal fats, beehives, or trees and nuts, and although it was primarily used for ointments and for sealing jars of preserves, wax was also used to make pills such as Catherine Bacon's suppository "For the inward piles," a common malady for the prenatal woman (see fig. 2).[13] Nutshells (nut kirnells), snail and clam shells, and pearls were all powdered for various recipes, and, while the food-link to mortar may have only been semiotic (signaling the mortar and pestle often used for grinding and powdering ingredients), all of these substances disrupt the notion of what *can* be eaten by detailing what *is* eaten, and if eaten, then food.[14]

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[10] For example, see Thomas Sheppey, "ffor the Iaundies both black and yellow, and for the Collick & stone," A book of choice receipts collected from several famous authors a great part in monasteries and often experimented as to a great number of them [manuscript], V.a.452, Folger Shakespeare Library, ca. 1675, 150.
[11] Anonymous, "for sour Ale," *Cookbook* [manuscript], W.a.111, Folger Shakespeare Library, ca. 1706, p. 201.
[12] Sheppey, "A most Incomparable Medicine," *A book of choice receipts collected from several famous authors a great part in monasteries and often experimented as to a great number of them* [manuscript], V.a.452, Folger Shakespeare Library, ca. 1675, 163.
[13] Bacon, Catherine, "For the inward piles or Emerods a Medicine," *Receipt book of Catherine Bacon* [manuscript], V.a.621, Folger Shakespeare Library, ca. 1680s-1739, 119.
[14] See "Mr. Altons Conduite for the stone," A book of receipts which was given me by several men for several causes, griefs and diseases . . . [manuscript], V.a.361-62, Folger Shakespeare Library, ca. 1625-1700, folio 22 recto, https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGER~3~3~13576~269892:A-book-of-receipts-which-was-given-%3Fsort%3Dcall_number%252Cmpsortorder1?qvq=q:nut%20shells;sort:call_number%2Cmpsortorder1;lc:FOLGER~3~3&mi=0&trs=8; See also above, Sheppey, "ffor the Iaundies both black and yellow, and for the Collick & stone."

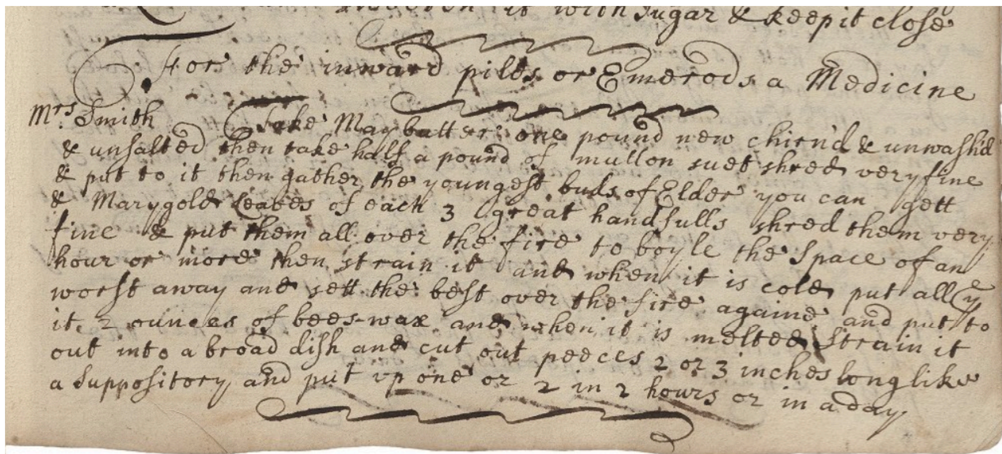
... with sugar & keep it close
For the inward piles or Emerods a Medicine
Mrs Smith Take May butter one pound new chirnd & unwashd
& unsalted then take half a pound of mutton suet shred very fine
& put to it then gather the youngest buds of Elder you can gett
& Marygold leaves of each 3 great handfulls shred them very
fine & put them all over the fire to boyle the space of an
hour or more then strain it and when it is cold put all ye
worst away and sett the best over the fire againe and put to
it 2 ounces of bees-wax and when it is melted strain it
out into a broad dish and cut out peeces 2 or 3 inches long like
a suppository and put up one or 2 in 2 hours or in a day

Fig. 2

Bacon, Catherine. "For the inward piles or Emerods a Medicine." *Receipt book of Catherine Bacon* [manuscript], ca. 1680s-1739, *Folger Manuscript Transcriptions Collection*, 119. https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGER~3~3~18460~281129:Receipt-book-of-Catherine-Bacon--ma?qvq=q:catherine%20bacon%20for%20the%20emerods&mi=1&trs=3.

Beyond these more commonplace examples of non/food substances, obstetrical texts also attest to the peculiar parturient appetite for human flesh.[15] Sharp in particular muses about women who "longed to bite off a piece of their Husbands Buttocks" (103). While descriptions of pica such as these are troubling, if a bit silly, to modern readers, the prevalence of corpse medicine during this time made cannibalism a feasible foodway. For the purposes of his argument, Richard Sugg defines cannibalism as the "consumption by mouth of those body parts or fluids which a donor cannot very easily do without" (25). He explores the many ways early moderns cannibalized each other, including Pope Innocent VIII, "The Vampire Pope," who drank the blood of three boys as they and he both died, and who also likely consumed breastmilk straight from the source in the days before his death; and Charles II (1630-1685) who powdered human skulls for medicinal use in his personal laboratory. Folger manuscript recipe V.a.680 "To

[15] For a discussion of cannibalism in early modern reality and imagination, see Richard Sugg, *Mummies, Cannibals and Vampires: The History of Corpse Medicine from the Renaissance to the Victorians* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011). See also Gitanjali G. Shahani, "Cannibal Foods: 'Powdered Wife' and Other Tales of English Cannibalism," *Tasting Difference: Food, Race, and Cultural Encounters in Early Modern Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2020), 135-62.

make Catchup" calls for "18 Bottles of brown mummy" mixed with strong beer, salt, pepper, and garlic (56). Sugg also enumerates the medicinal and magical uses for, as well as the commodification of, mummia in early modern Europe, including as a plaster for postnatal prolapse in *Aristotle's experienced midwife*, a topic covered in greater detail in the final chapter.[16] Elsewhere mummia was used to staunch bleeding and relieve bruising, even specifically that of sore breasts, presumably of nursing mothers. Powdered skull, skull moss, and human "secundine," or placenta, were among ingredients used to treat convulsions.[17] These recipes' use of the taboo stuff of human bodies, perhaps more so than other un/natural ingredients, exhibits the early modern blurring of what (and for whom, from where, and how much) counts as food, especially when it comes to pregnant embodiment, the origin of humanity.

"Suffering Her a Little": Food Allowances with Warning Labels

Midwifery treatises convey a fragile balance between enticing the appetites of parturient women suffering from morning sickness, stifling the depraved appetites of pica, and managing wayward desires by curbing them with small portions or innocuous alternatives. As we know, many expecting women "loath and abhorre good meats," especially near the beginning of their term, so obstetrical texts instruct midwives and expectant mothers to "set an edge (as it were) on their appetite, varying their meats in as many fashions as may be possible, thereby to make them more pleasing and desirable," even going so far as to prescribe "suffer[ing] them a little, and let[ting] them have their longings, for feare least it should prove worse with them" (Guillemeau 37; 21). In other places, texts concede that women may or may not experience the ill effects of indulging in their chalky or burnt cravings. On the one hand, ingredients with a chalky mouthfeel

[16] Salmon, 155.
[17] See "For Convulsion fitts," *A book of receipts which was given me by several men for several causes, griefs and diseases* . . . [manuscript], V.a.361-62, Folger Shakespeare Library, ca. 1625-1700, folio 161 recto.

contain high levels of calcium, an essential nutrient that women require in greater quantities than men, and especially when they are with child, and charcoal has toxin-absorbing properties that can at the very least settle an upset digestive tract. On the other hand, as in the ill-fated example of M. Forge's daughter, eating the walls could kill you. Once again, the texts make allowances for the prenatal diet that disrupt the conception of pregnancy as a stagnant state and blur the boundary between licit and illicit foods, opening a new world to pregnant women that resists the call of temperance in "respect of persons, place, [or] time" (*Twelfth Night* 2.3.91).

While these allowances made possible the inclusion of pregnant women in the fold of proper femininity, they also served as rejoinders maintaining the warning against excess in both quantity and kind. That expecting women were to "take heed of surfeiting or excess" was a feature of most midwifery texts, and many catalogued examples of pregnancy and childbirth going horribly wrong because of a woman's appetite for food or nonfood objects, even if she never acted upon them. *Aristotle's experienced midwife* ominously warns the early modern woman, "Evil to them that evil think."[18] Although confounding to modern readers, the scare tactic is clear: "their children haue carried the marks of some of the things they so earnestly desired and longed after" (21). Sharp contends that "Imagination" at the time of copulation "ofttimes also produceth Monstrous births, when women look too much on strange objects," whether it be because she has an overexcited appetite for hare and her baby is born with a harelip, or because she "lookt on a Black-more" and "brought forth a child like to a Black-more" (111; 118). Beyond their "othering" implications of a link between a transgressive interior thought-life (imagination) and undesired physical realities, these passages also suggest that both

[18] Salmon, 2.

appetite for food and sexual desire share the same causative root that may perhaps be incited by the state of pregnancy. In addition, in many medical texts the solution to pica and rebellious sexual desire was food or sex, so that, as Jennifer Evans writes, women were "damned if they did, and damned if they didn't" ("A taste for husbands'…").

Recipes mitigate the cautionary tales of inordinate eating in these treatises. As a more practical than rhetorical aid to the condition of pregnancy, the dialogic of anecdotal and empirical evidence interspersed with recipes is a way for texts such as *The midwives book* to counter the perceived threat of pregnant women crossing acceptable boundaries of eating. For example, in Sharp's manual, she warns that "too much eating and drinking will stifle [the child]," as well as "all immoderate…passions, desires, and longings"; the ensuing page directs the woman to drink wine boiled with the mother of thyme, and if "the womb be too windy [dry], eat ten Juniper berries every morning" (175-76). Sharp adds that the "Matrix" is dry "by [the woman's] great desire of copulation," a fact she seems to regard as almost too obvious to be worth mentioning (176). Again, the excessive appetite for food is linked with excessive sexual appetite, and the remedy is regulated food: she must take the acceptable food (Juniper berries) in an acceptable amount (ten, once daily). A woman may temper sexual appetite, as opposed to physical hunger or thirst, with "cooling drinks, and emulsions made of barley-water, blanched Almonds, white poppy seeds, Cucumbers, Citrons, Melons, and Gourds, and to drink frequently of this" (176). As if to emphasize desire as a psychosomatic function that could span the body from mouth, to stomach, to matrix, Sharp subsequently lumps prayer together with "good order of the body" consisting in "seasonable moderate eating and drinking of wholsome meats and drinks" (see fig. 3).

Prayer is then the chief remedy of their barrenneſs, not neglecting ſuch natural means, to further conception and to remove impediments that God hath appointed, and thoſe means are chiefly, either by a well ordering of the body and mind, or elſe when need requires by taking of Phyſick. The good order of the body conſiſts in ſeaſonable moderate eating and drinking of wholſome meats and drinks, moderate exerciſe, for idleneſs is a great enemy to conception, and that may be

Fig. 3

Sharp, Jane. "Prayer is then the chief remedy." *The Midwives Book*, 1671, 178. ProQuest, https://login.ezproxy.uta.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/books/midwives-book-whole-art-midwifry-discovered/docview/2240903191/se-2?accountid=7117.

She includes another admonishment for moderation that comes in the middle of a passage of ingredients:

> …Holyhocks in fair spring water, and with Honey, or Sugar enough to sweeten it, and add half a spoonful of white salt, for a Glister. Let her eat meats and drink such things as nourish well, but *take heed of surfeiting or excess*, and let her keep her body loose, roasted Apples eat with Sugar in the morning will do it…(my emphasis).[19]

If Sharp's recipe is regulatory, it is also permissive, a tone of care for the whole person implicit in the modifier of "fair spring" for the mother's water, the appeal of a multipurpose food that could also serve as a saline "Glister," or enema, and the incorporation of several sweeteners – honey, sugar to taste, and roasted apples with, again, more sugar. Many writers like Gilly Lehmann have pointed out the increasing prevalence of sugar in recipes of the period, and its use here, among other details, communicates a deeper interest in the physical as well as psychic wellbeing of the prenatal woman that allays the societal opposition to her having an appetite.[20]

[19] Sharp, 182.
[20] Lehmann, "Reading recipe books and culinary history: opening a new field," *Reading and Writing Recipe Books, 1550-1800*, edited by Michelle DiMeo and Sara Pennell (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2013), 93-113.

Aristotle's author admits "that it is very difficult to prescribe an exact diet" for women with "so great loathings and so many different longings," yet recipes for an acceptable prenatal diet abound (31). After warning women to "take care of excess" and her caretakers not to "present any -age [sic] or unwholesome thing to her, not so much as name it, lest she should desire it, and not be able to get it," the author presents salubrious and sanctioned foods and recipes:

> If she happens to desire clay, chalk, or coals, (as many women with child do) give her beans boiled with sugar; and if she happens to long for anything which she can't obtain, let her presently drink a large draught of pure cold water.[21]

The author goes farther than making an allowance for her cravings with a simple and practical solution in the form of a non-medicinal recipe (boiled beans with sugar), but he also makes allowances for any mother experiencing the eating disorder of pica ("If she happens…" and "as many…do"). In the period of humoral medicine during which a concoction, effective or not, to cure most any ailment could be found in receipt books, this writer offers "pure cold water" as a last-ditch panacea if the woman cannot scratch the itch of her particular craving. As a remedy for the depraved appetite both gustatory and sexual, the prenatal protocol is food and drink.

To say nothing of death of the mother and monstrous birth outcomes, Sharp cites another discouragement to immoderate eating: miscarriage. To "exceed in the things not natural as Philosophers call eating and drinking, fullness, emptiness…and too great intention of the mind" was for the early modern parturient mother to threaten the life of the child within her. Including ladies of the court, citizens' wives, and (even) country women as equally at risk for "unnatural and unreasonable desires" like eating sand and dirt, Sharp seems to make the case that pica is the great equalizer of pregnant women of every class and caliber (178). That women of the gentry

[21] Salmon, 34.

commonly had more difficult labors than those of country women because of their lack of physical exercise and unwarranted amounts of bedrest was well known; however, the inclusion of citizens' wives in Sharp's analysis points to an implicit cultural assumption about the quality of a person that could be told by their place and participation in the social hierarchy beyond the class into which they were born, but even more so was evinced by the way they mastered their childbearing bodies.[22]

Male-Coded Appetite in *Twelfth Night*

The understanding of appetite as a gendered affliction treated under different schools of medicine dependent on the patient's sex is apparent in the literature of the era. As has long been a topic of critical discourse, Shakespeare regards appetite as a stage for playing out the tensions between basic human needs and more complex existential desires, and his male and female characters, I argue, come to the table differently. Scholars have written extensively about hungry characters such as Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Prince Hal in *2 Henry IV*, and Sir Toby in *Twelfth Night*.[23] Of the male-focused discourse, Sir Toby is a favorite, both as a figurehead of unbounded appetite in critical discussion, and as the loveable miscreant Shakespeare's audiences came to expect from his plays. For Toby, life lies in unrestrained "eating and drinking" (surfeiting), and his sense of alimentary pleasure rebuffs Olivia's chaste and obsessive mourning of the deaths of her father and brother, even her "addiction" to melancholy (2.3.12; 2.5.196). In the scene of Viola and Olivia's first encounter with which I

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[22] See Audrey Eccles, *Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Tudor and Stuart England*, Routlege, 1982, p. 62.

[23] For more about these characters' appetites, see David B. Goldstein and Amy L. Tigner, eds., *Culinary Shakespeare: Staging Food and Drink in Early Modern England* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 2016); See also Simon Callow, "The Fat Man in History," *The Independent*, London, 1998; See also Robert Appelbaum, "Belch's Hiccup," *Aguecheek's Beef, Belch's Hiccup, and Other Gastronomic Interjections: Literature, Culture, and Food among the Early Moderns* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

began this chapter, Sir Toby announces Cesario's arrival with the infamous interjection that signals his intemperance.

> OLIVIA: What is at the gate, cousin?
> SIR TOBY: A gentleman.
> OLIVIA: A gentleman? What gentleman?
> SIR TOBY: 'Tis a gentleman here – [*Belches*.] A plague o' these pickle-herring! How now, sot? (1.5.117-18)

In the Arden Shakespeare, the belch stands in as a sort of caesura, a breaking off not only of the banter about gentlemen, but of the idea itself of what it means to be a gentleman. Toby's binging on pickle-herring to the point of passing wind in some form or other would have been understood by early modern audiences, as Appelbaum argues, as both transgressive of social norms and as characterizing him as an "everyman" who partook in the pub food of the working class and was unthreatened by the reminders of his own earthy and masculine body.

Although "[m]anaging the appetite…was as fundamental to the conduct of civil society as putting food on the table, or for that matter managing its cousin, sexual desire," such a management was also intricately tied to gender (Appelbaum 201). Toby's belch is not only an interjection that transgresses both the boundaries of speech and the other invisible rules of civility and moral integrity, but also a stereotypically manly sound that alerts the audience to Toby's immunity to the social contracts of courtly behavior, especially those which women could not break. Toby faces no serious consequences for his uncouth behavior: he convinces his friend Andrew Aguecheek to court his niece so that he can ensure his financial stability and continue squandering time and money together with Toby. Presumably without Church sanctioning, he marries Maria who is beneath him in station; moreover, he provokes an anticlimactic swordfight between Andrew and Viola for mere entertainment and to scavenge their belongings if they die. In all these things he proves himself to be an insatiable reveler, the

paragon of unaffected masculinity. Alternately, Malvolio serves as a foil to Toby when he transgresses the rules of polite society by dressing in yellow stockings and cross-garters to impress Olivia, his superior in station. His flamboyant dress, along with his exuberant smiling, offends the lady, who, rather than taking him as a legitimate suitor like the lovesick Orsino, thinks him mad. Thus, despite their being embedded in a play of cross-dressing and cross-gartering, Toby's transgressive eating and drinking never call into question his masculinity.

To have an appetite is to be manly – although appetite already connotes a lack, a "true" man not only desires, but also has the power to either suppress or satisfy that desire. Malvolio fails to prove his masculinity when he cannot secure Olivia, the object of his appetite, which first had to be aroused by Maria's practical joke. Juxtaposed to Toby's ongoing lust for and association with pickle-herring, Malvolio is "the trout that must be caught with tickling" (2.5.21-22). Unlike Toby's seeking out personal pleasure through food and the communal debauchery of Carnival, Malvolio's appetite is for a new order – becoming "Count Malvolio" and instating a Puritan value system – even as he reinscribes outdated, patriarchal, and courtly ideals by condemning the delinquency of Toby and Andrew.[24] For Malvolio, a balanced society begins with a "respect of place, persons, [and] time" (2.3.91). When she forges a love letter by her mistress, Lady Olivia, and places it in Malvolio's path, Maria exploits this austere sense of courtesy in him, as the courtly practice of letter writing and receiving would have also been part of his ideology. The letter's very purpose being to disrupt social order makes it so that language, the foundation of society, now becomes that which causes Malvolio to reimagine the world by appetitive affect, painting him a madman.

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[24] For more about pickle-herring as an instrument for remembering outlawed Catholic practices at the time, as well as for reimagining new worlds through performance, see Tobias Döring, "Feasting and Forgetting: Sir Toby's Pickle Herring and the Lure of Lethe," *Culinary Shakespeare: Staging Food and Drink in Early Modern England*, edited by David B. Goldstein and Amy L. Tigner (Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 2016), 157-77.

In the same subversive way, a surface reading of Maria's one-liner may puzzle modern readers – the placement of "tickling" seems an odd choice for an angling metaphor – but on the semantic level, the fishing image is rife with appetite in its cultural, alimentary, and ecological connotations. The play on words would have been apparent to early modern ears: the word "trout" sounds like and is a letter removed from "trouth," which was a variant of trout meaning truth or creed ("trout, n^1").[25] The term "troth-plight" was a solemn promise, especially of marriage, and occurs in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* to describe Florizel and Perdita's marital status: "This is your son-in-law / And son unto the king, whom, heavens directing, / Is troth-plight to your daughter" (5.3.149-51).[26] In some places the single word "troth" carried the same meaning; for example, in 1578 Francisco Lopez de Gómara used the term to refer to a marriage engagement, describing a woman who "demaunded him as hir husband by faith and troth of hand" (7). The linguistic sleight works both to admonish Malvolio's moral superiority and to ridicule his gullibility to believe Olivia wished to marry him.

In the culinary mode, trout appears in early modern recipes differently than herring. Early moderns found ways to prepare and preserve herring without actually cooking it, but by pickling, salting, and smoking. Employing Lévi-Strauss's idea of the "raw," the "cooked," and the "rotten" in terms of cultural taint, Appelbaum argues that herring transcended strict cultural definitions in more ways than in its cookery. A Lenten food, herring could be eaten lavishly in times of religious fasting. Considered wholesome for the body, it was also cheap to obtain in

[25] William Sayers, "Trusty trout, humble trout, old trout: a curious kettle," *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, vol. 8, iss. 3 (2009), https://go-gale-com.ezproxy.uta.edu/ps/i.do?p=AONE&u=txshracd2597&id=GALE%7CA351949489&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon&aty=ip.

[26] The other occurrence of "troth-plight" in *The Winter's Tale* communicates the interest of sexual purity at the time of marriage vows: "If thou wilt confess, / Or else be impudently negative, / To have nor eyes nor ears nor thought, then say / My wife's a hobby-horse, deserves a name / As rank as any flax-wench that puts to / Before her troth-plight: say't and justify't" (1.2.273-78).

abundance, making it a choice protein for rich and poor alike, a symbol of both capitalistic enterprise and economic prudence, and ideal noshing for a healthy diet and immoderate snacking. Conversely, cooking Malvolio's trout resembles that of other meat and fish main courses – boiling or baking it in white wine and vinegar. Perhaps because it was a freshwater fish unlike its cousin, herring, which spent most of their lifespan in the ocean, early moderns may have associated trout as a more unclean animal in need of fastidious cooking. As a verb, "to trout" meant to curdle or coagulate, probably in reference to the collagen that collects on the skin when the fish reaches a certain internal temperature. While Toby's herring subsides somewhere in the middle of raw and cooked, Malvolio's trout teeters from cooked to congealed, a small step away from rotten. Culturally speaking, Toby's raucous behavior on the individual level, far from tainting him socially, situated him as a public figure who shared the appetites and interests of the "common man." Malvolio, on the other hand, maintained such high personal standards as to separate him from, and even oppose him to, true civility. Thus, Maria's words tell a story of drawing out the hypocritical substance from behind Malvolio's skin of puritanism in order to gel differing philosophies into balance. Even if Malvolio's misfortune turns out to be the exception of the exemplary male's sexual venture, it still proves the rule that male appetite is the reproductive norm, and female, the aberration.

Although the trout catches the reader's attention, it is the tickling that holds the line taut. At Shakespeare's time, to tickle meant "to have an uneasy or impatient desire," specifically in the context of the humors or blood ("tickle, v[1]"). To tickle a trout would mean to bait it, but for the native European brown trout, the baiting itself is the prize. Brown trout, even more so than their rainbow cousins that eat mainly mayflies, prefer to feast cannibalistically on other fish as well as on small mammals like mice that skirt the riverbeds, thus transgressing taxonomic class

(*reptilia-mammalia*) and even their natural habitat to feed. When fishing for a brown trout, the angler must do more than rest the bait in the water; the trout desire the challenge, and the faster the chase, the stronger the appetite. According to early modern angling manuals, tickling was also the more specialized technique of catching trout "by encompassing them with a net, and men go into the water, tickle them on the belly, and so get them ashoar; and they must not perceive the net before they are in shallow water" (Pococke 252). Tickling thus conducts, counterintuitively, a paralyzing effect, in which the fish swims to its death of its own volition. In reference to appetite, death was always at stake for the early modern, whether by starvation or by falling prey to depravity and destitution through one's desires. Moreover, the brown trout has a yellow underside, and fishing manuals of the period also instruct anglers to tie their flies and fish hooks for trout with yellow silks (*Bayerische* 149). English audiences may have associated Malvolio's stockings not only with fishing, but also with the jaundice that comes from an ailing liver, or from blood that has been over-excited or curdled with alcohol. We can rethink Malvolio's judgmental attitude toward Toby and Andrew as the hypocrisy of one who partakes of his unbounded appetites under false, self-righteous rationalizations. Further, we can now think of *most* of his words as the narcissistic feedback loop of untruths: "every reason excites to this, that my lady loves me" (2.5.159-60). His "reason" is actually madness, and what really tickles his fancy is excitement itself, the uninterrogated birthright of masculinity.

Returning to Viola's arrival and the ado about allowing her entry, gender politics are already at play: where Sir Toby confirms Viola's masculinity by declaring there to be a gentleman at the door, Malvolio grapples with her gender through the "rhetorical ornament," as Caroline Bicks would have it, of figurative language (3). Again, Shakespeare deploys images of

fish and food to discuss the interplay of gender and sexuality. Malvolio relates to Olivia concerning her caller,

> Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for a boy: as a squash is before ’tis a peascod, or a codling when ’tis almost an apple. ’Tis with him in standing water, between boy and man. (1.5.153-56)

The terms *peascod* and *codling* may confound modern ears, but for early moderns, the images these words evoked would have been manifold. First, the thought of pickle-herring still fresh from Toby’s mouth a few lines before, the likening of Viola to a young cod, or a *codling* per this period, is prominent. However, the word choice here is to depict a young fruit, in particular a squash (peascod) and an apple (codling). Malvolio’s waffling is part of the comedy; he struggles to say whether the person at the door is a man or a boy, but the irony is that the audience knows Viola is neither. He waxes poetically about the lifecycles of squashes and apples, ruminating on which stage comes first, seedling or fruit. The syntax of line 154 subverts the inclination to preface a fully grown, harvestable, and edible part of a plant with its seeds when they might equally find their end as harvest/food. These familiar images make easy fodder for his self-important ramblings, but I would argue Shakespeare intentionally calls forth differences in the ways male and female characters experience and are affected by desire.

For Malvolio, the uncertainty of manhood comes to a head in the concluding reflection of maternity: “He is very well-favoured, and he speaks very shrewishly. One would think his mother’s milk were scarce out of him” (1.5.156-58). While the former sentence depicts a comely and eloquent gentleman, the latter contradicts this not only by emphasizing immaturity, but also by citing mother’s milk. It is not a generic image of childhood invoked, but the babe-in-arms. Thus, as Bicks writes, the maternal woman functions as a mirror for manhood even as the speaker seeks to paint a portrait of the man. This brings us back to the cod, a common referent

for the testicles in this era. In early modern anatomical treatises, the testicles witnessed to maleness, the Latin word *teste* meaning "testify, or witness."[27] Interestingly, however, in the one-sex theory of the body touted by early modern experts, women were thought to mirror men, in that the reproductive organs found their apples-to-apples counterparts in the other. Women's ovaries were called testicles and stones, and women were believed to produce seed as men did. Bicks persuasively posits that Sharp, far from the stratagem of her male contemporaries, writes about the female body as the standard frame of reference for understanding reproduction instead of as a mode for a man's "ability to breed and take his place as a patriarchal figurehead" (11). Rather than glossing over a man's anatomy as the norm, as many male authorities did, Sharp describes the cod as a purse, an image typically reserved for the womb because of its supposed ability, as we saw earlier, to "be both dilated and shut together" (Culpeper 31). Men's bodies, both Sharp and Shakespeare seem to say, can be turned into euphemisms as readily as women's.

Although Malvolio's demise indicates a specific lack in his masculinity, it is the inability to fulfill appetite, not the appetite itself, which jeopardizes his manhood. The major plot of *Twelfth Night* centers on this predicament. Duke Orsino famously opens the play: "If music be the food of love, play on, / Give me excess of it, that surfeiting, / The appetite may sicken and so die" (1.1.1-3). These first three lines contain a world of ideas about food, love, excess, surfeiting, appetite, sickening, and death – some of them unequivocal, some of them seemingly oppositional, such as the paradox that appetite's antidote is sickening with excess. In his encompassing analysis of this passage, David Schalkwyk reads Orsino's feeding on music as, more than simply a figurative conceit, the search for an element to "assuage his famished

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[27] Salmon, 4.

passion" in order to affect his "bodily organs via imagination" ("Music, food…" 82; 81). The vision of binging on that which makes one sick problematizes the benefit of having an appetite in the first place. The power of the sentence resides in the last word and its preoccupation with dying that questions of appetite bring up. To hunger for food is to keep one alive; it is the most basic urge of our survival instincts. Thus, an appetite that goes unfulfilled may end in death, and so too will the appetite itself then die. Yet, a depraved or out-of-control appetite is just as likely to send someone to the grave, or in a related sense, the sexual appetite satiated ends in a similar crescendo, "to die" the early modern shorthand for orgasm. Orsino dwells on these questions in the proceeding lines as he commands the repeated strain of music to cease because it has lost its sweetness – "Enough, no more" (1.1.7). He seems to refute the claim characters elsewhere in Shakespeare's oeuvre would make that his "increase of appetite had grown / By what it fed on" (*Hamlet* 1.2.144-5). Rather, he argues he must exceed the limits of normative eating to quiet his appetite. His thoughts turn to Olivia, the object of his romantic desire, and his inability to secure her hand in marriage, which threatens his masculinity.

One could argue Orsino's appetite for Olivia, much like that of the European brown trout, is stoked by the impossibility of courting her while she is in mourning. A static character who adds very little action to the play, Orsino provides the thematic backdrop of the lovesick male, but this first passage adds the characterization that his desire for Olivia is an extension of his appetite for music, food, and hunting – his appetite for life. Thirst for life inevitably coalesces with thoughts of death, and Orsino spurns this dark turn by critiquing love as fleeting fancy calling up for the first of many times the image of the sea that drowns all like a gaping vacuum. He chastises Olivia for mourning her brother and father for longer than he believes she ought, but it is also her depth of emotion to grieve so excessively that excites him.

How will she love, when the rich golden shaft
Hath kill'd the flock of all affections else
That live in her; when liver, brain, and heart,
These sovereign thrones, are all supplied, and fill'd
Her sweet perfections with one self king!" (1.1.35-39)

Orsino's appetite is both thwarted and quickened by Olivia's placing his fervor in contempt. Sick with desire, he thrills at the pursuit of Olivia in and of itself; at the same time, he pines for her capacious (read appetitive) temperament to be turned fully toward him.

Much like Malvolio's circular reasoning of seedling/fruit and boy/man, Orsino seeks the definitive cause of love. Whether appetite leads to surfeiting or surfeiting leads to appetite, Orsino is unequipped to answer; either way, his fascination with Olivia pushes him precariously toward madness, as he recalls how the first time he saw her, he envisioned himself turned into a hart, incessantly pursued by the hounds of his passions. He claims to want to fulfill (end) his desire by marrying Olivia, yet his words connote both a sexual and a deadly interpretation. The "rich golden shaft," while a hunting metaphor, is of particular interest in the context of romantic pursuit and of early modern anatomical hang-ups. Orsino's attendant, Valentine (a peculiar name that alludes, of course, to the Roman god Cupid as well as to the Catholic Saint Valentine who performed marriages "off-stage," as it were), portrays Olivia as a cloistress, or a nun, who cries salty tears ("eye-offending brine") all day long (1.1.30). The suggestion that she is at once closed off and "leaky" indicates that she will give Orsino a good hunt but will also be susceptible to his arrow when the time comes. The woman is fixed in the position of prey, though she is temporarily allowed the male-sanctioned agency of closeting herself. Robin Le Poidevin offers a philosophical rationale for the *Twelfth Night* characters' "complex confusions," or inconsistent behaviors such as abandoning their epistemological statuses over "misidentifications" of romantic interest (474; 77). Though a comic deployment, the absurdity of Olivia allowing herself

to break her seven years' vow of mourning for the young man she believes Viola to be at once demonstrates the fluidity of mourning and her discriminatory powers, as well as presents yet another example of a woman character's actions being merely *reactions* to a man's. Mourning was a particularly feminine and effeminizing art, and even though Olivia manipulates the socially acceptable timeframe for antisocial behavior, Orsino and his household make it clear that her sadness, or her desire for that which was lost and that which she cannot fulfill on her own, must be, and already is, under their jurisdiction. The men use her desire as justification for their own, but they also regulate it according to their patriarchal and chauvinistic objectives, betraying the assumption that female appetite was a mirror to male appetite, though being either too gaping or too retentive, a distortion.

Regulating Female Anatomy to Regulate Female Spirituality

Anatomical treatises of the early modern era likewise paint women as either closed or open to appetite as well as to male sexual targeting. Under the assumption of women as being either cloistered or leaky, *Aristotle's experienced midwife* gives contradictory analyses of female anatomy in relation to certain moral propensities and failings (see fig. 4).

very, the ſhorter her womb muſt be extended. As
to the action by which this inward orifice of the womb
is opened and ſhut, it is purely nature: for were it
otherwiſe, there would not be ſo many baſtards be-
gotten as there are; nor would many married wo-
men have ſo many children, were it at their own
choice, but they would hinder conception, though
they would be willing enough to uſe copulation;
for nature has attended that action with ſomething
ſo pleaſing and delightful, that they are willing to
indulge themſelves in the uſe thereof, notwithſtand-
ing the pains they afterwards indure, and the ha-
zard of their lives that often follows it: and this

Fig. 4

Salmon, William. "*Aristotle's complete and experienced midwife*," 14th ed., 14. 1782. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0108091058/ECCO?u=txshracd2597&sid=bookmark-ECCO&xid=ba35b6b5&pg=19.

The writer draws an implicit connection between the womb's openness and closedness and sexual immorality, both conceding that married women do not desire to have so many children and arguing that women naturally enjoy copulation and desire pregnancy. Pointing to the "Great DIRECTOR and AUTHOR" as a reason for women's sexual appetite, the writer places the blame of adultery on women and their divine appointment of reproduction by citing its empirically verifiable evidence: illegitimate pregnancies and children (14). For this authority on women's bodies, God has made the womb, not its male counterpart, the active agent of sex by its "magnetic virtue," which "draws the seed to it," or simply put, by its appetite (14). Just as for Sir Toby the passage of the throat is a euphemism for gustatory appetite, the passage of the womb for these writers is the psychosomatic link to female sexual appetite as well as the male imagining of a woman's nonacceptance of his seed.

Contrary to his relegation of lust, fornication, and "unavoidable pains" to the hungering womb, *Aristotle's* author defines female anatomy, especially in its deformed and lacking presentations, in relation to the standard of a male's (31). While he proclaims the female opening is a whopping eight inches long to accommodate a man's yard, an elongated clitoris or labia presumes a transgressive sexual appetite reserved only for men.[28] His discussion of the hymen, both broken and intact, reflects the concurrent cultural captivation with the physiologically insignificant part and its religious signification of purity.[29] In the same way, an older woman's internal membranes supposedly harden, becoming "grisly" (or "horrible or terrible to behold; causing such feelings as are associated with thoughts of death") because of too much sex

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[28] Ibid., 13.
[29] Ibid., 11.

("grisly, adj."). Female sexual pleasure both compares to and contrasts with men's, but only as it reifies the Eve narrative, in which a woman's "voluptuous itch" brought about the downfall of humanity (Salmon 27).

It is no surprise, then, when the text shifts from anatomy to "How a Woman ought to Order herself after Conception" with its rules and recipes to regulate a woman's appetites (30). For example, she ought to "observe a good diet, suitable to her temperament, custom, condition, and quality" (31). Unlike Orsino's anticipated and isolated surfeit as a way to fix the appetite, this author recommends taming a woman's longings and loathings by letting her "eat a little and often" (32). Included in his list of satisfactory foods are tender cuts of meat and fowl, but nothing too "hot seasoned, especially pies" (32). James Alsop points out that the "funeral baked meats," or meat pies that were baked in "coffins" made to be shelf-stable for the long hours of a postmortem vigil, in *Hamlet* signaled death and life as well as a grappling of licit and illicit eating for early modern audiences.[30] For the early modern prenatal woman, meat pies would have literally been a risk to the life of her baby, but no more a risk for causing sickness than for any person, as with all "off-limits" foods during pregnancy. Additionally, I would argue, midwives and practitioners saw these baked pies as an excessive food, not part of a diet that most women were accustomed to prior to conception, which was an important tenant of salubrious eating for childbearing women. The familiar is better than the unknown, and we still see this advice for pregnant women today, though perhaps without the morally entrenched obligation of staving off the appetite.

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[30] James Alsop, "'Funeral Baked Meats': Cannibalism and Corpse Medicine in *Hamlet*," *Exchanges: The Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, vol. 7, iss. 2 (2020), 153-68; See also Appelbaum, "Aguecheek's Beef, Hamlet's Baked Meat," *Aguecheek's Beef, Belch's Hiccup, and Other Gastronomic Interjections: Literature, Culture, and Food among the Early Moderns* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 15-27.

Related to moderation and repentance, purgation, which I will discuss at greater length in chapter two, was another tenant of prenatal care and eating, even when it came to curbing the appetite. The *experienced midwife* instructed women to take their broth with purgative herbs like sorrel, lettuce, succory, and burrage, which were thought to purify the blood.[31] In Orsino's estimation of Lady Olivia, he claimed, "O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first, / Methought she purg'd the air of pestilence" (1.1.19-20). His choice of words elicits warnings about the plague common to Shakespeare's London. F.P. Wilson writes about the collective fears during this period, especially those related to bad air, that perhaps seem less absurd in the post-Covid world than they would have in previous modern-age decades: For the early modern, plague "sent out its poison into the air as the violet its odors" (5). According to popular hearsay, the cause of pestilence could have been attributed to less substantiated but equally airy claims of "Flaming swords, hearses, coffins…seen flying through the air," as well as ghosts, angels, and even the vengeful arrow of God (3). In the instance of perfumery or medicine, at least in the early modern consciousness, displacing malevolent airs is an essential, material, and even forceful practice of preservation. Midwifery and medical practices tied purging with the intake-discharge theory of anatomy and physiology; a body was naught more than a vessel through which the humors and spirits flowed, and therefore openings and closings were of highest concern. Physicians used aromatics like garlic and licorice for the "purging and opening" of passages; and the overall purposes of "opening the breast," "enlargeing of the breath," and to "Comfort all spirituall partes of a man."[32] Onion, "the best fortification against the plague," and fumigations of vinegar were

[31] Salmon, 32.
[32] John De Feckenham, *This book of sovereign medicines*…, Folger manuscript V.b.129, pp. 40-41, Folger Shakespeare Library, ca. 1600, https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGER~3~3~19312~282096:This-book-of-sovereign-medicines-ag?qvq=q:for%20a%20cough&mi=2&trs=277.

also important food-based solutions for purging both the body as well as the air (Wilson 9). While for men domination of the appetite meant obtaining that which one desired or suppressing it altogether, for women, as we see in midwifery treatises and early modern recipes, treatment of the appetite entailed the spiritually linked disciplines of moderation, repentance, and purgation.

Female Greensickness: A Problem of Retention

Meanwhile, Orsino's lovesickness is the thorn in his flesh that keeps him from realizing the fullness of his masculinity. Also called "love fever," "the virgin's disease," or simply "dropsies," greensickness was thought to be "an obstruction in the womb-vessels of young females, under or about the time of their courses beginning to flow" (Culpeper 217). Greensickness presented as, among other symptoms, nausea "at the sight of proper food," and comparable to pica, "an unnatural desire of feeding on such things as are accounted hurtful, and unfit for nourishment" (217). Sufferers experienced the "fancy beyond reason" as Sharp would fashion it, intense longings for "chalk, coals, stones, clay, tobacco-pipes, and other things of like unwholesome nature" (89; Culpeper 217). While midwifery treatises almost never cited a cause for pica, or the "depraued appetite," other than the state of being pregnant or the weakness of the female temperance, professionals most often chalked greensickness up to pining, an affliction particular to young maidens. Bonnie Lander Johnson rethinks the gendering of greensickness in arguing that both Juliet and Romeo experienced erroneous appetites and greensickness due to "their failure to…make it through the crucial infant stages of blood, milk, and food nourishment" (136). From the first scene of *Twelfth Night*, Orsino's language characterizes him as pining, petulant, and melancholic, all traits of the greensick, virginal girl, but as with his other hypocritical statements about the "frailer" sex, he attributes female longing, not his own, to fancy.

Greensickness, according to Culpeper, "may proceed from a longing desire after the enjoyment of some particular person; or, in general, from a violent inclination to exchange a single life for the state of matrimony" (217). Humoral science would have it that the unrestrained appetite for illicit foods stemmed from an excessive romantic desire; therefore, the rationale behind the initial food-link within Culpeper's cure is evident: "drink tea, barley water, and other attenuating liquors, warm… Her food should be nourishing, but easy of digestion, and not such as may inflame" (218). However, Culpeper's ends may prove his methods when he prescribes a social cure for the patient's physical disease of lack, thereby severing the symbolic link between food and sex whilst seeking to reinforce it. While Orsino's plan was to poison or sicken his own appetite by gorging it on thoughts of love, the ultimate advice for young, virginal, or pregnant women was not to ruminate, but to settle.

> All passions of the mind, especially those of melancholy and despair, are highly prejudicial; if the disease, therefore, be found to proceed from a settled inclination after marriage, the parents of the patient should endeavour to provide her a suitable match, as the most effectual cure.[33]

As Hillary Nunn points out, greensick women were "embodiments of chaste passivity, and their lack of active participation in the sexual world threatens to leave them immobilized, firmly and eternally planted outside the reproductive realm" (161). That Olivia resides distinctly in the nonsexual realm, at least at the beginning of the play, is unacceptable to Orsino, who centers himself and his desire in his diagnosis of the lady as both pervious and impenetrable. Nunn argues that "greensickness can be read as an exclusively female branch of the physical condition known as lovesickness," and I would suggest Shakespeare is presenting both of the gendered manifestations through the deflecting romance of the lord and lady (163). If the actual,

[33] Culpeper, 218.

physiological cause of "the virgin's disease" was, as we discussed above in relation to pica, a dietary lack of essential minerals such as iron, the purported, social cause of female greensickness that answered the early modern threat of the melancholic, withdrawn, unmarriable woman was want of a man.

Just as Culpeper conceptualizes greensickness/lovesickness/pica as a problem of the vessels using words like "obstruction," "flow," "viscidity of all the juices," "alteration of the fluids," and "inaptitude of the vessels to perform those discharges which nature then calls for," so, too, does Orsino imagine the inadequacy of women in returning, or retransmitting, love as a problem of fluids (217). When Viola conveys to him that Olivia does not love him, Orsino counters,

> There is no woman's sides
> Can bide the beating of so strong a passion
> As love doth give my heart; no woman's heart
> So big, to hold so much: they lack retention. (2.5.94-7)

If we remember that retention of the menses and retention of the stomach's excrement were the cited causes of greensickness and pica, respectively, Orsino's estimation of Olivia and all women disrupts the view of retentive women as stagnant.[34] In her seminal work on "the virgin's disease," Helen King draws out the early modern connection of greensickness not only to the retention of the humors, but also to the problem of thick blood, citing vernacular scientists' recommendation of a blood thinning diet that would include onions, red sage, and pepper. "The classical heritage of sixteenth-century botany" would suggest, she contends, that the hot, dry, and

[34] Guillemeau, 41.

blood quickening ingredients “can thin any abnormally thick humors in the body, including menstrual blood” (25).

For Orsino, not only is the lack found in women a vascular problem, or a problem of porosity, it is their *openness* that keeps them from love and that, contrary to Culpeper, gives reason for their appetite according to line 98. “Alas, their love may be call’d appetite, / No motion of the liver, but the palate, / That suffers surfeit, cloyment, and revolt; / But mine is all as hungry as the sea” (2.5.98-101). The easy flow of the appetites is the root of why women cannot contain a man’s depth of passion called love, yet male voracity oddly becomes the opposite of inconstancy. In contrast to Orsino’s identifying with the devouring ocean, Sebastian codes the sea as maternal, albeit monstrous: “…myself and a sister, both born in an hour: if the heavens had been pleased, would we had so ended! But you, sir, altered that, for some hour before you took me from the breach of the sea was my sister drowned” (2.1.18-22). Linking drowning to birthing, Sebastian figures the sea as an insatiably hungry mother, would could simultaneously – and indiscriminately – give birth and eat. Meanwhile, as Graham Atkin points out, Orsino himself fails “to live up to his own grand claims of the retentive nature of his love for Olivia,” and he even flip-flops on his own claims about male constancy (27). Orsino evokes the oral imagery of the “palate” to represent the fickleness of women’s wants and compares himself to the all-consuming sea, swallowing the object of its desire regardless of taste, being sensitive to her requiting his feelings or not. On the contrary, his language implies both the inevitability as well as invincibility of his toxic love. Further, when Viola attempts to argue that women may love as much as men, and that her “sister” (speaking artfully of herself) loved to the point that “she pin’d in thought, / And with a green and yellow melancholy,” Orsino concludes she must

have died from a love so strong (2.5.113-4). Despite his dark conclusion, the duke seems apply such outcomes only to females, seeing himself as greater than the sum of his desires.

In this passage, Orsino pits himself against Olivia even as he professes his love for her. When he aligns himself with the unconquerable sea, Olivia, whom he has already declared a leaky and unretentive vessel, becomes a vessel in the nautical mode, tossed about unwittingly on the waves. Schalkwyk highlights the juxtaposition within Orsino's premise that "[w]omen are the creatures of desire, slaves to mere appetite. Men, on the other hand (and Orsino is their exemplar) have the capacity to retain and withstand the violent passion of love" ("Is Love…?"). I would argue, after Barbara Sebek who notes "a persistent pattern of association between sexual and nautical activities" in early modern thought and literature, that the double meaning of "vessel" would not have been lost on readers of the early modern midwifery treatises, entrenched in a cultural and psychological fascination with seafaring and shipwrecks and who were admonished consistently to "pilot" their bodies as the captain of a ship.[35] Not only do shipwrecks frame several of Shakespeare's plays including *Twelfth Night*, they are also part of the language of early modern sexuality. Demonstrating masculinity relied not only on dominion over land and sea, but also on the subjugation of women, especially of female reproductive bodies. In the literal sense, ships transported goods, information, and people around the globe, and safe passage was a tenuous and engrossing topic. The fleet of a nation was a symbol of its prosperity and effluence. In the metaphorical sense, women's bodies carried the precious cargo of life, and pregnant women, in the "scopic authority" of the male gaze, symbolized fertility, the continuance of bloodlines, and the biblical mandate to "fill the earth, and subdue it" (Bicks 9; Gen. 1.28).

[35] Salmon, 31.

Implicit in both of these meanings is the tension between what a vessel contains and to what extent it allows passage, as well as how these two ideas can play off each other. In Orsino's surmising, Olivia's lack of retention is subversively tied to her being closed or unbreachable; so too do midwifery treatises supply contradictory portraits of the state of femininity, by their very insistence, I believe, on static definitions of womanhood.

Revising Gender in the Discourse of Appetite

Just as midwifery texts posit the solution to a woman's lack is the state of matrimony, or as they treat the state of pregnancy as an assumed yet obscure cause of sundry appetitive malfunctions, *Twelfth Night* relegates its discussions of femininity to the supposed state of normal reproduction as it was perceived by early moderns, i.e., that women were either already pregnant or willing to become pregnant. The second and final time Viola beseeches Olivia's audience on Orsino's behalf, allowing her entry becomes a question of epistemological proportions yet again. First, the fool intercepts her in the garden with one of his classic verbal sparring matches involving irreverent religious banter and a discussion of the occupation of the clown. Next, Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, bordering on drunk, meet Viola at the door, a second and third gatekeeper to her purposes. Finally, rather than passively being imposed upon, Olivia is the one to come out into the garden, her entry an interjection to Viola's lines:

> I will answer you with gait and entrance, but we are prevented.
> *Enter* OLIVIA *and* MARIA.
> Most excellent accomplished lady, the heavens rain odours on you! (3.1.83-6)

Unlike the first visit when Olivia, intrigued by the mysterious gentleman at her door, allowed Viola entrance, this time Olivia is the one to cross the threshold like a uncontainable, wafting odor, extending a welcome to her caller. When Viola then desires the privacy that Olivia has sacrificed to her effluence, she entreats the lady with words redolent of the sanctity of her female

sex. “My matter hath no voice, lady, but to your own most pregnant and vouchsafed ear” (3.1.89-90). Andrew, who has been intellectually bested, tries out her vocabulary for himself, but whether an aside or no, Olivia ignores him and commands, “Let the garden door be shut, and leave me to my hearing” (3.1.93-4). Inside this outside place, Olivia and Viola have their secret discussion about Olivia’s heart, be it receptive or unretentive.

Viola’s word choice – first with “maidenhead: to your ears divinity,” and now with “pregnant and vouchsafed” – parallels that of the midwifery treatises and cultural assumptions of the day equating women’s bodies to their religious standings and social statuses (1.5.210; 3.1.89-90). Even in Sharp’s text, which was more progressive than the treatises of her male contemporaries, the feminine was equated with pregnancy – to be a woman was to be earnestly desiring conception and pregnancy; she uses the Genesis narrative to disprove the popular notion that conception was the curse wrought by Eve’s fall from grace. First appropriating God’s Genesis 3:16 curse of female conception instead as blessing (“I will greatly multiply thy conception”), Sharp goes on to say that it was “the sorrow to bring forth that was laid as a curse” (93). Nevertheless, by this logic Sharp seems to admit that by and large, women’s views about conception, not simply its cataclysmic end, were negative, disputing the notion that natural, if not Edenic, femininity presumes a desire for copulation and for pregnancy. That said, while Sharp reinforces the patriarchal trope that all women desire pregnancy, are pregnant, or will/have/been pregnant, she leaves room for women to despair labor and its aftermath. Women can bemoan the pain and sorrow of childbearing with a biblical justification, but even still, by some essential quality of womanhood, they will desire to fall pregnant. Yet the adverse cannot as easily be proven: a pregnant woman’s desires, such as her unrestrained appetites, are not always, necessarily, feminine.

Other texts do more to link the material and immaterial of womanhood. For Culpeper, the state of matrimony could cure the very real physical affliction of greensickness or anemia. For other writers in the business of childbirth, the state of pregnancy was a categorical change in a woman's body that othered her in terms of appetitive affects and their moral implications. For the early modern consciousness and for Shakespeare, likewise, virginity and mourning were two similar states to which a woman might belong that not only signified religious purity, but also indicated a woman's openness or closedness in terms of sexual and social pursuit. Although authors might admit a broken hymen did not necessarily negate virginity, many legitimized the religious practice of vaginal examinations by designating it as the surest sign of premarital sex and by giving anecdotal evidence of innocent women who were nevertheless wrongly accused and punished for breaking a law evidenced only in female bodies. A woman found guilty of premarital sex would be cloistered as a nun, spend a life as a spinster, or else covertly marry a willing or desperate man of lower status. Thus, from her religious uncleanness in transgressing her distinctly female status as a virgin (i.e., being too open), proceeds her closedness. Adversely, although mourning was a religion-sanctioned practice (just the same as both matrimony and maternity fulfilled religious duty for women), the state itself enacts closedness, being socially and sexually unbreachable. Any excessive desire for copulation or food during an epistemologically closed state such as pregnancy ironically manifests as an inevitable *expression of* that feminine state, whereas the already excessive desire of the virgin state results in closedness.

Elsewhere, Shakespeare links the state of pregnancy with morality when Viola blames her entrapment on her disguise, apostrophizing disguise as what her "pregnant enemy" the devil employs to do his bidding (2.2.29). The conceit works to link pregnancy and deception, the

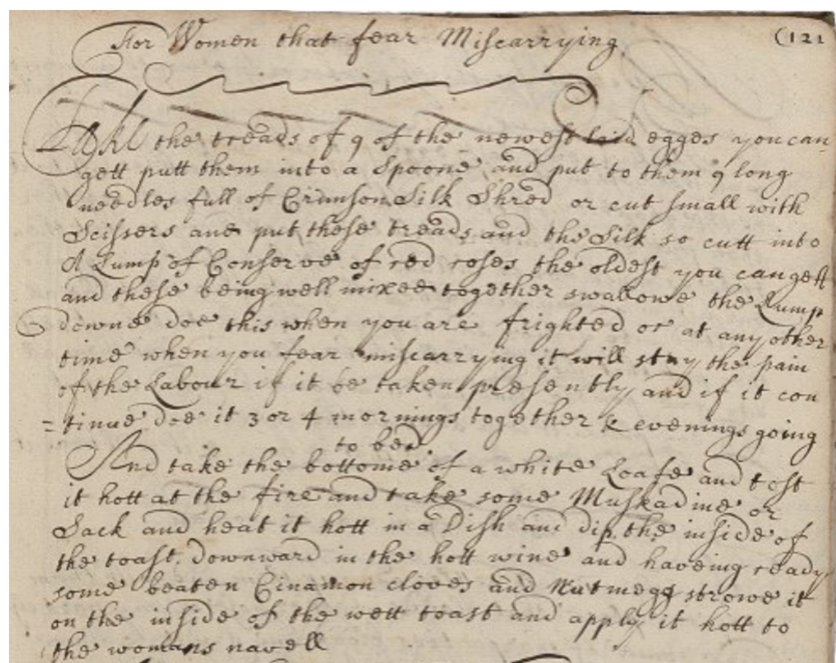
impetus behind the effacement of pregnancy and childbearing in early modern dramatic representation. Although the gender-revising portrayal of Satan may not expressly stem from cultural concepts about gender or femininity, the dramatic context of the phrase surely is. It is women's hearts, not men's, that she describes as "waxen," easily forming to whatever pleasing figure they see. "Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we," she grants, but the crux of her argument betrays an essentialist view of gender: "For such as we are made of, such we be" (2.2.31-2). Both a woman's fickle heart and womb assimilated to that on which her eyes alighted; therefore, a woman's appetites always overmastered her – pregnant, vouchsafed, and waxen as she was.

Conclusion: Women Routing New Foodways

If the medical and religious advice for a longing woman was avoidance, authorities all recommended one food to prenatal women, irrespective of their depraved cravings: toast. For *Aristotle's experienced midwife*, it was "toast dipped in mamsey" that could be applied to her navel "if she desire clay, chalk, or coals," or "a little wine with a toast in it, and other comforting things" (34; 71). While Guillemeau claims that drinking too much was bad for the pregnant woman, he concedes, "shee may take euery morning a draught of Wormewoodwine… with a tost of bread"; he thereunto cites Auicen who "commendeth tosted cheese"; or else "tost sop't in wine" and "suger" (38; 139; 177). Sharp likewise recommends toast as a helpful food for the pregnant woman to have with her beer or ale, to take with cold water after delivery, or as one of the parturient woman's "topical applications to be made to the pit of the stomach" (210; 220; 249).[36] Manuscript recipes for pregnant women such as Bacon's "For Women that fear Miscarrying" also feature toast (see fig. 5). The prevailing benefit of toast, apart from,

[36] The use of toast as an external plaster to the woman's belly – her "sides" as Orsino would have it, or her navel – lends itself to the argument I make in chapter three for the laying-on practices of the early modern birthing chamber.

importantly, being a staple in the early modern diet, was its propensity to sop up liquid, like a sort of sponge that could both retain and release fluid more dependably than a woman's body. Additionally, yeasted toast would have been used as a key ingredient for making fermented drinks like muscadine wine and sack, hence the verb "to toast" we still use today when raising a glass. Pertaining to early modern food studies, we could add another side to Lévi-Strauss's culinary triangle of the raw, the cooked, and the rotten – the burnt. Ironically, when women craved ash and coals and other charry substances that were deemed inedible, these treatises prescribed not only their avoidance of these appetites, but also the permittance of them. Toasted bread, charred "hott at the fire," was the perfect appeasement to a very real hunger, made all the more transgressive by its saturation with a forbidden substance for travailing women, alcoholic drink (Bacon 121). Metaphorically speaking, if the raw, the cooked, and the rotten represent the untouched, the production of culture, and the breakdown back to the untamed, respectively, then the burnt could represent the marginal realm specific to women, where nonfood or prohibited food, mediated by female experiences and agency, becomes food.



For Women that feare Miscarrying (121

Take the treads of 9 of the newest laid egges you can
gett putt them into a Spoone and put to them 9 long
needles full of Crimson Silk Shred or cut small with
Scissors and put those treads and the Silk so cutt into
A Lump of Conserve of red roses the oldest you can gett
and these being well mixed together swallowe the Lump
downe doe this when you are frighted or at any other
time when you fear miscarrying it will stay the pain
of the Labour if it be taken presently and if it con
=tinue doe it 3 or 4 mornings together & evenings going
to bed.
And take the bottome of a white Loafe and tost
it hott at the fire and take some Muskadine or
Sack and heat it hott in a Dish and dip the inside of
the toast downward in the hott wine and having ready
some beaten Cinamon cloves and Nutmegg strewe it
on the inside of the wett toast and apply it hott to
the womans navell

Fig. 5

Bacon, Catherine. "For Women that fear Miscarrying." *Receipt book of Catherine Bacon* [manuscript], ca. 1680s-1739, *Folger Manuscript Transcriptions Collection*, 121. https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGER~3~3~18462~281133:Receipt-book-of-Catherine-Bacon--ma?qvq=q:toast&mi=9&trs=62.

In ascertaining the appetites of characters like Sir Toby Belch and Duke Orsino, scholarly discourse highlights a treatment of desire that disrupts an inclination to pit excess against private health and public harmony. However, this chapter is an attempt to point out the limitations of these arguments when it comes to women and women's bodies. We cannot read appetite separately from gender. While appetite may have opened "the way toward hospitality" for men like Sir Toby, or "enstomaked" surfeiting as a means of self-healing for men like Orsino, midwifery treatises cautioned against appetite for those who needed nutrition the most – always already childbearing women (Appelbaum 230). For men, appetite is something with which to dally, a thrilling test of one's masculinity in his success or failure to prevail over it. For women, eschewing appetite is the order, just as mourning, virginity, and maternity were distinctly feminine and spiritual states. The early modern prenatal regimen for appetite was avoidance, both of fatty, sugary, and rich food and of mourning, romantic pining, and immorality. On the other hand, while midwifery recipes regulated prenatal life, they also provided a means for parturient women to meet their own needs. Beyond getting real food to real hungering bodies, recipes function as a rhetorical intervention to the epistemological problem of transgressive appetite and its perceived threat to the overly open pregnant woman. Recipes made allowances for the passage of femininity, not as delineated states and their inseparable appetitive affects, but like a toast of bread "sop't" in wine, absorbing the stagnancy of hegemonic categories and engendering fluidity. Food itself becomes an intrinsic permission for the female appetite, an opening to the effluence of the woman and the life within her.

CHAPTER TWO: "TO SEE THE ISSUE"
PERCEIVING PRODUCTION IN THE EARLY MODERN BIRTHING CHAMBER

> Give me the boy: I am glad you did not nurse him:
> Though he does bear some signs of me, yet you
> Have too much blood in him.
> —Leontes, *The Winter's Tale*, 2.1.56-58

> Here's such ado to make no stain a stain
> As passes colouring.
> —Paulina, *The Winter's Tale*, 2.2.19-20

The dialogue in 2.3 of *The Winter's Tale* offers a sequence of caesurae unique to Shakespeare's many instances of this dialoguing technique. The content of the conversation deals with the question of paternity after the recent, supposedly illegitimate birth of a royal baby. Hermione, the queen of Sicilia, has given birth while in prison for an alleged affair with the king of Bohemia, Polixenes. Lady Paulina, Hermione's loyal friend, brings the baby to King Leontes to prove the child's paternity and to convince him of Hermione's innocence. In the ensuing scene, Paulina and Leontes labor in an intense argument about parentage, the child's mother herself conspicuously absent. In addition to this not-so-invisible erasure of the female in question, the line-level structure of the back-and-forth with its countercultural interruptions of a woman railing against her king situates the question of a woman's place front and center. With phrases like, "Force her hence!," "Out!...Hence with her, out o' door," and "Will you not push her out?," the dialogue reimages the birthing scene and its inherent drama (2.3.61; 2.3.66-67; 2.3.73). The language also reimagines the gender and parental roles of birth, the father acting as the laboring, delivering woman, and the woman becoming the squalling, name-called, newborn babe.

Prior to this confrontation, Paulina enters the chamber, opposing herself to Leontes's courtiers by comparing them to midwives and herself to a physician who will set the king aright.

At this time she also introduces what would have been a common precursor to childbirth during that time: purgation.

> ’Tis such as you,
> That creep like shadows by him, and do sigh
> At each his needless heavings; such as you
> Nourish the cause of his awaking. I
> Do come with words as medicinal as true;
> Honest, as either, to purge him of that humour… (2.3.33-38)

Bloodletting, inducing vomits, and breaking the waters operated in the early modern birthing chamber as interventions, usually at the hands of an allowed physician, that managed the production of childbirth. All were methods of evacuating the body, whether it be of bad humors or spirits, of a supposed overabundance of blood, or of, ultimately, a baby. Similarly, but with less visible outcomes, purgative recipes were a part of the early modern labor and delivery protocol. Per midwifery manuals from the period, at the onset of a woman’s birth pangs, her midwife and attendants would have endeavored to evacuate not only the literal excess and excrement from her body to expediate delivery, but also the impurities that were much less quantifiable. The idea of purgation as it relates to *The Winter’s Tale* – its visual preoccupation with “issues” and “stains,” the selective permeability of Hermione’s prison, and the mirroring implicit in Paulina and Leontes’s rhetorical birthing scene – is central to the play’s representation of the permeability of the laboring woman as she was conceived by midwifery treatises and their recipes. Purging, along with bloodletting, inducing vomits, and the like, is the means by which a patriarchal culture enforced its authority over the birthing chamber, as well as projected its anxieties about what remains unseen when a baby is born.

Blood and bleeding, specifically female bleeding, as a signifier in the early modern era has been well documented by scholars like Gail Kern Paster, Gabriella Zuccolin, and Helen King; others who also write influentially about the history and cultural significance of the

practice of purgation such as Lucinda McCray Beier and Kimberly K. Cook point out that the desire to rid the body of bad humors fell disproportionately on women because of anxieties about their physical and spiritual susceptibility.[37] This chapter parses the seen and unseen effects of purging the puerperal woman, arguing that recipes for purgatives both disrupt and contribute to the obscuring of pregnant embodiment and its oppositional trope of a male privileging of the visual in the production of childbirth. Michelle Ephraim discusses suspicion and the problem of evidence in early modern birthing rituals, and Katarzyna Burzynska delves into the communal aspects of early modern childbirth. I build on such research, suggesting that the evacuations involved in the birthing process, on its own an evacuation of grander proportions, were patriarchal interventions in an otherwise female-exclusive phenomenon.[38]

The Intervention of Purgation in Early Modern Childbirth

In early modern medicine, deciphering a death and qualifying a birth both depended on the body's evacuations like fluids, excrement, and blood. Jacques Guillemeau recounts the case of Madam de Mommor, a twenty-five year old pregnant woman who suffered a flux of blood for three days. She apparently ignored the hemorrhage without seeking the help of a physician, and although she

> was delivered with great ease…she died the same day, at night: and was kept a pretty while by her friends who could not persuade themselves that shee was dead: At last being opened by M. Pineau…her wombe was found broken and rent.[39]

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[37] See Paster, "Laudable Blood: Bleeding, Difference, and Humoral Embarrassment," *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993), 64-112; Zuccolin and King, "Rethinking Nosebleeds: Gendering Spontaneous Bleedings in Medieval and Early Modern Medicine," *Blood Matters: Studies in European Literature and Thought, 1400-1700* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 79-91; Lucinda Beier, "A London Surgeon's Career: Joseph Binns," *Sufferers and Healers: The Experience of Illness in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1987), 51-96.

[38] See Moncrief, "'Show me a child begotten of thy body that I am father to': Pregnancy, Paternity and the Problem of Evidence in *All's Well That Ends Well*" and "Hermione's Suspicious Body: Adultery and Superfetation in *The Winter's Tale*," *Performing Maternity in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 2007), 29-43; 45-58.

[39] Guillemeau, 132-33.

At the time of the birth, he is arguing, more heed should have been given to the presentation of blood – the absence of which ironically mystified her attendants at the time of her death. Most of what happens during childbirth is about what is leaving the body – from the first bloody "shows," to, oftentimes, a blood covered infant, to the afterbirth followed by weeks of expelling the lochia. In fact, Jennifer Scuro writes that "the quality of *expellation* [is a] given to all pregnancy" (xii). While blood may not be present in every death and, as Scuro argues, every pregnancy may not end in childbirth, blood and water are the common issues of (and thus used to ascertain) parturiency and mortality.[40]

Purgation as a similar mode of pathology, although closely linked with bloodletting, was not always as dramatic, or as visual, an affair. Modern readers might have very specific notions about the meaning of purging, whether physiological, as in vomiting, or sociopolitical, as it usually relates to bodies forced from institutions or ethnic locales. In early modern obstetrics, administering a purgative was a necessary step in the birthing process. Guillemeau also tells of a constipated woman who went into labor, and

> whose great gut was so fild and stuft with excrements, as hard as a stone, that it was impossible for her to receive a Clyster; and wee were constrained, before she could bee delivered, to get out all the said excrements, otherwise it had been impossible to have taken forth the child.[41]

[40] In her graphic novel, *The Pregnancy [does-Not-equal] Childbearing Project: A Phenomenology of Miscarriage* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield 2017), Scuro offers a reimagining of pregnancy that is delineated from the "childbearing teleology" of the societal figuring of normative femininity. By illustrating and discussing the bloodiness of the natal experience on nearly every page, she underscores the idea that to be pregnant necessitates an inevitable loss of self. Her work is strikingly mixed in its media; within her drawings she includes digital elements such as Times New Roman font for doctor appointment cards, graphics like thought and speech bubbles, and digitally altered photographs that apparently originate from Scuro's personal camera roll and seem to represent her tunnel- or blurred-vision during her trauma, which cannot be recalled in clarity even with the help of an objective lens. Together with the rough sketches, often faceless people, abstract or line drawings, and the handwritten text of the main story and even pagination, these elements contribute to the "phenomenology of pregnancy" for which she contends in Part II.

[41] Guillemeau, 115-16.

Since the woman skipped the step of purgation, he warns, extreme measures had to be taken later in the process when the physicians, in all likelihood, took matters into their own hands. As with most early modern medical practice, evacuating the body was the first essential protocol in treating a person. Beiers offers a statistical analysis of the early modern surgeon Joseph Binns' purging his patients and finds that his practice "depended upon the humoral principles of maintaining or restoring the body's internal balance through evacuation" (61). "Thus," she writes, "even if the disorder treated were a wound or fracture of an extremity, happening to an initially healthy body, treatment invariably included purges and clysters (enemas) to keep the body 'soluble'" (61). For the most part in early modern medicine, purgation focused on the body's productions as a sign for vital health.

According to the midwifery manuals, though, purgation was both visible and invisible: blood could signify either immanent death or the normal "after-purgings" of childbirth; vomiting was either proof of a depraved diet (see previous chapter) or an evacuation of bad humors; elsewhere purgation through diuretics or enemas might be prescribed or vehemently dissuaded. Sharp often chastises the midwife who gives a purgative indiscriminately or who conversely overstuffs her mothers after birth, calling them "simple" and "foolish Nurses" (230; 235). The enigmatic purgative is often used alongside but not always the same as: letting blood, vomits, diuretics, glisters, or any manual measure of voiding the waters or other substances. For instance, Sharp contended that puerperal women might fall to vomiting because of "ill diet or raw humors," yet in the case of the latter, she advised adding a purgative, which she separated conceptually from both the vomit itself and from bloodletting (248). "If ill diet cause vomit, rectifie that; if ill humours, stop it not presently but purge gently; if blood come, pull back by rubbing, or cupping, or bleeding, opening a Vein in the food, ham, or ankle, and urging the after

flux" (249). The humoral, perinatal body required a delicate balancing of intake and discharge, and the discharge of its various fluids may portend the same ambiguous signs of life or death.

The visual aspect of purgation, then, resided in what was interred more often, and more reliably, than what was expelled. On the one hand, purgative recipes in midwifery manuals could be given for the specific end to "expell and drive forth" real substances from the body, such as the afterbirth (Guillemeau 177). To bring about such "purgations," Sharp suggests "two or three spoonfuls of Briony water…or a dram of the powder of Gentian roots every morning in a cup of Wine; the roots of Birth-wort are as good, or take twelve Peony seeds powdered in a little *Carduus* posset drink to sweat" (234). A uterine stimulant, birthwort, or *Aristolochia*, "was an effective contraceptive and abortifacient," as well as an emmenagogue used in ayurvedic medicine from at latest ca. AD 400 (John Scarborough, et al. 3). Unfortunately for many women and some men, birthwort has since been proven to be a toxic plant that can cause nephritis and renal failure, even when used as a transdermal treatment.[42] In the case of using birthwort to purge the placenta, the result may have been immediately discernable; however, the long-term and lasting effect of the medicine remained insidiously invisible. Nicholas Culpeper's medical text, *The english physician*, is arguably the most expansive and unrelenting in detailing evacuative recipes. On one recto page, he lists over 40 ingredients in a dozen recipes to purge the female body, including maidenhair, birthwort, and castor (see fig. 6). In other purgative measures for the birthing chamber, the desired outcome was not necessarily material, but spiritual or humoral. *Aristotle's experienced midwife* gives reasons for purging, as well as, unlike early modern contemporary texts, bleeding the puerperal woman, that suggest the less tangible outcome of

[42] See Scarborough, et al., "Ancient Medicinal Use of *Aristolochia*: Birthwort's Tradition and Toxicity," *Pharmacy in History,* vol. 53, no. 1, 2011, 3-21.

more efficacious laboring. For this author, the travailing woman should not "be concerned at those qualms and vomitings which perhaps she may find come upon her; for they will be much to her advantage in the issue" (57). The *issue* here, as in Shakespeare's usage, is that of the ritualistic process of childbirth, predicated on the final outcome of the child born – not the material result of a successful purge, the body's fluids expelled. To this end, *Aristotle's* author has no reservations against bloodletting, stating, "If the woman abounds with blood, to bleed her a little may not be improper; for thereby she will both breathe the better, and have her breasts more at liberty; and likewise more strength to bear down her pain…" (56). What on the surface appears to be the woman's best interest boils down to a regulation of the feminine. While blood loss may have accounted for her breathing better, this disregarded the woman's health and safety in favor of labor efficacy, much the same as with animal husbandry. Freeing up her breasts is more ambiguous; the author could have been referring yet again to the woman's breathing effectiveness, or this could be another insinuation of her only value being to bear and give suck to children. Finally, allocating strength to the woman (perhaps through the adrenaline released when her life is on the line) to leverage her own pain toward the goal of a live-born child assumes that a woman is not strong enough to bear children apart from medical intervention. Not only that, but the last phrase, "to bear down on her pain," betrays a tone of male superiority, that birthing is as simple a matter as mastering one's physical discomfort (56).

Of Practical Phyſic. 55

For flegmatic bodies, take the decoction of guajacum, ſaſſafras, dittany, for fifteen days without ſweating.

Then evacuate with agaric, mechoacan, turbith, ſcammony, coloquintida, black hellebore. As,

Take agaric two drams, infuſe it in mugwort water, two ounces, oxymel, an ounce, ſtrain, and the extract of mechoacan, a ſcruple. Or, take opening roots, half an ounce, mugwort, bettony, each two pugils, ſenna, half an ounce, agaric two drams, fennel and anniſeed, each a ſcruple, galengal, half a dram, roſemary-flowers, a pugil, infuſe them to three ounces and half, add ſyrup of ſenna, an ounce and half, cinnamon-water, half a dram.

Or if they drink wine, Take turbeth, mechoacan, agaric, each two drams, ſenna, an ounce and half, maiden-hair, balm, roſemary, each two pugils, cinnamon, galengal, each a dram, hang them in wine, give ſix ounces with half an ounce of manna.

Or, take diaturbith with rubarb, half an ounce, mechoacan, two drams, agaric, a dram, diarrhodon, cinnamon, each half a dram: Steel prepar'd, a dram, with raiſins, make an electuary: Give as much as a walnut.

Or give pills of agaric-fœtida, and ſo continue purging and preparing if the matter be ſtbborn. Or, take agaric, two drams, madder a dram, with ſyrup of mugwort, make pills. Or, take aloes, three drams, de tribus, one dram, with juice of ſavin, making pills.

If the ſtomach is foul, give a vomit leſt it get into the veins.

Then give provokers of the terms, which are hot and thin, about the time they uſed to flow: They are three degrees in ſtrength, and many ſorts of medicines are made of them.

A powder. Take cinnamon, a dram, amber a ſcruple, ſaffron, half a ſcruple. Or, take troches of myrrh, of wall-flowers, each a ſcruple, ſaffron, five grains. Or, take caſtor, penny-royal, each a ſcruple, with wine or proper waters.

Phyſical wine. Take madder-roots, an ounce, orris,

Fig. 6

Culpeper, Nicholas. "Evacuations for flegmatic bodies." *The english physician*. 1777. *Gale Primary Sources: Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, https://go-gale-com.ezproxy.uta.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Monographs&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&retrievalId=7fe57347-67ac-4b8c-bb38-8f8b51ce1e93&hitCount=1&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm¤tPosition=1&docId=GALE%7CCW010726547.

Purgative recipes in midwifery manuals have an ambivalent relationship to blood and bloodletting. As a practice, bloodletting involved making an incision with a small knife or by using leeches to create a new opening in the body. Conversely, purging, while it could induce bleeding or vomiting, involved the openings already present in the body's system of sphincters. The female body, then, is particularly purge-able: her vaginal opening, expanded and on-display

during childbirth, is a problematic visual gauge for patriarchal control. Men had little influence over the birthing chamber and especially the climactic scene of reproduction although they were highly invested in its insemination and outcome. The problem in childbirth became not so much centered on whether a woman would be delivered of a veritable issue, but at what point her purging could and should be regulated by medical intervention. Beyond this, obstetrical manuals also suggest an unseen outcome of purgation that points to the idea that something else takes place during the birth of a baby – something invisible that could be managed by the visible ingredients the woman ingested.

In *The Winter's Tale* the movement and language of the male characters around the birthing chamber points to this belief in purgation's purpose of proving, whether diagnosed by the body's evacuations or prescribed in comestibles. Leontes's overblown suspicion of Hermione has the dual-effect of mobilizing other male characters such as Camillo and Polixenes *away* from the site of examination, while garnering admittance for himself into the quintessentially female place, the birthing chamber. His intrusion focuses all forensic attention onto the childbearing woman who now, along with her female sympathizers, also bears the brunt of the office of proving. When Paulina takes up Hermione's cause, she swears, "He must be told on't, and he shall: the office / Becomes a woman best. I'll take't upon me" (2.2.31-32). The image is one of load-sharing: not only must Hermione herself contend with the false accusations of her husband, but the burden of proving is something *all* women share as an understood feature of anyone born without testes, or built-in "witnesses."[43] Inevitably, when Paulina takes Hermione's female child and loses her to the avarice of male control, her intercession becomes an act of female-on-female(-on-female) violence.

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[43] See chapter one, 34.

Macbeth and *Titus Andronicus* have a monopoly on visible blood, each act of violence a rupture in the seams of order; *The Winter's Tale*, however, deals in obscuring evacuations, from characters to blood to children.[44] Hermione's labor and delivery come as a silent echo, an inverted crescendo to an increasingly quieter sequence of emptying: Polixenes and Camillo escape from Sicilia, Leontes purges Mamillius from his mother's presence, and Hermione retires to prison, proud and tearless. First, although the Bohemian king's flight from the city takes place at night (and albeit offstage), the shock of the dramatic irony makes the situation overwhelmingly overt, the publicity of which possibly even inciting Leontes farther down the path of his insane jealousy. "How came the posterns / So easily open?" he asks, referring to Polixenes' getting through the gates. "By his great authority," the lord replies innocently. "Which often hath no less prevail'd than so / On your command." We can almost hear Leontes's teeth grind as he confirms, "I know't too well" (2.1.52-55). The trusted lord Leontes sent to apprehend Polixenes, we come to find, is the very one who has lent the visiting king his aid, and Leontes's rage upon learning of their scheme propels him from the threshold of the birthing chamber to the heart of it. The audience might expect Leontes's vitriol, with Hermione its target, to erupt at this point. However, his tactic is less verbose, more "insidious," as Burzynska would say: "Give me the boy," he deadpans (2.1.56). The women who moments before had waffled over who would care for Mamillius, and Hermione who had asked for him to be taken away, do not see Leontes's game. "What's this? sport?" Hermione asks, but the audience, knowing his true

[44] Hester Lees-Jeffries argues compellingly for the role of invisible blood in *Macbeth*, as read through the centrality of imagined bloodspots and bloody specters, as well as, interestingly, in reading the textiles of the play as "screens" onto which invisible blood may be mapped. I do not argue against this that all blood in *Macbeth* and *Titus* makes a material presence on the stage, or moreover that Shakespeare is not intentionally drawing attention to blood's material and immaterial implications; however, I do argue that in comparison to two of Shakespeare's bloodiest tragedies, *The Winter's Tale*, containing at least two deaths and a birth, negotiates *around* blood and bodily signifiers in a way that should make us question their power, even when they are conspicuously absent.

suspicions of her unfaithfulness, understands his deeper desire to ascertain his welk, as well as to ensure Mamillius's further conformity to his father's image (2.1.58). Donna C. Woodford explains the seventeenth-century belief that a mother bear literally licked her cubs into shape and relates it to the infamous bear of Antigonus' unseen demise in 3.3 (and to *III Henry VI*), writing, "Like the folkloric bear, the women in *The Winter's Tale* are believed to have great influence over their children, and it is an influence that Leontes finds as threatening to his patriarchal authority" (28). Perceiving parentage comes to a head in this play alongside the desire to perceive the imperceptible, that is, the guilt bound up in womanhood.

Bloodletting: Purging the Most Visible Bodily Signifier

Typically reserved for his tragedies, blood – its spilling, staining, and signifying – is a favorite obsession in Shakespeare's body of work. Arguably the most famous scene about blood ("Out, damned spot!") comes from *Macbeth* where blood represents the guilty conscience of a murderer (5.1.36). In the early modern understanding, "blood was at once the red fluid in human veins, a humor, a fluid governing crucial Galenic models of bodily change such as plethora and purging, a waste product, a cause of corruption, a source of life, a medical cure, a fluid appearing under the guise of all other bodily fluids" (Johnson and Decamp 2). Blood could not be pinned down to any one universal symbol, but its being a symbol is not disputed. Of the 36 mentions of blood (not including "spot," "bleed," "gore," "wound," "red," or "ruby") in *Macbeth*, for example, 25 appear in a context of sight or seeing, i.e. proving one's innocence or guilt.[45]

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[45] Here is a catalogue of the phrases evoking sight that occur adjacent to (often in the line before, of, or after) the word "blood" or "bloody" in *Macbeth*: "seemeth" (1.2.2); "brandish'd" (1.2.17); "see not the wound…peep" (1.5.46; 53); "judgment" (1.7.8); "marked" (1.7.76); "I see thee" (2.1.45); "informs thus to mine eyes" (2.1.49); "witness" (2.2.46); "eyes" (2.2.58); "seem'd" (2.3.99); "look'd" (2.3.111); "hid…exposure" (2.3.126-27); "seest" (2.4.5.); "Is't known" (2.4.22); "sight…Masking the business from the common eye" (3.1.118; 124); "eye…invisible" (3.2.47-48); "sight…eyes" (3.4.92; 94); "…brought forth / The secret'st man" (3.4.124-25); "I am

Cruentation, the belief that a dead body would bleed in the presence of its murderer, was a trial of ordeal in medieval and early modern forensics, and "spilling innocent blood," a phrase harkening back to Levitical laws of the Judeo-Christian Torah, was legal jargon used to indict suspects of murder.[46] Likewise, early modern gynecological and obstetric manuals make it evident that the presence of blood in the birthing chamber, while expected, could be the visible evidence of impurity, and too much of it usually portended death to the mother or fetus. Jacques Guillemeau writes, "The most grievous and troublesome accident, which a Woman can have, that is in travaile, is when there happens unto her, any fluxe of bloud… especially, if the fluxe of bloud continue long: because through the great losse of bloud (which is the lives treasure) the spirits and heate are dissolved (117). By bleeding laboring women from their arms, feet, or ankles, one could feasibly regulate the gaskets, so to speak, of the leaky business of birth.

Bloodletting as a practice in Shakespeare's London has been widely discussed as early modern society's way of conceptualizing and managing the immaterial meanings of their material world. Physicians and barber-surgeons performed phlebotomy according to their own customs and in reference to medical manuals of the time, like Nicholas Gyer's *The English phlebotomy*.[47] A bleeding could be ordered for any number of malady, and many believed it should be done yearly, in the spring if possible, for maintaining proper health and balance of the

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bent to know…scann'd" (3.4.133; 139); "see" (4.1.63); "Second Apparition, *a bloody child*" (4.1.76); "Horrible sight!" (4.1.122); "see" (4.3.105); "accompt/account" (5.1.40); "harbinger" (5.6.10).

[46] For more discussion of early modern forensic medicine, see Malcolm Gaskill, "Reporting Murder: Fiction in the Archives in Early Modern England," *Social History* vol. 23 iss.1, 1998, 25. See also, Lesel Dawson, "'In Every Wound There Is a Bloody Tongue': Cruentation in Early Modern Literature and Psychology," *Blood Matters: Studies in European Literature and Thought, 1400-1700* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 152-66. For a medieval discussion, see Sara M. Butler, *Forensic Medicine and Death Investigation in Medieval England* (London: Routledge, 2014), 140-42.

[47] For more about reading bloodletting instruments as a means of understanding phlebotomy practices and legislation in early modern England, see Eleanor Decamp, "'In such abundance…that it fill a Bason': Early Modern Bleeding Bowls," *Blood Matters: Studies in European Literature and Thought, 1400-1700* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 167-82.

humors. I would argue that not only was bloodletting a highly gendered performance, but within the space of the birthing chamber and the phenomenon of the laboring woman, the decision *not* to let blood complicates an understanding of a woman's excess of blood being essentially excrement. In humoral conceptions of the body, womanly blood, which was inherently impure, was largely excreted through menstruation, and that men commonly received phlebotomy via their barber-surgeons – voluntarily, alongside other uncharged and mundane bits of hygiene such as haircuts, shaving, and tooth extractions, and as they saw a need for it. According to Gyer, women

> are not to be let bloud. In weomen with childe, this is the reason: because naturall heat seruing for digestion, woulde thereby be diminished, and so nutriment would be withholden from the child, which were verie dangerous, if the mother were farre gone with child. The fruit in the womb is nourished by the Termes: and not hauing whereby to be nourished, it must of force in the wombe (hauing life, and wanting nourishment) die for hunger.[48]

The idea that a pregnant woman's excess blood was not only what fed her child, but what eventually also supplied breastmilk after birth, implies that menstrual blood (or so "excess blood" would have been in a woman who was not with child) was, at least on some level and in some circumstances, wholesome.

Physicians, although typically called when a birth had already become dire, were on the whole hesitant to let blood in puerperal women, unless as a last resort. Guillemeau paints a bleak picture of a hemorrhaging woman whose attendants, against the advice of a practitioner, "suffered her to loose her bloud, by little and little, and at last to loose her life" (121). Subversively, the first line of treatment in childbirth involved purgatives, diuretics, clysters, opening and forcing medicines, fumes, and vapors. If these methods failed to produce a baby,

[48] Gyer, 103-104.

surgeons may have resorted to "the operation of the hand" (nails trimmed close), the iron crochet, or the "little crooked knife" if the fetus was found to have died (see fig. 7). In all these interventions, as in much of modern obstetrics, the laboring woman loses her agency "by little and little" until she is a subhuman vessel, not healthy or rightly ordered until she produces a live baby.

Fig. 7

Guillemeau, Jacques. "The little crooked knife." Ca. 1550?-1613. *Child-Birth or, The Happy Deliuerie of Vvomen,* 141. Early English Books Online, https://www.proquest.com/docview/2248560824/99839297?accountid=7117&parentSessionId=Y54JjQZK%2FGV0Q5vDV3E3bEvr%2FJqQBThne1Nf85fd4tg%3D&pq-origsite=summon&sourcetype=Books.

A far less bloody play than the tragedy of *Macbeth*, *The Winter's Tale* is a romance, or tragicomedy, that blends the family drama in the first acts with the lighter moods found in the pastoral motifs, the singing, and ultimately in the happy ending of the latter acts. Nevertheless, metaphorical blood plays a central role in the plot, not to mention the overt eschewing of the real bloody matters such as Hermione's delivery, the death of Mamillius (while not bloody, perhaps germinated in blood), and the bear mauling Antigonus. As an oblique yet connected argument for

what Elisabeth Dutton would call the "rich ambiguity of blood as a stage signifier," where blood is contained or erased rather than "let" or "spilled," we see how the gender politics of the period disrupt a static figuring of the self by the body's functions (193). In a time when obstetrical practice included purgation as a way of quantifying the stages of the birthing ritual, *The Winter's Tale* features proving as a matter of thematic content, yet obscures the issues of birth, both material and metaphorical. Unlike plays that present blood as "a form of sudden appearance that signals an immanent disappearance," what, then, does the *disappearance* of blood in *The Winter's Tale* signal? (Joe Moshenska 94).

Blood's effacement in the obscuring of the birthing scene is a symbolic gesture toward the play's larger motif of controlling, and ultimately ousting, the feminine. Until Leontes begins to feel threatened by Polixenes and Hermione's relationship, the discussion of Hermione's motherhood and pregnancy is deferred, both by her attendants and by Leontes himself, and he is thereby able to effectively quarantine femininity. Leontes only confronts Hermione about her suspected sexual indiscretion after his fears are confirmed by the king-in-question's timely departure from Sicilia, and it is at this point that Leontes leans into the ideas of pedigree via blood and the other bodily fluids that nourish life and constitute personhood. Leontes enters Hermione's chamber without warning, and seemingly without initially taking notice of her or her ladies. Ephraim notes, "Leontes imagines an adulteress whose pregnant body allows men to enter and exit without leaving a trace of ocular proof" (51). For Leontes, Hermione's body is already a repository for lawful male begetting; the intercourse he imagines between Polixenes and his wife is confirmed by its being unverifiable. In the context of proving, both paternity and female chastity, that which has entered her body and that which exits are two tenuous matters in respect to her pregnant and childbearing status. If a parturient woman could effectively hide from men

the mysteries of life and original sin within her body, the assumption was that she could also conceal the engendering of manifold offenses.

Blood and Breastfeeding: Purging the Plethoric Female

The susceptibility of the pregnant, childbearing, and nursing woman translates to the susceptibility of those in contact with her, especially the baby not yet weaned. Upon learning of Polixenes' escape with great rapture, his attention pivots to his son, saying, "Give me the boy: I am glad you did not nurse him: / Though he does bear some signs of me, yet you / Have too much blood in him" (2.1.56-58). Writing about the perviousness of female bodies and spaces by males despite an early modern ontology of gender separation, Burzynska points out that "Leontes's unchecked actions also illustrate that he functions within an insidiously anti-woman discourse" (78). The assumption is that although Mamillius – whose very name bears the Latin root for breast, *mamma* – avoided Hermione's tainted blood through her breastmilk, he remains at risk by proximity, and that by removing him from the female space of his mother's chamber, Leontes can purge him of her influence. Hermione's bodily secretion of breastmilk is not only a threat of trans-generational moral contamination but also evidence of the corruption of female-ness more generally and its threat to life by mere association.

Medical experts of the day contended that after she had a baby, a woman's superfluity of blood flowed to the breasts to make milk. Since the hormones produced by breastfeeding usually keep women from menstruating, this was a convenient conclusion to draw; on the other hand, we see across many midwifery manuals the authors make allowances for pregnant women who

menstruate and offer recipes and advice for encouraging the menses after birth, both of which are strains of thought that complicate the concepts of plethora and excrement.[49]

> If the Feaver came from too much milk or terms stopt, open a vein in her foot, then purge a way the gross humours with sirrup of Maidenhair, Endive of each one ounce, waters of Succory and Fennel an ounce and half a piece.[50]

Although once again surfeit is the agent of maladaptation, or of complications postpartum, the abundance of milk seems to coincide with the stoppage, or lack, of menstruation. In a cascade theory of the body, the "terms" ceased when the nutrients in the blood were needed elsewhere – such as for sustaining the fetus in utero, or for feeding the infant at the breast – as opposed to what we now know to be a largely hormonal pathway. The early modern solution for this plethora/lack dichotomy was bloodletting from the foot, operating under the belief that the body was a vessel and its fluids could reasonably be "siphoned" toward their proper exits. The purgative recipe, then, functions as an expectorant of humors, the evacuated blood for which is merely the vehicle. Maidenhair, according to Gerard, was used in treating upper respiratory illness: "it helpeth the cough, tipeneth (casts out) tough flegme, and avoideth it by spetting" (983). For purging the phlegm-like qualities of fever-inducing breastmilk, then, maidenhair would have been expedient, the implied effect being interring that which "avoideth" the body or induced one to spit out the threat to health. Another implication we can draw from this excerpt (and one I will explore later in the chapter) is the idea that blood alone, even a surfeit of it, so to speak, is rarely the culprit behind a call for bloodletting for females; the contingency is the presence of other fluids like "slime" (Sharp and Culpeper), "gross humours" (Sharp), or as in the

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[49] For more behind the menstruation/milk pathway, see Sharp, 54; 177-82.

[50] Sharp, 245.

case of what Aristotle calls "*shows*," amniotic fluid he reads as "humours…discoloured with blood" so that blood is only an adjacently visible consequence of the humoral body's flux.

"A spider steep'd": Recipes to Purge the Monstrous-Feminine

Leontes's invites his courtiers to see the villainy he believes to abound, but neither Camillo nor Antigonus nor any of his lords condescend to his fancy. Indeed, Leontes's own "knowledge" is that which effectively poisons his mind, and he confides to one of them,

> There may be in the cup
> A spider steep'd, and one may drink, depart,
> And yet partake no venom (for his knowledge
> Is not infected); but if one present
> Th'abhorr'd ingredient to his eye, make known
> How he hath drunk, he cracks his gorge, his sides,
> With violent hefts. I have drunk, and seen the spider. (2.1.39-45)

While putting spiders in someone's drink was one way to poison an enemy, medicinal uses for spiders also existed in early modern cookery. Adding spiders to wine, taking spiderweb pills with water, or "candying" live spiders in butter and honey would cure an ague or the "wood evill" (dysentery in livestock). For example, Katherine Brown (1650-1662) includes arachnids in Folger manuscript recipe V.a.397, "An other for the same" (for an ague): "A liue spider and put it into a walnutt shell and bind the shell very fast with thrid then soe it in a silke bagg and lett the partie ware it about theire necke" (Fig. 2). In this instance, the spider is not consumed but worn as an amulet of sorts, a kind of auxiliary prophylactic or treatment, which I will discuss at greater depth in chapter three. Beyond helping the generically ill person, the proximity to the threatening agent itself is almost a novelty or spectacle, only one that is unseen, or if seen then perhaps irrevocably lost. The "bottled spider" is a favorite zoomorphism of Richard III, and elsewhere in Shakespeare's works the spider has both positive and negative connotations, at times used to

illustrate a character's mental acuity, at other times their weaving, entrapment, and spewing webs from their "wombs" deeply invested in the threatening, monstrous feminine.[51]

The relationship of arachnophobia, poison, and madness, creeps up again in one of the very first recipes in Margaret Baker's receipt book, "A water of the Leser century worth to bee compared unto gold" (see fig. 8). After a three-page array of the water's virtues, including that it "maketh good coollour…puteth awaye the watry humours…purgeth the bely," and "taketh awaye all corupttion of the bodie quicke or dead," Baker syntactically links "them whose braine is perished and…the franticke" with "a man [who] eate[s] a spider by chance." While the insinuation may not be direct – that the person of unsound mind is also the one who eats spiders – that both afflictions are of the unseen variety and have the same prescription is worth noting. A mentally ill person suffers internally just as one who inters something by accident, or believes they have. For if the spider was unseen, the illness is essentially one of the mind. If the spider was seen, and the person ingested it anyway, questions of sanity (willful eating) and agency (subconscious, self-harmful eating) come into play.

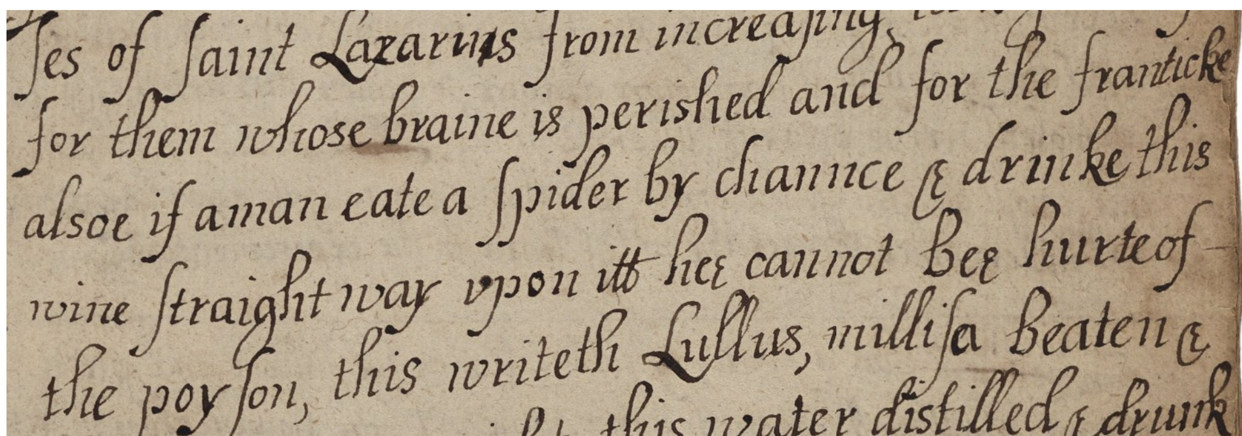
es of saint Lazarus from increasing
for them whose braine is perished and for the franticke
alsoe if a man eate a spider by chaunce & drinke this
wine straight way vpon itt hee cannot bee hurte of
the poyson, this writeth Lullus, millisa beaten &
this water distilled & drunk

Fig. 8

[51] For "bottled spider" see Shakespeare, *King Richard III*, 1.3.242; 4.4.81; see also, Shakespeare, *King John*, 4.3.127-29: "…the smallest thread / That ever spider twisted from her womb / Will serve to strangle thee"; see also, Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, 3.2.120-23: "…here in her hairs / The painter plays the spider, and hath woven / A golden mesh t'entrap the hearts of men / Faster than gnats in cobwebs." For a full examination of the monstrous-feminine as it appears in horror, see Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, and Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 2023).

Baker, Margaret. "A water of the Leser century worth to bee compared unto gold." *Receipt book of Margaret Baker* [manuscript], ca. 1675. *Folger Manuscript Transcriptions Collection*, https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGER~3~3~4097~262550:Receipt-book-of-Margaret-Baker--man%3Fsort%3Dcall_number%252Cmpsortorder1?qvq=q:A%20water%20of%20the%20Leser%20century%20worth%20to%20bee%20compared%20unto%20gold;sort:call_number%2Cmpsort.

Leontes's memorable tale about drinking poisonous spiders, in light of recipes such as these, takes on meanings about purgation and visibility that may not be immediately evident. Kimberly K. Cook places *The Winter's Tale* in conversation with *Macbeth* in terms of the plays being commentaries on the otherwise anti-woman silence during the century most heavily afflicted by the genocides of the European witch trials. "Unlike *Macbeth*, in which the weird sisters present a bizarre and almost comic threat to the king," she writes, "Shakespeare's portrayal of the plights of these virtuous women, [reflects] the victimization of other innocent women" (9). Taken thus, the story of the spider, what could have been an early modern wives' tale, could have also been a subversion of the weird sisters' recipe for a charm in 4.1 *Macbeth*. Although they enumerate most of the creepy, crawly creatures of lore, such as newts, bats, and adders, spiders are curiously absent from the spell. I would suggest that Leontes's potion – wielded by a man about (toward) feminine guilt rather than, as in *Macbeth*, a witch-designed weapon against masculinity – interpolates patriarchal anxieties about a gendered conception of poisoning into his feminized and sexualized investigative narrative. Further, where the sisters' charm has the purpose of implanting mayhem ("Double, double, toil and trouble"), Leontes brings up the spider water to insist on the necessity of regulating femininity through purgation. To underscore this, Anne Barton asserts that Leontes does not necessarily relate the tale of the spider understanding its full potential for incriminating himself in his obsession with seeing: "Whether visible or not, the spider in the cup is itself innocuous: it is the human imagination that is destructive and deadly" (25). The sisters' concoction subversively performs the masculine role of impregnation, which is obscured in the obscene, while Leontes's enacts evacuation "with

violent hefts" like a laboring woman, and his male scopic authority mediates the production of his purgation, that is, the incrimination of his wife.

In the case of Saint Lazarus, to whom Baker also alludes in her century water monograph (see Fig. 2), the ambiguity of death and forensic pathology, or ascertaining what cannot always be seen, is a major theme of the proto-resurrection narrative.[52] According to the story, Lazarus was a friend of Jesus who had been sick (William Lynes argues for a progressive illness such as pneumonia, plague, or cancer leading to sepsis), and the news of his death reached Jesus as he was *en route* to heal the man.[53] Famously, Jesus wept when he reached Lazarus' tomb, and then raised him back to life against protests from the crowd who knew him to be well on his way to putrefaction. While my aim is not to prove or disprove the veracity of this story, the connection to *The Winter's Tale* is not insignificant. In early modern and pre-modern mortuary practices, verifying death involved the visible signs of blood (in the case of a violent death), skin pallor, and *rigor mortis*. Qualifying the invisible matters of death, or what *really happens* to a person in loss of life, on the other hand, was more fluid and the access point for ritual, as I argue in the context of the postpartum rituals in chapter three. Hermione's death, the climax of the first half of the play, is the specular component of the Oracle's auricular indictment of Leontes. However manifest was her demise, given the miraculous resurrection of Hermione in the final act, we can interrogate the methods by which her death was determined. Paulina, as usual, makes the pronouncement as if her words are the last of the Oracle's message to Leontes.

> I say she's dead: I'll swear't. If word nor oath
> Prevail not, go and see: if you can bring
> Tincture, or lustre in her lip, her eye,
> Heat outwardly or breath within, I'll serve you
> As I would do the gods. (3.2.201-05)

[52] I discuss resurrection arcs and death rituals, both linked to the story of Lazarus, in greater depth in chapter three.
[53] For a more extensive forensic pathology of the biblical character, see Lynes, "Lazarus, Forensic Pathology of the Bible," LynesOnline.com, 2020.

She entangles the death of the queen with the guilt of the king, submitting Hermione's body as the proof of his wrongful accusation. Moreover, she points to the corporeal evidence of skin pallor (the lack of "lustre in her lip"), low body temperature (lack of "Heat outwardly"), and the stoppage of movement and function (lack of "breath within") (3.2.203-04). Paulina's examples of death, beyond being evidence of absence, function rhetorically rather than forensically, serving as a challenge to anyone foolish enough to doubt her testimony, as Leontes did to his own detriment.

Birth Chamber, Prison, or Pregnant Embodiment: Purging the Permeable Place of the Female

Hermione's labor and delivery, like most instances of dramatic childbearing in the period, are unrepresented on the stage, just as Leontes denies her the "child-bed privilege" of not only a safe and comfortable place to bear her child, but also the adequate time to rest and recover postpartum (3.2.102). Paster, and Kathryn M. Moncrief after her, remarks that "Childbirth is especially invisible" in early modern performance despite pregnancy being "a particularly visual phenomenon" (Paster, *Body Embarrassed* 163; Moncrief, "'Show me a child…'" 30). As I have argued above, Leontes treats Hermione's pregnancy as a side-issue, only latently acknowledging her condition as evidence of her infidelity. He further erases her delivery even when he comes face-to-face with the child. Although Leontes intrudes on Hermione's intended birthing chamber, Paulina's second verbal installment outside the jail cell in 2.2 is as close as we get to Hermione's actual place of having her baby. I would argue that Hermione's imprisonment, both literal and figurative, functions with the same selective permeability of the feminine, humoral body, and it is this permeability, both in the play and in the live birthing chamber, that patriarchal systems

and medical practitioners seek to regulate through purgation. When Paulina requests to enter Hermione's cell ("Conduct me to the queen"), the gaoler forbids it, saying, "I may not, madam: / To the contrary I have express commandment" (2.2.7-8). Based on Paulina's outrage, we can assume the "express commandment" comes from the king, as it contradicts the lawful allowance of visitors to noble persons in jail, especially to a newly delivered queen. Rather than yield to Paulina's dispute and let her enter, the gaoler instead permits Emilia, Hermione's lady attendant, to exit, only once Paulina's (unnamed and unscripted) Gentleman and her attendants take their leave. Of course, the gaoler's sole purpose being that of gatekeeping, his vigilance is not too remarkable; on the other hand, the excess to which he performs his duty – shunting Paulina's party, remaining present for her "conference," and choosing Emilia to come out rather than Paulina to go in – exhibits an abundance of male control that Shakespeare spent half the scene to illustrate.

Another preoccupation of this moment is that of imprisonment: the literal confinement of Hermione by her cell and by her body's constraint of bearing and birthing a child, and the figurative bondage of being a woman in a society, which determines the degree of freedom based on one's anatomical form and physiological function. Emilia gives Paulina news of Hermione's state by quoting the queen: "'My poor prisoner, / I am innocent as you'" (2.2.28-29). Later, Paulina repeats her sentiment, saying,

> This child was prisoner to the womb, and is
> By law and process of great nature, thence
> Free'd and enfranchis'd; not a party to
> The anger of the king, nor guilty of
> (If any be) the trespass of the queen. (2.2.59-61)

The latter lines imply a relationship of imprisonment, the womb, and guilt by association. Burzynska argues that these lines bring forth "the essential paradox of the early modern pregnant

embodiment, in which women simultaneously find themselves prisoners to their pregnancies and jailers to their infants" (82). While in the womb, the fetus is not only imprisoned physically, but legally she bears the incrimination of the mother on account of society's privileging the mother/baby dyad. Expunging guilt depends on the successful birth, and likewise all evacuations of the mother, spontaneous or forced, once freed from the female body, in one way or another prove the moral failings of the one who is still imprisoned by her own flesh. Paulina hints at the fallibility of being female that her leaky body necessarily signifies: "I'll use that tongue I have: if wit flow from't / As boldness from my bosom, let's not be doubted / I shall do good" (2.2.52-54). Although men like Leontes and the gaoler have the power of retention, women *will* flow, Paulina suggests, whether from their tongues, bosoms, or breasts. In regulating what, how, and from whence she will flow, Paulina believes she can change the pathways of womanly guilt.

To do this, Paulina once again confronts Leontes with language, but this time she employs a visual aid, that of the king's baby daughter, Perdita. She challenges him, "Call your children yours," and Leontes performs the transition phase of childbirth, as I suggested, in his vehemence to expel Paulina. The custom of presenting the newborn babe to its father was an early modern rite of birth and also a trial of paternity when, for whatever reason, the man was uncertain. Leontes's refusal to participate in this masculine part, therefore, is all the more glaring when taken with his maternal-coded role as the one who would effectively evacuate the (not-so) long-suffered suppliant and her insinuation of *his* guilt. Presenting the baby as one would a mirror aggrandizes the blurring of gender, both in the language and the performance. The female Perdita is a "copy of the father: eye, nose, lip; / The trick of's frown; his forehead… / The pretty dimples of his chin and cheek" (2.3.99-101). Here, proving lies in mirroring, only – unlike Caroline Bicks's rendering of early modern mirror theory which entailed an "imagining of the

male body as a site of patriarchal masculinity against which the female body was measured" – the genders of father and daughter are conflated in the ambiguous use of "his" and "pretty" (3). The audience must question if the mirror is the sounder image, if the "copy" is the source text.

Paulina juxtaposes and disrupts the roles of woman/delivered and man/deliverer in her final plea, and she simultaneously casts off the men who appear to grab her, evoking the intervening hands of a midwife or physician.

> I pray you, do not push me; I'll be gone.
> Look to your babe, my lord: 'tis yours…
> …What needs these hands?
> You, that are thus so tender o'er his follies,
> Will never do him good, not one of you. (2.3.124-28)

By suggesting Leontes is the one who has something to expel, Paulina condemns him of having a faulty constitution. However, as she and the courtiers present have witnessed, he is powerless to "push" her out on his own, and she leaves of her own volition – "I'll be gone" (2.3.124). Additionally, Paulina yet again fashions his lords as midwives or physicians attending on a birth who by use of hands more tender than those they lay on her fail to purge the king of his distemper and thus "Will never do him good" (2.3.128). By swearing, "The bastard brains with these my proper hands / Shall I dash out," Leontes attempts to assert his control over both Paulina's indictment and the situation as a whole. Seeking to reinstate himself in the male/deliverer role, he commandeers her image of the midwife with hands that would safely deliver a child into the world and becomes the one who brings a violent and bloody end to the new life. His lords expand on the conceit, worrying that "this purpose, / Which being so horrible, so bloody, must / Lead on to some foul issue" (2.3.150-52). Their words figuratively purge Hermione from her place and birthing scene, inadvertently casting Leontes back into the position of the childbearing woman whose "foul issue" is the result and proof of her inward guilt. When

Leontes replays the theme of tenderness by reinscribing Paulina as "Lady Margery" the midwife with whom Antigonus has acted "tenderly officious," the re-coding of gender and guilt is crystallized, and the portrayal of purgation as being ultimately helpful is unsettled (2.3.59).

In much the same way, the purgative interventions of the early modern birthing chamber illustrate the conceptualization of the female body as inherently permeable and requiring patriarchal regulation. In an era of humoral medicine where treating disease first required making the patient more "soluble," early modern obstetrics heightened these anxieties. By virtue of its focus on the female reproductive system and anatomy, the birthing chamber, thought to be a sort of female "holy of holies" where male access was limited or outright denied, became a space where male control was threatened and therefore more violently interjected. What should have been the exclusive office of females became regulated by male medical authority, turning a natural phenomenon into another location of treating or keeping the female body from going awry, if not a location from which the woman herself – her subjectivity and her perspective – could be effectively purged. In modern obstetrics, we see the field of labor and delivery undergoing the same stigma, in which women receive intervention upon admittance, and the focus centers on what exits the body as a result or as the proof of success. Read in this light, early modern purgative recipes can be an entry point to disrupt the double-pronged issue of the patriarchal anxiety about obscure pregnant embodiment and a privileging of the visual outcomes of birth. Because these recipes deal with what goes into the body and the body's humoral productions (i.e., the "vital spirits") go *unseen*, the recipes themselves are a valuable tool for understanding points at which visual evidence was not necessarily the end goal and how women could ingest agency in childbirth.

CHAPTER THREE: POULTICES, PLASTERS, AND CATAPLASMS
SCULPTING THE EARLY MODERN MOTHER

> There are women that dwell beyond the Antartique Pole, whose bodies are entire and Virgin like, euen after often child-bearing, and in whom there is perceiued no difference from them that are Virgins…But since there bee no such women found in our quarters…therefore will it be very necessary to have a care what is to be done, to their belly, breasts, and nether-parts.
> —Jacques Guillemeau, 1609

> …cover it over with white Wax, that it may not be offensive…
> —Jane Sharp, 1671

> …to the end they may as much as possible be strengthen'd and confirm'd: I say as much as possible, because there is no probability that they can ever be reduc'd to the same Estate they were in before she had Children.
> —Francios Mauriceau, 1668

The final scene of *The Winter's Tale* has famously given scholars and readers more questions than answers regarding Hermione's statue coming to life before the eyes of her estranged husband and returned daughter. The play that began as a tragedy reforms itself neatly into a comedy when all the characters, alive and well (except for Mamillius), gather around to remark on the sculptor's brilliance in casting their queen with all the beauty and nobility she exuded in life.

> But here it is: prepare
> To see the life as lively mock'd as ever
> Still sleep mock'd death: behold, and say 'tis well.
> [*Paulina draws a curtain, and discovers Hermione standing like a statue.*]
> (5.3.18-20)

As the stage direction implies, Hermione's actor performs the statue from the outset, but the audience's expectation of the dramatic revivification largely depends on the stagecraft and costuming, as well as on their concept of rendering life. Details from the text inform us of her "colour," that her "veins / Did verily bear blood," and that "the ruddiness upon her lip is wet" (5.3.47; 64-65; 81). Moreover, Leontes and Polixenes perceive that the sculpture "breathed," that

"her eye has motion in't," and that the "very life seems warm upon her lip" (5.3.64; 67; 66). Unlike the image of the blank, white Greco-Roman statue of contemporary performances since the 19th century's Mary Anderson as a reticent and guarded Hermione (see fig. 9), the sculpture/actress of the original early modern performance would have been the epitome of the Italian Renaissance's mannerism art – colorful, lifelike, and with so much "majesty" in her "natural posture" that Paulina repeatedly attempts to re-cover her after her unveiling.

Fig. 9

Van der Weyde, Henry, photographer. "Mary Anderson as Hermione." 1887. *Shakespeare Birthplace Trust*, https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespedia/shakespeares-plays/winters-tale/.

Early performances, in which the revelation of a living Hermione was an "analogic incongruity," as Eric Langley puts it, giving Shakespeare's comedic ending a "discordant resonance with unsettling literary antecedents" his audiences recognized from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, for example, would have necessitated the use of makeup and fabric in order to

achieve the layered irony of a body-being-a-sculpture-being-a-body (319). We know from Hermione's descending from the pedestal and taking her husband's hand that she was not actually cast in a rigid substance or a cumbersome costume to mimic marble, but rather that her performance itself made her statuesque. Her pristine form with "such life…warm life, / As now it coldly stands, when first [Leontes] woo'd her" contrasts severely with the last image of Hermione we saw in Act 3: bloody and bedraggled, the "child-bed privilege denied" (5.3.35-36; 3.2.102). From this frightful figure, she is recast, both in countenance and in Leontes's estimation, and he commemorates her majesty, castigating his own evil in "being more stone than it" (5.3.38). For, while Hermione lost her child-bed privilege and instead endured the public humiliation of defending her own honor in court, scholars like Alicia Andrzejewski have argued that her disappearance and the caregiving of Paulina constitute a "sixteen-year lying-in ceremony that revives and then 'preserves'" her (44). Her reemergence as a "benignly generative maternal presence" for some locates her idealized form as the solution to the male anxiety of grotesque femininity in childbearing, rendering the woman as the object, yet again, of male fantasy (Janet Adelman 194). I would further argue that the material details of Hermione's ceremonial reappearance as a sculpture, read within the context of the early modern "lying-in" or childbed period as a ritual process, function as symbolic of the mother's removal from and subsequent return to harmonious and acceptable femininity – physically, sexually, and socially. Rather than bringing the mother into a newly created life after giving birth, I see the childbed rituals as taking her *back* – back to dormancy, back to virginity, and back to whiteness, as if her brush with life during childbirth was too close for patriarchal comfort.

Adelman and other scholars qualify Hermione's regeneration as mainly a resurrection story: brought from death to life. I would add that her reappearance not only marks the end of a

death, whether social, sexual/matrimonial, or political, but also of an extended childbed period for which her statue form would have been the recognizable sign of the threshold or liminal space of the birthing chamber. In addition to Adelman, I use Victor Turner's theory of ritual process to frame the lying-in space as a "symbolic milieu that represent[s] both a grave and a womb" and its central figure, the newly delivered mother, as "neither here nor there…betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (95-96). For Turner, the "neophyte in liminality," whom I fashion to be the mother, "must be a *tabula rasa*," and I suggest early modern midwifery practices accomplished this through the laying-on of linens, poultices, cerecloths, cataplasms, plasters, and emollient creams, literally molding the woman's body back to a pre-pregnancy state. The topical treatments of early modern postpartum care are heavily documented in midwifery manuals; however, little scholarship has given focus to these practices, especially as they seem to be the central, material evidence of the lying-in period as a purification ritual.

Once a woman gave birth, her "lying-in" or "down-lying" began. Her chamber was kept closed and dark to keep out contaminating air, and the fireplace and candles would stay lit to bring warmth back to her body and to light the shut-up room.[54] Although the midwife would not change the woman's bedlinens for "three days up to a fortnight or more," she would cover the woman's breasts, belly, and privates with swaths or cataplasms immediately after childbirth (171). A customary practice that bordered on the religious or occult was to use the skin of a sheep, "flea'd alive for this purpose, to be laid all over her Belly, and to lie on four or five Hours" (Francios Mauriceau 249). For obstetric authorities like Mauriceau, the method of laying-

[54] For an anthropological look at the early modern lying-in period, see Adrian Wilson, *Ritual and Conflict: the Social Relations of Childbirth in Early Modern England* (Routledge, 2016), 170-81.

on or binding-up with skins or cloths was meant to seal up the openings of the woman's body that were now more vulnerable than ever, but the undertone of many of these texts suggests a more public-leaning concern with appearances and perhaps even with smells. In the extreme case of uterine prolapse, for example, Jane Sharp prescribed a cork pessary that she suggested should be covered "over with white Wax, that it may not be offensive" (148). Throughout the month-long lying-in process, the poultices and plasters changed along with the woman's changing body – starting with "anoint[ing] her secrets" to keep her privates clean and protect any tearing or episiotomy cuts, and later progressing to the binding remedies for engorged or feverish breasts. The medical end was relief and recovery *for* the woman, but implicit in texts such as the epigraphs to this chapter was the desire for recovery *of* the woman in the ideological and more sinister sense: patriarchy's toxic nostalgia for the virginal form, lost irrevocably to its simultaneous demand for progeny. Plasters, I will argue, played an integral role in ushering the postnatal woman (in a large sense, backward) through the symbolic thresholds –life to death, asexual to sexual, and socially marginal to socially central – of the postpartum rituals according to these patriarchal ideals.

The Death-to-Life Motif of Swathing

In the first tragic half of *The Winter's Tale*, we left Hermione presumably dead by the declaration of Paulina:

> I say she's dead: I'll swear't. If word nor oath
> Prevail not, go and see: if you can bring
> Tincture, or lustre in her lip, her eye,
> Heat outwardly or breath within, I'll serve you
> As I would do the gods. (3.2.201-05)

Although we are familiar with the outcome of the play, her death is not difficult to imagine. She has endured a traumatic delivery, in a jail cell and "something before her time," meaning she gave birth prematurely. What is more, Leontes has her dragged before the court for sentencing a few days postpartum, at which time she would under normal circumstances have been bedbound. According to early modern custom, a woman would not have been allowed out of bed for the first four or five days after delivery, and then only to remain in her birthing chamber for a fortnight or more. It is in the courtroom Hermione learns of Leontes's insane denial of her innocence, even after the Oracle's exoneration, and of her son's death. Under these conditions, as well as in the tragic mode of the play until now, her death seems inevitable.[55] For early modern audiences, the time immediately following labor and delivery was fragile and the mortality rates for mother and infant were not negligible. The entanglement of death and new life was an ontological tenant for early modern ritual and religion, and what happened to a woman after childbirth followed the stages common to every ritual, including those pertaining to death. Adrian Wilson points out that the lying-in period offered a cultural answer to nature's predicament of the trauma of giving birth: "with the demarcation of the lying-in room achieving separation, the 'month' of isolation accomplishing transition and the final churching ceremony making for reincorporation" (191). Paulina's references to Hermione's physical appearance, as I argued in the previous chapter, connote a preoccupation with forensic evidence; the deeper issue at stake, though, is the ritualistic process of mortuary practice, the representing and handling of a body after death.

Because of the ritualistic links between death and birth/lying-in practices like anointing both dead bodies and postnatal bodies, we can read late medieval and early modern embalming

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[55] For more on *The Winter's Tale* as a tragicomedy, as well as its self-referent moments as such, see Michael Saenger, "Nashe, Tragicomedy, and *The Winter's Tale*." *Notes and Queries*, no. 1 (2015), 116-17.

and mortuary art in tandem with postnatal swathing, cupping, and covering. Sculpting the body both *en vie* and post-mortem was a commemorative tradition carried to the early modern era from ancient Eastern civilizations like Egypt. Folger manuscript E.a.5 details the art of Egyptian embalming practices as part of the author's robust history and philosophy of medicine.

> …whenso'ere a man of any fashion dyes, then all the women of that family besmear's there heade & faces with Clay, & leaving the Corps at home, they wandring vp & downe the Citty, beate themselues, having there garments girt about them, & there breasts bare, & together with them goe allso the neighboring women…This done they at length Carry them to Embaulming, for there are Certaine appointed for this purpose who doe the feate; those whenas a Body is brought them, shew the bringers therof Certaine wooden portraitures of dead bodies artificially painted, & say they, this one is most acurately made.[56]

Plastering, then, was not only a process of preparing the dead for burial, but also a symbolic gesture of those in mourning, as they smeared their own faces with clay in what Turner calls the "communitas" of anonymity (96). Related to the placing of ashes on the forehead to remember the death of Christ, painting the body with clay or dirt was an acknowledgement of the death that awaits all without partiality; as the saying goes, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust." This equalizing and effacing function of death went through a sort of reversal as the morticians painted and masked the person's face and body with identifying details, and as the manuscript shows, accuracy was important. In the late medieval period, carved cadaver sculptures became prevalent for the wealthy, and devotion to detail was taken to the extreme by emphasizing muscles, ligatures, and even post-mortem paraphernalia like chin straps used to keep the jaw closed.[57] According to Christina Welch, "*memento mori* sculptures largely reject[ed] any notion of resting in peace" with cadavers represented with emaciated bodies and facial expressions contorted in

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[56] Anonymous, E.a.5, "Medical miscellany [manuscript]," (ca. 1634), 85-86.
[57] For more on the late-medieval extant effigy sculptures, see Christina Welch, "Exploring Late-Medieval English Memento Mori Carved Cadaver Sculptures," *Death in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: The Material and Spiritual Conditions of the Culture of Death* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 331-65.

the final agony throes of the departed. For Welch, the tension between death and life, stillness and restlessness, and peace and pain conveys a person who is in a liminal state, not unlike the delivered woman. Critical for the early modern postnatal woman would have been the re-affirmation of life after such a close call with death; laying on sheepskins, plasters of mutton suet, and cupping the body in order to draw blood to and enliven certain organs such as the breasts were all attempts, not unlike the lifelike effigy sculptures of the period, to model people after the fashion of life and pre-puerperal youth.[58] Alternatively, I argue, these practices could also be read as attempts to bring the woman back from the brink of life. After all, in a strict binary, death is pristine and life is messy, bloody, and violent. However, in a more nuanced way, death and life constantly overlap, from the near-death experiences reported by many to the autophagy of the cells in every living organism. Just as the *memento mori* sculptures depicted the liminal, liveliness of death, so the cataplasms of the birthing chamber mimicked the scene of stoic burial to subdue the deadliness of life.

With the ritual of laying-on sheepskin, early modern practitioners brought the religious facet of death, substitutionary atonement, into the birthing chamber despite an apparent want of medical substance to the practice. Mauriceau's description of sheepskin swathing gave for its primary purpose keeping the new mother's belly hot, but he had practical reservations about the folk remedy.[59] For starters, the need for a butcher to be at the ready in order for the skin to still be hot by the time it was laid on was unsustainable. In fact, the author suspected the animal skin's moisture would have the opposite effect of chilling the woman. Even so, Mauriceau (along with Sharp, Culpepper, Guillemeau, and even the receipt book of Catherine Bacon)

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[58] For a recipe for a suet poultice, see Thomas Sheppey, "A Pultiss either to break or dissolve any hard swelling in the brest or else where," Folger manuscript V.a.452, 252.
[59] Mauriceau, 249.

acknowledged and supported the practice.[60] For Guillemeau particularly, the prescription of the sheepskin attached itself to the ideologically entrenched preference for the "Virgin like" female form. For this author, if the woman's body could, as we say, "bounce back" to her pre-baby status, "it would then be needles to prescribe so many medicines, for the restoring them to the same state they were in before their beeing with child" (195). The understood "medicine" would have been the sheepskin, a symbolically laden signifier whose medicinal power was more ritualistic than practical. As Mauriceau and others granted, sheepskin was only useful in recovery as long as it was hot, four or five hours until it could be replaced by the cerecloths and liniments that molded (and remolded with each changing) the woman's parts for at least seven more days.

As a metaphorical treatment, however, sheepskin was highly evocative for early modern culture. In *The Winter's Tale*, the symbol of the sheep reoccurs throughout the play, alluding to biblical motifs and invoking the pastoral mode of the fourth act that bisects the play. The imagery of sheep enters with the first scene as Leontes and Hermione play the benevolent hosts to Polixenes, imploring him to remain with them in Sicilia rather than sail home to Bohemia. To draw him in, Hermione asks him to reminisce about his and Leontes's boyhood, and he obliges her with rose-tinted language.

> We were as twinn'd lambs that did frisk i'th'sun,
> And bleat the one at th'other: what we chang'd
> Was innocence for innocence: we knew not
> The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dream'd
> That any did. (1.2.67-71)

[60] See Sharp, 180. While Sharp does not explicitly endorse the flaying of a live sheep, she includes both landanum (see following) and sheep's milk as effectual ingredients in an plaster for the womb. See also Culpeper, 195; Guillemeau, 195; Bacon, "A Medicine to take away the after pains of women newly delivered," Folger manuscript V.a.621, 4.

Polixenes's pastoral equates youth with innocence, original sin having not yet been made manifest because of the absence of the female "other." The boys experienced perfect unity without the sexual tension that is immanent in the scene and comprises the conflict and catalyst of the plot. It is not the boys'/men's innocence that is on trial, but by assimilating youth and male friendship with Christ (the Lamb of God) and spiritual purity/wholeness, Polixenes makes of Hermione's body the locale of distrust and sin. Adelman writes that Hermione's "visible pregnancy stages the submerged logic of his account of original sin: temptations have been born to us, her presence suggests, because we have been born to them, acquiring original sin at the site of origin" (221). More than her female anatomy, her pregnancy and forthcoming delivery give evidence to Polixenes and Leontes of her inherent impurity, starkly contrasted by the virginal pastoral depicted in the twin male lambs. The introduction of this springtime, Edenic memory in a generically tragic "winter's tale" positions the characters for a fall, and the reference to lambs brings to mind the Christological image of a *via dolorosa*, a predetermined procession that the characters now take like "sheep to the slaughter." In fact, the next time we hear about the two sheep is when the old shepherd regretfully abandons them to the wolf in favor of saving the life of the baby Perdita. The lambs represent innocence and new life even as they insinuate an ever encroaching, sacrificial death.

The Sexual (Re)Awakening Symbolism of Anointing

Returning to the second half of the play, the symbol of the sheep acquires another layer of significance when the now sixteen-year-old Perdita prepares for her foray into womanhood as the mistress of the sheep-shearing festival. She and her lover, Florizel, the prince of Bohemia, have met offstage under false pretenses without their knowing of her lineage. Both believing her

to be a shepherdess by birth, the young couple's romance is not marred by societal expectations in spite of Florizel's royal status. However, Perdita's qualms with their social disparity surface when her duties at the festival ironically require her to dress above her station as a goddess or queen (who, as the audience knows, she is) and Florizel as a peasant. The prince reassures her that her garb only serves to highlight the nobility she already possesses.

> These your unusual weeds, to each part of you
> Do give a life: no shepherdess, but Flora
> Peering in April's front. This your sheep-shearing
> Is a meeting of the petty gods,
> And you the queen on't. (4.4.1-5)

Likewise, the sights and smells of the sheep-shearing festival "do give a life," with a frisky, freshly shorn flock emanating fertility; the food Perdita ordered, spiced with saffron, nutmeg, and ginger, wafting on the air and waiting to be devoured; and the bouquets of flowers she assembled supplying the scene with color. In true pastoral form, the setting and costuming reflect the characters' love, which elevates to the status of royalty whether or not they are actually country folk, contrasting the emotional bankruptcy of the courtly characters like Leontes and Polixenes.

Still, Perdita frets over her discordant dressing and the deeper issue of her social compatibility with Florizel even into the feast as she greets her guests with herbs and flowers. To a disguised Polixenes, she bestows rosemary and rue, symbolic of "grace and remembrance" and tinged dull green or brown (4.4.74). Polixenes calls them "flowers of winter," representing old age, as if to remark upon their dry, lackluster effect at a springtime festival, and Perdita defends them against the brighter and prettier "carnations and streak'd gillyvors, / Which some call nature's bastards" (4.4.82-83). Perdita shows her reticence for marrying the prince, but the king unwittingly affirms the practice of crossing class lines by stating,

> You see, sweet maid, we marry
> A gentler scion to the wildest stock,
> And make conceive a bark of baser kind
> By bud of nobler race. This is an art… (4.4.92-95)

Although she cannot agree, Perdita appeases him with summer flowers to add to the winter and turns next to the young people in attendance, Mopsa and the other girls, handing out the springtime blossoms that symbolize the sexual awakening of youth.

Signifying old, middle, or young age, flowers had much to do with sexual status in the early modern era. The language Perdita employs to elucidate the merits of spring's flowers evokes sexuality with phrases like "virgin branches," "maidenheads growing," "beauty," "sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes / Or Cytherea's breath," and "primroses / That die unmarried, ere they can behold / Bright Phoebus in his strength" (4.4.115; 116; 120; 121-24). Her speech climaxes with the flowers she reserves for Florizel, lilies "To strew him o'er and o'er!"

> FLORIZEL What, like a corpse?
> PERDITA No, like a bank, for love to lie and play on:
> Not like a corpse; or if – not to be buried,
> But quick, and in mine arms. Come, take your flowers.
> (4.4.129-32)

Death and life once again converge in these lines depicting a corpse revivified for, or perhaps *by*, love. The imagery of the couple lying on the bank of a stream, strewn "o'er and o'er" with flowers, not only calls up pastoral motifs of verdant landscapes and carnal pleasure, but it also alludes to the most well-known shepherding passage for early modern audiences, Psalm 23.

> The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
> He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
> He leadeth me beside the still waters.
> He restoreth my soul. (23:1-3, KJV)

The image here rereads the classical shepherd scene with orgasmic connotations that reinforce the use of folk and farming remedies to reconstruct the female body back into sexual order. The symbol of the bank beside the stream links shepherding to "greenness" and plant-life, much the same as the numerous early modern swathing recipes that combined some part of the sheep with either lilies or roses. For example, Catherine Bacon's recipe, "For sore Nipples when one give Suck" brings death and sensuality together to bear upon maternity (see fig. 10). The combination of "a leg of mutton boyled" with "red rose" petals and rosewater to "anoint the nipples" performs the dual-function of evoking both Levitical scenes of death – feasts and sacrifices – and the erotic, rose-strewn vision of the female form.[61]

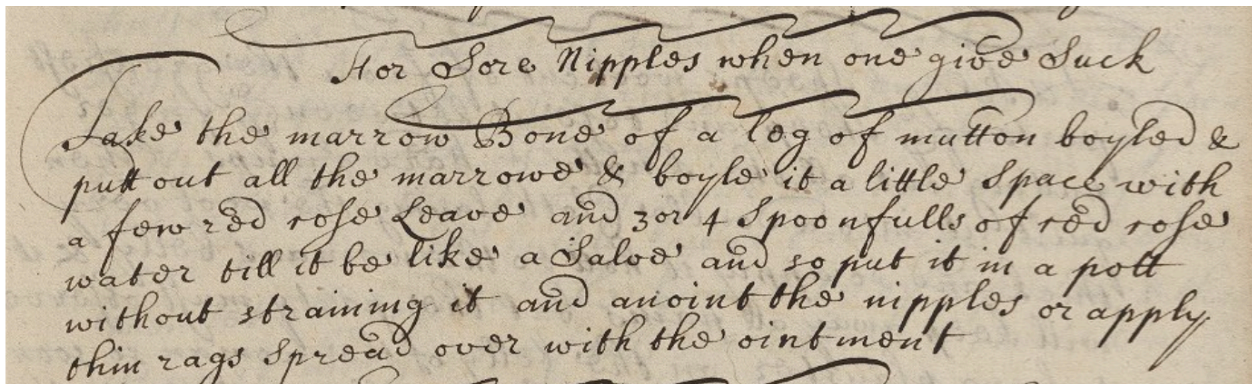
For Sore Nipples when one give Suck
Take the marrow Bone of a leg of mutton boyled &
putt out all the marrowe & boyle it a little Space with
a few red rose Leaves and 3 or 4 Spoonfulls of red rose
water till it be like a Salve and so put it in a pott
without straining it and anoint the nipples or apply
thin rags Spread over with the ointment

Fig. 10

Bacon, Catherine. "For Sore Nipples when one give Suck." ca. 1680s-1739. *Receipt Book of Catherine Bacon [manuscript]*. V.a.621. 145. Folger Shakespeare Library, https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGER~3~3~18488~281176:Receipt-book-of-Catherine-Bacon--ma%3Fsort%3Dcall_number%252Cmpsortorder1?qvq=w4s:/what%2FReceipt%2Bbook%2Bof%2BCatherine%2BBacon%2B%255Bmanuscript%255D.;q:catherine%20bacon;sort:call_num.

During lying-in, a woman's birthing chamber, much like the intervening pastoral between the tragic and comic halves of the play, became a liminal space. Its sights and smells – the many

[61] Holly Dugan analyzes the use of "aromatic stage properties" like the rosewater used in *The Assault on the Castle of Virtue* (1522), arguing that the damask rose represented both the erotic frivolity and the divine right to rule of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. See Dugan, "Casting Selves: Rosewater, Casting Bottles, Court," *The Ephemeral History of Perfume: Scent and Sense in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 42-69.

candles burning like incense, the blood of the sacrificial lamb and the unchanged bedlinens, the unctuous herbs, flowers, and balms of the medicines – contributed not only to its holiness as a realm of religious purification, but also to its being a place of sexual reawakening for the postnatal woman. In addition to the skins and cerecloths used to bind up her belly, many midwifery manuals called for poultices and ointments to be applied to a woman's breasts and privates. These recipes used the same flowers that Perdita gave as part of her own "coming out," including red roses and lilies in various emollient forms. For Sharp alone, poultice recipes list oil of roses, syrup of roses, conserve of roses, or honey of roses.[62] Culpeper also favors roses for unguents and ointments as well as for fomentations.[63] For example, he lumps one rosy postpartum ointment together with a fume of red roses for the same purpose: "Anoint the belly with the ointment of the Countess and other astringents, or use astringents, fomenations, or let her take into the womb a fume of mastich, frankincense, red roses…" (143).[64] Frankincense harkens to the gift given at the birth of Christ that simultaneously signaled his royalty and the anointing of his death. Lillies were also of important use in postnatal care, and oil of lilies appears in many recipes for poultices. Sharp advises midwives after a difficult delivery, in which the perineum is torn to "anoint the privities and fundament with…Oil of Worms, of Foxes, and of the Lillies of the Vallies, each alike" (see fig. 11). A midwife was to anoint her own hands

[62] See Sharp, 245; 247; 302; 305; and 306.
[63] For example, see Culpeper, 23. Interestingly, Culpeper also relies on roses in their various medicinal forms for his lengthy treatment of sexually transmitted diseases in women and of the amputation or drying of an elongated clitoris, see Culpeper, 3-8. I would argue that given these examples, the use of roses had a greater metaphorical concern with acceptable gender performance than it did with actual medical effectiveness.
[64] For the Countess ointment, which includes oil of roses and red rose leaves, see Ann Goodenough [1700-75], manuscript W.a.332, "The Countess of Rochesters Receite," Cookery Book of Ann Goodenough (ca. 1770-ca. 1775), 123, https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGER~3~3~5744~263270:Cookery-book-of-Ann-Goodenough--man%3Fsort%3Dcall_number%252Cmpsortorder1?qvq=q:oyntment%20countess;sort:call_number%2Cmpsortorder1&mi=2&trs=3.

with oil of white lilies before assisting in a delivery or laying hands to the mother's body.[65] In these ways flowers, a stereotypically sexual signifier, played an essential role in the oils and unguents that were preparative for a woman's revival as a sexual being, as one who "dies" in the early modern orgasmic sense of the word, and from a state of fruiting to a state of flowering. Additionally, either paired with death signifiers or as unguents for anointing, flowers served to ritualistically ready a new mother for the death implicit in puerperal trauma and loss and for the symbolic dying that could remedy such a close call with life.

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her Privities and Fundament with this following Unguent.

Take Oil of Worms, of Foxes, and of the Lillies of the Vallies, each alike, boil a young blind Puppy in them, ſo long that his Fleſh part from the Bones; then preſs forth all ſtrongly, and add to the ſtraining, *Styrax*, *Calamint*, *Benzoin*, *Opopanax*, *Frankincenſe*, *Maſtick*, of each one dram, a little *Aqua Vitæ*, a little *Wax*; mix them and make of them an Ointment; then let her drink often of this Potion following.

Fig. 11

Sharp, Jane. "A recipe for a torn perineum." 1725. *The compleat midwife's companion*, 120. https://go-gale-com.ezproxy.uta.edu/ps/i.do?p=ECCO&u=txshracd2597&id=GALE%7C++CW0107173930&v=2.1&it=r&sid=bookmark-ECCO&sPage=190&asid=abc31f20&aty=ip.

Flowers, particularly roses, had another indirect association with poultices for postnatal treatment. In her recipe to cure dryness of the womb, an exclusively sexual and largely metaphorical dysfunction, Sharp writes,

> Then take Labdanum two Ounces, Frankincense, Mastick, Liquid Storax, of each half an Ounce, Oil of Cloves and of Nutmegs, of each half a Scruple, Oil of Lillies and Rue, of each one Ounce, Wax sufficient, make a Plaister and lay it over the Region of the Womb.[66]

[65] Sharp, 118.
[66] Ibid., 193.

The primary binding ingredient, labdanum, is a nebulous signifier that crops up in texts under the names of "ladanum" and "lapdanum," but not to be confused with "laudanum" or "landanum," which was an opiate used into the 20th century.[67] Labdanum is a gum resin obtained from the fragrant rock rose that grows in mountainous regions. Importantly, shepherds harvested labdanum from the plants themselves as well as from the wool of sheep and goats that grazed on and among the bushy roses, using long sticks with strips of untanned goat's hide on the end that would accumulate the sticky substance. Interestingly, in the middle of Perdita's homily on flowers, Camillo chimes in, "I should leave grazing, were I of your flock, / And only live by gazing" (4.4.109-10). The play-on-words serves to remind the audience of Perdita's beauty as well as to reproduce the image of the sheep in the midst of the flowers, as if holding the two symbols in tandem was paramount to the meaning of the scene.

As a medicine, labdanum was believed to have many healing properties and a mild stimulant effect, but its primary purpose during the early modern era was as a defense against airborne plague, and people carried pieces of it on their staffs or tied about their necks. Therefore, its odiferous properties must certainly have been part of its draw for the early modern birthing chamber, as well as for midwives plastering the postpartum womb, which was perceived as being affected by smells. Many obstetrical manuals advise midwives to use smell as either a deterrent or attractant for the womb as it returned to normalcy after birth. If a womb was not contracting back to its pre-baby size or if it was prolapsing outside the body, midwives would hold noxious smelling ingredients to the womb and pleasant aromas to the face – or, "sweets to

[67] For variations, see the OED entry for "labdanum, n." See also Percy E. Newberry, "The Shepherd's Crook and the So-Called 'Flail' or 'Scourge' of Osiris," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* (1929) for an in-depth study of ladanum and its ancient harvesting tools and methods.

her nose, and stinks to the womb" (Culpeper 194). The rosy scent of labdanum could feasibly have served this role as a plaster, the same as a sheepskin, "laid on hot," might have done. Noting also the ancient-to-present-day use of lanolin, sebaceous oil harvested from sheep's wool, for treating the cracked nipples of breastfeeding mothers, the relationship of symbolic sheep and the birthing chamber has a deeper meaning and complexity than modern readers might assume. The overlay of approaches in the topical application of sheepskin, rose or lily oils, and labdanum is a holistic protocol that touches on every aspect of anointing – physical, sexual, and spiritual.[68]

The Hospitality Function of Plastering

Host(ess)ing in early modern culture, particularly during the lying-in period, was another part of the postpartum ritual process for which laying-on practices provided an important function. Primarily focusing on the first acts of *The Winter's Tale*, Carson Brakke writes, "Shakespeare's exploration of hospitality's equal capacity for conviviality and destruction intertwined with a consideration of the early modern woman's vulnerability" (10). Centering on Hermione's fraught position between appeasing Leontes as a wife and Polixenes as a host, Brakke's argument works for the early modern woman generally speaking. We can read the early modern birthing chamber further as the specialization of this theory, the axis point of female interest and susceptibility. As soon as a woman's birth pangs began, her husband would perform

[68] While the scope of this paper focuses on the sexual reparation of anointing, its religious connotations are unavoidable. As far as written history goes, anointing with olive oil appears in the biblical texts of Aaron the first high priest of Israel, and later of Saul, the first king of Israel, as well as in the consecration of the articles of the Tabernacle and Jewish temples (Lev. 8:10, KJV; 1 Sam. 10:1, KJV). Interestingly, the Bible also ascribes God's blessings, in the account of Isaac giving Jacob the birthright of his brother Esau, as literally "the *fatnesses* of the earth" (Gen. 27:28, KJV). From there, oil traversed the globe to Europe with Christians using oil in ordaining priests and holy baptisms. The European monarchy still uses fragranced olive oil, consecrated by a priest, in coronation ceremonies, including the coronation of King Charles III. The Middle English etymologies of oil as "holy" and of "chrism," the holy anointing oil, as "crème," exhibit the intersection of food, bodies, and essential value that converges on the material substance of oil, as well as in its material, geographical transport.

the practice of "nidgeting," or traveling door-to-door in their village to notify the woman's female friends who would come to stay with her during her travail.[69] The women, also called her "gossips," helped her through her labor both physically (she would sometimes lay or sit on a friend's lap to deliver the baby) and emotionally by telling stories (winter's tales?) or gossiping. After the baby was born, the friends and midwife would visit the woman daily, bringing monetary gifts in exchange for caudle, a sweet, alcoholic egg yolk or oatmeal drink that the postnatal woman would be expected to provide. Whether through conversation, food and drink, or by the furnishings of her home, the hospitality of the new mother was another "trial by ordeal" affirming that the ritual did not end with the childbirth.

Perdita awakens to her sexuality in her romance with Florizel at the same time she also embarks on womanhood socially through her role as hostess. Her identity as a shepherdess is overpowered by the unmistakability of her noble blood, which manifests as a result of her shepherdess duties. Even Polixenes and Camillo cannot help but notice her grace, typically reserved for the status of courtier and not peasant, exuding not only in her clothing, but also in her ability to perform the Mistress of the Feast by preparing the food and greeting the guests. Exhorting his daughter to play this role, the Shepherd addresses Perdita,

> …You are retired,
> As if you were a feasted one, and not
> The hostess of the meeting: pray you, bid
> These unknown friends to's welcome; for it is
> A way to make us better friends, more known.
> Come, quench your blushes, and present yourself
> That which you are, Mistress o'th' Feast. Come on,
> And bid us welcome to your sheep-shearing,
> As your good flock shall prosper. (4.4.62-70)

[69] See Wilson, 153.

Once a lowly peasant who came into his wealth as a result of finding the baby Perdita with her "faery gold" on the Bohemian shore, the shepherd is concerned with his standing in society, making "better friends" (4.4.66). The sheep-shearing festival would have bolstered his business, boosted the local economy, and, he points out superstitiously, was a way of making his flock prosper, as if the social acceptance of his family portended nature's acceptance of his herd. Twice, his language reinforces the role of hospitality as making those who are "unknown…more known" (4.4.65-66). The implication is that by opening his home, letting the outside world in, he increases what belongs to him even as what is his becomes the shared endeavor of everyone else. His daughter's taking responsibility for the feast, then, is not only a duty to her family, but a rite of passage of femininity; just as the Shepherd's "old wife liv'd, upon / This day she was both pantler, butler, cook, / Both dame and servant; welcom'd all, serv'd all," so too is Perdita to take her place in the cultural tradition of female hospitality. Where the former mistress sang, danced, and hung on the men – "On his shoulder, and his," her face aflame "With labour" – Perdita exceeds the expectations of her class, her pretty "blushes" juxtaposing the Shepherd's late wife's laborious puffing. She plays the role with poise and grace as a noblewoman of the court and wins the proposal of the prince. Her adoptive progenitors, despite their found wealth and play-acted nobility, never rose above their stations of birth, and her father even received a death sentence for attempting to do so. Hospitality, then, promised prosperity beyond birthright but turned out itself to be the birthright of peasantry.

In deconstructing hospitality, scholars both criticize and extol the ideologies behind the roles of the hostess, particularly those related to power dynamics and social construction. Brakke offers a balanced lens of early modern hospitality through the figure of the "tragic hostess" Hermione (1). Beyond hospitality's being either a "generous practice of charity," in which the

woman garners power in her home and community or a "corrosive celebration of excess," in which a man lives out his ideal patriarchy in displaying dominion, I would argue its primary aim is as a way of knowing in the essentialist society of early modern England. To know one's neighbors, to be known by them, and to know and recognize oneself were facets of a deep anxiety over the rift between the personal and public self that was emerging for this culture. The practices of host(ess)ing – gifting (Perdita's bouquets), feeding (the "Three pound of sugar, five pound of currants, rice" she needed, presumably for a pudding), and entertaining (the dancers and Autolycus's music) – are ritualistic aspects of the exchange of knowledge, how guests and hosts know each other and together know their world.[70] Additionally, dressing and disguising are integral to the characters' knowing – or reading and misreading – one another in this scene: Perdita dressed as a queen/good shepherdess host/herself, Florizel dressed as a pauper, and Polixenes and Camillo disguised. Thus, the "a-presenting," or giving of gifts and caudle, the exchange of information in stories and gossiping, and finally, the plastering and veiling of the lying-in ritual are the hospitable acts of exchanging knowledge of self, others, and the world.

Sharp's treatment of the postnatal woman disrupts traditional notions of female hospitality. In advising midwives to "anoint" the woman's "secrets," she nods to ideas of privacy and bodily autonomy early in her section on postpartum care (143). Moving on to how the woman ought to govern her diet (reminiscent of chapter one's discussion of a patriarchal supervision of female appetite), Sharp prescribes small amounts of soft, bland foods after the woman's travail such as jellies, juice of veal or capon, and sugar water with cinnamon. She goes

[70] For more about early modern exorbitant feasting, from which Shakespeare may have been drawing in enumerating foods and ingredients for the sheep-shearing, see Gilly Lehmann, "Henry VIII's Great Feast at Greenwich, May 1527." *The court historian /* 23.1 (2018): 1–12.

on to prescribe conditions for the milieu of the chamber itself where we know the woman's gossips and attendants would be crowded around her and doors and windows would be kept closed. "Let her for three Days keep the Room dark…let all great Noises be forborn, and all Unquietness, remembering to be Praising GOD for her safe Delivery" (144). So far as the sights and sounds of the lying-in chamber go, keeping the room dark and quiet, save for the low singing of praises by her female friends, was a ritualistic service to the postnatal woman by her guests. While she was responsible for hosting her gossips with drinks of wine caudle, they in turn were to serve her "White-wine burnt, with a dram of Sperma-cety melted in it," presumably that which was left over from keeping her lamps *unlit*.[71] The feeling is that the intensely private affair of childbirth would have gradually exposed itself to greater and greater publicity – the layers veiling the woman like darkness and quietness, as well as bedlinens and cerecloths, slowly disencumbered her each day as more and more people were allowed to look on, to participate, and to know her again.

Moving to the final scenes of *The Winter's Tale*, female hospitality becomes a vehicle for male ordering both in the realities of post-birth division of labor and in the psycho-symbolic confrontation with origin. Mirroring the beginning of the play, in which Leontes negates Hermione's role as hostess and thereby breaks apart the family unit and the fabric of the society over which he rules, the final events show Leontes paying penance by humbling himself to the status of guest and reinstating the woman as a hostess/caretaker.

> Whilst I remember
> Her, and her virtues, I cannot forget
> My blemishes in them, and so still think of

[71] Lines from *Macbeth* echo the idea of darkening being both the prophylactic measure against the evils and ill humors of bloodiness – birth and death – and the celestial retribution against spilled blood: "Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's act, / Threatens his bloody stage: by th' clock 'tis day, / And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp" (2.4.5-7). Interestingly, the 1623 Folio would have it "trauailing Lampe," further emphasizing the link between darkness and a woman's labor and delivery, or travail.

> The wrong I did myself: which was so much,
> That heirless it hath made my kingdom, and
> Destroy'd the sweet'st companion that e'er man
> Bred his hopes out of. (5.1.6-13)

Even as Leontes remembers his late wife, it is his fixation on his guilt that veils his ability to envision her objectively. His own "blemishes" mar her image, even unto the sustained metaphor of childbearing at the culmination of these lines; any issue the couple "bred" forth would have been destroyed by his input. Leontes reads Hermione's legacy as beginning and ending with him. For Adelman, the happy ending or comedy of the play only works because of Leontes's reordering, not reversing, of a patriarchal system, in which the objectified, pregnant female body acts as a "point of origin" for the male (219). Hermione's statue as a final stage representation is therefore primarily "an image of renewed nurturance" activated by male desire (234). Because Leontes's first attempt to invalidate Hermione's role as hostess failed so miserably, he reorients female hospitality within the same framework of gender hierarchy in order to achieve a happy ending. The reunion of husband and wife centers on Leontes in an acknowledgement of his part in what happened, of his *de facto* impotence in bringing about the deaths of his children, and of his inability to sire an heir for his kingdom – in short, in the belaboring of his mismanaged masculinity.

The hospitality integral to the lying-in period also reinforced male potency, despite the bodily absence of the father. While a postnatal woman was confined to the birthing chamber, her husband had his "gander month," or the time period following the birth when a man left the home in order to stay at separate lodgings as would a wandering gander whose mate was otherwise occupied by sitting on the egg (David Cressy 203). Cressy observes, "Another contemporary meaning of 'gander' was a dull or stupid person, a simpleton or fool, suggesting

that the husband was temporarily unmanned" (526).[72] Until his wife was physically and figuratively recovered, the man's place in the home was dubious, in spite of the remaining household duties left to the woman's charge and even multiplied in the reality of his sabbatical. Wilson points out that the man's temporary leave was a part of female "policing" to ensure he "respected the norms" of giving his wife adequate time to recover without expecting physical labor or sexual intercourse; however, his "gander month" also works to interject his culpability in effectively causing his wife's labor, both in childbirth and in the management of the household. He paid a penance of solitude and celibacy, which in turn increased her burden of work (194-95).

I believe it is important here to diverge from an early modern to a modern social critique of postpartum expectations and roles for women. According to Donna E. Steward and Simone Vigod, postpartum depression, or nonpsychotic puerperal depression, manifests in 6.5-12.9% (or higher in low- to middle-income individuals) of women who have borne a child; rates increase after the initial recovery period with 20% of postnatal women reporting depression beyond the first year and 13% beyond the second.[73] Although the pathogenesis of postpartum depression is unknown, medical experts identify the rapid decline of sex hormones after childbirth, low social support, marital difficulties, violence involving the partner, past abuse, and other trauma as proposed contributors.[74] During and after the Covid-19 pandemic, 23% of postnatal women reported postpartum depression, which suggests a link between environmental anxiety and postnatal outcomes and has to be considered when we think about women's issues in the post-

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[72] See Cressy, 526 (note 21 to Chapter 9).
[73] See Stewart and Vigod, "Postpartum Depression," *New England Journal of Medicine* (Dec. 2016), https://www-nejm-org.ezproxy.uta.edu/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMcp1607649#section_key_clinical_points.
[74] In addition to postpartum depression, of import is the racial disparity of preterm birth in the U.S. that has been linked to socioeconomic factors and racism. PTB is the leading cause of infant mortality among African Americans. See Paula Braveman, "The Black-White Disparity in Preterm Birth: Race or Racism?," *The Milbank Quarterly*, 101: 356-78 (2023), https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1468-0009.12625.

pandemic world.[75] Beyond the psychological aftershocks of birth, postpartum women are 31% more likely to experience constipation than nonpregnant, nonchildbearing women who are already impacted at a consistently higher prevalence than men.[76] That women experience more trauma, especially sexual trauma, than men may be another key contributor to their physiological anxiety that emerges in bodily gridlocking – constipation, low sex drive, the documented hesitancy women have of taking up too much space, to name a few. The division of household labor, the expectation to receive and entertain guests, and the meager maternity leave for the U.S. – 12 weeks of paid maternity leave compared to the global average of 29 weeks – all contribute to the burden of recovery that compounds the psychological and physical and that largely rests on the woman who has given birth.

Deconstructing modern postnatal expectations enables us to re-read the early modern postnatal scene, attending to the presumption that female desire was the catalyzing force behind postpartum recovery. The early modern woman's uprising, imbedded with death symbolism, culminated in movement toward husband and a concern with the broader community and religion. Having been swathed and anointed according to burial rites, the mother reentered life and normative femininity only through the pursuit of the child's father, as if her origin belonged with her male counterpart as much as he found his in her. The early modern concept of uprising was at its core others-centered, with the new mother rising like Lazarus to his savior, only her purpose was for hospitality – husband, household, and neighbors. Francis Quarles's

[75] See Sarah L. Kornfield, "Risk and Resilience Factors Influencing Postpartum Depression and Mother-Infant Bonding during COVID-19" (2021) https://login.ezproxy.uta.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/risk-resilience-factors-influencing-postpartum/docview/2579422479/se-2, doi:https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2021.00803.
[76] See M. Kuronen et al., "Pregnancy, puerperium and perinatal constipation – an observational hybrid survey on pregnant and postpartum women and their age-matched Non-pregnant controls." *BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology*, vol. 128, no. 6 (2020), 1057–1064. See also McCrea et al., "A Review of the Literature on Gender and Age Differences in the Prevalence and Characteristics of Constipation in North America," *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management* (2009).

representation of the maiden from Song of Solomon is presumably not of a woman who has recently given birth, but it still conveys a picture of the "feminine urge" to rise from one's rumpled bedlinens and partially closed canopy to dash after her "beloved" (see fig. 12). The implicit message of the caption, a biblical reference, is that of single-minded pursuit: "I will rise" and "I will seeke him whom my Soule loveth." From her striking expression of longing to her bare feet, the woman has disregarded propriety entirely, prepared to "goe about the citie in the Streetes & in the broad wayes" in her nightdress. We can almost feel the anticipation of her chase by noticing the hand and foot of the person just steps ahead of her and mostly absent from the picture. We know by the end of the verse, "I found him not," this woman's gratification is delayed by the man's unexplained departure, but the early modern audience would have understood the consummation later in the story was the right and pious end to which she unabashedly ran. Whether effectively "dead asleep" or figuratively put to death after childbirth, the woman, quickened by desire, returns to the male form as her source of life.

Fig. 12

Quarles, Francis (1592-1644). "XI." *Emblems by Fra: Quarles*, 1635, 224, Folger Shakespeare Library, https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGER~2~2~4310~257811:Emblemesby-Fra--Quarles-?qvq=q:child%20bed&mi=1&trs=345.

Male Reinsertion After Birth: Pessaries and Breast Cataplasms Reinstating the Mother

Recipes for pessaries offer other early modern examples of male absenting during lying-in which demands additional labor from the mother. A woman's purification after giving birth went hand-in-hand with the purgation that came through a literal and symbolic insertion, the cathartic power of presence. Despite Leontes's sixteen-year estrangement from Hermione, the final scenes attest to the fact that she has not been alone all this time. On the contrary, Hermione has been the central figure of "some great matter[s]" dealing with Paulina and the unnamed "they" apparently apprised of the construction of her statue (5.2.102;105). As a whole, the

interlude of 5.2, delivered onstage by three gentlemen, serves to fill in the audience about several important events that occurred behind the scenes: Leontes and Perdita have reunited, Perdita has received the belated news of her mother's death, and the "rare Italian master, Julio Romano," has finished his sculpture of Hermione that commemorates the late queen (5.2.98). These three separate instances are moments of recognition – "that which you hear you'll swear you see" – that necessitate the insertion of the male subject who renders the identity of the woman as an object (5.2.32-33).

Leontes's paternity poses an integral conflict in the first third of the play; his refusal to accept Perdita as his "issue," calling her a "bastard" and "brat," enacts violence against his wife who bore her, seals his fate with the Oracle, and results in the death of Antigonus and nearly two decades of guilt and despair for the king. When father and daughter reunite in the final act, the drama of it is apparently not even, in the words of 2 Gentleman, "such a deal of wonder" as to warrant its own scene (5.2.24-25). Perdita's identity is inherently recognizable to Leontes as a married woman, made doubly royal by Florizel, whereas in infancy, though she was the "whole matter / and copy of the father," Leontes remained unconvinced of her parentage (2.3.98-99). The "good goddess Nature, which hast made / So like to him that got it" could only affectively create a copy that was powerless to evoke recognition in the original (2.3.103-04). Heart change aside, Leontes's acceptance of Perdita comes down to her having the features of her mother, the shepherdess sham gone, and in her marriage to a prince – in short, in her male-sanctioned passage into acceptable womanhood.

Perdita's "recovery" also functions as the final symbol of Hermione's recovery, the mother's bestowal of a blessing onto her daughter being the only speech and action the resurrected Hermione makes.

> You gods, look down,
> And from your sacred vials pour your graces
> Upon my daughter's head! Tell me, mine own,
> Where hast thou been preserv'd? (5.3.121-24)

She addresses Perdita and no one else, and she conjures the image of anointing to metaphorically christen her child, a religious act that in early modern times was not privy to the presence of the parents, hence the need for godparents. Here, however, Hermione herself plays the role of priest, mediating between the gods themselves and Perdita, just as "by Paulina" Hermione knew "that the Oracle / Gave hope" that Perdita was still alive (5.3.126-27). This woman-mediated transferal of knowledge and blessing mimics the female agency involved in Hermione's suggested ability to "preserve" herself "to see the issue," to bring herself back to life as one who had been anointed and now obtained the power to anoint others, specifically her female progeny (5.3.127-28).

The idea of anointing is implicit in the recovery and rendering of womanhood through postpartum poultices and other symbolic approaches to "cover" a woman after childbirth. Part of the lying-in process, as discussed above, was keeping the woman enclosed – the closed windows, the darkness, staying inside the birthing chamber or house. After her month-long stint inside, however, the ritual presented the woman with a paradox: her quarantine could only come to an end by "churching," or receiving the blessing of a priest whom she would have to leave the house to go see. To circumvent the problem, the woman's gossips stood in as bodily shields, surrounding her as she made her way from her front door to her carriage, or if close enough, to the village church steps.[77] Only then, under the supervision of the male priest and in the presence of the other churchgoers, could the woman lose the metaphorical shroud of her literal crowd. Just as her female attendants mediated the woman's delivery and her postpartum recovery, so they

[77] Wilson, 176.

were also often responsible for ushering her back into the community in a very real sense. By using their own female bodies to cover hers, the gossips acted as a substitution acceptable to God and to the rest of the world, the religious implications linking back to the role of the sheepskin and its Christological symbolism.

These allusions were further emphasized with the traditional reading of Psalm 121 when the woman took the "uprising seat," the place reserved for the purpose of containing the postpartum, as of yet impure woman once inside the church.[78] A Song of Ascent, Psalm 121 originated with the ancient Israelites who would have sung the words as they ascended the steps of the Temple at the end of their pilgrimage to Jerusalem every year. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help," went the words as the Isrealites cast their sights up to the golden walls of their destination, or as the newly delivered mother gazed up at the holy man offering her communion (121:1). As the ancient Israelites remembered the blistering sun on their backs from their sojourn, and as the postnatal woman's eyes were still adjusting after weeks in her darkened chamber, they recited,

> The Lord is the shade upon thy right hand.
> The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.
> The Lord shall *preserve* thee from all evil: he shall *preserve* thy soul.
> The Lord shall *preserve* thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore. (121:5-6, my emphasis)

Just as the ancients spoke the words, and just as the post-puerperal woman repeated them, Hermione's lines echo the same sentiment, only this time it is the woman herself who is doing the reflexive task of "preserving" herself. Subversively, the sacrificial barriers between God's wrath and woman-begotten original sin were the very same gossiping, female vessels barred from catholic priesthood.

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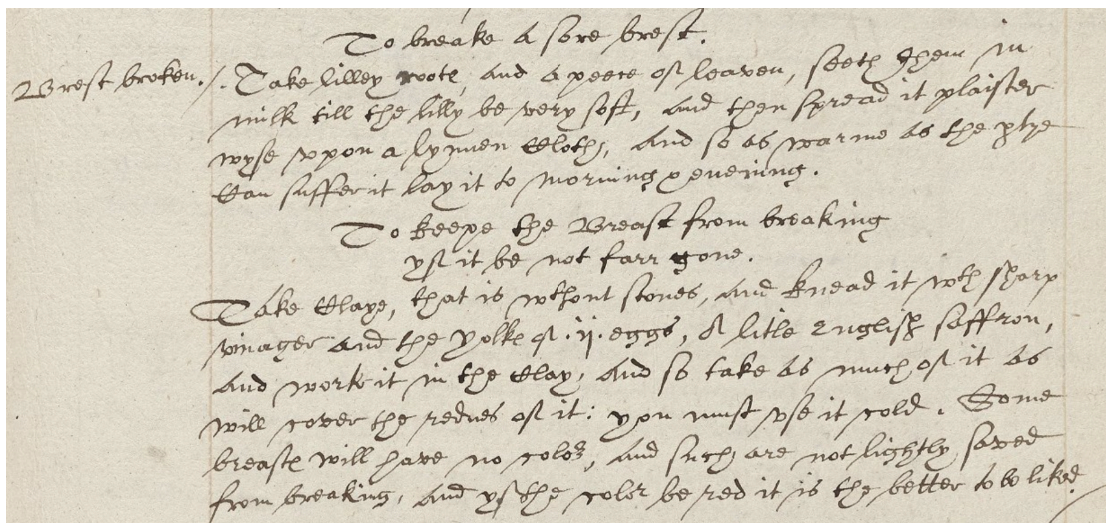
[78] Ibid., 177.

Recipes for pessaries and breast cataplasms reinstate male authority over female bodies and reflect the Renaissance ideals of the woman as the sexualized and nurturing Madonna figure, a vessel for the God-ordained dual purposes of motherhood and subservience to mankind. In a recipe for a vaginal pessary, Culpeper uses mercury and birthwort, both known toxins, and other powerful purgatives like hellebore and coloquintida to keep a woman's uterus from prolapsing.[79] Additionally, he suggests staphisacre, known for "destroying vermin" and used as a strong emetic ("staphisacre," n1). Pessaries, while useful in assisting women in certain cases, offered vehicles of male reinsertion that exploited women in attempting to re-sculpt them to a pre-puerperal, sexualized state. Similarly, a recipe "To keep the Breast from breaking yf it be not farr gone" (somatically opposed to the previous recipe, "To break a sore brest") advises midwives and physicians to apply clay (see fig. 13).


To breake a sore brest.

Brest broken. /. Take lilley roote, and a peece of leaven, seeth them in milk till the lilly be very soft, and then spread it plaister wyse uppon a lynnen clothe, and so as warme as the ptye can suffer it lay it to morning & evening.

To keepe the Breast from breaking
yf it be not farr gone.

Take Claye, that is without stones, and knead it with sharp vinager and the yolke of .ij. egges, a litle englishe saffron, and work it in the claye, and so take as much of it as will cover the rednes of it: you must use it cold. Some breaste will have no color, and such are not lightly saved from breaking, and yf the color be red it is the better to be liked.

Fig. 13

De Feckenham, John. "To keepe the Breast from breaking yf it be not farr gone." *This book of sovereign medicines against the most common and known diseases ... collected of Master Doctor Feckenham, late Abbot of Westminster* [manuscript], ca. 1600, V.b.129, p. 39, Folger Shakespeare Library, https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGER~3~3~19299~282083:This-book-of-sovereign-medicines-ag?qvq=q:V.b.129%20sore%20brest&mi=2&trs=5.

[79] Culpeper, 141.

The clay, mixed with vinegar, egg yolk, and saffron, would have been a bright yellow substance used not only to help heal engorged postpartum breasts, but also to cover the redness, malfunction, and shame of them. As it dried, the clay would have hardened and kept the tissue from swelling or "breaking," preventing the female body from leaking in a way that was not acceptable to the male gaze. Keeping the breasts from cracking would have staved off infection, but the practice of plastering the body with clay to counteract abject appearances was a misogynistic method of commandeering breasts "not too far gone" for sexual desire rather than for their nutritive capacity, much less for the woman's bodily autonomy and overall well-being. Hermione's reassimilation into the familial and societal order requires the return/recovery of Perdita, but her own physical reassimilation into acceptable femininity also ultimately requires the power of art to mimic, create, and exaggerate life. The audience, who has witnessed the extraordinary "winter's tale" of a woman stripped of her children and dignity, a baby's miraculous recovery and flourishing in an idyllic land, and a princess's reconciliation with her father, is being made gradually aware of the artifice of the play in the final scenes. With Hermione's resurrection Shakespeare calls his audiences, Piero Boitani surmises, "to decide between two alternative *fictions*: that of life miraculously preserving itself through time and adversity, and that of art, which, in its verisimilitude, brings back to life" (251). I would suggest that this suspension of disbelief, the willingness *not* to choose between the alternatives, was a smaller leap for early moderns than it is for modern readers. We are quick to smooth the plot wrinkle by explaining Paulina's trick: her sheltering Hermione these many years, sneaking off to "that removed house," as 2 Gentleman relates, "twice or thrice a day," and adeptly keeping Leontes from remarrying until the big reveal (5.2.106-07). The artistry of Hermione's performance as a statue, then, becomes merely another elucidation for the caprice and not the

very power of the theatre. The *tour de force* of Italian Renaissance art such as the paintings of the Palazzo Te in Mantua (see fig. 14) by Guilio "Pippi" Romano (after whom Julio Romano is fashioned in the play) was its ability not only to mimic life, but also to "beguile Nature of her custom" and *bring to* life (5.2.100). Nature, we recall, could not move Leontes in his regard for his daughter at the beginning of the play; however, as Boitani writes, "Art enchants" (250). Shakespeare's final scene is the dramatic equivalent to the exaggerated, fluid paintings and sculptures of the mannerist mode, just as Hermione's regeneration involves the trial of overcoming death as symbolized through plastering to rise again as a *tabula rasa*, the woman she was before the experience of childbirth. Through the ritual, or artifice, of laying-on practices, she moves from social liminality to centrality as the recovered, hospitable, and sanctified Madonna who "was most marble," but "there changed color" (5.2.91).

Fig. 14

Pippi, Giulio, or Giulio Romano, and Guazzi Anselmo and Agostino da Mozzanica. "Baccante che Danza." 1527. *Palazzo Te*, Mantua, Italy. https://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/opere-arte/schede/M0230-00024/?view=autori&offset=15&hid=37720&sort=sort_date_int.

In the ritual process of the lying-in period, as I have argued, the belief was that the cataplasms, the poultices, and the pessaries mimic the death and burial process to effectively

reincarnate the postnatal woman. Having soared too close to the sun, brushed up too intimately with life, this woman must die. The death rituals authorize her rebirth in ways similar to Art's ability to generate life; however, as with Hermione, the woman reborn is really the woman re-sculpted to the same state prior to childbearing. The performance of Hermione in the fictional world of *The Winter's Tale* and of Hermione's actor in the stage representation both have a way of suspending our disbelief in the origin and life cycle of the woman. It also allows us to reexamine the postpartum woman and what it means for her to recover and to be recovered. A large part of this process beyond the therapeutic is the ritual and therefore also the performance. From the highly evocative fresh-flayed sheepskin to the bloody bedlinens kept unchanged, lifeblood is a symbol of rebirth whose medicinal power pales in comparison to its connotations in folk superstition or religion. The use of flowers like roses and lilies offer more sexual renewal than organ revitalization, and the clay and egg mixtures seem intended to recast the newly delivered body back to the reticent, still, and blank ideal of toxic, masculine nostalgia. Compared to today's world, the expectations for postnatal women leave little room for the "natural posture" and variety of life, confining women to a truncated maternity leave and negligible social, economic, and physical support. Unlike Hermione who had Paulina for a nursemaid, or the early modern woman who had her surrounding gossips, the modern woman's proverbial "village" has shrunk, and culturally we have not provided viable resources. We medicate, we bind her up, and we put her back into the narrow mold of a male-ordered society. We do not ask questions or give a platform for the individual stories of the phenomena of pregnancy, labor, and delivery.[80] We speak to her as one would to a stone – without hope of answer.

[80] For one such account, rendered in sporadic sketches and writing that melds personal narrative and critical theory, see Jennifer Scuro's graphic novel, *The Pregnancy [does-Not-equal] Childbearing Project: A Phenomenology of Miscarriage* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

CODA: THE FASHIONING OF CHILDBIRTH

One might expect a thesis about early modern dietary protocols for childbearing women to begin with eating and end with producing. After all, it only seems natural – optimistic even – to hope that women would have had the agency to pursue both their wants and their needs and to engender life as a happy, conclusive byproduct of that pursuit. However, as I suggested in the outset of this project, it may be neither possible nor helpful to define with any accuracy what the early modern woman wanted. Because we often take for granted that women of that era desired children, we also fail to appreciate that just like eating, childbirth was and still is a cultural phenomenon. Rather than assume the binary of consuming and producing, throughout these chapters I have suggested alternatives that at times blur food and reproduction to suggest something more than two separate yet interdependent facts of survival. For example, instead of beginning with food and ending with a baby, this work begins with the *possibility* of food and ends with the *action* of creating, found in the same word – plastering.

As a noun, plastering constitutes a non/food typically used as the structure of walls, but as we have seen, it could have also been the object of female desire, even her food. The very makeup of the rooms that contained a woman – kitchens or birthing chambers – *became* her, fed her, and in some cases, as with M. Forge's daughter, may have killed her. Alternatively, the mineral rich non/food ingredients desired by sufferers of pica may have been just the thing their anemic bodies needed. While concerned with what prenatal women beheld, as it was believed to influence what she begot, obstetrical authorities could not account for her "depraued" desire lighting on the most basic of her surroundings: dirt, ash, and walls. Meanwhile, despite the authorial voices of these texts admonishing such inordinate appetites, the recipes therein override the prohibitions by "allowing her a little" of what she desired and even prominently featuring

charred food like toast as a primary prescription for pregnancy. That the woman desired and sometimes ate ingredients like plaster made non/food substances viable foodways and the female existence a self-forging path.

Before we go on to my final usage of plastering, the more informal sense of the word, "to defeat utterly; to strike with repeated heavy blows," is of important note ("Plaster, V., Sense 3.e"). During the early modern era, the natal phase of parturiency was the most visual (except perhaps in dramatic and literary representations), the bloodiest, and the deadliest. Grappling with mortality for women in childbed was an insistent theme of early modern culture and Renaissance art, as we saw with *The Winter's Tale*. Little else had such striking power to "utterly defeat" a woman as the ordeal of labor and delivery. Likewise, perhaps at no other time in a woman's life was she plastered repeatedly with purgatives, bloodlettings, and other medical interventions designed to activate and increase the efficacy of birth, and moreover to establish a visible body of evidence *for* the unseen productions of childbirth. The slang definition of plastering from the 19th century as it alluded to mangling a bird with shot or to a boxer pummeling an opponent is in some ways more applicable to the early modern natal woman's body than other denotations; however, this is not to say that she had no control over her labor. Many cases in obstetrical texts exemplify women who refused such treatments, and although those examples mainly serve the author's purpose of advising women to allow a doctor's help or warning doctors against ignoring visual signs like hemorrhage, their inclusion also means that women claimed bodily autonomy in *non*/action, which could have been detrimental and/or freeing, just as it opened pathways to future women for whom those passages evinced the insidious side of patriarchal interjection to childbirth.

As a verb in the typical sense, plastering refers to the laying-on of substances that harden, bind, and shape things into definable objects. The additional meaning "to cause to lie flat" metaphorically evokes the lying-in phase of the perinatal process, during which many plasters, ointments, and fabrics or skins were literally applied to the postpartum woman's body. I argue in the last chapter that the laying-on process was integral to the lying-in ritual, and with plastering in this version, I also broaden the definition of food to incorporate ingredients absorbed topically as performing the same function in early modern medicine as those taken orally. The question we then ask ourselves is why the early modern midwife or practitioner would have changed the method of administering treatment from feeding to fashioning. What could have been a full-circle picture that began and ended with the woman eating is the woman statuesque and pristine as Hermione's death monument. Granted, auxiliary arguments could be made that the Eucharist ceremony with which the lying-in ritual officially culminated is the final, complementary image of partaking in perinatal embodiment. However, I focus on the material elements involved in the recasting of the mother's feminine form – her breasts, her belly, and her privities – that demonstrate the symbolic potency of recipes for perinatal women. The early modern woman again disrupts the implicit regulation of the treatments intended to return her to a pre-pregnancy, sexualized state in enacting loopholes via her female gossips. The expectation that remains, though, calls up a modern-day response to patriarchal ideals and systems for the postnatal woman that have not since changed.

In our current century the resurgence of midwifery, a craft that declined in popularity in the U.S. after World War II, indicates a dissatisfaction with mainstream obstetric care.[81] As I

[81] See Eugene Declercq, "Trends in midwife-attended births in the United States, 1989-2009." *Journal of midwifery & women's health*, vol. 57, no. 4 (2012): 321-26. See also Amy Chasteen Miller, and Thomas E. Shriver, "Women's childbirth preferences and practices in the United States." *Social science & medicine*, vol. 75, no. 4 (2012): 709-16.

displayed in this thesis, many of the early modern natural medicines and obstetrical practices proved themselves efficacious and continue to be used successfully by mothers and practitioners today. By way of personal anecdote, I chose to have two unmedicated births attended by midwives over "traditional" hospital births because I desired a more holistic experience, in which I would be treated as a person and not a patient. I gave birth and raised young children during the Covid-19 pandemic, so to say that I understand the physical trauma as well as the mental and emotional toll of postpartum recovery and loneliness of modern-day motherhood is putting it lightly. This is not to say that hospital births cannot incorporate gentle, accommodating practices, or that modern medicine has not drastically decreased mortality rates for mothers and infants. I only suggest that women be afforded the power to choose at every stage including the prenatal when her wants seem inordinate, the natal phase when the visual products of labor are not immediately apparent, and the postnatal when we attempt to re-fashion her according to the standards of society. We have seen that the desires of women, regardless of the object, are always, already transgressive; women create new life, alternative ways of being, through those desires. As I posited in the first chapter, the early modern depiction of women through recipes for parturiency is that of a vessel: porous, susceptible, and known by its input and output. Even so, the recipes' pre-eminence in these texts that seem to arise in response to and not independent from them also points to women as the originators, vessels that contain, connect, and course the world.

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