Edited by Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks

Gendered Temporalities in the Early Modern World

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Gendered Temporalities in the Early Modern World

Gendering the Late Medieval and Early Modern World

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This series provides a forum for studies that investigate women, gender, and/or sexuality in the late medieval and early modern world. The editors invite proposals for book-length studies of an interdisciplinary nature, including, but not exclusively, from the fields of history, literature, art and architectural history, and visual and material culture. Consideration will be given to both monographs and collections of essays. Chronologically, we welcome studies that look at the period between 1400 and 1700, with a focus on any part of the world, as well as comparative and global works. We invite proposals including, but not limited to, the following broad themes: methodologies, theories and meanings of gender; gender, power and political culture; monarchs, courts and power; constructions of femininity and masculinity; gift-giving, diplomacy and the politics of exchange; gender and the politics of early modern archives; gender and architectural spaces (courts, salons, household); consumption and material culture; objects and gendered power; women's writing; gendered patronage and power; gendered activities, behaviours, rituals and fashions.

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Introduction

Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks

Is time gendered? This collection of essays addresses this question with a focus on the early modern period, an era that is itself designated by a contested periodization. It examines gendered and embodied temporalities, and the ways that time structured early modern lives and the textual and material commemorations of those lives.

The essays examine aspects of gendered temporality in England, Italy, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, Aceh, and Virginia, thus allowing trans-regional and transnational comparisons. The authors come from different scholarly disciplines, including art history, English, history, Spanish, and women's and gender studies, and several are written by interdisciplinary groups of authors. The collection is divided into three parts—temporality and materiality, frameworks and taxonomies of time, and embodied time—followed by an epilogue that considers how these issues play out in the classroom, and explores the contemporary stakes of this research. The essays draw on a broad array of textual and material primary sources—letters, medicinal recipes, almanacs, scholarly works, poems, plays, court testimonies, biographies and autobiographies, sacred stories, puzzles, wills, petitions, financial records, royal edicts, mirrors for princes, paintings, sculpture, needlework, and household objects. The use of a wide variety of material objects as sources is particularly noteworthy. Material culture is becoming an increasingly important part of the analysis of the past, and the essays in the book that analyze how material objects express, shape, complicate, and extend human concepts of time represent this trend. Among the material objects examined in the book is the human body, as some essays explore somatic experiences of temporality in periods that range from the moment to the family life course. Whether they use material or textual evidence, or both, essays examine categories, definitions, and conceptualizations of time set out by both women and men, and by individuals across the social scale, thus examining elite and popular culture. Taken together, the essays allow an assessment of the ways that gender and other categories of difference condition understandings of time, and note how contemporary

and early modern conceptions of time inform one another and our work as scholars and teachers.

Most of the essays in this volume began as presentations and conversations at the ninth Attending to Early Modern Women conference, held in 2015 at the University of Wisconsin– Milwaukee, for which the title was the rather playful: 'It's About Time'. In choosing this focus, we were both responding to and extending the renewed critical attention that is being paid to temporality. As the cultural theorist Emily Apter put it in another playful phrase in a recent forum on feminist theory, 'It's Time's time.'[1] Time and temporality are now featured in handbooks and guides for undergraduate students as 'critical concepts' or 'key terms' they should understand.[2] After a decade or so in which some queer theorists rejected periodization, chronology, change over time, and sometimes time itself as teleological, heterosexist, and normalizing metanarratives and advocated 'unhistoricism' or 'new presentism', literary critics are increasingly calling for approaches that recognize the communal investments of historicist, feminist, and queer methodologies.[3] In the same summer that Attending to Women was discussing time in Milwaukee, the International Society of Cultural History was doing so in Bucharest, with a conference focusing on culture and time.[4] Peter Burke has examined the history of the idea that time is culturally constructed, and in the 2006 Natalie Zemon Davis lectures at Central European University, Lynn Hunt focused on changes in chronological frameworks, past, present, and future.[5] These considerations assert what

1   Apter, 'Women's Time', p. 1.

2   Handbooks include Adam, *Time*, and West-Pavlov, *Temporalities*. The revised Advanced Placement course for European, world, and US history also includes periodization as one its nine key historical thinking skills, thus extending this concern to secondary school students. (For European history, see: College Board, 'AP European History', 2017, https://secure-media. collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/ap/ap-course-overviews/ap-european-history-course-overview.pdf).

3   Queer theory's rejection of futurity and of differences between past and present began with Edelman, *No Future*, and Goldberg and Menon, 'Queering History'. These were critiqued by Valerie Traub, among others, in her 'New Unhistoricism in Queer Studies' and *Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns*. Reviews of this debate, and calls to recognize commonalities as well as differences, can be found in Friedlander, 'Desiring History and Historicizing Desire', several of the essays in Loomba and Sanchez, eds., *Rethinking Feminism in Early Modern Studies,* and the essay by Penelope Anderson and Whitney Sperrazza in this volume.

4   Five of the papers from this conference, along with several others, are in Arcangeli and Korhonen, eds., 'A Time of Their Own'. Some of the articles in this special issue focus on women's understanding and measurement of time.

5   Burke, 'Reflections on the Cultural History of Time'. Hunt's Davis lectures have been published as Hunt, *Measuring Time, Making History*.

many of the essays in this volume do: time is an embodied aspect of human existence, but also mediated by culture; experiences and understandings of time change, and the early modern period may have been an era when they changed significantly, with the introduction of new vocabularies and technologies of time; time is gendered and also structured by other social hierarchies; material objects shape experiences and conceptions of time.[6]

The three essays in Part I, 'Temporality and Materiality', take up this focus on objects. In 'Time, Gender and the Mystery of English Wine', Frances E. Dolan examines what at first appears to be a familiar 'timeless' beverage but was actually unstable and unknowable. Although we often associate the English with beer, ale, and cider, wine was everywhere in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, Dolan notes. More than a beverage, it was invested with all kinds of significance, starting with the communion cup, but those meanings were often contested. This was in part because wine, while highly valued, had often fallen victim to the ravages of time and transport by the time it reached English consumers, and was doctored by those who sold and served it, from coopers and tavern keepers to cooks and housewives. As a consequence, wine was widely distrusted as foreign, spoiled, and adulterated. It was also understood to have its own timeline or life course, moving from 'fresh', 'young', or 'brisk' wines that were prized above older vintages to the spent wines that formed the basis for distilled spirits and medicines. Wine's unpredictability was associated with femininity, as it made women and men alike more disordered and vulnerable, but was particularly dangerous for women, who were warned not to drink in excess and praised for abstinence or moderation. Wine also occasionally provided an opportunity for women, however, who joined experiments in growing grapes and making wine in England. Ranging across a wide variety of sources, from Elizabethan London to colonial Virginia, and from the sixteenth century to popular depictions of that period today, Dolan tells the story of the gendering of wine, its consumption and production. Tackling wine as a work in progress, she argues that wine connects us to the past largely to the extent that it continues to be a mystery or a knowledge problem, a beverage at once familiar and inscrutable.

We may not know what the wine consumed by early modern women and men *was*, but we know it was served in drinking vessels and at all hours of the day, as were other fermented beverages. In 'Women in the Sea of Time: Domestic Dated Objects in Early Modern England', Sophie Cope

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6   For a cross-temporal look at how objects we use to 'tell' time, especially calendars and clocks, shape our experiences and conceptions of time, see Birth, *Objects of Time*.

begins with one of those vessels, a tin-glazed earthenware mug inscribed with the name of a woman and a date.[7] She uses this and other domestic dated objects to analyze the relationship between people and time, both quotidian and eternal, focusing particularly on objects that circulated within women's networks, including cooking wares, chests, and embroideries. She investigates how ideas of personal time were expressed by women through the inscription of objects in their physical surroundings, arguing that such objects demonstrate the significance of dates in marking and extending social connections between women. Dated objects would ideally outlive their owner and reach forward to posterity and beyond. Thus through their inscriptions, women were able to mark out their own place in the much wider sea of time.

In their jointly authored essay, 'Time, Gender, and Nonhuman Worlds', the author team of Emily Kuffner, Elizabeth Crachiolo, and Dyani Johns Taff continue this focus on the material, reaching beyond human temporal realms to examine botanical, nautical, and disease-based perspectives on time that disrupt hierarchies of gender and redefine ontological boundaries. They discuss representations of the plant guaiac, used to combat the spread of the so-called 'French disease' through Europe, that expose temporally contingent definitions of masculinity, texts that portray human characters with plant-like characteristics that contravene human chronologies, and maritime metaphors in Shakespeare that disrupt human attempts to describe masculine erotic desire as everlasting and female erotic desire as having an expiration date. Their investigations reveal that nonhuman realms and agents unsettle early modern writers' attempts to establish essentialized constructs of gender and time, thus revealing the interdependence between human and nonhuman worlds.

The four essays in Part II, 'Frameworks and Taxonomies of Time', examine categories, definitions, and conceptualizations of time set out by early modern women and men of varying social classes in Europe and Southeast Asia. In 'Telling Time through Medicine: A Gendered Perspective', Alisha Rankin analyzes the role of gender in concepts of medical time, where multiple, overlapping systems of time—astrological, seasonal, liturgical, horological—guided medical theory and practice. She first discusses Renaissance medical scholarship by male authors, including learned theories of the four humors, treatises on disease, and almanacs, all of which embedded the microcosm of the human in a macrocosm of time. She then shifts the focus

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7   This chapter began as a paper at the Gender, Power, and Materiality in Early Modern Europe 1500–1800 conference held at the University of Plymouth in April 2016.

to women's concepts of medical time. Drawing on letters and medicinal recipes written by German noblewomen, Rankin argues that women both reflected broader reckonings of time and drew their own concepts of medical temporality from the female body, including menstrual cycles, pregnancy, and childbirth. Women thus engaged in deliberate attempts to understand and pin down embodied time.

Educated noblewomen were not the only women who drew on many languages of time to craft their own, as Elizabeth S. Cohen demonstrates in 'Times Told: Women Narrating the Everyday in Early Modern Rome'. Using the records of the criminal courts of Rome *c.* 1600, which include the voices of non-elite women, many of them illiterate, from whom we seldom hear, she finds that women's testimony, delivered in intimidating formal settings and recorded verbatim, carried serious legal weight. As complainants, as suspects, and as witnesses, women had to remember, reconstruct, and tell stories about recent and more distant pasts and to situate their accounts within convincing temporal frames. Telling time orally was challenging, and women, like their male counterparts, used varied narrative strategies and temporal rhetorics to lend veracity to their tales. Cohen stresses that the abstractions, precisions, and disciplines of official time—the sort that we moderns take for granted—often gave way in early modern courts, as in life, to less clear and less efficient, but nevertheless functional practices of local time.

In 'Genealogical Memory: Constructing Female Rule in Seventeenth-Century Aceh', Su Fang Ng takes us to Southeast Asia to examine the ways in which a woman at the top of the social scale constructed genealogical time as she memorialized her father. Four queens ruled Aceh, Sumatra (present-day Indonesia), from 1641 to 1699; the first, Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn Taj al-Alam, for 35 years. Ng analyzes similarities between Taj al-Alam's symbols of royal power and her father Iskandar Muda's, especially their claim to Alexander the Great as a legendary ancestor. Contesting the genealogy her husband crafted, Taj al-Alam reinscribed a continuous genealogy from her father in her elaborate diplomatic letters sent to foreign kings, including one sent to Charles II of England in 1661, and in royal edicts. Continuity in the rhetoric of royal power shows a daughter's appropriation of paternal as well as royal power. By the end of the seventeenth century, the myth of queenship was so prevalent that some English visitors believed Aceh had always been governed by queens, testifying to the power of Taj al-Alam's reworkings of genealogical memory.

With 'Feminist Queer Temporalities in Aemilia Lanyer and Lucy Hutchinson', Penelope Anderson and Whitney Sperrazza explore times embedded in

poems, and from Italy to England. They argue that the multiple temporalities of Aemilia Lanyer's 'The Description of Cooke-ham' and Lucy Hutchinson's *Order and Disorder* model a mutually galvanizing rather than antagonistic relationship between feminist and queer theory. Lanyer's and Hutchinson's texts return to long-standing feminist concerns: female communities, the foundational stories of patriarchy, and a focus on desire both procreative and emphatically not. But the theories the texts themselves manifest do the work of queering—not as an alternative to, but in concert with—these feminist concerns. For Lanyer, this involves not only a focus on the eroticism of all-female communities, but also a lingering in a kiss oddly material and suspended in time. For Hutchinson, it concerns the way that the impossibility of procreative sex shows the needlessness of female harm. Lanyer's and Hutchinson's feminist queer poems, Anderson and Sperrazza assert, rewrite the sequence of events in order to imagine causality differently: pushing back against received patriarchal narratives, they locate women at the poetic origin not due to their reproductive capacities, but rather through a consequentially queer desire founded upon disparaged affect.

Part III, 'Embodied Time', includes three essays that explore somatic experiences of temporality in periods that range from the brief moment to the generation. In 'Embodied Temporality: Lucrezia Tornabuoni de' Medici's *sacra storia*, Donatello's *Judith*, and the Performance of Gendered Authority in Palazzo Medici, Florence', Allie Terry-Fritsch approaches Donatello's fifteenth-century bronze sculpture of Judith as a dramatic actor in Lucrezia Tornabuoni de' Medici's sacred story, 'The Story of Judith, Hebrew Widow', written in the 1470s. She traces how the performative cues of Lucrezia's words about how and when to look, listen, or imagine functioned to connect an audience sitting in the garden of the Palazzo Medici somaesthetically with the statue, thus prompting the opportunity for an active coproduction of the narrative that bound performers and audience together in their embodied temporality. The essay highlights the strategies by which Lucrezia's narrative enfolds contemporary Florentine attitudes concerning justice, virtue, and political power into Judith's sacred history, and analyzes Lucrezia's self-fashioning in relation to both the textual and sculptural biblical heroine as a strategy to give voice to her critical role within the family and the state.

Gazing at a statue in the Medici Palazzo garden was an experience shared by only a few, but wondering whether you or someone else were pregnant was an experience shared by many, and repeated often across the life course in an era when pregnancy could not really be confirmed until it ended. In 'Maybe Baby: Pregnant Possibilities in Medieval and Early Modern Literature', Holly Barbaccia, Bethany Packard, and Jane Wanninger examine

potentially pregnant women in the writings of Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, and John Webster. All three authors write women characters whose status as mothers-to-be they never totally resolve, thus creating periods of uncertainty in the supposedly inevitable advance from one phase of life to the next. Taken together, these authors and their 'maybe maternal' female characters illustrate the extent to which potential pregnancy amplifies the inscrutability of women's bodies and highlights the thwarted efforts of other characters, readers, and audiences to interpret them. By introducing the possibility of these women's pregnancies but leaving their maternal status unverified, Barbaccia, Packard, and Wanninger argue, Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Webster create experiences of embodiment infused with epistemological uncertainty and temporal complexity.

If individual bodies could be changeable and complicated, families were even more so, as Grace E. Coolidge and Lyndan Warner explore in 'Evolving Families: Realities and Images of Stepfamilies, Remarriage, and Half-siblings in Early Modern Spain'. One in three children in early modern Europe experienced the loss of a parent, with the possibility of the surviving parent's remarriage to a stepmother or stepfather bringing stepsiblings or new half-siblings. Coolidge and Warner use advice literature that suggested strategies to cope with the evolution of a family as it moved through death and remarriage, along with archival records of testaments, estate inventories, and guardianship arrangements to reveal the gendered patterns of stepfamilies, in which strong relationships between adult half-siblings suggest a shared family identity even as families evolved over many years of extended fertility, a feature of many stepfamilies. Visual representations of family groups are relatively rare in Spain, but one of the few family portraits of the seventeenth century – *The Painter's Family* by Diego Velázquez's son-in-law Juan Bautista del Mazo – captures the expanded age range as well as emotional connections and disruptions imposed by death and remarriage.

The future figures in many of the essays in this book, from wine made for next year's drinkers to testaments designed to divide inheritance among children not yet born. In the final chapter, which serves as an epilogue, 'Navigating the Future of Early Modern Women's Writing: Pedagogy, Feminism, and Literary Theory', Michelle M. Dowd confronts that future head on. She notes that the gendered nature of temporality takes on a distinct set of meanings in the classroom, as we strive to make the past in which early modern women and men lived and created simultaneously strange and immediate to students who will shape the world in the years ahead. She explores the challenges of teaching premodern women's texts within curricula where they are seen more often as comments on an era's

gender politics than a part of its literature, and where all teaching in the humanities is threatened. Using Elizabeth Cary's *Tragedy of Mariam* as a case study, Dowd proposes that we can engage our students in more meaningful discussions about how and why the fact of female authorship matters by inviting them to consider the complex intersection between gender and form, that is (somewhat paradoxically) to have them read it *as a drama* as well as a female-authored text. The essay concludes by inviting strategic advocacy for premodern women writers in the contemporary classroom, advice that makes explicit what all the essays implicitly promote.

Concerns with the future evinced by so many of the female subjects of this book as they wrote, built, spoke, planted, drew up wills, devised medicines, embroidered, or just went about the business of their lives belie the notion common in the early modern period (and to some degree our own) that women and their ideas and desires were more time-bound, while men and their ideas and desires were (and are) everlasting and timeless. Women shaped the future because of their reproductive capacities, of course, and several essays point out how concerns about childbirth and those about time were connected, so much so that giving birth in German was referred to as 'going on her time'. But women shaped the future even more through the textual and material products they created, ordered, or purchased that allowed them to escape the bounds of human life. Their sense of obligation to the future extended beyond their own families and kin to the less fortunate whose lives they extended through food or medicine, and to imagined readers or viewers for whom their writings or needlework would be interruptions of a time past in the flow of daily life. Sometimes these products crossed normative gender boundaries and allowed women—both real and invented—to challenge or queer patrilineal and patriarchal norms, while at other times they reinforced them, or they did all of these at once, as conservative forms and usages sometimes made radical innovations possible.

How thoughts of the future shaped the actions of past actors is only one of several themes that thread through the essays in the book. Another is how people managed their time. Though men worried about women's idleness, which along with their wine drinking might lead to sexual excess, women worried instead about not having enough time to carry out the various tasks they needed to do. The earliest reference to the broadside ballad 'A Woman's Work Is Never Done', fittingly appears in the 1629 inventory of a widow who sold ballads, no doubt one of many things she did to keep her household going after the death of her husband, a common event, yet one that marked a dramatic break in any family's history.

A third common theme is the complexity of experiences of time. Early modern women and men lived in a number of times at once—planetary, botanical, biblical, seasonal, liturgical, multigenerational, life-course, daily, horological—which overlapped and conflicted. Embodied time was itself multitemporal and nonlinear, experienced as a moment when one might glance at a statue or sip a glass of new wine, an hour whose events one had to later recall to a judge, a day spent writing, several months when one (or a woman who mattered) might or might not be pregnant, or a lifetime of gradual aging punctuated by the type of events that we still call 'life-changing' as well as far more mundane ones.

Finally, several of the essays point to the importance of things that did not happen as well as those that did: children who were not born, powerful men who desired but did not rape, lineages that did not continue, vines that did not grow, ideas about time that did not become modern. They encourage us to think about the histories we have not inherited, as well as those we have. The phrase that was the conference theme in 2015, 'It's About Time', was one heard often in the political rhetoric of the United States in 2016, but that feminist future did not come to pass. Why it did not was in part because of the central issue traced in this collection: the power of gender and imaginings of gender in lives past, lives present, and lives feared or dreamed for the future.

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Part I

Temporality and materiality

1 Time, gender, and the mystery of English wine

Frances E. Dolan

Abstract

Wine was widely drunk in early modern England. But would we recognize it? Time unsettles the meaning of this 'timeless' beverage because early modern people were unable to control its effects on the wines they consumed. Wine's unpredictability was, in the early modern period, both associated with femininity and, occasionally, an opportunity for women who joined experiments in growing grapes and making wine in England so as to make wine that was more dependable and affordable. Ranging across a wide variety of sources, from the sixteenth century to popular depictions of that period today, this essay argues that wine connects us to the past largely to the extent that it continues to be a mystery or a knowledge problem.

Keywords: wine; winemaking; early modern England; women; gender; Shakespeare

We know early modern women and men drank wine. But we can't know exactly what that wine tasted like. As a knowledge problem, wine joins many other mysteries of gendered experience in the past. Surviving evidence confirms an historical phenomenon we can call 'English wine' and some of the ways in which it was gendered. As we will see, it is easy to document popular attitudes toward wine in ballads and plays. We can readily find recipes for making, using, or ameliorating wine, as well as fulminations against and paeans to it. We can also find references to wine in inventories and account books, lyric poetry, letters and diaries, popular accounts of commensality and of murder, recipe compilations, medical texts, the notebooks of early experimental scientists, and in the surprisingly large literature advocating English grape growing and wine making in the seventeenth century. Moving across the social landscape, wine left archival stains that offer tantalizing

traces of its cultural centrality and its instability. To understand it, we need to gather evidence from a range of sources, accepting that the resulting assemblage will still be missing pieces and can never answer all of our questions. As we try to pin down women's lived relationship to wine as consumers and producers, we find enigmatic hints, marginal comments, texts of questionable provenance. No matter how widely we forage, the specifics of how that wine smelled and tasted elude us.

In early modern England, most people, young and old, male and female, queens and servants, routinely drank fermented beverages of some sort since water was widely and wisely distrusted. Although we often associate the English with beer, ale, and cider, those beverages they still manufacture and export, wine, largely imported, was a favored beverage in England for most of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, until coffee, tea, chocolate, and distilled spirits diversified beverage options and challenged its monopoly. Wine had sacramental meanings, of course, in the communion cup at the center of the celebration of the mass as well as in its supposed inversion, the witches' sabbath.[1] Its sacramental meaning depended on its capacity for transformation, its ability to become or be experienced as something else, as well as its ability to change and bind its consumers. It was the lubricant of good fellowship, from households to taverns to palaces. A standard gift to and from royals and among aristocrats, it was so prized that it was the object of piracy and profiteering; Sir Francis Drake, for instance, seized wine from the Spanish.[2] Fortunes were made in importing wine. Elizabeth I rented out or farmed the right to collect customs duties on all imported sweet wines to her particular favorites, first Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and later the Earl of Essex. While it could be a luxury good, and a marker of elite status, wine was also a crucial part of recompense for servants, high and low.[3]

While wine was highly valued and widely drunk, it had often fallen victim to the ravages of time and transport by the time it reached English consumers' cups. As a consequence, wine was widely distrusted as foreign, spoiled, and adulterated. It was also understood to have its own timeline or life course, moving from new wines that were prized above older vintages to the spent wines that formed the basis for distilled spirits and medicines. Frugal housekeepers and tapsters found uses for wine at every stage in its timeline, from grape lees to vinegar, from new wine to distillations. Tackling wine as a work in progress, most who served wine, from housewives to coopers

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1   Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*; Camporesi, *Juice of Life*.
2   See Sebek, 'More natural to the nation', esp. pp. 107, 116; Fischer, 'Digesting Falstaff'.
3   Somerset, *Elizabeth I*, p. 333; Braddock, 'Rewards of Office-Holding', esp. p. 45.

and tavern keepers, artfully amended and blended it. Did this make wine foreign or domestic, a taste of the past, as it is often still called, or a fragile compromise in the present? No one could be sure. That uncertainty was both associated with femininity and, occasionally, an opportunity for women who joined experiments in growing grapes and making wine in England.

The mystery of early modern wine is not only a function of the time that has passed between now and then. Then as now, taste would have been highly subjective, varying from person to person. More than that, early moderns themselves struggled to anticipate and control the taste of their wine because the process of importing and storing wine exposed it to the ravages of time, temperature, and oxygen. While the causes of wine's decay were not fully understood, the effects were widely lamented. As we will see, if we focus on early modern wine as a process unfolding in time, rather than a stable product, we can see more clearly women's roles as agents who made and amended wine as well as consumed it.

Starting in the nineteenth century, the discovery of bacteria's role in making and spoiling wine opened up strategies for managing fermentation and for preserving wine. But precisely because winemakers today have so many ingredients and techniques available to them, the provenance and contents of the wine we drink now remain less certain than we sometimes like to think. Although many describe wine as a vehicle for tasting the time and place where grapes ripened, this romanticization glosses over the many interventions between vine and glass. What we know about early modern wine is that it was inscrutable: unstable, contaminated, mixed up. What we share with early modern drinkers, I contend, is uncertainty about what, exactly, is in the wine we drink. It might seem as if wine links us to drinkers in the past. But that link is tenuous. Ranging across a wide variety of sources, from the sixteenth century to popular depictions of that period today, this essay argues that what appears to be the same comestible simultaneously connects and divides the present and the past.

Gender and wine consumption

Various scholars have explored the relationships among alcohol, sex, and gender in medieval and early modern Europe, demonstrating the associations of drunkenness with violence, sexual excess, and disorder for both sexes.[4]

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4   Martin, *Alcohol, Sex, and Gender*; Kümin, *Drinking Matters*; Bloom, 'Manly Drunkenness'; Ellinghausen, 'University of Vice'; and *Pleasing Sinne*.

But what was particular to wine? In *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Robert Burton identifies 'The two maine plagues, and common dotages of human kind, Wine and Women, which have infatuated and besotted Myriades of people. They goe commonly together'.[5] Proverbs provide more concise versions of the same warnings, linking wine and women as threats to the male drinker: 'wine and wenches empty men's purses'; 'wine and women make [wise]men runnagates'.[6] Numerous ballads elaborate on the various plots by which wine and women conjoin to ruin men.[7] We might view even the most conventional advice about wine as gendered. 'Wine wears no breeches' is an early modern version of 'in vino veritas', suggesting drunks have no secrets.[8] This proverb depends on the twin assumptions that wine drinkers are men (who conventionally wear pants) and that, when they drink, they surrender the gendered authority that was so often troped as 'wearing the breeches', exposing, even emasculating themselves.

Medical advice variously advised and prohibited wine consumption, usually based on the gender and age of the drinker. Andrew Boorde, in his *The Compendious Regiment of Health*, advises that 'Wine [...] doth comfort old men and women, but there is no wine good for children and maidens'.[9] This advice continued for more than a century. Wine was bad for children and good for the old because it raised the body's temperature. Thomas Venner, for example, advises that only after 40 should men 'begin to make much of the use of wine'; then it should be 'given with a liberall hand unto old men' especially from 60 to death.[10] According to proverbial wisdom, 'Wine is old men's milk'.[11] Wine benefited the old because it provided the vitality and heat they lacked.

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5   Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, sec. 1.2.3.13, p. 291.

6   *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, W 473, p. 474. See also Apperson, *English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases*, pp. 692–93.

7   See, for example, 'The subtil Miss of LONDON'; 'A Merry Dialogue'; 'A Mornings Ramble'; and 'A Caueat or VVarning'. See also *Wine and Women*. On the association of wine and women, see Scott, 'Discovering the Sins of the Cellar,' in which she emphasizes the homonyms cellar and seller.

8   *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, W 490. Even 'Put not good Wine into an ill bottle' can have gendered implications. In *The Arte of Rhetoric*, Thomas Wilson elaborates on this as an example of allegory or extended metaphor: 'It is evill putting strong Wine into weake vessells, that is to say, it is evill trusting some women with weightie matters', sig. N2r. This is connected to advisories against women drinking wine since they were sometimes thought to have weaker brains in general and thus poorer heads for wine.

9   Boorde, *Compendious Regiment of Health*, sigs. D1v–D2r.

10   Venner, *Via recta*, p. 40.

11   *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, W 483.

The drama provides another gauge both of the ubiquity of wine in early modern England and the gendering of its consumption. According to Alan Dessen and Leslie Thompson's *Dictionary of Stage Directions*, wine is 'the most common item in tavern or banquet scenes or at other times when figures drink', appearing in about 65 stage directions. Shakespeare's plays mention wine at least 82 times. This doesn't count the other words for wine, including canary, malmsy, sack, and bastard.[12] While some female characters drink wine—Gertrude, for instance, pledges Hamlet with a poisoned stoup of wine—it is male characters who most often call for wine. 'Give me some wine; fill full', requests Macbeth (3.4.90), trying to recover from seeing Banquo's ghost; 'a Stoup of wine' Sir Toby Belch demands in *Twelfth Night* (2.3.111).[13] In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Antony and Pompey call for wine, but Cleopatra does not.

In Shakespeare's plays, men's wine drinking is as much a vulnerability as it is an entitlement. In *Richard III*, the Duke of Clarence begs his executioner for 'a cup of wine', is offered 'wine enough' then stabbed and drowned in 'the malmsey butt' (malmsey was a fortified wine like Madeira; 1.4.147–48, 245); his ghost later laments that he was 'washed to death with fulsome wine' (5.3.130). In *The Tempest*, Stefano exploits Caliban's unfamiliarity with and immediate lust for wine. The most famous manipulator of a man's weakness for wine would probably be Iago, who both insists on Desdemona's sexual availability through a leveling aphorism he appears to have invented—'the wine she drinks is made of grapes' (2.1.239)—and exploits Cassio's 'very poor and unhappy brains for drinking' (2.3.29–30). He explicitly offers Cassio 'a stoup of wine' (l.26; the very thing Claudius calls for and from which Gertrude drinks in *Hamlet*). Cassio elaborates that he 'could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment', that he has already had the one cup he allows himself, 'craftily qualified' or diluted, and that he is therefore reluctant to 'task [his] weakness'. Iago plays on Cassio's desire to drink 'to the health of black Othello' and to conform to what the other gallants desire. Iago has cunningly used wine to prepare his pawns: Roderigo, who has 'caroused' to Desdemona 'Potations pottle-deep'; three Cypriots, whom he has 'flustered with flowing cups'; and then Cassio,

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12   Varriano, *Wine*. Varriano has his own calculations: 'In the 26 plays in which they are mentioned, sack appears 44 times, Rhenish wine four, and claret and malmsey once each', p. 178. In her study of sack in the Henry IV plays, Sebek, 'More natural to the nation', p. 109, points to the play's 'interest in anchoring the wine that Falstaff consumes and that flows abundantly in Eastcheap in the Elizabethan "moment"', when imports from Spain dominated consumption despite ongoing war with Spain.

13   All citations of Shakespeare will refer to *The Norton Shakespeare*.

whose weakness he knows and on which he plays. He has created a 'flock of drunkards' on watch and then thrown an inebriated Cassio into the volatile mix. He keeps it going with the repeated cry 'Some wine, boys!' (2.3.65). While Iago is undoubtedly a villain, his strategy is not unique in Shakespeare.

Lady Macbeth proposes that she will tempt Duncan's two chamberlains 'with wine and wassail' so that they become 'spongy officers' who lose their control over memory and reason (1.7.64, 71). She later specifies that she has drugged their possets—a comforting drink of spiced milk curdled with wine that was often served at bedtime. What's more, she associates their incapacity with her own stimulation: 'That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold./ What hath quenched them hath given me fire' (2.2.1–2). Thus the wine cup is a crucial weapon in instigating and escalating these two tragedies, *Othello* and *Macbeth*. Perhaps more surprisingly, Portia, too, exploits a man's taste for wine to keep control over her marriage plot. She complains that one of her suitors, 'the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew', is always drunk by the afternoon and so advises Nerissa, her servant, that they can eliminate him as a marriage prospect if they use his weakness to game the casket test her father established to determine her husband: 'set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket; for if the devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I will be married to a sponge' (1.2.81–85). Here, as in *Macbeth*, a female character uses the word 'sponge' to describe men's weakness for wine, a weakness she both disdains and exploits. When male characters call for 'some wine, ho!' they cannot be sure exactly what they are getting or why it is being offered. The cup of fellowship might be a means by which the host gains control of the story at the guest's expense.

In various genres, women might also be described as drinking wine to excess. Ballads describe how men's and women's wine drinking made women more sexually vulnerable. One sums this up helpfully: 'When Wine is settled in your braine,/ you may be got with Child.'[14] While wine was often linked to heterosexual congress and risk, it also linked women to one another. In the satirical pamphlet *'Tis Merry When Gossips Meet*, the gossips are drinking

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14   'A new Ballad'. A female character in John Fletcher's comedy *The Wild Goose Chase* (1621) suggests that wine makes women more sexually vulnerable not only when they drink it but when men do. Oriana advises her brother that as men drink sack 'they ne'r speak modestly/ Unless the wine be poor, or they want money [...] if *in Vino veritas* be an Oracle,/ What woman is, or has been ever honest?/ Give 'em but ten round cups, they'll swear *Lucretia*/ Dy'd not for want of power to resist *Tarquine*,/ But want of Pleasure, that he stayed no longer', Act 1 scene 1, sig. B2r.

claret and sack.[15] In Middleton's *A Chastemaid in Cheapside*, the gossips at the Allwit Christening get drunk on 'comfits and wine' (3.2.49sd) and the scene links their gossip and incontinence explicitly to wine. The Third Gossip promises to tell the Fourth about her daughter's 'secret fault' (which turns out to be that she's a bed-wetter) 'when I have drunk', and her friend points out that 'Wine can do that, I see, that friendship cannot' (96–97). Allwit is sure that the puddles under their stools are not 'some wine spilt' but rather urine.[16] According to these satires, the open 'secret fault' of women socializing together is their incontinent consumption of wine. Do warnings and satires suggest that enough women drank to provoke disapprobation or that the very idea of women drinking wine—especially together—provoked both mirth and terror? It is always hard to know.

Either way, texts in a range of genres constantly, even obsessively, imagined women's wine drinking.[17] For example, in *Paradise Lost*, Milton describes Eve, once 'satiated' with forbidden fruit, as 'heightened as with wine, jocund and boon' (9.793). Milton's simile requires readers to know how women who are 'heightened' with wine would look and act.[18] The simile also draws on widespread unease about the connection between drinking wine and poor judgment for women—and its potentially ruinous effects.

Thomas Tryon, for example, returns—repeatedly!—to the suggestion that women should drink sparingly if at all. 'Women ought not to drink

15   Rowlands, *Tis Merry*. Women drank with male friends as well as female. In Cavendish's *Convent of Pleasure* (3.6), a Citizen's Wife, Mrs. Negligent, looking for her husband, enters a tavern, 'where a Bush is hung out', advertising that it sells wine. But she lingers to accept the wine two gentlemen offer her, confiding 'In truth, I find a cup of Wine doth comfort me sometimes', p. 114.
16   Middleton, *A Chastemaid in Cheapside*; Paster offers an illuminating reading of incontinence in the play in *Body Embarrassed*, pp. 52–63. I want to emphasize the central role of wine drinking in this incontinence.
17   While all the speakers in a dialogue called *Wine, Beere, and Ale, Together by the Eares* are male (Wine is a gentleman and Beere is a citizen) several of them suggest that women drink wine. Wine boasts to Beere: 'I am a companion for Princes, the least droppe of my blood, worth all thy body. I am sent for by the Citizens, visited by the Gallants, kist by the Gentlewomen: I am their life, their Genius, the Poeticall furie, the Helicon of the Muses, of better value then Beere', sig. B2r. The unclear antecedent for 'they', following hard upon the reference to gentlewomen, suggests that perhaps gentlewomen value wine as their genius. Beer points out that wine is 'kept under locke and key, confinde to some corner of a Cellar, and there indeed commonly close prisoner, unlesse the Iaylor or Yeoman of the Bottles turne the Key for the chamber-maid now and then, for which shee vowes not to leave him till the last gaspe where Beere goes abroad, and randevous in every place', sigs. B2r–B2v. Asserting his own accessibility and mobility, Beere associates women's wine consumption with sexualized secrecy and confinement.
18   Goldstein wonders whether this drunkenness might be the result of 'a psychosomatic reaction to her disobedience, or because of the chemistry of this particular fruit, or both?' in *Eating and Ethics*, p. 189.

Wine or strong Drink, which are bad for Men, but an *hundred fold worse for Women*', he advises.[19] According to him, wine is worse for women because it encourages an inclination to a sexual excess to which, he points out, only human females descend. This includes activities he deems unproductive, such as having sex while menstruating or pregnant and marrying younger men. In *A Way to Health*, which begins with a laudatory poem from a Mrs. Ann Behn, he warns of

> the too frequent drinking of *Wine* and *strong Drinks*, which heats the Seed, and pervokes Nature, and make her lose her way, which is very pernicious and dangerous to al sorts of People, but more especially to WOMEN; and therefore the Ancients did direct those of *that Sex*, to observe an higher degree of *Temperance* and *Order* than they prescribed to *Men*, as knowing that the whole Wellfare and Preservation of Mankind did chiefly depend on their good or ill Constitution.[20]

Note how Tryon's concern with controlling women also asserts men's dependence on them for the 'whole welfare and preservation of mankind'.

While some of Tryon's concerns seem idiosyncratic, his recourse to the ancients is not. In *The English Gentlewoman*, for instance, Richard Brathwait similarly announces that wine drinking leads inevitably to adultery and that as

> For these *Feminine Epicures*, who surfet out their time in an unwomanly excesse, we exclude them the pale of our Common-weale. Be they of what *state* soever, they are staines to their *Sexe* for ever. Especially such, who carouse it in deepe healths, rejoyce at the colour of the wine, till it sparkle in their veines, inflame their bloods, and lay open a breach to the frailty of their Sexe. For prevention whereof, we reade [in Pliny] that kinsmen kissed their kinswomen to know whether they drunke wine or no, and if they had, to be punished by death, or banished to some Iland.[21]

This is yet another instance of the fantasy we find everywhere in the early modern period that disorderly women could be killed or banished, a fantasy

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19   Tryon, *Way to Health,* sig. N8r.
20   Ibid., sig. N6v. In the earlier *A Treatise of Cleanness*, he states that: 'The whole Preservation of Mens Health and Strength does chiefly reside in the Wisdom and Temperance of Women. Therefor the ancient Wise Men in former Ages, did direct and accustom their Women to a higher degree of Temperance than the Men', sig. B4r.
21   Brathwait, *English Gentlewoman*, sig. H2r. Brathwait here refers to Plinie, *Historie of the World*, I, p. 418, sig. Nn5v.

that is always recalled wistfully as practice in some other time and place. Kiss the girls and make them disappear. However different they may be, Tryon and Brathwait both offer us vivid pictures of female desire enhanced by wine and outside men's control. Before cutting himself off with the fantasy of a diagnostic kiss, Brathwait lingers over the vision of the 'feminine epicure', risking the possibility of the reader who identifies with or desires her. Sparkling in her veins, inflaming her blood, the wine she drinks seems to become the blood it resembles, and therein lies its appeal and its danger.

We see the association of wine with bodily fluids in an erotic verse that is often considered a curiosity or an embarrassment. In sonnet 63 of Barnabe Barnes's sonnet sequence *Parthenophil and Parthenope* (1593), the speaker imagines copying the gods in taking different forms to gain access to his mistress, contemplating encompassing various parts of her body as a glove, a necklace, a belt. Parthenophil builds toward a discussion of becoming a comestible, going inside rather than around. 'Or that sweet wine which downe her throate doth trickle,/ To kisse her lippes, and lye next at her hart,/ Runne through her vaynes, and passe by pleasures parte'. Thomas Nashe ridiculed this conceit as destined for the chamber pot, both fleeting and debasing.[22] But what interests me is how the sonnet builds toward a desire to inhabit the female body and imagines that the way to do that is as wine, which is not quite digested as other nutrients might be but rather becomes part of the body even as it passes through. Barnes's conceit is affiliated with Ben Jonson's in much more famous and beloved lines: 'Or leave a kiss but in the cup,/ And I'll not look for wine'.[23] Jonson's trick here is a displacement that eludes Barnes. Contented with just a kiss in the cup, his speaker enjoins Celia to drink to him only with her eyes, to quench their spiritual thirst with a 'drink divine'. Just as, in the Song of Solomon, the bridegroom admires his beloved's mouth as 'like the best wine […], that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak',[24] Jonson's speaker imagines himself as the drinker and his beloved as the drink. In contrast, Barnes puts the male lover, Parthenophil, in the position of what will be consumed and imagines an unsettlingly material mistress, Parthenope, who not only drinks but urinates. Her lover, Parthenophil, combines aggression, imagining encircling and then invading her, with the abjection of being consumed and then

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22 Barnes, *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*, sonnet 63, sig. F4r; Nashe, *Have with You*, sig. Q2v.
23 Jonson, 'Song: To Celia'. Wine's supposed property of being human adjacent, a supplementary bodily fluid, was described as being 'homogeneall'. See Whitaker, *Tree of Humane Life*, and Dolan, 'Blood of the Grape'.
24 Song of Solomon 7.8–9, 7.12.

eliminated. But both Barnes' and Jonson's poems exploit the erotics of wine as an animate extension of or supplement to the female body.

Because wine was so often associated with vulnerability, exemplary women were praised for abstinence or moderation. According to the famously ambivalent biography of Elizabeth Cary by one (or more) of her daughters, while she 'seemed not to have full power over herself in matter of diet' and had a weakness for sugar, 'she by custome and nature never [drank] wine; of which she never drunke more then a spoonfull att any time'.[25] Of the many contrasts between Elizabeth I and Mary Stuart, yet another is that Elizabeth watered her wine, drinking more water than wine, while, by various accounts, Mary Stuart both grew fat on wine and bathed in it.[26] One of Mary's biographers, John Guy, argues that Mary asserted her queenship even when imprisoned by maintaining the multicourse meals with wine pairings that characterized the court. Apparently, she not only put on the show but injudiciously indulged herself. Guy specifies her wine drinking as particularly fattening.[27] A letter from the Earl of Shrewsbury to Sir Walter Mildmay (then Chancellor of the Exchequer and a member of the Privy Council) in January 1569 complains that one of the unexpected costs of housing Mary is the expense of procuring additional wine. He simply must have more wine, he writes, because 'truly two tonnes in a monthe have not hitherunto sufficed ordinarily, besids that that is occupied at tymes for her bathings, and suche like uses'.[28] Each tun would be the equivalent of about 252 gallons. A small bathing tub might have held around 40. To place Shrewsbury's request for more than 2 tuns a month for his household or 24 per year in context, Elizabeth's court went through about 300 tuns per year at its heights, later reduced to 240. However little Elizabeth drank herself, imported wine was a major expense for the court[29]—and for those who entertained visits from her and her entourage.

25   *Elizabeth Cary*, p. 144. There is some dispute as to which of Cary's four daughters who became Benedictines, Anne, Elizabeth, Lucy, or Mary, wrote the biography. Interest focuses on Anne and Lucy.

26   On Elizabeth's abstemiousness, see an undated manuscript attributed to John Clapham, a member of William Cecil, Lord Burghley's household: 'The wine she drank was mingled with water, containing three parts more in quantity than the wine itself' (Read and Read, eds., *Elizabeth of England*, p. 89). The editors claim that 'these observations were rapidly composed within four months of the death of Queen Elizabeth' (ibid., vi). See also Somerset, *Elizabeth I*, p. 350.

27   Guy, *True Life of Mary Stuart*, pp. 431–32.

28   The letter, from the Talbot Papers, appears in Lodge, *Illustrations*, II, pp. 27–28.

29   Woodworth, 'Purveyance for the Royal Household'. According to Woodworth, 'The cellar was expected to furnish annually from two hundred to three hundred tuns of wine. In the earlier and more extravagant years of Elizabeth's reign the household required three hundred tuns,

Shrewsbury's request in this letter hardens into a 'fact' about Mary in the index of Lodge's *Illustrations of British History*, which includes the entries 'baths of wine used by the Queen of Scots', and also, under Mary, 'used to bathe in wine'.[30] Neither the Earl of Shrewsbury nor his wife, popularly known as Bess of Hardwick, seems to have been happy about having Mary billeted upon them by Elizabeth, who established the arrangement immediately after they married. It would last for more than 15 years and inflame conflict between the couple, including suspicions about possible adultery between the Earl and Mary (who was 20 years younger than Bess).[31] Mary, a prisoner, did not like this arrangement either. As a consequence, communications from the Earl or Countess of Shrewsbury, or Mary herself, regarding the arrangement have to be read critically. This letter from the Earl was written very early in Mary's stay. Is it evidence that she bathed in wine or served or drank it at bath time? Is it evidence of the Earl's prurient interest in her habits? Or is it an attempt to capitalize on her reputation as a larger than life consumer to get more support for what quickly emerged as a financially ruinous assignment? For my purposes, it serves as evidence that even when wine finds a place in the story or appears in the index, its meaning is simultaneously gendered and murky. From communion cup to bathtub wine was always bearing significance beyond itself. But what it signified was usually under debate.

Wine and time

Wine's epistemological instability and its usefulness both depended on the fact that it had its own life course; it was, for good and ill, in time. Because early moderns did not know how to control the effects of time and air on wines, old wines were seldom valued as better than young ones. Time was not a friend to early modern wine, which was most consistently praised as 'fresh', young, or 'brisk'. As a consequence, early modern links between women and wine do not celebrate maturity—in the way that we see in popular culture

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but later the amount was reduced to two hundred and forty tuns. Most of the wine was French wine. The merchants who supplied it were English and often were the same men who furnished groceries for the spicery. Besides French wine the court used a small quantity of sweet wine which it bought from merchants trading in Spain and the Levant', p. 55. By the end of Elizabeth's reign, the cellar had compounded with wine merchants in order to reduce brokerage fees and exert more control over the quality of the wine.

30   Lodge, *Illustrations*, II, pp. 435, 441.
31   See Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*.

now. Rather, they offer a particular twist on the *carpe diem* tradition. The speaker in one late seventeenth-century ballad concludes that for both wine and women, 'Nothing can be like the present Time,/ Give me Wine and Women in their prime,/ And before that e'er they pall/ Give me all'.[32]

It was so difficult to stabilize wine in this period that it was usually doctored in one way or another to conceal and slow spoilage, enhance sweetness, and extend supplies. Amendments might be as benign as the addition of herbs and spices, but they also included a witch's cauldron of bizarre possibilities. Strategies for preserving and improving wines included variations on what have since become reliable methods: increasing its sugar or acid levels; or using a preservative in the form of vitriol (a metal sulfate) or sulfur. In other words, while sweetened wines were often called 'bastard', most wines were adulterated in one way or another. One contemporary called this the 'mystery of vintners'.[33] In the early modern period, wine amendment was recognized as widespread and denounced as fraud; it was variously called adulteration, transubstantiation, and alchemy. What went into the barrel then was a bit more eclectic than it is now. But then as now amending wine was part of the standard business of producing, storing, and serving it.[34]

Many wine connoisseurs now suggest that drinking wine is a way to taste the essence of another time and place. The word 'terroir' is often used to describe how all of the constituents of location (soil constitution, sun exposure, climate, precipitation, etc.) express themselves in a wine. Although the effects of soil constitution, for example, cannot yet be quantified, it is widely asserted that wine 'tells the story of its origin'; that a glass of wine 'tells a story, first of that place, and second of that year'.[35] Purportedly, then, to drink wine is to travel through time and space, to 'uncork the past'

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32 'Beauteous JENNY'. There is some contradictory evidence as well, suggesting that aged wines might be preferred, especially for older drinkers. According to Simon's *History of the Wine Trade in England*, for example, 'The most unfortunate queen, Catherine of Aragon, was only given new wine for her drinking, although this did not suit her failing health, and she begged, but in vain, to have some other. In 1534, she sent to Chapuys, the Emperor's Ambassador, for a cask of old Spanish wine, which was given her, but it appears that the servant who executed her commands was dismissed for the offence of obeying her orders, the King not choosing her to drink or eat anything but what he provided for her', II, pp. 138–39.

33 For lists of additions to wine, see Plat, *Jewel House*, sigs. I3v–I4r; *True Discovery*, pp. 27–28; and Charleton, 'The Mysterie of Vintners', in *Two Discourses*.

34 For an overview of additives widely used in winemaking today, see the appendices to Feiring, *Naked Wine*.

35 Goode and Harrop, *Authentic Wine*, pp. 2–4, 235. See also Dolan, 'Wine, Time, and Terroir'.

or, as Keats put it, to savor 'a beaker full of the warm south'.[36] This access to the past is always a fantasy. But aggressive wine amendments make it especially hard to sustain. Renaissance drinkers did not taste another season and climate as much as they sampled a fragile compromise cooked up in a London tavern or a Yorkshire kitchen. Layers of time, place, and agency commingled in a single mouthful.

Whose agency? Coopers, who both made barrels and shaped their contents, were important wine amenders, as were tapsters. But housewives, too, participated in fighting the effects of time through and in wines. Cookbooks and other how-to guides addressed to women routinely tell them how to use wine in medicines intended to offset the ravages of time.[37] These practical guides also advised housewives on how to 'amend'—we might say 'disguise'—wines that had gone off. Gervase Markham's *The English Housewife*, for instance, includes a chapter on wines borrowed from a manuscript on vintner's secrets; in it, he advises the housewife on how to amend enormous quantities of wine. As Michael R. Best points out in his edition of Markham, 'what in the vintner was scandalous adulteration was admirable ingenuity in the frugal housewife'.[38] Women were also, as we will now see, important participants in the venture of growing grapes and making wine in England.

Women and winemaking

Grape growing and winemaking, like the many other agricultural innovations of which they formed part, were driven by men, those whom Joan Thirsk calls 'gentlemen farmers', who both experimented with new methods and wrote about those experiments.[39] The majority of texts advocating English

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36   See, for example, McGovern, *Uncorking the Past*, pp. 27, 269, and *passim*; Keats, 'Ode to a Nightingale', l. 15.

37   See Wall's chapter on 'Temporalities', in *Recipes for Thought.*

38   Best, 'Introduction', xxv. Markham's recipes for amending wine deal with huge quantities—appropriate to the professional and not the housewife. This is because, as Markham only explains in his third edition, he took his chapter on wine from a 'rudely written' and unpolished manuscript by 'one professed skillful in the trade' and expert in 'vintner's secrets' (Best, 'Introduction', p. xviii). This manuscript, *Secreta Dei pampinei*, had been in Hugh Plat's hands and in, his *Floraes Paradise*, Plat claimed to have written it. Best compares a surviving fragment of the manuscript (in the British Library) with Markham's text, concluding that Markham added nothing substantial to the content, polishing and reorganizing it. On Plat's relation to the manuscript, see also Thick, *Sir Hugh Plat.*

39   Of writers including Markham, Walter Blith, and John Worlidge, Thirsk asserts that '[t]hroughout the [seventeenth] century the strongest stimulus to experiment came from

winemaking promote it as an extension of the many other ways of making a rural estate self-sufficient and productive. Ancient taboos insisted women were inimical to wine production: vines wither if a menstruating woman passes;[40] wine sours if she enters the cellar in which it is stored. While these fears were still occasionally repeated into the early modern period, they were lapsing into obsolescence and they did not prevent women from experimenting with grape growing and winemaking. Perhaps this is not surprising since there was a long tradition of women brewers, as Judith Bennett among others has documented, and winemaking in particular resides at the intersection of domains women often controlled, including gardening, medicine, and food production.[41] Although gentleman farmers like gentlemen virtuosi instigated, bankrolled, and documented much of the experimentation in gardens, kitchens, and labs, they did not monopolize it, depending on wives, children, and servants. Those figures were not only on the margins assisting.[42] In the notebooks, correspondence, and published writings of various prolific polymaths, we catch glimpses of women who were in the vanguard of English winemaking.

Barnabe Googe, in an 'Epistle to the Reader' in his translation of Heresbach's *Foure Bookes of Husbandry*, mentions that, at the time he writes in the late sixteenth century, at an 'ancient house' at Chilwell, in Nottingham, there 'remaineth yet as an ancient monument in a great windowe of glasse the whole order of planting, proyning, stamping, and pressing of Vines. Besides, there is yet also growing an old Vine, that yeeldes a Grape sufficient to make a right good Wine, as was notably proved by a Gentlewoman in the said house'.[43] This gentlewoman is then the preserver of an ancient tradition, like the window, like the vine, but also an innovator who 'proves' that it is possible to reclaim a lost past so as to realize a future for English wine.

Also in the late sixteenth century, Hugh Plat visited the gardens of Sir Francis Walsingham, principal secretary to Elizabeth I and often referred

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gentlemen farmers such as these' (Thirsk, 'Plough and Pen', esp. p. 301).

40   Crawford, 'Attitudes toward Menstruation', esp. p. 59; Camporesi, *Juice of Life,* pp. 113–17; Krazitzky, *Healing, Performance and Ceremony*, p. 202, n.49.

41   Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters*; Wall, *Staging Domesticity*; Wall, *Recipes for Thought*; Laroche, *Medical Authority*; and Munroe, *Gender and the Garden*.

42   A. Cooper, 'Homes and Households'; Hunter and Hutton, *Women, Science, and Medicine*; Harkness, *Jewel House*.

43   Heresbach, *Foure Bookes of Husbandry*, sig. A3v. Googe mentions two men as well, but he points out that the wines they produce are not 'right good' because of 'the malice and disdaine peradventure of the Frenchmen that kept them', rather than any fault of soil or situation. The gentlewoman he mentions seems to have avoided this pitfall by doing the work herself.

to as her 'spymaster', and his wife, Ursula, at their estate at Barn Elms, on the Thames between London and Richmond. There, he observed that: 'my Lady Walsinghams vines at barnes elms be planted against the back of chimneys whose fiers doo greatly helpe the ripening of the grapes, so likewise of the Apricock wch are bounde upp to the wall with the vines'. According to Malcom Thick, what Plat saw 'may have been the earliest heated walls in English gardens'.[44] Lady Walsingham is one of those women whom we know largely through her associations with men: the best sources on her are biographies of her husband, and even there she is only briefly mentioned (and her heated walls not at all). She is the mother of the Frances Walsingham who married Sir Philip Sidney and later the Earl of Essex. Perhaps most intriguingly for my concerns here, John Dee was her near neighbor at Barn Elms, and he describes Ursula as coming to his house 'very freely'; she served as godmother to his daughter Madinia.[45] Walsingham may have been engaging in intrigue, but Ursula was forging connections with influential if eccentric knowledge producers and ripening her grapes.

Plat was especially interested in grapes because he made wine which he boasts is 'rich, and of a strong boiling nature' and would keep for 'a whole yeere, and sometimes longer, without any shewe of fainting deadness, or discolouring: which is as much as any Vintner can well require in his best French wines'.[46] Touting his own vintage, Plat also draws our attention to the limited lifespan expected for all wines, homemade and imported. In his *Floraes Paradise* (1608), Plat offers his wine as a 'new, rare, and profitable invention', second only to secrets in metallurgy. He identifies women as particularly appreciative consumers of his homemade English wine. Defending it as just as good as imports, he argues that 'if any exception shold be taken against the race and delicacie' of his homemade wines, 'I am content to submit them to the censure of the best mouthes, that professe any true skill in the judgement of high country wines', adding that the French ambassador said 'that he never drank any better new Wine in France'. 'Race' can mean many things in Plat's praise for his wine, but it seems most likely that he refers to the meaning specific to wine, that is, a kind or class of wine, its essence or spirit, and a distinctive taste that links product to place. Race

44   Thick, *Sir Hugh Plat*, pp. 58–59, quoting British Library manuscript SL 2210 (sig. 79v). Thick dates the notebook to about 1581–92. See also Mukherjee, 'Secrets of Sir Hugh Platt'.
45   On Walsingham, see Budiansky, *Her Majesty's Spymaster*; and Hutchinson, *Elizabeth's Spymaster*. For the detail about Ursula's relation to Dee, see J. Cooper, *Queen's Agent*, p. 263; and *Private Diary*, pp. 3, 9, 18–19 (on visitors to Dee's library) and 33 (on Ursula as godmother).
46   Plat, *Floraes Paradise*, sig. O8v.

here is, then, an early word for *terroir*, what makes Plat's wine distinctly his, what distinguishes it from others.[47]

Plat goes on to say

> that now mee thinks I begin to growe somewhat strong in my supporters; & therefore I make some doubt, whether I shall need to bring in that renowmed Lady *Arabella*, the Countess of *Cumberland*, the Lady *Anne Clifford*, the Lady *Hastings*, the Lady *Candish*, & most of the Maides of Honour, with divers Lordes, Knights, and Gentlemen of good worth, that have generally applauded the same.[48]

The women Plat mentions include three, Arbella Stuart, Margaret Russell (the Countess of Cumberland and Anne Clifford's mother), and Anne herself, who will appear as dedicatees of Amelia Lanyer's long devotional poem *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* just a few years later (1611). The maids of honor seem likely to be Anne of Denmark's 'maids of honor', that is, many of the same crew who had appeared in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Blackness* at court in 1605,[49] and which included Elizabeth Hastings, Countess of Huntington, whom Plat seems to mention, as well as others of Lanyer's dedicatees (Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford, and Catherine Howard, Countess of Suffolk). Performers and patrons, this posse might also have been among what Plat calls 'the best mouths', encouraging and benefitting from the experimentation that helped to produce drinkable English wine. They offer an appealing corrective to the much more familiar satires of women drinking and gossiping together. Promoting invention, these 'mouths' are, in Plat's account, productive.

Samuel Hartlib's compendious text *Samuel Hartlib His Legacie* (1652), gathering together other writers' texts and letters written to Hartlib, is, like all of the texts Hartlib midwifed into print, an undigested hodgepodge.

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47   Ibid., sig. E7v. Plat's use of 'race' corresponds to the term 'typicity': 'the way a wine displays characteristics shared among wines from this particular location' (Goode and Harrop, *Authentic Wine*, p. 13). 'Racy' is still used as a wine descriptor, but it has only gradually moved from meaning tasting of the earth or tasting of its own sap or spirit to meaning more generally lively or sprightly wine.

48   Ibid., sigs. E8r–v.

49   Of these women, the only one I cannot yet identify is 'Lady Candish'. On Queen Anne's court and her ladies, see Barroll, *Anna of Denmark*. The names Plat lists do not overlap precisely with Anna's favorites. It is also not easy to determine exactly who served as 'maids of honor'. However, the cast lists of masques do survive. Nagy, *Popular Medicine*, discusses the herbal knowledge and skill of aristocratic women, especially 'the delight she [the Countess of Cumberland, Anne Clifford's mother] took in distilling waters and other chymical extractions', p. 65.

It includes a discussion of orchards and fruit growing, titled *A large letter concerning the Defects and Remedies of English Husbandry*. The letter is addressed to Hartlib, and he frames it as a work he first commissioned and then amended and augmented. Written in the first person, it is often attributed to Robert Child, who attempted, unsuccessfully, to establish a vineyard in Massachusetts in the 1640s.[50] In the course of a fervent argument that the English should make their own wines and ciders rather than relying on imports, the speaker (Child?) points to 'some *Ingenious Gentlemen*' who 'usually make *wine* very good, long lasting, without extraordinary labour and cost' especially one in Kent, whom the margin identifies as Sir Peter Ricard who 'yearly maketh 6 or 8 hos-heads, which is very much commended by divers who have tasted it, and he hath kept some of it two years, as he himself told me, and it hath been very good'.[51] Hartlib's manuscript journal, now searchable digitally, also records that 'at my Lord Warwick's Lady Ranelagh heard a Relation of 20. Or 3. Tonnes of wine made last year 1652 of English Grapes by one in Kent whose name she can easily learne'.[52] Perhaps Lady Ranelagh was describing the same Kentish gentleman who ends up in Hartlib's *Legacy* via Child. Lady Ranelagh was, of course, Katherine Jones, Robert Boyle's sister; they may have collaborated, certainly lived together for the last 23 years of their lives, and are buried together.[53] Focusing on wine brings into view those women some historians of science have refused to see but whose stories those who attend to early modern women are telling; the digitization of lives, letters, and other sources is making it easier to piece these stories together. Furthermore, Hartlib's and Boyle's notation of intelligence women brought them about wine affirms that winemaking was news. Lady Ranelagh was eager to hear a relation of it and to pass it on to Hartlib as part of the overall project of agricultural 'improvement'.

Women are part of this story, not only as what early moderns called relators, that is, those who collect and convey information, but as newsmakers and experimenters. In that capacity they are both on the record and off it, in the story and at its margins. In Hartlib's *Legacie*, the section on orchards proceeds to recount that 'lately in *Surrey* a *Gentle-woman* told me, that they having many *grapes*, which they could not well tell how to dispose of, she, to play the good *House-wife*, stampt them to make *verjuice*; but two

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50   Pinney, *History of Wine in America*, pp. 29–30; Morison, *Builders of the Bay Colony*, pp. 244–68.
51   Hartlib, *Samuel Hartlib His Legacie*, sig. D4v. On Hartlib, see Greengrass, 'Samuel Hartlib', pp. 304–22; Picciotto, *Labors of Innocence*, pp. 118–21; and Yeo, *Notebooks*, pp. 97–131.
52   Hartlib, *Ephemerides*, 1653, n. pag.
53   DiMeo, 'Lady Ranelagh's Book'; DiMeo, 'Such a sister became such a brother'. On Hartlib's female correspondents, see also Bourke.

moneths after drawing it forth, they found it very fine brisk *wine*, cleer like *Rock-water*, and in many other places such *experiments* have been made'.[54] The one 'she' stands out amidst the three 'theys', trumpeting the moment when she resolves their uncertainty and we learn what motivated her, the desire to play the good housewife and outwit the ravages of time. While the 1655 edition of this text mysteriously adds 'Captain Tucker' in the margin as if to identify this Surrey gentlewoman, the passage itself remains the same. Joan Thirsk notes this and laments that this change amounts to 'robbing the Surrey lady of her claim to fame, and transferring it to Captain Tucker'. But the original passage remains unchanged next to the reference to Captain Tucker. Thirsk finds in Hartlib's papers a 1653 reference to a 'Captain Tuck' who married Lord Winchilsea's sister from Kent, and 'is the likeliest gent. Who hath so many tuns of wine out of English grapes'. For her, this is a possible route to 'tentatively restore the lady to the record'.[55] But what's interesting to me about this particular amendment by Hartlib is that it leaves the description of the gentlewoman winemaker unrevised. She is still on the record. If anything, the possibility of her association with a Captain Tucker promises to add specificity to the attribution. Captain Tucker could be a member of the 'they' who had excess grapes and who discovered that the verjuice *she* had made turned into wine. But in all three versions of Hartlib's text (1651, 1652, 1655), she is there. Her experiment is an important part of the text's evidence that the English can and should make good wine. Hartlib's text goes on to appeal not to others who hope to play the good housewife but to 'ingenious men': 'I therefore desire *Ingenious* men to endeavour the raising of so necessary and pleasant a commodity'.[56] But while it cannot quite attach ingenuity to women, it depends on female informants and reports on a female experimenter. Similarly, William Coles's *Adam in Eden: or, Natures Paradise*, also published in the 1650s, hales the effort of a single woman: 'And though many of our Vines be of the same kind with those in *France*, yet they seldom come to maturity, to make so good Wine as theirs, our Country being colder: however, I have heard of

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54   Hartlib, *Samuel Hartlib His Legacie*, sig. D4.
55   Thirsk, *Alternative Agriculture*, p. 137. Thirsk includes several invaluable pages on grape growing as, ultimately, a failure, pp. 135–39. Picard, *Elizabeth's London*, p. 167, claims 'acqua vitae (brandy) was being made commercially, on a small scale, by Jane Garrett, the wife of a foreign leather dresser and merchant, in 1593'. Picard cites Scouloudi, *Returns of Strangers*, where one finds other records of women aqua vitae distillers (entries 838 and 803v; 896 and 863v).
56   Hartlib, *Samuel Hartlib His Legacie*, sig. D4v.

Wine made in *England*, of Grapes, growing in Mrs. *Pits* Garden at *Harrow* on the Hill' (on the outskirts of London).[57]

The praise for the effort of a single woman in Surrey or Harrow on the Hill suggests the sliding scale of the local. This might expand to include various English colonies, especially Virginia, in which the English aspired to make 'English wine', with either native or imported grapes. For example, James I sent hundreds of copies of a text on viticulture, as well as plant starts and French experts, to Virginia in the hope of countering tobacco growing with two other crops, grape vines and silk worms.[58] But if the dream of making English wine might extend to the Jamestown plantation it most often condensed down to one gentlewoman in Surrey, one old vine, one year's glut of grapes, one housewifely scheme, one heated wall.

If rural gentlemen's and gentlewomen's experiments in winemaking yielded only small quantities for the consumption of their families and friends, inspiring anecdotes of ingenuity in a dream of English wine production that has not quite been realized even yet, the English had a more powerful contribution to make to the history of wine as consumers who pushed the market, and through contributions to the production and transport of wine.[59] For example, in the 1630s, Sir Kenelm Digby invented the sturdy dark glass wine bottle with a flat bottom and a punt, which required a coal furnace that could reach extremely high temperatures. Without what we still recognize as the modern wine bottle, as just one example, moving champagne from lucky accident to method would have been impossible. While Digby is credited with the bottle's invention, it was probably tested and first produced in Sir Robert Mansell's glassmaking works, since he held a patent until 1642. Elizabeth, Lady Mansell, ran her husband's glassmaking business in his absence, defended his patent, and switched from Scottish coal to Newcastle coal for the glassmaking furnaces (thus lowering costs).[60]

In exploring how time and gender conjoin in creating the mystery of English wine, I have proceeded by gathering, combining, and scrutinizing surviving fragments of evidence. I have ranged across the early modern period, gratefully synthesizing the work of other scholars, relying on our

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57 Coles, *Adam in Eden*, sig. X1r.
58 On these initiatives, see Bigelow, 'Gendered Language'.
59 Lukacs, *Inventing Wine*, pp. 61, 110.
60 Godfrey, *Development of English Glassmaking*, pp. 115, 196, 225–32. While I'm on the subject of women's involvement in manufacture, Elizabeth Cary, as part of her ongoing attempts to secure maintenance from her husband, tried to get her husband's pipe stave license 'diverted to her' (Wolfe, 'Introduction', p. 23); this was a license to make and export staves used in making barrels and casks for wine (Wolfe, 'Introduction', p. 23, n. 54).

growing treasure trove of biographical information to connect the dots among some of the players, valuing plays, pamphlets, poems, agricultural treatises, proverbs, ballads, notebooks, and correspondence equally as evidence that wine was ubiquitous, gendered, and inscrutable. At every turn, I have emphasized the questionable provenance of the surviving evidence. In this, the surviving evidence resembles the wine I'm using it to trace—ephemeral, elusive, possibly tainted. My method, then, resembles that of the maligned wine amenders, who combined and doctored what they received. The only difference is that I draw attention to this process of collection and combination, to what has gone into this cask and what is missing.

Wine in the popular imaginary

Wine remains central to popular depictions of the Renaissance broadly conceived: fountains running wine epitomize court excess; overflowing wine cups at Renaissance fairs and in historical fictions in various media capture passion, risk, and excess—and more rarely, women taking a place at the table to consult and consort with men and with one another. Even as it captures one version of what makes the Renaissance a recognizable and appealing brand, the wine in those cups seems to link us to the past; they drink and we drink. Indeed, shows like *The Tudors* almost seem to imply drinking games among viewers; one can easily find suggestions for such games online. Lift your glass every time Henry has a tantrum. But what we know about early modern wine is that it was unstable, adulterated, illegible. What was and is in that cup?

The wine in popular representations of the Renaissance reinforces two robust associations we have seen in early modern culture itself: that wine was associated with sexual danger for women; and that English pride was wounded by the reliance on imported wine. We see the association between wine and sexual danger in the pilot of *Reign*, the Mary Stuart soap opera, in which a female shadow warns her: 'Taste all the love and sorrow but don't drink the wine' (which will be drugged). 'Don't drink the wine' condenses the advisory that haunts so many fictions of Renaissance courts, those bowers of bliss and blood into which we are invited as voyeurs even as we are warned that many a maiden will not make it out intact.

We find versions of the association of wine with nationalism in two popular depictions of Henry's court. Hilary Mantel's novel *Bring Up the Bodies* figures Anne Boleyn's exotic tastes and sexual allure in terms of wine. The protagonist and narrator, Thomas Cromwell, observes that 'Henry

[the VIII] has been adapting his taste to hers. Henry used to enjoy hedge wines, the fruits of the English summer, but now the wines he favours are heavy, perfumed, drowsy'—that is French.[61] While Mantel has achieved a cultural prestige rarely afforded to historical fictions about Renaissance queens, she has surprisingly little to say of interest about Anne Boleyn. But Mantel suggests that the association of so many English queens with wine-producing countries—France, Spain—helped to shape both the fashions for (and distrust of) particular wines.

In the Showtime series *The Tudors*, Henry serves English wine to the skeptical French ambassador, reminding him that 'We've been making wine in England since the Romans'. 'As late as that?' the ambassador sneers. The ambassador's verdict is that the wine is 'uh, very fruity [...] and strong like a gladiator sweats'.[62] The joke still works for audiences today because of the assumption that the English still don't make good wine—although climate change is giving them an assist—even as it tries to remind viewers that the English did make wine and that wine consumption and national pride were inseparable even in the sixteenth century.

The role of wine in the popular vision of the Renaissance extends into consumer goods, including the 'wives of Henry VIII wine charms' one can find on Etsy. A wine charm is, of course, a way to identify your glass so that you don't constantly need a new one or drink from the wrong one. It's a way to know your wine from someone else's. The charm secures a costume party identification between present and past, frolicsome knower and object of knowledge: I'm Jane Seymour! It also depends on the partygoer to recognize the difference between, say, Catherine of Aragon and Catherine Howard, Anne Boleyn and Anne of Cleves. Few could. This technology for knowing your wine depends, in this case, on knowing your history. But neither is very stable. Even if you can consistently identify your queen and your glass, that doesn't mean you know any more about its contents than Anne Boleyn might have. It's the not knowing, I have been arguing, that links us to early modern wine drinkers. Iago reassures Cassio that wine is a 'good familiar creature/ if it be well used' (2.3.283–84). But on this as on so many other fronts, he is not to be trusted. Cassio and Iago both know that Cassio responds to wine differently than others do. For him, the cup of fellowship is 'unblessed' and 'the ingredient is a devil' (2.3.282). The contents of the cup vary from drinker to drinker. Wine is also dynamic in the bottle or in the glass and dynamic over time, so that what is consistently called

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61   Mantel, *Bring Up the Bodies*, p. 94.
62   Hirst, 'Definition of Love'.

wine varies considerably. One final early modern proverb is this: 'Wine by the barrel, you cannot know'.[63] This is the vinous version of 'You can't judge a book by its cover'. Early moderns knew that they could not know.

One can find in historical fiction harbingers of stories other than the predictable extremes of drunken, randy men and women who are either villainous or victimized. For example, in Philippa Gregory's *Other Boleyn Girl*, that other Boleyn, Mary, stakes her claim as a domestic goddess who thrives outside the court when she confides in the reader 'I made an agreement with one farmer that if he should get a good crop of grapes then I would ask my father to send to London for a Frenchman to come on a visit to Hever Castle and teach the art of winemaking'.[64] That glimpse of Mary, overseeing an experiment in making wine, is the kind of story about women and English wine I've been inviting you to think about—a story for which we have some evidence but that has not yet captured the popular imagination. But that is starting to change.

In Deborah Harkness's *All Souls Trilogy*, in the second book, *Shadow of Night*, largely set in the sixteenth century, there are stolen moments when the witch Diana Bishop attempts to distill spirit of wine, a concentrate used in medicine and alchemy, and shares wine with Joanna Kelley, Edward Kelley's wife.[65] The vibrant intersections of domesticity, the occult, and science, the strange ways the past picks up signals from and sends out reverberations to the present, are part of the early modern we know from attending to women and gender. But it's not a story we've had honored and told back to us all that often. So far. Perhaps wine will help us to tell more interesting stories about early modern gender for a popular audience. The surviving evidence about wine supports more varied and engrossing stories than have dominated popular depictions of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. That's so often true. It's not just that there are better stories in the archives if we dig for them. It's also that even the dustiest of archival research depends on collecting fragments, looking in the margins, and puzzling over blots and holes. As teachers and scholars, we can follow the lead of the best writers of historical fiction and exploit gaps in our knowledge as opportunities. If we have to speculate and elaborate anyway, why not do so in ways that assign pleasure and agency to women?[66]

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63   *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, W 492.
64   Gregory, *Other Boleyn Girl*, p. 29.
65   Harkness, *Shadow of Night*.
66   First, a toast. Merry Wiesner-Hanks's invitation inspired me to write this essay; she then guided me as I delivered it as a talk and then turned it into a chapter. Audiences at the Attending to Early Modern Women conference and at the University of Maryland Baltimore County and

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About the author

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2   Women in the sea of time

Domestic dated objects in seventeenth-century England

Sophie Cope

Abstract

This essay looks at domestic objects inscribed with dates in early modern England. It investigates how time was perceived and experienced by women through the inscription of these objects. Two case studies of dated objects provide the focus for discussion. The first looks at wares used in the everyday running of the household, and considers their meaning in relation to the cyclical rhythms of daily life. The second considers samplers inscribed with personal information including dates and ages, arguing that such objects demonstrate the significance of dates in marking and extending social connections between women. Overall, the essay aims to show the opportunity dated wares present to analyze the connection between women, time, and material culture.

Keywords: materiality; dates; cycles; duration; kitchenware; embroidery

A tin-glazed earthenware mug in the collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum poses an interesting puzzle about the position of women in time in seventeenth-century England (Figure 2.1).[1] In many ways, it is an unremarkable piece of ceramic. Made in one of the London potteries that lined the river in Southwark, likely Montague Close, Pickleherring, or Rotherhithe, it holds about half a pint of liquid, and was likely to have been intended for strong beer. The decoration on the mug is not unusual, with grotesques painted in shades of blue, green, and brown, and an inscription around the rim records the name of the owner in fairly typical blue with white background. Yet it is precisely this inscription, reading 'ANN CHAPMAN ANNO 1642', which makes this object so interesting. Through the inscription a clear connection

1   Victoria and Albert Museum, London, mus. no. 1107-1853.

**Figure 2.1   Tin-glazed earthenware mug, dated 1642, London. Victoria and Albert
Museum, London**

is made between a woman, Ann Chapman, and a point in time, the year 1642. Yet the rest of the decoration bears no temporal messages, and no documentary evidence is known to provide further explanation. Thus, faced with the uncertainty of the meaning of this connection between Ann and the year 1642, the catalogue entry for the mug concludes that 'its primary role was probably a commemorative piece for display'.[2]

Yet objects like Ann Chapman's mug can tell us a great deal more about women and time than simply linking a woman and a date. This chapter, an exploratory study, provides ideas on how we might approach the question of dated objects, and examines the ways these objects can be used to think about women's experience of time in the home.[3] Dated objects are here defined as wares in some way inscribed with a date, often just the year, which could be carved, molded, painted, or embroidered onto an object. Encompassing fairly 'everyday' items, they survive in large numbers from the late sixteenth century. Most were inscribed at the time of making, though some were inscribed again at later dates as they were reappropriated by new owners. The dates themselves are almost always dismissed as being merely commemorative, however, often of a marriage or anniversary. Thus the fascinating insights these objects give us into the relationship between people and time have yet to be examined fully. This chapter uses dated objects to investigate the relationship between women and time, both quotidian and eternal, suggesting lines of enquiry and theories that can be usefully applied elsewhere.

Some groups of objects are more obviously associated with women than others, and the focus here is on two categories of domestic dated objects that circulated within women's networks: cooking wares associated with daily routine and the everyday running of the household, and embroideries. Although these are very different categories of domestic object, they raise interesting possibilities about the significance of dates in marking and extending social connections between women. The discussion reflects various approaches to the question of dated wares, and aims to show how

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2   'Mug', *V&A*, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O20966/mug-montague-close-pottery/ (accessed 9 November 2017).

3   This chapter explores some of my initial thoughts and approaches to the question of dated wares. It draws on my M3C/AHRC-funded doctoral research at the University of Birmingham, which aims to redress the gap in our understanding of how material culture can be used to analyze ideas of time, focusing on dated objects in the domestic environment, and how we can use them to investigate perceptions of time and temporality in seventeenth-century England. This research initially began as part of a cataloguing project with a private collection, Crab Tree Farm, Chicago, based on their own dated objects from across the wider early modern period.

certain categories of dated object might operate in different ways depending on the user, audience, and context. Moreover, by considering the theory of temporal systems put forward by George Kubler in *The Shape of Time*, the chapter also considers the more conceptual position objects hold in time.[4] From the rhythms of daily rituals to the agency involved in a woman physically marking her material world with references to time, dated objects provide us with a unique opportunity to investigate the connections between women, time, the domestic, and material culture.[5]

Daily domestic rituals and household objects

Women were intimately involved in the maintenance of the material life of the home. As Bernard Capp has argued, a woman of the middle and upper classes was expected 'to manage the household, look after the children, and oversee her maids.'[6] He notes that although patriarchal codes structured early modern English society, women could negotiate the terms on which these codes operated within the home, giving them 'some measure of autonomy and space, and a limited degree of authority.'[7] This is certainly evident in recent work by Catherine Richardson on domestic life in early modern England. Richardson uses household-advice literature alongside legal testimonies to problematize the tension between the subordinate role of women in the household as recommended in conduct books, and the reality of female agency in maintaining the order of material goods in the home.[8] Through this examination Richardson shows that in this period men passed control of the material goods of the house, and its daily routines of production and consumption, to their wives.[9] Yet Richardson makes clear this was not a straightforward transferral of power. The male head of household maintained overall control over domestic space, but through the routines of daily use and the required skills to use and maintain certain

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4   Kubler, *Shape of Time*. See also Kubler, 'Shape of Time, Reconsidered'.

5   Some categories of dated objects are more problematic on this count. For example, the owners of objects initially received as courtship gifts were arguably passive recipients rather than actively recording their own position in time, and it is possible Ann Chapman's mug was given in this context. See Richardson, 'A very fit hat', and O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint*, on courtship gifts.

6   Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, p. 7.

7   Ibid., p. 25.

8   Richardson, *Domestic Life*, pp. 27–28. Also see the forthcoming volume by Hamling and Richardson, *Day at Home.*

9   Richardson, *Domestic Life*, p. 46.

household goods, 'different kinds of agency, operating in different physical spaces at different times of the day' could coexist and occasionally compete.[10]

The defining role that women held in household maintenance, production, and consumption was a major factor in shaping their experience of time, through the repetitive temporal rhythms of the day. This is clearly the case in the mid-seventeenth-century broadside ballad, 'A Woman's Work is Never Done', in which the cyclical daily rhythms of domestic chores provide the focus.[11] The female protagonist of the ballad relates to the narrator the chores of her daily life. Her tasks begin by attending to the fire, '[...] when that I rise early in the morn,/ Before that I my head with dressing adorn,/ I sweep and clean the house as need doth require,/ Or, if that it be cold, I make a fire.' The timing of tasks related to heat and light, such as lighting the fire, is particularly interesting—delineating the start and end of day as they do, occurring at sunrise and sunset, these activities and the objects used to facilitate them provide the boundaries of the temporal cycle of a woman's day. Meanwhile the ballad ends by reinforcing the circular nature of the temporal experience of daily life with the final lines, 'And thus to end my Song as I begun,/ You know a Woman's work is never done.'

However, it is not just the natural cycles of the day that shape this temporality. Following these tasks at first rise, the ballad continues to narrate the woman's daily life. Her day progresses as she attends to her husband's and children's needs, but she is notably sensitive to the markers of time passing around her: 'But when th'leven a clock bell it doth chime,/ Then I know tis near upon dinner time', and likewise, 'at night when the clock strikes nine/ My Husband he will say, tis supper time.' The woman in this ballad is clearly attentive to the passage of time—she listens out for the bells and the clock to remind her to move onto the next task, with this awareness of artificial time shaping her experience of the day just as the natural rising and setting of the sun had as well. The clock could well have been in the kitchen itself. Sara Pennell notes that the clocks found in the kitchens of houses in Westmorland inventories between 1650 and 1750 were often the only timepieces owned, and that it was particularly significant that they would be kept in the room that was 'the heart of so much quotidian activity'.[12] Pennell argues that this discovery complicates the association

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10   Ibid., p. 47.

11   Helen Smith discusses this ballad in her chapter on gendered labor in *Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture*, pp. 177–92, in which she states that although the earliest surviving version of the ballad is dated 1660, the earliest reference to it dates to 1 June 1629 when it was part of the estate of 'the widow Trundle' who sold ballads (p. 190).

12   Pennell, 'Pots and Pans', p. 204.

of timepieces with the gendered control of timekeeping—by being placed in the kitchen, clocks were arguably more likely to be consulted 'by female servants, their mistresses and housewives in general' on a daily basis than by male members of the household.[13]

Yet it was not just clocks that could mark time. What of the other objects that would be encountered throughout the day in the completion of these household tasks? What can they tell us about a woman's perception of, and relationship with, time? Much of the ballad is devoted to tasks involving the preparation of meals—indeed, these are the occasions in which the woman is guided by clocks and bells to remind her of the time—and significantly, many dated domestic goods relate to the preparation and cooking of food. Several dated cast metal cooking pots survive, for example. One of the earliest extant dated domestic objects is a cast bronze skillet which alongside a molded fleur-de-lis is inscribed with the date 1575 below the handle, while another bronze skillet has the date 1592.[14] Several dated spit jacks also survive, intended to be fixed above the fireplace and used to turn the spit on which meat would be roasted. Two particularly interesting examples from the second half of the seventeenth century are dated 1670 and 1688. Both include a decorative brass plate inscribed with the dates, and the initials 'TD', and which are, rather suggestively, decorated with Atlas supporting the globe (Figure 2.2).[15] Other dated objects involved in the preparation of food include spoons, skimmers, and pastry jiggers, among others.

Rather than just having a date, or a date and initials, some objects used for cooking were also inscribed with moral or pious messages alongside the year. Several identical brass skillets survive with the year 1684 and the moral instruction 'PITTY THE PORE'.[16] These skillets were made in the Fathers foundry of Montacute, Somerset, and were part of a graduated set of five motto skillets. Each design had a moral or loyal inscription, but the 'PITTY THE PORE' skillets are the only ones to also include a date. The fact that the others were undated suggests that the inclusion of 1684 on just one design was a conscious decision with particular meaning attached to it. It was not part of the overall decorative design of the group, nor was it there simply to mark when the skillet was made. Moreover, the production of several copies of this skillet design for different customers with the same date suggests that

13   Ibid.
14   British Museum, London, mus. no. 1958,0203.1; Collection of John H. Bryan.
15   Victoria and Albert Museum, London, mus. nos. M.957-1926 and 715-1892. These jacks were likely made in London, although one came to the museum from a house in Norfolk.
16   These are catalogued in detail in Butler and Green, *English Bronze Cooking Vessels*, p. 59.

Figure 2.2   Brass and iron spit jack, dated 1670, England. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

we need to think more analytically about the meanings of, and responses to, the dates on these objects, rather than seeing them as merely commemorative.

There are several reasons why these skillets may have been dated. In their catalogue of English bronze cooking vessels, Roderick Butler and Christopher Green suggest that the year may have referred to the Great Frost of 1683/84, encouraging the user to think of the poor in that testing time.[17] This is certainly possible, but it seems unlikely—the owner would have most likely wanted to show off this new piece of kitchenware, and in years to come this morbid reflection on the Great Frost would have somewhat dampened the prestige of the object.[18] Moreover, putting the skillets into context with other dated domestic wares with moral inscriptions suggests that the inscription of the year was not necessarily a direct reference to specific events or circumstances. A red earthenware pipkin, for example, a cooking pot used for cooking directly over the fire, survives with the somewhat paradoxical inscription 'FAST AND PRAY 1650'.[19] Such temporal markers perhaps served more abstract purposes, acting as reminders of the passing of time, and when combined with such spiritual or moral prompts served as poignant reminders of the user's own mortality.[20]

Indeed, we could interpret the ballad in this light, with its frequent reminders of natural and clock time that a woman might encounter seemingly having pious connotations. While the references to time in the ballad are there to reinforce the constant succession of domestic tasks that the woman admits burdened her, they also give a heightened awareness of her own temporality and serve to emphasize that she is spending her time productively.

The moral or spiritual connotations of the passage of time, seen in inscriptions like 'fast and pray' and 'pity the poor', can also be found in contemporary literature. Protestant writers warned of the dangers of misusing time, a sentiment echoed in autobiographical writings by pious women in this period. In her 'mother's legacy' of 1616, Dorothy Leigh warns how, alongside covetousness, idleness was to be avoided as one of the greatest sins, since 'many are so carried away with idlenesse and pastimes that they can find no time to pray'. Significantly, she advises that 'we need to be very circumspect, and watchfull over our selves, les wee bee snared with this

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17   Ibid.

18   I am grateful to Tara Hamling for this suggestion.

19   Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, mus. no. Gl.C.35-1928.

20   While she does not consider the role of the date, Sara Pennell has noted that moral inscriptions on cooking utensils acted as 'reminders of and prompts to the necessity of domestic virtue'. 'Mundane Materiality', p. 182. See also Hamling, 'Old Robert's Girdle', on the use of visual and material props in domestic devotion.

part of the dievls policy'. Time therefore ought to be observed, and one's own use of time vigorously monitored.[21]

In a similar fashion, Lady Margaret Hoby used her diary, written between 1599 and 1605, to record every activity of her day in sequence. These entries were usually with a direct reference to time, either an exact clock time or one relating to other daily rhythms such as dinner time or bed time, in a bid to show that no time was ever wasted and that every moment of her day was spent either in productive or pious activity. For example, Hoby's entry for Tuesday 28 August 1599 begins, 'In the morninge, after priuat praier, I Reed of the bible, and then wrought tell 8: a clock, and then I eate my breakfast: after which done, I walked to the feeldes tell: 10 a clock, then I praid, and not long after, I went to dinner'.[22] The language Hoby uses demonstrates how comprehensive and almost list-like her entries are. The constant use of 'then', and phrases such as 'after which' and 'not long after' show how she is attempting to account for every moment of her day without a gap. Taken in this context, the constant reminders of time in a woman's environment, whether references to a year now passed on an object, or the tolling of bells, would have acted as a reminder of the passing of her *own* time, and prompted self-reflection over whether this had been spent productively.

Yet references to time need not have been negative or oppressive. In those cases when dates on an object marked moments in a woman's own life—whether that be the commemoration of an anniversary, or simply the moment the object was acquired—such objects acted as a kind of material memory which would outlive the temporal occasion of the event itself. In this way they acted as physical evidence of a woman's existence at that moment in time, and one that would remain as witness to her, even after her death, when such items could be passed on to future generations of family and friends. The fact that cooking pots were some of the few types of objects which could remain the property of a woman supports the idea that dated examples would have been particularly meaningful to her. As Pennell states, cooking vessels, utensils, and hearth goods were frequently incorporated into the 'paraphernalia' legally allowed as limited property to married women.[23] These objects could have high emotional as well as monetary value to women, as highlighted by their appearance in wills as bequests to other women. Pennell,

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21   Leigh, 'Mother's Blessing', pp. 55–56. For more on the genre of mother's legacies see Heller, *Mother's Legacy*. Heller defines mother's legacies as a distinct branch of the advice tradition in early modern England that took the form of a dying mother's pious counsel to her children.
22   Hoby, *Diary*, p. 11.
23   Pennell, 'Pots and Pans', p. 212.

Figure 2.3   Elm chest, dated 1640, England. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

for example, quotes the will of Sarah Boult who left her married daughter, Sarah Clements, 'my largest and smallest brass kettles [...] my largest brass skellett [...] my iron jack [...] my bell metal pott' amongst other domestic wares.[24] These dates then, inscribed onto objects that were not just used by women, but which could also have been owned, given away, and bequeathed by them, communicated a woman's life to posterity, marking her position in time on an object which would be used, circulated, and above all, endure past that one moment. These dated objects therefore uniquely embodied multiple ideas of time: the cyclical time of daily rhythms and chores and the linear time of dates and years, from the everyday to the eternal.

Sometimes more overt links were made between a woman and her place in time through declarations of possession inscribed onto an object. This can be seen on two early seventeenth-century chests which clearly state who their owners were, and locate them in time. The first is an oak chest inscribed 'THIS IS ESTHER HOBSONNE CHIST 1637', alongside vigorous floral decoration.[25] The second is a boarded elm chest inscribed, 'ELESABETH LOVELL 1640', which is also carved with various designs of strapwork and foliage (Figure 2.3).[26] The lettering on both chests runs across the top of the

24   Ibid.
25   Victoria and Albert Museum, London, mus. no. W.31-1926.
26   mus. no. 527-1892.

front panel, although the inscription on Elizabeth Lovell's chest is much larger, taking up the entire length of the panel, while Esther Hobson's is confined to a small section on either side of the key hole. Yet both were large, bulky, and costly items, and as such these chests would have likely stood on permanent display, providing a much bolder reminder of the women who owned them than the kitchenware that could be moved in or out of sight.

However, as with many dated objects, even when their owners' names are known, we know frustratingly little about who these women were, and little documentary evidence survives in relation to the objects themselves. The style of Lovell's chest suggests it was made in Shrewsbury, and so Elizabeth possibly came from that area or nearby. Slightly more can be said for Esther Hobson. Before the Victoria and Albert Museum acquired the chest, it had been housed in an inn at Brigg, Lincolnshire, having been donated there by a member of the Hobson family, who had been tenant farmers on Lord Yarborough's estate there for many generations.[27] While no Esther Hobson is recorded in the parish registers at Brigg during the seventeenth century, she may of course not have had the surname Hobson at birth, but acquired it in marriage. Many other Hobsons however are recorded in Brigg, while there are several others, including an Esther Hobson, recorded to be living in Kirkburton, West Yorkshire at this time. Perhaps, then, Esther came from another branch of the Hobson family and the chest was at some point passed on to the Lincolnshire Hobsons, but more research remains to be done on the connection between these two families.

While we might not be able to pinpoint exactly who these women were, we can learn a lot about these objects, and why they might have been in-scribed with names and dates, through a consideration of the wider cultural context of chests. Chests were one of the oldest forms of furniture and were multifunctional, providing storage as well as extra seating and surfaces.[28] While most middling households would have had at least one chest, richer households may have had as many as a dozen.[29] Indeed, their popularity and near-fundamental role as household furnishing is demonstrated in the study of production and consumption in early modern English households by Overton *et al.*, who have shown that in Kent over 90 percent of inventories mention chests throughout the period 1600–1750.[30] Chests could be particu-

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27 Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Object File, Archive MA/1/P647.

28 See Macquoid and Edwards's entry on 'Chests' in, *Dictionary of English Furniture*, II, pp. 1–26.

29 Chinnery, *Oak Furniture*, p. 360.

30 Overton *et al.*, *Production and Consumption*, pp. 90–91. The authors also note a lower figure of 50 percent for Cornwall, although this figure is still significant in light of the markedly lower percentage of other goods found in Cornish inventories.

larly identified with female members of the household in different ways. On the one hand, they were often used to store linens and other household goods, and thus were associated with the female-dominated maintenance of the household discussed above. In 1630, for example, the widow Martha Barton bequeathed her daughters, 'my chest of linen to be equally divided between them.'[31] Chests also had a more symbolic function though. They were associated with a woman entering marriage, as it was customary for her to bring a chest to her new home, or for her father or husband to commission one to commemorate the occasion, and they might be used to hold her dowry.[32] Marriage was arguably the most important rite of passage a woman would experience, transforming her social and sexual standing, leading to new domestic roles as wife, mother, and housekeeper, and such objects would come to represent this transformation.[33]

If these chests were made to commemorate a marriage, it would go some way towards explaining the inscriptions. As no male name appears alongside them, we can see these objects as intensely personal and proud markers of the occasion when the women have reached this pivotal life cycle event. They also suggest a great sense of pride in being able to possess such costly and elaborately decorated objects. Catherine Richardson has described the accumulated goods a girl of middling wealth would acquire throughout her childhood at various extraordinary occasions. Gathered in anticipation of a time when they would form the basis of a new household, they would later become part of her marriage negotiations, and would be 'representative of her family's prosperity'.[34] As the place where such collections would have been stored, the chest would have come to represent all that a woman herself owned, her connections with her own family and kin, and her transition into a new household and a new role. Yet by marking these chests with a name and a date, these women are also firmly declaring their own unique existence and their own position in time, and memorializing it for the future.

Objects in time

We can gain a deeper understanding of how dated objects could be used to communicate a person's existence in time to posterity by thinking more

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31   Evans, ed., *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury*, p. 12.
32   Hamling, 'An Arelome To This Hous', p. 68.
33   O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint*, p. 1.
34   Richardson, *Domestic Life*, pp. 77–78.

conceptually about the existence of different temporal systems. In particular, the theory of the art historian George Kubler, put forward in his 1961 work *The Shape of Time*, encourages us to consider the temporality of objects.[35] Kubler argues that objects occupy time differently than do people, with objects having much longer 'durations' than humans. For Kubler, duration is defined as the 'span' of a thing in time, with different kinds of things occupying different spans. He wrote, 'When we define duration by span, the lives of men and the lives of other creatures obey different durations, and the durations of artefacts differ from those of coral reefs or chalk cliffs'.[36] Kubler was particularly influenced by the thirteenth-century work of St. Thomas Aquinas, who had speculated on the nature of the time of angels, and the notion of the *aevum*, or the duration of the human soul. This duration was somewhere between time and eternity, having a beginning but no end.[37] Kubler saw the concept of the *aevum* as a useful way of thinking about the duration of 'many kinds' of artifact, 'so indestructible that their survival may, for all we know, ultimately approach infinity'.[38]

Kubler wrote in the 1960s, and the advent of material culture studies in the 1980s, which drew upon earlier developments in archaeology and anthropology, saw further exploration of how we might critically engage with objects.[39] Most notable is the volume edited by Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, in which Igor Kopytoff in particular emphasized the

35   Kubler, *Shape of Time*. Although an art historian by training, in this text Kubler dealt as much with material culture as with works of art. He suggested that 'the idea of art' be expanded 'to embrace the whole range of man-made things' and not just 'the useless, beautiful, and poetic things of the world', taking what he calls 'the desirableness of things' as his point of departure. Indeed, following Kubler's death in 1996, Gordon R. Willey argued that *The Shape of Time* remains fundamental for the inclusion of material culture in art history (Willey, 'George Alexander Kubler (26 July 1912–3 October 1996)').

36   Kubler, *Shape of Time*, p. 84.

37   Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, pt. I, q. 10, a. 5.

38   Kubler, *Shape of Time*, p. 84. Kubler's thinking here is problematic when applied across material culture as a whole. Since he includes few examples, it is unclear which kinds of objects he sees as having infinite durations. Indeed, while Kubler's work is useful in interpreting the objects considered in this chapter, notably inheritance items, it becomes problematic when applied to other, more ephemeral, categories of object.

39   Following the rise of material culture studies, other disciplines also began to develop their own approaches to the question of objects, including literary studies and art history (for example, the work of Jones and Stallybrass, Michael Baxandall, and Nigel Llewellyn). Yet in recent years the division of material culture studies by disciplinary background has become less marked as the field moves towards a multidisciplinary engagement with objects (see for example the recent volume by Richardson *et al.*, *Routledge Handbook of Material Culture*). This has not only meant that the breadth of things considered within the study of material culture has widened significantly, but also that there has been a recognition that, as a result of this range, no single,

biography of an object as a model through which to analyze the meanings of things. Such an approach sought to understand all the stages in the 'life' of what Appadurai calls 'things-in-motion', from production, through to trade, use, and perhaps even destruction. This model rejects the idea that objects are static or passive artifacts, and has proved influential to future scholars, notably Jonathan Gil Harris, who has advocated a 'diachronic' approach to material culture which involves tracing the trajectory of a thing through time and space. According to Harris, the culmination of various moments in an object's 'life' invests it with significance. Harris's approach thus acknowledges the diverse temporality of an object, since its present value is seen to derive diachronically from its relations to past and future contexts.[40]

Yet while scholars like Appadurai and others have been interested in tracking the lives and trajectories of things through time, Kubler's theory is particularly distinctive in suggesting that artifacts could even *transcend* time. If early modern people viewed objects in this way, then the things they made and adapted, through the addition of dates and other inscriptions, could be seen to reach into eternity, and can be interpreted as personal markers on the much wider sea of time. The language used by testators in wills certainly suggests that objects may have been seen in this way, with property and domestic fixtures, especially furniture, frequently being bequeathed to a house 'forever'.[41] The dates therefore attest to a specific, brief interaction by a person with an object whose duration will ideally endure past the human who made it or owned it. The date, accompanied by personal details like the owner's names and other short inscriptions like 'pity the poor' or 'fast and pray', becomes a message to posterity, and a way for a woman to stamp her own presence on something which would be circulated, inherited, and which would last beyond her.[42] Indeed, in his critique of Kubler, Jan Bialostocki suggested that we should take into account not only the visual form of things, but also 'their utility, function

all-encompassing methodology or approach exists for engaging with material culture (Gerritsen and Riello, eds., *Writing Material Culture History*, p. 5).

40   Harris, 'Shakespeare's Hair', pp. 484–85

41   Hamling, 'An Arelome To This Hous'.

42   Ceramics is an interesting category of dated object as 'semi-durables', so-called by Carol Shammas, since 'if routinely used, they would require early replacement' and thus would be unlikely to outlive their owner. Yet the fact of survival of dated examples many hundreds of years later suggests that they were not routinely used but were intended for display. See Shammas, *Pre-industrial Consumer*, p. 76, and Pennell, 'For a Crack or Flaw', p. 31.

and importance as vehicles of communication'.[43] Might we see domestic dated objects in particular as such vehicles of communication across time?

Needlework

We can use ideas about object temporality and duration to examine a different category of dated object associated with a more elite group of women—needlework. Samplers in particular are frequently inscribed with names and dates from the seventeenth century onward, and thus provide an important medium through which to investigate how wealthier women, not necessarily directly engaged in the domestic activities discussed above, were able to individually identify and record themselves. Embroidery was a skill women learnt at an early age and samplers were a key part of this education, used in the learning and recording of stitches.[44] While many of the girls who worked samplers were unlikely to be expected to earn a living, the acquisition of needlework skills was nevertheless an important stage in a young woman's development, anticipating the future management of a household and the possibility of adorning items within the home with personal additions.[45] Samplers were thus a kind of aide-memoire for the young women who worked them—after completion they were not obsolete but would be brought out, referred to, and passed down to other female relations.[46] Indeed, it was perhaps to these women, as well as their future selves, that the inscriptions on samplers were addressed. The narrow shape of the early band sampler facilitated this function as they could be rolled up and stored away, ready for future use and reference, rather than display.[47]

It was likely their formative part in early education that led the girls and young women who made them to proudly embroider their names and the date on which they completed the work, marking their accomplishment at learning a new skill. Elizabeth Billingzley, for example, precisely recorded that she completed 'Her ZAMPLer' on 'the 19 IVLY 1653'.[48] Moreover, unlike the wares discussed earlier in this chapter, samplers are of particular interest because they were inherently tactile objects—made with the very hands of the women whose lives are inscribed onto them. This intimate

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43   Bialostocki, 'Review', p. 135.
44   Humphreys, *Samplers*, p. 1.
45   Browne and Wearden, *Samplers*, p. 9.
46   Brooks *et al.*, *Needlework Collection*, p. 2.
47   Browne and Wearden, *Samplers*, p. 9.
48   Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, mus. no. T.17-1928.

personal connection is illustrated by some of the inscriptions samplers bear—one, for example, reads 'ANN FENN IS MY NAME AND WITH MY HAND I MADE THE SAME 1655'.[49] Here Ann clearly records her presence at a specific moment in time, with the reference to her hand working the object further conjuring up the image of her at that moment, preserving the memory for posterity.

In their work on how textiles were used to transmit memory during the Renaissance, Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass argue that although women were largely left out of the dominant memory culture of inheritance, through samplers they could materialize 'a counter-memory' for themselves.[50] They see the stitching of female makers' names onto needlework objects as a way for women or girls to record themselves in this alternative memory system, 'a subculture recorded in physical objects that were nearly always transmitted among women [...] passed down through their families'.[51] Jones and Stallybrass do not discuss the role the recording of dates played in this memory system, but these temporal reflections were clearly a way for their makers to fix themselves to a specific moment in time, adding weight and authority to the sampler as a record of their existence. Indeed, these makers would sometimes include multiple references to time by including their age at the time of making as well as the date. Rachel Loader, for example, recorded that she wrought her sampler 'BeING/ TWeLVe YeARS OVLD THe TeNTH/ DAY DeSeMBeR 1666'.[52] Meanwhile although Ann Skinner does not record her age at the time she made her sampler, she does refer to both her position within the life cycle—'I AM A MAIDE BVT YOUNG'—as well as alluding to her future life, 'MY SKILL IS YET BVT SM/ALL I HOPE THAT GOD W/ILL BLESS ME SO THAT IS/HALL LIVE TO MEND THIS ALL', alongside the date 'NOVEMBER 22 1672'.[53] A range of temporalities are therefore used to subjectively identify the individual maker in time—dates, life cycles, ages, and even allusions to time not yet passed. Combining not just a proud assertion of skill and accomplishment, but also a record of the maker at that very moment in time, these objects became material manifestations of the women and girls who made them.[54]

49   Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, mus. no. T.20-1928.

50   Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, p. 134.

51   Ibid., pp. 156–58.

52   Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, mus. no. T.39-1928.

53   Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, mus. no. T.51-1928.

54   For more on how needlework objects became material expressions of the women who made them, see the discussion on the use of embroidery to express the views and morality of the maker through the selection of subjects and stories in Geuter, 'Embroidered Biblical Narratives'. Mary

Figure 2.4 Silk, leather, and beadwork bag, dated 1625, England. Collection of John H. Bryan, used by permission

Jones and Stallybrass see this memory subculture that samplers were a part of as connecting female makers to other women. We can further analyze how the dates on these objects connected and extended such networks by considering how the dated inscriptions represented the different temporal intersections between people's lifetimes. In her study of women's textualities and the use of needlework in particular as a medium for text, Susan Frye outlines how we should envision the domestic context of the making of early modern English needlework. Using the personal accounts of women like Margaret Hoby and Elizabeth Isham, Frye emphasizes how the production of needlework was frequently performed in the company of other women. Clifford, for example, records sewing with her favorite cousin, while Hoby also records how she 'wrought with my maids'. Frye concludes that the objects these women made, in particular samplers, 'manifested lifetimes of connections among women'.[55] Many of the inscriptions on needlework objects reflect these female networks in which they were produced,

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Brooks, however, advises caution when seeing these selections as indicative of personal views, since the significance of the images may have changed as they were passed around (*English Embroideries,* pp. 14–15).

55   Frye, *Pens and Needles*, pp. 123–25.

circulated, and given meaning. A small embroidered beadwork bag dated 1625, for example, demonstrates that it was produced as a testimony to friendship, as it bears the inscription 'THE GIFT OF A FREND' (Figure 2.4).[56] While the maker and recipient remain anonymous, the date on this bag fixes their friendship to a specific moment in time and acts as a future reminder of the occasion on which the gift was given.

Other needlework objects more clearly reflect the temporal intersections of different women's lives. One example which has been the source of much academic interest is a sampler inscribed 'JANE BOSTOCKE 1598/ ALICE LEE WAS BORNE THE 23 OF NOVEMBER BE/ING TUESDAY IN THE AFTER NOONE 1596'.[57] Research has shown that Jane and Alice were distant relatives, with this sampler perhaps allowing Jane to pass on her own skills and designs to the next generation.[58] Again there are several temporalities recorded through the inscription. There is the past event of Alice Lee's birth, recorded to a very precise degree with the date, year, day of the week, and time of day all present. This precision is made even more poignant as it contrasts with the long labor involved in working the object. There is also the suggestion of Alice Lee's future life, with the expectation that she would learn the skills needed to produce such a sampler at a later date. Meanwhile the temporality of the object itself is recorded, overlapping with Jane's, as it records both the year of its own creation and the date of Jane finishing what was presumably a gift for Alice. In this inscription then, three kinds of temporal timelines, past, present, and future, intersect.

Meanwhile several other samplers from the end of the seventeenth century bear inscriptions which show they were all made by students taught by the 'dame' school teacher Juda, or Judith, Hayle.[59] One example is inscribed, 'ELIZABETH MEADOW IS MY NAME AND WITH MY NEEDLE I WROUGHT THE SAME AND IUDA HAYLE WAS MY DAME', alongside the date 1691.[60] Jones and Stallybrass have argued that samplers were a means for women to undo any distinctions between public and private, registering links with

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56   Collection of John H. Bryan. See a comparable bag with the same motto and the date 1631 in Brooks *et al.*, *Needlework Collection*, p. 114. Brooks notes that it has been suggested that kits for making such bags may have been available for purchase.

57   Victoria and Albert Museum, London, mus. no. T.190-1960.

58   Frye, *Pens and Needles*, p. 123.

59   For a discussion of how young women may have been educated in needlework at schools see Brooks *et al.*, *Needlework Collection*, pp. 14–18.

60   Museum of London, London, mus. no. 89.296.

other women both inside and outside the domestic setting.[61] Taking up this idea, Frye has also argued that samplers such as these embody both the network and the individual, 'the process of sewing within a network of household and community connections and a representation of each woman's self-perceived location inside that community'.[62] We can take these arguments further by considering exactly how the inscription of dates linked women to this wider community. Indeed, this group of samplers is significant because through their dated inscriptions the young women represent meetings in the lifetimes, or as Kubler would see it, durations, of different individuals. Thus the timeline of Judith Hayle's life intersects briefly with Elizabeth Meadow's in 1691, and with other girls on other samplers in 1693 and 1694. Meanwhile through Hayle and these surviving objects all these women are linked—in this way these samplers act as material memories of specific moments and connections between women, before transcending them, as the durations of objects extend well past those of human lifelines.

Conclusions

This chapter has shown that dated objects provide us with a unique opportunity to analyze how connections between women and time were created and expressed through their material environment. It has emphasized that there are multiple ways of interpreting the meaning of dated inscriptions, and these vary as a result of different users, audiences, and contexts. In particular, it has argued that by moving past seeing dated inscriptions as merely commemorative, we can learn a great deal more about how women experienced and perceived time. While many dated objects would have been initially intended to celebrate a major life-cycle event such as a birth, courtship, or marriage, we need to think more critically about the role of such objects after the fact. They endured past that single moment as they were displayed, used, circulated, inherited, and eventually collected, and had a meaning such objects would have had both in quotidian life and for future audiences. It has been suggested here that if these dates did hold personal meaning to women, in some cases formed by their very own hands, then their presence in the material environment of the household could be empowering, with these objects acting as material memories of a woman's

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61   Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, pp. 134, 148.
62   Frye, *Pens and Needles*, p. 133.

own position in time, and in some cases, of the networks of which she was a part. Yet time might also be oppressive – fervent Protestants emphasized that not a second ought to be squandered in idleness, and so reminders of past dates would also be reminders of the quick passage of time, and one's own mortality. To return to Ann Chapman's mug, the inscribed date 1642 may well have indicated a special occasion on which the mug was given, as the V&A catalogue suggests, but this temporal message also hints at the complexity and materiality of women's experience of time in this period.[63]

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3 Time, gender, and nonhuman worlds

Emily Kuffner, Elizabeth Crachiolo, and Dyani Johns Taff

Abstract

Early modern constructions of gender reach beyond the human in ways that complicate the male/female binary and efface the border between beings and environment. This essay examines three categories of gendered temporality in representations of nonhuman realms, revealing botanical, nautical, and disease-based perspectives on time that disrupt hierarchies of gender and redefine ontological boundaries. Drawing on a wide range of texts from early modern Spain and England, including works of natural history, poetry, and drama, we analyze manifestations of gendered temporality that frequently disrupt the authors' attempts to stabilize binary constructs, thus revealing the interdependence between human and nonhuman worlds.

Keywords: nonhuman; temporality; ocean; plant; ecocriticism; new materialism

Some historians have located a shift in perceptions of chronology around the fourteenth century, when Europeans moved from a circular model of time that emphasized repetition and return toward a modern and more linear conception in which time moves from past to future, marked from the death of Christ.[1] While the depiction of this shift may be useful in general, early modern temporality often defies attempts to conceive of time within a single framework. Instead, definitions of time overlap and compete, particularly when one looks outside the human world, as early moderns themselves did often. Recent work in animal studies, for instance, has moved beyond definitions of temporality that separate historical, or human, time from ahistorical, or natural, temporality, addressing, as Erica

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1   Ruggiero, *Renaissance in Italy*, pp. 7–8.

Fudge advocates, 'the absence of the nonhuman from history'.[2] Fudge's work foregrounds 'significant shifts in human thinking and thus human history' brought about by nonhuman agents.[3] Likewise, the emerging field of critical plant studies has extended the definition of nonhuman actor to the plant world.[4] Several scholars within plant studies have posited a phenomenological account of plant existence, including with regard to time.[5] Michael Marder, in particular, proposes a vegetable temporality that involves 'hetero-temporality',[6] a plant time that is dependent on outside factors like sunlight and mechanical interventions by humans; 'the infinite temporality of growth', that nevertheless includes interruptions in that growth; and 'the cyclical temporality of iteration, repetition, and reproduction'.[7] Further, Randy Laist asserts that 'plants seem to inhabit a time-sense, a life cycle, a desire-structure, and a morphology that is so utterly alien [to humans] that it is easy and even tempting to deny their status as animate organisms'.[8] Despite humans' familiarity with plants and animals, they are animate and agential in a way that seems 'alien' to and therefore confounds human understanding. This tension between familiarity and alienation also characterizes representations of the environment. For example, Steven Mentz argues that in early modern mercantile, colonial, and religious discussions of the ocean, 'the sea's mysteries became urgent; the ocean needed to be understood even as it frustrated understanding'.[9] According to Mentz, these oceanic mysteries interrupt human timelines, sometimes suspending human lives between life and death: in *Navigation Spiritualiz'd* (1698), John Flavell asserts that mariners should be seen as neither alive nor dead, but rather 'as it were, [as] a Third sort of Persons […] their Lives hanging continually in suspense before them'.[10] For some early moderns, those who ventured out to sea could be deemed neither alive nor dead and as such, existed outside normative conceptions of time. The oceanic environment thwarts human efforts at mastery and understanding even as

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2   Fudge, 'History of Animals', n. pag.

3   Ibid.

4   See, for instance, Kohn, *How Forests Think*; Laist, 'Introduction'; Ryan, *Posthuman Plants*; Gagliano, 'Seeing Green'; Pollan, *Botany of Desire;* and Vieira *et al.*, eds., *Green Thread*.

5   See Houle, 'Animal, Vegetable, Mineral', and Myers, 'Conversations on Plant Sensing'.

6   Not to be confused with the heterotemporality that has become contentious in literary criticism and queer theory.

7   Marder, *Plant-Thinking*, p. 95. See pp. 93–117 for a full account.

8   Laist, 'Introduction', p. 12.

9   Mentz, *At the Bottom,* p. 4.

10   Quoted in ibid., p. 52.

humans deploy new scientific or philosophical theories and new navigational instruments designed to enhance that mastery and understanding.

Just as the nonhuman could suspend normative conceptions of time, it could disrupt early modern constructions of gender.[11] The texts we examine here often subscribe to a gendered view of time in which the masculine is more durable while the feminine quickly expires. They participate in a larger cultural narrative about the 'ages of man' and 'ages of woman', which takes the early modern subject through a series of linear stages, separated by gender, from birth to old age. Such a notion of time underpins Jaques's famous speech in *As You Like It*, which, despite its opening reference to 'all the men and women' who are 'merely players' on the world stage, makes the 'seven ages' descriptive exclusively of male life.[12] Women appear merely as nurses and mistresses, and even then are signified only by representative body parts: the nurse's arms, the mistress's scornful eyebrow.[13] Here and elsewhere, writers often present men as active members of social and political life who are therefore esteemed through their old age, whereas women's valued social time is limited to their youth and fertility, as for example when poets exhort young women to 'gather ye rosebuds while ye may'.[14] In what follows, however, we argue that nonhuman agents disallow rhetorical efforts to establish a fixed, gendered notion of time.

We investigate three manifestations of temporality that appropriate imagery from the nonhuman realm, focusing on disease-based, botanical, and nautical perspectives on time, each of which disrupt gendered hierarchies and redefine ontological boundaries. First, we discuss representations of the plant guaiac, used to combat the spread of the so-called 'French disease' through Europe, that expose temporally contingent definitions of masculinity. Next, we turn to texts that portray human characters with plant-like characteristics. Such portrayals display alternative, often gendered, notions of botanical time that contravene human chronologies. Finally, we analyze maritime metaphors in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* that disrupt human attempts to describe masculine erotic desire as everlasting and

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11   Alaimo, *Bodily Natures*, and Sandilands, 'Eco Homo', demonstrate that cultural constructions of gender are central to understanding the relationship between bodies and the environment. Paster, *Body Embarrassed*, Laroche and Munroe, *Ecofeminist Approaches*, and Estok, *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare* make related claims in their work on interrelations between sixteenth- and seventeenth-century conceptions of gender, bodies, and the nonhuman world. See also George, *Botany, Sexuality and Women's Writing*, and Miller, *Vegetative Soul*.

12   Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 2.7.139–43.

13   Ibid., 2.7.143 and 2.7.148.

14   Herrick, l. 1.

female erotic desire as having an expiration date. Our investigations reveal that nonhuman realms and agents unsettle early modern writers' attempts to establish essentialized constructs of gender and time.

Time, gender, and disease

The outbreak of the 'French pox', or syphilis, in 1494 constitutes one instance in which the nonhuman disrupted fixed chronologies; the sudden emergence of a terrifying new illness contravened the dictum of humoral medicine's founding fathers that ailments existed immutably since the world's formation.[15] Shortly thereafter, the Spanish encountered the medicinal plant guaiac in the Indies; this plant enjoyed a brief vogue as a miracle cure, but initial optimism faded rapidly as it became clear that those purportedly cured often relapsed.[16] In this section, we examine the gendered language surrounding disease, plant, and medical care in guaiac narratives, drawn from fiction, natural history, and medicine. These texts, authored by and for an educated male elite, assume the patient to be male, thereby eliding female experience—which figures as a diseased and corrosive, yet simultaneously passive, absence—effectively defining human time as masculine.[17] Earlier accounts regard the disease as epidemic and curable, relying on a linear construct of time, while later ones resign themselves to disease as an endemic and incurable social ill governed by a circular model of temporality.

Sixteenth-century medical epistemology, shaped by humoral theory, ascribes a cold and wet disposition to the female body in contrast with the hotter and drier male.[18] Treatises on the pox concur that it stems from an excess of cold qualities, ascribing a similar nature to pox as to the female body.[19] As Kevin Sienna and others have shown, women in medical accounts of pox operate as vectors that spread disease, often without exterior sign of illness; yet, paradoxically, they are less affected by it even as they are more

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15   Foa, 'Old and the New', pp. 27–28.

16   Quétel, *History of Syphilis,* p. 30. Syphilis does not appear as a diagnostic term until the eighteenth century, and the early modern equivalent incorporated other illnesses like gonorrhea that would be separated in modern diagnostic practices. Early modern authors employed a variety of terms for the disease; we use the English equivalent, pox.

17   Berco, *From Body to Community,* p. 81.

18   See Paster, 'Unbearable Coldness', who argues that while Laqueur's 'one-sex model' adequately describes early modern anatomical knowledge, early modern gender construction is grounded as much (if not more) on a humoral understanding of the body as on body parts.

19   Arias de Benavide, *Secretos*, fol. 10v; Lobera, *Libro*, fol. xxiiii; Sienna, 'Pollution, Promiscuity and the Pox', p. 557.

susceptible to it, due to their innately cold nature.[20] Many texts explicitly blame women, particularly the native women of the Indies, for the existence of pox.[21] Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo's *Historia natural y general* (1535), for example, states that Christians contracted disease through 'carnal knowledge of native women', adding that 'they are the ones who bear the burden of spreading and communicating this pain and disease'. He thus ascribes sole responsibility for spreading the disease to women.[22] As these examples attest, pox narratives disavow female suffering; yet the disease itself is marked as feminine in that it is spread by women and endemic to the female body, particularly the doubly disenfranchised native woman.

The illness—cold in nature, and accompanied by a loss of heat through humoral depletion during intercourse, has a cooling and thereby emasculating effect that threatens the humoral definition of maleness, leaving the patient 'full of cold humors'.[23] As a consequence, patient responses are marked by an attempt to define and defend the boundaries of the male body while disease and plant become metaphors for gendered identity. While the disease is similar in humoral character to the female body, guaiac shares and restores the quality of vital heat that defines the male by purging the corrupted humors from the body and restoring balance.[24] In earlier accounts, patients regain masculinity through struggle with disease, resulting in victory over it, while later accounts define masculinity through forbearance and imperviousness to pain.

Nicolás Monardes, an early and ardent Spanish proponent of guaiac, employs combat metaphors to figure the plant as an implicitly male warrior who enters the body and does battle with disease. In his medical history, the personified plant enters the human body and eradicates pox even as it reduces the disease to a plant-like state.[25] Guaiac, he asserts, 'roots out

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20 Sienna, 'Pollution, Promiscuity and the Pox', p. 557; Quétel, *History of Syphilis*, p. 28.

21 Sources on guaiac tend to rely on an American origin for pox, contending that a merciful God placed the remedy for disease in its place of origin; however, this was but one of several origin theories (albeit the most popular). Other competing narratives placed the origins of pox in Naples or occasionally France. These narratives likewise placed the blame on women, specifically prostitutes, for the spread of disease (Quétel, *History of Syphilis*, pp. 66–67; Arrizabalaga *et al.*, *Great Pox*, p. 36). The etiology of syphilis has not yet been fully resolved.

22 'partiçipaçion carnal con las mugeres naturales [...] ellas son las que tienen cargo de repartir é comunicar este dolor y enfermedad', Fernández de Oviedo, *Historia general*, p. 365. Similar language is found in other sources, such as Delicado, *El modo de usar*, p. 79. All translations are by E.K., unless otherwise noted.

23 'Llenos de humores fríos', Mosquera de Figueroa, 'Paradoxa', p. 216.

24 The guaiac cure involved drinking 'agua de palo' or decoction of guaiac accompanied by disciplined fasting and extreme sweating.

25 Medical authorities occasionally take recourse in the language of plants to describe disease. Monardes, for example, refers to pox as a 'bad seed' ('mala simiente') (p. 13), foreshadowing

disease and uproots it completely, so that it may never return'.[26] The use
of two synonyms for the act of uprooting the disease from the blood of the
infected—the more metaphorical *extirpar* paired with a more literal yanking
out of *desarraigar*—insists upon a botanical construction of disease. By
reducing the disease to a vegetative state, the plant becomes a warrior
within the human body, entering it and rooting out the scourge of illness.
Monardes confidently assures the reader that patients will 'be perfectly
cured, without falling ill again'.[27]

The idea of pox as an invasive force that overpowers its male victim
appears in Fracastoro's epic poem *Syphilis sive morbus gallicus* (1530) as
well, wherein he states that 'this raging disease is one of the most tenacious
there is [...] it cannot be easily and lightly vanquished or tamed and in its
harshness it disdains to be conquered'.[28] Fracastoro describes the disease as
predatory and attributes human emotion—contempt—to it. Similarly, Pietro
Matthiolo's *I discorsi* (1573), presents a personified view of the plant, whose
branches are 'children of the trunk, and therefore like little animals', that
enter the human body and 'valiantly [...] liquefies and purifies the infected
humors [...] in its fury opposing the contagion and putrefaction that reigns
in the French Disease'.[29] Matthiolo ascribes agency and human emotion
to the plant, and in all three of these accounts the plant works actively
within the human body to restore the patient's imbalanced masculinity by
vanquishing disease. The construction of plant as a defender of the body
reveals optimism regarding guaiacum's potential healing power coupled
with fear of the corrosive effects of the female.

As initial confidence that the pox could be cured faded, accounts of the
disease came to rely on a more cyclical temporality of endemic disease,
giving way to satirical accounts that portray the plant in a more passive
role as a mediator who intercedes with the allegorized disease on behalf
of the hapless patient. Following the initial 1494 outbreak in Naples, pox
spread rapidly across Europe until around 1530 when infections leveled off

Girolamo Fracastoro's later configuration of the seeds of disease in *On Contagion* (Fracastoro,
De contagione et contagiosis morbis, 1546).

26   'lo extirpa y desarrayga del todo, sin que mas buelva', Monardes, p. 15.

27   'sanan perfectissimamente, sin tornar a recaer', ibid., p. 13.

28   'quippe effera labes,/ inter prima tenax et multo fomite vivax,/ nedum se haud vinci placidis
et mitibus, at nec/ tractari sinit et mansuescere dura repugnat', Fracastoro (Gardner trans.),
'Syphilis', pp. 20–21.

29   'figliuoli del tronco; & imperò simili à piccoli animali [...] valentemente [...] liquifare &
mondificare i già infetti humori [...] con la raggia, que possee, opporsi alla contagion &
putrifattione, che regnano nel nel mal Francese'. Matthiolo, *I discorsi*, pp. 154–55.

and the illness became accepted as part of the status quo.[30] Even during guaiac's initial vogue, detractors such as the doctors Alfonso Chirino and Ruy Díaz de Isla continued to regard mercury as a more effective remedy, and in 1529 Paracelcus pronounced it useless. These authors felt that any results from the guaiac cure were due to the severe fasting and sweating that accompanied it rather than the effects of the plant. Later proponents of guaiac no longer believed that it alone could cure pox, a decline in expectations that mirrors societal attitudes towards pox more broadly as the initial terror that accompanied its epidemic spread gave way to acceptance; later authors recommended guaiac's use either at regular intervals to contain the disease or in combination with other treatments.

As the epidemic phase of disease faded, pox increasingly became an object of satirical portrayals designed to ease suffering through humor. Several poems in Sebastián de Horozco's *Cancionero*, for example, laud the use of guaiac as an ameliorative, yet demonstrate no confidence in a lasting cure. In the opening poem, the 'Cofradía del Santo Grillimón' (The confraternity of Saint Pox), Horozco personifies the disease as a burlesque saint whose sufferers parody a religious brotherhood.[31] In his account, the disease and its victims are gendered male; though he states that the brotherhood of sufferers is inclusive, all the professions and statuses he names (young men, friars, married men, kings, lords, and prelates) are masculine, thus negating female experience of disease.[32] He states that 'Saint Pox does not concede absolution unless it is to relapse. But if anyone wishes to be relieved a little, they should endeavor to engage the virtue of the holy wood as mediator'.[33] He asserts that pox is incurable, yet the plant functions as a mediator with the anthropomorphized disease to grant temporary relief. Moreover, the masculine *santo* is juxtaposed with the feminine variant of intercessor, *medianera*, applied to the plant, thus gendering it female. Horozco draws on the legacy of female intercessors, particularly the Virgin Mary, as healing agents in Spanish literature, dating back to Gonzalo de Berceo's thirteenth-century *Los milagros de nuestra señora*.[34] The use of this

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30 Quétel, *History of Syphilis,* p. 51.

31 *Grillimón* or *greñimón* are among the many names that the disease went by in Spanish. Francisco Delicado explains that this name arose from the groaning (*gruñir*) sound that sufferers emitted at night due to the persistent pain in their joints (Delicado, p. 262).

32 Horozco, *Cancionero*, p. 1.

33 'el santo Grillimon/ no concede absolucion/ si no fuere á reincidencia./ Mas si quisiere qualquiera/ ser relevado algun tanto,/ procure tener manera/ de poner por medianera/ la virtud del palo santo', Horozco, *Cancionero*, p. 3.

34 See Dangler, *Mediating Fictions*, p. 6; pp. 19–21.

trope suggests that pox treatment has moved out of the perceived purview of human doctors and into the realm of the miraculous.

In another poem from Horozco's *Cancionero*, the poetic voice laments a long history of suffering from the pox, which he compares to gout, alluding to the disease's later reputation as a courtly affliction. Having tried many painful purges and remedies, he turns at last to guaiacum for relief. After using the decoction and fasting for 30 days, the poetic voice states that 'for now the disease has left me, and been thoroughly purged, unless it returns'.[35] This poem, like the 'Cofradía del Santo Grillimón', insists on the cyclical nature of recurrent disease, wherein any relief is temporary. Accounts of disease that emphasize relapse and regard it as incurable rely on a circular model of temporality in which the disease can be alleviated yet never escaped; this is reinforced by the turn from an active and implicitly male plant described through war metaphors in the earlier accounts towards the female plant who intercedes with disease yet cannot eliminate it. The turn from the linear chronology that traces human life from birth to death towards a circular narrative of repetition and therefore infinite time suggests that optimism has been replaced by resigned acceptance of disease.

Cristóbal Mosquera de Figueroa's satiric essay *Paradoxa en loor de las bubas* (1569) adopts a similar perspective by treating the disease as mundane.[36] In his ironic eulogy, pox becomes a marker of aristocratic identity and an 'entertainment for courtiers'.[37] Using phrasing similar to Monardes and Fracastoro, he declares that the disease 'seizes control of the humors of men'.[38] However, the invasion of the body is no longer as insidious as that in earlier accounts. Instead, the ailment becomes a long-term companion that 'grows along with the body', whose pains are merely 'feelings given to man so that he may know he is alive and feeling'.[39] Although Mosquera de Figueroa, unlike the other authors mentioned, includes women and children among the afflicted, they serve as a foil to the imperviousness to disease that becomes a marker of masculine virtue; he enjoins his reader that 'those

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35   'por agora la dolencia ha días que me ha dexado,/ y quedó muy bien purgado/ si no vuelve a reincidencia', Horozco, *Cancionero*, p. 83.
36   The paradox, inherited from the classical tradition, was a satirical eulogy to a commonplace subject (Núñez Rivera, ed., *Paradojas*, p. 123).
37   'entretenimiento de cortesanos', Mosquera de Figueroa, 'Paradoxa', p. 215. As the disease became endemic, criticism of courtiers for sexual licentiousness frequently attributed the spread of pox to the poor morals of the nobility. It should be noted that Mosquera de Figueroa was himself a member of the minor nobility.
38   'señoreando en los humores de los hombres', ibid., p. 205.
39   'criándose a la par con los cuerpos [...] sentimientos para dar a entender al hombre que está vivo y que siente', ibid.

who are men should not dwell on such trivialities as the pains suffered by children'.[40] The dismissal of pox as a minor ailment when suffered by the non-elite is common in pox treatises that belittle the suffering of women and natives. The hotter climate of the Indies supposedly lessened pox's severity whereas the colder air of Europe produced a more deadly variant.[41] Mosquera de Figueroa, for example, asserts that pox is known as the 'Indian measles', Oviedo compares it to scabies, and Monardes states that its symptoms are as common in the Indies 'as to us the smallpox, and almost all the Indians have it without paying it much heed'.[42] Mosquera's paradox draws on the idea that women's colder and wetter disposition meant that they suffered less from the effects of a cold disease. While women and children succumb to pox, men rise above it by dismissing the pain. Consequently, the male patient overcomes the effeminizing effects of disease by using it as a site to exert masculine self-control and autonomy. He advocates the plant's effectiveness against disease, yet in his and similar accounts, the cure administrated does not eradicate disease entirely from the body, but rather needs to be repeated periodically to expel the buildup of corrupted humors. Thus, in later accounts of the disease and the plant, as disease-time shifts from an epidemic trajectory to an endemic cycle, the gendered language used to construct the disease and the plant shifts, though the underlying ideology does not. Early accounts define masculinity through battle with disease and victory over it, while later accounts define masculinity through forbearance and suffering. In both these models, female experience is elided, privileging male subjectivity. In guaiac narratives, when disease pushes back against human definitions of time, as patient relapses belie attempts to vanquish the illness, humans simply change their definitions of illness, disease, and masculinity, rather than adjusting the underlying ideology of diseased femininity.

Flower-time and gender in English texts

Like Spanish accounts of guaiac, which gender the plant either masculine or feminine in different situations, English texts ascribe gender to plants, often assigning different genders not only to whole plants but also to various

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40   'los que fueron hombres no paren en cosas tan livianas como son los dolores que sufren los niños', ibid.

41   Fernández de Oviedo, *Historia general,* p. 365.

42   Mosquera de Figueroa, 'Paradoxa', p. 209; Fernández de Oviedo, *Historia general,* p. 364; 'como a nosotras las viruelas, y casi los mas de los Indios y Indias las tiene[n] sin q[ue] dello haga[n] mucho escrupulo' (Monardes, *Primera y segunda*, p. 13).

parts of plants. We can see this in John Parkinson's *Theatricum Botanicum* (1640), which the author describes as 'this Manlike Worke of Herbes and Plants', and his earlier work as 'a Feminine of Flowers'.[43] In Parkinson's conception, the more robust parts of plants—those used for medicinal or culinary purposes, like leaves and roots, as well as ferns, grasses, and trees—are evidently masculine, whereas the flower, particularly the garden flower, which his earlier work catalogues, is feminine.[44] His divisions also contain an implicit gendering of temporality, as the 'feminine' is composed of the shortest-lived parts—flowers—and the masculine of the hardier, longer-lasting parts—'herbes and plants'. Parkinson's distinctions are typical of a body of English texts that we examine in this section, which gender plants with respect not only to their material parts, but also to their perceived temporality.

Scholars commonly acknowledge a figurative association between young women in their reproductive prime and blooming flowers.[45] One prominent example is Sonnet 64 from Spenser's *Amoretti* (1595). In it, the love interest is compared to various flowers: lips that smell like gillyflowers, cheeks like roses, neck like columbines. In fact, the woman's parts out-flower the flowers: although 'Such fragrant flowres doe give most odorous smell', the speaker finds the woman's own 'sweet odour' to 'excell' those of the flowers.[46] It is notable (and predictable, given how common these tropes are) that the lover compares the woman's body parts to blooms only in their early stages or their prime: 'budded Bellamoures', 'Pincks but newly spred', 'lillyes, ere theyr leaves be shed', 'yong blossomd Jessemynes'.[47] The overall impression when the parts are combined is that of the woman as a garden, one with nothing rotting or wilted or desiccated, that smells good and contains only flowers that are budded or in bloom. We might think here of any number of other typical examples, such as Milton's Eve, similarly compared to her lush garden, which is brimming with flowers and fruit that can barely be contained. Eve,

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43 'To the King's Most Excellent Majestie', n. pag. For the context of female practitioners of medicine in relation to this quote, see Laroche, *Medical Authority*, p. 28.

44 His classification breaks down somewhat when we consider that flowering plants are included in *Theatricum Botanicum*, and the plants of a kitchen garden—herbs and vegetables—are included in his previous work, *Paradisi in sole Paradisus Terrestris* (1629), but that he sees plant characteristics in terms of masculine and feminine is telling.

45 Levin, 'Flower Maidens', p. 96, touches on the 'connection of young women and flowers', specifically in early modern English literature, but the connection is by no means limited to early modern England. For other contexts, see McCracken, 'Floral and the Human'; and King, *Bloom*.

46 Spenser, *Amoretti* 64, ll. 13–14.

47 Ibid., ll. 7–12.

first seen by Satan clouded in fragrance from the flowers and half-visible through the opulent roses, seems to merge with them and is then thought by Satan to embody a blooming, 'fairest unsupported flow'r' herself.[48]

The element of passing time is implicit in the above poems' measures of beauty and freshness—though in Milton's utopian prelapsarian vision of Eve, she is seen as everlastingly in her prime, which is contrary to, for example, *carpe diem* poems that threaten a virginal or reluctant mistress with the prospect of future fading beauty and bodily rot. Although older women are rarely identified with flowers,[49] looking at such atypical examples can provide a more complicated view of how time and gender relate. Thomas Fuller's work *Antheologia: or the Speech of Flowers* (1655), for instance, contains an inset story that functions like a *carpe diem* poem, but which is spoken by an old, wilting rose 'pale and wan with age' to a younger budding one.[50] The elder explains that she used to be coy and virginal and reluctant to be plucked by ladies. Eventually, the sun faded her color, 'so that the Green or white sicknesse rather, the common penance for over-kept virginity, began to infect me'.[51] She then tried to 'prank' herself up and attempted to offer herself to any passerby,[52] which entails

> rape to a Maiden modesty, if forgetting their sex, they that should be all Ears, turn mouthes, they that should expect, offer; when we women, who only should be the passive Counterparts of Love, and receive impression from others, boldly presume to stamp them on others, and by an inverted method of nature, turn pleaders unto men, and wooe them for their affections. For all this there is but one excuse, and that is absolute necessity, which as it breaks through stonewalls, so *no wonder if in this case it alters and transposes the Sexes, making women to man it* in case of extremity, when men are wanting to tender their affections unto them.[53]

The lesson to the younger bud is to lose her 'virginity in a good hand', rather than risk acquiring the 'Green or white sicknesse', which is likened to a kind of overflow or inordinate lengthiness of modesty and virginity, qualities that are desirable only within a short window of time. The older, faded rose emphasizes that her 'over-kept virginity' has masculinized her 'by an inverted method

48 Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1674), 9.432.
49 Levin, 'Flower Maidens', pp. 96–97.
50 Fuller, *Antheologia*, p. 25.
51 Ibid., p. 28.
52 Ibid., pp. 28–29.
53 Ibid., pp. 29–30, italics ours.

of nature', coincident with her faded, wilted appearance. Nature 'alters and transposes the Sexes' so that the fading rose must 'man it' out of necessity. In this conception of temporality, women's desirability, and even femininity, is a temporary state that can be altered by time, eventually morphing into masculinity. Masculine time, we can infer, is much more durable than feminine. This suggests a sense of gender unmoored from human physicality, disrupted by and mingled with the alternate timescales offered by plant ontology.

If masculine time is longer lasting than feminine, the application of the feminized trope of the flower to a male character, as might be expected, often signals the character's effeminate fragility, much as Fuller's elderly rose is masculinized by her inability to embody a fresh bloom. The femininity implicit in the comparison to a blossoming flower is, in fact, leveled not only at female characters, but also male. Flower imagery conjoined with masculinity is not a connection critics commonly discuss, but it appears regularly in literary texts and allows us to complicate our picture of early modern botanical temporality and to see gender as detached from human bodies. For instance, in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (published 1592), Hieronimo mourns his son Horatio's death by lamenting, 'Sweet lovely rose, ill-plucked before thy time'.[54] 'Sweet' and 'lovely' are not specifically feminine characteristics, though they may seem so from a modern point of view. The femininity of the image comes rather from the commonplace notion of the fragile and transitory blossom, applied to Horatio posthumously, after he has proven to be 'plucked' earlier than expected. Elsewhere in the same play, Belimperia similarly mourns her dead lover, 'Who, living, was my garland's sweetest flower',[55] noting his fragility only after his death. Shakespeare's *Richard II* (eponymous play published 1597) is described in a similar way by his queen once he's dethroned. She catches sight of him being paraded past to the Tower of London and exclaims, 'But soft, but see—or rather do not see—/ My fair rose wither'.[56] The emasculation inherent in this image becomes clear when she rebukes him for not fighting back, asking, 'What, is my Richard both in shape and mind/ Transformed and weakenèd?'[57] In these instances, the frailty and short lifespan of blooming flowers signifies the characters' feminine weakness. Gender here is less a trait of the characters' physiology than an attribute projected onto an understanding of plant time and overlaid onto characters through the work of metaphor.

54   Kyd, *Spanish Tragedy*, 2.5.46.
55   Ibid., 1.4.4.
56   Shakespeare, *Richard II*, 5.1.7–8.
57   Ibid., 5.1.26–27.

Spenser offers a familiar use of flower imagery in his pastoral elegy for Sir Philip Sidney, *The Doleful Lay of Clorinda* (1595), but then manipulates it, controlling the impression of Sidney's gender and preserving Sidney's masculine image, which comes not from a specific characterization of him but from his association with the flowers described in the poem.[58] Sidney is figured as an unspecified and generic flower in various ways. One description follows conventional examples in mourning his early death:

> What cruell hand of cursed foe unknowne,
> Hath cropt the stalke which bore so faire a flowre?
> Untimely cropt, before it well were growne,
> And cleane defaced in untimely howre.[59]

Here, as in the *Antheologia*, there is a sense of the bloom being subject to improper handling. In the former, the elderly rose stayed too long on her stalk. In this passage, Sidney is unjustly and 'untimely cropt', which confers on him the fragility of the flower, like the 'ill-plucked' Horatio. Yet other figurations of Sidney complicate this image. He is the 'fairest flowre in field that ever grew',[60] but an elaboration of this metaphor turns him into multiple flowers, apparently all of the same species, that had previously adorned 'woods, hills and rivers'.[61] Sidney's death has left the land denuded and bewailing its 'widow state'.[62] In this figuration, Sidney as a conglomeration of wild flowers is husband to the feminized land, despite the language—'fairest flowre'—conventionally reserved for depictions of women and femininity. This depiction allows Sidney to retain his masculinity as a husband, and to combat the impression of fragility by the vast coverage he once achieved in various locales: as flower, he has managed to occupy not only fields, but woods, hills, and even rivers. He has been omnipresent. Moreover, he has left behind a 'flowre' which 'Is but the shadow of his likenesse gone'.[63] This flower is apparently his poetry—a connection strengthened by the final lines comparing the 'dolefull layes' written for Sidney to flowers decorating

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58   There is some dispute about the authorship of this poem, with Mary Sidney sometimes thought to be either the author or collaborator. The Yale Edition, which I reference here, attributes the poem to Spenser. See Coren, 'Edmund Spenser, Mary Sidney, and the "Doleful Lay"', for a helpful overview of critical debates about the poem's authorship.

59   Spenser, *Doleful Lay*, ll. 31–34.

60   Ibid., l. 29.

61   Ibid., l. 25.

62   Ibid., l. 27.

63   Ibid., ll. 57–58.

his hearse—which is seen as a poor substitute for Sidney in the flesh. Yet it allows him to exist, in a sense, beyond the bounds of his physical life, and it allows him to be everlastingly in bloom. In this way, the poem manages his potential feminization and portrays him as stronger and longer-lasting than an individual fragile bloom; he is as ephemeral as a flower but not weakened by his association with it, and can avoid the effeminacy incurred by other objects of such a comparison. The malleability of this gendered inflection of time, which confers masculinity or femininity through depictions of plants, presents an alternative understanding of gender grounded in the nonhuman.

Opals, oceans, and expiring desire

Early modern writers unmoor gender from the body not only in representations of humans as plants but also in imagery connecting humans to the maritime environment. In Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (performed *c.* 1601; printed 1623), we see again the association of a flower's wilting with a woman's loss of physical beauty. But comparisons between wooers and seafarers—and the sea itself—in the play undermine the idea that a woman's love and beauty has an expiration date and that a man's love and attractiveness, in contrast, lasts a lifetime.

As he discusses love with Viola/Cesario in Act 2, Orsino characterizes male erotic desire as fickle but ultimately linked to ideas about longevity and eternal time. He contrasts this characterization to female erotic desire, which he associates with change over time because it abates on the same time scale as female beauty. Orsino asserts that 'all true lovers' are 'Unstaid and skittish in all motions', and goes on to specify that men, 'however [they] do praise [themselves],/ [their] fancies are more giddy and unfirm,/ more longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn,/ Than women's are'.[64] Orsino's portrait of male lovers whose moods 'waver' runs counter to common early modern assertions about women's natural inconstancy and infidelity in their role as the 'weaker vessel'.[65] He bases male lovers' changeability in their moods and inclinations, unattached to concerns of

64   Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 2.4.72–76. We refer throughout this chapter to Viola/Cesario using this form to indicate Viola/Cesario's position as both male and female. We have elected, though, to refer to Viola/Cesario using female pronouns for the sake of simplicity. On Viola/Cesario's 'identity as *both* genders' and on her relationship in the character of Cesario—i.e. as male—to Orsino, see Osborne, 'Marriage of true minds', 102 and following.

65   See 1 Peter 3.7: 'Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered' (King James Version). For a historical analysis of early modern

age or time. But women, Orsino pontificates, 'are as roses, whose fair flower/ Being once displayed, doth fall that very hour'.[66] Men might be generally more fickle than women in their 'fancies', but women are on the clock; they change in a single, temporally directed way, blooming and then fading, becoming—in Orsino's eyes—unworthy of male affection once they are 'too old' and the flowering—as it were—of their beauty has passed. Orsino's comparisons imply that love makes an otherwise constant man changeable and inconstant, while a woman is inconstant regardless of whether she is in love because of the inverse relationship between her beauty and time. His inconstancy is 'wavering,' moving in and out of passion with no strict regard to his age, while a woman's progresses from beauty and desire to their absence in a manner parallel to the temporal direction of her age.

Comparisons between lovers and the sea in the play—spoken by both Orsino and Feste—undermine Orsino's bi-gendered organization of erotic time. After witnessing Orsino's mood changes and unsatisfiable tastes for music, Feste asserts that lovers like Orsino ought to be put to sea:

> Now the melancholy god protect thee, and the tailor make thy doublet of changeable taffeta, for thy mind is a very opal. I would have men of such constancy put to sea, that their business might be everything, and their intent everywhere, for that's it that always makes a good voyage of nothing.[67]

Feste's speech maps Orsino's emotional state onto the nonhuman world— both the opal and the ocean—and has the effect of positing consonance between human and nonhuman action. Orsino's changeable 'intent' makes him like a precious stone—an everlasting object—but only like one known for its changing nature. His intent also makes him an ideal partner with the changeable sea. But this fundamental unpredictability, in a basic, practical sense, also endangers the 'good voyage;' a 'business' venture whose 'intent [is] everywhere' seems reckless and unreliable, vulnerable to shipwreck or other maritime hazards. In Feste's joke, we see both Orsino's passion and the sea as simultaneously destructive and productive, at once abetting and interrupting human pursuits (economic, marital, social) in Illyria. Although Feste describes Orsino and the sea as expansive—'everything', 'everywhere'—he also implies the value of an end-date: in order to make a 'good voyage', Orsino would need

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uses of this biblical chapter and other constructions of the woman as the 'weaker vessel', see Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, chap. 4.

66   Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 2.4.37–38.

67   Ibid., 2.4.72–76.

to return to the harbor and to end his 'wavering'. Though Orsino lauds the durable, nonchronological nature of a man's erotic desire, Feste reminds him subtly that human commercial productivity requires actions that have a beginning, middle, and end. The ocean in Feste's metaphor endangers this necessary chronology, and places Feste's and Orsino's metaphors in tension.

Orsino's own comparisons of his passion to the ocean further complicate the conception of female erotic desire as having a beginning and end and male erotic desire as, in some sense, outside of time. After remarking on the failure of his attendants' music—which he calls 'the food of love'—to satisfy the 'appetite' of his desire for Olivia, he laments,

> O spirit of love, how quick and fresh art thou
> That, notwithstanding thy capacity
> Receiveth as the sea, naught enters there
> Of what validity and pitch so e'er,
> But falls into abatement and low price
> Even in a minute! So full of shapes is fancy
> That it alone is high fantastical.[68]

Orsino compares the 'spirit of love' to the 'sea', asserting that both are depthless and that both have the capacity to immediately—'in a minute!'—devalue anything that enters into them, no matter how precious. In one sense, the sea here appears feminized: it is penetrated by whatever it 'Receiveth', and as in some classical, reoccurring views of monstrous femininity (Scylla and Charybdis, for example), the sea is ravenous and insatiable; it destroys virility. In this reading, we might see Orsino as emasculating himself by aligning his all-consuming passion with the all-consuming, feminized sea. But Orsino's sea—and by analogy his passion—is also productive; it overflows with 'shapes' and is 'high fantastical', a phrase that the Norton editors gloss as 'uniquely imaginative'. Orsino's sea and his passion, then, are also arguably masculinized, in that he describes both the sea and the spirit of love as mutable, dangerous, and artistically productive *because* of their volatility. The sea, then, exhibits both masculinized and feminized qualities; its productivity does not have an expiration date, and it tends to endanger voyages that rely on chronological time. When representations of the ocean exhibit durable temporality *and* ambiguous gender designations, comparisons of a lover's desires or moods to the ocean destabilize the idea that a woman's erotic pursuits expire while a man's endure.

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68   Ibid., 1.1.1; 1.1.3; 1.1.9–15.

Orsino argues forcibly that no woman could possibly bear as intense an erotic passion as his passion for Olivia, but in so doing, he again ambiguously genders the sea. In response to Viola/Cesario's assertions of Olivia's steadfast disinterest, Orsino cries

> 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.
> Alas, their love may be called appetite,
> No motion of the liver, but the palate,
> That suffer surfeit, cloyment, and revolt.
> But mine is all hungry as the sea,
> And can digest as much.[69]

Orsino emphasizes his own fickleness in this moment: despite having just asserted how much more 'wavering' men's erotic passions are than women's, Orsino accuses women of lacking 'retention', a word that can also mean constancy. According to Orsino, women's passions are weaker, less deep, belonging not to the 'liver' but to the tongue. If Orsino's liver—or perhaps stomach—is the seat of his passion, and is compared to the depths of the 'hungry' sea, then a woman's passion, in Orsino's view, located in her 'palate', would correspond to something higher up, such as the surface of the ocean. The depths of the sea, for Orsino, are masculine, strong, hungry, and powerful. And yet, he and Feste both remark on Orsino's own changeability, comparing it to that of the sea. This comparison links his passion and the sea more to the feminine—according to Orsino—quality of nonretention and wavering changeability than to a purportedly masculine strength or continence: the sea proverbially overflows bounds (the beach is a boundary in constant flux) and is inconstant, as Feste's joke makes clear. Even as Orsino attempts to draw a firm distinction between his own passion and the passions of which women are capable, the metaphors of ingestion, hunger, and the sea undermine the gender roles he sets out to reinforce.[70]

Comparisons of courtship to human commercial or exploratory ventures, like the comparisons we have examined between erotic desire and the ocean, often trouble boundaries between masculine and feminine erotic

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69   Ibid., 2.4.91–99.
70   For a discussion of Orsino's relationship with the 'foreign-ness of the ocean' in *Twelfth Night*, see Mentz, pp. 50–62.

temporality. In Act 3, Fabian uses the figure of an ill-directed ship to describe Sir Andrew's erotic failures, again engaging with but also undermining the idea that a man's erotic desires have no expiration date. Commenting on Sir Andrew's despondency in the face of Olivia's continual rejection of advances from suitors, Fabian and Sir Toby assure Sir Andrew that 'the youth'—Viola/Cesario—hasn't made it impossible for him to win Olivia in the end.[71] They seek to keep Sir Andrew at court in order to use his money for drinks, but they also appeal to Sir Andrew's appetite for romance, and tell him that Olivia showed favor to Viola/Cesario in order to 'awake [his] dormouse valor, to put fire in [his] heart and brimstone in [his] liver'.[72] Fabian chides Sir Andrew for failing to rise to Olivia's supposed challenge, exclaiming 'The double gilt of this opportunity you let time wash off, and you are now sailed into the north of my lady's opinion, where you will hang like an icicle on a Dutchman's beard unless you do redeem it by some laudable attempt either of valour or policy'.[73] Fabian figures Sir Andrew as a ship or a sailor who has missed his opportunity to come into the harbor of Olivia's favor, and has instead 'sailed […] north', into the cold and possibly dangerous seas away from his object of desire.[74] Sir Toby and Fabian use the concept of unending male passion to convince Sir Andrew that he still has a chance to woo Olivia; if Sir Andrew can 'redeem' himself by means of a show of 'valour', he can avoid the emasculating effect of having 'let time wash off' or abate his erotic pursuit of Olivia. But audiences might see that Sir Toby and Fabian are leading Sir Andrew by the nose. They assure Sir Andrew of the never-sated quality of his erotic desire for Olivia, but in doing so, they also underline Sir Andrew's position as a foil for Orsino, challenging Orsino's definition of masculine erotic temporality.[75]

Where Sir Andrew fails to figuratively sail into Olivia's harbor, Viola/Cesario succeeds. Maria figures her in 1.5 as one of many ships in Olivia's

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71   Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 3.2.15.

72   Ibid., 3.2.16–17.

73   Ibid., 3.2.20–24.

74   For a reading of Sir Andrew's 'failure to prove his masculinity' and to succeed in 'the profitable commerce of sociability', see Hutson, 'On Not Being Deceived', pp. 162–63. The *Norton Shakespeare* editors note that Fabian may allude 'to navigator Willem Barents, who led an expedition to the Artic in 1596–97' (726, n. 4). See also Hadfield's argument that early modern writers saw a 'distinction between the sophisticated and decadent South and the hard, virtuous North, a geographical division that had an obviously sexualized element' (par. 4). The 'North' is a feminizing location in Fabian's metaphor, but early modern cultural ideas—as well as the potentially phallic 'icicle'—destabilize that gender designation.

75   On Sir Andrew, romance, and masculinity in *Twelfth Night*, see Stanivuković, 'Masculine Plots', p. 115 and following.

harbor, destined to be rebuffed. After Olivia has asked Viola/Cesario to 'be gone',[76] Maria emphasizes her mistress's dismissal and says to Viola/Cesario 'Will you hoist sail, sir? Here lies your way'.[77] Maria compares Viola/Cesario's mission as a suitor's proxy to the voyage of a ship that comes to harbor, seeking mercantile gain. Maria asserts that Viola/Cesario's erotic mission has failed and turns her figurative ship away from Olivia's harbor, but Viola/Cesario resists: to Maria's dismissal, she retorts, 'No, good swabber, I am to hull here a little longer'.[78] Even if she cannot drop anchor, she will 'hull'—i.e. 'lie unanchored with lowered sails'[79]—in Olivia's court and try to carry out Orsino's orders. Viola/Cesario appropriates Maria's metaphor, placing Maria herself as a 'swabber' on Viola/Cesario's deck and figuring herself as both sailor in command and as ship that will 'hull' in the harbor. She creates and negotiates a complex erotic triangle between herself, Orsino, and Olivia; her desires do not expire in that she meets Orsino and loves him from that moment and—at least ostensibly—beyond the end of the play. Her desires, like her anchored ship, are also decidedly *un*-'wavering'. She drives the beginning, middle, and end of the plot and her success with Olivia, however unintentional or undesiring, is very much akin to the chronologically driven success of a merchant venture. The nonhuman forces in the play, while they invite a contrast between Viola/Cesario's strength and Sir Andrew's weaknesses as a navigator, also jeopardize her life and disrupt the social hierarchies that are central to the courtship narratives in the play. Steven Mentz reads Viola/Cesario's 'unstable identity' as marginalizing her and aligning her with the boundary between the ocean and the land.[80] Mentz's analysis illuminates the alienation that can plague those who shipwreck and who experience submersion in the ocean. And yet, in wresting linguistic control over the maritime metaphor from Maria and performing as a successful merchant in Olivia's court, Viola/Cesario refocuses our attention from the margins to the social center of the play. Her 'unstable identity' affords her a position from which to challenge gendered conceptions of erotic temporality.

As the preceding examples illustrate, early modern notions of time are inextricably bound up with notions of the nonhuman in ways that destabilize attempts to define human chronology within a single rubric. The three

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76 Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 1.5.176.
77 Ibid., 1.5.178.
78 Ibid., 1.5.179.
79 See 707, n. 6, in Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*.
80 Mentz, *At the Bottom,* 61–62.

kinds of temporality we examine—linear versus circular, botanical time overlaid onto human ontologies, and enduring versus fleeting—coexist and overlap. This multivalence suggests a queering of temporality grounded in nonhuman beings and substances.[81] Moreover, the texts we have discussed often disassociate gender from the human body, displacing it onto the nonhuman so as to upend gendered norms, suggesting resonances with ecofeminist perspectives. In our readings, the nonhuman resists writers' attempts to construct gendered binaries, de-essentializing gender from human morphology and dispersing it into the environment. This dispersal takes two forms, occasionally manifesting as a continuum between human and nonhuman in which little distinction is made between the two, but at other times establishing an opposition between human and environment. The writers we examine—and perhaps early modern cultures more broadly—grapple with emergent, contested attempts to classify time, gender, and the nonhuman. Our analysis therefore reveals the richness of early modern notions of the natural environment, inviting further inquiry into body–environment relations and the mediating role of language in shaping those relations.

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81   For work on queer temporalities, see the Chapter 7 in this volume, 'Feminist Queer Temporalities in Aemilia Lanyer and Lucy Hutchinson', by Penelope Anderson and Whitney Sperrazza, and also Menon, *Unhistorical Shakespeare*. For queer ecologies, see Mortimer-Sandilands and Erickson, eds., *Queer Ecologies*.

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Part II

Frameworks and taxonomy of time

4   Telling time through medicine

A gendered perspective

Alisha Rankin

Abstract

This essay examines the role of gender in concepts of medical time in early modern Europe. In early modern Europe, there were multiple, overlapping systems of time – astrological, seasonal, liturgical, horological – that guided medical theory and practice. In Renaissance medical scholarship, the microcosm of the human was embedded in a macrocosm of time. This essay shifts the focus to women's concepts of medical time. Drawing on letters and medicinal recipes, it argues that women both reflected broader reckonings of time and drew their own concepts of medical temporality from the female body, including menstrual cycles, pregnancy, and childbirth. Women, it argues, engaged in deliberate attempts to understand and pin down embodied time.

Keywords: medicine; pregnancy; childbirth; temporality; menstruation

In May of 1557, the German countess Dorothea of Mansfeld (1493–1578) waited anxiously for her daughter-in-law to give birth. In a letter to her friend and patron, Electress Anna of Saxony (1532–1585), she apologized that she would not be able to travel to Dresden for the upcoming Pentecost celebration because of the uncertain timing of the birth: 'She goes around quite heavily, and by twelve strikes of the clock, she is always hot and tired [...] with the help of God, she will have lain [given birth] in either eight or fourteen days, but she is not sure of her calculation, and I cannot move from her until God has helped her from her burden.' In a postscript, Dorothea added,

> She began her calculation on the 25th of August in the fifty-sixth year [1556]. Her first calculation was made after the conventions of our women, and according to that, I give her eight days. But one cannot know, as Your

> Grace is well aware. According to the movement [*dem regen nach*], she
> will have lain in eight days, as I have calculated. But if the calculation
> does not follow the movement, she will not come before six or eight days
> after Pentecost [June 6].[1]

This statement stands out for several reasons. It suggests that Dorothea felt
confident in canceling a trip to visit her most important ally out of her duty
to stay by her daughter-in-law in childbed, and it provides an insight into the
period of anxious waiting at the end of pregnancy. Particularly significant,
however, are the multiple overlapping temporalities contained in this single
brief message. The looming Pentecost holiday embedded the entire scene
within a setting of religious time. The specific date of 25 August and the time
marker of 12 strikes of the clock contrasted with the general uncertainty of
figuring out when the baby would come, still a vexing problem for expecting
mothers and their heath-care providers today. Above all, Dorothea's letter
provides evidence of the expectation that women would calculate their own
time to delivery and that there were differing conventions on how to do so.

 This short fragment from a noblewoman's letter provides a starting point
for a larger discussion of medical time—and the role of gender within it—in
the early modern period. Then as now, medical practice was formulated
around a series of questions that all had to do with time. How long have
you had those symptoms? When will this pain go away? What time should
I take my medicine? When should I pick those herbs? How long do I stir
this salve? How long do I have left to live? For the modern era, medical time
has been explored by phenomenologists, who have taken up the question
of time and medicine to look closely at temporality in the experience of
illness. The phenomenology of modern medical time revolves, in particular,
around the contrast between 'objective time' as measured by clocks and the
'embodied time' experienced by patients: the slow passage of time while
waiting nervously for test results or lying uncomfortably in a PET scan, for
example.[2] Sociologists have also examined the issue of time and health in
the modern world, with a particular focus on hospital or institutional time
as a cultural construction that upends patients' usual sense of normality.[3]
While other systems of time form a backdrop to our lives (religious calendars,

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1   Dorothea of Mansfeld to Anna of Saxony, 3 May 1557, Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (hereafter
SHStA) Dresden, Geheimes Archiv, Loc. 8528/2, fols. 20–21r.

2   Toombs, ed., *Handbook of Phenomenology and Medicine*; Svenaeus, *Hermeneutics of Medicine*.

3   See, for example, Roth, *Timetables*; Zerubavel, *Patterns of Time in Hospital Life*; Frankenberg,
ed., *Time, Health, and Medicine*.

work calendars, school calendars), the medical system revolves around appointment times and dates, in contrast to the personal, embodied time experienced by both practitioners and patients.

In early modern Europe, time measured by clocks was still nascent, and the concept of an 'objective time' was murkier in both medical theory and medical practice. Indeed, Thomas Ricklin has argued that in the Middle Ages, there was an 'absence of an abstract dimension of time divorced from biological or cosmological considerations'.[4] Multiple, overlapping systems of time—astrological, seasonal, liturgical—fed into a person's lived experience. As a number of historians have pointed out, many of these overlapping systems were connected especially to the workday and yearly rhythms of labor in the Middle Ages.[5] From the thirteenth century onward, moreover, there was an ever-increasing interest in and preoccupation with clocks, which led to a more concrete idea of time, at least in elite and urban environments.[6] Nevertheless, for most of early modern Europe, horological time was merely part of the background: the overlapping, seasonal systems of time continued to impose a prescriptive temporal framework, particularly given the cyclical nature of so many of them—the movements of the stars, the changing of the seasons, the recurring religious holidays and saints' days.

Whenever we encounter prescriptive frameworks, we have to ask where women fit in. Philosophers and sociologists of modern medicine have noted that women, in particular, experience a disjunction with medical time as prescribed by hospitals, in part because women's bodies do not conform to expectations.[7] In the early modern period, the female body perpetually perplexed physicians and scholars, and Olivia Weisser's recent study has shown how female patients experienced disease differently than male patients.[8] David Houston Wood has examined embodiment, time, and humoral medicine in early modern English literature, with some attention to notions of masculinity and femininity, and Helen King has noted that

4   Ricklin, 'Conceptions of Time', p. 438.

5   Le Goff, *Time, Work and Culture in the Middle Ages*; Humphrey and Ormrod, eds., *Time in the Medieval World*.

6   The growing importance of clocks in medieval and early modern Europe has been a major topic for historians looking at perceptions of time. Cipolla, *Clocks and Culture*; Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour*; Sauter, 'Clockwatchers and Stargazers'. Ricardo Quinones has focused on the artistic preoccupation with clocks and time in the Renaissance. Quinones, *Renaissance Discovery of Time*.

7   Thomas, 'Time and the Cervix'; Pizzini, 'Women's Time'; Zeiler and Käll, eds., *Feminist Phenomenology and Medicine*.

8   Weisser, *Ill Composed*; Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters*, chap. 5.

medical concepts of the dangers of virginity helped shape ideals of the proper age of marriage for girls.[9]

Rather than examine the very interesting question of gender, embodiment, and time for female patients, however, this essay will focus on women as healers—specifically aristocratic women, many of whom became widely known for their healing efforts.[10] As purveyors of health care who were influenced by learned culture but stood outside of it, noblewomen healers provide a fascinating entry point into the question of gendered medical time. In her examination of gender dynamics in early modern French poets' depictions of time, Cathy Yandell has argued that sixteenth-century culture had an 'obsession not only with temporal theories but also with time as a practical consideration', and that these notions were highly gendered. While men lived by schedules, elite women were often depicted as 'wasters' of time or as merely 'passing the time'.[11]

What was the situation for women healers? To what extent did concepts of time influence their practice? Did they feel the same concerns about wasting time? I will first briefly discuss the different kinds of medical time that were commonly in play in early modern Europe, both among learned physicians and among laypeople, and then turn to a case study of German noblewomen. Examining the use of time in medical care, I argue, sheds new light on women's medical knowledge.

Medical time

Time was a crucial consideration in both learned and lay medicine in early modern Europe. As Ricklin has noted, all bodily processes involved conceptions of time in some way.[12] It was central to the theory of the four humors, and several Hippocratic and Galenic texts addressed the topic specifically. Crucially, the seasons of the year influenced the humors and had to be taken into account in any diagnosis or regimen. In the spring, blood was dominant; in the summer, choler; in the fall, black bile, and in the winter, phlegm. This cycle made some medical procedures seasonal: bloodletting, for example, was recommended in springtime, when patients had extra blood; and springtime was also seen as the best time for coitus. A patient's

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9   Wood, *Time, Narrative, and Emotion*; King, *Disease of Virgins*.
10   Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters*.
11   Yandell, *Carpe Corpus*, pp. 31–32.
12   Ricklin, 'Conceptions of Time', p. 442.

complexion, the specific mixture of the qualities hot, cold, wet, and dry, would alter in intensity depending on the season. A patient's age similarly affected complexion—people were hotter and wetter at birth and grew colder and dryer as they aged.[13] Sixteenth-century Italian physician Girolamo Cardano kept careful records on his own diet and regimen at different stages of life to keep track of his changes in self-regulation as he aged.[14]

Time also played a central role in understandings of disease. Medieval scholars, drawing on Hippocratic and Galenic texts, pinpointed four stages of diseases—beginning, rise, climax, and decline. There were also 'critical times' related to important bodily processes such as conception, gestation, and birth, where quite a good deal could go wrong.[15] (Not coincidentally, all of these critical times involved the female body.) Intermittent fevers were defined by the cycles by which they disappeared and returned—tertian fevers on the third day, quartan on the fourth, and quintan on the fifth. The time of day was similarly important—certain therapies should only be carried out in the morning, while others only in the evening, and some diseases—especially fevers—had a trajectory tied to the time of day.[16] Early modern physicians' case studies of individual patients, published in collections known as *Curationes* and *Observationes*, usually included notes about the change in symptoms over time and recorded the place and date of the case.[17] As clocks became widespread, references to the specific hours of day became more common in describing both disease and treatment. An *observatio* by the personal physicians to Landgrave Wilhelm IV of Hesse-Kassel, written in 1580 and published in 1583, recorded a test of a poison antidote on dogs using specific hours of the day to mark each set of symptoms.[18]

The entire humoral system was embedded in the turning of the stars and planets, an important additional factor in considering health and illness. Galen had conceptualized a 'medical month' of 26 days and 22 hours, which he based on the average of the moon's return in longitude (27 1/3 days) and the period of its visibility (26 1/2 days). As Nancy Siraisi has noted, medical authors in the early Renaissance felt justified in criticizing Galen's medical astrology for its lack of sophistication. Italian physician Pietro d'Abano, for example, emphasized the complexity of the planets' effects on human

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13   See the overviews of medieval and early modern medicine: Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine*; Demaitre, *Medieval Medicine*; Lindemann, *Medicine and Society*.

14   Siraisi, *Clock and the Mirror*, chap. 4.
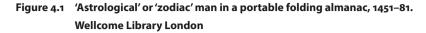
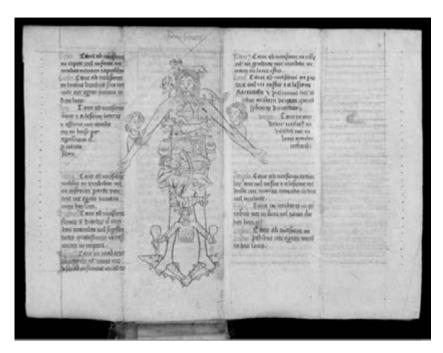15   Ricklin, 'Conceptions of Time', pp. 446–47.

16   Demaitre, *Medieval Medicine*, p. 39.

17   Pomata, 'Sharing Cases'; Pomata, 'Observation Rising'.

18   Berthold, *Terrae sigillatae*, B4v–C3v.

**Figure 4.1   'Astrological' or 'zodiac' man in a portable folding almanac, 1451–81.
              Wellcome Library London**

health and called Galen's medical month 'a fantasy'.[19] The embeddedness
of the human microcosm in the macrocosm of the universe can be seen in
depictions of an astrological figure or 'zodiac man' in learned medical texts,
which showed how various body parts were beholden to the stars (Figure 4.1).
Astrological information was usually included in the small, folded books
known as '*vade mecum*' that physicians sometimes carried to their regular
house calls, which helped the physician determine proper times for bloodlet-
ting and other medical procedures. As Katharine Park and Gianna Pomata
have noted, the use of the word 'observation' in medicine derived from its
use in observing the stars.[20] The interwoven system of humors, diseases, and
the movement of the stars and planets is striking in its cyclical nature—it
relied on patterns that returned. It featured the microcosm of the human
embedded in a macrocosm of time, a theme that became even more important
in Renaissance scholarship, with increasing Neoplatonic influence.[21]

19   Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine*, pp. 135–136.
20   Park, 'Observation in the Margins'; Pomata, 'Observation Rising'.
21   Wilberding, 'Neoplatonism and Medicine'.

Figure 4.2   Detail of Peter Slovacius's 1581 almanac with zodiac man and symbols indicating auspicious dates for various procedures. Wellcome Library London

Lay medicine often overlapped with learned. In the late medieval period, vernacular songs and poems proclaimed the importance of the stars' influence on human life, and handwritten 'planet books' circulated information on the astrological influences on herbs, phlebotomy, and overall health.[22] From the sixteenth century, the zodiac man became a commonplace in printed almanacs, which gained increasing popularity in the early modern period.[23] Almanacs regularly gave advice on good days for medical procedures such as bloodletting or taking medicine.[24] For example, an almanac created for the year 1571 by physician and 'Krakow university astrologer' Peter Slovacius, published as a single-sheet broadside, included an image of the zodiac man next to a table full of symbols that marked lunar cycles as well as auspicious days for various procedures, most of them medical (Figure 4.2).[25] In a largely agrarian society, the importance of the seasons

22 Barnes, *Astrology and Reformation*, pp. 17–19.

23 Capp, *English Almanacs*; Barnes, *Astrology and Reformation*, pp. 25–28.

24 Curth, 'Medical Content of English Almanacs'; Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine*, p. 149. Almanacs were the most popular printed sources after the Bible in early modern England. See Rhodes, 'Time', p. 287.

25 Slovacius, *Almanach auff das 1581. jar.*

and the stars remained paramount, although their influence tended to be more direct and specific.

For all early modern individuals, moreover, calendric and seasonal time overlapped with liturgical time—most calendars centered on festivals of saints. Indeed, the physician's *vade mecum* usually included a calendar of Christian feast days. Cutting through the cyclical nature of seasons, stars, and saints' days was the linear path of human life—birth to death. And of course the episodic nature of illness threaded through all of these concepts. The cyclical, the linear, and the episodic, the general and the specific, overlapped to guide notions of human health and illness, life and death.

Gender and medical time

Gender played a central role in temporal understandings of medicine. Women were understood to be colder and wetter than men and thus tended toward the phlegmatic humor, which meant that the seasonal waxing and waning of the humors affected them in different ways than men.[26] They menstruated, which involved a cyclical pattern of time outside of the seasonal/astrological/religious framework and was sometimes portrayed as an illness.[27] They bore children—again a process that involved an entirely different set of time calculations. Their ages were not men's ages.[28]

As medical practitioners, women were also expected to relate to the tasks of healing in different ways than men. Ideas about gendered uses of medical time appear in numerous sixteenth- and seventeenth-century conduct handbooks, housefather books, and guides to running estates. One of the most extensive of these manuals, published by an Austrian baron named Wolfgang Helmhard von Hohberg in 1682, spelled out carefully the different ways the master and mistress of the house should approach medicine. The master was responsible for the overall regulation of health, the knowledge of humors and complexions, and the knowledge of auspicious times to complete medical tasks. The mistress of the house, in contrast, was responsible for specific duties such as planting the herb garden, making medicines, and caring for the sick. The master was thus responsible for keeping track of what

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26   Thomasset, 'Nature of Woman'.

27   Read, *Menstruation and the Female Body*; McClive, *Menstruation and Procreation*; Park, *Secrets of Women*, 94.

28   For an excellent study of the differing expectations of men and women, see Wunder, *He Is the Sun, She Is the Moon*.

we might call 'big time', while the mistress was in charge of the nitty-gritty day-to-day details.[29] Not all housefather manuals divided medical labor in exactly this way, but nearly all of them were in agreement on the women's medical tasks of seeing to the herb garden, making medicines (especially by distillation), overseeing the household apothecary, and caring for the sick.[30] In previous work, I have examined these gendered medical expectations from the point of daily medical tasks.[31] A closer attention to temporalities can shed new light on how exactly women perceived these medical activities.

Thus far, all of the kinds of medical time I have discussed were prescriptive directives based on larger concepts—'big time'. They told the reader, listener, or viewer what to do or how to understand health and disease. As usual, the prescriptive voices tended to be male—the authors of calendars, astrological charts, almanacs, medical treatises. If one turns to *descriptive* accounts of medical time from early modern individuals of both genders, however, it quickly becomes obvious that people also experienced medical time in ways that departed from the prescriptive concepts of 'big time'. Medicinal recipes, for example, show a multifaceted attention to time. In many recipes, time is indefinite, experiential, and applied: a common instruction in reducing liquids was to 'boil it down' two or three fingers, a directive that was both empirical and embodied. You could not know how long it would take until you did it—and you needed to look at your fingers. Once completed multiple times, however, the questions of 'how long' and 'how much' would need less consideration.[32]

In other cases, timing was specific: 'stir it for two hours'; 'take it for fourteen days'; 'the patient will get better in forty days'. Many recipes were tied to times of the year, such as the common instruction to pick herbs 'between our dear lady's two days', meaning the Annunciation of the Virgin on 15 August and her nativity on 8 September (which also happens to be a time when a lot of herbs are good for picking). Others were similarly seasonal: 'Gather in May an herb called saxifrage', or 'Take elder blossoms, distill in wine, set in the sun until the time of the lavender flowers', which introduces the idea of botanical time. These examples all come from Dorothea of Mansfeld's recipe collection but are not unique to her.[33] They demonstrate the richness of concepts of time in lay spheres—tied to the astronomical

29   Hohberg, *Georgica Curiosa*, I, pp. 87–178 and pp. 234–322.
30   Rankin, 'Housewife's Apothecary'.
31   Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters*, esp. chaps. 1, 3, 4; Rankin, 'Becoming an Expert Practitioner'.
32   See, for example, the many manuscript medical recipe collections in the Codices Palatini germanici in the University of Heidelberg library.
33   Sächsische Landes- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, Ms. C 317.

calendar, the liturgical calendar, the botanical calendar, and, frequently, to the very experience of making.

In the rest of this essay, I focus more specifically on women and their perceptions of medical time. I draw, in particular, on the correspondence between Dorothea of Mansfeld and Anna of Saxony, which survives extensively from 1557–75. Dorothea was an aging widow in this period (she died in 1578 at age 85), and she appears to have spent most of her days making medicines in her garden distilling house and giving them to the local sick poor as well as to her elite and powerful friends.[34] Anna, in contrast, was occupied with her duties as the wife of Elector August of Saxony and was less singularly focused on medicine, although she was very interested in it and consistently pushed Dorothea to teach her new recipes and procedures.[35] These two highly aristocratic women cannot be taken as 'average' cases, but their exceptional level of education is helpful in this case, as they absorbed many of the prescriptive ideas of medical time I just discussed. Time appears frequently as a marker of medical procedures throughout these letters, and three themes recur consistently: first, the importance of botanical time; second, concerns about a lack of time; and third, the complicated nature of childbirth and time.

Time and women's medical work

Dorothea's letters to Anna are full of the notion that many medical tasks could only be completed at their appropriate time—not because it was astrologically auspicious, but because that was when the plants grew. 'May is dedicated to the aqua vitae', she wrote to Anna of Saxony in 1561, 'and if I squander it, I will not be able to make any this year', as numerous crucial herbs were at their peak in May.[36] In June 1557, she noted that she had not yet made rose sachets, 'because I want to wait until the fresh roses come, as is now happening'. She added 'I have not forgotten to distill the rosewater, and I will do everything as soon as it is time'.[37] When two local women unexpectedly presented her with large baskets of fresh violets one June, she wrote that she had to drop everything and distill them

34   Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters*, chap. 3.
35   Ibid., chap. 5.
36   SHStA Dresden, Geheimes Archiv, Loc. 8528/1, fol. 328r.
37   SHStA Dresden, Geheimes Archiv, Loc. 8528/2, fol. 24r.

right away, as 'I was most fearful that I would miss the opportunity'.[38] For Dorothea, the rhythm of making medicines throughout the year revolved around the specifics of botanical time rather than the abstract influence of the planets.

Although she also felt similar pressure to makes medicines when the herbs were at their peak, Anna of Saxony's position as the Electress of Saxony allowed her to direct the gathering of plants at their appropriate times. Many years she sent out a letter to villages in March asking them to gather baskets of violets for her medicinal preparations. In a letter to the villages of Eilenburg and Weissenfels in March 1578, for example, she noted that 'whereas the time is approaching when the blue violets come forth and bloom, and whereas we need a good quantity here in our distilling house for medicines, we require [...] that you put out the order in your jurisdictions to gather all of the violets that grow [there] [...] and pack them into clean baskets and send them here to the castle'. She promised to pay both the flower-gatherers and the messengers for their efforts.[39]

Concerns about time show up consistently, moreover, in Dorothea's depictions of days filled with medical work, making the medicines that she handed out to the local poor. In 1557 she reported, 'Your Grace cannot imagine how the poor people keep me busy here. God knows I have nary a quarter hour of peace and all I do [otherwise] is eat and sleep.[40] In 1568 she wrote that, 'Your Noble Grace cannot imagine what an onslaught of people I have here; it lasts from morning to evening', and, in 1569, 'I work constantly every day'.[41] In May 1573, at the age of 80, she reported that she was rising every morning at three o'clock to begin making her famous aqua vitae and working 'very well, from morning until evening'.[42] Many letters to Anna included the closing 'written in haste', and she frequently begged Anna to 'have patience' when visits were delayed by medical tasks.

Dorothea's depiction of herself as constantly overworked may well have reflected the actual situation—contemporary reports of her medical

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38 SHStA Dresden, Geheimes Archiv, Loc. 8531/2, fol. 150r.

39 Anna of Saxony to the administrators of Eilenburg and Weissenfels, 10 March 1578, SHStA Dresden, Kop. 520, fol. 87v.

40 Dorothea of Mansfeld to Anna of Saxony, 3 May 1557, SHStA Dresden, Geheimes Archiv, Loc. 8528/2, fol. 20v. 'e k g konnen nichtt glauben was mir die armen leutt hie zu schiegken machen kein fertel ston habe ich ruwe das weuz gott ich iß dan aber schlaff gott sei alle zeitt gelobett.'

41 Dorothea of Mansfeld to Anna of Saxony, 12 February 1568, SHStA Dresden, Geheimes Archiv, Loc. 8531/2, fol. 7r; Dorothea of Mansfeld to Anna of Saxony, SHStA Dresden, Geheimes Archiv, Loc. 8531/2, fol. 150r. 'ich bin alle tage in stetter arbeit.'

42 Dorothea of Mansfeld to Anna of Saxony, 30 May 1573, SHStA Dresden, Geheimes Archiv, Loc. 8534/4, fol. 78r–v.

activities mention that she spent most of her days working in her distilling house.[43] Importantly, however, they also fit into cultural expectations of a widow. Unmarried older women, especially those involved in healing, faced a range of negative stereotypes—they were seen as ignorant, superstitious, and inherently dangerous, with bodies full of accumulated poisons (as menopausal women no longer experienced the monthly purging of poisonous menstrual blood) and the tendency towards temptation by the devil. Viewed as unproductive members of society, they were often considered a burden to their children or more distant relatives. While aristocratic widows like Dorothea were less vulnerable than older women with no money or power, they still had to confront such negative associations.[44] Constant work—especially work that centered on charitable healing—helped dispel some of these stereotypes, as well as the concerns about women and idleness noted by Yandell.

Anna of Saxony, too, worried about time and medical tasks, albeit less consistently and with a different focus. Ideas of being constantly overworked do not come through strongly in her letters: her role tended to be as a director of medical tasks, and she had a host of servants to help her.[45] However, she frequently found it difficult to fit her medical interests into her general duties of being consort to a powerful ruling prince, both because of the regular travel (she accompanied August on nearly all of his trips) and because of her frequent pregnancies. After a slow recovery from the birth of her daughter Anna in November 1567, for example, she sent several letters to befriended noblewomen apologizing for her tardiness in thanking them for medicinal recipes or sending them requested medical advice, noting even in February 1568 that she had been 'burdened with a great exhaustion and weakness after the birth of our child'.[46] Fulfilling her role as a loyal consort thus took time away from medical duties, and she openly expressed regret at this interruption.

Both Anna's and Dorothea's letters also contain markers of the time and effort it took to copy out medicinal recipes. In 1577, Anna returned a handwritten book of recipes to a woman named Amagard von Bertesleben, with the apology that she had kept it for such a long time. She explained that she had not had time to have it copied before that point, and that she

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43   Cyriacus Spangenberg, "Mansfeldische Chronica Der vierte Teil [1578]." *Mansfelder Blätter* 30 (1916): 56.

44   Lawless, 'Widowhood', pp. 20–22.

45   Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters*, chap. 4.

46   See, for example, SHStA Dresden, Geheimes Archiv, Kop. 512, fol. 290r (5 December 1567), 296r (31 December 1567), and Kop. 513, fol. 15r (14 February 1568).

found the recipes useful enough that she did not want to let 'just anyone' copy them.[47] In the early 1570s, she began to worry about Dorothea dying before she could teach Anna all of her remedies, and she frequently pressed Dorothea to write them down for her, with the clear feeling that time was running away. Dorothea, for her part, cautioned her to have patience, 'for such things take time'.[48] In the letters of both women, then, one finds a sense that their healing practices were beholden to forces outside their own control—the vicissitudes of botanical time, the lack of enough hours in a day, the requirements of daily life as an aristocratic lady.

Timing childbirth

Finally, markers of time were central to discussions of childbirth. Dorothea referred to a woman's act of giving birth as 'going on her time' (*an der zeit gehen*), reporting to Anna in 1557 that 'my son Hans Jörgen's wife has gone on her time and has borne a young son'. The German word Dorothea used for a premature birth was *unzeitig*, literally 'untimely'—in one case noting that her son's 'untimely child [*unzeitiges Kind*] still lives, but it is a poor child to behold'.[49] Anna, in contrast, used *vorzeitig*, or born before its time. As we saw at the beginning of this essay, however, a baby's specific time was far from obvious, which brings us back to the complicated process of calculating due dates. It is clear from the manner in which Dorothea wrote to Anna that she expected Anna to understand what she meant by the calculation (*Rechnung*) and its problems. She described her daughter-in-law's calculation as beginning on 25 April 'after the conventions of our women'. Reading between the lines (and counting the weeks on a calendar), it seems likely that 25 August represented the approximate date of impregnation. However, Dorothea also mentioned another calculation, 'according to the movement' (*dem regen nach*), which likely referred to quickening. Dorothea did not give a specific date for that event but suggested that the two calculations led to quite different results.

The calculation appears to have been a tradition that Anna well understood. Indeed, in 1567, she described her own calculation for an upcoming birth in a letter, as she wanted Dorothea to come help her in childbed. 'We

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47   Anna of Saxony to Armgard of Bertesleben, SHStA Dresden, Kop. 520, fol. 25r. (9 July, 1577).
48   Dorothea of Mansfeld to Anna of Saxony, 1 June 1561, SHStA Dresden, Geheimes Archiv, Loc. 8528/1, fol. 329r.
49   Ibid., 8528/2 29r.

have put a needle in a calendar 14 days after St Martin's Day [November 11], but the calculation could be off by eight days', and thus she requested that Dorothea come no later than eight days after St. Martin.[50] (In the end, Dorothea would have arrived tardily either way, as Anna gave birth five days after St. Martin, on 16 November.) Despite the inevitable timing problems of childbirth, Anna's reference to putting a needle in the calendar gives a physicality to the abstract calculations and underscores their importance for the women involved. That she did not explain the method of her calculation to Dorothea suggests that she expected Dorothea would already know it. Indeed, it is likely that most childbirth calculations took place locally, through tacit knowledge and in-person exchanges. Only in the instances in which trusted correspondents were far-flung do we hear the small details, like the needle in the calendar.

Childbirth calculations were crucial both for making sure a trusted midwife would be present and for the tradition of gathering female family and friends at the birthing bed, two tasks that were considerably more difficult for elite ladies who lived at a distance from their loved ones. The letters of Anna of Saxony provide excellent insight on this difficulty, as she was frequently pregnant. She regularly asked Dorothea—along with other favored noblewomen—to come to Dresden to attend her in childbed, as in the above example. She also spent considerable time arranging a midwife, both for herself and for others. A letter from Anna to a servant in July 1577 related instructions for sending midwives named Mutter Martha and Mutter Agatha to several noblewomen who needed their services around the same time, based on their expected times of delivery.[51] Anna complained numerous times about the state of midwifery in Saxony, and the attentions of trusted midwives were in high demand. The timing thus had to be carefully arranged to the extent it was possible.

In all of these temporal reckonings—botanical time, restricted time, and pregnancy time—there was a distinct lack of focus on horological time. Dorothea occasionally used clocks for emphasis, as in her note that she rose at three o'clock in the morning or that her daughter-in-law was hot and tired by noon. But for women healers, the hours of the day rarely appear as a unit of measurement for disease, in contrast to the trends in learned medicine. Yet clock time nevertheless loomed large in the background of birth, especially in aristocratic families, as the specific hour and minute of

50   Anna of Saxony to Dorothea of Mansfeld, 2 November 1567, SHStA Dresden, Kop. 512, 275r.
51   Anna of Saxony to Appolonia Neefe, Kop. 520, fol. 35v.

birth were important in astrological calculations.[52] Similarly, the hour of death was often recorded meticulously. To give a poignant example, Anna's daughter, Elisabeth of Saxony (1552–1590), wrote her mother a letter the day her two-year-old daughter Maria died: 'On this date, between eleven and twelve o' clock in the night, my beloved little daughter went to God, at which my dear husband and I, as the parents, are full of grief, as Your Grace can well imagine as a mother.' Noblewomen certainly were fluent in horological time and used it to mark specific events, but in the general description of disease, it appears only rarely.

Conclusion, or, almost out of time

The discussions between these elite German noblewomen certainly demonstrate the centrality of overlapping systems of time to their concept of medical practice. But is gender really a useful category of analysis when thinking about medical time?[53] One might object that botanical time would have been important to any healer who needed to use herbs, and anyone engaged in medical work must have found him- or herself pressed for time on occasion. And one might expect that learned physicians would have been closely involved in calculating the due date for aristocratic women, given that physicians were increasingly positioning themselves as experts in gynecology and obstetrics, as Monica Green has demonstrated.[54] As Elizabeth S. Cohen shows in her essay in this volume, there was less of a divide between learned and lay time than one might expect. Elite men took the temporal frameworks of women seriously; indeed, in many cases they inhabited the same overlapping concepts of time. Yet I maintain that gender was crucially important in all of these areas. While botanical time certainly drove the medical practice of healers of both genders, women were usually depicted as responsible for the household herb garden and, according to Hohberg, expected to 'collect at the proper time those things that grow nearby, good healthy herbs, roots, blossoms, fruits, seeds, dry them, and store them'.[55] In the household setting, at least, there was an expectation that women follow botanical time as part of their overall duties.

52 See Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars*.
53 Scott, 'Gender'.
54 Green, *Making Women's Medicine Masculine*.
55 Hohberg, *Georgica Curiosa*, 335.

Similarly, women's statements about being pressed for time had significance to the expectations for their daily lives. It would be worth exploring—in depth, elsewhere—the question of whether women's medicine was seen as work or as a leisure pursuit. Lynette Hunter has found that seventeenth-century English gentlewomen tended to emphasize the leisurely nature of their medicine, but we have seen the opposite in these letters.[56] Although Dorothea and Anna both expressed enjoyment at making medicines, they also saw it as a necessary task, closely matching Yandell's findings for sixteenth-century female poets. The difference between these cases and seventeenth-century English gentlewomen could be either regional or temporal (or both), but in both cases, women deliberately fit the time they spent on healing into a larger narrative of work and leisure.

Finally, figuring out the timing of childbirth appears to have been a women's duty, at least in sixteenth-century Germany. The most popular midwifery manual, physician Eucharius Rösslin's popular *Rose Garden for Pregnant Women and Midwives* only briefly mentions the timing of childbirth—40 weeks or 9 months—and gives no indication of when the counting begins.[57] Dorothea's statement that her daughter-in-law's calculations were done 'after the conventions of our women' and Anna's pinning of a needle in her calendar suggest that, in fact, calculating the approximate due date of a child remained part of women's domain. All of these aspects of women's medical time fit into the general order and expectations of women's daily lives—the due-date calculations, indeed, tried to make specific something that is very difficult to specify exactly, even today. Calendar time (both religious and astrological), horological time, and the time expectations inherent in Galenic humoral theory all formed a backdrop to the perceptions of medical time espoused by these elite noblewomen, but they rarely took center stage. Instead, the focus tended to be on the specific aspects of time that affected daily and yearly rhythms. From the making of medicines to the calculations of childbirth, temporality relied on familiarity: with seasonal botanical patterns, with daily work rhythms, with their own bodies.

56   Hunter, 'Women and Domestic Medicine'.
57   Rösslin, *Rose Garden*.

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5   Times told

Women narrating the everyday in early modern Rome

Elizabeth S. Cohen

Abstract

In the criminal courts of Rome *c.* 1600, women's testimony, delivered in formal settings and recorded verbatim, carried serious legal weight. Yet telling time orally to intimidating male officials was challenging. As complainants, as suspects, and as witnesses, women had to remember, reconstruct, and tell stories about recent and more distant pasts and to situate their accounts within convincing temporal frames. Some of their expressions reflected their particular experience as women, but in this public arena they, much like their male counterparts, used varied narrative strategies and temporal rhetorics to lend veracity to their tales. The abstractions, precisions, and disciplines of official time—the sort that we moderns prioritize—often gave way in early modern courts, as in life, to less clear and less efficient, but nevertheless functional practices of local time.

Keywords: time-telling; women; testimony; judicial records; Rome

In the criminal court records of Rome *c.* 1600, ordinary women show themselves to be canny and adept tellers of time. As elsewhere in early modern Europe, criminal courts took active part in government campaigns to corral and correct the behavior of the broad population. To that end, Roman tribunals, needing to reconstruct and verify offenses that the culprits wished to obscure, interrogated witnesses and asked them to narrate from memory events in the less and more distant past. In generating these accounts, in which magistrates and witnesses collaborated, rhetorics of time became an important dimension of ordering evidence convincingly. An energetic Roman justice created hundreds of fat volumes of complaints and testimonies, recorded verbatim, including many by women as well as by men. Ratified by delivery in the same, rather intimidating judicial settings, both men's and women's words carried

weight. Here I focus on women's testimonies and on the ways that they told time in this distinct arena where what they said did matter, to the courts, but also to themselves, their families, their neighbors, and their enemies. Early modern time-telling, especially in an oral mode, was not straightforward, and not all women talked time alike. Roman women's temporal language sometimes reflected their particular gendered experience. Much of their testimony, however, deployed various forms of telling time selected from a repertoire of local oral usages that women shared with their male counterparts.

As we begin, it is helpful to remind ourselves of the gaps between early modern expectations and what our modern—or postmodern—culture takes for granted in its routine, everyday senses of time. We usually think first of 'clock' time, of time as something concrete, moving relentlessly forward in consistent, precisely labeled units, authorized by governments, and coordinated even beyond national borders. For us, everyday time is deeply mediated by technologies of nano-measurement and global-scale communication. Numbered minutes, hours, days, and years, recorded in writing or digitally and publicly proclaimed, are everywhere. We assume that most people know of and shape their doings to a common electronic drummer. The early modern world had complex and elaborate ways of thinking about and expressing time, but, with less capacious technologies and weaker governance, it lacked the precision of detail and the consistency across space that we assume. In the culture of early modern Europe, time was not one concept but many. It had several dimensions including scale—from deep time to minutiae—duration, and sequence, as well as directional patterns of linearity or cyclicity. Early modern narrators could draw on an intricate, broadly shared repertoire of ideas, feelings, and expressions to make sense of their own temporal experiences and to represent them to others. Historians have, therefore, asked how some kinds of people, operating in settings or spaces diversely shaped by physical environments, political structures, technologies of communication and counting, and gendered bodies, may have selected from the general cultural treasury and used some forms of time in distinctive ways.

Although we need to be careful with the sometimes distorting clarity of binaries, some such contrasts concerning time have been suggestive: the precise mechanics of clock time versus the organic rhythms of nature or the human body; the empowered time of public affairs versus the private, everyday patterns of domesticity;[1] the large-scale official time of the nation

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1   Hershatter, *Gender of Memory.* In their life histories rural women timed public interventions with reference to the lives of their families, for example, the births of children, while the men spoke more often of 'campaign time', the chronology of party policy.

versus customary local practices; urban professional versus rural, peasant time.[2] While an analogous binary of male versus female time might be illuminating, that is not my principal approach here.[3] Rather than focus on gendered differences, this essay explores the temporal expressions of a strata of non-elite women, many of them illiterate, from whom we seldom hear. Drawing on the records of the criminal courts, we see female witnesses deploy many ways of telling time. Not only do different women use different temporal rhetorics, but a single witness often uses more than one. Furthermore, some women speak with clarity, as others struggle to recall and report what they remember. Particularities of women's experiences find a place in their testimonies, and also sometimes in men's accounts of female activities. Overall, indeed, on the question of gender, the range of women' s temporal expressions overlaps substantially with those of their male peers. Partly this has to do with the settings, both general and specific, in which we hear them speak.

Premodern European culture embraced several widely shared understandings of time on bigger and smaller scales, while it also accommodated many local adaptations. Nevertheless, although by modern standards of precision and consistency early modern time may look like a untidy hodgepodge, it worked for its users. A natural or environmental rhythm of time, at once cyclical and variable from year to year or decade to decade, shaped agriculture, hunting and fishing, commerce, and construction. References in medieval records to these deep dimensions of time, both taken for granted and difficult to track, are scattered and often oblique. In the explicit framework of culture, on the other hand, a very visible time was predominantly Christian and teleological. It looked to an ultimate end in first apocalypse and then salvation or perdition for eternity. In the long beforehand, however, human beings lived in time, and that meant unsettled and recurrent change. Life was a fraught effort to minimize sin, endure suffering, and with God's providence achieve some prosperity in a deeply unstable earthly world. Within this sweep of eschatological time, an annual cycle of Christian holidays mapped onto the natural rotation of the seasons. During the Middle Ages, following a calendar of days dedicated to saints, the Virgin Mary, and holy events, Christians invoked providential aid for the security of life and livelihood. For diurnal timekeeping there were sundials and later a few institutional clocks, but most often church bells marked time's passage. From the early Middle Ages, bells called monks to pray a

2   Bähr, 'Power of the Spoken Word', pp. 133–36.
3   In parallel, a recent study of English gentlewomen's timekeeping is Korhonen, 'Several hours'.

cycle of five offices, or liturgical hours, that broke the day into segments. Prime, or the first hour, was sung around daybreak, Terce, Sext, and Nones followed, and, at sunset, Vespers concluded the round. Three other hours or offices divided the night—Compline, Matins sung at midnight, and Lauds, marking the first hints of dawn. This ecclesiastical schedule, with its details adapted to different terrains and human needs, endured and spread from monasteries outward to the lay world. Later, in Italian towns and cities, civic bells from clock towers joined the clamor, announcing hours of work and rest, and occasions of celebration and of mourning.[4]

Gradually, European culture acquired more confidence about human ordering of the earthly realm, and in early modern times new human structures and mechanical technologies served a more optimistic view of change. As part of this process, public authorities and work foremen embraced a more regular pattern of daily hours to discipline human activity. On a larger scale of time, accounts of the past moved from chronicles or annals—year-by-year lists of events—to fuller narratives of histories that sought to explain and teach. As writing and literacy spread, the creation and storage of records and contracts adopted dating as a means of identifying, verifying and ordering both private papers and swelling repositories of public documents. Complementing the writing of manuscripts, printing reinforced a linear sense of time and narration. Precision about dates—in the burgeoning corpus of administrative paper, on the one hand, and diaries, on the other—came more surely with sequential numeric designations for years and days, and a cyclical but regular rotation of named months.[5] Yet even such an apparently self-evident practice long sustained local variants. For example, the New Year, and its change of number, began in Rome on 1 January, but in Venice on 1 March and in Florence on 25 March, the Feast of the Annunciation.[6]

In the Roman courts, as in other early modern institutions, time took on more structured, urban, and administrative particularities. Doing business with the Governor's criminal tribunal, which is the source of the records used here, was to many ordinary Romans, male and female, both familiar and intimidating. Keen for business, the court initiated many trials, but also encouraged residents to bring their complaints. For women and men

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4   For a general introduction, Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour*.
5   For a woman's example, the impressive diary of the eighteenth-century frontier American midwife, Martha Ballard, 'Martha Ballard's Diary Online', at dohistory.org/diary.
6   Many dimensions of local time are well described for Florence; see Trexler, *Public Life*, pp. 73–77, 247–63.

alike, testifying took place in circumstances intended to draw out the truth and to lend legal force to the evidence given. Although complainants and sometimes witnesses might have consulted lawyers in advance, everyone speaking to the court faced the magistrates alone, under oath, and usually in special offices, often adjacent to the jails. Indeed, not only culprits, but also many associates and even bystanders, notably those of modest rank, were arrested and jailed to ensure their appearance and to reduce collusion. Furthermore, the threat of torture loomed, although only some men and a few women suffered it in the end. Some other witnesses—among them, ill or injured victims, respectable women, and prominent courtesans—received accommodation, with a notary sent to take a deposition at their homes. In whatever setting, notaries recorded in full and close to verbatim the words of all testimonies. These transcripts, once collected, then became, at a later stage of the process, the basis for legal arguments and judgment.[7]

Under Roman criminal law, testimony from women as well as from men, its truthfulness tested by these protocols, carried hefty legal weight. Women were routinely called to testify, some as accused, alone or in combination with others, of slanders, thefts, sexual misconduct, and violence, and many others as witnesses to a wide range of disorders, deceptions, and more serious troubles. Altogether, for the decades just before and after 1600 we have testimonies from many hundreds of women. Most women who appear before the court were of middling or lower social rank. Prostitutes, whose trade attracted the rowdy clientele whose antics filled the police reports, were notably numerous. Often knowledgeable about local regulations and law enforcement, sex workers used the courts to seek their own ends. While only some female witnesses could read or write, testimony drew on oral skills that need not put them at a disadvantage vis-à-vis their male counterparts. Before the court, everyone—high and low, educated and illiterate, men and women—operated in the same spoken mode of communication that predominated in the lives of all, but which mostly eludes later scholarship. Without denying that women had distinct experiences, the broad cultures of time were not, for present purposes, inherently gendered, nor indeed were the particular practices of the courts. Women spoke to the officials about what they had seen and what they knew, but in this highly structured setting they shared much of their roles as legal actors and many of their words with their male peers.

Shaped by the language and evidentiary demands of the law, formal interrogations were dialogic, and the verbatim transcripts that recorded

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7   On judicial organization and practice, see Fosi, *Papal Justice*, pp. 31–45, 61–71.

them were, as texts, collaborative.[8] Always under the jeopardy of perjury, oral delivery, on the spot, without notes or reinforcements, in response to previously unknown questions, could be challenging. Speakers had to guess at the court's interests and assess their own, all the while asserting veracity and deferring courteously to the authority of the state. Often enough, memory did not serve or the stakes were obscure, and the deponent was forced to improvise. Consequently, in testimonies expressions of time were often approximate or hedged, with efforts to convince built by heaping up different kinds of time and associated markers of activity. Habits of oral narration were often not linear, but sinuous and given to doubling back. As the court worked to hone the proffered stories, it was interested in, among other details, more precise representations of time than everyday discourse required. Witnesses sought to oblige, but were also quick to beg forgiveness for any lapses.

Judicial inquiry used two frameworks of interrogation: direct questions and more open-ended invitations to narrative. The first usually opened the interrogation, as the officials asked the witnesses to identify themselves and the circumstances of their appearance. Answers to questions might be straightforward statements of when one was arrested, or how long one had been in Rome. Sometimes, though, a short answer shifted into the second form, a more extended oral narrative. There the witness had to remember something that had happened more or less long ago, and to recreate a plausible tale.

As an example of a complex, retrospective narrative, consider this elaborate testimony by a marginal woman relating a half dozen encounters during a single day many months before. In April 1603, a serving woman absconded with a pricey necklace belonging to the new bride of the Governor's deputy. To build his case, this important magistrate had questioned a cluster of women who had known his thieving servant. Among them was Thomassina, a poor widow who scrounged a living from begging, sewing, and brokering job tips.

> One day I heard from the wife of Boschetti [a neighbor] that her husband had sent outside the city to get a serving woman, but that she had not come, and standing myself begging there on the steps of San Pietro, that woman called Madalena went by, and I was on the steps of the Gregoriana, and she said to me that she was looking for a place as a servant and did I know anything, because in company with me were many other women begging; and so I remembered what Boschetti's wife had said. So I said

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8   On talking to the court, see Cohen, 'She Said', pp. 417–25.

to Madalena that I would find her a master, and I took her to the house nearby of Signore Pompilio who is said to be a tailor, although he does not keep a shop, and to a goldbeater because Costanza, his sister-in-law with whom I chat, had said that he wanted to fire one servant and to find another. But when I took Madalena there, that other servant began to shriek that she was there; and so therefore they did not take Madalena, and so I lead her to the house of Signore Antonio Boschetti and they gave her a job and she stayed 3 or 4 months and she got 5 *giulii* a month. But I don't remember the dates exactly.[9]

Though her linear account of one day's encounters contained very few temporal markers, Thomassina buttressed it with abundant details of space and persons. Though, as she explained, she did not know the dates of Madalena's service with Master Boschetti, she told in other ways exactly what had happened and, in parallel, validated what mattered to her, the legitimate expectation of a tip for finding the job.

Since many of the events that figured in trial testimonies had just occurred, the shorter temporal units of days and hours appeared frequently. As in many early modern cities, sound signaled public time in Rome. Many church bells clanged, and from the fifteenth century a few public clocks joined the clamor. Leadership and consistency in timekeeping across Roman neighborhoods remain, however, little known. Testimonies cited the sound of bells as a time marker, but often as a gesture more than a confirmation of fact. For example, according to one serving woman, 'it was in the morning when the clock struck five times but I don't know what time it was'. In the same trial, a male servant protested when the court pressed him about time, 'I really can't say because days often go by when I don't hear the hours sound'.[10] Although these statements may reflect an impulse to obfuscate, they also show a characteristic expectation of uncertainty.

Witnesses readily testified in a language of hours, but in several ways these units were local and notional rather than consistent measures. Roman timekeeping broke the day into a time of light and a time of darkness, each divided into sets of twelve hours. Yet, as light waxed in the summer and waned in the winter, daytime hours lengthened and shrank with the seasons, and night-time hours inversely. Hours were usually numbered from

9   All archival citations date between 1590 and 1610 and come from the Archivio di Stato di Roma, Tribunale criminale del Governatore; they will be designated by series name, volume, and folio numbers. As here: Processi, xvii secolo, busta 25, fol. 442v.

10   Processi, xvii secolo, busta 44 (1605), fols. 703v, 772v.

1 to 24, counting from sunset. Thus, in testimonies the evening was usually designated as the first or second hours of night and the late afternoon as 22 or 23 hours. Confusing for us, however, counting sometimes started at a different point, as in the example above where 'five hours'—implicitly after midnight—referred to very early in the day. Testimonies spoke of 'hours' and of half-hours, but references to smaller amounts of time were rare. In official contexts, and occasionally in men's testimony, familiar prayers—the paternoster or the miserere—labeled short intervals, corresponding to the length of time needed to recite the well-known words. This usage appeared, in parallel with clock time, in the very official setting of the torture room.[11]

Even in a large city, the alternating periods of light and darkness were central to everyday time. Sunrise and especially nightfall were the pivotal moments, each marked by so-called Ave Maria bells, that were the clearest public markers of time and frequently cited in testimonies. Human physiology and common needs to eat and sleep, to work and pray, responded to these natural diurnal rhythms. Darkness posed special risks for women, and some of their language reflected such gendered circumstances. Although not everyone kept the same schedules, in early modern Rome a rotation of daily activities was a common point of reference for retrospective narration. Reporting their everyday rounds, women often situated themselves by location more than time, although a rhythm of activities might suggest a temporal sequence. For example, they spoke of being inside doing household chores, that often meant the morning, or sitting by the doorstep spinning, that more likely occurred in the afternoon.[12] Other women, including sometimes prostitutes, told of going to church for mass or to view a special religious display and collect an indulgence (*perdonanza*).[13] Here the church indicated both a place, but also an occasion linked to the calendar of liturgies. Other markers of everyday time used sociability. Mealtimes appeared often, especially when taken in company with family or friends—nothing in the morning, but dinner (*pranzo*) in the early afternoon, and supper (*cena*) in the early evening. In the rhetorical habits of combination, Romans talking would readily pile on different temporal markers in a single expression, such as a reference to a meal with other measures of time. According to one prostitute, she had stayed home until 'the hour of eating', meaning

11   Cohen, 'She Said', p. 411.
12   Processi, xvii secolo, busta 28bis (1603), fol. 848r.
13   Prostitutes at mass: Processi, xvii secolo, busta 44 (1605), fols. 701v, 703r; busta 58 (1607), fol. 317. Apostles displayed at San Giovanni in Laterano: Investigazioni, busta 388, fol. 45r; Costituti, busta 505, fol. 116v. *Perdonanza:* Costituti, busta 590, fol. 87; Querele, busta 8, fols. 93r, 94r, 95v.

midday dinner, and then went out to visit two churches and returned by
23 hours.[14] A client arrived at his prostitute's house, 'after dinner, around
the time of vespers', although prayers were likely not the first thing on his
mind.[15] A doublet-maker explained that he ate his dinner 'at midday', but
delayed his supper until one and a half hours of night, because his mother
was a midwife and came home late.[16]

The transition from darkness to light and from sleep to activity had no
sharp threshold. People got up and began their days at different times. Some
started before dawn, others later. The Ave Maria bell at sunrise announced
the beginning of the day. 'I left the house Friday morning at the sounding
of day [*sonare del giorno*]', testified a woman who was a domestic servant
in a boarding house.[17] Note the layered temporal expression that named
the day, the morning, and the bell. Or, in 1610, early one summer day, four
wives, each with a basket of laundry on her head, set out very early for a
private fountain near the church of Sant' Andrea della Valle. 'Five hours'
had sounded, but three of the women carried lanterns because it was dark
and still 'night', as a male witness awakened by the women's knocking
confirmed. The plan to go together was likely prudent in the twilight, for,
near the door of the wash place, they were accosted, 'oh poor women', by
two men who noted the early hour. One of them proceeded to assault the
youngest and prettiest of the laundresses.[18] Early-rising women often
invoked religious duty to designate time, that is, they were attending an early
mass. Occasionally, in the criminal context, they noticed a neighbor's door
or shutters that had been defamed in the night with ink or excrement.[19] A
later rising prostitute's client, on the other hand, spoke of leaving her house,
'quite early although it was already bright daylight'.[20]

More than dawn, sunset and the end of daylight figured prominently
in criminal testimonies about Roman daily life. Unlike daybreak, at the
sounding of the evening Ave Maria bell, almost everyone was awake and
likely to remain active for some hours. As historians of early modern Europe
have recently shown, darkness did not mean sleep and even where reliable
lighting was not available, night was often a busy time, both for work and

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14   Investigazioni, busta 351, fol. 50r.
15   Ibid., fols. 176v–177r.
16   Processi, xvii secolo, busta 19 (1602), fols. 1019v–1020r.
17   Processi, xvi secolo, busta 257 (1592), fol. 1046r.
18   Processi, xvii secolo, busta 87, fols. 451r–459r.
19   Costituti, busta 591, fol. 92r. On house-scorning, Cohen, 'Honor and Gender'.
20   Costituti, busta 591, fol. 155v.

for sociability.[21] Not only in the streets, but also at taverns and in their homes, people kept busy for some hours after nightfall. A man appeared at his girlfriend's door when it was 'deep night' (*molto notte*).[22] One woman claimed to have stayed up spinning until after midnight and then gotten up to go to early mass.[23]

Highlighted by Roman law, the differences between light and dark figure frequently in criminal court proceedings. In daylight, events in the street were readily observed by many witnesses. During the shrouded evening hours, it was harder to see and to identify malefactors. To validate their reports, witnesses to night-time events would explain that they were carrying a lantern, or that the moon was bright. Due to darkness but also because evening gave opportunity for recreation, including for the many men in Rome lacking strong household ties and seeking distraction, the first several hours of the night were the time for disorder in some neighborhoods.[24]

For these reasons, the boundary between light and dark shaped one official temporal restriction specific to women. To minimize night-time disorder, Roman authorities imposed a curfew that police patrols enforced, if fitfully. After the Ave Maria bell, women were not supposed to leave their dwellings alone, nor to move about the city streets unless accompanied by male kin. Aimed largely at prostitutes, the regulation constrained as well the considerable numbers of mostly respectable poor women, many of whom lived on their own. In practice, these women did go out and sometimes were nabbed by the police as they went to get a light for their fire or to buy fruit at a shop or wine and take-out from a pub (*ostaria*).[25] When arrested, women usually protested that they had not gone far or that night had just begun. Another legitimating explanation for being out at night was visits to female kin or friends, and especially going to help the sick. Angela, the wife of Giuseppe Ciapponi, was arrested on a Sunday evening, at two hours of the night, in the house where she had been called to administer certain salves and a clyster to an ailing woman.[26] Eugenia, charged by her husband Ventura Pacini with adultery, highlighted in her defense the difference between night and morning: '[...] I never go out at night except for some reason, and it's been more than four months that I have not done so, although it is very

21   Ekirch, *At Day's Close*, pp. 163–64, 174–76; bees and sociability, pp. 178–84.

22   Costituti, busta 589, fol. 124v.

23   Querele, busta 8, fol. 92r.

24   Nussdorfer, 'Priestly Rulers'.

25   Cohen, 'To Pray, to Work', p. 303. Also, Costituti, busta 485, fols. 194v–195r; busta 505, fol. 61r; busta 592, fol. 38r

26   Processi, xvii secolo, busta 25 (1603), fol. 19r–v; also, Costituti, busta 508, fols. 10v–12r.

true that in the morning, always two hours before daylight I go to weave in the house of my woman friend [*commare*] until 14 or 15 hours [roughly, 8 or 9 am]'.[27] The cops, showing excessive zeal, even arrested women returning from midnight mass on Christmas Eve.[28]

Narrating on a scale of weeks, witnesses used oral habits that mixed naming days with other expressions of redundancy and relational time. Women and men spoke of a Sunday, Wednesday, or Friday, often coupled with the oral designation phrase, 'just passed' (*prossimo passato*). This usage, which appears in Latin in the court's questions, invites specificity, but appears to have been familiar to the witnesses. Catholic practices also shaped narrative speech, even where a term's religious sources were lost. Where we would refer to a 'week', Romans spoke of '8 days' or an octave, a unit of the liturgical calendar allocated for the celebration of major holidays from Sunday to Sunday inclusive. Similarly, for two weeks or a fortnight, Romans spoke of '15 days'. For example, in 1607 the courtesan Domitella Stagli, living in the piazza San Silvestro, opened her complaint of a house-scorning, 'You should know that, yesterday evening made it a week [i.e. a week ago yesterday], it was Sunday around four hours of the night, when I was in bed, I heard someone knocking on my door and making a disorderly racket, and because it was night, thinking that it might be the police, I got up and went to my window'.[29] And then again, just last night, Domitella continued, at 'four and a half hours of night', the 'insolent' ruckus happened again. She went to her window, recognized the culprits as the same ones as before, and shouted to them, 'tomorrow morning I will send the Court [*Corte*, meaning the police] after you'. A witness, Margarita, who lived with her sick husband downstairs below Domitella, was frightened by the assaults. She confirmed both incidents, saying that last night's troubles occurred, 'I believe, as midnight sounded at the Trinità' and lasted for a quarter of an hour.[30] Although qualified with the conventional disclaimer, this statement atypically refers to a specific church bell and to so brief a time span as a quarter hour.

On a longer scale of time, too, when women spoke to the court of months or seasons, they used a variety of temporal rhetorics. Female witnesses sometimes named months, but very seldom did they number days. For example, in 1590 Jacoba, wife of Gregorio Bell'huomo, gave shelter in her

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27   Costituti, busta 594, fol. 181v.
28   Costituti, busta 593, fols. 44v, 45v; busta 594, fol. 54v.
29   Processi, xvii secolo, busta 57, fol. 501r.
30   Ibid., fol. 502v.

hometown of Velletri, north of Rome, to a homeless young woman. Several weeks later, the matron found herself arrested and taken to the city where she testified in the Corte Savelli jail: 'it was the month of May, just passed, and, if I remember rightly, it was the eighth of that month, one evening, late, while I was standing in front of my house, there passed by that maiden [*zitella*] dressed as man wearing some ragged old hose, a patched doublet, and on her head a cap of very old fabric, and [she was] crying [...]'.[31] Although this testimony exceptionally gave a precise date, it was typical in the phrasing that piled up details and incorporated the cautionary rhetorical allusion to memory. More commonly, witnesses approximated with phrases such as 'about two months ago' or Thomassina's 'three or four months' to describe Madalena's employment. Sometimes, under pressure, witnesses could not make good temporal sense at all. Asked when she had heard a piece of information, a woman responded, 'about a year or six months, I don't have it well in mind'; later of another exchange, she said that it happened 'about 9 or 10 months [ago], or 15, if I remember rightly'.[32] Although the magistrates pushed for clear answers, they did not expect always to get them.

About some things, on the other hand, women could be precise. Monetary sums paid for rent or received for work, usually expressed as rates by month or day, were often cited, although partial compensation in kind, such as room, board, or other goods, was routine and never included in the quote. Even if she would not say how long Madalena worked, Thomassina knew exactly what she was supposed to be paid: 5 *giulii* per month. Another servant earned one scudo (equal to 10 *giulii*) per month.[33] Prostitutes, though not paid a regular rate, remembered cash received at different times. For example, Francesca from Assisi, described a regular client, a soldier turned cop, who, when they had sex, gave her 'sometimes one *giulio* sometimes two, and in all she may have gotten one scudo from him'.[34] As to paying out, a recently widowed, former prostitute sublet a room from a respectable matron, but had to give it up, because she could not afford the rent of one scudo per month.[35]

Female bodily time was a gendered setting for counting by days and months. Asked about her livelihood, Bastiana, a poor, unmarried woman from Rieti, explained: 'I do nothing except spin twine [*spago*]; I spin a

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31 Processi, xvii secolo, busta 237, fols. 52v–53v.

32 Processi, xvi secolo, busta 286 (1595), fols. 743r, 746r.

33 Processi, xvii secoolo, busta 6 (1600), fol. 218v.

34 Costituti, busta 505, fol. 62r.

35 Costituti, busta 507, fol. 56v.

pound and a half a day and earn three *carlini* a day'.[36] She linked these assertions closely to the forthright pronouncement that she was six months pregnant and that it was her second time, though by a different man. John Christopoulos, using Roman trial records, has pointed out the layered uncertainties around knowing if you were pregnant, and for how long.[37] Yet when women addressed the court, giving a temporal length to a pregnancy, even one still too recent to be noticed, verified its potential legal utility. For example, in 1601, Isabella from Albano, was arrested at night below the Trinità dei Monti in mixed company. To the magistrates, she explained that her husband was out of town, she was two months pregnant and had done heavy laundry work the day before. Fearing that she would miscarry, she had sought the support of her compatriot, Giovanna d'Albano, who was arrested with her. This logic, including the citation of pregnancy, did not excuse Isabella from a fine of one scudo to be paid to charity.[38] Agata of Tivoli was, she testified, four months pregnant and with a babe in arms, when she was arrested in the evening riding on the croup of a gentleman's horse. She had come to the city with her young children to look for her husband, who had left home a month earlier to take the water of the Holy Wood, a cure for syphilis. Found to be indeed a respectable woman, she was released without charges.[39] More often, however, pregnancies measured in months were cited in cases of miscarriage due to accident or violence.[40]

While city women occasionally referred to agricultural seasons like the harvest, usually in connection with a trip to the country, the Catholic calendar supplied a primary language of time. If neither language nor behavior much distinguished Sundays from workdays, major holidays and festive liturgical octaves marked the narration of the everyday. In the context of criminal trials, probably the most often cited season was Carnival. For several weeks from late January, streets and homes teemed with parties, dancing, masquerades, high jinks, perfumed eggs, and frequently also violence. For young women Carnival was an occasion for amorous encounter.[41] It was time, too, for quarrels, as two women were 'at war since Carnival', because one

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36   Costituti, busta 485, fols. 82v–83v.

37   Christopoulos, 'Nonelite Male Perspectives', pp. 161–66.

38   Costituti, busta 505, fols. 5v–6v; Registrazioni d'Atti, busta 143, fol. 30. In the same neighborhood in 1605, baptismal records list an Isabella d'Albano as the mother of an illegitimate daughter, with a Giovanna d'Albano as godmother. San Lorenzo in Lucina, Battesimi, fol. 55v.

39   Costituti, busta 599, fols. 118v–119r.

40   Investigazioni, busta 345, fols. 78v–79r; busta 351, fols. 208r–v, 210r; Costituti, busta 507, fol. 55v.

41   Processi, xvii secolo, busta 18 (1602), fols. 720v–721r; busta 28bis, fols. 417v, 423v.

failed to invite the other to a party.[42] Sometimes, however, the festival was simply a marker, as when a woman told, 'It was a bit [*pezzo*] before Carnival and I was returning from the house of the saddler, and because it was raining I had my apron over my head.[43] Religious holidays also figured in testimony in relation to special events. A hairdresser asked a client to lend her a nice dress so she could appear in a holy pageant (*sacra rappresentazione*) on Easter Tuesday.[44] For a parade for the octave of Corpus Christi, a decorative plasterer's wife explained giving paints from her husband's supply to a neighbor to decorate a float.[45] And a prostitute reported returning from mass on 'the day of the Madonna in September', referring to the holiday of the Virgin's birth.[46] Other times, the festival was, like Carnival in the earlier example, only a marker. Thus, a wife testified in May that, 'on the Saturday before Christmas just passed', because angry at her notary husband, she had decamped from her household and two daughters and had gone to stay with her brother out of town, returning only on the 'first Friday in March'.[47]

Longer spans of time, measurable in years, appear in the court testimonies in several forms. Simple statements of duration expressed as a number of years most often appeared in response to the court's preliminary questions set to locate the witness: how long have you been in Rome? how long have you been married or widowed? what is your work and for how long? As Rome's population, both male and female, was highly mobile, time in the city was often a first inquiry. In 1610, Lavinia, wife of Emilio, a carpenter, described, convolutedly, her family's history: in paraphrase, many years ago her mother, Europia, came to Rome and brought her and her two sisters, but in fact her sister Artemisia and the small one, Apollonia, had been born in Rome, and there came as well her father, who has been dead ten years, and since the Holy Year (1600) they had always lived in this house in (the parish of) San Nicolo in Carcere.[48] The Roman sojourn question was often coupled with queries about livelihood. Hieronima, wife of Lothario, in 1603 testified that she had been in Rome 'ten years [...] and in that time I have worked as a servant for various people, and among others I worked for Messer Andrea Bacci, who was a physician, and I was there five or six years, and it is two years since I left'. She then goes on to tell of events at Bacci's house one morning, five

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42   Processi, xvii secolo, busta 18, fol. 1056v; another party, Costituti, busta 499, fols. 23v–25r.
43   Costituti, busta 595, fol. 108v.
44   Processi, xvii secolo, busta 26 (1603), fol. 402r.
45   Querele, busta 8, fol. 95r.
46   Ibid., fol. 22v.
47   Processi, xvii secolo, busta 18, fol. 719r.
48   Processi, xvii secolo, busta 89, fol. 13r.

or six years earlier.[49] In a specialized context for the duration of women's work, midwives called as forensic experts to inspect women's bodies verified their authority by citing unusually long, but still approximate—'five or six', 'thirty', or 'many'—years of professional experience.[50]

In the court's direct questions seeking to identify witnesses, for women marital status drew more attention than age. The answers normally reported as numbers of years the lengths of marriage or widowhood. Thus, Menica Romana said, 'I have a husband called Francesco who sells clothing, and it is four years since I took him [as a spouse].'[51] Claudia della Valle, age 35, testified that she had been a widow 9 years and now lived with her 12-year old son and 8-year old daughter, who had been a prostitute for 3 or 4 years and evidently supported the family.[52] Where women's ages did appear, mature adults usually gave rounded numbers such as 35 or 40.[53] For teenagers and younger women, specific ages seem to have had more evidentiary or explanatory weight in parsing the ambiguities around virginity, marriage, and responsibility for the conduct of female youth.

For more distant pasts involving many years, narrative rhetorics of time required more than numbers. For example, in 1608, a married woman described her nubile sister: 'of the age of about 17 years [*in circa*], she was born the year of the Great Famine', that is 1590–91.[54] Much less clearly, when prosecuted for impregnating his teenaged servant, Florestano, a man who with his wife did laundry for a living, explained that the girl had come to work for them two years earlier, 'in the year that bread cost two *baiocchi* the loaf'.[55] More commonly, Romans identified years by naming their rulers, the popes. To designate a particular time, they specified papal reigns—even those that lasted only a few months—or notable deeds. Testifying in 1603, a widow from Constantinople said that she came to Rome when Sixtus V (r. 1585–90) was pope and later met another Greek immigrant in the city 'a little while before the Pope [Clement VIII, r. 1592–1605] went to Ferrara'.[56] This military venture in 1598 likely figured in the witness's temporal map, because these Greek women, who received monthly alms from the pope's

49   Processi, xvii secolo, busta 26, fol. 873r.
50   Processi, xvi secolo, busta 309 (1598), fol. 295v; Processi, xvii secolo, busta 26, fol. 732r; Investigazioni, busta 351, fol. 208v.
51   Processi, xvi secolo, busta 309, fol. 296v.
52   Costituti, busta 507, fols. 175v–176r.
53   Costituti, busta 506, fols. 114v–115r.
54   Processi, xvii secolo, busta 65 (1608), fol. 398r.
55   Processi, xvi secolo, busta 286, fol. 755r.
56   Processi xvii secolo, busta 26, fols. 628r–v, 630r.

officials, kept careful track of their benefactor's movements. The jubilees or Holy Years that took place every 25 years were also a point of reference. Thomassina, the job broker, answered the court's initial inquiry, 'I am not married since my husband died this Holy Year'.[57] She referred to the Jubilee of 1600, three years earlier. So did an unmarried Spanish laundress, aged 40, who reported in 1609 that she had first come to Rome for the Holy Year.[58]

To reiterate the intricacies and varieties of how women, and men, talked in court about time, let me conclude with several testimonies from a single trial, another night-time house-scorning, in which women of different statuses report on events that had happened just recently and over the preceding year or two. Remember that, although witnesses may have consulted in advance, each testified alone. In early May 1602, Giulia Marenghi, a well-known courtesan also called Giulietta Romanesca, brought charges in the Governor's court against several soldiers in the light cavalry (*cavalleggieri*) for assaulting her house in the Via Paulina. The principal defendant, Pietro Ciani, was a would-be client of Giulia's, who had gathered his fellows to express noisily his umbrage at her unwillingness to entertain him. Giulia began her testimony, 'the day after the evening that my house was invaded and insolence was done to me, as I deposed in the complaint that I made the other day, Pietro Ciani came to my house in the morning and said to me that he had heard that my house had been invaded'.[59] Although Giulia aimed for accuracy, her switchback mode of oral narration is not easy to follow. The chronology appeared to have involved a ruckus one evening, a self-congratulatory visit by the culprit to his victim's house the following morning, and then her complaint to the court, probably later that day. Pietro was arrested on 1 May, and within a few days Giulia had organized several sympathetic testimonies from her nearby colleague Signora Settimia Lochetti, that courtesan's servant, Caterina from Città Castellana, and another neighbor, also called Giulia Romana. In this context where the witnesses were not suspected of complicity in the attack on Marenghi's house, they were treated as respectable women, and the notary took their depositions in the relative comfort and privacy of their homes.

The interrogation, in jail, of Pietro himself opened the trial. He began with answers to the court's preliminary questions. 'I have been in prison one other time, it was a while ago, in the time of Pope Gregorio XIII (r. 1572–85); I was also convicted in the time of that pope because I killed a

57   Processi, xvii secolo, busta 25 (1603), fol. 44r.

58   Costituti, busta 594, fol. 192r.

59   Processi, xvii secolo, busta 18, fol. 985r.

certain Andrea [...], I was dismissed from the Company of the Saviour, and for that homicide I was banished for six years, and I went away to war' in France.[60] Since then he has returned to Rome and, as a member of the light cavalry, has served in a papal troop under Capitano Bardi.

Signora Settimia Lochetti, another prominent courtesan living nearby, was called to support Marenghi's case, with testimony about similar incidents involving Pietro Ciani that had taken place a year earlier. Aiming for precision in an oral form, Settimia used convoluted but typical language about time: 'Since that summer, that just now [in May] it will be a year [ago], I have known Pietro Ciani; although at first I knew him only by sight, during this last year Pietro, sometimes alone and sometimes with others, at different times of day, came knocking on my door'. After many attempts to send him away, one day, during daylight hours, Settimia confronted him directly from her window and the two exchanged insults, culminating in Pietro's threats to 'come every night to kick her door down'. 'As evening came [that same day]', Settimia continued, 'I being in my house, it must have been four or five hours of the night, all at once [*a un tempo*], I heard kicking against my door [...]'. Settimia once again called Pietro out, explaining later that she recognized him from his gait, 'because the moon was shining'.[61] Here Settimia related exchanges that took place over a year ago; she gave a season—summer—but no dates. In the context of the crucial day, she highlighted the differences between day (*giorno*) and evening (*sera*), and offered approximate but numbered hours to tell the time—four or five hours of the night.

Caterina from Civita Castellana, Lochetti's servant, confirmed her mistress's report, but added a few temporal details. First, Caterina situated herself temporally in her employment: 'It is three years that I have been in the service of Signora Settimia, my mistress.' Then she offered her version of the back story: '[...] and during this time I have met many people who came to the house, and in particular, a certain Pietro light cavalryman [...] who, since Pentecost [*Pasqua rosata*], came many times during the day to knock on Signora Settimia's door [...] alone or in company.' To pin down the date, Caterina cited Pentecost, a religious holiday 50 days after Easter. Thirdly, she related the central incident with an elaborate framing in time: 'on May Day [*il giorno del mese di Maggio*], that now it has been a year, and [...] in the evening, about the hours of four and five, while I was up above and Signora Settimia was below, chatting, with a Signor Frangipani and two

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60   Ibid., fols. 982v–983v.
61   Ibid., fols. 986v–987r.

others', the assault on the door occurred.[62] Several of Caterina's temporal details echoed those in the others' depositions, and with these voluntary, rather than officially summoned, witnesses, some prior consultation was likely. Yet her mention of Pentecost, which came in mid-June in 1601, did not align with her subsequent references to early May. In such examples of inevitable error and inconsistency, we also see variety in the 'times told' of stories, even prepared ones.

Giulia Romana, a woman neighbor whose status and livelihood we do not know, backed Lochetti's account, but from a slightly displaced local perspective and with different temporal language. 'It could be two years that I have lived here in the street of the Babuino and near me lives also the Signora Settimia [...] [in the past] a week [*otto giorni*] before the soldiers went to Hungary, one Sunday in the evening at four hours of the night approximately, as I was ready to go to bed and getting undressed, at that moment I heard a great noise[...]'.[63] To position this house assault, Giulia first told how long she has lived in the location and then cited the much celebrated departure, a year earlier in the summer of 1601, of a large troop of soldiers dispatched by Pope Clement VIII to assist the Hapsburg defense of Christendom.[64] Here an ordinary woman invoked a very public moment in the city's recent history and very carefully, if perhaps impressionistically, situated the local crime as occurring a week *before* that landmark event. Then she spelled out the layered labeling of the moment that figured in other testimonies and added her own experience: on Sunday, in the evening, at around four or five hours, when she was getting ready for bed, then the noise and kicking began.

These efforts to tell, orally, everyday stories in this very distinct setting that valued truth and detail suggest that time was important but not easy to manage. Though some women were more skilled than others, gender did not, of itself, discount their testimonies. Being able to narrate and so to establish a sequence among events, especially about human transactions, was a key to trial proceedings, but also to the conduct of life itself. Women, and men, could and did remember and reconstruct, but often not with a tidy linearity that the judges, and historians, would desire. Everyday culture had multiple strategies for tracking and marking time, drawing on a medley of bells and different domains of daily activity from eating and work to religion. If expressions of time often carried approximation, everyone understood

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62   Ibid., fols. 990v–991r.
63   Ibid., fols. 992v–993r.
64   Hanlon, *Twilight,* p. 85.

and looked for means to give them force. The abstractions, precisions, and disciplines of official early modern time often gave way to murkier, more sinuous, but nevertheless reasonably functional practices of local time. Altogether, when women spoke to the Roman courts, their temporal rhetorics sometimes incorporated particular gendered circumstances. Often, however, women told everyday time in ways that drew on a rich, oral culture that they shared with men.

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6 Genealogical memory

Constructing female rule in seventeenth-century Aceh

Su Fang Ng

Abstract

Four queens ruled Aceh, Sumatra (present-day Indonesia) from 1641 to 1699; the first, Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn Taj al-Alam (1641–75), for 35 years. This essay analyzes similarities between her symbols of royal power and her father Iskandar Muda's, especially their claim to Alexander the Great as a legendary ancestor. Contesting the genealogy her husband crafted, Taj al-Alam reinscribed a continuous genealogy from her father. Continuity in the rhetoric of royal power shows a daughter's appropriation of paternal as well as royal power. By the end of the seventeenth century, the myth of queenship was so prevalent that some English visitors believed Aceh had always been governed by queens, testifying to the power of Taj al-Alam's reworkings of genealogical memory.

Keywords: Aceh; Taj al-Alam; queenship; memory; genealogy

Female rule was often deplored—for instance, Mary Queen of Scots was denounced by John Knox as 'abominable'—and associated with disorder and a topsy-turvy world.[1] Despite this cultural prejudice, there were a surprising number of early modern queens exercising supreme political authority. William Monter found 30 such female rulers, including the Scottish Mary, across Europe between 1300 and 1800.[2] Studies of European queens far outnumber those of female rulers from outside Europe, but Monter's introduction also notes scattered examples of regnant queens around the world while Merry

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1   In his *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558), John Knox aims to show 'how abominable before God is the Empire or Rule of a wicked woman' (4.365); for the response to female rulers see Jansen, *Monstrous Regiment of Women*.
2   Monter, *Rise of Female Kings in Europe, 1300–1800*.

Wiesner-Hanks's global survey suggests that women wielding political and religious power were found both inside and outside Europe.[3] In early modern archipelagic Southeast Asia, regnant queens were unusually abundant. Anthony Reid's list highlights this remarkable elevation of women: 6 of 32 rulers of Bone since the fourteenth century; 2 queens between 1404 and 1434 in Pasai; one in Burma (1453–72); several at Sukadana in Borneo (1608–22), Jambi in East Sumatra (1630–55), and Solor in East Flores (1650–70); a century of female rule in Patani (1584–1688) and more than half a century in Aceh (1641–99).[4] He suggests, 'Austronesian societies, which include Polynesia and Madagascar as well as Indonesia and the Philippines, have been more inclined [...] to place high-born women on the throne.'[5] Given increasing scholarly attention to queenship in premodern Europe and the issues raised about sovereignty, power, and representation, it is worth taking a more global view of gender and power by bringing non-Western examples into discussion.[6] For Southeast Asian studies, Europeanists' attention to gender would be equally salutary: Sher Banu A.L. Khan has called for Southeast Asianists to take up O.W. Wolters's conjecture that his analysis of spiritual or charismatic aura in 'men of prowess' could also be applied to women when the discipline 'becomes a field for extensive gender studies'.[7] Southeast Asian Islamic states offer an interesting perspective on gendered negotiation of power: while indigenous traditions accord women more authority, Islamic teachings prohibit female rule. In this regard, the state of Aceh in Sumatra, the focus of Khan's own studies as well as those by Barbara and Leonard Andaya, is particularly pertinent, with four regnant queens in the seventeenth century.[8] Its port-capital was an important early modern trading center for spices, visited by foreign traders from India, the Middle East, China, and Europe. The succession of four queens on the throne from

3   Wiesner-Hanks, 'Gender and Cultural Power in Global Perspective'. The plethora of studies on European queens include those of individual rulers as well as more wide-ranging surveys, such as Hopkins, *Women Who Would Be Kings*; and Woodacre, *Queens Regnant of Navarre*; and essay collections such as Orr, ed., *Queenship in Europe 1660–1815*; Levin and Bucholz, eds., *Queens and Power in Medieval and Early Modern England*; and Woodacre, ed., *Queenship in the Mediterranean*.

4   Reid, 'Female Roles', pp. 640–41.

5   Ibid., p. 639.

6   There are too many studies to cite; for surveys of the field and articles on theoretical issues, see Wolf, 'Reigning Queens'; Nelson, 'Medieval Queenship'; and Adams, 'Renaissance Queenship'.

7   Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region*, p. 169; Khan, 'Men of Prowess', p. 204. For other studies, see Jacobsen, 'Autonomous Queenship'; and Strong, 'Toward a Theory of Buddhist Queenship'.

8   B. Andaya, ed., *Other Pasts*; *eadem*, *Flaming Womb*; L. Andaya, 'A very good-natured but awe-inspiring government'.

1641 to 1699 testifies to the sustained power of Acehnese queenship in this period, its longevity due in no small part to the length of the reign of the first, Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn Taj al-Alam (1641–75), who ruled for 35 years.

Aceh's period of female rule has been considered one signifying the weakness of the crown since 1783 when William Marsden declared that the era of female rule allowed nobles (*orang kaya*) unrestrained power and 'thereby virtually changed the constitution into an aristocracy'.[9] Female rule is understood as a decline from Aceh's golden age of Taj al-Alam's father Iskandar Muda, who expanded Aceh's territories through conquest and whose reign is considered 'a true peak of royal power and centralization' with 'a particularly masterful ruler'.[10] Even when queens are accorded power, they marked the loss of royal authority with the increasing influence of a (male-dominated) aristocracy. Noting the correlation of queenship and port-kingdoms, Reid argues that the aristocracy used it as a mechanism for limiting royal despotism to foster foreign trade.[11] Following Reid, Amirul Hadi argues that the death of Iskandar Muda signified 'the beginning of a corresponding process of decentralization' and a 'crisis of succession'.[12] Even Ito Takeshi suggests there was a 'shrinkage of political power under the four successive female rulers', who were 'figureheads', though he concedes they 'exerted, to a certain extent, an influence on Aceh's political life'.[13]

Other scholars, however, see female rule as indigenous practice.[14] In the renewed debate, some scholars praise queenship's more democratic features. Leonard Andaya suggests that Taj al-Alam's 'strict adherence to [...] Islamic prescription' on good female behavior 'explains her style of government and the misconceived notion of the weakness of her rule'; in enforcing Islamic law, she 'took bold measures to assure that she would maintain control'.[15] Sher Banu Khan's revisionist work argues that 'a more accommodative and consensual approach based on the law and the ability to keep foreign diplomats and merchants happy' ensured Aceh's prosperity and independence.[16] Distinguishing queenship from charismatic and absolutist male rule encapsulated by Wolters' term 'men of prowess', Khan

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9   Marsden, *History of Sumatra*, pp. 364–65; Hurgronje, *De Atjehers*, I, p. 94; Veltman, 'Nota over de geschiedenis', pp. 66–67.

10   Reid, 'Trade and the Problem of Royal Power', p. 103.

11   Reid, 'Female Roles', p. 639.

12   Hadi, *Islam and State*, pp. 72, 80–81; see Graaf, *Reisen van Nicolaus de Graaff*, p. 13.

13   Ito, 'World of the Adat Aceh', p. 120.

14   Veth, 'Vrouwenregeeringen'.

15   L. Andaya, 'A very good-natured but awe-inspiring government', pp. 67, 69.

16   Khan, 'Sultanahs of Aceh', p. 8; see also Khan, *Rule Behind the Silk Curtain*.

argues, 'legitimacy relied less on notions of sacral and charismatic power based on prowess than on Muslim notions of piety and the just ruler whose leadership is based on consensus [*muafakat*] and accommodation', with 'soft power' an effective force.[17]

Whether deplored or celebrated, female rule tends to be treated as falling outside normal political and social systems. Queenship is often understood as departures from tradition. The scholarly recuperation of Acehnese queenship consciously separates it from the long shadow of Iskandar Muda's reign. The breaking of old frames allows for a more accurate perspective on queenship's relative strengths and weaknesses. In practice, of course, female rule, like male rule, comes embedded in a context. The female ruler constructs her royal image out of the same cultural elements as her male counterpart, even if the elements are deployed differently. While Taj al-Alam's reign departed in several ways from her male predecessors', there was also continuity. Claiming paternal heritage, she redeployed her father's imperial symbols, especially the legendary lineal descent from Iskandar Zulkarnain, the Islamic name for Alexander the Great. Given how fraught female rule was in an Islamic context, the conservative use of genealogy—family lineage and tradition—to construct her monarchical image makes possible the radical innovation of a woman on the throne. Continuity in the rhetoric of royal power from Iskandar Muda's time to that of his daughter Taj al-Alam shows a daughter's appropriation of royal and paternal power.

Fashioning royal image

A late sixteenth-century English visitor, John Davies, testified to genealogy's importance to the Acehnese: 'These people boast themselves to come of Ismael and Hagar, and can reckon the Genealogie of the Bible perfectly.'[18] While biblical genealogy was important for Muslim Acehnese as descendants of Adam, just as important was the myth of lineal descent from Alexander the Great (Iskandar Zulkarnain) a legendary ancestor claimed by the Acehnese and other Southeast Asian kings. Taj al-Alam's father's name, Iskandar Muda, literally means Alexander the Younger, and, in her self-fashioning, Taj al-Alam linked herself to forefathers, not only to her father Iskandar Muda but also to Alexander. Deploying genealogical memory, she constructed a powerful image of female rule. Taj al-Alam's appropriation of paternal power

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17   Khan, 'Men of Prowess', p. 205.
18   Markham, ed., *Voyages and Works of John Davis*, p. 151.

is seen in the elaborate diplomatic letters sent to foreign kings. Trading relations left extant a few royal letters from Aceh in the period to European monarchs, letters that reveal something of Acehnese royal self-fashioning in their 'compliments' (*puji-pujian*) section, which serves as an extended and elaborate address and praise of the letter's sender. More so than her father's, Taj al-Alam's letter defines royal identity genealogically.

Sultan Iskandar Muda's illuminated letter to King James I of England in 1615 is a spectacular example of a Malay golden letter. Its beauty belies the negative contents, denying the English trading rights requested for Tiku and Priaman in western Sumatra. Annabel Teh Gallop shows that the English merchant John Oxwick, who offended Iskandar Muda and alienated his fellow merchants, expended more effort in securing a formal reply in the beautiful presentational letter than the mundane trading permit the English needed.[19] The substance of the denial is quite short but the 'compliments' delineating the royal image is rather extended. It emphasizes the sultan's wealth and power, dilating on his martial prowess, his vassal states, and all the territories he conquered. This extended description is in striking contrast with the abbreviated 'compliments' section of only two sentences for James I. Although lacking any direct reference to Alexander, the praise of Iskandar Muda's sovereignty over the eastern (*pihak mashrak*) and western (*pihak maghrib*) countries, with cardinal directions left untranslated in Arabic, suggests his universalist ambitions.[20] The Alexandrian connection becomes explicit in the letters of his successors, his son-in-law Iskandar Thani and Taj al-Alam.

Sher Banu Khan sees a signal difference between Iskandar Thani's and Taj al-Alam's mode of rule. Arguing that Acehnese queens are pragmatic women practicing 'piety politics' based on 'moral force, a consensual style of decision-making based on *musyawarah* [consultation], and sanctioned by *adat* [custom] and Islam',[21] she points to letter's extended praise of Taj al-Alam's piety. Comparing the description of royal attributes in the compliments section of Taj al-Alam's letter to that of her husband Iskandar Thani's 1636 letter to the Prince of Orange, Fredrik Henrik of the United Provinces, Khan argues that she 'represented herself as a moral and righteous ruler.'[22] Noting the absence of reference to religious roles in Iskandar Thani's

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19 Gallop, 'Gold, Silver, and Lapis Lazuli', pp. 105–39, letters in app. A, pp. 243–57.
20 Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Laud Or. Rolls b.1 (R); Gallop, 'Gold, Silver, and Lapis Lazuli', app. A, p. 243. Translations from Dutch, Malay, and Persian are mine, unless otherwise indicated.
21 Khan, 'Men of Prowess', pp. 217, 225.
22 Ibid., p. 213.

letter, Khan finds Iskandar Thani 'arrogant' in contrast to what she calls Taj al-Alam's 'modesty and humility'.[23] Annabel Teh Gallop's reading of the letters both disputes and confirms this assessment:

> There is a remarkable degree of correspondence with the *puji-pujian* in Iskandar Thani's letter written over 20 years previously. Of the 26 distinct sets of attributes in Iskandar Thani's letter, all but five are repeated in Taj al-'Alam's, which also includes several new formulations, giving a total of 32 sets of attributes. In some cases the correspondence is word-for-word, while in other cases there are potentially significant differences in phrasing.[24]

However, while Iskandar Thani's justice is compared to that of the Persian king Nusyirwan Adil and his liberality to that of Hatim Tai, a figure whose generosity is proverbial, Taj al-Alam's justice, as Gallop notes, is compared to that of Sultan Ibn Abd al-Aziz, 'a reference to Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz, the fifth Umayyad caliph (r. 717–720), traditionally viewed as "an exemplar of the Muslim virtues of piety, equity and humility."'[25] The 'compliments' underlines Taj al-Alam's piety, but many of the same references to the ruler's piety were also used to describe her husband.

Taj al-Alam and Iskandar Thani's letters share more similarities with each other than with her father Iskandar Muda's. They show particular concern with genealogy. While the letter praises Iskandar Muda's descent from kings with monuments of gold alloy (*turun-temurun daripada raja bernisyan suasa*),[26] it emphasizes his military strength. Iskandar Thani's letter also extols his wealth and power, with loving detail about his elephants, horses, and jewels. But these references, Gallop notes, are repeated in Taj al-Alam's letter, including those to her 'elephants caparisoned with gold and lapis lazuli [...] and hundreds of war elephants' (*gajah berpakaian mas belazuardi [...] dan beratus gajah peperangan*). Like her father and husband, she is described in imperial terms as a 'queen who possesses kingdoms in the west and the east' (*raja yang mengempukan kerajaan barat dan timur*). Since the Malay word for ruler, *raja*, is ungendered, the phrasing is exactly the same. What distinguishes Taj al-Alam and her husband's letters from Iskandar Muda's is the reference to Alexandrian descent, an addition perhaps pioneered by her

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23   Ibid., p. 214.
24   Gallop, 'Gold, Silver, and Lapis Lazuli', p. 126.
25   Ibid.
26   Ibid., app. A, p. 243.

husband. With a name that means the Second Alexander, Iskandar Thani is praised as a 'king from the lines of kings of Alexander the Great' (*ialah raja yang raja al-diraja anak cucu raja Iskandar Zulkarnain*).[27] Taj al-Alam's letter uses almost the exact same phrase to highlight genealogical transfer: she is described as 'king of kings of the descendants of Sultan Alexander the Two-horned' (*raja al-diraja anak cucu a(l)-Sultan Iskandar Zulkarnain*) and is 'God's caliph and the raja who speaks the strange wisdom of God, the raja who pours out the law of God' (*ialah khalifat Allah lagi raja yang menyatakan hikmat Allah yang ghaib, ialah raja yang melimpahkan syara' Allah*).[28]

In their address to the recipients, both Iskandar Thani and Taj al-Alam emphasize the longevity of diplomatic and trade relations by reference to Iskandar Muda's time, even though trade relations between Aceh and Europe began earlier. Iskandar Thani's letter declares: 'from the time of his late majesty Makota Alam until the time we were appointed as God's viceroy [*khalifat Allah*], never have the chains of love [*tali rantai muhabbat dan udat*] linking the Captain and our royal presence been broken, and it is our hope that long may this continue'.[29] Similarly, Taj al-Alam's letter frames the relationship between Acehnese and English as one continued from her father's era: she instructs that the letter be conveyed to Charles II 'to fulfill all the agreements [*perjanjian*] between the sons of Aceh the Abode of Peace with English sons as it was in the bygone era [*zaman yang dahulu kala pada*] during the time of the late Makota Alam who is honored [*dimuliakan*] by God of all the worlds'.[30] The letter contends that her trade agreements with the English reaffirm her father's as she presents her reign as a continuation of his illustrious one, establishing continuity between past and present. Despite similarities with her husband, her attitude towards the Dutch was rather more hostile. The letter explains that the English have not been able to trade in some of her dominions because 'they have been apprehended by the accursed Dutch' (*ditahaninya oleh Wolanda yang celaka itu*) and warns of Dutch duplicity: 'because the scoundrels are up to treachery and theft, and the English are suffering' (*karena si celaka itu sangat makar dan pencurian sehingga anak Inggeris pun kesukaran karenanya*).[31] While she might have been trying to fan the flames of Anglo-Dutch rivalry—Ito Takeshi notes that in this period 'the Dutch claimed that as a result of their conquest [of Melaka

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27   Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 4818a.I.3; Gallop, 'Gold, Silver, and Lapis Lazuli', app. A, 246.
28   Gallop, 'Gold, Silver, and Lapis Lazuli', app. A, p. 252.
29   Ibid., app. A, p. 247.
30   Ibid., app. A, p. 253.
31   Ibid.

in 1641] they inherited monopoly rights in the region from the Portuguese',[32] a claim that impinged on Acehnese trade—it is also the case that as she tried to link her reign to her father's, she simultaneously differentiated it from her husband's. Repeating many of her predecessors' tropes, Taj al-Alam emphasizes not just piety but also the fame of her ancestors.

Genealogical concerns too frame her understanding of the English. Taj al-Alam's letter congratulates Charles II on his accession to the throne by reference to his ancestors. Dated October 1661, a little more than a year after Charles' restoration following the interregnum, the letter does not clearly indicate how informed she was about the English Revolution. The contemporary English translation uses explicit language of return and restoration:

> Wherein wee cannot sufficiently express most puissant Prince the Joy that wee received when wee were made acquainted with the happy tydings of your Majesty's safe returne into your owne country, and that divine providence had restored you to your Crowne and kingdomes and seated you upon your Majesty's ffather (of blessed memory) his throne.[33]

This is very likely an elaboration added by the English translator. The original letter simply notes Charles' accession:

> when the news reached the mirror of our heart that Sultan Charles the Second had borne upon his head the favour of the Lord of all worlds and had taken the place of his father on the throne of the kingdom and had placed on his head the crown descended from the kings of yore, we were overjoyed.[34]

Whether or not Taj al-Alam was fully knowledgeable about English politics, both versions emphasize the inheritance of a father's throne. This is especially true of the original Malay in its description of Charles' crown. The Malay term, *turun temurun*, meaning descending lineally, is linked to the Arabic

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32   Ito, ed., *Aceh Sultanate*, introd., I, p. 5.

33   British Library, India Office Records, MSS Eur. Photo 149/8, fol. 156; Gallop, 'Gold, Silver, and Lapis Lazuli', app. A, p. 37.

34   Gallop, 'Gold, Silver, and Lapis Lazuli', app. A, pp. 253, 255, her translation. The original reads: 'maka tatkala terdengarlah kepada sam' cermin kalbu kita akan khabar Sultan Karulus Sikundus sudah menyunjung anugerah Tuhan seru alam sekalian mengantikan takhta kerajaan ayahanda dan menyunjung makota yang turun temurun daripada silsilah raja yang tua2 itu, maka terlalulah kesukaan kita'.

borrowing *silsilah*, meaning 'chain'. The Arabic term originally referred to scholarly genealogy, whereby intellectual authority (*ijazah*) vested in the newly certified teacher is confirmed through a verified chain of masters who constitute the intellectual ancestors. This practice of establishing a chain of authority is also used to confirm the authenticity of teachings in *hadith*, the sayings of prophet Muhammad, in which case the term *sanad* (plural *isnad*) refers to the chain of authorities that supports a tradition. In Southeast Asia, *silsilah* is used, as in the case here where it is modified by the word *raja* meaning 'king', in the more literal sense of lineage or genealogy, to refer to the royal line. Found also in titles of court chronicles, the word is extended to mean history, alluding to the genre's origin in king lists. Just as intellectual genealogy confers authority, so does the *silsilah* of an illustrious ancestry.

Genealogical language legitimates rule by claims to antiquity. Taj al-Alam adopted a title celebrating inherited crowns. While her husband imitated her father's Alexandrian title, she imitated the one he used most extensively in his lifetime. Makota Alam, meaning the Crown of the World, inspired her title, a variant of his: as *makota* is the Sanskrit word for crown, so *tāj* is the Persian word for the same. Moreover, Amirul Hadi notes that Abdurrauf Singkili, an Islamic scholar patronized by Taj al-Alam, gives to her father Iskandar Muda the Arabic title *sayyidunā wa mawlānā* (our lord and master) and to her the feminine version of that title, *sayyidatunā wa mawlatunā*.[35] Like her father she was God's caliph (*khalifat Allah*). Taj al-Alam forges links to her father's reign to emphasize the continuity of succession. She fashions her rule not as an anomaly but as a continuation of a tradition. Adopting the same titles as her male predecessors, especially her father, she also distinguished her reign from her most immediate male predecessor, her husband.

Commemoration and contestation

The links Taj al-Alam forged with her father, emphasizing familial bonds, were a strategy in her contest with another dead man, her husband Iskandar Thani. Her accession meant a political reconfiguration at court. One royal edict, or court document with the ruler's seal, called *sarakata*, shows Taj al-Alam reaffirming her father's policies. Scholars have noted how Taj al-Alam uses land grants to reward supporters[36] This particular *sarakata*

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35   Singkili, *Mir'āt al-Ṭullāb*, p. 2; quoted in Hadi, *Islam and State*, p. 63.
36   Khan, *Rule Behind the Silk Curtain*, pp. 180–82.

repossesses lands granted to one party by her husband to return them to another who had previously been granted those lands by her father. The *sarakata* records that in 1613 in the time of Sultan Iskandar Muda these lands were given to Tok Bahra, which Taj al-Alam returned with the conferral of a new title of Seri Paduka Tuan Seberang and an appointment as Panglima Bandar, administrator in charge of foreign traders. This new position was created as a counterweight to the role of Laksamana, or Admiral, whose incumbent was anti-Dutch.[37] Strikingly, the *sarakata* begins with a long list of titles and attributes of Taj al-Alam's father Iskandar Muda, functioning as a kind of encomium. Most of the document recalls Iskandar Muda's grant of these lands in 1613, with Taj al-Alam herself introduced only toward the end. Promulgated in the time of Sultan Jamal al-Alam Badr al-Munir (r. 1703–26), the *sarakata* links her to her father, and suggests that their joint names were still honored in the early eighteenth century. The document suggests that the lands' reversion to Tok Bahra would fulfill her father's wishes. Repeated thrice is the phrase 'sabda ḥaḍrat Sjāhi ʿĀlam' (the spoken wish of Shah Alam) or simply 'ḥaḍrat Sjāhi ʿĀlam' (the wish of Shah Alam), referencing Iskandar Muda by another of his titles, here meaning ruler of the world.[38] In reversing her husband's commands, Taj al-Alam is justified by reference to paternal authority.

Taj al-Alam's shift away from her husband's political position was noticed by contemporary Dutch observers. When the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) delegation arrived in Aceh in 1642, led by commissioner Pieter Sourij, his account notes that he and his delegation were richly entertained with a feast. During the meal, they were treated to a song, whose subject was no other than Taj al-Alam's father:

> After the first two courses were ended, the previously described players and singers began to sing a song of praise to glorify the queen's late father. On hearing this, all the great cousins and the other Acehnese hearing this were so moved that they burst out in tears, as if by doing so his virtue would indeed be elevated to the heavens. From this it is evident that although cruel while alive, he has truly left behind among the Achinese people an undying reputation and heritage. On the contrary, of the younger man who was from Pahang nothing is known (as if he never was).[39]

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37   Ibid., p. 183.

38   Tichelman, 'Een Atjèhsche sarakata', p. 371. See Ito, 'World of Adat Aceh', pp. 60–61.

39   Ito, ed., *Aceh Sultanate*, I, p. 174 (VOC 1143, fol. 567r). The original reads: 'Na de twee eerste maaltijden geeijndicht waaren, begonnen voorschreven speelders en zangers singen, een loffsangh

The 'younger man from Pahang', a kingdom in the Malay peninsula, is Iskandar Thani, Taj al-Alam's husband, seemingly forgotten only a year after his death. Her father was the focus of courtly memory. The depths of emotion evoked by the song of praise—even if the affect was performed—suggests a political investment not only by Taj al-Alam but also by her court in memorializing and commemorating her father. The passage suggests this commemoration comes with a concomitant forgetting and erasure of her husband. Indicating a distinct shift in the political winds, this may be a deliberate political strategy to legitimize her rule. By emphasizing her blood links to the revered Iskandar Muda, Taj al-Alam crafted a ruling style distinct from her foreign husband's.

This commemoration of Iskandar Muda would pose problems for Pieter Sourij's delegation, tasked with delivering jewels ordered by the late Iskandar Thani. The jewels were initially rejected as having been ordered by a previous king, who had since passed away, then accepted by the queen at a value assessed by her own *orang kaya*, her aristocrats. The Dutch, however, found their valuation too low and demanded their original price since the jewels were custom made and therefore not suitable for resale elsewhere. According to Sourij, the Acehnese dismissed the late king's authority:

> [...] they said since it was the dead king who did this and not this ruling Majesty, [...] since he was dead, so too all other things he did were similarly no more, which clearly showed (as repeatedly mentioned before) he was not loved by the Acehnese, and also few remember his name in honor, that additionally is a great cause why they had no attachment to this work.[40]

The new reign signaled a break from old policies. Dutch observers noted not just a lack of enthusiasm for Iskandar Thani but even an erasure of his memory. The *orang kaya* negotiating with them, Maradia Sestia,

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waarbij des Coninginnes overleden hʳ vaders loff verbreijden, twelcq alle de groote neffens andere Atchinders aanhoorende zoodanich beweegden, dat hun de traanen uijt oogen barsten, alsoo zijn deuchden bij haarlijck tot den hemel verheven wierde, uijt welcke te bespeuren is, hoewel in zijn leven wreet, echter onder Datchince natie een onsterffelijck naam, en goeden nagelaten heeft. Daar te contrarije van de jongste die een Pahanger was (gelijck off noijt geweest) bekent wiert.'
40   Ito, ed., *Aceh Sultanate*, I, pp. 179–80 (*Dagh-register van Pieter Sourij*, May to August 1642, fol. 572R). The original reads: '[...] zij lieden zeijden hoewel den overleden Coningh die hadde laten maken evenwel dese regerende Maijᵗ niet, [...] oversulcx hij doot zijnde, oocq alle t'gene door hem gedaen mede verstorven was, uijt welcke evident bleeck (als vooren meer maalen gementioneert) bij Datchinders niet bemindt, ende zijnen naam oock ter eeren, weijnich gedencken, dat al[s] mede een groote oorsaack is, waarom geen genegentheijt tot dien werck hebben' (my translation). Pieter Sourij's tenure in Aceh was from 15 May to 18 August 1642.

advised the Dutch to maintain their long friendship, again linking Taj al-Alam to her father:

> And just as the director-generals during Makota Alam's reign had lived in friendship with Aceh, now the same (friendship), with regard to a female reign, must not decrease, but increase.[41]

The rhetoric of Taj al-Alam's court, certainly in this first transitional year of her reign, breaks away from her husband's rule to elevate her father's memory and emphasize continuity with his reign. It is Iskandar Muda's name that is often repeated in the archives long after his death.

The claim that Iskandar Thani was little loved and forgotten may be part of the Acehnese's hard bargaining over the sale of the jewels. However, it may also suggest the reason for Iskandar Thani's short reign. Sher Banu Khan argues that he was 'most likely poisoned', due to his extravagance, as evidenced by the 'jewel affair'.[42] Hints from the archive suggest that Taj al-Alam was shaping memories of the past to assert her own rule. Her adoption of an Alexandrian ancestry, as in the letter to Charles II, may also be linked to hints of an erasure of her husband's rule. A biography of her father written in the latter half of his reign deploys the Alexandrian genealogy, as does a work of world history written in Aceh begun in her husband's reign but completed in hers. Subtle differences in the deployment of Alexander in these two near-contemporaneous Acehnese texts show a rhetorical struggle over the appropriation of Alexander in the political transition. Taj al-Alam may be reappropriating her husband's appropriation of Alexander as used by her father.

Her father's biography, *Hikayat Aceh*, composed between 1607 and 1636, identifies Alexander the Great, known by his Islamic name Iskandar Dhū'lqarnayn (Zulkarnain in Malay), as Iskandar Muda's ancestor. In giving him this genealogy, *Hikayat Aceh* follows the *Sejarah Melayu*, the chronicle of the Melakan sultanate, dominant in the fifteenth century before its fall to the Portuguese. In tracing their ancestry to Alexander the Melakan sultanate followed the legends of the even earlier sultanate of Palembang, located in the Sumatran highlands, to which it traces its origin—legends transmitted through the Malay Alexander Romance.[43] With the several removals of the

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41 Ito, ed., *Aceh Sultanate*, I, p. 183 (VOC 1143, ad. 23, fol. 574v). The original reads: 'Ende alsoo d H[r] Generaal bij Macotta Alams regering met Atchin in vriendschap had geleeft, moest nu d'selve, ten aansien een vrouw regeert, niet vermindert; maar vermeerdert.'

42 Khan, 'Jewel Affair', p. 160.

43 Ng, 'Global Renaissance', pp. 293–312.

sultanate originating in Palembang, the legend of Alexander the Great's sons establishing kingdoms in Southeast Asia also spread through the Archipelago, to the Peninsula, to Borneo, and even to eastern Indonesia in the Spice Islands. In *Hikayat Aceh* Iskandar Muda is paired with his Ottoman counterpart as modern versions of the great ancient kings Solomon and Alexander: the Ottoman Sultan declares,

> [...] in ancient times Allah the Exalted made two most great Muslim kings in this world, one was the prophet Solomon, and the other King Alexander, [...] In our age today Allah the Exalted also made two most great kings in the world. From the western side we are the most great king, and from the eastern side Seri Sultan Perkasa 'Alam [Iskandar Muda] is the great king and the one who presses the cause of Allah's religion and the religion of the messenger of Allah.[44]

Although the claim to Alexander is made only analogically, this text establishes his importance to Iskandar Muda's imperial image, whereby he is depicted as the Ottoman sultan's equal. The claim would become explicitly genealogical for both Iskandar Thani and Taj al-Alam.

The second text, Nuruddin al-Rānīrī's *Bustan as-Salatin* (The garden of kings), is an encyclopedic compendium of seven books: the first book begins with creation and the second covers world history, including stories of the prophets and the genealogy of the kings of Persia, Byzantium, Egypt, and Arabia to close with a chapter on Aceh's history. Despite *Hikayat Aceh* as precedent, this work makes no mention of any Alexandrian ancestry for Iskandar Muda. Instead, the Alexandrian descent is transposed onto Taj al-Alam's husband. *Bustan* tells the story of how Iskandar Muda selected Iskandar Thani as his successor, attributing to the latter elements of sacral kingship, including Alexandrian genealogy, found in *Hikayat Aceh*. Iskandar Muda's conquest of Pahang was said to be divinely inspired so that he could bequeath Aceh to Iskandar Thani, a Pahang prince taken captive at the age of seven. Defeat turned into imperial destiny. *Bustan* portrays Iskandar Muda using the art of physiognomy to find marks of rulership in Iskandar Thani's countenance:

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44   *Hikayat Aceh*, ed. Iskandar, p. 96. The original reads: '[...] pada zaman dahulu kala jua dijadikan Allah Ta'ala dua orang raja Islam yang amat besar dalam dunia ini, seorang Nabi Allah Sulaiman, seorang Raja Iskandar juga, [...] Maka pada zaman kita sekarang ini pun ada jua dijadikan Allah Ta'ala dua orang raja yang amat besar dalam 'alam dunia ini. Maka yang daripada pihak maghrib kitalah raja yang besar, and daripada pihak masyrik itu Seri Sultan Perkasa 'Alam raja yang besar dan raja yang mengeraskan agama Allah dan agama Rasul Allah.'

> For he is the king of the descent of kings, and his name will be most famous
> in all the world, and he is the descendant of King Iskandar Zulkarnain.
> Therefore I should take him as my son.[45]

This act of prognostication marks Iskandar Thani as chosen to carry on the royal line, especially since the omen is interpreted by no other than the legendary Iskandar Muda. Taj al-Alam's strategy was to wrest back her husband's appropriation of her father's memory.

The author of *Bustan al-Salatin*, Nuruddin al-Rānīrī was an Islamic scholar and mystic from Gujarat, who came to Aceh in 1637, after the start of Iskandar Thani's reign, and was patronized by him; in fact al-Rānīrī had previous ties to Pahang royalty.[46] Unsurprisingly, his work serves to enhance the reputation of his patron. In transferring Alexandrian genealogy to Iskandar Thani, al-Rānīrī expunges the Alexandrian claim of Taj al-Alam's line. Soon after Iskandar Thani's death, al-Rānīrī fell out of royal favor, and was replaced as chief religious counselor by a local man, Sayf al-Rijal.[47] Teuku Iskandar suggests that 'ar-Raniri was not in favour of a female ruler', as evidenced by an episode he recounts of a letter from the Byzantine ruler to Harun al-Rasyid in which Nicephorus claimed he 'deposed the woman ruler of Byzantine (Irene) as she had behaved like a pawn in a chess game, because "women are weak and have less intellect."'[48] However, al-Rānīrī's *Bustan* includes a flattering description of Taj al-Alam as queen, which praises her good deeds, her fear of God and religiosity, her charity and her justice; moreover, the praise of her charitable deeds is put in terms similar to the praise of her father.[49] As Amirul Hadi points out, al-Rānīrī's *Bustan* portrays her care for her subjects as 'akin to the love of a mother for her children'.[50] Still, it is clear from its shaping of genealogical memory that the work's primary patron was the late Iskandar Thani, and al-Rānīrī's revision was not enough for him to retain his position.

Given that Taj al-Alam shaped her image after her father's, it became politic to appeal to his memory. When officers lodged complaints about their

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45   Nuruddin al-Rānīrī, *Bustan*, ed. Siti Hawa, p. 9. The original reads: 'Bahawasanya ialah raja ad-diraja yang turun-temurun, dan ialah yang termasyhur namanya pada segala alam, dan ialah anak cucu Raja Iskandar Zulkarnain. Maka seharusnyalah ia kuambil akan anakku.'

46   Iskandar, 'Aceh as Crucible', pp. 57–58.

47   Reid, 'Religion', pp. 65–66.

48   *Bustan*, MS Raffles, XLII, p. 172; quoted in Iskandar, 'Aceh as Crucible', p. 60.

49   Nuruddin al-Rānīrī, *Bustan*, ed. Siti Hawa, p. 62; Nuruddin al-Rānīrī, *Bustanu's-Salatin*, ed. Iskandar, p. 36.

50   Hadi, *Islam and State*, p. 91.

ill-treatment and wrongful termination by one of her nobles, the eunuch Seri Bidjaja, they couched their petition by reference to Iskandar Muda's reign:

> Wherefore regarding the said treatment, likewise they complained about him, (saying) during the time of Marhum Makota Alam, there was never such treatment or [wrongful] termination, about which they requested from her Highness, who ruled in her father's place (and as if he lived again in her), that she would therein please provide [a remedy].[51]

From the Dutch report, Taj al-Alam's subjects followed her lead in using the language of genealogical memory. They appealed to her by reminding her that she ruled by inhabiting her father's authority. Commemorating her father's memory, Taj al-Alam fashioned her image as embodying her father and her reign as the revival of Aceh's golden age.

Cultural models of queenship

When examining Acehnese cultural ideals of queenship, scholars have most often turned to a prescriptive text, a mirror for princes written in Aceh around 1603 by Bukhari al-Jauhari called *Taj as-Salatin* (Crown of kings). In doing so, they turn to a text coming out of a generic tradition—the Islamic mirror for princes—that generally views women's counsel with suspicion. *Taj as-Salatin* itself advises kings to 'avoid the company of women and minimize conversation with them' (*hendaklah raja itu kurang duduk serta segala perempuan dan kurang berkata-kata dengan mereka itu*).[52] Thus it comes as a surprise that *Taj as-Salatin* allows for a female monarch. However, female rulers are only permitted when no male heir can be found in order to prevent a 'political crisis' (*kesukaran hal kerajaan*).[53] *Taj as-Salatin* goes into considerable detail in laying out the different court protocols that a queen must follow, notably the insistence that the queen cannot be seen publicly but must speak to the court from behind curtains. *Taj as-Salatin* accommodates female rule within the constraints of Islamic injunctions about female modesty.

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51   Ito, ed., *Aceh Sultanate*, I, p. 223 (VOC 1143, Ad.4, fol. 503r). The original reads: 'Waarom om geseijde bejegeningh, gelickelijck over hem claaghden, (seggende) ten tijde van Morhom Macotta Alam, noijt soodanich bejeegent ofte uijtgemaacqt waaren geweest, versochten daarover haare Alteza, die tans in haar s'vaders plaats selffs regeerden (en bij als in haar weeder leeffden) dat daar inne gelieffden te versien.'
52   Bukhari al-Jauhari, *Taju'ssalatin*, p. 63.
53   Ibid.

However, prescriptive mirrors were not the only source of cultural models. If we turn instead to romance, we find a wide range of representations, including in the well-known Malay Alexander Romance, *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain*, which influenced royal self-fashioning. With wide circulation, *Hikayat Iskandar*'s importance should not be underestimated as the Alexander legend was incorporated into genealogies of Malay kings in the Archipelago. One of the early Islamic romances transmitted to Southeast Asia in the early period of conversion, the older recension of the text originated in Pasai, Sumatra, the precursor kingdom to Aceh, while the second recension comes from Aceh's rival Melaka.[54] The work was well known in Aceh in this period: Nuruddin al-Rānīrī mentions a text of Alexander's story in *Bustan as-Salatin* and perhaps translated it.[55] Offering exemplars of good and bad queens, *Hikayat Iskandar*'s narratives serve as either warnings or models to emulate.

In Iskandar's journey to conquer the west, a striking episode involves his encounter with a queen of Andalusia. The expected battle does not occur because the queen turns out to be secretly Muslim. Following a prophecy, Queen Radhiah has been waiting for Iskandar's arrival to reveal her true religion, saying, 'Although I have the nature of a woman my acts are not those of other women.'[56] Rather she declares herself a warrior woman, describing herself with military accouterments: 'my seat with a sword, my carpet the saddle of a giraffe, my shield [crafted in Pandahan?], my mirror a shield, and my drink the blood of all warriors'.[57] In this moment of radical familiarity, the enemy turns out to be Muslim kin—perhaps an allusion to Muslim rule in the southern Iberian Peninsula lasting from around 711 until the Reconquista expelled the last Muslims in 1492—and Radhiah joins Iskandar's increasingly multinational army to conquer the world for Islam. It is notable that the ruler who has already converted to Islam is a woman, and moreover, she is described as a martial ruler ready to defend her country, even in this text about the world-conquering Alexander. As

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54   Braginsky, *System of Classical Malay Literature,* p. 23. The two recensions arose when in 1436 the third king of Melaka, Iskandar Shah, married a Pasai princess, who might have brought a copy of the work with her (Winstedt, *History of Classical Malay Literature*, rev. and ed. Talib, p. 65).

55   Nuruddin al-Rānīrī, *Bustanu's-Salatin*, ed. Iskandar, pp. 5–7.

56   Soeratno, ed., *Hikayat Iskandar*, p. 87. The original reads: 'Sugguh pun seperti sifat perempuan tetapi pekerjaan hamba tiada seperti perempuan yang lain.'

57   Ibid., p. 88. The original reads: 'kedudukan dengan hamba pedang, akan hamparan hamba pelana jerapah, dan akan perisai hamba pandahan [sic], dan akan cermin hamba perisai, dan minuman hamba darah segala hulubalang.'

a model, Radhiah is both the heroic warrior in the mold of Taj al-Alam's father and a model of feminine piety.

The negative exemplum, like the Byzantine Irene from al-Rānīrī's *Bustan*, is a tyrannical queen Iskandar meets on the way to China. A usurper from a neighboring island kingdom, she killed their true king and took their wealth (*Dan habis segala arta kami dirampasnya. Dan ialah membunuh raja kami*).[58] To make matters worse, the kingdom was originally Muslim. Iskandar defeats her to restore the kingdom to the rule of an oligarchy of men. The conflict suggests a parallel to Aceh's situation with the aristocratic *orang kaya* potentially as a political opposition to the crown, and perhaps serves as a warning to queens who might overreach. After defeating her, however, Iskandar converts the queen to Islam, thus indicating the possibility for recuperation of political sins through religious atonement. This counter-exemplum, a kind of mirror image of Aceh, underscores again the importance of piety. *Hikayat Iskandar*'s varying representations of queenship offer far more possibilities for female agency, even female heroism, than allowed by the prescriptive *Taj as-Salatin*. For despite her defeat, the tyrannical queen rules a technologically advanced kingdom with impressive defenses, including automatons (*patung*) that are robotic soldiers, essentially drones.[59] Reformed through conversion, she is another martial woman assimilated into Islam. Both positive and negative exempla present the reader with martial queens who are (or become) suitably pious. In contrast to prescriptive mirrors that present only an ideal, romances offer a range of possibilities. The martial character of the queens of romance, in particular, allows women to inhabit the role of a ruler who is a defender of the state, a ruler, for instance, like Taj al-Alam who presented herself as the embodiment of her all-conquering father.

Conclusion

Middle Eastern attitudes toward female rule can be varied. Two visitors to Southeast Asia in the period responded very differently. A Muslim visitor to Aceh from Egypt, Mansur b. Yusuf al-Misri, describes Taj al-Alam as 'a gracious and perfect Muslim woman'.[60] But Muhammad Rabiᶜ, secretary to

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58   Ibid., p. 448.
59   Ibid., p. 455.
60   Quoted in Laffan, *Makings of Indonesian Islam*, p. 16; MS *Sirat al-mutawakkil*, fol. 124, in unidentified MS, papers of R.B. Serjeant at Edinburgh University Library.

the envoy of a late seventeenth-century Persian embassy to the Thai court, describes the institution of queenship in Aceh as a power grab by councilors:

> [...] because the king's son is little while the daughter is big, they make the daughter king, they seize the reins of power into their own hands, from now on they are prosperous and autonomous, they rule; and therefore the faction sustained such a cowardly policy. They put over their heads the wonder of shamelessness and ingratitude. Those men of womanly qualities installed the maiden of their virgin thought on the throne of deception. From that time to this day they have given the kingdom, that territory a paradise discovered, in marriage to Houris of the fairy race.[61]

Muhammad's disparagement of the 'woman-hearted men of state' (آن زن صفتان) for allowing a woman to sit on the throne is couched in gendered terms; O'Kane's translation is rather more metaphorical than mine—I simply render the phrase above as 'men of womanly qualities'—but it is clear that rule by a woman was perceived by the Safavid author as contrary to the natural order.[62] Still, much of Muhammad's own language is highly metaphorical. When he derides the greedy and unscrupulous nobles as unmanly, he imagines them as veiled women, shrouded not to protect their modesty but instead covering themselves with shame. Yet the target of his criticism is not the queen herself, described here as a virgin maiden and compared to the mythical *houri*, the beautiful virgins of paradise, which continues his conceit of Aceh being like heaven. Rather, his target is the aristocratic statesmen content to submit to female rule. However, his erroneous assertion that previous kings were Arabs reveals a second-hand knowledge of Aceh. It is evident that Taj al-Alam's reign was unusual enough to be remarked upon. Praise or censure, these comments reflect more on the authors than on Taj al-Alam herself.

Taj al-Alam shaped her monarchical image after her father, using titles that imitated his, and in turn she sought to disavow connections to her husband. Her invocation of Alexander, in particular, contests the genealogy her husband crafted, to inscribe one connected instead to her father. This Alexandrian genealogy brings with it precedents for considering queens not

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61   Muḥammad Rabic ibn Muḥammad Ibrahim, *Safīna-i Sulaimānī*, ed. ᶜAbbas Farouqi, p. 173. For another translation, see O'Kane, trans., *Ship of Sulaimān*, p. 175. The original reads:

پسر پادشاه چون کوچک و دختر او بزرگست دختر را پادشاه کرده عنان اختیار را بدست خود گرفته من بعد مرفهالحال مستقل بوده حکومت نمایند و بنابر نفاق چنان مصلحت نامردانه دیده معجر بی شرمی و نمک بحرامی بر سر کرده آن زن صفتان دوشیزه فکر بکر را بتخت فریب نشانیده از آن زمان الی الان پادشاهی آن ملک بهشت نشان فا به کابین آن حوروشان پری نژاد دادهاند

62   O'Kane, *Ship of Sulaimān*, p. 175.

as emergency replacements but as rulers in their own right. In contrast to prescriptive mirrors, the Malay Alexander romance features ruling queens, of whom some are tyrants but others are good Muslims. *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain*'s narratives of Islamic warrior women open up imaginative space for a Southeast Asian queen to imagine herself in the martial mold of her father.

Like European women studied in this volume—such as those discussed in Elizabeth S. Cohen's and Alisha Rankin's essays—Taj al-Alam actively shaped ideas of temporality as she reconstructed the past to fit her own purposes. While there is not the space here for a full comparison, it is worth noting that Taj al-Alam's example resembles that of Elizabeth I of England. Anthony Reid suggests that the dynamic between the queen and the aristocracy was similar: 'The orangkaya found they could govern collectively with the queen as sovereign and referee, and there was something of the quality of Elizabethan England in the way they vied for her favour but accepted her eventual judgement between them.'[63] Sher Banu Khan contends that both queens used providentialism and religious authority to justify their reigns.[64] I would add that Taj al-Alam also resembles Elizabeth in their parallel claim to their father's authority. Like Taj al-Alam, Elizabeth had to assert her right to rule. In her case, Elizabeth had the stain of illegitimacy: after the execution of her mother Anne Boleyn, the 1536 Act of Parliament disinherited her though her father Henry VIII reinstated her in the succession in 1543. Whatever her private feelings might be, as queen Elizabeth took care to affirm her associations with her father publicly. Indeed, like Taj al-Alam, she shaped her public representation to emphasize her genealogical links to her father, whether in progresses or in paintings.[65] For both, their genealogical self-fashioning shaped the myth of queenship itself.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the myth of Acehnese queenship had taken such a hold that English visitors believed it to be practiced longer than it really was. Thomas Bowrey, present in Aceh when Taj al-Alam died in 1675, recounted erroneously that she had 'Reigned Ever Since the Death

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63   Reid, 'Female Roles', p. 641.

64   Khan, 'Men of Prowess', p. 214, n. 50, citing McLaren on Elizabeth, pp. 99, 105.

65   In *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation*, Frye notes the genealogical tableau in the 1559 published description of a progress, *The Queen's Majesty's Passage* (p. 33), while Louis Montrose's analysis of a late Elizabethan painting considers how it foregrounds her dynastic inheritance by placing her in parity with her father, even as late as 40 years into her reign (pp. 64–67).

of theire Tyrannicall Kinge, which was noe lesse then Sixty odde years.'[66] By then the erasure of Iskandar Thani's reign seemed complete. Later William Dampier noted,

> I think Mr Hackluit or Purchas, makes mention of a King here in our King James I. Time. But at least of later Years there has always been a Queen only, and the English who reside there, have been of the Opinion that these People have been governed by a Queen *ab Origine*; and from the antiquity of the present constitution, have formed notions, that the Queen of Sheba who came to Solomon was the Queen of this Country.[67]

Myth became more alluring than history. Perhaps the English's own distance from their own period of rule by a regnant queen led to this mythologizing. Such confusions about Acehnese monarchical succession testify to the power of Taj al-Alam's reworkings of genealogical memory.

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66   Bowrey, *Geographical Account*, p. 311. Bowrey's confusions seem to find a parallel in those of historians. Both Ito Takeshi and Sher Banu A.L. Khan, authors of dissertations on Aceh, give Taj al-Alam's dates as r. 1641–75; Khan notes that Taj al-Alam's successor Sultanah Nur Alam Naqiatuddin Syah reigned from 1675 to 1678. However, the Hakluyt series editor of his travel account, Sir Richard Carnac Temple, believes Taj al-Alam reigned from 1641 to 1669, as a letter from Fort St. George to Surat, 24 August 1669, has the following news: 'Wee have bin informed that the Queene of Achine being dead they are there embroyled in Civill warrs' (from *Factory Records*, Surat, No. 105, cited in Bowrey, *Geographical Account*, p. 311, n. 1). Temple concludes, 'The second queen died in 1675, as stated in the text, after a reign of only six (not sixty) years' (p. 311, n. 1).
67   Quoted in Bowrey, *Geographical Account*, p. 296, n. 6.

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7   Feminist queer temporalities in Aemilia Lanyer and Lucy Hutchinson

Penelope Anderson and Whitney Sperrazza

Abstract

The multiple temporalities of Aemilia Lanyer's 'The Description of Cooke-ham' and Lucy Hutchinson's *Order and Disorder* model a mutually galvaniz-ing rather than antagonistic relationship between feminist and queer theory. Lanyer's and Hutchinson's texts return to long-standing feminist concerns: female communities, the foundational stories of patriarchy, and a focus on desire both procreative and emphatically not. But the theories the texts themselves manifest do the work of queering—not as an alternative to, but in concert with—these feminist concerns. For Lanyer, this involves not only a focus on the eroticism of all-female communities, but also a lingering in a kiss oddly material and suspended in time. For Hutchinson, it concerns the way that the impossibility of procreative sex shows the needlessness of female harm.

Keywords: feminism; queer; lesbian; temporality; Aemilia Lanyer; Lucy Hutchinson

Our title responds to an adversarial moment in the fields of feminist and queer early modern studies: the long-standing charges that feminism's focus on bodies and the patriarchal family promote essentialism and heteronormativity and that queer theory's lack of attention to gender and misogyny replicates masculinist norms.[1] Of course, both feminism and queer theory offer more sophisticated theories than these condemnations allow: feminists have long understood both gender and the body as constructed, and queried any stable sense of identity; many queer scholars have under-taken thoroughgoing critiques of gendered systems that acknowledge the

[1]   Loomba and Sanchez, 'Introduction', p. 5.

workings of gendered oppression. But the antagonism remains. Following
Lee Edelman's 2004 rejection of futurity, feminist theory has sometimes
seemed, ironically, like the past to the future of queer theory. The fraught
theoretical debates around temporality and history (two distinct terms, as
Valerie Traub notes) associate queerness with subversion and innovation,
while feminism and its emphasis on women writers appear at least outdated
if not outright reactionary.[2]

In the wake of the 2016 election, though, we with feminist and queer
commitments have antagonists enough. Accordingly, we join with other
scholars in seeking 'a strategic collectivity that remains conscious of differ-
ence and incommensurability'.[3] How can we understand the relationship
between feminism and queer theory as not adversarial, nor substitutive,
but as coexisting and mutually galvanizing? In choosing the terms 'femi-
nist queer temporalities' we begin with certain stakes in these questions.
First, 'feminist' and 'queer' modify each other, insisting upon their linked
genealogies and intersecting agendas, but 'feminist' also precedes 'queer', in
acknowledgement of the institutional and activist histories of the theories
and their practice.[4] The plural 'temporalities' stresses multiple understand-
ings of time—a multiplicity of which history is a vital subcategory. We
characterize history as a desire for the past, but also for the past to *be* past.
Coupled with an awareness of historical distance is a desire to encounter
that past, but only insofar as that distance exists. History organizes relation-
ships among time, bodies, actions, and texts, but the literary texts—both,
importantly, poems—we analyze offer several other ways of organizing
those relationships.

The feminist and queer theory debates cluster around the relationship
between gender and sexuality, on the one hand, and between history and
temporality, on the other. The *Attending to Early Modern Women* conference
itself, and our work here, provide a reminder of gender's continuing relevance,
although its initial importance in works like Traub's *Renaissance of Lesbian-
ism*, Jonathan Goldberg's *Sodometries*, and Alan Bray's *Homosexuality in
Renaissance England* seems no longer at stake in queer critical discourse.[5] As

2   Freeman articulates this: 'Yet until recently dominant strains of queer theory have tended
to privilege the avant-garde. At one point in my life as a scholar of queer culture and theory, I
thought the point of queer was to be always ahead of actually existing social possibilities' (p.
xiii).
3   Loomba and Sanchez, 'Introduction', p. 7. See also Friedlander on a common approach,
though with less emphasis on feminism.
4   See Freccero on the 'queer feminist archive' of texts ('Tangents (of Desire)', p. 91).
5   Cf. Loomba and Sanchez, 'Introduction', p. 2.

Ania Loomba and Melissa E. Sanchez note in their important new collection *Rethinking Feminism in Early Modern Studies: Gender, Race, and Sexuality*, this omission of gender arises from a particular critical standpoint: 'We might hypothesize that the queer turn from historicism as well as feminism is an attempt to move out of the material and specific that both have (wrongly) come to represent.'[6] As Loomba and Sanchez reveal, the assignments of the material and the specific to historicism and feminism mean that sexuality (and especially queer studies) become the domain of theory. This not only downplays the theoretical interventions of feminism, but also obscures the knowledge that material forms and specific details can provide theoretical interventions.

The conflicts between history and temporality acquire their starkest forms in the distinction between the history of sexuality and queer theory. The historians of sexuality include Alan Bray, Valerie Traub, and Will Stockton, who emphasize the difference between past and present, stressing that 'the relations of sex to time are the effects of a historical process, not the preconditions to history'.[7] Queer theorists or 'unhistoricists' like Madhavi Menon and Jonathan Goldberg, in contrast, are 'invested in suspending determinate sexual and chronological differences while expanding the possibilities of the nonhetero, with all its connotations of sameness, similarity, proximity, and anachronism'.[8] One of the primary points of contention concerns teleology: queer theorists characterize history as teleological, and, after Edelman, tie it to a futurity embodied in the child of the patriarchal family. The rejection of child-oriented futurity often leads—though it need not do so—to a concomitant dismissal of feminist critiques oriented around the body and the family, thus reiterating the exclusion of gender.

Investigating multiple models of temporality helps disrupt this equation while showing that history need not be read teleologically. Historians of sexuality and queer theorists share definitions of multiple temporalities: Traub defines temporality as multiple, 'the various manifestations of time', and Goldberg incorporates this multiplicity into the term itself, defining 'multitemporality', following Michel Serres, as 'lived time'.[9] While cautioning that multiple temporalities are not wholly liberatory, Carolyn Dinshaw notes that 'we can use a queer historical awareness of multiplicity to expand

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6   Loomba and Sanchez, 'Feminism and the Burdens of History', p. 22.

7   Traub, 'New Unhistoricism', p. 31. See also her *Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns*.

8   Goldberg and Menon, 'Queering History', p. 1609. See Sanchez, in Stockton *et al.*, 'Disciplines', p. 108.

9   Traub, 'New Unhistoricism', p. 31; Goldberg, 'After Thoughts', p. 505.

our apprehension and experience of bodies in time—their pleasures, their agonies, their limits, their potentials—to contest and enlarge singular narratives of development'.[10] In her discussion of the shared but divergent experiences of multiple temporalities, Dinshaw reanimates a vital emphasis on the ways that bodies experience Serres's 'lived time'.

By emphasizing 'lived time', our thinking joins with Diana Henderson, who highlights 'gendered *experiences* and *events*' rather than identities.[11] 'Hailing an author's writings as "female", "homosexual", or even "queer"', Henderson argues, 'does far less to disrupt normative hierarchies than does pursuing with care which particular discursive conventions and departures such an author might perform in a given time and place'.[12] Harkening back to the acts versus identities debates that characterized early thinking about homosexual subjects, Henderson retains a focus on the 'material and specific' in 'particular discursive conventions and departures'. In one way, though, we want to push back against her formulation: for the texts we analyze, 'time and place' are not 'given', but instead themselves performed out of discursive conventions. As Ari Friedlander notes, 'just as there is no outside-text, there is no outside-time'.[13] This is precisely what makes Aemilia Lanyer's and Lucy Hutchinson's 'particular discursive conventions and departures' useful to a reimagination of feminist queer temporality: all three terms are under construction in their texts.

Aemelia [*née* Bassano] Lanyer (1569–1645) and Lucy [*née* Apsley] Hutchinson (1620–1681) share certain distinctions as writers, although their biographies diverge significantly.[14] Both wrote landmark religious poetry: Lanyer, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611), a volume of religious lyrics concluded by 'The Description of Cooke-ham', the first country house poem; Hutchinson, *Order and Disorder* (composed 1660s to 1670s), an epic retelling of Genesis that treats more of the biblical book than *Paradise Lost* does. Even here, differences begin to emerge: Lanyer published her original poems, the first seventeenth-century woman to do so; for Hutchinson, while the first five cantos of the epic appeared anonymously (often attributed to her brother) in 1679, the rest of the poem stayed in close-kept manuscripts until 2001. Confessional and social markers further distinguish the writers. Lanyer came from an Italian-Jewish family of court musicians, and after a

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10   Dinshaw, 'Temporalities', p. 122.
11   Henderson, 'Tempestuous Transitions', p. 64, original emphasis.
12   Ibid.
13   Friedlander, 'Desiring History', p. 11.
14   Hutson, 'Lanier', and Norbrook, 'Hutchinson'.

childhood spent on the margins of Queen Elizabeth's court and an extended affair with a noble lover became pregnant out of wedlock. An unhappy marriage to another court musician, designed to mitigate the scandal, plunged Lanyer into financial and social difficulties for the rest of her life. Her poetry, with its desire for patronage, emerges from this context. Hutchinson, in contrast, often stands as the paradigm of the virtuous Puritan wife, a characterization that owes much to her biography (first published, to popular acclaim, in 1806) of her husband, the Parliamentary Colonel John Hutchinson. While this depiction downplays the boldness of Hutchinson's thought—she also completed the first full English translation of the arguably atheist Lucretian epic *De rerum natura*—it does accurately suggest the strength of her happy marriage, which encompasses deep commitments both religious and republican. Amidst two different moments of political upheaval—the end of Elizabeth's reign and the English Civil Wars—Lanyer and Hutchinson thus offer a diversity of religious and social positions within intersecting poetic genres.

The plural temporalities at work in Lanyer's 'Cooke-ham' and Hutchinson's *Order and Disorder* articulate what Elizabeth Freeman describes in *Time Binds*: 'a kind of *temporal* transitivity that does not leave feminism, femininity, or other so-called anachronisms behind'.[15] From an analysis of twentieth-century literature and art, Freeman argues for the usefulness of 'outmoded masculinities and femininities from which usable pasts may be extracted'.[16] Her theory of 'temporal drag' 'treat[s] these texts and their formal work as theories of their own, interventions upon both critical theory and historiography'.[17] Looking back to much earlier texts, we find a similar conjunction of self-awareness and critical resource in Lanyer's and Hutchinson's texts: each offers alternative models of temporality that critics can take up.

Abandoned modes, strategies, and investments offer a useful caveat to Traub's characterization of historicist work on gender, race, and sexuality as a way to 'catch modern formulations in their moment of inception, when their terms are still being worked out'.[18] Traub's focus on the beginnings of 'modern formulations' is important: it helps us to understand the world in which we live more fully. But diverse modes of temporality in early modern texts also enable us to catch formulations that never become modern—and

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15   Freeman, *Time Binds*, p. 63, original emphasis.
16   Freeman, *Time Binds*, p. xxiii.
17   Ibid., p. xvii.
18   Traub, 'Afterword,' p. 244.

these outmoded formulations still have something to teach us. They can help us, in Dinshaw's words, 'to contest and enlarge singular narratives of development'.[19] The interpretive frameworks we identify within early modern texts are necessarily shaped by our methodologies, our 'scholarly pasts', and our ways of perceiving, but the early modern texts' frameworks are not the same as our methodologies—and we are much more interested in the former than the latter.[20] The disconcerting, anachronistic temporalities in Lanyer's and Hutchinson's texts, which align neither with a clear teleology nor with recognizably modern forms, help us to navigate a way through the impasse between feminist and queer theory.

Both in choosing women writers as our subject and in foregrounding gender in their works, we align ourselves methodologically with the long tradition of feminist criticism. Lanyer's and Hutchinson's texts, and our readings of them, return to long-standing feminist concerns: female communities, the foundational stories of patriarchy, and a focus on desire both procreative and emphatically not. But the theories the texts themselves manifest do the work of queering—not as an alternative to, but in concert with—those feminist concerns. For Lanyer, this involves not only a focus on the eroticism of all-female communities, but also a lingering in a kiss oddly material and suspended in time. For Hutchinson, it concerns the way that the impossibility of procreative sex shows the needlessness of female harm.

The feminist and queer configurations of Lanyer and Hutchinson manifest through their poems' multiple temporalities. Some of the temporalities operating in Lanyer's 'Cooke-ham' and Hutchinson's *Order and Disorder* are neither coterminous with their historical moment of composition nor with the historical moments described in the poems. For Lanyer, one of those multiple temporalities is a lingering in an action that cannot be repeated without destruction, a drawing-out of poetic time in order to maintain queer intimacy; for Hutchinson, it concerns a needless repetition of an action that does not take place, only for that non-action to generate queered reproductive time. Each of these temporalities, to a twenty-first-century reader, feels out of time: Lanyer's female eroticism suspended in memory and the garden; *Order and Disorder*'s impossible dilation of reproduction resolved through divine intervention. These disturbances to plausible order are also instructive, reminding us to look for a time 'when normal wasn't', as Karma Lochrie puts it.[21] The anachronisms and recurses of Lanyer's

19   Dinshaw, 'Temporalities', p. 122.
20   Sanchez, 'This Field,' p. 142.
21   Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, title.

and Hutchinson's times generate queer temporality, in Annamarie Jagose's formulation: 'a mode of inhabiting time that is attentive to the recursive eddies and back-to-the-future loops that often pass undetected or uncherished beneath the official narrations of the linear sequence that is taken to structure normative life'.[22] By going back to the past of early modernity but also back to the literary present of poetic texts, our analysis of Lanyer and Hutchinson both detects and cherishes the irruptions of a past that does not understand itself as past, that insists on its own recurrent relevance. The multiple temporalities of Lanyer's and Hutchinson's texts open up feminist and queer possibilities in the past, while offering new models for queer and feminist desires and politics in the current moment.

The longing touch of the past: Aemilia Lanyer's 'Description of Cooke-ham'

Lanyer's 'The Description of Cooke-ham' (1611) marks its relation to time with its very first word: 'Farewell (sweet Cooke-ham) where I first obtain'd/ grace from that grace where perfit grace remain'd' (1–2).[23] Beginning with 'farewell', which repeats within the first ten lines, Lanyer frames her poem as an act of leave-taking—a farewell to both the space of Cooke-ham and the intimate female community it harbors. In Lanyer's actual or imagined memories of this country estate, only Lady Margaret (the poem's dedicatee, Countess of Cumberland), Lady Anne (Countess of Dorset), and the poet herself inhabit Cooke-ham's space. Following Barbara Kiefer Lewalski's influential work, scholars often focus on the poem's 'imaginative vision of an enduring female community' and how the three women's relationship forms the basis for Lanyer's 'seventeenth-century feminist voice'.[24] The sense of female intimacy created among these women is bolstered by that between the women and the space itself, such that Cooke-ham's landscape becomes a key figure in the model of female community scholars glean from the poem.[25] As we read about the 'pleasures' and 'delights' these women

22   Jagose, 'Feminism's Queer Theory', p. 158.
23   All citations of Lanyer's text refer to Susanne Woods's edition and will be noted by line number in the body of the essay.
24   Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England,* p. 241; see also Phillippy, Mueller, and the two articles by Bowen. Goldberg, *Desiring Women Writing*, Larson, Holmes, and Greenstadt build on this feminist work in order to read Lanyer's text within an early modern queer framework.
25   See Coch, 'An Arbor of One's Own?'

experience at Cooke-ham, however, the opening 'farewell' lingers, disrupting the poet's 'sweet memor[ies]' with a reminder of their ending.

The leave-taking and dissolution of the female community glimpsed in that first 'farewell' occupy much of the poem, inspiring its frequent classification as 'an elegy for a feminine, Christian paradise'.[26] The first half of 'Cooke-ham' focuses on Lady Margaret's arrival in the spring, and the poet recounts how 'each plant, each floure, each tree/ set forth their beauties' to welcome her' (34). Then, the poem shifts—'sweet Cooke-ham, whom these Ladies leave,/ I now must tell the griefe you did conceave/ at their departure' (127–29)—and Lanyer describes Lady Margaret's farewell and the 'cold griefe' that accompanies her absence (194). Critical work on 'Cooke-ham' often references this linear temporal trajectory, beginning with spring and Lady Margaret's arrival, and ending with winter and Lady Margaret's farewell. According to this linear trajectory, Cooke-ham's female community is 'fated to disintegrate from the beginning of the valediction, its harmonies portrayed as joys of a passing season'.[27] Mapping the loss of female community onto the poem's seasonal arc, however, not only connects both to a linear temporality that ultimately becomes unproductive, but also suggests that the loss of female community is as inevitable as the changing seasons.[28] Such readings echo the teleological impulses we aim to resist and, more detrimentally, fix Lanyer's complicated model of female intimacy as 'a phenomenon of the past which can be discussed only in retrospect'.[29] By taking this linear trajectory for granted as *the* temporal framework of the poem, 'Cooke-ham's' more complicated and nuanced temporal model goes unnoticed.[30] Starting her poem with a glimpse of its ending, Lanyer rejects linear temporality in favor of a model where the 'farewell' can linger.

If we look past the seemingly dominant linear trajectory that culminates in 'sorrow', 'cold griefe', and the 'desolation' of female community, what alternative temporality might 'Cooke-ham' offer (188; 194; 203)? Rather than finding in Lanyer's poem what James Holstun finds in early modern male-authored poetry—'the passage of lesbian desire into an inarticulate silence'—we want to consider how Lanyer's palpable longing for female

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26   Beilin, p. 182. See also Hodgson.

27   Coch, 'An Arbor of One's Own?', p. 108.

28   Scholars often discuss the poem's linear trajectory as an analogy to the fall of Eden. See, for instance, Beilin, *Redeeming Eve*.

29   Holstun, 'Will you Rent our Ancient Love Asunder?', p. 837.

30   One notable, recent exception is Bowen, who in 'Rape of Jesus' unpacks the political subconscious of Lanyer's text and argues that 'the paradox of the liberation in the past that remains in the future [...] is part of the story *Salve Deus* wants to tell' (pp. 109–10).

intimacy becomes legible as a temporal structure that insists on the past's recurrent relevance.[31] 'Cooke-ham' is saturated with and structured by longing, in Freeman's sense that 'produces modes of both belonging and "being-long," or persisting over time'.[32] Lanyer's longing for 'an enduring female community', in Lewalski's influential phrase, suggests a future that looks askance at the barren, unproductive landscape represented by the poem's dominant narrative.[33] At the same time as that longing invites us to consider a more vital future, Lanyer's longing for the past and the heightened materiality of her memories insist that we attend to these lapsed experiences. Lanyer's constant turning back demonstrates her desire for a narrative of female community—a feminist herstory—and her desire for the past itself, for the time and space of those earlier moments. Lanyer's longing becomes most palpable in perhaps the most critically well-trodden moment of this poem: Lady Margaret's farewell kiss to the 'stately tree'. The tree kiss has garnered much critical interest, particularly since Elaine Beilin labeled it 'the single dramatic event of the poem'.[34] In an act of scholarly lingering, we return to the kiss in order to consider how longing becomes central to the poetic structure of Lanyer's memories and the desires that emerge within them.

In the final movement of this poem, Lanyer recounts how the Countess gives the oak tree a 'chaste, yet loving kisse' as she says farewell to the 'sad creatures' of Cooke-ham's landscape.

> Forgetting not to turne and take your leave
> Of these sad creatures, powrelesse to receive
> Your favour, when with griefe you did depart,
>   [.   .   .   .   .   .   .]
> But specially the love of that faire tree,
> The first and last you did vouchsafe to see:
> In which it pleas'd you oft to take the ayre,
> With noble *Dorset*, then a virgin faire:
> Where many a learned Booke was read and skand
> To this faire tree, taking me by the hand,
> You did repeat the pleasures which had past,
> Seeming to grieve they could no longer last.

31   Holstun, 'Will you Rent our Ancient Love Asunder?', p. 836.
32   Freeman, *Time Binds*, p. 13.
33   Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England*, p. 241.
34   Beilin, *Redeeming Eve,* p. 205.

And with a chaste, yet loving kisse tooke leave,
Of which sweet kisse I did it soone bereave:
Scorning a senceless creature should possesse
So rare a favour, so great happinesse.
No other kisse it could receive from me,
For feare to give backe what it tooke of thee:
So I ingratefull Creature did deceive it,
Of that which you vouchsaft in love to leave it.

(151–53; 157–72)

Lady Margaret's kiss takes on a heightened materiality in Lanyer's representation—the 'chaste, yet loving kiss' is something the poet can steal from the tree's surface. In these lines, Lanyer simultaneously offers a material, embodied account of both women kissing the 'stately oak' and an immaterial, elusive gesture of desire. Within 'Cooke-ham's' linear narrative, the tree kiss functions as a temporal rupture between the intimacy preceding this moment, and the solitude that permeates its aftermath. Before the tree kiss, Lanyer depicts a vibrant female community, reflecting how Lady Margaret would often 'take the ayre' near the tree with 'noble *Dorset*' (159–60). Just before the kiss, Lady Margaret takes the poet 'by the hand' and leads her to the tree where they 'repeat the pleasures which had past' (162–63). Notably, Lanyer emphasizes that the women's past pleasures are 'repeat[ed]', not merely recounted verbally or remembered fondly. Within the act of leave-taking, and 'seeming to grieve' that their pleasures 'could no longer last', Lady Margaret and our poet enact a 'temporal transitivity' that pulls their past into their present.[35] After the tree kiss, these scenes of intimacy shift into scenes of 'cold griefe' as the poet and tree are left alone (194). The tree becomes a 'senceless creature', the poet an 'ingratefull creature' as she deprives the tree of the kiss and leaves it 'most forlorne' (175). Coinciding with the end of 'pleasures past' and the start of Lady Margaret's absence from Cooke-ham, the glimpse of homoerotic desire evident in the kiss exchange functions as the fulcrum that shifts the scene of female intimacy and community into one of solitude.

Left unnoted by an account of the tree kiss within 'Cooke-ham's' linear trajectory is the strange temporality of this moment, and how that temporality frames its elusive erotics. As a material intermediary between the touching of lips, the tree necessitates a temporal delay in the bodily workings of desire. Thus, the heightened 'temporal drag' of this episode becomes inextricable

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35   Freeman, *Time Binds,* p. 63.

from the somatic desire contained within these lines.[36] The somatic desire the poet demonstrates as she steals the kiss queers the poem's feminist impulses. As we witness the poet's longing not just for an intimate female sanctuary, but also for bodily contact with Lady Margaret, the tree kiss becomes a poetic rendering of what Carla Freccero calls 'femininity's queer relation to touch'.[37] The poet's kiss is 'non- but not anti-normative', both the culmination of her desperate longing to belong within Cooke-ham's female community, and a glimpse across time at a possible gesture of homoerotic desire.[38] After this briefest glimpse of unfulfilled homoerotic desire, Lanyer describes the solitude that follows as a barrenness: the arbors and trees 'look bare and desolate', 'green tresses' turn to 'frosty gray' (193), and the birds 'neither sing, nor chirp', but instead stand on 'some bare spray' and 'warble forth their sorrow' (186–68). This is, as Beilin observes, 'an unregenerate world, filled with images of death'.[39]

The bleak future these descriptions outline, though, is constantly tempered by Lanyer's palpable longing for the past, manifested poetically in her memories of the estate. Throughout 'Cooke-ham', the lingering impulse presses back against the linear time of the tree kiss and its function as a rupture between past and present. As the poet moves into her account of Lady Margaret's farewell to the tree, the recounted memories of a deeper past intrude on the Countess's farewell: memories of Margaret and Lady Anne reading beneath the tree, of Anne's days as a 'virgin faire', and of the repeated past 'pleasures' between Margaret and the poet. Past and present seem to run together as Lanyer presents coterminous scenes from then and now. Lanyer lingers narratively within these memories, unfolding the successive kisses over the course of eleven lines, and dilating the poetic time of the tree kiss episode. In the lines surrounding Lady Margaret's kiss, we witness both the brutal consequences of this event as it exists within linear time and the poet's desire to delay that linear momentum, lingering within the pleasures afforded by nonlinear temporality and an ever-present past.

The present participle verb clauses at the start, middle, and end of the tree kiss sequence formally enact these dual temporal impulses, muddling our sense of linear chronology and drawing out the action occurring in these lines. Lanyer uses this formal technique throughout 'Cooke-ham', but the concentration of participle clauses here takes on a heightened significance because they serve as a structuring mechanism for the poem's most explicit

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36   Ibid., p. 62.
37   Freccero, 'Tangents (of Desire)', p. 95.
38   Ibid., p. 99.
39   Beilin, *Redeeming Eve*, p. 206.

gesture of desire. For instance, in the line where Margaret leads the poet to the tree—'to this faire tree, taking me by the hand'—the present participle 'taking' seems to function as a verb describing the Countess's action, but because of its position in the line it acts as an adjective modifying the initial clause. As both verb (driving the action forward) and adjective (looking back to modify a previous utterance) this specific moment of female bodily contact hovers syntactically between then and now. The syntactical transformation of an active verb into a lingering adjective formally enacts the poet's longing to linger over this moment, and longing emerges as both the desire to belong and the desire to be long. Rather than an easy chronological movement, these lines offer a model of temporal drag, 'retrogression, delay, and the pull of the past on the present'.[40]

The dual temporal impulses at work in the tree kiss—the linear momentum of Lady Margaret's leave-taking and the poet's palpable desire to linger within the moments before the leave-taking—perform a temporal rupture in the service of temporal lingering. In the midst of the poem's recounted memories and the constant turning back to past moments, we witness the poet's abrupt withholding: 'no other kisse it could receive from me,/ for feare to give backe what it tooke of thee' (169–70). An abrupt end to the repetition and turning that structure the rest of Lady Margaret's leave-taking, here the poet withholds her kiss from the tree—she refuses to repeat, to turn back and kiss the tree again—in order to maintain the affective structures of Cooke-ham's female community. The temporal rupture of the tree kiss becomes a way to linger in the elusive erotics of this memory. The homoerotic impulses of this moment and the temporal lingering the tree kiss enacts in both its content and its form offer a model of feminist queer temporality contingent upon desiring bodies and the desire to hover between past and present.

When scholars argue for a narrative of queer intimacy in Lanyer's 'Cooke-ham', they frequently read the tree kiss as a material locus of queer desire. Read as a lesbian 'substitute for the phallus' or, more explicitly, as a 'dildo', the poem's rendering of queer desire consequently remains within this singular moment.[41] Within the strange temporality of the tree kiss episode, we argue in contrast, the tree pulls desire into queer time rather than functioning as an object of queer desire. The temporal structure necessitated by this material intermediary, coupled with Lanyer's narrative lingering in this moment, refigures bodily desire. Reading the consecutive touch of Lady Margaret's and the poet's lips on the tree as a moment of queer intimacy 'privileg[es]

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40   Freeman, *Time Binds*, p. 62.
41   Goldberg, *Desiring Women*, p. 40; Greenstadt, p. 77.

presence where no presence is to be found', as Freccero cautions against.[42] Rather, Lanyer's material memory of the tree kiss figures 'a non-touching of what is in effect untouchable'.[43] Precisely by not touching the tree again, Lanyer preserves desire in a state of longing.

The link between the tree kiss episode and the poem's articulation of longing gains traction when read alongside a much less explicit moment of desire and tangential bodily contact later in the poem. Well after the Countess seems to have left the space, Lanyer includes two lines that turn back to the moment of leave-taking, again lingering within the specificity of that moment when the embodied, vibrant space becomes empty. 'Each brier, each bramble, when you went away', she recounts, 'caught fast your clothes, thinking to make you stay' (197–98). As nature catches Lady Margaret's clothing, Lanyer echoes her highly material rendering of the kiss with a materialization of longing. The fact that this moment comes after the tree kiss, after the moment in the poem most saturated with longing, invites us to think about the erotics of this later instance of bodily contact, particularly the erotics of 'catching' or grasping. This is not quite a 'tangential touch' as Freccero defines the phrase—'not a secure conjoining of body parts, not a hand in hand, but a glancing, feather-light[44]—but instead a touch more barbed and demanding. In the 'catching' grasp of nature on the Countess's clothes, the past and same-sex desire refuse to relinquish their hold.

Measurably different than the 'faire greene leaves' and lush 'fruits' of Cooke-ham's landscape at the poem's opening, 'briers' and 'brambles' are the things of a dead landscape. Yet, as they catch and grasp at the Countess, even this barren landscape becomes activated by the poet's longing. In these final lines, the poet is doubly out of time—out of time because she lingers in this anachronistic past and out of time to keep Lady Margaret in the space in order to maintain their intimacy. Figured as briers and brambles, the clutch of anachronistic temporality here is both stinging and unavoidable. Unlike the oak tree, which holds particular meaning and memories for Lady Margaret and the poet, Cooke-ham's briers and brambles will catch on anyone brushing past them. Reading this as a universalizing final gesture of longing reveals the possibilities beneath the 'dust and cobwebs' of 'Cooke-ham's' closing lines (202). As Lady Margaret takes her final farewell, and the briers and brambles catch fast to her clothes, a piece of Cooke-ham lingers with her.

42   Freccero, 'Tangents (of Desire)', p. 94.
43   Ibid., p. 93.
44   Ibid., p. 94.

The endangerment of the matriarch: Lucy Hutchinson's *Order and Disorder*

If the tree kiss of Lanyer's 'Cooke-ham' figures a desire that lingers without action in order not to erase the moment of desire, the Abraham and Sarah episodes of Lucy Hutchinson's biblical epic *Order and Disorder* (1679) repeat in response to a desire that seems to work to no purpose at all. In two episodes of what biblical scholars call 'the endangerment of the matriarch', Genesis 12.10–20 and Genesis 20, Abraham pretends that Sarah is only his sister, not his wife, upon their arrival in a new country, due to his fear that the rulers will kill him in order to possess Sarah.[45] Ironically, neither of these episodes is necessary: the monarchs both desire Sarah but do not claim her, in rare instances of good kingly behavior in Hutchinson's epic. What purpose do they serve, then, in the larger structure of the biblical poem and its retelling of Genesis?

Scholars of Hutchinson identify patterns in her biblical epic that speak to these concerns. Elizabeth Scott-Baumann and Sarah C. E. Ross emphasize the ways that *Order and Disorder*'s transformation of the biblical text and genre, respectively, create alternative temporalities, whether through the exemplary application of glosses or through the use of 'a meditational mode of biblical verse to enter into digressive, analogic, and emblematic meditations on contemporary British history'.[46] Both Scott-Baumann and Ross stress Hutchinson's engagement with contemporary politics in her use of biblical history and its applications. As Erin Murphy writes, 'the unarticulated connection between the marginal text and the main text allows for a simultaneous representation of historically distinct moments in time, which emphasizes the non-linear quality of sacred history.'[47] Murphy's foregrounding of the 'non-linear quality' of certain kinds of biblical time itself (primarily typology, in Murphy's analysis) highlights the important point that both biblical time and the use Hutchinson makes of it in her poem model multiple temporalities.[48] Murphy further links Hutchinson's temporal manipulations to reproduction.[49] Our work builds upon all these

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45   The motif repeats, with a few alterations, when Abraham and Sarah's son Isaac tells the same lie about his wife Rebecca (Gen 26.6–11).

46   Ross, *Women, Poetry, and Politics*, p. 177.

47   Murphy, *Familial Forms,* p. 128.

48   For further discussions of Hutchinson's relationship to exemplarity and typology, see Anderson, 'Lucy Hutchinson's Sodom', and Shook, 'Pious Fraud'.

49   Murphy, *Familial Forms*, p. 123. For Hutchinson's maternity challenging patriarchy, see Miller, *Engendering the Fall,* pp. 107–35. For Hutchinson elevating intellectual concerns above

scholars' insightful arguments, while considering something they do not: the way that these temporalities and their peculiar reproductive time enable configurations not only feminist but also queer.

What can 'the endangerment of the matriarch' tell us about the relationship between feminist and queer theories? The answers to this question speak to some of the central affordances of Hutchinson for feminist queer temporalities: the repetition of the episodes, the introduction of unsettling allusions into the text, and the explicit didactic framing of the poem. In their willingness to risk a woman's physical safety and bodily integrity in order to preserve a man's life and avoid confronting male desires, the episodes highlight some of the central patriarchal issues that feminism critiques. At the same time, the episodes introduce both elements critiqued by queer theory and patterns usually taken as queer. The former concerns the reproductive futurity that has shaped much queer theory since Edelman's *No Future*: Abraham and Sarah offer a peculiar—a queer—take on this, since God delays the conception of their long-promised child past ordinary reproductive time (the 90-year-old Sarah becomes pregnant with Isaac after the second subterfuge). Abraham and Sarah's disrupted reproduction links them to queer sexuality, as do the repeated haltings of the rulers' desire for Sarah—desire rendered unproductive, unreproductive. The fact that Abraham and Sarah are half-siblings also contravenes modern reproductive wisdom.[50] Two factors combine to straighten out this queerness, God's blessing and the temporal distance of the biblical text.

Hutchinson, however, refuses to tidy up the incidents by enfolding them within Abraham's blessing from God.[51] The first episode, at Canto 11.41–90, frames the subterfuge as a failing of Abraham's. The narrator begins 'But there his former resolution failed,/ And fear of death above his faith prevailed.'[52] Following a long description of Abraham's steadfast faith in God throughout dire circumstances, these lines clearly present the choice to conceal the marriage as indicating the limits of Abraham's ability to trust God: his faith flounders on the double test of the 'lustful men' and Sarah's beauty (*OD* 11.47). Despite the narrator's criticism, Hutchinson's

biological ones, see Anderson, *Friendship's Shadows,* pp. 125–28.

50   Unlike the biblical text, which leaves open the possibility that Abraham lies about Sarah being his sister to excuse his behavior, Hutchinson reiterates their sibling relationship in both episodes (*NOAB* Gen 20.12, n.; *OD* 11.44–47, 14.213–17).

51   In contrast, see Wilcher, 'Lucy Hutchinson and *Genesis*' (p. 36), who reads Hutchinson as justifying Abraham's behavior.

52   *OD* 11.41–42. All citations of Hutchinson's text refer to David Norbrook's edition and hereafter will be noted by canto and line numbers in the body of the essay.

literary emphases at first make Abraham's choice look correct. The poem describes Sarah's effect on the pharaoh:

> Upon her looks he feasted his glad sight
> And drunk down love's infection with delight.
> The more she saw him burn, the more she blazed,
> For blushes which her guilty fear had raised
> The lustre of her beauty did augment
> And more attractions to his eyes present.
>
> (*OD* 11.61–66)

The passage vividly depicts Sarah's danger at court, with its language of 'love's infection', 'burn[ing]', and 'blaz[ing]'. The echoes of rape narratives, like Lucretia's, in which chaste beauty spurs desire, further heighten this effect, suggesting that the reader knows how the story will end. Importantly, though, the 'blushes' that inflame desire originate not in maidenly chastity (though Sarah is chaste), but rather in 'her guilty fear' due to the concealment. The scheme designed to keep Abraham safe—he worries that 'I shall be killed that they may seize on thee'—threatens Sarah (*OD* 11.50). The concealment not only creates the opportunity for desire, but also renders the body itself desirable.

While the vividness of the threat to Sarah almost makes Abraham's actions seem justifiable, the pharaoh's surprisingly honorable behavior reveals their superfluity. Although 'with rage as erst with love he burned', the pharaoh nevertheless contents himself with a sharp verbal rebuke: '"What madness," said he, "did thy thoughts inspire/ To kindle in me this unquenched desire?"' (*OD* 11.82–84). In an epic riddled with corrupt kings (with even Noah chastised for drunkenness), the pharaoh acts ethically, not only releasing the couple without punishment but also letting them retain their wealth.[53] The language shows the traces of desire's intensity, with 'kindle' recalling the burning of the previous passage and the alliterative line '"lovely object of my lawless love"' heightening the formal parallels to other narratives in which men behave dishonorably (*OD* 11.83, 90). The pharaoh's very reasonableness, however, casts the motivation for the entire episode into disarray: more clearly than ever, it seems, this subterfuge arises from Abraham's fear and lack of faith.

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53   Norbrook, 'Order' (pp. xl–xli), cites Abraham as an exception to Hutchinson's critique of monarchs.

It is all the more surprising, then, that Abraham repeats his actions in the second endangerment of the matriarch episode.[54] The much longer second episode compresses the development of desire, the primary subject of the first episode: 'Abimelech the king her beauty fired:/ But not a common love within him burned,/ The excess of this into a fever turned' (*OD* 14.32–34). Briefly evoking the earlier episode in the shared language of fire and burning, the second story focuses on two elements: an extended description of the slumber in which Abimelech learns of his error, and an exploration of the two men's responsibility for their actions (unlike the focus on Sarah's bodily guilt in the first episode).

The allegory of sleep, like the evocation of rape narratives in the first episode, introduces a literary delay into the biblical narrative. The sleep passage closely parallels and sometimes simply translates Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 11.592–625 (*OD* 14.43–85). Toward the end of the interposition, Hutchinson introduces the idea of desire, which does not occur in this passage in Ovid: sleep, the messenger declares, 'thy pleasing charms the vexèd senses bind,/ Thou calm'st the rages of unquenched desires' (*OD* 14.80–81).[55] Further expanding Ovid, Hutchinson catalogues sleep's effect upon 'the student', 'industrious matrons', and 'the eager gazing lover', among others (*OD* 14.109, 114, 118). Hutchinson also incorporates an Ovidian figure from another metamorphosis into this one: 'Sad Philomel abruptly ceased her songs/ And, sleeping, lost the memory of her wrongs' (*OD* 14.97–98). The mention of Philomel's 'wrongs' means that it cannot be solely the nightingale who falls asleep, but must also be the raped woman; this allusion forges an additional connection to the prior incident. By extending her description of sleep with figures both biblical and seventeenth-century, Hutchinson shifts the temporal meaning of the Ovidian interruption: the allusion links back to its classical precedent, but it does not stay there. By drawing in additional figures, Hutchinson emphasizes the continuing force of what does *not* happen in this story; by evoking contemporary students, matrons, and lovers, she suggests it *could* happen in her own time. The interposition dilates the biblical text, in an act of lingering over desire not unlike Lanyer's tree kiss.

Despite its length, the second episode seems to serve no greater purpose than the first, for King Abimelech, like the pharaoh, behaves honorably. He challenges both God, asking '"shall then my innocence/ Suffer like guilt?"' (*OD* 14.154–55) and Abraham:

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54 Scholars often attribute this repetition to the combination of Elohistic and Yahwistic sources, but the repetition of request depends on the earlier incident. See *NOAB* Gen 20.1–18, n.

55 The Ovidian interruption draws out *Order and Disorder*'s classicism, which its preface rejects.

'[...] Our fault proceeded from our ignorance,
But thou didst willfully our sins advance;
And sure, though I bear all th'affliction,
Yet thou hast done what ought not to be done.'
Abraham, whom justly thus the king accused, [...]

<div align="right">(OD 14.197–201)</div>

Abimelech draws a sharp distinction between his own unwitting misdeeds and Abraham's intention to deceive, his 'willful' 'advance' of their 'sins'. By labeling Abraham 'justly' 'accused', the narrator affirms this contrast, and Abraham's guilt.

Pushed to account for his actions, Abraham first repeats his reasons from the earlier episode and then reframes his behavior in a surprising way:

[...] whensoe'er we came to any place
She would the sister's title only own
Nor let our marriage be to strangers known.
This our concealment, though unlucky here,
Proceeded not from malice but from fear.

<div align="right">(OD 14.222–26)</div>

These lines take the repetition of the act and convert it to a general principle, at every time ('whensoe'er'), in 'any place'. More startlingly still, Abraham extrapolates the general rule for behavior by misrepresenting his earlier actions: when he names the strategy 'unlucky *here*', he overwrites the fact that precisely the same thing happened the first time.[56] In Abraham's framing, his pretense that Sarah is not his wife has 'unlucky' effects—plagues, widespread infertility—only this once. But Hutchinson refuses this misinterpretation, both through the linguistic and formal parallels between the two episodes already established, and through the continuing of those parallels to the episode's conclusion, when Abimelech uses much of the pharaoh's language: '"hide/ The flames which may beget unlawful fire:/ 'Tis easier to prevent than quench desire./ All would not, as I do, return thee pure" [...]' (*OD* 14.244–47). 'Flames' and 'fire' evoke the burning of the prior episode, while 'unlawful' parallels 'lawless' and 'quench desire' recalls 'unquenched desire' (*OD* 14.245

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56   Gen 21.13 includes the generality but not the characterization that only this instance had negative results: 'And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother.'

and 11.63; 14.245 and 11.90; 14.246 and 11.84). The linguistic insistence on the likeness of the two episodes undercuts Abraham's use of the first episode as a precedent while rejecting its lesson. The threatened but averted rape returns in "'All would not, as I do, return thee pure'"—but again, the irony is that both kings do (*OD* 14.247). The explicit lesson drawn from these events in fact applies to neither.

In the Abraham and Sarah episodes, Hutchinson's interventions within the biblical text tend to undercut Abraham's wisdom and authority: both his motivations for his actions and the conclusions he draws from his behavior ring false in the context of the parallels Hutchinson forges between the two episodes and the allusions she introduces to them. Hutchinson's choices stand out all the more starkly because she rarely valorizes kings like the two who desire Sarah but do not assault her. Notably, too, Hutchinson does not offer here the explicit didactic readings in which she often engages elsewhere, such as the lengthy interpretations of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac.[57] There, she stresses that 'religion changes styles of things,/ Making the same act diverse as it springs/ From man's own nature, or obedience/ To God's command to murder innocence' (*OD* 15.131–34). The endangerment of the matriarch episodes open themselves to readerly interpretation, without a direct explanation offered; the literary techniques of allusion and repetition thus frame their meaning more strongly.[58]

And yet a further innovation that Hutchinson appends to the second episode seems to overturn all these meanings. For she makes Isaac's long-promised birth consequent upon the deception:

> This just reproof did their frail fear procure.
> Then Abraham prayed to God with fervent zeal,
> And, by his prayer moved, the Lord did heal
> The king with all his concubines whom he
> For Sarah's sake plagued with sterility.
> To comfort their disgrace, now Sarah's womb
> Grew pregnant with the promised fruit in whom
> A blessing was designed for the whole earth,
> And the ninth moon disclosed the joyful birth.
>
> (*OD* 14.248–56)

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57   On Hutchinson's use of the biblical text, see Scott-Baumann, *Forms of Engagement*, and Ross, *Women, Poetry, and Politics*.

58   This is a literary version of Scott-Baumann's argument about marginal biblical glosses (p. 186).

In Genesis, Isaac's conception and birth occur in a separate chapter from the deception of Abimelech; Hutchinson introduces the idea of causality linking the two. But sterility exists throughout the story, both explicitly, as the affliction visited upon the king and his concubines to punish the king's desire for Sarah, and implicitly, as the untold secret that would render other concealment unnecessary. That is, in each endangerment of the matriarch episode the rulers desire Sarah honorably, as a wife; in each case, had they known of her sterility, they would have abandoned her. The lines do not, however, posit Sarah's fertility as a reward for her chastening into greater virtue, instead resolutely insisting upon the wrongness of the deception, 'their disgrace'.

In the Abraham and Sarah episodes, Hutchinson introduces causality as the outcome of unnecessary, illogical action, but the consequence arises from emotional recompense, 'to comfort their disgrace.' Successful conception depends upon the acknowledgment of the endangerment of the matriarch as illogical and unnecessary. In her insistence both on the faultiness of the precedent and the affective dimensions of the causal connection, Hutchinson undermines the principles of teleology: 'A teleological perspective views the present as a necessary outcome of the past—the point toward which all prior events were trending.'[59] Despite the long-awaited promise of Abraham and Sarah's child Isaac, Hutchinson's innovations within the story manage to present his conception and birth not as a logical fulfillment of a past promise, but rather as an emotional recompense to an arbitrary event. For one of the primary origin stories of the patriarchy, this is a remarkable innovation.

These features also explicitly link Hutchinson's narrative to other queer forms of sexuality, such as Annamarie Jagose's influential formulation of lesbian sexuality:

> both the reification and the hierarchical valuation of heterosexuality and homosexuality are achieved as if through nothing more than the uninvested narrative mechanisms of numerical order or chronological progression. As second is to first, so the cultural weighting of heterosexuality as first-order and homosexuality as second-order is secured through the self-licensing logic of sequence. These cultural narrativizations of sexual sequence produce the very hierarchies they are taken to describe. In this book I argue that the mechanisms of sexual hierarchisation produce the lesbian as the figure most comprehensively worked over by sequence, secondary and inconsequential in all senses.[60]

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59   Traub, 'New Unhistoricism', p. 21.
60   Jagose, *Inconsequence*, p. ix.

Hutchinson's narrative does not produce what it promises, except by the means of a roundabout emotional recompense predicated upon the failure of the episodes themselves. But this failure is instructive, because it rewrites the patriarchal narrative with a focus on the endangerment of the matriarch (asserting the values of feminism), while—at the same time and consequently—it offers a model of sexuality that has all the markers of lesbianism—inconsequentiality, repetition, undifferentiated figures—except for the simultaneity of two female bodies. Given that last, rather vital, caveat, what use is it to think of the queer networks of desire amongst Abraham, Sarah, and the two rulers as lesbian? Simply, it upends the hierarchy Jagose rightly critiques: this patriarchal origin story starts with a sexuality characterized by repetitions of inconsequential, non-reproductive sexuality. Procreation can only occur, patriarchy can only begin, 'to comfort their disgrace', with an emotional recompense that acknowledges, indeed depends upon, the recognition that the patriarch's willingness to endanger the matriarch is wrong. Hutchinson's narrative locates a form of lesbian sexuality as the precursor to all of human history.

Conclusion

Lanyer's tree kiss and Hutchinson's lesbian potentiality both illuminate ways of living with time but not in it. Lanyer demonstrates the possibility but also the price of a return to memory: the speaker cannot repeat the tree kiss without the risk of losing it. Hutchinson predicates the start of history upon an event that did not happen, that did not need to happen. Both poems model anachronistic temporalities that offer a way out of the deadlocks of the feminist and queer theory debates. By exhibiting temporalities rooted in specifically early modern ways of understanding, the texts locate themselves in historical time; by creating those times as non-linear, repetitive, inconsequential constellations of desire and bodies, the texts reveal their connections to, and their usefulness for, feminist and queer thinking now. The work Lanyer and Hutchinson do is anachronistic in the sense that they both imagine times out of time, pauses and interruptions in a linear time frame. But our analysis of them is not anachronistic in the sense of applying theory that distorts the original investments of the texts, because their multiple temporalities are available and imaginable in their historical moments: they are the theories the texts themselves offer. We have, however, chosen certain self-consciously

anachronistic terms—like lesbian—for Lanyer and Hutchinson's time, in order to demonstrate the existence and occurrence of patterns given other names in other times.

This combination of early modern ways of imagining time and later vocabulary for some of those imaginings aims to foreground not only the terms themselves but also their accreted histories. This conjunction affords us a new perspective on the task of feminism to 'examine' 'the connection between the histories we inherit and the futures we imagine', as Loomba and Sanchez compellingly put it.[61] By looking in new configurations at the multiple temporalities of these early modern poems, we hope to uncover the histories we have not inherited—the broken lineages, the averted events—in a way that will let us imagine different futures. As Audre Lorde tells us: 'But there are no new ideas still waiting in the wings to save us as women, as humans. There are only old and forgotten ones, new combinations, extrapolations and recognitions from within ourselves—along with the renewed courage to try them out.'[62] Living in the wake, in 2017, of the feminist consummation that did not happen, with all the peril that entails for those left out of both 'the histories we inherit and the futures we imagine', it helps to remember that not-happening, too, can have causal force. Lanyer's and Hutchinson's feminist queer poems rewrite the sequence of events in order to imagine causality differently: pushing back against received patriarchal narratives, they locate women at the poetic origin not due to their reproductive capacities, but rather through a consequentially queer desire founded upon disparaged affect. Taking up the 'old and forgotten' models from Lanyer and Hutchinson in conjunction with both feminist and queer theory affords 'new combinations, extrapolations, and recognitions from within ourselves'. Now we only need 'the renewed courage to try them out'.

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61   Loomba and Sanchez, 'Feminism and the Burdens of History', p. 41.
62   Lorde, 'Poetry Is Not a Luxury', p. 38.

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Part III

Embodied time

8   Embodied temporality

Lucrezia Tornabuoni de' Medici's *sacra storia*, Donatello's *Judith*, and the performance of gendered authority in Palazzo Medici, Florence

Allie Terry-Fritsch

Abstract

This essay approaches Donatello's fifteenth-century bronze sculpture of *Judith* as a dramatic actor in Lucrezia Tornabuoni de' Medici's 'The Story of Judith, Hebrew Widow', written in the 1470s. The essay highlights the strategies by which Lucrezia's narrative enfolds contemporary Florentine attitudes concerning justice, virtue, and political power into Judith's sacred history and traces how the performative cues of Lucrezia's words functioned to connect her audience somaesthetically with the statue in the temporal setting of the garden of the Palazzo Medici. Ultimately the essay analyzes Lucrezia's self-fashioning in relation to both the textual and sculptural biblical heroine as a strategy to give voice to her critical role within the family and the state.

Keywords: Donatello; Lucrezia Tornabuoni; Palazzo Medici; sacred drama; *Judith*; Renaissance sculpture

Donatello's bronze sculpture of *Judith*, once located in the garden of the Palazzo Medici in Florence, was one of the most visible works within the family's collection of art and today is considered a critical monument within the art historical canon of Renaissance sculpture (Figure 8.1).[1] While its earliest history is unknown, by the mid-1460s the sculpture was installed in

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1   Although the scholarship on Donatello's sculpture is too extensive to fully cite here, the following sources provide useful overviews of the literature and/or bibliographies: Janson, *Sculpture*, pp. 198–205; Greenhalgh, *Donatello*, pp. 181–92 ; Dolcini, ed., *Donatello*; *Donatello-Studien*; Wohl, review of *Donatello Studien*; Caglioti, *Donatello e i Medici*; Petrucci, *La scultura.*

Figure 8.1   **Donatello (Donato di Niccolò di Betto Bardi), Judith, c. 1464, bronze,**
               located between mid-1460s and 1495 in the garden of Palazzo Medici,
               today in the Sala dei Gigli, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence. Photo: author

Palazzo Medici, where it remained for nearly 30 years until its forced removal to Palazzo della Signoria in 1495.[2] Considered to be the first monumental sculpture of the Jewish heroine, the bronze figure emphasizes the action of beheading in its compositional design. Judith stands with her right arm raised in the air, poised to strike the neck of Holofernes, whose hair she holds in her left hand. Holofernes is awkwardly positioned beneath her, and the contortion of his head in relation to his body indicates that he has already received one blow and is prepared to suffer the second and fatal strike of the sword. Judith's steadfast expression and erect posture above the tyrant visualizes her sacred female authority.

During its installation within the garden of Palazzo Medici, the *Judith* was raised on a column, which had two (no longer extant) inscriptions attached to it. The first inscription proclaimed,

> Kingdoms fall through luxury, cities rise through virtues;
> behold the neck of pride severed by the hand of humility
> Regna cadunt luxu, surgunt virutibus urbes;
> Cesa vides humili colla superba manu.[3]

The second, presumably written by Piero de' Medici and placed on the base of the statue as a means to reiterate his political stature and beneficence in Florence, read,

> Public Health. Piero de' Medici, son of Cosimo, dedicated this statue of a woman to the union of liberty and fortitude, so that the citizens might be led back through their constant and invincible spirit to the defense of the republic.
> Salus publica. Petrus Medices Cos. f1. libertati simul et fortitudini hanc mulieris statuam, quo cives invicto constantique animo ad rem publicam tuendam redderentur, dedicavit.[4]

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2   There is general scholarly agreement that the *Judith and Holofernes* dates to the late 1450s to early 1460s, with an installation date in the garden of the Medici palace in 1464, or shortly thereafter. On the differing views on date and commission, see Janson, *Sculpture*, pp. 202–5; Herzner, 'Die "Judith" der Medici'; and Caglioti, 'Donatello', pt. 1. On the removal of the sculpture, see Landucci, *Diario fiorentino*, p. 119.

3   See, particularly, Janson, *Sculpture*, pp. 198–205; Caglioti, *Donatello e i Medici*, pp. 1–12; Crum, 'Severing'.

4   My translation of 'salus publica' as 'public health' implies the meaning of the term as in Cicero's maxim 'salus publica suprema lex esto'.

The inscriptions' rejection of tyranny in favor of liberty and humility clearly positioned the sculpture as a metaphor for the Medici as virtuous defenders of Florence.[5] Indeed, the intended combined message was rather straightforward: Judith symbolizes the victory of humility (*humilitas*) over pride (*superbia*) and luxury (*luxuria*).[6] The Medici erected the statue so that they and others would be inspired by her example to selflessly perform civic duty to the Republic. Given this overt political framing, art historians have situated their interpretations of the form and content of the *Judith* within the context of Cosimo's or Piero's efforts to self-fashion their political identity in the 1450s and 1460s. The bronze heroine, standing erect with sword held high above her head, is understood as the embodiment of male Medici political power.[7]

While such an interpretation is undoubtedly accurate, the sculpture is filled with layers of signification that resist being 'read' in one particular way all the time.[8] The ground floor spaces of the Medici residence were designed to accommodate a wide public who came to the palace as visitors, business associates, and supplicants. The statue's positioning within the garden ensured its visibility to these guests, and, since the primary entrance to the palace from Via Larga offered a view of the garden beyond the space of the courtyard, even passersby may have had the opportunity to glimpse the sculpture.[9] The ability of the *Judith* to communicate to multiple audiences in a variety of ways enhanced its intrinsic value for the Medici family. Indeed, its adaptability perhaps is one reason why the sculpture was considered acceptable in a fifteenth-century domestic context, despite its overt symbolic connections with the Florentine government and its potential characterization as a conspicuous display of Medici wealth and power.[10]

Although the scholarship on Donatello's bronze sculpture in Palazzo Medici is quite extensive, very little has been written of the primary viewing audience for the *Judith* during the 30 years in which it was installed in the garden; that is, those individuals who lived in the palace and who served to benefit from its pro-Republican subject.[11] Cosimo, the *pater patriae*, already was dead by 1464, the earliest proposed date for the *Judith*'s installation within the family's

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5   Cagliotti, *Donatello e i Medici*, pp. 1–21.

6   Kauffmann, *Donatello*, p. 168.

7   For a recent example, see Crum, 'Judith'.

8   Ames-Lewis, 'Donatello's Bronze *David*', pp. 238–39.

9   For differing proposals of the placement of Judith in the garden, see Hyman, *Florentine Studies*, p. 195; Ames-Lewis, 'Donatello's Bronze *David*'; Caglioti 'Donatello', pt. 2.

10   Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*, pp. 252–53.

11   For an interpretation of the *David* from a female perspective, see Baskins, 'Donatello's Bronze *David*', pp. 113–34.

home.[12] Likewise Piero, despite his direct intervention in crafting the sculpture's meaning by adding his inscription to it, died within a few years of its arrival in the palace. Thus, despite the great number of art historical studies dedicated to illustrating the *Judith*'s ability to shape a portrait of Piero's political power, the visual resonance of it to do so with effect necessarily ebbed in the wake of his death and the decades that followed. Between 1469 and 1492, Lorenzo 'il Magnifico'—Piero's son and the effective leader of the family after his father's death—inhabited the spaces that had been decorated by his grandfather and father. The memory of his ancestors was visualized in the architecture and art of the palace, and the way in which the palace was used and how its decoration communicated the family's status and power persisted fluidly during Lorenzo's lifetime. As Dale Kent has emphasized, Renaissance 'sons "became" their fathers at a certain point' and continued to embody and express their attitudes over the generations. In this line of thinking, the sculpture of *Judith* continued to uphold male Medici claims to authority and power in the city after Piero de' Medici's death, albeit transferred to his eldest son.[13]

Yet, Lorenzo was only 20 years old at the time he assumed the head position of the family, and he relied on his mother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni de' Medici, to help manage his and the family's affairs. Before her husband's death, Lucrezia held many roles simultaneously within the Medici household, including wife, mother, hostess, intellectual liaison to the leading male members of the family, political sounding board, and diplomat for Medici affairs.[14] As Francis Kent has discussed, Lucrezia possessed active political power, and often received letters from individuals who wished her to use this power in particular ways.[15] She openly demonstrated her understanding of the economic transactions of the family business through strategic investment in properties and was a savvy entrepreneur who, among other enterprises, designed and managed a resort at the hot springs of Morba.[16] Piero's death in 1469 did not diminish Lucrezia's authority and visibility; rather it rose as she retained the role of first matron of the household and served as a relatively overt intermediary for and adviser to Lorenzo until her death in 1482.[17]

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12   Caglioti, 'Donatello', pt. 1, pp. 14–22.

13   D. Kent, *Cosimo*, p. 242.

14   Pernis and Adams, *Lucrezia*, p. 65; Medici, *Sacred Narratives*, p. 31.

15   F. Kent, 'Sainted Mother'; Pernis and Adams, *Lucrezia*, pp. x–xi, 52–64, 73; Medici, *Sacred Narratives*, p. 30.

16   Ross, *Lives*, pp. 113–18.

17   F. Kent, 'Sainted Mother', esp. pp. 14–15; Tomas, *Medici Women*, pp. 26ff; Medici, *Sacred Narratives*, pp. 30–33.

Lucrezia built a reputation as a cultured intellectual from the first year of her marriage to Piero in 1444 and was an active participant in humanist discussions at the family's residences both in the city and in the country. She authored several texts that were shared with, praised, and performed by some of the leading poets and writers of Florence.[18] Her extant body of work includes several *laudi spirituali* (spiritual poems that were sung) and five *sacre storie* (sacred narratives in verse).[19] In the 1470s, Lucrezia wrote her sacred narrative entitled 'The Story of Judith, Hebrew Widow', one of several that she composed after Piero's death.[20] The text is cited often as an expression of Lucrezia's piety, and is seen in alignment with her impressive public charitable works in Florence and elsewhere. Art historians and literary critics have noted a loose connection between Lucrezia's selection of subject and Donatello's sculpture in the garden of her palace. In his exploration of the gendered implications of the *Judith*'s woman-on-top iconography, Adrian Randolph suggested that the sculpture may have inspired a 'proto-feminist' gaze for the female members of the Medici family, including Lucrezia, who decided to rewrite the story of the empowered biblical female.[21] Yet, this is as far as scholars have ventured to address the sculpture within the context of Lucrezia's writings and her specific agency within the palace.[22]

This essay instead situates Donatello's sculpture in direct communication with Lucrezia's sacred story so as to highlight another layer of signification for the *Judith* as an embodiment of female Medici political power. Jane Tylus has suggested convincingly that Lucrezia's texts were created specifically for an intimate group of family and friends, and the language that Lucrezia used may be understood as a self-conscious attempt to insert her works into the popular literary culture already realized in Florence by the late 1460s, which was erudite and laced with political content.[23] Evidence of a broad spectrum of locations and contexts for the recitation of poems and prose exist for fifteenth-century Florence, from 'public' to 'private', including Palazzo Medici and other Medici villas in the region. Texts, poems, and songs were commonly performed by members of the Medici family, including Lucrezia, for small gatherings of familiars or on the occasion of diplomatic

18   Tomas, *Medici Women*, p. 28.

19   Medici, *Sacred Narratives*, p. 162.

20   The *sacre storie* are found Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze, Magliabechiano VII, 338. Throughout this essay, I rely on Jane Tylus's transcription of 'The Story of Judith, Hebrew Widow', in Medici, *Sacred Narratives*.

21   Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*, p. 268.

22   For example, see Medici, *Sacred Narratives,* p. 120.

23   Medici, *Sacred Narrative,* p. 153.

visits. In her own stories, Lucrezia included performative clues that signal their use as both texts to be read and words to hear.[24] Expanding on Tylus's suggestion, the essay reconstructs the garden of Palazzo Medici as it once appeared in the 1470s to consider it as a performance space for Lucrezia's sacred narrative of Judith. The performative culture fostered within the fifteenth-century Medici household itself provides a strong foundation for considering the garden as a space activated by Lucrezia's words. As this essay explores, however, compelling formal and performative intersections between Lucrezia's text and Donatello's sculpture also signal the garden as a setting for a recitation.

The essay traces how the performative cues of Lucrezia's words functioned to somaesthetically connect Lucrezia's audience with Donatello's statue, thus prompting the opportunity for an active co-production of the narrative that bound performers and audience together.[25] 'Somaesthetics'— a term derived from the combination of *soma*, or the active, sentient body, and *aesthetics*, or sensory appreciation— refers to the purposeful cultivation of the body and mind to enhance sensory appreciation and creative self-fashioning.[26] Somaesthetic experiences, such as the active cultivation of the audience in the garden of Palazzo Medici, fostered the production of meaning in the Renaissance spectator through the self-conscious performance of body–mind engagement strategies that personalized viewers' perception and understanding of artistic programs.[27] Through the sensuous, time-based scenarios of somaesthetic experiences, the process of viewing became enfolded into performative assertions of individual and collective identity. Throughout the text, Lucrezia actively cultivates her audience members to appreciate their immediate sensory environment through clear instructions on how and when to look, listen, or imagine. When she speaks of Judith, Lucrezia often strays from the standard narrative of the female heroine and, within these self-conscious expansions and gaps in the text, invites the audience to read into the subject and personalize its protagonist. In the context of a recitation in the garden of Palazzo Medici, or, as a text imagined in tandem with the decoration of the garden, Lucrezia's words enliven Donatello's

24   Ibid., pp. 28, 71.

25   For Butler, the body is not a static fact that is given, but rather is 'a manner of doing, dramatizing, and reproducing a historical situation'; Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution'.

26   Shusterman: 'Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal'; *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, pp. 262–83; Shusterman, *Performing Live*; Shusterman, *Body Consciousness.*

27   This is the central focus of my book-length project, *Somaesthetic Experience and the Renaissance Viewer: Politics and Political Persuasion in Medicean Florence, 1459–1580*, which is currently in progress.

Judith as the sacred heroine of her story. They also construct a dynamic relation between herself and her audience by enfolding the sacred time of the story with contemporary time, which was experienced sensuously through her commands to see and hear. Highlighting the strategies by which Lucrezia's fifteenth-century story conflates contemporary Florentine attitudes concerning justice, virtue, and political power with Judith's sacred history, the essay provides a gendered reading of Donatello's *Judith* based on Lucrezia's heroine. Ultimately the essay reveals how Lucrezia's self-fashioning in relation to both the textual and sculptural biblical heroine may be considered a strategy to give voice to her critical role within the family and the state.

During the fifteenth century, Palazzo Medici featured a square plan with its primary facade facing Via Larga and its garden located behind it along Borgo San Lorenzo (now Via Ginori).[28] Although the garden and its surrounding architecture were completely transformed under the Riccardi family after 1680, it is possible to reconstruct its original form—an irregular quadrilateral plan— in the mid- to late-fifteenth century. The garden was enclosed on four sides and free-standing sculptures were placed along the walls and in niches. The northern wall of the garden was lined with fruit trees and most likely featured an ancient statue of Priapus, which was inscribed with a verse.[29] A one story high wall ran along the southern (Via de' Gori) and western (Borgo San Lorenzo, now Via dei Ginori) sides of the garden; these walls were crenelated at the top and plastered and decorated in sgraffito to emulate stone blocks.[30] The wall lining the Borgo San Lorenzo was pierced by a portal that aligned with the center of the courtyard and front entrance.[31] Two antique marble statues of Marsyas flanked the door on either side.[32] The back of the palace, including the arcade that lined the western side of the courtyard, formed the eastern wall of the garden.

The portal that connects the garden to the courtyard on this side gave onto a direct view of Donatello's bronze sculpture of *David*, which was placed in the center of the courtyard. Raised above eye level on a pedestal, the slender, sensuous body of the young boy is positioned in triumph above the decapitated head of Goliath.[33] While the rock held in David's left hand

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28   Büttner, 'Umbau des Palazzo'; Preyer, 'L'Architettura', pp. 58–60.
29   Looper, 'Political', p. 256; Cagliotti, 'Donatello', pp. 14–49; Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*, pp. 257, 264–65.
30   Thiem and Thiem, *Toskanische*, p. 62.
31   Looper, 'Political', pp. 258–59.
32   Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*, pp. 261–63.
33   Shearman, *Only Connect*, pp. 22–27.

identifies him, the long sword held in his right hand firmly locates him in the narrative moment after the slingshot battle and beheading of the giant. An inscription placed on the base iterated the significance of the act: 'The victor is whoever defends the fatherland. God crushes the wrath of an enormous foe. Conquer, o citizens!'[34] Raised in the air as it was, the bronze statue was displayed like imperial statues of ancient Rome but proclaimed the Republican values of the city-state instead of the rule of one.[35] As fifteenth-century visitors were well aware, an earlier sculpture of *David* by Donatello was installed in the *sala grande* of the Palazzo della Signoria and its pedestal also was inscribed with a political text, 'To those who fight bravely for the fatherland God lends aid even against the most terrible foes.' This inscription's close relationship with the later inscription on the bronze *David* in the Medici courtyard indicates that it was self-consciously appropriated to forge a political connotation between the two and ensure its primary subject was understood to express the values of the Florentine *popolo*, firmly against tyranny and a defender of liberty.[36] The clear sight line of the sculpture from the street and from the garden signaled to visitors its primary importance to the Medici within the overall collection of works on display.[37]

While Richard Goldthwaite asserts that the walling off of the garden was an exclusionary gesture, one must consider how this same act functioned to cultivate an intimate sensory environment for those many individuals who gained access to the interior of the palace.[38] The walls of the enclosed garden diminished the noise of the busy Renaissance city and created a self-contained architectural setting that was curated to elicit sensory delight. The garden was filled with diverse fruit trees, flowers, myrtle, and laurel, as well as topiary in the form of coats of arms, animals, and ships.[39] According to a description from 1459, when Galeazzo Maria Sforza, the son of the Duke of Milan, was a houseguest for two weeks within the palace, the 'garden [was] done in the finest of polished marbles with diverse plants, which seems a thing not natural but painted'.[40] Such an extensive and well-cultivated green space was a site to be coveted in the urban setting of Florence, where residents utilized every available nook for the cultivation of

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34   The inscription was recovered by Sperling, 'Donatello's Bronze "David"'.

35   McHam, 'Donatello's Bronze *David* and *Judith* as Metaphors', pp. 37–38.

36   Crum, 'Donatello's Bronze *David*'.

37   McHam, 'Metaphors', pp. 37–38.

38   Goldthwaite, *Building*.

39   D. Kent, *Cosimo*, p. 300.

40   Hatfield, 'Some Unknown Descriptions', p. 233.

plants and flowers.[41] Vespasiano da Bisticci recorded that Cosimo enjoyed getting his hands dirty in the garden and that his active work there brought him great enjoyment.[42] In the *casa vecchia*, Cosimo had enjoyed an orange garden in the rear of the palace; in the new palace, this garden expaned to measure approximately 35 meters from the north to south walls and 18 meters between east and west.[43]

A marble fountain was once located in the garden, most likely on the central axis with the *David* and the entrance doors to the palace. An account of the service for the 1469 wedding festivities of Lorenzo de' Medici and Clarice Orsini held in Palazzo Medici provides a description of its relation to the *David* in the courtyard: 'No sideboards had been placed for the silver. Only tall tables in the middle of the courtyard, round that handsome column on which stands the David, covered with tablecloths, and at the four corners were four great copper basins for the glasses, and behind the tables stood men to hand wine or water to those who served the guests. The same arrangement was made in the garden round the fountain you know.'[44] The spatial implication of the account is that the centers of both the courtyard and the garden were transformed into buffet stations for the drinks and food of the party. Thus, the *David* was the central feature of this festal display on one side, while the fountain anchored the station on the other.

Traditionally, the description was interpreted to suggest that Donatello's bronze *Judith* was itself part of this fountain, for it was also believed that the bronze cushion upon which Holofernes' body is splayed was once part of a watering mechanism.[45] The Judith narrative is contingent on water, for the heroic defeat of Holofernes ultimately allowed for the restoration of water to the city of Bethulia, thus the coupling of the figure with a fountain was not iconographically illogical.[46] Furthermore, by placing the *Judith* with the fountain in the center of the garden, the bronze figure repeated in both form and content the bronze figure in the courtyard. This produced a symmetrical layout of decapitation scenes in two large free-standing

41   Looper, 'Political', p. 255.

42   Bisticci, *Renaissance*, pp. 224–25.

43   Goldthwaite, *Building*, p. 135.

44   Ross, *Lives*, p. 130; Caglioti, *Donatello e i Medici*, p. 86

45   For proposals that the sculpture once was integrated into a fountain, see Hyman, *Florentine Studies*, p. 186, n. 37; Janson, *Sculpture*, pp. 198ff.; Pope-Hennesey, *Donatello*, p. 286; Looper, 'Political', pp. 257, 261–65. For documents relating to a granite basin that was left in the garden when the sculpture was confiscated by the Signoria, see Wiles, *Fountains*, p. 110. For a full dispute of the statue as fountain, however, see Cagliotti, *Donatello e i Medici*, pp. 81–100.

46   Looper, 'Political', p. 263.

sculptures made by the hand of the same artist and displayed along the east–west axis of the palace. Yet, as the material evidence found during the restoration of 1988 suggests, the holes in corners of the bronze pillows were not in fact spouts (but rather once featured tassels) and no other signs of technology for water were attached to any of the internal surfaces of the sculpture.[47] Thus the *Judith* most likely was not used as a fountain, and, as such, it was not located in the center of the garden. While there is little to no documentary evidence to suggest an alternate location for it, Francesco Caglioti's proposal for the disposition of the *Judith* in the center of the northern half of the garden is logical.[48] While it would no longer be on direct axis with the *David*, the sculpture's repetition of material, subject, and political content would have been unmistakable to a fifteenth-century visitor and would have bound it to the larger themes that underscored the Medici collection of art in the last quarter of the century.

Residents and guests could enjoy a view of the *Judith* in the garden from a number of different vantages. Benches were installed along the walls between the doors and stone paths lined the perimeter.[49] As evidenced by extant columns and capitals incorporated into the current Riccardi gallery along the south side, an internal loggia with three bays once occupied this part of the garden.[50] This loggia, unlike its exterior counterpart on Via Larga, was for the use of the family and their guests and was decorated with several antique relief panels as well as a monumental bronze sculpture of a head of a horse.[51] The covered and arcaded space served as a place for relaxation, conversation, and entertainment and provided relief from the elements. It also was used as a frame for individuals, such as Clarice Orsini on her wedding to Lorenzo in 1469, when she was seated under the loggia as she ate and enjoyed the entertainment of 50 dancers.[52] The loggia faced directly on to the garden and thus was freely accessible from it; a second entrance to the loggia was provided through a door in its southeastern wall, which led to the corner room of the courtyard on the *piano terreno*. Individuals could climb on top of the loggia to enjoy an elevated view of the garden. Additional raised vantages were offered along the entire west wall of the garden by means of a hanging walkway, which could be accessed via doors leading from the *piano nobile* at the back of the house as well as a

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47   Dolcini, ed., *Donatello*.
48   Caglioti, *Donatello e i Medici,* app., illus. 18.
49   Looper, 'Political'.
50   Tarchiani, *Il Palazzo*, pp. 85–86.
51   Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*, p. 264.
52   Baskins, 'Donatello's Bronze *David*', pp. 113–34.

small, most likely enclosed, spiral staircase in the northwest corner of the garden.[53] An intimate gathering of *famiglia e amici* in the garden would have afforded everyone a direct view of the *Judith*, regardless of their seating. The seating arrangement was analogous to the theater-in-the-round developed in medieval theatrical productions and experienced in Florentine popular festival.[54] That is, the audience encircled the actors.[55] In the context of Lucrezia's *sacra storia*, Donatello's sculpture played the role of Judith in the center of the garden and the audience either sat on the benches or stood on one of the raised platforms that surrounded it.

The line of sight for viewers of the Judith was critical for Lucrezia's sacred story of Judith, which is filled with concepts of vision and visual strategies. The first half of her text (86 of the 151 stanzas) make no mention Judith at all. Instead, this prolonged preamble introduces vision as an important indicator of virtue and a vehicle for justice. Those characters who were unable to see due to vices, including Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes, suffered the consequences of their shortsightedness, while those who possessed clarity of vision due to virtue, that is, the Hebrews, were rewarded with God's grace. For example, Lucrezia elaborates on the ways in which Holofernes wrongly attempted to control the vision of conquered peoples through the forced worship of an image, presumably a statue of Nebuchadnezzar.[56] It is notable that Holofernes is here described as 'Duke', as though invoking the courtly structure of tyranny.[57] Yet the 'children of Israel' refused to recognize Nebuchadnezzar's idol. As a demonstration of their humility before God, they shielded their eyes and hearts and instead channeled their prayers more forcefully to him.[58]

At the 85th stanza, Lucrezia breaks from the narrative to speak directly to her audience and to instruct them:

> Now *take good note of my words*:
> *see* how the just Lord saw fit to exalt his people,
> *note* in what manner he sent a remedy,
> and *see* how they were liberated from that cruel siege.[59]

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53   Linaker, *I Restauri*, pp. 10–11; Looper, 'Political', p. 257.
54   Ross, *Lives,* pp. 130–31; Preyer, 'Planning for Visitors', pp. 361–64.
55   Frank, 'Pilgrim's Gaze'.
56   Medici, *Sacred Narratives*, p. 134.
57   Ibid., p. 132.
58   Ibid., p. 135.
59   Ibid., p. 145 (emphasis mine).

As narrator, Lucrezia urges her audience to open their eyes for the first time and to visually engage with the agent of God's grace. Within the context of the garden, Lucrezia's audience was invited to engage with Donatello's *Judith*, who stood upon her raised column and provided a visual stimulus to the entrance of the heroine into the narrative. The aural aspect of Lucrezia's words functioned like ekphrastic text, which, as Jas Elsner has argued, encourages viewers to 'read in' and personalize the image.[60] Seated facing Donatello's sculpture and listening to Lucrezia's words, the audience—just as audiences of popular performances—co-produced the experience through their active gaze.[61]

Vision also functions as an indicator of moral virtue in Lucrezia's text. She emphasizes Judith's clarity of vision, particularly in the narrative moments in which she must manipulate her own image to persuade Holofernes to act. For example, on the fourth and fateful night of her stay within Holofernes' camp, Judith agreed to attend Holofernes' banquet beside him and thus prepared her exterior self in her finest clothes and her interior self with great devotion to the Lord.[62] Holofernes' inability to see beyond Judith's physical surface inevitably initiated his downfall. His incomprehension exposed his blindness to the strength of their faith, and thus he continued to besiege the Hebrew people.[63] Without proper vision, Holofernes was in effect blind to what was to come.

The audience was cued to look at what he did not: his death by the hand of the virtuous woman. Lucrezia complements this cue to look with a reminder to listen. She explains,

> *as you will now hear,*
> their prayers were heard by God,
> and he rescued them from harm.
> *You will witness* his infinite grace;
> He reveals his power to unbelievers,
> *And he gives victory to them who have faith*.[64]

The last phrase connects Lucrezia's narrative directly with the inscription on the base of the *David* that was placed in the center of the courtyard.[65] The wielding of such political statements within Lucrezia's Judith

60   Elsner, 'Art History as Ekphrasis', p. 49.
61   Hatfield, 'Some Unknown Descriptions', pp. 237–38.
62   Medici, *Sacred Narratives*, p. 148.
63   Ibid., p. 136.
64   Ibid., p. 145 (emphasis mine).
65   Sperling, 'Donatello's Bronze "David"'.

narrative served to enfold her audience within the immediate context of the Palazzo Medici and shape the sculpture's symbolic content in time-based performance.

The political intentions of Lucrezia's narrative are implied further through her use of *ottava rima*, the structure of sacred and secular *cantari* that were publicly recited in Florentine *piazze*.[66] As Nerrida Newbigin, Dale Kent, and others have demonstrated, these popular performances played an important role within Florentine daily life and often conveyed political sentiments couched in popular rhetoric. Lucrezia's narrative was undoubtedly connected to popular performative culture in Florence and this, too, held political significance. The dramatic structure of her narrative anticipates her audience's familiarity with the theatrical traditions of *sacre rappresentazioni* and uses their staging techniques to draw her listener-viewers into the sensory environment of the garden.[67]

Not yet mentioned in the literature on either Lucrezia's narrative or Donatello's sculpture are the clear correspondences between the two Judiths during the scene of decapitation and their formal connections to public rituals of execution as well as their staged performance in Florence. While Holofernes' decapitation generally is considered to be the dramatic highlight of the Judith narrative, Lucrezia's version of the scene is rather unremarkable and quick:

> Once she had said her prayer
> Judith rose, her heart resolved,
> and in one hand she grasped a sword she had found
> leaning against a column or the wall,
> and so well did the young woman brandish it
> it would have been fitting for a strong and sturdy man,
> she struck him twice, with force,
> and his head rolled away from his shoulders.[68]

The sparse attention given to the beheading is in alignment with extant fifteenth-century scripts for sacred dramas featuring decapitations, which do not verbalize the scene in any detail since this narrative was performed

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66   Lucrezia distinguished the stories of Judith and St. John the Baptist from her other sacred narratives through her use of the *ottava rima* (eight-line stanza); Medici, *Sacred Narratives*, pp. 26–27.

67   Pernis and Adams, *Lucrezia*, p. 122.

68   Medici, *Sacred Narratives*, p. 155.

live by the actors on stage. By following convention, Lucrezia creates a gap in the text that allows for the witnessing of a performance of the scene by the bronze sculpture of *Judith*, which emerges as a dramatic actor.

Early modern dramas of beheading drew upon the visual language of juridical punishment in an effort to engage with the lived experiences of spectators and facilitate a 'reality effect' that personalized the distant past and enabled deeper understanding of the drama's significance.[69] On the feast of St. John the Baptist's martyrdom (29 August) in 1451, for example, Florentines staged a sacred drama of the *Decollazione di San Giovanni Battista* (Beheading of Saint John the Baptist).[70] Unlike the elaborate traditions developed to celebrate the feast of the saint's birth each year, sacred dramas commemorating the Baptist's martyrdom were unprecedented in Florentine ritual practice. In fact, this performance provides the only extant record of a beheading drama in the city, which strongly suggests that the staging of the production must be understood in its temporal proximity to the signing of a political treaty with Milan. At that time, Cosimo de' Medici, acting as a member of a wartime commission, the *Dieci della Balià*, negotiated an official alliance between the Florentines and Francesco Sforza, the Milanese duke, and thereby effected peace between the two city-states after an extremely long period of political strife and military battles.[71] The immediate celebrations for the peace treaty included a great *festa* in Florence with fireworks and bells ringing from the towers of the churches. However, the drama presented one month later, on 29 August, was the culmination of the celebration. The location of the stage was outside the walls of the city in the Pratello della Giustizia (or the 'little meadow of justice'), the site for state-sponsored criminal executions in the city. The enacted death of Florence's patron saint on a site used for the execution of real criminals heightened and fostered devotion toward him, since both the saint and his death were embodied so vividly through actor and stage.[72]

The performance on the feast of the martyrdom of the Baptist was most likely connected to the new attention that the date received after the Medici family's return from exile in 1434. Like all Florentines, the Medici held a special devotion to St. John the Baptist as the patron saint and defender of their city.[73] According to Florentine legend, it was on John the Baptist's

69   Owens, *Stages of Dismemberment*, esp. pp. 115–43.

70   Trexler, *Public,* p. 119, n. 130; Newbigin, *Nuovo corpus,* pp. 109–33; Terry, 'Donatello's Decapitations'.

71   Newbigin, 'I Giornali', pp. 103–5.

72   Edgerton, *Pictures*, pp. 234–38.

73   Chrétien, *Festival*.

birthday in 401 that the city was liberated from the Goths, thus John was explicitly connected to *libertas*, the most important virtue of the Florentine Republic. Elaborate festivities, including processions, theatrical spectacles, *mostre*, and fireworks, marked the feast of John's birth each year, and the Medici actively participated in the organization and staging of the celebrations. They also were involved in joint artistic commissions for the most important cult site dedicated to their city patron, the Baptistery of San Giovanni, as was their father. When the Albizzi faction staged its famous coup against the Medici in September 1433, Cosimo, his brother Lorenzo and the other male members of the family were stripped of their right to political office and forced into a fixed period of exile from the city. However, in the days and months that followed the Medici departure, a series of political, economic, and social disturbances disrupted the equilibrium of the city to such an extent that the Medici were invited back to Florence within a year, and their political enemies were exiled in retribution. The Florentines ultimately attributed the political disturbances of these years to inappropriate actions performed by elected officials of the city.[74] These officials were elected to office in 1433 and 1434 on no less of an auspicious date than 29 August, the feast of San Giovanni Decollato. Thus, the sixteenth-century historian Francesco Guicciardini explained in his *History* of the Tuscan city that the popular opinion of the Florentines was that the economic and social disturbances of these years were a result of their patron saint's anger with them for not respecting his feast day and not protecting the Medici family.[75] When Cosimo returned to the city, the Florentines formally changed the date for all future elections of offices away from the feast of the Baptist's martyrdom (29 August) to the day prior (28 August). With the newly expressed political connection between the Baptist's feast of decapitation and Cosimo and Lorenzo's return to the city from exile, the Medici assumed a particular devotion to the cult focus of their patron saint's martyrdom, that is, the *head* of the Baptist.[76]

Lucrezia would have been familiar with the performance of the drama and the connections it expressed to her husband's family. She herself wrote a narrative of Saint John the Baptist's martyrdom in one of her sacred stories. Although there are no specific staging instructions for the Florentine *Decollazione* drama, other theatrical productions from the period suggest that the gestural language used to express the scene of

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74 Trexler, *Public*, p. 333, n. 3.
75 Guicciardini, *History*, p. 4.
76 Terry, 'Donatello's Decapitations'.

beheading was a prolonged exaggerated pose with sword held high. Like those actors on the stage, Donatello's *Judith* is remarkable for its static concentration on the moment of the decapitation (Figure 8.2).[77] The rigid expression and stance of *Judith*—so different from the fleshlike treatment of *David*'s prepubescent body in the courtyard—communicated strength and determination. Judith's sword is held high, frozen in the moment *before* the second, and fatal strike to his neck. Due to its position in the air away from Judith's body, the sword is easily seen regardless of the angle at which the sculpture is viewed. Traces of the original gilding on the blade of the sword suggest that it was further highlighted in the natural light of the day. Judith's costuming emphasized her active distribution of justice as a warrior hero since, as Diane Apostolos-Cappadona has analyzed, it was based on ancient armor, including the cuirass (neck piece) and vambrace (bracelet).[78] Judith, in her raised position and with her sword held high, embodied the action of the beheading scene. By commanding her audience to look at the agent of God's grace, Lucrezia pointed to the visual form as the eternal image of Justice.[79]

While Lucrezia's narrative abbreviates the scene of beheading so as to enliven the *Judith* statue in its performative action, at least thirteen subsequent stanzas are dedicated to the ways in which the decapitated head was displayed to Judith's fellow Israelites once back inside the walls of her hometown. As Lucrezia emphasizes, the sight of the head was so powerful that it spurred emotional and bodily reactions.[80] Judith was urged to mount the 'cursed head' on the wall of the city 'so that by everyone it could easily be seen', and this emboldened the Israelites to seek further justice from members of Holofernes' army.[81] Lucrezia's emphasis on the communal need for viewing Holofernes' decapitated head conforms to fifteenth-century Florentine attitudes about the importance of communal witnessing of criminal bodies.[82] Sight was a means for civic cleansing after criminal transgressions. The body of the criminal was offered to the community as

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77   Scholars have noted the awkward position of Holofernes under the figure of Judith and have considered the group formation as a kind of visual psychomachia that condenses the narrative into its culminating moment; Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*, pp. 251–52. Yet, one can also read the sculpture as a performative image that enacts Judith's sacred history in the dramatic language of the late fifteenth century.

78   Apostolos-Cappadona, 'Costuming', p. 331.

79   Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*, pp. 257–59; Terry, 'Donatello's Decapitations'.

80   Medici, *Sacred Narratives*, p. 157.

81   Ibid.

82   Terry, 'Craft of Torture'.

Figure 8.2   Detail of Figure 8.1. Photo: author

a means of visualizing the process of justice and the effective containment of crime through its retribution. The collective gaze of the crowd upon the criminal body was a means by which the community of Florentines imposed their moral and civic judgment. In this way, viewers could read the head of Holofernes in Donatello's sculpture, twisted in Judith's hands so as to be in alignment with the audience's vision, as a sign of good government.

Whereas art historians generally have pointed to the *Judith* as a stand-in for the male members of the Medici household, Lucrezia's narrative positions her as the political protagonist.[83] Throughout the sacred narrative, Lucrezia emphasizes Judith's masculine and feminine characteristics as a means to explain her active power. According to Lucrezia, Judith possessed a 'manly heart', presumably one that would not falter under the stress of the impending siege, as well as an independent spirit, for she had been widowed for three years and 'did not seek another husband'.[84] However, she would use her feminine beauty to position herself as Holofernes' assassin.[85] Judith's plan was to create a false vision for Holofernes and to use his susceptibility to material beauty to her advantage,

> When Holofernes *saw* her, he was set aflame;
> that ferocious heart of his became human,
> and once he began to *gaze* at her lovely face
> he could not take his *eyes* away from hers.[86]

Holofernes could not see beyond her exterior: he ordered his treasurer to 'place her who is like the rose of an orchard here tonight among my treasures'.

During the scene of the decapitation of the tyrannous general, Lucrezia claimed that Judith brandished her sword like a 'sturdy and strong man'.[87] Although such references to masculine strength may be read as literary tropes intended to explain Judith's augmented power through the grace of God, they also reflect on the ways in which Lucrezia self-consciously pointed to Judith's crossing of normative gender boundaries. When Judith took it upon herself to take action to alleviate the suffering of her people, she brought herself before the priests of Bethulia and proclaimed,

83 Crum, 'Judith between the Public and Private', pp. 303ff.
84 Medici, *Sacred Narratives*, p. 145.
85 Ibid., p. 150.
86 Ibid., p. 148.
87 Ibid., p. 155.

May each of you note my words!
Through his grace, God has put it into my heart
to meddle [*frammettersi*] in things so your vows will be heard
and thus my Lord has promised me
that I might serve as the means
whereby our suffering might be alleviated and ended.[88]

Lucrezia's selection of the verb 'frammettersi' ('to mix oneself up in' or 'to meddle') was a deliberate intervention in the Judith narrative, as it does not appear in the source material.[89] It served as an auditory cue to her audience to indicate that Judith recognized that she was transgressing normative performative strategies in order to achieve her purpose.

Judith's transgressions of normative gender roles were familiar to Lucrezia and she created parallels in their respective lines to foster a connection between them. For example, in stanza 85, Lucrezia (as narrator) commands, 'Now take good note of my words' ('Or fa' che mie parole a punto noti'); in stanza 90, Judith commands, 'May each of you note my words!' ('Ciasciun di voi le mie parole noti').[90] Like Judith, Lucrezia crossed normative gender boundaries in her highly visible position as wife of Piero and mother to Lorenzo.[91] Indeed, Cosimo allegedly called her 'the only man in the family'.[92] Lucrezia's alignment with the 'meddling' of Judith's pious but nonconventional actions speaks to the ways in which the matron demonstrated her agency within the masculine-dominated familial structure.[93]

Lucrezia took liberty with Judith's character description as a strategy to further connect her to the protagonist. For example, Holofernes described Judith as that 'woman, with eloquent words' and greeted her directly as 'flower of all beauty'.[94] The narrative emphasis on both Judith's power of eloquence and her beauty as a 'flower' were Lucrezia's additions to the Judith narrative, as these passages deviate from the sources and embellish the female heroine in particular ways. The treatment of Judith as an 'eloquent flower' may well have held allegorical significance for Florence (Fiorenza), the city of the Madonna del Fiore and home to a well-established humanist literary scene. Visual similarities between Donatello's *Judith* and the female

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88   Ibid., pp. 146.
89   Ibid., p. 147. On meddling, see also, Martelli, 'Lucrezia', pp. 51–52.
90   Medici, *Sacred Narratives*, p. 146, n. 40.
91   Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*.
92   Bargellini, 'Ladies', p. 14.
93   Jordan, 'Listening', p. 186.
94   Medici, *Sacred Narratives*, p. 153.

personification of *Florentia* found on the reverse of the bronze portrait medal of Cosimo de' Medici make this point at least by the end of the century.[95] Framing the heroine in such a way, Lucrezia built on familiar allegorical connections of Donatello's statue of *Judith* with Florence—firmly against tyranny, faithful in God, and willing to fight for the collective good. The prominent connection of Donatello's *Judith* with the seat of the Florentine government at the end of century—when the statue was removed from the Medici Palace and placed on the *ringheria* outside the Palazzo della Signoria—attests to the ways in which Florentines already made allegorical connections between their city's history and the Judith story.

On a second level, however, Lucrezia's words shaped this reference into a more distinct commentary on her own place within Florence. The 'eloquent flower' equally referenced Lucrezia herself, the author of Judith's words and known throughout the city as 'rarely eloquent'.[96] In the years in which the text was most likely written—the early 1470s—Lucrezia, like Judith, was widowed, independent, and in a position to help shape the political scene of Florence. Her husband had previously connected himself to Judith by placing the second inscription on its base. When he died, she assumed the role of Judith and used her narrative to firmly connect herself with the symbolic content of the sculpture.

The last lines of Lucrezia's narrative are spoken in the first person and contribute to an even further layer of symbolic content within the text:

> May you, omnipotent Lord, be thanked,
> who drew me out of the sea to the shore,
> and I am now in harbor, where my heart
> offers up to you my weak and unpolished rhymes.

The phrase 'who drew me out of the sea to the shore' is a clear reference to Venus, who was born of the sea. The putti adorning the neckline of Judith's clothing in Donatello's sculpture allude to this aspect of the female goddess. By positioning herself ultimately as a devout Venus, Lucrezia conflates the well-known typological associations of Judith-with-Mary with Mary's-neoplatonic-association-with-Venus and, in so doing, perhaps makes a reference to herself as 'cleansed' through the just works of the government.[97]

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95   Fulton, *Earthly Paradise*, p. 153.
96   Valori, *Vita,* p. 95; F. Kent, 'Sainted Mother', p. 10, n. 31.
97   Apostolos-Cappadona, 'Costuming', pp. 325ff.

When considered as a text to be performed, Lucrezia's sacred narrative of Judith fostered a particular way of viewing Donatello's sculpture in the temporal setting of the garden of the Palazzo Medici. The matron's commands to her audience to look up and see at key points in the narrative served to cultivate an active viewing experience that incorporated them, along with the sculpture and Lucrezia herself, into the dramatic action of the biblical tale. Just as in Florentine *sacre rappresentazioni*, Donatello's sculptural group acted out the demonstration of justice through its gestural performance. By assuming the role of Judith's compatriots, the audience served as embodied witnesses to her heroic efforts and were aligned with the notion of good government for which she stood.

Furthermore, Lucrezia's manipulation of her audience's somaesthetic experience may be connected to the subtle way that the matron shaped her own identity within the intimate circles of the Medici family. The text's self-conscious doubling of Lucrezia's narration with Judith's speech conflated the voices of the two female protagonists and drew attention to the similarities of their social positions and moral virtues. As the audience in the garden witnessed the positive result of Judith's transgression of normative gender roles, they also participated in Lucrezia's own successful transgression of traditional patriarchal structures within the Florentine Renaissance household. Such performative interplay between listening inside the palace and witnessing Florentine identity politics in dramatic sculptural form is critical for understanding the full visual and symbolic potential of Donatello's statue in the garden as well as the leading lady of the Medici family in the 1470s.

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9 Maybe baby

Pregnant possibilities in medieval and early modern literature

Holly Barbaccia, Bethany Packard, and Jane Wanninger

Abstract

This chapter focuses on the phenomenon of 'maybe maternal' literary figures in medieval and early modern texts. Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Webster all write women characters whose maternal status they never totally resolve. Taken together, these authors and their female characters illustrate the extent to which potential pregnancy amplifies the inscrutability of women's bodies and highlights the thwarted efforts of other characters, readers, and audiences to interpret them. By introducing the possibility of these women's pregnancies but leaving their maternal status unverified, Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Webster confront the intersections of epistemology and embodiment associated with pregnancy and motherhood. Thus they play seriously with the question of how interpretable the female body is as a potentially meaningful, or morally pregnant, text.

Keywords: Geoffrey Chaucer; William Shakespeare; John Webster; pregnancy in literature; motherhood in literature; 'pleading the belly'

Premodern pregnancy was inherently precarious and uncertain. Even whether a woman was pregnant was, to some degree, unknowable. A pregnancy's terminus was its surest verification, yet health risks and diagnostic uncertainties inherent in premodern medicine meant that any pregnancy's outcome was always at issue. At the same time, the patriarchal logic of early English society necessitated some degree of certainty about pregnancy, or at least performances of such certainty. This experience of time, in which a pregnancy could not really be confirmed until it ended, and its outcome in turn provided the only certain evidence of the pregnancy's realness, is infused with epistemological uncertainty and temporal complexity. At the

crux of the interpretive challenges posed by pregnancy was the maternal subject, who was at once in a position of explanatory authority, privy to the embodied experience of pregnancy, and objectified by that state, rendered as a text that others could decipher. While literary scholarship has tended to focus on unequivocally pregnant characters and definitively maternal bodies, this chapter explores some of the *possibly* maternal literary characters that appear in premodern texts by Geoffrey Chaucer (d. 1400), William Shakespeare (1564–1616), and John Webster (*c*. 1580–*c*. 1626–34). In these works we find women whose ambiguous maternal statuses present interpretive dilemmas for narrators and characters within texts and for their readers and audiences. These potentially pregnant characters embody epistemological uncertainties animated by female agency and the temporality of pregnancy. Across genre and time period, English writers ask how interpretable the female body is as a potentially meaningful, or morally pregnant, text.

Even unequivocally maternal figures in early English texts resonate with the complexity of their eras' attitudes toward pregnancy. In medieval literature, mystery and uncertainty often surround pregnant women: for instance, in Play 13 of the *York Corpus Christi Plays* ('Joseph's Troubles about Mary'), the Virgin Mary's unambiguous but paradoxical pregnancy provokes her husband's comical misogynist doubts. In Arthurian legends, at the moment of his marvelous conception, Arthur's mother, Igraine, does not know who is impregnating her. Some hagiographical works feature abortion miracles in which, through saintly intervention, fetuses disappear. Meanwhile, Shakespeare and Webster's prominently pregnant characters, Hermione, from *The Winter's Tale* and the titular *Duchess of Malfi*, face intense scrutiny about their maternal status and the paternity of their children. In the premodern world, as now, a range of reasonably reliable physical signs could help a woman determine pregnancy: the absence of menses, the quickening—or time when the mother-to-be feels movement—and a swelling abdomen. Given that the average early modern Englishwoman was pregnant eight to ten times, the symptoms would have been familiar.[1] Medieval gynecological and obstetrical manuals advised readers about how to interpret signs of pregnancy, and texts like the twelfth-century *Trotula* include sections on how to interpret symptoms related to the fetus's sex.[2] Later manuals implied that identifying and assessing the progress of pregnancy became an increasingly scrutinized process. Indeed, early modern medical texts (usually authored by men) tended to emphasize the potential for misinterpretation and the lack of certainty

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1   Moncrief, 'Show me a child', p. 30.
2   See in particular Green, *Trotula*, pp. 102–3

in diagnosing a pregnancy, suggesting that each reported or observed sign could potentially stem from something else. In *Child-Birth, or the Happy Deliverie of Women*, printed in English in 1612, French royal physician Jacques (James) Guillemeau advises doctors to be 'very circumspect' in determining pregnancy, warning that there is 'nothing more ridiculous, then to assure a women that shee is with childe' only to find out she is swollen with wind or water.[3] He exhaustively notes the symptoms of pregnancy, but cautions that 'these signs are not so certaine'.[4]

The outcomes of pregnancy were uncertain in other ways as well; while it offered future hope through the promise of children, the survival of the mother and child could never be presumed in the event of labor and delivery. In this epistemological framework, pregnancy could only be understood as a subjective, physical, and temporal state in terms of its conventional telos, but that end—parturition and survival of mother and child—was seen as neither stably intelligible nor wholly predictable. Possible pregnancy does not simply intensify the instabilities present in every medieval and early modern pregnancy, it makes them impossible to ignore. Premodern pregnancy was, to use a phrase Kathryn Moncrief deploys in reference to early modern England, 'both obvious and obfuscating', legible as a visible phenomenon but resistant to stable signification or wholly predictable outcomes.[5] When pregnancies are potential but unconfirmed in medieval and early modern literature, the obfuscation is what becomes most obvious. By overtly leaving characters, readers, and audiences thwarted by unanswerable questions, the literary deployment of such hypothetical mothers forces us to recognize the impulses to interpret the characters' bodies and to reimagine past and future in the reflexive temporality of possible pregnancy. If a pregnancy's existence is permanently in flux, without the stabilizing interpretive force of an outcome to fix its temporal position, many versions of events and their implications are always simultaneously available. The writers of such potential mothers offer these possibilities not only to readers and audiences but also to female characters who exert agency on the strength of their ambiguously productive bodies.

Bringing together works from different genres written centuries apart reveals a persistent strain of interpretive questions posed by and through the potentially maternal figure. Both in spite of and through their physical opacity and the indeterminacy of their narrative arcs, the characters we

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3   Guillemeau, *Child-Birth*, p. 1.
4   Ibid., p. 6.
5   Moncrief, 'Show me a child', p. 30.

explore in this chapter evoke temporal, subjective, and moral ambiguity. In *The Canterbury Tales*, for instance, May's fake or real pregnancy moves the plot and raises questions about how to interpret her character. Chaucer's Criseyde might be a mother; would her having children make her actions more understandable? The peaceful resolution of *All's Well that Ends Well* is contingent on Helen's pregnancy announcement, but the deception that underlies it calls those ends into question. 'Pleading the belly', the common law process in England that allowed a woman to request reprieve of her death sentence if she could demonstrate pregnancy, emerges as a useful concept for the characters and texts in question. For instance, when Joan La Pucelle claims pregnancy in *Henry VI, Part 1*, she evokes the protected status of maternal body, but is viewed at once as a lying witch, promiscuous opportunist, and terrified victim. Cariola's similar plea in *The Duchess of Malfi* highlights the tenuous authority of the maternal subject amidst the hypocrisy of her society. Even beyond instances that adhere to the legal definition of pleading the belly, women in the texts explored in this chapter look for ways to leverage the authority of their somatic experiences to tell a compelling story about their bodies. Pleading the belly, then, becomes suggestive of a broader network of ways in which women work to author their futures.

These instances illustrate the ways potential pregnancy shapes interpretation, amplifying the inscrutability of women's bodies and positioning possibly pregnant women as at once authorial agents and inscripted objects in relation to other characters, readers, and audiences. Medieval interpretative practices called on readers to navigate the relationship between the surfaces of texts and their meanings; accordingly, characters who appear not as mothers but as potential mothers-to-be manifest interpretive challenges that resonate in Chaucer's time and beyond. In raising the possibility of pregnancy but refusing to verify it within their texts, Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Webster force us to confront the intersections of epistemology and embodiment associated with maternity. These writers bring the myriad of future possible outcomes into the literary present of ongoing potential pregnancies. These unfulfilled outcomes simultaneously enable author, character, and audience to revise the past, conjure the future, and conceptualize a dynamic present.

Maybe mothers: Chaucer's maternal and literary ambiguity

Twice in his poetry, Geoffrey Chaucer invites readers to speculate about his female characters' maternal statuses. Is Criseyde a mother? Is May really pregnant? And what does it matter? In *Troilus and Criseyde* (c. 1380) and

'The Merchant's Tale' (*c.* 1390s), the possibility of motherhood or pregnancy might make a difference in the reader's understanding of the woman's moral character and the story's meaning. Chaucer uses these moments of maternal possibility to explore how fictional surfaces might relate to the kernels of truth they contain. His speculative treatment of Criseyde's and May's potential fruits proves surprisingly fruitful, resonating with medieval theories of interpretation in which the reader emerges as bearing responsibility for producing textual meaning.

In an early description of Criseyde, Chaucer's narrator claims that, 'wheither that she children hadde or noon,/ I rede it naught, therefore I late it goon' (*Troilus* I.132–33).[6] To the alert reader, that claim appears disingenuous on two levels. First, the narrator doesn't seem to be telling the truth about what exactly he has read and translated. In Chaucer's main source of the *Troilus*, Giovanni Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato* (1330), the narrator states explicitly that Criseyde 'had never been able to have any children, [and] did not need to care for any son or daughter' (I.15).[7] Likewise, Chaucer's other known sources make clear Criseyde has no children; Benoit de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* (*c.* 1160) calls her a virgin. Second, the narrator's claim he will 'late [...] goon' the question of whether Criseyde is a mother is inherently false because he has now planted the idea's seed in *our* imaginations. The reader who wants to understand the story might find the question recurring, as evidently it has recurred for the translator. After all, the *Troilus* tells the tragic story of Criseyde's betrayal of Troilus and his death in the wake of that betrayal, but even though his story essentially condemns Criseyde, Chaucer's narrator does not want to speak badly of her (V.1775). Although she 'was untrewe', he refuses to discuss her 'gilt' and sends the reader to 'other bokes' if we want to see her condemned (V.1774–76).

Depending on how far we let ourselves explore it, the question of her maternal status might be critical 'to [our] interpretation of Criseyde's character and actions' and feelings.[8] If Criseyde has children, she has more to protect, more to bargain with, and more to lose. Whether she has children and whether they are with her could make Criseyde's choice to stay with the Greeks instead of returning to a doomed city more or less understandable, depending. Jane Cowgill observes that, 'the pointed absence from the text of [Criseyde's] either existent or non-existent children creates a blank, unresolved space'. More to the point, the children are existent

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6   All references are to Benson, ed., *Riverside Chaucer*.
7   Chaucer *et al.*, *Troilus and Criseyde*.
8   Cowgill, 'Chaucer's Missing Children', p. 40.

and non-existent, that Chaucer sets up a thought experiment not unlike Schrödinger's, in which the children are simultaneously present and not present, depending on whether we read with them in mind. We can heed the narrator's advice to let go of the idea of Criseyde's possible children, but when instead we let it inform our interpretation, it has the potential to influence our understanding and judgment of Criseyde and her story in any number of ways. Simply realizing how much power the possibility has over us might cause us to become more aware of how much power we have as readers to make meaning. The *Troilus's* narrator prays in his concluding stanzas that wherever and whenever it is received, his poem will be understood (1798), yet he has also foregrounded the productive problems inherent in interpreting texts.

Throughout his writings, Chaucer shows an interest in the relationship between the surface of a text and the meaning it produces and carries, and in how readers and texts create meaning together. In his retraction to *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer includes the *Troilus* with those 'translacions and enditynges of worldly vanitees' (X.1085) for which he asks forgiveness. There, he also offers a way for the *Troilus* and his other problematic works to maintain their moral usefulness in spite of their seemingly immoral fictions. He reminds us of the Pauline notion that 'Al that is written is written for oure doctrine' (1083): the right-minded Christian reader can find or create the proper meaning in any text. And at the end of 'The Nun's Priest's Tale', Chaucer also translates Paul's sentiment; there, he includes the familiar medieval image of the fruit and husk to represent the relationship between story and meaning. The Nun's Priest asks the reader to 'Taketh the fruyt [the meaning of his story], and lat the chaf [the fictive surface] be stille' (VII.3443). This admonition seems at first to emphasize the reader's role as a finder of textual meaning, but medieval allegoresis generally 'thematizes interpretation, not simply as vertical archaeology (e.g., digging out kernels from their shells), but as a productive act that locates itself in the temporal circumstances of both writing and reading'.[9] Readers must after all decide which surface elements to take as 'fruit' and which to let go, and as we have already seen in the *Troilus*, Chaucer sometimes complicates that process in ways that make us more aware of our responsibility and power as meaning-makers.

In 'The Merchant's Tale', Chaucer lays the comparison between pregnant bodies and morally pregnant texts even barer. The Merchant tells the fabliau-like story of a foolish old man (January) and the young wife (May) who

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9   Copeland and Melville, 'Allegory and Allegoresis', p. 164.

deceives him with another man. At the tale's climax, the blind January escorts May to their enclosed garden, where her lover, Damien, awaits. To accomplish her deception May invokes a pregnancy that may or may not be true:

> Allas, my syde! [...]
> I moste han of the peres that I see,
> Or I moot dye, so soore longeth me
> To eten of the smale peres grene [...]
> I telle you wel, a womman in my plit
> May han to fruyt so greet an appetit
> That she may dyen [...]
>
> (IV.2331–36)

Her fruit craving provides evidence that she is bearing fruit of her own, and January helps her into the tree, where she and Damien have sex in front of the blind husband (2352). Meanwhile, Pluto and Proserpina (the classical gods of the underworld, here the king and queen of 'Fayerye' [2227]) wander by, see the deception play out, and get into a marital dispute of their own. Feeling sorry for January, Pluto restores his vision, but then Proserpina makes it possible for May to give 'suffisant answere' (2266) to January so that he believes her outrageous story (that she was struggling with a man in a tree because doing so is a cure she learned for blindness) over the evidence of his own eyes. The Tale's last image, of January's stroking May's 'ful softe [...] on hire wombe', brings back to mind his initial enthusiastic late-life revelation that 'a wyf [is] the fruyt of [her husband's] tresor' (1270) and underscores the morally troubling use to which May has put her real or invented pregnancy.

At the same time, May, not her narrator, is the one introducing the possible pregnancy, and in doing so she creates a new possible future for herself in which she can fulfill her appetites. The reader learns of May's 'plit' at the same moment as January, and it had seemed unlikely before this moment in the Tale that the senile sexual incompetent could have impregnated May, yet we know she has not yet consummated the affair with Damian. 'Is January then more virile than we had imagined? Or is this unheralded yet remarkably convenient pregnancy just another of May's quick lies?'[10] Samantha Katz Seal offers an ingenious alternative that emphasizes May's agency as a conceiver of children and stories, asserting that according to

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10   Seal, 'Pregnant Desire', p. 302.

medieval theories of conception, the woman as well as the man must emit her seed during sex for pregnancy to occur. Because meeting with Damian has already awakened May's sexual imagination and appetite, Seal argues, she might have had the mental sexual experience necessary while in bed with January to emit her seed and conceive a child, even without physical pleasure. As Seal puts it, 'In this scenario, even though May's body is like "wax" in the physical and sexual sense as she receives January's seed, her imagination remains as imprinted and inaccessible as if she were indeed copulating with Damian, the object of her thoughts.'[11] Additionally, Chaucer has also awakened the reader's imagination with May's possible pregnancy. As in the *Troilus*, speculating about the truth of May's story leads the reader to understand and assess her character in different ways.

Thus 'The Merchant's Tale', like the *Troilus*, uses a moment of maternal ambiguity to redirect our attention to our own potentials and limitations as textual interpreters. Chaucer plays productively with the ideas of fiction and truth, of fruit and chaff, and of maternal and textual indeterminacy. While Criseyde's narrator's moment of wondering aloud stimulates readers' interpretive imaginations, May 'pleads her belly', in a sense, to control her future. In that way, she anticipates moves later literary women will make with pregnancy claims. Ultimately, through his maybe maternal characters, Chaucer shows us how narratively and interpretively productive uncertainty can be.

Possible pregnancy and maternal agency in *All's Well that Ends Well*

The interpretive relationship between text and recipient signaled in Chaucer's ambiguous descriptions of maternity and pregnancy can also be seen as animating the end of *All's Well that Ends Well*, Shakespeare's 1604 'problem comedy'. Written more than 200 years later than Chaucer's works and intended for the stage rather than the page, *All's Well* raises related interpretive questions around the possibility of pregnancy and its ramifications for understanding the story as a whole. At the play's conclusion, its protagonist, Helen, reappears from feigned death, in possession of her estranged husband Bertram's ring and apparently pregnant with his child. Shakespeare, in drawing attention to the spectacle of the pregnant body in ways his source text does not, underscores the contingency of its presumed meaning in ways that resonate in terms of the medieval interpretive practice with which Chaucer's texts engage, and like those texts, plays

11   Ibid., p. 303.

on the inscrutability of medieval and early modern pregnancy. The role of pregnancy in *All's Well* furthermore raises questions about maternal agency and authority, rendered all the more powerful by the play's refusal to stage the 'ends' of the pregnancy with which it concludes.

The plot for *All's Well* originally derives the story of Giletta of Narbonne, included in the Third Day of Boccaccio's *Decameron,* completed around 1352. Giletta, who will become Helen in Shakespeare's rendering, cures the king of a fistula and is rewarded with marriage to the man of her choosing, Beltramo (Bertram in the play), Count of Roussillon, who disdains the match. He vows not to accept/consummate the marriage until his wife has obtained his ring and given birth to his child. Displaying a level of agency and ingenuity unique among Boccaccio's female characters, Giletta engineers her husband's acceptance by fulfilling the terms of his riddle.[12] William Painter offered an English translation of the story in novel 38 of *The Palace of Pleasure* (1575)*,* and this likely served as Shakespeare's most immediate source. At the end of the tale, Giletta gives birth to twins: in Painter's words, 'two sons which were very like unto their father'.[13] By giving birth to not one but two healthy babies who are both male *and* resemble their father, Giletta has pulled off a kind of reproductive hat trick, providing an heir and a spare whose family resemblance guarantees their paternity. As Painter describes it, the count 'knew [...] the children also, they were so like him'.[14] Giletta's maternal success and Beltramo's self-evident paternity are depicted with an excess that both highlights the fairy-tale quality of the story and belies the instability and uncertainty that characterized real pregnancy in the period (and beyond). Painter's translation hints at the precarity of Giletta's position, somewhat sardonically noting how she 'caused [the children] carefully to be nursed and brought up' and describing her weeping and falling prostrate at Beltramo's feet to beg for his acceptance.[15] Giletta's success in securing her place as Beltramo's rightful wife is dependent on his recognition both of her and their children. Her proof that she has satisfied his conditions is external to herself, and thus, Boccaccio (and by extension Painter) are offering a fantasy of scrutable reproductive ends that necessarily elides the inscrutability of pregnancy itself.

Shakespeare, in adapting his source text, concludes his play with an announcement of pregnancy rather than the presentation of healthy young

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12 See Ferme, *Women, Enjoyment, and the Defense of Virtue*, pp. 124ff.
13 Painter, *Palace of Pleasure*, in *All's Well that Ends Well,* ed. Snyder, app. E, p. 231.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.

heirs. In doing so, he directs our attention to the liminality and contingency of pregnancy while emphasizing the interpretive authority of Helen, the presumptive mother-to-be. The language of pregnancy and procreation abounds in *All's Well*. In its first line, for instance, Bertram's mother, the Countess, laments the necessity of 'delivering' her son from her in his leaving (1.1.1), and later, the King attempts to reconcile a reluctant Bertram to his sudden marriage, a 'new-born brief', with the assurance that his new bride's attributes 'breed honour' (2.3.175, 2.3.129).[16] Most importantly, procreation anchors the riddle with which Bertram rejects Helen, swearing to avoid his new wife and the marriage bed until she can achieve what seems impossible:

> When thou canst get the ring upon my finger, which never shall come off, and show me a child begotten of thy body that I am father to, then call me husband; but in such a 'then' I write a 'never'.
>
> (3.2.55–58)

At the end of the play, of course, Helen seems to have satisfied these conditions thanks to a successful bed trick—a conventional plot device whereby one party in a sex act has been secretly replaced by a substitute. When she appears onstage with the ring and a pregnancy announcement, the reactions of characters onstage, the expectations of genre, and conventional interpretations of the play alike suggest that she has successfully secured her position as wife by fulfilling his stipulations.

Even so, the play's conclusion provokes controversy, not least because the abrupt changes of fortune and heart on which it relies are difficult to reconcile with the plot's seeming insistence on the tidiness of a riddle solved.[17] A less commonly referenced complicating factor in the play's conclusion is that Helen has not actually fulfilled the precise terms of Bertram's demand; instead of 'show[ing him] a child', she offers instead the 'proof' of her pregnancy. Her interpretative authority is rooted in somatic evidence, signaled in the riddle with which Diana, Helen's co-conspirator in the bed trick played on Bertram, announces Helen's reappearance at the play's end: 'one that's dead is quick./ And now behold the meaning' (5.3.303–4). Ironically juxtaposing Helen's supposed death with a declaration

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16   Citations from Shakespeare, *All's Well that Ends Well*, ed. Snyder.

17   Kathryn Schwarz probes the conventional 'problem play' designation, arguing that it belies the constancy and chastity that characterizes Helen's actions; she suggests that it is the fact of Helen's powerful will itself that makes the play a 'problem' for audiences. Schwarz, 'My intents are fix'd'.

of new life, Diana references the quickening, the stage of pregnancy at which 'the first perceptible movements of the fetus during pregnancy' can be felt by the mother, often presumed to be around the fourth month of pregnancy, but in practice dated anywhere from around the 13th to 25th week.[18] While midwifery texts from the early modern period tend to call the possibly pregnant woman's phenomenological experiences into question, suggesting that birth was the only foolproof means of retroactively guaranteeing pregnancy, the quickening was nonetheless viewed as a significant turning point in pregnancy, verifying the existence of new life.[19] As Laura Gowing has identified, the quickening was taken as the best means of forecasting parturition, and it was dependent on the woman's sensations: 'internal feeling was the best measure of pregnancy'.[20] Helen herself, not just her womb, is 'quick' in Diana's telling; she constructs herself as a legible signifier of future life.

At the end of *All's Well*, Helen simultaneously presents her pregnancy as an object of interpretation and lays claim to the performative agency to script its meaning. She revisits the riddle Bertram had initially put to her, but in doing so, she revises his text in significant ways. While he had demanded to be shown his child, Helen offers instead his letter itself, and though she is brandishing the original, she paraphrases its contents: 'this it says/ "When from my finger you can get this ring/ And are by me with child, etc." This is done' (311–13). She has indeed succeeding in getting the ring that symbolizes the consummation of their marriage, but in Helen's iteration of Bertram's riddle, pregnancy has replaced the living child demanded both by Bertram and by Shakespeare's source text. Helen elides this difference with the performative claim 'this is done', which underscores her own agential capacity while situating the key events in past tense—as fait accompli—rather than as ongoing process, as pregnancy might be understood to be. Though Helen insists on a present relationship instantiated by the pregnancy and ring she bears—full marriage to Bertram—the sense of completion suggested in her phrasing is belied by the way in which her pregnancy extends beyond the boundaries of the play itself. The act of conception may indeed be 'done', and by gesturing back to it, Helen insists on the facts of the bed trick as she has presented them, but pregnancy itself is a state of flux—it bears a proleptic relationship to maternity, but it is not wholly synonymous with it.

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18 'quickening, n. 1'. *OED Online*, December 2016, Oxford University Press.
19 See Moncrief, 'Show me a child', pp. 31–33.
20 Gowing, *Common Bodies*, p. 122.

While Shakespeare depicts Helen's motherhood as a hypothetical—rather than, as in Painter, the defining feature of Giletta's successful ending—he adds a new unequivocally maternal figure to the plot, Bertram's mother, the Countess of Roussillon. Helen and the Countess are juxtaposed throughout the play as both women contrive to match Helen to Bertram. Janet Adelman counts the Countess among the 'suffocating mothers' in her book by that title, associated with oppressive female agency. Adelman suggests that in announcing her pregnancy, Helen 'becomes the epitome of the maternal power than binds the child'; paradoxically, by becoming a father, Bertram makes Helen a binding mother who can replicate his own.[21] This conflation of Helen and the Countess offers a lens through which we can read Helen as, in a sense, always already a mother (or a future mother) in the play. The Countess's powerful sense of maternal agency is symbolized early in the play when she repeatedly expresses a motherly relationship to Helen as a means of teasing out the younger woman's attraction to Bertram. She insists, 'I say I am your mother,/ And put you in the catalogue of those/ That were enwombèd mine' (1.3.131–33). The Countess here lays claim to an imaginative discursive authority around what constitutes the maternal bond, with the potential to revise the history of her womb to encompass the relationships that she builds. When Helen balks at the specter of incest suggested were she to share a mother with her beloved, the Countess raises the possibility that she might instead be mother-in-law, a suggestion that shifts the conversation away from the genealogical past to the dynastic future, shaping a bond between the two women that animates Helen's quest. Helen, in asserting her procreative will over Bertram in order to rewrite their relationship, is mirroring her mother-in-law in leveraging the discourse of pregnancy.

Maternal agency is, then, a powerful force in the play, which makes Shakespeare's revision of his source text, and the interpretive instability that characterizes the end of the play, all the more striking. Shakespeare exchanges the overdetermined reproductive futurity signaled by Giletta's twin paternal doppelgangers for the spectacle of Helen's purportedly pregnant body. The text leaves the nature of this spectacle unclear; while Diana's reference to the quickening places Helen at least partway through the pregnancy, the scene includes none of the evocative, weighty language that characterizes full-term characters like Juliet in *Measure for Measure* and Hermione in *The Winter's Tale.* Critics have tended to assume that Helen's pregnancy would need to be visible to audiences for dramatic effect and biological veracity, but as Caroline Bicks points out, this need not be the

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21   Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, p. 83.

case.[22] When Diana impels the audience to 'behold the meaning', she frames Helen as a self-evidently intelligible signifier, but given the way in which the state of pregnancy was, to return to Moncrief's terms, simultaneously 'obvious and obfuscating', the specific meaning of the spectacle of the maternal body is far from clear. Moncrief argues that in light of its fraught interplay of visibility and indeterminacy, Helen's 'performance of pregnancy' calls the stability of the play's ending into question, suggesting that her successes in winning Bertram 'may not be as certain as they first appear'.[23] Helen claims that through the ring and her pregnancy, Bertram has been 'doubly won', a phrasing that can't help but hearken back to Giletta's twins. The comparison underscores the extent to which Helen, in contrast to her literary ancestress, relies on her own interpretive claims, and eventually, her rhetorical performance of pregnancy, to secure her fate.

Helen's state at the end of the play can be read in terms of the 'blank, unresolved space' that Cowgill reads in Chaucer, raising questions about agency and interpretive authority that suffuse the work. Indeed, indeterminacy may be the point, underscoring as it does the contingency spelled out in the play's title. While ink is often spilled on the concluding adverb, assessing whether the play could be said to end 'well' or not, by concluding with pregnancy, the play also calls into question its own 'end'. While Helen's pregnancy seems to point to a future beyond the end of the scene, the play itself gestures toward recursivity rather than forward progress, as the King promises Diana her pick of noble husbands, just as he did with Helen. Past and future are bound up in the liminal temporal space of pregnancy; simultaneously heavy with meaning and inscrutable, Helen's pregnancy reflects the complexity of maternal agency and its contingent dynamics of time and interpretation as they emerge in *All's Well that Ends Well.*

The quick and the dead: pleading the belly in Shakespeare and Webster

When Diana declares, 'So there's my riddle: one that's dead is quick' (5.1.303), she paves the way for Helen's seeming rebirth and alludes to her possible pregnancy. Yet this 'riddle' also gestures usefully toward other characters

22   Bicks, 'Planned Parenthood', pp. 299–303. For a recent example, take the 2011 Globe Theatre production, available on DVD, in which Helen (Ellie Piercy) does not appear visibly pregnant in the play's last scene. Shakespeare, *All's Well that Ends Well*, dir. Dove.

23   Moncrief, 'Show me a child', p. 34.

with possible pregnancies in early modern drama. Joan la Pucelle, Shake-speare's fictionalized Joan of Arc in *Henry VI, Part 1* (1592), and Cariola, in John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613–14), are killed even though they might be pregnant. Both quick and dead, these seemingly disparate figures all, in a sense, plead their bellies. While this tactic, in which a condemned woman could claim pregnancy to forestall a death sentence, technically offered only a temporary reprieve to condemned women, in sixteenth and early seventeenth century England it could often enable women to avoid execution entirely. Reprieves for possible pregnancy could later turn into commuted sentences or pardons.[24] Of these characters, Joan comes closest to facing judicial execution, but her condemnation comes from her English enemies rather than a court of law. Cariola also claims pregnancy, in her case to obtain clemency from murderers. Even Helen can be seen as successfully pleading her belly, using her pregnancy announcement as leverage to revivify herself and reconstitute her marriage. Whereas Helen's claim to pregnancy is taken seriously by characters in the play and audiences of it, the possible pregnancies claimed by Joan and Cariola are suffused with doubt, raising questions of when and how maternal authority can be imagined to work in framing narratives of pregnancy. All three characters, however, retell their pasts and imagine new futures in the midst of the strange, nonlinear time of possible pregnancy. As part of the fictional worlds of period theater, potential pregnancy enables a proliferation of narratives and interpretations by making obvious irresolvable uncertainties about past, present, and future. By opening the question of whether or not a character is pregnant and refusing to resolve it, these plays raise speculation about past events and gesture toward diverse hypothetical outcomes. When Joan and Cariola plead their bellies they reveal the productive uncertainty of potential pregnancy and test its limits.

A potential pregnancy is not an unreasonable representation of parent and child relationships and inheritance in *Henry VI, Part 1*. Although Joan is the play's only potential mother, there are many parent–child pairs. Prominent among them is the ineffectual Henry VI, who cannot live up to the memory of his father, Henry V, and his past triumphs in the war against France. However, resembling one's father is no guarantee of victory. The elder Talbot is England's remaining great warrior, a parallel to Joan in the ongoing Hundred Years War. His son is just as brave and as unwilling to retreat as he is, even in the face of certain death. The Talbots die together, both unwilling to flee when massively outnumbered, thus ending their

24   Levin contextualizes Joan's plea: 'Murder not then the fruit within my womb', pp. 81–84.

family line. When Joan is captured by the English, after a last ditch attempt at using witchcraft to turn around her fortunes in battle, she encounters and renounces her father and announces her supposed pregnancy. These linked declarations throw into relief the failures of inheritance throughout the play to ensure social stability and to transfer authority. Joan's temporal creations, the new pasts and futures born of her possible pregnancy, undercut the fiction of stable family lines sustaining social order.

During Act 5, scene 6, as the English lords, York and Warwick, lead Joan toward her death, she first stresses an illustrious parentage and then claims pregnancy as she searches for a persuasive narrative to save her life. Her desperation and the hostile skepticism of lords suggest that Joan is blatantly lying. Yet regardless of the validity of her claims, the immediate proximity of Joan's rejection of her father, the Shepherd, and her claim of pregnancy indicates that possible pregnancy reflects the failures of inheritance to insure family legacies and cultural stability. Establishing their relationship, the Shepherd asserts: 'She was the first fruit of my bach'lorship' (5.6.13) and when Joan declares her condition she echoes his wording, 'I am with child, ye bloody homicides./ Murder not then the fruit within my womb' (62–63).[25] This further underlines the connection between Joan's retelling of her childhood and her articulation of a future child. The Shepherd first declares that her situation 'kills thy father's heart outright' (2), and asserts 'I'll die with thee' (6). Before she even speaks, Joan violates the expectation that parents should live on through their children. She may kill her father in a variety of ways: emotionally, through inadvertently encouraged suicide, and through challenging her paternity to the Shepherd's face. Although Joan's supposed patricide is more direct, it is suggestive of Helen's assertion that she has forgotten her father: 'I think not on my father,/ [...] What was he like?' (1.1.81, 83). While Helen uses her inheritance, her father's special receipt for curing the King's fistula, to create a new future for herself, Joan tries to recast her past and future and is roundly denounced by the men around her. When Joan rejects the Shepherd, he, in return, reimagines the past by positing childhood deaths by poisoned breast milk or attacking wolves before consigning Joan to the flames. If she offers him no legacy, she might as well never have been born. These dire imaginings don't bode well for Joan's potential offspring. Her temporal creations are at odds with those of the men around her from the outset.

Like other possibly pregnant characters, Joan's pregnancy announcement also highlights character and audience efforts to interpret women's illegible

25   *The First Part of Henry VI.*

bodies. Joan's retellings of past and future may not stall the stories others tell about her, but their thwarted interpretations further underscore the failure of patriarchal descent to insure social order. York and Warwick assert the dauphin's paternity and condemn the possible infant because of it, encouraging Joan to identify other fathers and then reproving her for naming first Alençon, then René of Naples. Their narrative suggestions and rejections encourage interpretation of Joan's performance of pregnancy and raise questions about her sexuality. As with Helen, possible pregnancy makes overt the impossibility of ever resolving such questions. Bicks notes: 'Naming multiple fathers, Joan becomes the "Strumpet" that Helena suggests she might be when she bargains with the King.'[26] Warwick and York's negative reactions to both Joan's cutting rejection of the Shepherd and her claims about her child's paternity highlight the weight they confer on patrilineal inheritance. But even as they use lineal descent to taunt Joan and expose her desperation, they reveal brokenness in their own values. All of the potential fathers paradoxically condemn a possible child that the English lords simultaneously assume cannot exist. They actually collaborate with Joan to revise and erase paternity, undercutting its presumed solidity. Even as York and Warwick seem certain of their interpretation of Joan—barren wanton who is not carrying on her father's line and therefore is incapable of reproducing—they leave all options open except survival: 'And yet forsooth she is a virgin pure!/ Strumpet, thy words condemn thy brat and thee./ Use no entreaty, for it is in vain' (5.6.83–85). For all his sarcasm and skepticism, York allows that there could be a 'brat'. Joan may be anyone from a virgin who lied in desperation to a pregnant witch. The very obscurity of her possible pregnancy makes apparent the inadequacy of lineal inheritance, the play's primary mechanism of transmitting authority. Helen stage-manages her pregnancy announcement, enabling her to exert control over others' reactions and harness a credibility that Joan, an enemy captive, cannot hope to match. Pleading her belly does not save Joan, but even in death she is quick with possibilities, which live on as simultaneous might-have-beens that can never be resolved.

This is a liminal, temporally pliable space that Joan shares with Cariola, the loyal lady in waiting and confidant to Webster's titular character in *The Duchess of Malfi*. When considered in connection with all of the attention paid to the Duchess's maternal body, by characters within the play and scholars,[27] Cariola's last-second pregnancy announcement builds on

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26   Bicks, 'Planned Parenthood', p. 327, n. 63, references *All's Well* 2.2.172.
27   See for example Luckyj, *Winter Snake*; Ray, 'So troubled with the mother'.

and intensifies our awareness of the obfuscating nature of pregnancy and highlights attempts to interpret indecipherable female bodies. Procreation is a central concern in Webster's play, as characters spend much time trying to confirm maternity and determine rightful inheritance. At the start of the play the Duchess is a widow, and she seemingly has no children until the three that result from her secret marriage to Antonio, her steward. However, midway through the play her brother, Ferdinand commands: 'Write to the Duke of Malfi, my young nephew/ She had by her first husband' (3.3.67–68).[28] While the historical Duchess did have a son during her first marriage, Webster never resolves this apparent discrepancy. Years after she seemingly becomes a mother in the play, Ferdinand's lines instigate retrospective uncertainty about her maternal status at its outset. Reminiscent of Chaucer's willful obscuring of Criseyde's maternal status, this shadow of a possible pregnancy creates an alternate temporality, inviting audiences to rewrite the past and future in light of a heretofore unknown eldest son. Even before the introduction of this son, the Duchess's indeterminate maternity is a prominent feature of her remarriage. Bosola, serving as a spy for her two brothers, spends a lot of time and energy in Act 2 trying to confirm her supposed first pregnancy. Like the author of an early modern midwifery manual, he is unable to verify it through her appearance or observation of symptoms, suggestive though they are. Antonio provides definitive evidence by dropping the baby's nativity, or horoscope, in Bosola's presence. Pregnancy remains illegible, and only the birth of the child retrospectively confirms its existence.

When Cariola, like the Duchess, faces death on Ferdinand's command and at Bosola's hands in Act 4, scene 2, she pleads her belly, and this possible pregnancy aligns with and highlights the uncertainty about procreation that fills the play. Rather than accept death as inevitable, like the Duchess, Cariola uses possible pregnancy to articulate past and future narratives that she hopes will save her. Although they fail, potential maternity continues to shadow the play to its end. As with Joan, Cariola's revisions proliferate. She asserts by turns that she is engaged, has information about treason, has not been to confession in two years, and is pregnant. This excess of options makes all her pleas seem implausible, and yet also makes her pregnancy announcement more credible; Cariola's claim of being 'contracted to a young gentleman' (4.2.239–40) and avoidance of confession might align with a pregnancy. Secret relationships are demonstrably conceivable in *The*

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28   Webster, *Duchess of Malfi.*

Duchess of Malfi, given the Duchess and Antonio's clandestine marriage.[29] As with Joan's profusion of fathers, for her prospective child and herself, and the impossible possible chronologies of May's conception in 'The Merchant's Tale', Webster creates a paradoxical array of pasts and futures even as Cariola faces her end.

Cariola's pregnancy claim also aligns with and follows from the Duchess's final, fruitless instructions on caring for her youngest children. Up to this point the Duchess seems to believe, due to Bosola's deception, that her two youngest children are already dead, when in fact they die around the same time as Cariola. Despite this, the Duchess famously gives Cariola final instructions on caring for the children: 'I pray thee, look thou giv'st my little boy/ Some syrup for his cold, and let the girl/ Say her prayers ere she sleep' (4.2.196–98). The uncertainty about what the Duchess knows or believes about her own maternal status is reflected in Cariola's claims. Both women might be mothers and, given the final responsibility the Duchess places on Cariola, her sudden maternal claims invoke ties to those doomed children and to the son, or sons, that live on. The surviving characters declare the Duchess and Antonio's surviving son the heir, and he faces an unstable inheritance and a possible brother with only the memory of his mother to back him.

Although very different from Helen's cleverly staged return, Cariola's frantic final lines underline that for all these characters possible pregnancy is life and death. When she declares: 'I am quick with child!' (4.2.245), Bosola replies, 'Why then/ Your credit's saved' (245–46). Webster uses the same terms that Shakespeare employs in Diana's riddle and in an injunction to Helen on familial duty: 'You must hold the credit of your father' (1.1.79–80). This is a coincidence, but an illustrative one. Bosola's quip callously asserts that killing Cariola saves her reputation because if she is, to use a pointed term, expecting, no one will ever know because this possible pregnancy will never come to fruition. 'Credit' is, in a sense, the social burden she dies to preserve, a condition that recalls the 'credit' obligations born by Helen as her father's heir. While Helen uses her pregnancy to sustain a lot of 'credit', to tentatively recreate relationships and reputations in a very unstable world, Cariola's claims generally aren't given any. As with Warwick and York's treatment of Joan, Bosola's snark allows for a potential child even as it encourages audiences to presume desperate, false pleading. Even as Bosola

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29   Marcus proposes another possibility: 'Cariola's seemingly irrational plea may be based on the hope that, if they believe she has a man available to avenge her, the executioners will be less likely to take her life'. Webster, *Duchess of Malfi*, p. 287, n. 4.2.239–40.

assassinates Cariola, the possible versions of past and present that she creates proliferate and haunt the play. Helen and Joan share this reproductive limbo, as do Criseyde and May. All these permutations remain as irresolvable as the possible pregnancies of the characters. Pleading the belly enables female characters' efforts to rewrite their lifetimes, but also invites the prescriptive interpretations of others. Through these figures, these texts probe the limits of temporal productivity and interpretive authority embodied in possible pregnancy.

Conclusion

The texts explored in this chapter invoke the possibility of pregnancy in service of a range of possible ends, for instance: to save marriages, facilitate adultery, mitigate sins, to inspire mercy, or to call morality into question. The possibly maternal characters we have examined all present interpretive dilemmas that themselves produce multiple, if competing, meanings. While May may not plead her belly in the same way Joan and Cariola, or even Helen, do, she too leverages the possibilities of pregnancy to assert control over her destiny. Helen's revision of Bertram's conditions for their married life is not so dissimilar from the reinterpretations Chaucer invites readers to consider when he speculates about Criseyde's maternity and plays with his own sources. Attending specifically to possible pregnancies in early English literary works, not only to verifiable ones, makes pregnancy's obfuscation obvious, revealing the tendency of writers to highlight interpretive and epistemological uncertainty about female characters' bodies, pasts, and futures, through irreconcilable, simultaneous possible options. The temporal, generic, and thematic distinctions among these texts reflect the scope of the potential lenses through which possible pregnancy might productively be viewed, and it is because of, rather than in spite of, the range in the texts we've explored that we see these instances of raised but unresolved maternity as constituting a generative body for analysis.

   The questions of gendered authority and conditions of possibility associated with potential pregnancy are thrown into sharper relief by considering the practice of pleading the belly in relation to another early modern legal tradition that might be considered a rough analog—the recourse literate men (but not women) enjoyed to benefit of clergy. If a male first offender could demonstrate literacy, he could swap knowledge for survival. Women lacked this option, but were able instead to leverage the possibilities of pregnancy to shape their narratives. After a woman pled pregnancy in an

effort to defer her fate, a board of matrons presumed to have the knowledge and experience of childbirth necessary to render judgment would examine her; their determination of pregnancy or possible pregnancy could result in temporary—and sometimes permanent—reprieve.[30] A legal fiction animated by gendered, embodied, maternal knowledge and authority, this process evoked by Joan and Cariola depends on the uncertain temporality and moral implications associated with premodern pregnancy.

The female authority invoked in pleading the belly was, however, still mediated by male legal authority. It is a literary/historical fact that the female characters we have explored are likewise mediated figures, conjured by male authors and narrators, and, in the case of the dramas, originally embodied on stage by male actors. Even as these texts reflect the possibilities for embodied interpretive authority associated with maternal femininity, they also can't help but reflect a broader cultural anxiety about the nature of that power and an interest in its limitations. In an era in which pregnancy was increasingly viewed as a medical concern under the purview of male authority, as Guillemeau's pamphlet helps illustrate, potential pregnancy and its concomitant association with women's experiential knowledge was a subject ripe for scrutiny, just as it subjected (and continues to subject) bodies to scrutiny. Putting literary works portraying possible pregnancy into dialogue with medical literature, women's history, the history of law, and other disciplinary approaches and methods could shed light on the ways in which premodern women could, and did, leverage narratives around their bodies in attempts to author their fates. Possible but unprovable pregnancy disrupts the passage of time, assumptions of inheritance, and the supposedly inevitable advance from one phase of life to the next. Reproductive time, which can be viewed as at once cyclical and teleological, is paused in these depictions of potential maternity-in-progress. The irresolvable nature of the possibilities, probabilities, and uncertainties associated with pregnancies that are claimed but do not progress within the bounds of a text illuminates the ambiguities that adhere to social narratives of pregnancy and maternity in the medieval and early modern periods.[31]

30   Levin, 'Murder not then the fruit within my womb', pp. 81–83.

31   Thanks to the participants in the workshop 'Maybe Baby, or Pregnant Possibilities in Medieval and Early Modern Literature', 18 June 2015 at the 25th anniversary Attending to Early Modern Women Conference for stimulating conversation that led to this essay.

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10   Evolving families

Realities and images of stepfamilies, remarriage, and half-siblings in early modern Spain

Grace E. Coolidge and Lyndan Warner

Abstract

'Evolving Families' examines remarriage and the stepfamily in Spain in the 1500s and 1600s. One in three children experienced the disruption of a parent's death with the possibility of the surviving parent's remarriage bringing a stepparent as well as stepsiblings or new half-siblings. The essay reviews how advice literature suggested strategies to cope with the bereavement and replacement phases of a stepfamily and analyzes archival records of births, marriages, testaments, estate inventories, and guardianship arrangements to reveal the gendered patterns of stepfamilies. Widowers were more likely to remarry and a younger first-time bride meant an extended fertility became a feature of many stepfamilies. Although family portraits were rare in Golden Age Spain, *The Painter's Family* by Diego Velázquez's son-in-law Juan Bautista del Mazo illustrates the half-siblings of two marriages to capture the expanded age range as well as the emotional connections, and disruptions imposed by death and remarriage.

Keywords: guardianship; stepfamily; remarriage; estate inventories; family portraits; Velázquez-del Mazo; half-siblings

Over the life cycle, an adult in early modern Europe could become a spouse, widow or widower, single parent, and then once again a spouse, with the possibility of repeating the cycle, as remarriage rates hovered between one-fifth to one-third of marriages.[1] If a child in early modern Castile lived

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1   Dupâquier *et al.*, eds., *Marriage and Remarriage*; Casey, *Early Modern Spain*, p. 214: James Casey states that about a fifth of marriages in seventeenth-century Spain were remarriages for

past its first birthday, he or she had more than a one in three chance of losing at least one parent to death's scythe before adulthood.[2] By their very nature, families evolve over time as children are born, grow, and leave home, but the early modern stepfamily experienced further periods of change when a parent died and the surviving spouse entered into a union with a new partner. For the child, the introduction of a stepparent into the household meant the possibility of siblings (either stepbrothers and stepsisters or newborns) from the remarried couple. Stepfamilies literally 'embodied time', as their very existence resulted from the changes death and remarriage had created.

The stepfamily in early modern Spain had many configurations, first disrupted, then reassembled, enlarged, and diminished in a pattern that could be repeated over generations. The social connections, economic partnerships, and even emotional attachments between the family members that entered and exited the life of a child or adult can sometimes be glimpsed in the archival record as families struggled with inheritance and distribution of property. In Mediterranean Europe, the family's evolution through a cycle of remarriage attracted criticism and controversy from secular authorities and the Tridentine church, and in the plots of popular stage dramas.[3] Legal prohibitions, too, reflected the tensions that surrounded the issue of remarriage and the evolution of the family into a new form.[4] Particular anxiety in more moneyed circles focused on property and the potential harm to the children of a first marriage when a parent, especially a widow, turned attention to a new spouse or to new younger siblings and displaced the members of the original family unit.[5]

This chapter examines the elite stepfamily in Spain in the 1500s and 1600s through archival documents, advice literature, and a remarkable group portrait. The first part of the chapter focuses on archival records, which reveal the gendered and temporal patterns created by death and remarriage in early modern Spanish families in testaments, estate inventories, and guardianship arrangements. Advice literature demonstrates an early modern awareness of

one or both partners.

2   Vassberg, 'Orphans and Adoption', p. 441; in census data from 15 Castilian villages ranging from 1553 to 1664, 38.5 percent of children under 19 were orphaned or half-orphaned, 23 percent lost fathers, 12 percent lost mothers. The nobility, too, struggled with the results of parents' early deaths. Coolidge, 'Investing in the Lineage', pp. 228–29.

3   Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family, and Ritual*, pp. 275–76; Fink De Backer, *Widowhood in Early Modern Spain*, pp. 41–68; Carrión, *Staging Marriage in Early Modern Spain*, pp. 105, 115.

4   See, for example, Burns, ed., *Underworlds*, partida VI, title XVI, law IV, 1285.

5   Calvi, 'Reconstructing the Family', p. 275; Warner, *Stepfamilies in Europe*, pp. 242-48.

the evolution of a family through the disruption of the death of a parent to the integration of new family members into a stepfamily. Moving away from an examination of continuity and change between centuries, the chapter focuses instead on continuity and change within the life of the stepfamily. Writers such as Juan Luis de Vives and Luisa de Padilla attempted to control and manage the evolution of blended families through their advice. While Spanish concerns about remarriage and the blended family were similar to those in other parts of Europe, artistic patronage shows a markedly different pattern in Spain compared to northern Europe at a particular moment in time. Commissions for portraits of real or imagined moments in the life cycle of a Spanish family were scarce, which renders the choices in *The Painter's Family* by Juan Bautista del Mazo all the more fascinating. Although this portrait is not representative of all blended families, a close reading of this painting and the archive documents surrounding the elite family it portrays captures the emotional connections and disruptions imposed by death and remarriage over the life course of the artist's family. Thus the two sections of the essay, which investigate archival sources and provide an analysis of *The Painter's Family* as a text, complement each other by revealing the financial, legal, and emotional complexities of an early modern Spanish stepfamily.

Remarriages and the structure of stepfamilies

Gender played an important part in the elite family's experience of widowhood and the possibility of remarriage. The death of a husband gave a woman access to power she did not have as a wife. A widow in Castile was entitled to her dowry, half of the couple's shared property, and the *arras* (her bride gift from her husband), and she was legally emancipated from parental control.[6] If she was appointed guardian of her minor children by their father in his will or by a judge, she would also administer a deceased husband's half of the community property on their behalf, earning the rights to one-tenth of the estate's income. By law a widow lost access to the children's financial assets if she remarried, although she could petition the king for a license to keep her guardianship after remarriage, using a legal mechanism called *gracias a sacar*.[7]

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6   Fink De Backer, *Widowhood in Early Modern Spain*, p. 112. For variations in widows' rights across the regions of Spain, see Casey, *Early Modern Spain*, p. 28. For more on widowhood across Europe, see Warner and Cavallo, *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe.*
7   Twinam, *Public Lives, Private Secrets,* p. 43. Fink De Backer, *Widowhood in Early Modern Spain,* pp. 148–49.

Across early modern Europe and in Spain too, male remarriage was the most common pattern. Whether by choice or circumstance such as poverty, age, guardianship of children, or landholding patterns, many widows did not remarry. Thus lone widows were a high proportion (about 15 percent) of the heads of households across the villages of rural Castile in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century.[8] In the more urban setting of Toledo, widows were approximately 19.3 percent of the population in 1561.[9] There were consistently more widows than widowers (4 to 12 times more) in sixteenth-century Castilian villages.[10] In Spain across the early modern period as in other parts of Europe, widowers were more than twice as likely to remarry as widows. Isabel Beceiro Pita and Ricardo Córdoba de la Llave find that the rate of remarriage was 13 percent for men and 5 percent for women in fifteenth-century Seville, though the rate for the nobility was higher.[11] Similarly in a study of 82 noble widows who were guardians of their children between 1400 and 1700, only 2 remarried.[12] Across these sources some widows who did remarry might be hidden as wives in the records, but widowers were also hidden as heads of household with a new wife. Overall, male remarriage and wife substitution often defined the stepfamily experience, a pattern reflected in the archival documents surrounding Mazo's *Painter's Family.*

Among the urban elite in Spain as elsewhere in Europe, remarriage reconstructed an economic network and could also serve to build new networks and to enrich a spouse from one marital phase to the next. In sixteenth-century Madrid, a study of the town councillors reveals that in negotiating their second marriages, widowers were able to attract brides with larger dowries or more important social and political connections than their first wives had provided.[13] Pedro del Arce's marital career demonstrates well this financial strategy of the urban elite. Born in 1607, Arce married in 1642 to doña María Tufiño de Vallejo, the widow of a jewel merchant who brought nearly a million *maravedíes* with her in dowry as well as two young sons from her first marriage. The boys' inheritance from their father was given to their stepfather Arce to hold in trust until the boys came of age. Arce's

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8   Vassberg, 'Status of Widows', p. 183.
9   Fink De Backer, *Widowhood in Early Modern Spain,* p. 1.
10   Vassberg, 'Status of Widows', p. 183.
11   Beceiro Pita and Córdoba de la Llave, *Parentesco, Poder y Mentalidad*, p. 163. Poska confirms a similar statistic for peasant widows in Galicia. Poska, *Women and Authority in Early Modern Spain*, pp. 164–65.
12   Coolidge, *Guardianship, Gender, and the Nobility*, p. 111.
13   Guerrero Mayllo, *Familia y vida cotidiana de una élite de poder,* pp. 69–71.

marriage benefited him financially, which enabled him to rise professionally. In 1643 Arce purchased the lucrative post of *montero de cámara*, which cost him nearly a fifth of his estate but gave him a modest salary, significant tax exemptions, and, most importantly, proximity to the king through the right to attend the royal bedchamber. Arce also became an assayer and inspector in the Royal Mint (*ensayador de la casa de la moneda*) and an art collector of some note – *The Fable of Arachne* by Velázquez currently in the Prado Museum was owned by Arce.[14] At the time of his first marriage to the widow Vallejo his estate had been worth about 5,000 *ducados*, but when his goods were inventoried for his second marriage in 1664 his estate was worth between 66,000 and 75,000 *ducados*. When Arce remarried in 1664 he chose another wealthy widow who brought a dowry that included numerous valuable paintings.[15]

The evolution of Arce's family through two marriages also brought him substantial responsibilities and throws light on the gendered aspects of remarriage. When his first wife died her will referred to the 'great care and many expenses and personal oversight' that the settling of her dowry property had cost Arce. In an unusually direct reference to the financial and personal aspects of the new family she had formed with her second marriage, doña María noted that, 'if it had not been for his assistance, expense, and intelligence—having given in every way what he had to the common household—the [dowry] properties would have been lost'. Arce, then, had fulfilled his masculine responsibility of dealing with the financial aspects of his new marriage. Doña María's will also referred to some of the difficulties that could arise when families evolved. She repeatedly admonished her sons from her first marriage to avoid lawsuits and come to a peaceful settlement with their stepfather, stating 'Don Pedro will not defraud the aforesaid my sons in anything which would pertain to them and ought to be theirs'.[16] Indeed, it took more than 1000 pages (an entire protocol) of notarized documents to resolve the estate, and in the end Arce owed his wards over 1.3 million *maravedíes*.[17]

The phrasing of doña María's will implies trust and affection in her marriage, and Arce seems to have dealt fairly with his stepsons. However, Arce also demonstrated a shrewd understanding of how the financial advantages of

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14   Burke and Cherry, *Collections of Paintings in Madrid*, pt. I, inv. 75, item 22, pp. 587, 591.
15   Ibid., pt. I, inv. 38, pp. 377–78.
16   Archivo Histórico de Protocolos de Madrid, Madrid, Prot. 8.228, fols. 420–24; notarized copy of a document in Prot. 8.222, fols. 623 *et seq.*—cited in Burke and Cherry, *Collections of Paintings in Madrid*, pt. I, p. 379; p. 380, n. 21.
17   Burke and Cherry, *Collections of Paintings in Madrid*, pt. I, inv. 38, p. 379.

marriage accrued over time. Between the inventory of 1657 and the inventory of 1664, the value of the paintings in Arce's collection increased sharply, suggesting that Arce had undervalued them at the time of his first wife's death to reduce the cost of keeping his collection together when her belongings were liquidated. At the moment of his second marriage, however, it was in Arce's interests to inflate the value of the goods he was bringing to the marriage (to strengthen the claim his son by his first marriage would eventually have on his estate) and to deflate the value of his new wife's dowry (to lower the claim her heirs from a previous marriage would eventually have on his estate). Evidence suggests that in 1666 Arce did just that, deflating his second wife's dowry by 33 percent between the settlement of her first husband's estate and his acceptance of her dowry.[18] This saga of a sequence of death, remarriage, dowries, and paintings reveals the complex interactions between the emotional and the financial that characterized the family's evolution.

Above the level of the urban elite, families of the titled nobility evolved over time partly because of the pressure to provide a male heir who could inherit the family title, as well as the entailed property and wealth. Among the nobility the remarriage of a widowed title-holder who had no sons was almost guaranteed. The first duke of Arcos (d. 1530) provides an extreme example of this trend. His first marriage was to doña Isabel Pacheco who died childless in 1521.[19] He remarried to doña Juana Girón, who gave birth to a daughter, Geronima, and then died shortly thereafter. He married a third time to his dead wife's aunt, doña María Girón, who gave birth to a daughter and then, finally, to the son and heir that the duke needed so badly. Unfortunately, doña María died from the complications of her son's birth in 1528.[20] This family evolved rapidly from the death of the duke's first wife in 1521 to the death of his third wife only seven years later. The family would metamorphose even further with the duke's fourth marriage in quick succession to a woman who would become the stepmother to his surviving children, from the second and third marriage beds. The only constant in this evolving family was the remarrying duke, who himself died in 1530. The duke's eldest daughter Geronima from his second marriage bed seems to have predeceased him, and his two surviving children from his third marriage bed went to the care of an aunt and an uncle.[21] The duke's will again hints at the emotional complications of

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18   Ibid., pt. I, inv. 75, pp. 585–86.
19   Garcia Hernán, *Los grandes de España en la epoca de Felipe II,* pp. 351–52.
20   Ibid., p. 357; Archivo Histórico de la Nación, Madrid (AHN), Nobleza, legajo 121, no. 4, for the marriage capitulations.
21   AHN, Nobleza, Osuan, legajo 121, nos. 6 and 9.

his family's rapid evolution, as he begged his children to honor and esteem their stepmother (his fourth wife) and to allow her to live in his house for as long as she wanted to, 'as she deserves because of her character and lineage'.[22] Many other families experienced this series of marriages, births, deaths, entrances, and exits that made and remade the family unit.

While the duke of Arcos' family evolved quite rapidly, other noble families experienced a slower evolution that could leave them with half-siblings who were of different generations. Inevitably, the evolution of titled families through marriages and remarriage and the years between siblings created tensions, which often focused on inheritance. When the fifth duke of Osuna's first wife died in 1671 (after 26 years of marriage) from complications of the birth of her fifth daughter, he was left grief-stricken, with a newborn to care for, and with no male heir. He was also in a difficult financial situation. His wife had been an heiress, and on her death her titles and estate went to their eldest daughter Isabel and Isabel's husband. The duke needed help caring for his youngest daughters, and he needed a male heir, as well as the financial relief that a new wife's dowry could bring. He promptly married again, finalizing his second marriage in 1672.[23] Six years later, his second wife Antonia gave birth to a healthy male boy. The duke finally achieved a male heir after 33 cumulative years of marriage to a first then a second wife.[24] The duke and duchess were undoubtedly delighted with the appearance of the long-awaited male heir, but the duke's eldest daughter from his first marriage bed was bitterly disappointed. Isabel had married her close cousin, the count of Puebla de Montalbán in 1667,[25] and the couple had named their first-born son Gaspar after his grandfather, in the expectation that he would inherit the title of duke of Osuna since Isabel had only sisters at that point. Far from welcoming her new half-brother, Isabel sued her father for what she saw as her son's rightful share of the family wealth.[26]

Advice on remarriage and stepfamilies

The archival world of postmortem inventories, valuations of estates, remarriage contracts, and last wishes in testaments reveals the complex necessities

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22   Garcia Hernán, *Los grandes de España en la epoca de Felipe II*, p. 353.
23   Jury Gladstone, 'Aristocratic Landholding and Finances in Seventeenth-Century Castile', pp. 47–48.
24   Ibid., p. 51.
25   Ibid., p. 43.
26   Ibid., p. 52. Isabel lost the lawsuit.

that might require guidance on how to conduct family life when a widowed parent chose to enter a second marriage. In his sixteenth-century conduct book, *Instrución de la muger christiana*, published in Spanish in 1528, 1529, 1539, 1545, 1555, 1576, 1584, 1792, and 1793, Juan Luis Vives attempted to offer this guidance. Vives began by fulsomely praising the stoic widow who remained faithful to the memory of her deceased husband.[27] He quoted Saint Jerome's invocation that a remarrying widow invited 'not a new father but an enemy' into her home, 'not a parent but a tyrant'.[28] Vives continues with Saint Jerome's passage on widows. The remarrying mother inflamed by lust (*encendida de luxuria*) 'forgets the fruit of her womb' by 'putting aside her recent mourning and arrays herself as a new bride'.[29] Yet Vives also recognized the necessity of remarriage, going as far as to say that it was a 'heretical thing' (*cosa heretica*) to condemn second marriages altogether.[30] Vives' advice on 'how to live' (*como ha de uiuir*) takes on a decidedly practical tone once the widow has plunged into a remarriage, pointing out the dangers of cherishing 'the memory of a younger age' and 'comparing it with the present' because it will feel like it 'gets worse every hour'.[31] Remembering and mourning a former husband needs to stop, he says, once the widow has a new one. Because she has accumulated life experience, the widow needs to learn to deal with the passage of time, especially when she might be irritated with her current husband. She must resist reflecting too often on the special qualities (*gracias*) of the previous one.[32]

Vives also recognized the more common phenomenon of male remarriage, devoting a section of his advice manual to stepmothers (*las madrastas*). He suggests that the substitute mother should be kind to the children in her care because of the fleeting nature of life and the frequency of remarriages. Vives points out to his female reader that her own children might eventually

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27   Vives, *Education of a Christian Woman*, pp. xvi–xvii.

28   Vives, *Instrución de la muger christiana*, fols. 205v–206r: 'Toma la madre (dixe el) para sus hijos, no ayo mas enemigo, no padre mas tirano.' As Fink De Backer, *Widowhood in Early Modern Spain*, notes (pp. 34, 63), the theme of the 'evil stepfather' comes up repeatedly in Spanish literature, with Gaspar Astete, *Tratado del govierno de la familia* (1603), and Cristóbal de Castillejo, *Diálogo de las condiciones de las mugeres* (1544), also referring to this issue.

29   Vives, *Instrución de la muger christiana*, fols. 205v–206r; Vives, *Education of a Christian Woman*, p. 323.

30   Vives, *Instrución de la muger christiana*, fol. 215r.

31   Translation adapted from Vives, *Education of a Christian Woman*, p. 283, with thanks to Gabriela Pozzi; Vives, *Instrución de la muger christiana*, fols. 186v–187r: 'la memoria de la edad mas fresca que se nos fue y comparandola con la presente que por los mismos terminos se va andando: y víendo la engrauescer de cadahora'.

32   Vives, *Instrución de la muger christiana*, fols. 186v, 187v, 206v.

have a stepmother or substitute parent who cares for them, so whether she is dead or alive (*si muere, ò bive*), her treatment of other children will guide how others treat hers. He uses the vocabulary of motherhood with the stepmother to emphasize that any 'good and honourable woman' (*buena y honrada muger*) will be a mother (*madre*) to her children (*hijos*).[33]

In her seventeenth-century book *Nobleza virtuosa*, Luisa de Padilla, the countess of Aranda, echoes some of Vives' practical lessons, but presents the theme more from the perspective of the child who must deal with a stepparent. Padilla advised widowed noblemen to remarry if they did not have descendants, guidance that her own husband followed with apparent reluctance after she died.[34] Having given this advice, Luisa de Padilla's text subtly predicts her own death, counseling her daughter that, as the eldest, she 'should show the love of a mother' (*deveys tener amor de madre*) to her younger sisters and welcome a possible stepmother (*madrastra*) even if the new wife and mother proves difficult.[35] Implicitly recognizing the tensions that could disrupt sibling relationships, she counsels her daughter to love any new half-siblings that may result from the remarriage of the father to a stepmother, 'giving pleasure with a happy face and behavior and being loving and giving to these new siblings you have in her without differentiating them from the ones you already have'.[36] Padilla's advice suggests that childhood could end early if a parent died. In this case, Luisa's children predeceased her, which put pressure on her husband to make a second marriage.[37] Her text provides an example of how the reality of the death and remarriage of parents might have shaped the psychology of the early modern family and the resulting pressure on the older children from a previous marriage.

Visual images of stepfamilies

Beyond the archival evidence of frequent remarriage and the advice dispensed to the men and women who ventured into it, the visual representations of stepfamilies in Spain reveal some of the ambivalence and emotional repercussions of serial remarriage and parenting and capture even more fully the stepfamily's nature as having evolved over time. If we look across

33   Ibid., fols. 187v–188r.
34   Egido, *La nobleza virtuosa*, p. 15.
35   Padilla, *Nobleza virtuosa*, pp. 261–62; Egido, *La nobleza virtuosa*, p. 23.
36   Padilla, *Nobleza virtuosa*, p. 262: 'darla gusto con rendimiento y rostro alegre, amando, y regalando mucho los hermanque della tengays, sin diferenciar los de los primeros'.
37   Egido, *La nobleza virtuosa*, pp. 15–16.

northwestern Europe, many funerary monuments, triptychs, and family or group portraits displayed to the viewer the various phases of the family life cycle. These visual representations of real families necessitated a leap of the imagination as they often portrayed deceased siblings or parents alongside living ones to remind the viewer how the past continued into the present and to show how the survivors had forged ahead in a new permutation of the family.[38] Northern European triptychs or funerary brasses celebrating the lineage of middling to wealthy families commemorated a husband, wife, and children, but also showed serial wives by remarriage and carefully noted the children of each marriage bed. In strongly Catholic regions from Flanders to Italy, the portrayal of family members, whether as donors in devotional triptychs or later as a family group in a domestic setting, provided artists with a steady source of commissions.

Golden Age Spanish culture shared many of the lineage concerns prevalent in the rest of Europe. For example, some of the illuminated patents of nobility provide details of bloodlines with families kneeling before the Virgin or namesake saints and the occasional funerary monument depicts a husband with his two wives.[39] This did not become a general pattern, however, for despite a preference for Flemish and Italian painters among the Spanish collectors of the seventeenth century, the taste for family group portraits did not break through. As one historian has remarked, compared to other regions of Europe, 'Spanish art seems to have been slower' at developing a tradition of displaying the family as a group, with parents and children in a domestic setting. Instead art in Spain favored 'dynastic continuity' or used religious art to depict 'the moral exemplar of the home'.[40] Indeed as the Florentine ambassador commented in 1590 'in Spain they like devotional paintings with quiet attitudes and without elaboration'.[41] Paintings of family members from the Golden Age tend to favor the individual full-length portrait. In a listing of 140 inventories by 130 collectors of thousands of Spanish paintings for the years 1601– 1750 categorized according to the Iconclass classification

38   Warner, 'Remembering the Mother'; further examples in Warner, 'Seeing Stepfamilies in European Visual Culture', in Warner, *Stepfamilies in Europe*, pp. 204-32.

39   Bass, *Drama of the Portrait*, p. 65, figs. 29 and 30, shows seventeenth-century examples from Hispanic Society of America, New York. Noble tombs also occasionally contain sculptures of married couples, but not of families. Per Afán de Ribera (d. 1454) is represented on his tomb in the Monasterio de la Cartuja de Santa María de las Cuevas in Seville with his first wife, Teresa de Córdoba and his second wife, María de Mendoza. María, who survived him, is dressed in the religious habit of the order she joined towards the end of her long widowhood, Romero Medina, 'María de Mendoza', 165.

40   Casey, *Early Modern Spain*, p. 213.

41   Cherry, 'Seventeenth-Century Spanish Taste', p. 18.

system of subjects, the large category of 61B, 'historical persons, portraits and scenes from life', shows this emphasis on the commemoration of many hundreds of individuals within the comfortable to noble families of the Spanish Golden Age.[42] By contrast, Iconclass category 42, 'family and descendance', is virtually nonexistent.[43]

The art historian Raquel Novero Plaza has observed that there are only three group portraits in seventeenth-century Spanish art.[44] In 1662 José Antolínez painted the Danish ambassador to Spain, Cornelius Pedersen Lerche, with his staff and friends seated around a table, while a child and a dog run across the foreground.[45] The two other group portraits—the celebrated *Las Meninas* and *The Painter's Family*, discussed below—each illustrate a family created through male remarriage, not a nuclear family.

Nineteenth-century interpretations of *The Painter's Family* (Figure 10.1) attributed the picture to Diego Velázquez, the seventeenth-century court painter known for *Las Meninas* (1656), in which Velázquez appears in self-portrait with brush and palette in his studio with the Spanish king Philip IV and his second wife Mariana of Austria reflected in a mirror while their daughter the Infanta Margarita is attended to by courtiers or maidservants (*meninas*). According to the 1800s museum catalogue description of *The Painter's Family*, Velázquez was the artist busy in the studio space in the background in an echo of his composition in *Las Meninas*.[46] It was thought

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42 'Index of Subjects', Burke and Cherry, *Collections of Paintings in Madrid*, 61B, pp. 1436–53, details all the portraits whose male sitters are unknown, 61BB details all the unknown female sitters, 1493–1501, further categories within 61B and 61BB show male and female sitters in portraits whose identities are known and some double or group portraits by Italian artists. Some of course might be generic scenes.

43 'Index of Subjects', Burke and Cherry, *Collections of Paintings in Madrid*, p. 1402: in this Family category there are four paintings of a mother and child nursing, one painting of a father with son(s) by the Italian painter Moroni, a painting of a mother with son(s) by an anonymous artist, and six paintings of a mother or woman with children. Of these six, one was by a Flemish painter, and two others by the Italian artists Tintoretto and Titian. See, for example, the matching individual portraits of a man and wife by Velázquez. The wife is also depicted with her son, but the trio is not portrayed as one family. Diego Velázquez, *Don Diego del Corral y Arellano*, c. 1632, oil on canvas, 215 × 110 cm, *Museo del Prado*, www.museodelprado.es/coleccion/obra-de-arte/don-diego-del-corral-y-arellano/2ad754f0-ead2-4d55-942e-6b24d7c5351d; and Diego Velázquez, *Doña Antonia de Ipeñarrieta y Galdós and her Son, don Luis*, c. 1632, oil on canvas, 215 × 110 cm, *Museo del Prado*, www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/doa-antonia-de-ipearrieta-y-galdos-and-her-son/9d815be7-49bc-46be-aa41-ce882f0368a1.

44 Novero Plaza, 'La familia de Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo', pp. 179–80.

45 José Antolínez, *Ambassador C. Pedersen Lerche with his Staff*, 1662, 172.5 cm × 202 cm, *Statens Museum for Kunst*, inv. no. KMS1646, http://collection.smk.dk/#/en/detail/KMS1646.

46 Cruzada Villaamil, *Anales de la vida y de las obras de Diego de Silva Velázquez*, p. 285; López Navio, 'Matrimonio de Juan B. del Mazo con la hija de Velázquez', p. 410.

**Figure 10.1   Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo, The Painter's Family,
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria. Used by permission**

that in *The Painter's Family* Velázquez portrayed his wife Juana seated in the right foreground with her billowing skirts and children and grandchildren around her, while her daughter Francisca stood in the left foreground alongside brothers, living and dead.

Archival scholarship on the registers of baptisms, marriages, and deaths of the Velázquez–del Mazo family gradually divulged a different narrative for the painting, however, which shifted the attribution to Velázquez's son-in-law, Juan Bautista del Mazo, whose coat of arms is visible in the upper left-hand corner of the painting. In the later nineteenth century a second interpretation suggested that Mazo portrayed his nuclear family in the foreground in the early 1650s, to feature his wife Francisca Velázquez and their children, while paying tribute to his in-laws Velázquez and Juana Pacheco in the background scene of the painter's studio.[47]

47   Cruzada Villaamil, *Anales de la vida y de las obras de Diego de Silva Velázquez*, pp. 287–89.

When the painter Velázquez died in August 1660, Juan Bautista del Mazo, a long-time presence in Velázquez's workshop, succeeded to his royal court position as 'pintor de cámara' in 1661.[48] Francisca de Velázquez predeceased her father by seven years, leaving Mazo a widower with five surviving children ranging in age from about eleven months to fifteen years. Like most widower fathers with young children in early modern Europe, Mazo did remarry. Francisca Velázquez's death, before that of her father, is particularly poignant, as she seems to have dictated her testament while she died from complications of childbirth, 'con dolores de parto'. The interval between the death of his first wife and Mazo's second marriage is not yet known.[49] At least four more children were born of the second marriage, and documents about their inheritance, guardianship and timing of baptisms allow some precision in understanding the life cycle of the Velázquez–del Mazo family.

By 1960, some of this archival work on Mazo's second marriage, the string of births and eventual death of the second wife and stepmother allowed López Navio to offer a third interpretation that the new wife took her place in the painting surrounded by her children as her older stepchildren stood to the left.[50] As late as the 1990s, interpretations of the painting continued along these lines that the Velázquez grandchildren of Mazo's first marriage, several male youths in black and a daughter, stood on the left of the painting while 'Mazo's second wife with her four children' occupied the right side, with a tribute to Mazo's father-in-law as the Spanish court painter evident in the 'Velázquez portrait of Philip IV of Spain' at the center of the painting.[51]

A fourth variation on the same theme argues that the beautiful seated woman on the right is young, yet old enough to be a mother (and indeed she probably was), so she must be a young, third wife; and the baby who clings to her skirts is a new baby of the third marriage.[52] This fourth analysis of *The Painter's Family* shares the assumption that the beautiful seated woman was a new wife. Such a remarriage represented a typical pattern in early modern European families, when a widower chose a young, never-married bride as a stepmother to his children.[53]

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48   Cherry, 'Juan Bautista Martínez de Mazo', pp. 250–52.

49   Cherry, 'Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo', pp. 511, 521, apendice documental, documento 1, 1653.

50   López Navio, 'Matrimonio de Juan B. del Mazo con la hija de Velázquez', pp. 409–10.

51   Prohaska, *Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna*, p. 113.

52   Gutiérrez Pastor, 'El Retrato de la última hija de Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo', p. 312.

53   Vassberg, 'Orphans and Adoption'; Vassberg, 'Status of Widows'; Ciappara, 'Marriage and the Family in a Maltese Parish', p. 39; Carlton, 'Widow's Tale', p. 122; Palli, 'Illegitimacy and Remarriage in Estonia', pp. 476–77.

The cumulative sequence of archival documents on baptisms, marriages, death, and guardianship now published together in the *Corpus Velazqueño* allows scholars to trace the prolonged nature of the reproductive cycle of Mazo's serial marriages that is manifest in *The Painter's Family*, but not in quite the way previous generations of art historians understood, as they substituted wife for even younger wife in foreground, moving from nuclear family to stepfamily to complex stepfamily in the process. Mazo might have been paying tribute to his mentor Velázquez, the father of his first wife, Francisca Velázquez, but Mazo also told the story of the life course of his own family, capturing its evolution over time.

The seated woman in the foreground surrounded by children was indeed a wife and mother, but it was as Mazo's daughter that she fulfilled her role in the *Painter's Family*. Thus the painting does not focus on a marital relationship between the painter and one of his wives but highlights relationships among his children of two marriage beds as Novero Plaza contends in a recent (fifth) interpretation. Moreover, this rare Spanish family portrait depicts the continuation of the family after the death of a wife, with the sequence of younger siblings who often follow a father's remarriage. The half-siblings in the portrait reflect, too, the remarried families of the dukes of Arcos and Osuna mentioned earlier and in this sense *The Painter's Family* represents a gendered temporality typical of male remarriage among the Spanish elite.

Raquel Novero Plaza argues that the eldest surviving child of Mazo's first marriage with Francisca Velázquez, Inés Manuela, born in 1638, sits in the vivid, voluminous red skirt, a full generation older than the youngest surviving child of Mazo's second marriage.[54] The little boy, Francisco, in a white outfit with red accents to match his older half-sister's skirt, leans into Inés' body in a gesture of familiarity so typical of a young child comfortable with an intimate. The boy's closeness to his older half-sister captures and intensifies the generation gap so frequent in stepfamilies and serial marriages. In this case as father Mazo might have used his family portrait to prescribe to his children the affectionate relationship he hoped for between the two marriage beds, because these half-sibling relationships spread out over a generation had the potential to be fraught with tensions. As we saw above, Isabel, eldest daughter of the duke of Osuna, had to watch the replacement of her own son as the heir to the Osuna title by her newborn half-brother.

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54   Novero Plaza, 'La familia de Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo', n. 40; López Navio, 'Matrimonio de Juan B. del Mazo con la hija de Velázquez', p. 393; *Corpus Velazqueño*, Anexo doc. A1, p. 841, doc. 99, pp. 100-101, doc. 111, p. 108, doc. 137, p. 129.

Moreover, Mazo's eldest surviving daughter, doña Inés del Mazo de Silva y Velázquez, was already a remarried widow. Her first husband and the son of her first marriage had both predeceased her, and she entered her second nuptials in her 23rd year in February 1661 and became a mother again.[55] Between Mazo's eldest surviving child and youngest living child stands Mazo's granddaughter, an infant gripping onto the red skirts of her mother, Inés, to stay upright. The grandchild is only a few years younger in age than her uncle Francisco, the youngest surviving child of the second marriage. Mazo's eldest surviving son Gaspar, depicted in profile on the left of the portrait, had already married in January of 1659 and by the time of the painting had fathered at least four children.[56] Baltasar, the second son on the left of the painting, had also married and fathered at least one child.[57] The youngest son of the group of brothers from the first marriage bed, Melchor, also in black, entered the seminary at age twelve, six months after his stepmother Francesca de la Vega died.[58]

With *The Painter's Family* highlighting the trio of Inés, Francisco, and a chubby-cheeked grandchild, Mazo represents clearly the extended span of childbearing when a widower introduced a younger wife and stepmother. The eldest children of the first marriage were old enough to be the biological parents of children of subsequent marriage beds. Mazo was a grandfather at least seven times over by the time he witnessed the birth of his last child, while Francisca Velásquez had not lived to see any of her grandchildren. Gaspar's eldest son, Bruno, born in November 1659, had the privilege of having his great-grandfather Diego Velázquez named as his godfather.[59] This eldest known grandchild (and great-grandchild) was roughly the same age as his little uncle Francisco while Gaspar's fourth child, and Mazo's last son were both born in November 1663.[60] Between his first two wives, both named Francesca, Mazo's fatherhood spanned almost 30 years of fertility.

To accentuate, and perhaps encourage, the affectionate bonds between the children of the first marriage and the younger set from the second shown in the figures at the right, Mazo links the two marriage beds in his portrayal of the half-siblings. As we have already seen, the painter father

55   Novero Plaza, 'La familia de Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo', n. 41; *Corpus Velazqueño*, doc. 449, p. 511.

56   *Corpus Velazqueño*, Anexo doc. A8, A10, A11, A12, pp. 843-45; *Corpus Velazqueño*, doc. 458, p. 514; Novero Plaza, 'La familia de Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo', p. 182.

57   *Corpus Velazqueño*, doc. 457, p. 514.

58   *Corpus Velazqueño*, doc. 464, 466, pp. 517-18.

59   *Corpus Velazqueño*, Anexo doc. A10, p. 844.

60   *Corpus Velazqueño*, docs. 458–59, pp. 514–15.

grouped together his eldest and youngest surviving children—Inès and Francisco—with the older sister acting as a maternal figure to the little boy so effectively that generations of art historians assumed she was his mother. Similarly, Teresa, Mazo's daughter by his first marriage depicted as the young woman in gray standing beside her full brothers clad in black, gently caresses the head of her younger half-brother Luis, the eldest son of Mazo's second wife Francisca de la Vega. Luis in turn touches his little brother Juan Antonio. As was typical of widower fathers in comfortable socioeconomic circumstances, Mazo raised his children together in a household, with a strategy of wife replacement.

The figures in the foreground are all half-siblings or step-grandchildren, but the background scene on the right shows a woman and a toddler with arms outstretched hoping to be picked up by the painter in his studio. A catalogue description of the painting in the 1990s remarked, 'The studio scene in the background with a portrait of Infanta Margarita Teresa and a genre scene has not been clarified.'[61] We can use archival documentation about Mazo's family to speculate about who these figures are, however, and help date and understand the painting that Novero Plaza dates to 1665.[62] Francisca de la Vega, Mazo's second wife, died in 1665. Fernando, her youngest child born in November 1663, had predeceased his mother, because he is not named among her heirs.[63] Thus we notice that a curtain to the left of the painting is ready to be pulled across to separate Mazo's family in the foreground from the figures in the studio. What has separated the family members? Death.[64] The mother and child in the studio are dead rather than among the living.

The woman and the toddling boy, who raises his arms to be noticed by the artist in the studio, might commemorate Mazo's second wife Francesca and their little son Fernando. The figure of the painter in the studio could represent Mazo and nod an acknowledgment to his deceased father-in-law Velázquez, too, as the artist at the canvas in *The Painter's Family* evokes the court painter of *Las Meninas* from a decade earlier. In the court atelier, Velázquez and Mazo, as master and apprentice and later father-in-law and son-in-law, collaborated on many royal portraits. The artist in the studio works on a royal commission of Infanta Margarita of Austria dating to 1665,

61   Prohaska, *Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna*, p. 113.

62   Novero Plaza, 'La familia de Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo', p. 185.

63   *Corpus Velazqueño*, docs. 459, p. 515, docs. 463, 464, p. 517.

64   Gillgren discusses the iconography of the curtain or veil 'separating man from the divine' in a Swedish Lutheran family portrait of the early 1700s. Gillgren, 'Eye of Faith', 116–17.

roughly the same time frame as *The Painter's Family* itself.[65] Mazo was careful to pay homage to his royal patrons, too, in the portrait underway in the studio and the 1650s framed portrait of the king by Velázquez. There may be gestures or commemorative objects within *The Painter's Family* that point to Mazo's first wife Francisca and mother of the five of the children—whether it is the bust of a woman directly below a royal portrait by Velázquez or in the brooch that Teresa touches.[66] Some of these intimate meanings are probably lost to us.

When Francisca de la Vega died, she left Mazo again a widower with young children. He had four living children under the age of fourteen, Melchor from the first marriage and three living sons from his second marriage with de la Vega, Luis, Juan Antonio and Francisco as well as the older, already married and settled children discussed above. Again, another wife arrived on the scene or perhaps she was already present. Ana de la Vega, the third wife, had already acted as godmother to the last child of Francisca de la Vega and Mazo in November 1663.[67] Although there is no direct archival link yet discovered to show that Anna and Francisca were kin, the godparent connection provides strong circumstantial evidence that Ana de la Vega was most probably an aunt, the sister of Francisca de la Vega, as typical of seventeenth-century Spanish practice.[68] Moreover, the practice of marrying a deceased wife's sister was common throughout Catholic areas of Europe despite the canon law prohibition requiring a dispensation from the diocese or the pope. Such a marriage between close affinal kin or in-laws was considered to be incestuous by the Catholic Church, but this pattern of remarriage served to keep the family patrimony intact as well as attempting to ensure a loving, caring relationship between the stepmother-aunt and the children in her care. Remarriage to a deceased wife's sister, the children's aunt, intensifies in the late eighteenth century and into the early 1900s but can be found intermittently before then.[69]

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65   Novero Plaza suggests that the portrait of the *Infanta Margarita* was started by Velázquez before his death and finished by Mazo, but the Prado Museum attributes the painting entirely to Mazo dated *c.* 1665; Novero Plaza, 'La familia de Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo', p. 181; Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo, *The Infanta Margarita de Austria*, *c.* 1632, 215 × 110 cm, *Museo del Prado*, www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/the-infanta-margarita-de-austria/88462bf7-a4f2-4238-901e-8541105293d5.

66   Novero Plaza, 'La familia de Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo', p. 183, n. 26.

67   *Corpus Velazqueño*, doc. 459, p. 515.

68   López Navio, 'Matrimonio de Juan B. del Mazo con la hija de Velázquez', pp. 397, 408; Novero Plaza, 'La familia de Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo', p. 186.

69   Warner, *Stepfamilies in Europe*, pp. 239-42.

Mazo's complex family went on evolving after his own death in February of 1667.[70] His sons with his second wife, Francisca de la Vega, were still young enough to need care and a guardian when he died in February. In June 1667 all three boys were living (perhaps for educational purposes) with don Jorge de Lima in Madrid. By 1668 Mazo's third wife had remarried, and she and her new husband were responsible for the care and education of her stepson-nephews. It isn't clear who held their formal guardianship at that point, but the fact that they were still in Ana de la Vega's care strongly suggests that she was their mother's sister in addition to being their stepmother. In November of 1668 Ana de la Vega submitted a petition asking for don José de Vera to be appointed the formal guardian of her three stepsons, a responsibility which he accepted and subsequently carried out, collecting rents on the boys' behalf. As a remarried stepmother, even with her probable link as maternal aunt Ana de la Vega was very unlikely to receive the long-term formal guardianship that would include control of their considerable property, but it is quite possible that she retained a close relationship with the boys as they grew older and may even have shared custody of them.[71]

In his painting, Mazo points the viewer in multiple ways to the passage of time and the evolution of a family through first marriage, death, second marriage, death, and into the future of the next generation. *The Painter's Family* shows the continuation of the family in a new generation, portrayed by a granddaughter clinging to the skirts of her mother. This infant girl in the foreground perhaps represents the others of her generation too, and emphasizes how women (even if short-lived) shaped the future through their reproductive capacities. If the curtain separates the dead from the living, the woman in the studio could represent both of Mazo's dead wives, and the toddler could represent the numerous children who died. By the time of the composition of the painting Mazo had suffered the loss of at least eight of his immediate family members, two wives and at least six children. His surviving children would continue to move through the cycle of an evolving family, having lost both their parents and several siblings and half-siblings, but secure in the care of their stepmother-aunt and her new husband.

The fate of the painting of the blended Velázquez–del Mazo-de la Vega family, forged through numerous remarriages over several generations, takes on a life of its own. By 1744, the painting was in the estate of the husband of Velázquez's great-granddaughter Catalina, born in December 1677 and of the

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70   *Corpus Velazqueño*, doc. 473, p. 526.

71   Coolidge, *Guardianship, Gender, and the Nobility*, pp. 67–68; *Corpus Velazqueño*, docs. 476, 478, 479, pp. 527–28.

same generation as her cousin the baby girl on the right of the painting.[72] Identified in the documents as 'Catalina del Mazo Velázquez', she seems to have inherited the family painting from her father Baltasar, who enjoyed several prominent positions at the Spanish royal court.[73] Catalina was the first wife of her husband, Joseph Spino y Navarro, dying at about age 30, leaving three sons with her husband as heirs and writing her will in 1707, with her goods inventoried in 1708. After her death, one of her sons died and her husband married again to Geronima, a widow who had a son and daughter from her first marriage. Joseph and Geronima subsequently had a daughter together. By 1744 the painting, described as 'de la familia de los Velázquez y Mazos' and valued at 4000 *reales*, was part of an estate that was about to be divided between Catalina's sons Francisco and Bernardino (who had already lost his wife), their stepbrother and stepsister, and their half-sister and her husband.[74] The evolving family in the painting, with its living and dead members grouped so affectionately together, might have resonated with the people who stood to inherit it almost a hundred years later as their own families evolved into the future.

Conclusions

Remarriage was common enough in early modern Spain for the dying to make provisions for stepfamilies in testaments, for the survivors to establish guardianship arrangements for half-orphaned children, and for inventories to carefully document the parts of an estate for any heirs from first or subsequent marriage beds. Advice literature acknowledged the phenomenon of frequent Spanish remarriages, despite concerns about its morality. The intensely Catholic culture of Counter-Reformation Spain heightened concern over the role of women and sexuality at the same time that a far-flung empire shattered families, only to reconstruct them in new and challenging ways.[75] A history of religious tension, forced conversions, and forced expulsions further complicated the formation of the family in early modern Spain, with moralists creating a rhetoric that contradicted itself, condemning, while also acknowledging, the reality of remarriage. Ironically, while much of the

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72   *Corpus Velazqueño*, doc. 493, p. 537.

73   Burke and Cherry, *Collections of Paintings in Madrid*, p. 1023; Novero Plaza, 'La familia de Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo', pp. 182–83.

74   Burke and Cherry, *Collections of Paintings in Madrid*, doc. 132, l. 40, pp. 1026, 1029, n. 1.

75   Twinam, *Public Lives, Private Secrets*; Mangan, *Transatlantic Obligations*; Poska, *Gendered Crossings*.

moral concern centered on women's remarriage, men were the ones most likely to remarry. This remarriage pattern cut across the social spectrum, but the more abundant sources for the elite make it possible to integrate archival, prescriptive, and visual sources about their lives, and analyze how a family's evolution over time affected its financial and emotional life in a way that is not possible for the less privileged.

Although remarriage was a reality among the comfortable classes who could afford to commission a commemorative family portrait to a lost era, to a deceased spouse, and to their continuing family, few patrons in early modern Spain chose the domestic family grouping so popular in other regions of Europe. One of the few family portraits that does exist, Juan Bautista del Mazo's *The Painter's Family*, managed to capture the gendered temporality of the stepfamily created by male remarriage. Mazo portrayed the long course of life and death in his own family in seventeenth-century Spain while he visually expressed the bonds he hoped would link his children and grandchildren from various marriages. In the portrait, Mazo's children embody the lengthened expanse of fatherhood as death, remarriage, and birth recreated family units and changed the family roles and relationships of both adults and children.[76]

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Epilogue

11 Navigating the future of early modern women's writing

Pedagogy, feminism, and literary theory

Michelle M. Dowd

Abstract

This essay explores the challenges of teaching premodern women's text through the lens of literary theory and scholarship as it relates to pedagogical practice. It argues that while post-structuralist feminist theory is necessary to the study of premodern texts by women, it is often difficult to implement in the classroom, given the current academic and political climate. Using Elizabeth Cary's *Tragedy of Mariam* as a case study, Dowd proposes that we can engage our students in more meaningful discussions about how and why the fact of female authorship matters by inviting them to consider the complex intersection between gender and form. The essay concludes by inviting a form of strategic advocacy for premodern women writers in the contemporary classroom.

Keywords: pedagogy; literary theory; early modern women's writing; Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam*; literary form

As the essays in this volume have demonstrated, early modern conceptions and experience of time were intricately tied to gendered constructs, ideologies, and lived practices. Memory, reception, and commemoration are thus always in some sense gendered practices, as they are inextricable from the cultural modalities that inform the lives, beliefs, and imaginations of men and women both in the early modern period and in our own. The gendered nature of temporality takes on a distinct set of meanings in the classroom, especially for those of us who research and teach the works of early modern women. Indeed, the classroom is a space where the pressures of different temporalities are felt particularly acutely. For many

of us invested in the multivocality and complexities of the past, we strive to historicize literary and artistic artifacts, to engage our students in the fascinating and often strange past-ness of cultural production. But we also aim to make the past immediate, to interact with early modern women's writing so that it becomes a vital, present-tense concern. And, through our efforts, we also frequently look to the future, hoping to guide students as they develop into the critical thinkers, creative artists, and knowledgeable citizens who will shape the world in the years ahead. Balancing these different temporal impulses is far from easy, but it is made especially difficult when the subject of our pedagogy—early modern women's writing—is still often considered marginal within the academy. How we approach the teaching of these writings both now and in the future is thus both an intellectual and an urgently practical matter. This epilogue analyzes some of the underlying theoretical and structural dilemmas that condition our pedagogical approaches to early modern women's writing in order to map out some possibilities for the road ahead.

I begin, then, with provocation in the form of a question: Should we teach early modern women writers *as* women writers? And, if so, why? Should women writers continue to be featured in separate classes, course units, or anthologies? If yes, then what is the pedagogical or scholarly or theoretical rationale for doing so? I frame this essay with these questions in order to engage and stimulate dialogue about how and why we teach texts written by early modern women at what I feel is a critical vantage point in the history of feminist pedagogy and the study of premodern women in particular. From my own perspective as a teacher and scholar of early modern English literature, the so-called and oft-cited 'crisis in the humanities' poses a unique set of challenges for those of us who study premodern women's texts. In this chapter, I explore these difficulties through the lens of literary theory and scholarship as it relates to pedagogical practice. I argue that while post-structuralist feminist theory is necessary to the study of premodern texts by women, it is often acutely difficult to implement in the classroom, given the current academic and political climate. I then turn briefly to Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam*, a frequently taught text that exemplifies many of the pedagogical difficulties faced by teachers of early modern women's literature. I conclude, in a somewhat polemical vein, not by seeking a clear resolution to the problem I foreground, but by inviting a form of strategic advocacy for premodern women writers in the contemporary classroom.

Literary theory offers a useful starting point. One of the reasons that I (and perhaps others as well) resist the act of teaching women writers *as*

women writers—that is, of emphasizing gendered authorship explicitly in the pedagogical process—is that such an approach in many ways works against recent theoretical paradigms and scholarly trends. Since the rise of deconstruction and post-structuralist theories in the 1970s and 80s, literary scholars have learned to be wary of the author. We tend to shy away from granting the author any particular explanatory privilege or status, especially any having to do with intentionality. Such attitudes about authorship stem from the highly influential work of French post-structuralist theorists, most notably Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. In his foundational piece, 'The Death of the Author,' Barthes memorably argued that '[t]o give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing'.[1] Furthermore, this shift in understanding the relationship between author and text fundamentally alters the temporality of authorship itself. In the more traditional understanding of the author, Barthes explains, the author 'is always conceived of as the past of his own book: book and author stand automatically on a single line divided into a *before* and an *after*'. By contrast, the modern author (whom Barthes refers to as a 'scriptor') 'is born simultaneously with the text, is in no way equipped with a being preceding or exceeding the writing, is not the subject with the book as predicate; there is no other time than that of the enunciation and every text is eternally written *here* and *now*'.[2] For Barthes, the past-ness of the traditional author and the implicit causality of the author–text relationship pose untenable limits on interpretation. Instead, by shifting focus to the reader, Barthes sought to disburden the text from the oppressive force of intention.

Foucault would similarly contend in his essay 'What Is an Author?' that it is readers who construct authors: the author, he writes, 'does not precede the works; he is [...] an ideological product'.[3] Foucault extended Barthes' analysis of the temporal limitations of traditional understandings of authorship to emphasize the restrictive and disciplinary nature of what he referred to as the 'author function'. When the author is imagined to come before the text, he asserts, the result is a reduction of imaginative and interpretive possibilities, an abatement of the risk and threat that literary discourse embodies. For Foucault, the author 'allows a limitation of the cancerous and dangerous proliferation of significations within a world where one is thrifty not only with one's resources and riches but also with one's discourses and

1   Barthes, 'Death of the Author', p. 147.
2   Ibid., p. 145.
3   Foucault, 'What Is an Author?', p. 221.

their significations'.[4] Initially composed in the late 1960s, both Barthes' and Foucault's statements reject the implied tyranny of Western rationalism and instead plot a course to free texts from the ideological restraints of authorship, traditionally understood. In undermining the temporal causality of the author–text relationship, both theorists helped to loosen the interpretive grip of the author, opening up new, and often more progressive approaches to textual study. The disenfranchisement of the author was thus a crucial move in literary theory. It helped unsettle traditional canons of value, it paved the way for analysis of the nonauthorial figures (including the printers, publishers, scribes, and patrons) who helped bring texts into being, and it assisted in directing attention to the work of readers, including non-elite and female readers.

Neither Barthes nor Foucault were interested in women writers per se (as their consistent use of the masculine pronoun to describe the author attests), but their theoretical interventions created a space for the kinds of work many of us studying women's writing engage in today. Indeed, some of the most innovative and exciting recent scholarship on early modern women's writing insists on placing these writers within broader textual and cultural contexts that are not solely determined by authorial gender. Following Maureen Quilligan's call in 1997 to 'deghettoize' writings by women by placing them in 'local historical context' together with male writers, scholars and teachers have emphasized the cultural, political, and literary embeddedness of early modern women rather than their status as a separate object of inquiry.[5] Many scholars have, for instance, investigated women's literary networks, their mastery and adaptation of specific literary genres and rhetorical techniques, and their engagement with the work of their male contemporaries. In her study of Margaret Cavendish, Lara Dodds investigates the complex literary influences (both male and female) with which Cavendish engaged. As she persuasively argues, 'As long as women's writing is read primarily through a lens of biography or of gender, literary developments in individual women's works will be interpreted in the context of personal experience rather than as responses or contributions to broader cultural, political, or literary trends'.[6] In a similar vein, Julie Eckerle examines women's life writings in terms of these texts' 'dynamic relationship' with

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4   Ibid., p. 221. See also pp. 211–16.
5   Quilligan, 'Completing the Conversation', p. 42. See also Nigel Smith's suggestion that scholars consider how and where women's writing 'engages first with the literary canon and aims to do something with it' ('Rod and the Canon', p. 235.)
6   Dodds, *Literary Invention of Margaret Cavendish*, p. 6.

male-authored romance,[7] and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann analyzes women's poetry in terms of its 'close engagement with [… early modern] literary and intellectual culture', broadly conceived.[8] These and other recent studies emphasize the necessity of situating women writers within wide-ranging socioliterary contexts, of taking seriously women's literary exchanges and interpellations rather than viewing them as isolated or singular.[9]

Such developments have influenced pedagogical scholarship as well, in the form of anthologies designed for use in the undergraduate and graduate classrooms. Perhaps most notably, Betty Travitsky and Anne Lake Prescott's anthology, *Female and Male Voices in Early Modern England*, published in 2000, includes texts by both men and women in order to encourage student dialogue and analysis across gendered lines. The volume presents a series of excerpts from male and female writers, with each set of texts organized according to broader topical categories. So, in the section on 'Love and Sexuality', one set of texts pairs Katherine Philips with Richard Barnfield and William Shakespeare, while another in the section on 'Religion' pairs Jane Ward Lead with John Milton. As Travitsky and Prescott state in their introduction, their goal in organizing the volume this way is to 'achieve a doubled vision of the literary record' by including women writers while avoiding tokenism. As they postulate: 'if women's texts could be foregrounded without being ghettoized, readers would be more likely to take gender into account when reading the literature of the past'.[10] Their anthology, like much recent work on early modern women's literary networks, highlights the scholarly and pedagogical value of *not* reading such writers exclusively as (or, in some cases, even primarily as) women writers. The process of seeking, as Travitsky and Prescott do, a 'doubled vision' of early modern women's writing, one that acknowledges the complex embeddedness of these works within literary history and culture is a crucial intervention and one that, I hope, will continue to shape the study of early modern women's writing in the years ahead.

However, despite anthologies such as Prescott and Travitsky's and several decades of progress made by feminist theorists, activists, and teachers, there still remains a degree of disconnect between theoretical and scholarly

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7   Eckerle, *Romancing the Self*, p. 2.

8   Scott-Baumann, *Forms of Engagement*, p. 3. See also Patricia Pender's discussion of women's adept deployment of the modesty topos in *Early Modern Women's Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty*.

9   In addition, many of these critical studies take up either explicitly or implicitly Sasha Roberts's call for greater dialogue between feminist and formalist literary inquiry. See 'Feminist Criticism and the New Formalism' and 'Women's Literary Capital in Early Modern England'.

10   Travitsky and Prescott, eds., *Female and Male Voice in Early Modern England*, p. ix.

assessments of women's writing and pedagogical objectives and actual prac-
tice in the classroom. Often early modern women writers are taught—when
they are taught at all, a point to which I will return—in separate courses and
units, or are taught within paradigms that specifically foreground gender,
and frequently gendered authorship, as the primary focus of inquiry.[11] This
has certainly been true of my own experiences in the classroom and as a
faculty member at two different public institutions. At the University of
North Carolina at Greensboro, I regularly taught an undergraduate course on
English Women Writers before 1800 and a graduate course on Early Modern
Women's Writing (both cross-listed with Women's and Gender Studies). At
the University of Alabama, where I now teach, I have discussed plans to
offer graduate-level seminars focused on early modern women writers as
part of the Hudson Strode Program in Renaissance Studies. And yet, when
I teach courses such as these, I always return to questions of ghettoization
and exclusion: given recent theoretical and scholarly insights into women,
textual production, and cultural influence, might such courses actually do
a disservice to premodern women's writing?

Within English literary studies, this pedagogical dilemma, I argue, has
a specific theoretical history: it is bound up with the conflicts between
post-structuralist and feminist theory that came to a head in the 1980s.
As many feminist scholars have noted, the death of the author in literary
studies coincided with the rise of recovery projects seeking to highlight the
work of women writers.[12] The results were often not pretty. Just as women
were coming into critical visibility as writers, they were pronounced dead
and thus irrelevant by post-structuralism. As Toril Moi summarizes the
situation: 'Feminists who wanted to work on women writers at the same time
as they were convinced that Barthes, Derrida and Foucault were right, began
to wonder whether it really mattered whether the author was a woman'.[13]
Nancy K. Miller, along with many others, concluded that 'the postmodernist
decision that the Author is dead [...] does not necessarily work for women

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11   Of course, I am acutely aware of the structural limitations on English course offerings
(which are rarely determined at the sole discretion of individual faculty) and, indeed, of the
privilege of being able to teach such advanced or specialized courses as part of one's teaching
load. In the comments that follow, then, I in no way seek to lay blame on individual teachers for
their choices in organizing their courses; instead, I am interested in exploring the structural
and political dilemmas that put many teachers in awkward or intellectually counterproductive
positions vis-à-vis their course material and delivery options.

12   For useful discussions of this problematic, see Fuss, *Essentially Speaking*, and Felski, *Beyond
Feminist Aesthetics*.

13   Moi, 'I Am Not a Woman Writer', p. 261.

and prematurely forecloses the question of identity for them'.[14] According to this and similar arguments, deconstructionist readings that focus on 'the instability of meaning' lay an unstable foundation for making more politicized, activist statements about identity or agency within patriarchal systems of power.[15]

Another part of the reason that the death of the author does not 'work' for women in this analysis is that the death of the (male) author had to be earned, and it was earned by decades of scholarship that *did* care intently about the (male) author, about authorial intent, and about close readings guided by the principle of a shaping authorial vision. As Laura Rosenthal has argued with regard to female dramatists in the Restoration, for instance, new readings of male playwrights (such as William Wycherley and William Congreve) in part derive and directly benefit from 'extended investigations' and 'many years of interesting debates, discussions, and readings of Restoration drama' that did not include the works of women, such as Aphra Behn.[16] No similar critical history exists for women writers. As a result, critics invested in studying women's writing are still playing a kind of scholarly 'catchup'. To put it another way: the death of the male author could be afforded in a way that the death of the female author could not.

The impasse created by the clash of post-structuralism and feminism is hardly breaking news. But as Moi wrote as recently as 2008, the tensions between these positions are still vitally relevant to studies of women and aesthetics, and they have not yet been satisfactorily resolved. Certainly (as Moi claims) there is need for continued theorization of the concept of the 'woman writer' for literary scholars. But for the purposes of this essay I am interested in the pedagogical fallout of this impasse, the ways in which our political choices in the classroom are haunted by this old theoretical debate.

14   Miller, 'Changing the Subject', p. 106. By contrast, Cheryl Walker argues instead for a 'new concept of authorship that does not naively assert that the writer is an originating genius, creating aesthetic objects outside of history, but does not diminish the importance of difference and agency in the responses of women writers to historical formations'. See 'Feminist Literary Criticism and the Author', p. 560. In a similar vein Felski asserts: 'There is a need for feminism to rethink the relationship between discourse and subjectivity in such a way as to both acknowledge the structural determinants influencing communication and simultaneously account for the validity of women's writing and speaking in the development of an oppositional feminist politics' (*Beyond Feminist Aesthetics*, p. 55). For specific discussions of early modern women's authorship, see Ross, 'Early Modern Women and the Apparatus of Authorship', and Wall, *Imprint of Gender*.
15   On this point see Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics*, pp. 44–48, esp. p. 45.
16   Rosenthal, 'Introduction: Recovering from Recovery', p. 8. On the difficulty of establishing a female literary tradition, see also Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History*; Salzman, *Reading Early Modern Women's Writing*; and Staves, *Literary History of Women's Writing*.

Or perhaps to put it more boldly: I am interested in the ways in which the current political climate (both within and outside the academy) keeps this double bind in play, rendering it continually challenging to resolve.

A key problem is that many of the political and structural forces that influence our pedagogical practices actively challenge or even foreclose the possibility of fully incorporating the teaching of women writers into other aspects of literary study. For women's writing to become truly integral to literary studies writ large, it must be valued as such by all those who teach in literature departments, and this is simply not yet the case. Even though the canon debates are supposedly long over and post-structuralism's heyday is well past, and despite the fact that current scholarship is integrating analyses of women's writing into broader conversations in exciting ways, early modern women's writing remains marginalized in the academy. I see such marginalization in the form of outright neglect and in more subtle forms of separation and differential treatment. It will come as no surprise to most readers of this volume that premodern women's writing is often simply missing from university curricula, often glaringly so. One of my recent PhD students, who completed her BA and MA at two different institutions before coming to UNCG, told me a few years ago that the first time she had read an early modern text by a female author was when she read *The Tragedy of Mariam* in my doctoral seminar on Renaissance drama. This was after years of undergraduate and masters-level coursework in Renaissance literature at two well-known institutions. At universities with fixed reading lists for doctoral and masters-level comprehensive exams, premodern women writers are often notably absent, an omission that not only devalues such writing, but puts structural barriers in the way of teaching it: why study early modern women writers if they won't be on the exam? Such practices within doctoral education also have effects that extend to the academic job market, which is in turn influenced by teaching demands and perceived pedagogical (as well as research) needs at institutions ranging from community colleges to top-ranked research universities. Of the 29 faculty positions listed under the categories 'British Literature' and either 'Renaissance' or 'early modern' in the 2016 *Job Information List* published by the Modern Language Association, only one job (a senior, tenured position) listed 'women's writing' as a specifically desired area of research and teaching specialty. (And the findings from 2016 are representative of early modern jobs listed in *JIL* publications in recent years).[17] So, the corollary to the relative lack of early modern women's

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17   Modern Language Association, *Job Information List* (*English Edition*), 2016–17 (accessed 12 December 2016).

writing in much doctoral education in Renaissance studies is the relative lack of such writing as a significant part of Renaissance job descriptions. Why study early modern women writers if they won't get you a job?

At the undergraduate level, the problem is often even more acute, especially given that there is frequently less room for customization within the undergraduate curriculum at many schools. At my current institution, the University of Alabama, the undergraduate catalog does not include a specific course on early women writers (British or American), instead listing only one general course on 'Women in Literature', which includes writings both by and about women.[18] In addition, many standard descriptions of literature surveys in institutional bulletins make no mention of female authors (UNCG's *Undergraduate Bulletin* describes the 'Major British Authors' course as a survey of 'Major poets, dramatists, satirists read within the context of their times: Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Swift, and others.'[19]) Although many of us who teach early literatures ensure that women writers are included with those 'others' on our syllabi, the bulletin copy nevertheless performs important ideological work: it highlights a system of value from which women are excluded, rendering the teaching of women writers an 'extra' or a niche interest, rather than an essential part of a literature curriculum.

This brings me to the slightly subtler ways in which premodern women's writing gets marginalized through differential treatment rather than pure exclusion. As Alice Eardley has recently argued about anthologies of early modern women's poetry, women's writing is often perceived as interesting for political rather than aesthetic reasons.[20] Women's writing, as she demonstrates, is often 'divorced from a literary tradition' and read instead in terms of what it can tell us about women's historical circumstances, especially their resistance to gendered structures of power.[21] Indeed, even excellent anthologies such as Travitsky and Prescott's often privilege gender as an interpretive lens for students. As they assert in their introduction, one of their key goals for their anthology is to 'encourage[e] students to be more aware of gender as a significant category of thought and perception'.[22] Of course, this is a very admirable goal in its own right, but it also has the effect

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18   University of Alabama, *Undergraduate Course Catalog*, 2016–17, www.catalog.ua.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/english/courses/ (accessed 14 December 2016).

19   UNCG, *Undergraduate Bulletin*, 2017–18, https://reg.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/UGB_1718.pdf#page=225 (accessed 20 February 2018).

20   Eardley, 'Recreating the Canon', p. 274.

21   Ibid., p. 281.

22   Travitsky and Prescott, eds., *Female and Male Voices in Early Modern England*, p. x.

of limiting the conversation about women writers to be always already about gender, an effect that is compounded over time through the repetitive assertions of such links between women's writing and gendered politics in a great deal of pedagogical and scholarly research. In Linda Woodbridge's wonderfully apt phrasing: men 'inhabit literature-land; women inhabit history-land'.[23] It is perhaps for this reason that women's writing is still perceived to be a niche interest within the field of early modern literary studies. Women's writing is largely understood to be 'about' women and gender in a way that men's writing is not. As a result, it is fairly easy for scholars whose primary focus is *not* women or gender to simply opt out of discussions of women's texts, since they are viewed as marginal to dominant literary conversations. (The proportion of female to male audience members at scholarly talks on early modern women or, indeed, at conferences such as Attending to Early Modern Women is one relatively clear manifestation of this tendency.) In post-stucturalist terms, the author may very well be dead, but she is very much alive in the field of early modern women's writing. As long as women writers are, in Moi's words, 'perceived as women who write' and thus 'perceived as Other in relation to a male norm',[24] then the figure of the female author remains central—often, as I am suggesting, problematically so—to our pedagogy and scholarship.

In the classroom, students are often encouraged to approach men's and women's writing through different interpretive frameworks; texts by women writers are expected to represent gendered discourse or the history of women more broadly, or they are presented as notable exceptions to the male literary status quo. The implication, held especially, I think, by many of our colleagues who do *not* regularly teach women authors, is that women's writing is first and foremost *about* gender and gender politics rather than aesthetics. (A few years ago, I spent a good part of the first day of my seminar on premodern women's writing engaging students in a discussion of why the official bulletin title for this particular course—'Feminist Theory and Women Writers'—is in fact a kind of non sequitur.) When limits are placed on the kinds of analysis our students might engage in vis-à-vis premodern women's writing, it becomes difficult to argue for the centrality of women's writing to studies of literature and the humanities more broadly.

The current state of the humanities within the academy and public culture makes such an argument more urgent than ever. Given the challenges facing institutions of higher learning in general, and liberal science and,

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23   Woodbridge, 'Dark Ladies', p. 62.
24   Moi, 'I Am Not a Woman Writer', pp. 266–67.

especially, humanities disciplines in particular, those wishing to make a case for literary studies have sought out what they feel to be the most rhetorically persuasive arguments. We are thus reminded that reading and critical thinking are all vital to twenty-first-century American culture and even to the future economic prospects of undergraduate students.[25] To be sure, such dialogue and public engagement is essential for those of us who teach in humanistic disciplines, and there is a real need for both practical and ideological arguments in support of humanistic study. But what gives me pause is that the cornerstone of many of these arguments is what I would describe as a nostalgic and conservative return to the glory days of the traditional literary canon. When push comes to shove and the significance of literary study needs to be foregrounded for the purposes of public discussion, canonical white male authors are often put prominently on display. For those of us who work in earlier literature periods, that means Shakespeare. A lot of Shakespeare.

In a much-discussed column published in the *New York Times* in February of 2015, titled grandly enough 'College, Poetry and Purpose', Frank Bruni lauded his college Shakespeare professor, Anne Hall, whose passionate teaching of *King Lear* provided him with what he called a 'transformative educational experience'.[26] Bruni clearly seeks to highlight the significance of humanities instruction to student learning and development. But in his subsequent interview with his former teacher, he cites her 'lament about changes in the humanities' and the current state of literary instruction today. He writes:

> She expressed regret about how little an English department's offerings today resemble those from the past. 'There's a lot of capitalizing on what is fashionable', she said. Survey courses have fallen out of favor, as have courses devoted to any one of the 'dead white men', she said. 'Chaucer has become Chaucer and [...]' she said. 'Chaucer and Women in the Middle Ages. Chaucer and Animals in the Middle Ages. Shakespeare has become Shakespeare and Film, which in my cranky opinion becomes Film, not Shakespeare.'

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25   Several recent mainstream media articles articulate such arguments. See for example Solberg, 'Former Twitter CEO Talks Importance of Liberal Arts', Waller, 'Hunting for Soft Skills, Companies Scoop up English Majors' and the editors' of *Scientific American*'s piece 'STEM Education Is Vital—But Not at the Expense of the Humanities'. By contrast, Adam Gopnik sets aside the utilitarian arguments for humanities and literary study by asserting instead that 'English departments democratize the practice of reading'. See 'Why Teach English?'
26   Bruni, 'College, Poetry and Purpose'.

Bruni then turns to the current course offerings in English at the University of Pennsylvania, where Hall teaches, to seek out evidence of such so-called 'fashionable' courses, which he finds in titles such as 'Pulp Fictions: Popular Romance from Chaucer to Tarantino', 'Sex and the City: Women, Novels and Urban Life', and 'Global Feminisms'. Not surprisingly, all the courses he cites by name feature literature by women or other marginalized groups.[27] Of fundamental concern, Bruni claims is what he (following Hall) describes as 'an intellectual vogue and academic sensibility that place no one master-piece, master, perspective or even manner of speech above others.' There are many, many critiques to be made of Bruni's argument (as the lengthy comment section on the *Times* website attests), but for my purposes in this essay I am primarily interested in the striking reentrenchment of literary conservatism, of a 'great books' mentality, that the column breezily affirms. The turn to Shakespeare here is also a return to the promise of a false universalism. When the discipline of literary studies is perceived as threatened, many seem to fall back on traditional symbols of literary value. When times get tough, it becomes time to return to what really matters: Chaucer and Shakespeare, not film, feminism, or female novelists. The ultimate goal of a liberal arts education, in Hall's words, is to learn what it means to be 'fully human'. Reading Shakespeare will help us do this; presumably reading Mary Wroth or Elizabeth Cary will not.[28]

Let me be clear: I have no quibble with Shakespeare per se; I teach him regularly and find his works valuable for approaching a range of crucial interpretive questions, including many that challenge the very idea of traditional literary value. But how might those of us who also value the works of premodern women authors approach such writing in the classroom

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27   Another recent incident at Penn raised similar questions about literary value vis-à-vis women writers. In December of 2016, students at the university removed a portrait of Shakespeare from the English Department building and replaced it with a photograph of Audre Lorde, an incident that generated heated criticism from those who felt the move denigrated Shakespeare, including many who claimed they had never heard of Lorde. See Jaschik, 'Making a Point'.

28   Although space does not permit a full discussion here, a similar argument could be made about the relative treatment of noncanonical male-authored Renaissance drama in both scholarly publications and the classroom. That is, even if we take Shakespeare out of the conversation entirely, there remains a tendency to privilege canonical over noncanonical works (the plays of Jonson and Marlowe over those of Heywood or Dekker, for instance). To take one specific example: in a recent issue of *Shakespeare Quarterly* devoted to the topic of 'Not Shakespeare' (ed. Engle), a title that already defines its content in relation to what is both excluded and implicitly privileged, only one essay (on Henry Porter's *The Two Angry Women of Abington*) deals substantively with a noncanonical play and author. None of the essays considers works by female playwrights.

so as to articulate more fully how the study of works by women is essential to our understanding of the premodern past in broad terms (regardless of whether we wish to claim that reading such works will help make us 'fully human')? What strategies might we engage in to help avoid the logic of exceptionalism that often frames discussions of premodern women's texts? I wish to turn briefly to Cary's closet drama, *The Tragedy of Mariam*, in order to sketch out how some of these problems play out in the classroom and what some potential strategies for addressing them might look like. I have selected *Mariam* as a point of focus for several reasons: it is frequently taught, it is available in several modern editions and anthologies, and it also exemplifies some of the dilemmas facing teachers because as a closet drama it sits uneasily between the fields of Renaissance drama (which is often presumed to be and taught as exclusively male-authored) and early modern women's writing (which is often associated primarily with the genres of poetry and prose, at least until the Restoration).

Within the field of early modern drama studies, certainly, *The Tragedy of Mariam* is somewhat of an odd bedfellow. On the one hand, the play has become part of the canonical repertoire, being regularly taught in undergraduate and graduate surveys of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. On the other hand, scholars have often posited an uneasy or oppositional relationship between Cary's play and others from the period, a tendency demonstrated by the binary frameworks that dominate much of the critical discussion: male vs. female, stage vs. closet, public vs. private, theatrical vs. untheatrical. In the case of *Mariam*, much of this uneasiness is directly related to the question of female authorship. In her recent essay on future directions in scholarship on Renaissance drama (an essay that makes no mention of Cary or any other female dramatist), Tiffany Stern highlights the dominant trend in drama criticism toward decentering the author. She notes that 'the study of Renaissance drama has moved away from being comfortably authorcentric' and concludes confidently that 'the field will undoubtedly find further and different ways to reconsider context and deauthor texts'.[29] The post-structuralist death of the author figures as almost a given here; instead of remaining 'comfortably authorcentric', drama scholars, Stern asserts, will continue to focus on performance history, print history and the new bibliography, and the often-fragmented nature of the textual archive. *Mariam*, however, does not fit well into this scholarly overview. Cary's play instead offers a potent example of what I described earlier as the death of the (female) author not yet being 'earned' in critical discourse.

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29 Stern, 'Renaissance Drama: Future Directions', pp. 154, 156.

While Stern's remarks accurately reflect the current state of scholarship on male-authored Renaissance drama, they are not particularly useful for assessing criticism on female-authored plays such as *Mariam*. Indeed, the fact of *Mariam*'s female authorship continues to figure centrally in analyses of the play; criticism on Cary's tragedy, in other words, remains to a large degree 'comfortably authorcentric', despite Stern's claims.[30] Furthermore, when *Mariam* is incorporated into broader discussions of Renaissance drama, it is often included precisely because it is *different* from other plays; it is an exception.

Such critical tendencies are readily apparent in the treatment of Cary's play in many popular anthologies and editions. First, several anthologies of Renaissance drama simply exclude *Mariam* entirely.[31] Others that include the play frequently go to great lengths to emphasize both its female authorship and its distinction from other plays of the period. For instance, in his introduction to *Mariam* in *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*—one of the most popular of these anthologies, and the one I use in many of my own undergraduate and graduate classes—David Bevington brings female authorship to the fore as a defining feature of the play. The first sentence of his introduction reads: '*The Tragedy of Mariam* occupies a unique position in this anthology in several respects.' The first and most significant of these unique features concerns authorship; the second sentence of the introduction reads: 'It is the only play written by a woman'. Where *The Tragedy of Mariam* is concerned, then, the author is definitely not dead. Not coincidentally, Bevington also relies heavily on Cary's biography as an interpretive rubric for understanding the play. He notes that 'Like Cary, Mariam was unhappily married to a powerful and unpredictable man [...]' and suggests that Cary 'seems to have identified' with the emotions Mariam expresses in the tragedy.[32] As Ramona Wray writes in her introduction to the Arden edition of the play, such a biographical focus has long dominated discussions of Cary's works. As she notes, such readings are problematic at best, in part because they are 'one-dimensional' and, as a result, have

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30   Nigel Smith has referred to his tendency to take the biological gender of the author as a primary analytical point of departure as the 'persistent return in scholarship [...] to the matter of being an early modern woman.' See 'Rod and the Canon', p. 235.

31   The most notable of these is the Blackwell anthology, *Renaissance Drama: An Anthology of Plays and Entertainments*, edited by Arthur Kinney, neither the first nor the second edition of which includes the play. The play is also omitted from the ninth edition of the *Norton Anthology of English Literature* (ed. Greenblatt *et al.*; some earlier editions included excerpts from the play).

32   Bevington, introduction to *The Tragedy of Mariam*, p. 617.

bypassed 'the representational complexities inherent in the biographical impulse as a literary form', among other things.[33]

Bevington's introduction is also at pains to emphasize the ways in which Cary's play, as a closet drama, deviates from the commercial dramatic tradition: it was written to be read not performed (a point that recent scholarship has hotly questioned); it features a chorus and long speeches (which he describes as 'sententious'); and it excludes 'all violence from the stage'.[34] Not surprisingly, with differentiation comes value judgment: *Mariam* is described as a 'severely regular classical drama' (elsewhere he uses the phrase 'rigorously classical' and 'studiously classical'), and Cary's particular brand of classicism is further contrasted with that found in plays such as *The Spanish Tragedy* and *The Revenger's Tragedy*: these male-authored plays are described as combining classical elements with 'dramatic forms that are distinctively English and popular'.[35] And given what we know (or have been taught to know) about the development of English Renaissance drama as a popular art form, this comparison effectively devalues Cary's tragedy as an oddity, a curiosity that just doesn't quite fit the literary tradition. The last line of Bevington's introduction reads: '*Mariam* is an instructive and powerful example of the road not taken.'[36]

Bringing *Mariam* into the classroom, then, often means dealing with preexisting narratives about the text's status—as an exception, as necessarily *about* the fact of its female authorship—narratives that condition how we and our students might approach the play. Indeed—and I think Bevington's introduction is one good example of this—compelling narratives about women's writing can take on a life of their own, sometimes superseding the texts those women actually wrote. The results of this disconnect are often striking: because *Mariam* is a closet drama, Bevington can claim that there is no violence on the stage. But how, then, do we account for the fight scene between Constabarus and Silleus in Act 2? If our students are similarly encouraged to buy into the logic of *Mariam*'s exceptionalism, then they may

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33   Wray, introduction to *The Tragedy of Mariam*, 6–8. On the biographical impulse in Cary studies, see also Straznicky, 'Profane Stoical Paradoxes', pp. 105–7; Callaghan, 'Re-reading Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedie of Mariam*', pp. 165–67; and Kegl, 'Theaters, Households, and a "Kind of History"', p. 138.

34   Bevington, introduction to *The Tragedy of Mariam*, p. 615. See also Bevington's reflective discussion on editing *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, in which he explicitly acknowledges that he included *Mariam* in the volume because it is a closet drama in a 'severely classical' form and because it was 'written by a woman' ('Recent Trends in Editing', p. 97).

35   Bevington, introduction to *The Tragedy of Mariam*, p. 620.

36   Ibid., p. 620.

find themselves working through an unnecessarily narrow interpretive framework. *Mariam* is important, we are told, because it was written by a female author and because it is a closet drama, two presumptions that tend to guide analysis in certain ways: gender issues and the character of Mariam become *necessarily central* to critical response,[37] and, because closet drama is devalued in comparison with commercial drama, the formal features of the play often become embarrassing anomalies to be explained away. The effect is frequently a forced separation between questions of gender and those of form.

I would suggest, however, that it is precisely in the intersection of gender and form that we can engage our students in more meaningful discussions about how and why the fact of female authorship matters. Rather than approaching a text like *Mariam* from the point of view of a preexisting male narrative of dramatic value, we might instead ask students to use the text at hand to rethink that narrative itself, a process that could include a reflection on the dramaturgical choices made by male playwrights as well as female ones. How does reading *Mariam* change our understanding of drama as a literary genre? What does the choice of closet drama allow Cary to stage (or not to stage), and in what ways are those dramaturgical elements gendered (or not)? What, to borrow from Caroline Levine, are the 'affordances' of form for Cary, the potential (and potentially political) 'uses or actions latent in' the 'materials and designs' that distinguish closet drama as a mode?[38]

Asking such questions in the classroom can enable students to explore how literary form and gendered positioning can come together in productive and complex ways. To be sure, closet drama was a form highly associated with female authorship in Renaissance England, due to the fact that no women wrote for the professional stage in the period and, thus, the only female-authored dramatic texts that survive are closet dramas. But the form was certainly not exclusively or even primarily female-identified, and value-laden descriptions of closet drama as 'rigorously classical' do not do justice to the formal vitality and structural nuance of a play such as *Mariam*. As Wray points out, '[d]espite its provenance [...] closet drama is not hermetically sealed as a theatrical statement'.[39] Instead of assuming that the

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37   Wray notes that '[b]esides biographical readings' the main trend in criticism on *Mariam* has been 'to explore its gendered representations'. Introduction to *The Tragedy of Mariam*, p. 32. On this trend, see also Shannon, '*The Tragedie of Mariam*'.

38   Levine, *Forms*, p. 6.

39   Wray, introduction to *The Tragedy of Mariam*, p. 55. On closet drama, see also Straznicky, 'Closet Drama'.

category of 'closet drama' is static, therefore, we might encourage students to reflect on the multiple dramatic modes the play puts on display, how such dramatic choices are (and are not) influenced by gendered contexts, and how, as a result, the play helps to define the meaning and significance of theatricality itself.

Let me give one quick example of how thinking about *Mariam* as the result of generic choice might shape a pedagogical approach to the play. Cary could certainly have written this story as a prose narrative, an approach she took with her account of *Edward II*. What, we might ask students, can drama (and specifically closet drama) do that a prose narrative cannot? One answer is that unlike a prose history, drama—whether closet or stage—calls into being an imaginative divide between the narrative space of the current action before the reader/spectator and those actors and actions that occupy a different spatial (and often temporal) realm, beyond the immediate 'scene' of the drama.[40] As a result, a dramatist can strategically place certain events or conversations 'onstage' to amplify their significance or, by contrast, remove them from the current 'scene' of action. We can explore this process in part by inviting students to compare Cary's treatment of her subject to that of her prose source, Thomas Lodge's translation of Flavius Josephus's *The Antiquities of the Jewes* (1602). Cary creates several episodes that are absent from Lodge, including the dramatic confrontation between Mariam and Doris in Act 4 in which they quarrel over familial legitimacy. Significantly, Cary locates this scene *after* Herod's surprising return to Jerusalem earlier in the act. In electing to dramatize this scene and position it where she does, Cary both highlights competing familial claims (a theme central to the play) and amplifies the force of those disagreements; the multivocality of the onstage dialogue stands in marked contrast both to Herod's prolonged absence from the stage and to his desire for sociopolitical conformity throughout the play.[41]

Generic choice thus affects *Mariam's* approach to a range of topics, including but not limited to gender. At the same time, it remains true that the sociohistorical positioning of Cary as a woman in English Renaissance society affects the literary influences that shape her writing and her own treatment of dramatic form. However, the results of these processes are far from predetermined or stable; they are not dictated by the 'fact' of female

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40   As Alison Findlay has argued, 'Women who composed plays in preference to prose or poetry, and in spite of having no immediate public venue in which to perform before 1660, did so with a keen awareness that drama constitutes a more immediate expression of spatial practice than any other form of literature' (*Playing Spaces*, p. 3).

41   For more extensive analysis of Cary's treatment of dramatic space in *Mariam*, see my essay 'Dramaturgy and the Politics of Space'.

authorship or by preconceived notions of closet drama. We could thus read *Mariam* and similar texts not as exceptions to some 'rule' but as part of a broader literary-historical picture that might in fact change the 'rules' that we have learned and transform our understanding of literary influence, thereby expanding the range of interpretive contexts available for us and our students.[42] Just as our understanding of Renaissance drama is incomplete without understanding print culture and conditions of performance, it is also incomplete without understanding private closet drama, its formal mechanisms, and the sociohistorical positions of the women and men who produced it. If women's writing is understood as crucial to comprehending the past—and not just women's past, but the past *period*—then it is no longer an exception that can be safely ignored.

My own view, then, is that we must continue to take a both/and strategy in our approach to women's writing in the classroom. While we can and should continue to engage current theoretical and scholarly paradigms that position women's writing within a complex, cross-gendered socioliterary network, the fact that literature by women continues to be situated within ideological structures of power that render it marginal or a 'niche' interest demands that we keep questions of gendered authorship prominently in play, at least strategically. One tactic is simply to engage our students in the *problem* of teaching early women's writing—the problems of exclusionism, and tokenism—by making those topics the subject of discussion and analysis. But to return to the specific question I raised earlier about the use-value of separate courses on women writers, I would emphasize a few specific benefits of such courses that are worth the risks of ghettoization that they bring, at least at the moment. One is access: despite the publication of good anthologies and stand-alone texts in recent years, women's writings are still much more difficult to access than men's from the period, which poses a specific disadvantage in the classroom. Separate courses on women writers thus help maintain both access and visibility. Similarly, such courses have a political payoff, in that they grant substance or heft to women's writing that mark it as worthy of extensive and detailed consideration. Finally, by focusing exclusively on women writers, such courses make it possible for gender to come off the table, as it were: since the back-and-forth comparison between male and female writers is less likely to be a feature of such courses, students can instead engage in more wide-ranging discussions, in which

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42   We might think here of the way in which scholarship by Natasha Korda and others has completely altered the previously accepted 'fact' of the all-male stage in Renaissance England (see Korda, *Labors Lost*).

gender becomes *one of many* topics of literary analysis rather than the sole focus. The reality remains that courses and units focused exclusively on women writers are still needed because these writers have not yet been as well integrated into the broader literary curriculum as we might have hoped. Women writers are still largely perceived as women first and writers second, a perception that directly affects pedagogical decisions about whether such writers get taught in the first place and, if they *are* taught, how they are presented to students. The ongoing challenge, then, is to articulate to our colleagues and the broader public how and why an analysis of women's writing and artistic production is crucial to our understanding of the early modern past, writ large. Foucault famously concludes his essay 'What Is an Author?' with the question: 'what difference does it make who is speaking?'[43] If we apply this question to the teaching of premodern women's writing in our current moment, the answer seems clear, if not entirely reassuring: it makes all the difference in the world.

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43 Foucault, 'What Is an Author?', p. 222.

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