**BEARING MEN: A CULTURAL HISTORY OF MOTHERHOOD FROM THE CYCLE PLAYS TO SHAKESPEARE**

**by**

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**ABSTRACT**

The scholars who assert that motherhood acquires new favor in the early modern period and the critics who contend that male subjectivity and patriarchy in Shakespeare's plays depend on the repudiation of the mother both base their perspectives on an understanding of motherhood which is too monolithic. To contribute to a more historically specific understanding, I draw on the work of numerous historians and examine humanist and reformist writings, the Corpus Christi cycles, and two Shakespearean plays.

I find that the medieval "calculative" and "incarnational" versions of motherhood enabled women to exercise considerable control over their sexuality and fertility and clout in their families and communities, and that the Corpus Christi cycles served as a mechanism to extend multiple facets of these versions of the maternal. While the early modern period inherited the expansive, medieval versions of motherhood, the "new," restrictive form of motherhood advocated by the humanists and reformers helped to devalue the inherited forms, promote a greater spiritual, physical, and economic dependence of women on men, and enlarge the scope of the paternal at the expense of the maternal.

My examination of Macbeth demonstrates that the play employs Scottish history so as to heighten attention to the risks produced by Elizabeth I's and James I's adaptations of the competing versions of motherhood available in the early modern period. It suggests that James's adaptation is especially conducive to instability, since it generates a contradiction in the hereditary system of political power--the simultaneous need for and exclusion of women/mothers. This contradiction coupled with the diminution of the feminine/maternal makes it more likely that murder will be construed as an alternative means of being "born" into the succession. Whereas Macbeth shifts from constructions more aligned with incarnational and calculative mothers to constructions more affiliated with new mothers, Coriolanus appears nearly throughout to be informed by the contest over motherhood. By exploring this contest, I add to the understanding of the economic, political, familial, and theatrical aspects of the play, and make it possible to suggest that Coriolanus demonstrates peace is achieved when a version of motherhood resembling the expansive, medieval forms is embraced.

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For Phyllis D. K. Olchowy

1962 - 1994

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aspects of the dominant culture which foster social and economic oppression and exploitation. I am very appreciative of their contributions to the direction of my current work.

I owe a great deal to my parents, Katherine and Adolph, who cultivated a materialist understanding in me at a very early age. My mother told me stories about her teaching experiences at a schoolhouse in north-central Alberta called "Shakespeare" (yes, that's truly what it was called). Her students, many of whom were the children of Eastern European immigrants, and who spoke English as a second language as she did, took turns bringing wood in the winter for heating that school's two rooms. Some of them came to school hungry. Whenever my mother reminisced about her experiences at that school, she emphasized that, "with no eating, it was hard to teach reading and writing." My father once introduced the idea of a National Food Bank in Canada to a group of other farmers at the local cafe. He explained that such a bank, by guaranteeing a reasonable price for grain, could help to stabilize and secure the income of small family farms, which were particularly disadvantaged by an unstable "boom and bust" economic system. When the weather was good and crop yields were high, the prices dropped. In such a situation, only the farmers who could afford to store their grain until prices went up again would be able to turn a decent profit. When the weather was poor and crop yields were low, the prices rose. The problem in this scenario, of course, was the very shortage of grain to sell--so, once again, only the farmers who had been able to store grain from a previous year would be able to make a reasonable income. At some point during my father's presentation of his Food Bank idea, the principal of the high school entered the cafe. He didn't sit down with the farmers at the U-shaped counter but remained standing by the door. However, when a number of the farmers began getting really interested in my father's idea, the principal interrupted the discussion with a tirade about the free market economy. The farmers quickly finished their coffees and left. What I learned from that experience was that language had power and could function in an oppressive way and that the ideas of farmers like my father could make a lot more sense than those of high school principals.

I also owe a great deal to my sister, Phyllis, who taught English and directed plays as I did. Though she died of cancer at the very beginning of my research for this thesis, her insights, compassion, and courageous endurance of physical pain inform my work and my theoretical

# CHAPTER I
## DID MOTHERS HAVE A RENAISSANCE?[1]

The early modern period marks a significant moment in the history of motherhood. While it is often assumed that motherhood and marriage acquire new favor in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries due to the repudiation of the medieval view which construes the celibate life as more valuable, and that this new approval of motherhood and marriage promotes a more positive attitude toward women and sexuality because it moves away from the misogyny which informs the traditional valorization of virginity, my investigation of motherhood in early modern culture demonstrates that such assumptions are based on an understanding of motherhood which is too narrow and monolithic.

This understanding does not take into account the expansive, highly esteemed notion of motherhood adumbrated in the discourses and practices of late medieval incarnationalism, and women's distinctive contribution to its stature and impact. While informed by misogyny, "incarnational" motherhood also subverted it by depicting Christ himself in physical and maternal terms and by construing physicality, particularly women's, as a means of developing a special intimacy with the divine. It encouraged a family formation founded on charitable works rather than on marriage, and a sexuality oriented toward an ambiguously-gendered, divine being rather than a heterosexual, human one. It validated the "re-production" achieved by feeding bodies instead of by breeding them. Further, it made motherhood accessible to men, not just women, and provided women with a viable, valued alternative to the secondary role of wife and progenitor. Incarnational mothers also greatly contributed to the rise and development of the Corpus Christi cycles which themselves served as a mechanism to disseminate and extend the many facets of the incarnational version of the maternal over a period of two centuries.

The perspective which assumes that motherhood and marriage acquire new regard in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and that this new approbation was a boon for women at the time also fails to take into consideration the long-standing "calculative" form of motherhood which was practiced by the majority of women.[2] Calculative motherhood influenced the development of incarnational motherhood and, like incarnational motherhood, enabled women to exercise a great

deal of control over their sexuality and fertility and considerable clout in their families and communities.

Though probably surprising to some of us,[3] the ability to limit the number of offspring was indeed well within the reach of women, married or not, during the medieval period.[4] The extant data indicate the availability of more than two hundred generally reliable contraceptive and abortion methods--most of which involved the consumption of carefully prepared herbal concoctions. The contraceptive effect of prolonged breastfeeding also helped women, particularly those who were wet-nurses, to manage their fertility. In addition, the very pattern of indulgence and abstinence encouraged by the Catholic cycles of feast and fast provided a legitimate means by which married women could defy the sexual advances of their husbands during certain times of the year, even in the face of the church tenet which decreed that spouses were obligated to fulfil the conjugal debt.

Calculative mothers also carefully evaluated the procreation of children in terms of economics and thoroughly coordinated their reproductive and productive labor.[5] Their productive activities were essential and substantial as well, likely "constituting at least half of the total household economy" (Erickson xix) and leading most scholars to conclude that the medieval period marked the "high point of women's employment" (Wiesner, Working Women 2).[6] At a time when the vast majority of households were rural, subsistent, and largely self-sufficient, and the members of the households had access to common land, women provided for their families' basic needs not only by preparing food and making clothing but also through such activities as gardening, dairying, poultrying, fishing, and brewing. Though much of what the women produced on the holding was consumed there, any surplus they did manage to accrue was sold by them at the local markets in order to purchase other supplies needed for their families' maintenance. The women often worked alongside men, ploughing and reaping, to sustain a living on the land. Moreover, in times of family need or a labor shortage, the women, again like their menfolk, would hire themselves out to wealthier peasants or to the local gentry. The employment of women in the towns was extensive and multi-faceted as well. While access to artisanal work for women in guilds dominated by men was typically through birth or marriage rather than through apprenticeship, the women still participated in the same craft processes as men, often practicing them alongside their husbands and continuing the business

after their husbands' deaths.  In some crafts, such as textiles, the women even dominated.  Many of the women also kept ale-houses and inns and, like their rural counterparts, frequented regional markets buying and selling goods for the provision of their families.  Both the rural and the urban housewives were knowledgeable about the use of herbs, salves, and ointments, and were the primary medical practitioners of the time.  Many worked as midwives and often added to the material resources of their household and welfare of their families through the remunerative use of their breast milk for nutritive and medicinal purposes.

Both the incarnational and the calculative versions of motherhood differ significantly from the "new" motherhood[7] of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which severs the maternal from God's body, charitable and remunerative labor, and the knowledge and means with which to prevent or end pregnancy, and which restricts the maternal to the work of bearing and rearing children, as many as possible, within the patriarchal family and household.

In chapters 2 and 3, I will examine the three versions of motherhood in much more detail and demonstrate that the exaltation of marriage and women's role as the reproducer of children in the new pronatal version of motherhood promoted by the humanists and reformers helped to suppress the beliefs and "works" of incarnational motherhood, including the two-centuries-old Corpus Christi cycles, and to erode and devalue the concepts and practices of calculative motherhood.  The repudiation of both traditional modes of motherhood led to a greater spiritual, economic, and physical dependency of women on men.  This dependency reinforced the parts of the contradictory ideologies of marriage and family which advocated the subordination of the wife to the husband and of the mother to the father, which relegated the management of charitable duties and the responsibility of remunerative employment to men/fathers, and which, in doing so, substantially enlarged the scope and leverage of the paternal at the expense of the maternal over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

My examination of the calculative, incarnational, and new forms of motherhood will not only contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the competition over the maternal in early modern culture as a whole, but will help to historicize and complicate the "oedipal plot" (Rose, "Where are the Mothers in Shakespeare?" 301) which has long dominated the critiques of motherhood in

Shakespeare's plays.[8] While there is no question that the influential and astute psychoanalytic explorations of motherhood sharpen insight into how the diminution/elimination of the mother and the devaluation of the mother's desire signify in the complex formation of male subjectivity and patriarchy in Shakespearean drama, they are necessarily limited in their interpretation of the role of the maternal because they posit an ahistorical model of the family and of the formation of gender.

In chapters 4 and 5, I will extend the work of the psychoanalytic critics by exploring Shakespeare's Macbeth and Coriolanus in relation to the different versions of motherhood in early modern culture. Macbeth grapples with the insecurities generated by Elizabeth I's and James I's adaptations of the available ideologies of motherhood and the diminution of the range and influence of motherhood in early modern culture as a whole. It employs Scottish history in such a way as to heighten attention to the risks which the monarchs' adaptations produce, and shifts from constructions of the maternal which refer more to Elizabeth and incarnational and calculative mothers to constructions of the maternal which refer more to James and new mothers. It suggests that James's adaptation of the available ideologies is especially conducive to instability, since it generates a contradiction at the center of a hereditary system of political power--the simultaneous need for and exclusion of women/mothers. This contradiction coupled with the diminution of the feminine/maternal, the play intimates, makes it more rather than less likely that murder will be construed as an alternative means of being "born" into the succession.

The approach to motherhood in Coriolanus is more complex than in Macbeth. Whereas Macbeth shifts from constructions of the maternal more easily aligned with incarnational and calculative mothers to constructions of the maternal more readily affiliated with new mothers, Coriolanus appears nearly throughout to be deeply informed by the contest between the inherited and the new versions of motherhood. Complicating matters even more is that the conflicting, often contradictory positions of the characters and the countries in relation to the contest change over the course of the play. Examining these changing positions adds to the understanding of the economic, political, familial, and theatrical aspects of the play, as well as makes it possible to speculate that Coriolanus suggests peace may be achieved when a version of motherhood which most closely

resembles not the restrictive new motherhood but the expansive incarnational and calculative forms

of motherhood is embraced by the mother and the son who are featured in the play.

In the remainder of this chapter, because I am one of the growing numbers of critics who no

longer consider an unexamined critical position worth writing about,[9] I want to briefly review the key

theoretical developments and debates which have profoundly affected the work of literary critics,

register my growing reservations about particular aspects of these developments and debates, and

conclude with a few suggestions as to how an investigation of the divergent notions of motherhood in

the early modern period may serve to stimulate insight into the current theoretical impasse troubling

the work of materialist critics and, by doing so, help to reinvigorate the historical form of materialist

criticism.

Perhaps the most significant developments precipitated by postmodern/poststructuralist

theory over the last several decades concern the subject, language, and the use of master narratives

as explanatory devices.[10] The unified, coherent, autonomous, transcendent, self-present subject of

liberal humanism has been displaced by the heterogeneous subject--a subject made up of

competing, contradictory discourses and informed by the social and economic conditions of a

particular historical moment and location. The traditional view of language as a neutral, transparent

medium or a simple, referential tool has been displaced by the understanding of language as a

complex system of signifying practices, which construct or mediate realities rather than merely

present or reflect them, which derive meanings not in relation to signifieds or external referents but in

relation to other signifiers or the semiotic systems in which they are functioning, and which

themselves constitute an arena where diverse subjects struggle to make certain meanings--certain

ideological formations--prevail. The use of totalizing narratives which attempt to account for all

features of experience in a particular past or present has been displaced by the deployment of more

limited and localized narratives which consider constitutive aspects of experience--such as class,

race, and/or gender--which the grand narratives typically exclude. While none of us as subjects, in

the terms of this postmodern frame of relations, can completely escape the discursive regimes, or

the power/knowledge configurations, of the communities in which we reside, the particular position of

each of us in the network of contradictory, intersecting discourses assures differences among us as well as possibilities for agency--that is, for the ability to act on and alter the regimes.

These theoretical developments seriously challenge the assumptions of the "old" historicism exemplified by E. M. W. Tillyard's "Elizabethan World Picture"--for example, the assumptions that human beings share an eternal, universal nature, that literature reflects history, which in turn provides the solid "background" for the unified or autonomous literary work or its author, and that the historicizing process is an objective, apolitical activity carried out by scholars who, unlike the works and authors they study, are not bound to history. The postmodern paradigm construes both the scholars and the authors whom the scholars study as subjects who are variously positioned within the social formation, who are necessarily diverse, partial, provisional, and ideologically invested, and who interact with the multiple, polysemous, historical products of other subjects that, too, are socially situated, limited, changeable, and interested. Language is deeply implicated in the social formation and literature is considered an integral part of history, a part which both informs and is informed by culture--or, as Jean E. Howard puts it, "[a] part of a much larger symbolic order through which the world at a particular . . . moment is conceptualized and through which a culture imagines its relationship to the actual conditions of its existence" ("New Historicism" 25).

It was the renunciation of the "old" assumptions and the promotion of the "new" ones by a few upwardly mobile critics which prompted the important and productive debate about the historicizing process among early modern scholars a number of years ago.[11] Fashioning themselves as "new historicists," this small group of influential critics were confronted by other literary critics-- principally feminist critics--on several counts: (1) their denial, inadvertent or otherwise, of their own historicity and their indebtedness to some of the "old," but anticipatory, historicism; (2) their preoccupation with institutional or court power and the power relations among males; (3) their subordination of the body and gender to power, and general inattention to early modern discourses about women, sexuality, gender relations, marriage, the family, and the masterless; (4) their "thick" reading of only a few texts to generate bold generalizations about the culture as a whole or a particular literary work; (5) their disregard of the significant contradictions and instabilities of particular configurations of both power and the body; (6) their argument that the dominant form of

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authority actually produces elements of apparent subversion or transgression as a means of maintaining its control; and (7) their inability to explain historical change. Feminist critics in this debate also reproached deconstructive critics for too easily subsuming the real social, educational, legal, and economic differences between men and women in the early modern period into "something less anxiety-producing, more abstract, more fun" (Neely, "Constructing the Subject" 11, 12), and for their complicity in making the world into "the endless play of signifiers" (Haraway 576). Donna Haraway characterized the relativizing "all is text and flux" tenet of the deconstructionists as a totalizing credo, and asserted, "We need the power of modern critical theories of how meanings and bodies get made, not in order to deny meanings and bodies, but in order to build meanings and bodies that have a chance for life" (580).

The critics of "new historicism" and "newer than new criticism"--Carol Thomas Neely's expression for deconstruction ("Constructing the Subject" 14)--called for specific methodological practices which would subvert the totalizing tendency of both theoretical approaches. They recommended situating canonical texts in relation to multiple non-canonical writings--particularly those about women, sexuality, gender relations, marriage, the family, and the masterless--and to the non-discursive practices and institutions in which the texts were produced. They encouraged literary critics to apply the critical skills they have brought to the study of literary texts to the dialogic nexus of discourses which a wide selection of cultural texts produces, since examining how multiple forms of writing contradict, undermine, recuperate, or reproduce ideologies could enable challenges to the still dominant conservative ideological appropriation of early modern texts. To counter the deconstructionists' "poetics of the 'already read,'" Nancy K. Miller advocated a "poetics of the underread and a practice of 'overreading'" that "unsettle the interpretive model which thinks that it knows when it is rereading, and what is in the library," and that constructs women's writing as "a new object of reading" (274). Neely extended Miller's concept of overreading. She urged "read[ing] over" canonical texts as if for the first time, "reading to excess" the possibility of female subjectivity, resistance, or even subversion, overreading texts with histories, overreading texts with both early modern and contemporary critiques of the inequity between men and women, and overreading the multiple and reciprocal relationships between cultural and literary texts ("Constructing the Subject"

15-16). Howard suggested that literary critics "write history from below, from subordinated gender and class positions, rather than from above, and so avoid an unintentional romance with, and a redoubling of the effects of, dominant power in one's own critical work" ("Feminism and the Question of History" 152).

The debate and its aftermath enabled a fruitful alliance of new historicism and feminism, as well as of cultural materialism--a methodology which is closely related to new historicism, but which validates subversion as much as (if not more than) containment in its critical practice and, therefore, does not privilege control or closure. This alliance provided an effective means for complicating the ahistorical/idealist/essentialist kinds of feminism--for example, the influential psychoanalytic feminism--which tend to disregard the differences race, class, and culture make among and within women and which consequently fail to grapple with the specific and variable forms of representations of gender and of women's oppression and exploitation.[12]

While the postmodern developments in theory, as well as the debate among early modern literary critics and the recommendations for critical methodology which it generated, exerted and continue to exert a major influence on my own work, I now have reservations about particular aspects of the postmodern theoretical shift. These reservations have been prompted by what Teresa L. Ebert and Donald Morton refer to as the "ludic" turn in theory--particularly as it has been embraced by critics who identify their work as materialist--and allude to a theoretical impasse which was hinted at in the critiques levelled at the deconstructive critics and which may prove much more difficult to negotiate than the conflicts between new historicists and feminists or between essentialist feminists and materialist feminists. Ebert defines "ludic" theory as a theory "that is founded upon poststructuralist assumptions about linguistic play, difference, and the priority of discourse" (Ebert, Ludic Feminism 3). It claims to be materialist but all that seems to "[count] as the 'material' is basically the 'signifier'" (Morton, "Class Politics" 477). Preoccupied with the construction of desire and the "playful uncertainties" of discourse (Morton, "Class Politics" 477), it overlooks or denies "the priority of [physical] *needs*" and "the increasing economic divisions (the very real binaries) between the haves and the have-nots" (Ebert, Ludic Feminism 75-76, 196). It "substitutes the personal (playful meditation) for the political (historical explanation)" and "discursive determinism for an

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economic determinism" (Ebert, Ludic Feminism 16, 25). Both Ebert and Morton pose crucial questions to critics who characterize themselves as materialists. "What kind of subject can afford to explain politics and the social world strictly in terms of 'desire' except the subject whose 'needs' are already met?" Morton asks ("Class Politics" 475). "[W]hy has so much feminist and postmodern theory . . . been preoccupied with disclaiming and distancing itself from issues of economics, labor, production, and exploitation, dismissing these issues as . . . 'economic reductionism'?" Ebert inquires (Ludic Feminism 23). Ebert and Morton are very wary about the central place of the subject and "subjectivity" in what has become the dominant mode of materialist analysis. With this centrality, Ebert asserts, the exploration of difference becomes an "apparatus to perpetuate the regime of nomadic, molecular subjects, and in so doing keep the existing social structure intact" (Ludic Feminism 119). It tends too often to entirely displace/overlook the "forest" for the "trees."

Ebert's and Morton's critiques of ludic theory in the "'post-al' academy" (Morton, "Birth of the Cyberqueer" 369)--"post-al" referring to the plethora of supposedly materialist theories which claim to be postMarxist, postfeminist, postcolonialist, etc.--confront very directly a serious theoretical issue, one which has been avoided and occluded by all the success that the ludic methodology has achieved and which begins to explain why such a materialist theory can continue to thrive at a time when there are such strong conservative forces at work in many arenas. The crisis of materialist theory in postmodernity (and I am particularly concerned about this crisis in relation to materialist feminism) is about the very meaning of politics, the possibility for social transformation, and the commitment to the amelioration of oppression and exploitation.

Postmodern theories effectively challenge the assumption of a metaphysical or transcendental presence "behind" language. They demonstrate that behind words are more words-- rather than God, theologically speaking; Truth, philosophically speaking; or Meaning, literarily speaking. As a result, they facilitate an understanding of the materiality--and oftentimes agonizing self-referentiality or opacity--of language, as well as of the constitutive/mediative role language plays in the formulation of meaning/ideology. However, does the challenge to an amaterial, metaphysical presence/essence behind language and a more astute understanding of the density and constitutive/mediative capacity of language necessarily mean that attention to the relationship of

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linguistic/discursive constructions to other "modalities of materiality" (Althusser 169) such as the physical and the economic should be diminished or suspended?

I want to suggest that Louis Althusser's discussion about the different modalities of materiality may be especially useful to materialist critics who are concerned about the present theoretical crisis and committed to the advancement of social and economic justice. While Althusser's analysis of ideology thus far has principally fostered a more sophisticated understanding of the materiality of ideology (and of language, too, of course, since ideology is formulated in language), and while such an understanding has proved enabling and enriching for the work of materialist critics over the last two decades, other aspects of Althusser's perspective extend this understanding and more closely address the current concerns about the "ludic" turn in materialist analysis. For example, Althusser contends that "[t]he material existence of the ideology in an apparatus and its practices does not have the same modality as the material existence of a paving-stone or a rifle" and that "the materialities . . . of a gaze, of a hand-shake, of an external verbal discourse or an 'internal' verbal discourse (consciousness), are not one and the same materiality" (166, 169). Althusser unfortunately does not theorize these differences, which he himself acknowledges when he states, "I shall leave on one side the problem of a theory of the differences between the modalities of materiality" (169). He does, however, assert that the "autonomy of the superstructure" is only "relative," that the superstructure and base affect or act on each other in a "reciprocal" manner, and that the "different modalities" of matter are "all . . . in the last instance [rooted] in 'physical' matter" (136, 166, 169). His theoretical perspective thus prohibits either a clear separation or a complete conflation of the various modalities of materiality; refuses to construe the effects of ideology on physicality as a "one-way street" or in "trickle-down" terms despite the relatively autonomous status of ideological formulations; and preserves the preeminence--the *determining* power--of the physical "in the last instance."

Theorizing the differences between the modalities of materiality is a huge project and goes beyond the scope of my work here. However, I do think that the time for theorizing such differences may have come, because, for all the critical preoccupation with difference in the post-al academy, some of the most pressing differences--for example, the difference between the variable

constructions of class and the shared/universal need for food, or, as Ebert puts it, "[t]he truth of hunger" (Ludic Feminism 196)--have been either subordinated or ignored. Ebert in fact insists that "[i]t is only through [the] recognition of universal needs that difference can be materialized" (Ludic Feminism 151). Moreover, despite the fact that language is not a neutral, transparent medium, or a simple, referential tool, and does indeed constitute a relatively autonomous material domain where changeable subjects struggle to make particular ideological formulations prevail, I want to suggest that linguistically-rendered formulations should "in the last instance" be considered and evaluated in relation to the material modalities of physical need and the economic conditions of a particular historical moment and location--something which I myself try to do in my investigation of the competing versions of motherhood in the early modern period.

This matter is an important one, because there are serious consequences if attention to the relationship of language/discourse to other modalities of materiality is either minimized or abandoned altogether. Elaine Scarry warns us:

> When language and the body are placed side by side, the weightlessness of any language that has lost its referential aspirations becomes especially noticeable. But what becomes noticeable in addition to this problematic deficit of linguistic consequence is the problematic surfeit of consequence, the danger that results from excluding the material world. . . . [T]he more invisible the material referents, the more possible that they are being put at risk ([since] to be visibly at risk invites rescue and redress). ("Introduction" xxii)

The abdication of relational analysis or of all referentiality in our discursive/linguistic projects does not make these projects ineffectual in terms of the excluded "material referents." It just makes it more likely that the effects generated by the projects will be ones which are perilous for those referents. In other words, by not relating our critical work--or should I say critical "play"?--to the unjust conditions of physical and economic existence, we become complicitous in the production and perpetuation of the injustice. If we are not part of the solution, we are part of the problem. A neutral position is not an option.

The matter of addressing physical need/pain is compounded by the medium of language itself, which is extremely resistant to the articulation of such a physical state. As Scarry explains, "physical pain--unlike any other state of consciousness--has no referential content. It is not *of* or *for* anything. It is precisely because it takes no object that it, more than any other phenomenon, resists objectification in language." Just as the examination of the relationship of discursive/ideological constructions to other modalities of materiality is a very consequential endeavor, so, too, is the capacity to linguistically register physical need/pain because "the relative ease or difficulty with which any given phenomenon can be *verbally represented* also influences the ease or difficulty with which that phenomenon comes to be *politically represented.*" Scarry discusses the attempts to express physical pain in language by several groups of people: individuals who have experienced such pain, medical personnel, Amnesty International letter-writers, personal injury lawyers, and artists--the last of whom Scarry finds to be remarkably few in number, a paucity which she attributes to the extraordinary difficulty of the task. She provides a few examples of literary texts which take on the task and seem to succeed at it--Sophocles's Philoctetes, Bergman's Cries and Whispers, and Nietzsche's The Gay Science (Body in Pain 4-12). I myself was reminded of a favorite passage of mine from Samuel Beckett's novel Watt, where Beckett uses repetition to register physical need:

> The ordinary person eats a meal, then rests from eating for a space, then eats again, then rests again, then eats again, then rests again, then eats again, then rests again, then eats again, then rests again, then eats again, then rests again, then eats again, then rests again, and in this way, now eating, and now resting from eating, he deals with the difficult problem of hunger, and indeed I think I may add thirst, to the best of his ability and according to the state of his fortune. . . . [T]he fact remains . . . that [the ordinary person] proceeds by what we call meals, whether taken voluntarily or involuntarily, with pleasure or pain, successfully or unsuccessfully, through the mouth, the nose, the pores, the feedtube or in an upward direction with the aid of a piston from behind is not of the slightest importance, and that between these acts of nutrition, without which life as it is generally understood would be hard set to continue, there intervene periods of rest or repose. (52-53)

I also could not help but think of Rebecca Brown's remarkable novel, The Gifts of the Body, which features a home-care worker who assists people with AIDS, and which, in an exquisitely spare, luminous language, attends very closely indeed to bodies in pain--to their loss of the capacity to walk or stand, loss of the capacity to speak, loss of the capacity to eat, etc.--losses which typically accompany a terminal disease.[13] In addition, as I will demonstrate in chapter 2, the Corpus Christi cycles of the late medieval and early modern periods, cycles which were developed and performed over a period of about two centuries, very centrally and extensively focus on physical need and bodily pain--perhaps in a manner unparalleled in any other literary work not only because of their subject matter but because of their theatrical form, or their use of flesh-and-blood bodies to act out and speak about physical pain.

As it turns out, physical need, bodily pain, and concerns about the body in general are almost obsessively attended to in many of the discourses and practices of late medieval people--particularly in the discourses and practices of the calculative and the incarnational versions of motherhood which were prevalent at the time and which themselves are intricately implicated in the Corpus Christi cycles. In fact, I want to suggest that my investigation of these two versions of motherhood-- versions which the early modern period inherited--and of the formulation and promotion of the new motherhood in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may serve, in a number of respects, to illuminate the current theoretical impasse frustrating the efforts of committed materialist critics.

First, my investigation will deal directly with the basic components of a historical (as opposed to a ludic) materialist analysis as they are defined by Friedrich Engels in The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State:

> [T]he determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of immediate life. This, again, is of a two-fold character: on the one side, the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing and shelter and the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. (qtd. in Wayne, Matter of Difference 6)

In calculative motherhood, both forms of production (the production of the means of existence and the production of human beings themselves) are carefully coordinated; in incarnational motherhood, they are thoroughly conflated; and in the new motherhood, they are almost completely separated with the production of the means of existence identified as the primary responsibility of men and the production of human beings construed as the essential duty of women. An examination of the variable and changing relations and gender inflections of "the production and reproduction of immediate life" are vital to a materialist feminist critique because, as Ebert reminds us and as my historicized investigation of motherhood will indeed show, "the gender division of labor is . . . the precondition of all appropriation of surplus value and accumulation" (Ludic Feminism 80-81).

Second, my investigation will explore relations between the different modalities of materiality which appear very distinct from our own, as well as trace the shift to relations between the modalities which seem more similar to ours and thus familiar to us. The calculative and incarnational versions of motherhood--both in ideological and in practical terms--overtly take into account hunger and the intimate connection between food and the body, and between food and the body and the maternal. Incarnational motherhood also includes God in the food-body-mother nexus. Both of these forms of motherhood attribute an agency to the body--to its senses and, in particular, to its needs and pains-- an agency which we scholars in our postmodern moment, perhaps too often cramped up in front of the disembodied texts in books and on computer screens, can scarcely identify with or even imagine. As Wolfgang Riehle observes, "[t]he idea of knowledge and wisdom which are sensual and which can be savoured was widely accepted and completely taken for granted until the seventeenth century, and is something which we today, who are so used to the idea of the 'dissociation of sensibility'--to use [T. S.] Eliot's famous phrase--have long since lost" (109-110).[14] In examining the discourses and practices of the calculative and especially the incarnational mothers, then, we truly do get a glimpse at what Jean Howard refers to as the "radical otherness of the past" ("The New Historicism" 11). The revised relations between the different modalities of materiality which may be discerned in the new motherhood, on the other hand--much more oedipal in their orientation--are ones which are more easily recognizable for us (post)moderns. The new motherhood separates the nexus of food-body-mother from the Word/God, from males, from charitable works, from

remunerative labor, and from the knowledge and means with which to promote, to prevent, or to end pregnancy. It encloses the mother in the patriarchal family and household.

Third, my investigation will show that print technology was anything but an innocent player in the epistemological shift from the "Word made food and maternal flesh" to the "Word alone." In fact, that the "Word [could be] made print"[15]--could, that is, in a historically unprecedented manner be widely disseminated in a disembodied form--greatly enabled the institution of the new humanist and reformist paradigm for the relations between the different modalities of materiality--a paradigm which separated the Word from the food-body-mother nexus and emphasized *sola scriptura*, and which detached faith from physically, socially, and divinely efficacious service and insisted on *sola fides*.

Fourth, my investigation will point to our own on-going complicity with the new relations between the different modalities of materiality wrought by the humanists and the reformers--relations which, again, were greatly enabled by the advent of print technology and which perhaps are all the more secured and fortified now in an age of burgeoning electronic technologies.[16] This complicity should, I think, be of particular concern to scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries precisely because print technology first gained preeminence during that period.

Finally, my investigation will shed some light on the critical biases which are linked to our complicity with the new relations between the different modalities of materiality formulated and promoted in the early modern period. For example, we often tend to assume that the increasing spread and use of print technology, the growth in literacy, and the new emphasis on education in the early modern period could only have been positive developments, and to minimize or be completely oblivious to what was lost in the shift from an oral and dramatistic *modus operandi* to a "printistic" one, especially for women and for the understanding, value, and influence of motherhood. In addition, we tend to construe the illiterate medieval subject as ignorant and to treat the medieval subject and the medieval period as a whole disparagingly and monolithically, a tendency which I will discuss in much greater detail in chapter 2. While the inclination to belittle and to reductively depict the medieval subject and period no longer prevails in the work of medieval scholars, it still has currency in a number of very influential works by early modern literary critics--new historicist, cultural materialist, and materialist feminist works, as a matter of fact--as David Aers points out ("A Whisper"

177-202). Despite the claims of these critics that their work is "new," "radical," and "historical," he argues, they present a "peculiarly dematerialising and idealist version of medieval culture and society against which supposedly major cultural changes in Shakespeare's England can be identified and understood," as well as make their bold assertions about the medieval period and its subjects on the basis of only a few texts. Aers contends that "any account that tells us stories of transformations [for example, in the "construction of the subject"] . . . will have to describe with great care . . . precisely that against which it is being alleged the changes are identifiable as decisive changes and ruptures." It is much more "laborious," he willingly concedes, but insists that for critics who claim that their work is historical, "[t]his is an elementary demand."[17] He also speculates that the reductive tendencies of these early modern literary critics may very well be due to their lack of interest in and attention to religious matters and to their training in traditional English departments which tend to focus on canonical works and rigidly compartmentalize and divide the literature of the medieval and the early modern periods ("A Whisper" 187, 189, 195). A number of years ago now, the renowned feminist historian Joan Kelly-Gadol contended that "[o]ne of the tasks of women's history [in particular] is to call into question [such] accepted schemes of periodization" (139).

I have found these and other observations, contentions, and recommendations of Aers and Kelly-Gadol to be immensely enlightening and useful for my own investigation of motherhood, both in the wider culture of the late medieval and the early modern periods and in the more particular cultural formations of the Corpus Christi cycles and Shakespeare's plays.

It has, however, not been easy to cross the boundary between the early modern era and the later Middle Ages--to carve a small "hole in [that] . . . wall" (Midsummer Night's Dream V.i.200) which has been built between the people and the culture of the two periods. But I hope that having done so will make it easier for more of us to see that the "rude mechanicals, / [Who] work for bread" and who call themselves "mother's son[s]," on the other side of those stones, are far more sophisticated than many of us have imagined (Midsummer Night's Dream III.ii.9-10; I.ii.73; III.i.69). Indeed, as I have suggested, their beliefs and behaviors, and especially those of their female counterparts, may help us at this juncture of our critical work to revitalize our commitment to the advancement of social and

economic justice--because their religious piety, despite the contradictions and tensions which informed it, was no opium.

**CHAPTER II**
**THE WORD MADE FOOD AND MATERNAL FLESH**

**2.1    Impediments to an Understanding of Incarnational Motherhood**

The view of the Middle Ages as "dark" and "barbaric" still often impedes a deeper

understanding of the period.  David Aers traces the beginnings of this deprecatory characterization to

the early modern humanists who formulated a "'Dark Ages' against which, and in terms of which,

they could define and legitimise their own commitments" ("A Whisper" 195).[1]  Richard E. Sullivan

also attributes the formulation of this "dark-age interpretation" to the humanists who turned to the

language and literature of the ancient world for their model of civilization, and further points out that

the Protestant reformers readily embraced the humanists' disparaging conception of the medieval

era and the rationalists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries subsequently extended it by

making the time into "a dismal dark age positioned between a glorious classical age and a new age

of enlightenment" (6-7, 11).  Peter Brown finds evidence of this formation's influence not merely in

the eighteenth century but also beyond it, through to our own time (Cult of the Saints 12-17).  In the

twentieth century, perhaps no-one has encouraged the perception of the Middle Ages as

degenerative more than Johan Huizinga in The Waning of the Middle Ages.

Though Huizinga in his eloquent and sonorous prose explores in detail an age which had

been subject to over-generalization and neglect, he again produces the notion of the era as a time of

decline and decadence, with the clerical elite struggling in vain to maintain what was conceptually

valuable and pure in the face of widespread contamination by the masses who were ignorant,

childlike, superstitious, and obsessively literal-minded in their interpretation of doctrine.[2]  "The spirit

of the Middle Ages, still plastic and naive, longs to give concrete shape to every conception," he

asserts.  "By this tendency to embodiment in visible forms all holy concepts are constantly exposed

to the danger of hardening into mere externalism.  For in assuming a definite figurative shape

thought loses its ethereal . . . qualities" (136).  Huizinga laments particularly the preoccupation with

the concrete since, to his way of thinking, such an inclination toward literalism can only diminish, not

enhance, spiritual development.  Sarah Beckwith contends that this kind of "platonizing formulation"

on Huizinga's part served to deter other, less "idealizing" investigations of the "dominant forms of

late medieval catholic religiosity" (Christ's Body 17-18). Gail McMurray Gibson, in surveying a number of the works which exhibit Huizinga's influential "critical bias," also argues that "[f]or fifty years historians and laymen alike seized Huizinga's words and revered them as primary texts, almost never reassessing his evidence or questioning his conclusions" (2-5).[3]

The ready acceptance of the "two-tier model" of the elite and the vulgar (Brown, Cult of the Saints 17) and also of the clerical point of view by the historians and critics who reproduce the pejorative characterization of the medieval period significantly restricts their investigations of the history of piety.[4] The acceptance of the two-tier model not only informs Huizinga's construction of the literate elite unsuccessfully staving off the corrosive influences of the literalist laity and the perspectives of the many scholars who "have continued to remouth, in language more or less negative, [Huizinga's] working assumptions" (Gibson 4). It also limits the perceptions of historians and critics who focus predominantly on the laity, seeking not to ridicule but to more sympathetically render the beliefs and behaviors of the mass of people by arguing that the growing hierarchization of the church increasingly separated the concerns of the clergy and the laity, discouraged interaction of the two, and, as a result, contributed to the alienation of the laity who developed, for better or for worse, their own forms of worship.[5] However, the acceptance of a clear distinction between the clergy and the laity, along with the tendency to overlook, to belittle, or to simplify non-clerical devotion, are perhaps nowhere more pronounced than in examinations of the piety of late medieval women, since these studies tend to concentrate not just on the writings of clerics but on only one portion of these writings: the discourses of dualism and misogyny.

The discourse of dualism represents the body as rotten, gluttonous, lustful, and seductive, as an entity which the spirit seeking salvation has to fight with, punish, and control. Sexuality in particular has to be repudiated by the soul striving for holiness. That philosophical, scientific, and theological traditions of the medieval period all contributed to the association of the woman with both the body and sexuality made women especially subject to the denigration encouraged by the dualist formulation. In the philosophical tradition, "*[m]ale* and *female* were contrasted and asymmetrically valued as intellect/body, active/passive, rational/irrational, reason/emotion, self-control/lust, judgment/mercy, and order/disorder" (Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 151). The scientific

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tradition reinforced this gender difference and asymmetry with its construction of the woman as an imperfect or inferior man and its notion that, in the process of conception, the woman provided the matter and the man contributed the form or animating component. The perception of woman's ontological and physiological inferiority was further developed by the patristic discourses, which align Adam with the soul or the intellect and Eve with the flesh or the appetites, constitute woman's very nature as sexual, and equate woman with weakness and sexual temptation. The secular literature of the period also emphasized the association of woman with the body and sexuality by highlighting the adultery of aristocratic women and the lustful antics of lower-status women. Even many folk rituals at the time construed woman as disruptive and sexually insatiable (Davis, Society and Culture 124-31).[6]

With such a multi-faceted elaboration of dualism and misogyny in the Middle Ages, perhaps it should not be surprising that so many historians assume the era between the decline of antiquity and the Renaissance was also a "Dark Age for the woman" (McLaughlin, "Equality of Souls" 213)--a time when the dualist concept of the person and the misogynist concept of the woman prevailed and were simply internalized by women, particularly holy women who consequently felt compelled to repudiate sexuality and resort to starvation and other practices of physical self-mutilation in order to foster their own spiritual growth.[7] Perhaps it should also not be surprising that numerous scholars argue these women were forced not merely to renounce their sexuality and discipline and punish their bodies but to strive to become more masculine as a means of rising to the level of the spirit and the divine,[8] or maintain that the Virgin Mary, because she was such a high profile model for women, could only, by virtue of her extraordinary virginity, have exacerbated the women's self-abnegation.[9]

That dualist and misogynist constructions circulated during the medieval period cannot be denied. However, perspectives which over-emphasize the dualist and misogynist discourses, as well as those which disparage the literalism of the laity, criticize the growth of clerical power, or continue to impose a two-tier model on late medieval piety, all severely hinder a nuanced understanding of the incarnationalism of the period, especially its historically specific notion of motherhood.

My consideration of late medieval incarnationalism will demonstrate that it, though informed by dualist and misogynist formulations, literalist inclinations, clerical authority, and lay and clerical

segregation, significantly altered them--by construing Christ himself in physical and maternal terms and by encouraging the development of an expansive, influential version of motherhood based both on the conflation of divine, digestive, and gestative functions in the Eucharist, and on the much longer-standing "calculative" form of motherhood which linked reproductive labor to other forms of work and validated the kind of "re-production" accomplished through the nourishment and physical care of bodies.

The intermingling of the spiritual and the physical and the masculine and the feminine in "incarnational" motherhood allowed priests and other holy men to depict themselves as mothers and their work as maternal. It also enabled holy women to resist the secondary role of wife and progenitor, to cultivate charitable practices focused on physical need, and to exert influence so considerable that the women set the model for lay piety and inspired the universal Feast of Corpus Christi for the church. This festival itself--in concert with the labor crisis precipitated by the sudden and severe population decline in the fourteenth century--prompted the rise and development of the Corpus Christi cycles. The cycles further encouraged the valuation of a motherhood which was based on the construction of Christ as edible and maternal, affiliated with remunerative work that involved the body and produced materials for the body's sustenance, and preoccupied with charitable labor rather than the propagation of offspring, and with a family formation founded on common need instead of on conjugal or blood bonds.

The expansive, influential beliefs and behaviors of the incarnational version of the maternal, along with the extraordinary contradictions and exquisite tensions which they generated, proved intolerable for the early modern humanists and reformers. So, too, did the discourses and practices of the legacy of calculative motherhood--a legacy which, like so many other aspects of the medieval period, has been subjected to much critical deprecation.

Examining the incarnational ideology and the labor crisis of the later Middle Ages will sharpen insight not only into the formation and elaboration of incarnational motherhood and its relationship to the tradition of calculative motherhood, but also into the humanists and reformers' rejection of both the incarnational and the calculative versions of motherhood and promotion of a

"new," much more limited form of motherhood--that is, into the struggle over the scope and impact of motherhood which so deeply troubled the early modern period.


## 2.2    The Incarnational Construction of the Divine

The body of the incarnated Christ depicted in late medieval religious writings and iconography resonates with numerous and complex conflations related to food and motherhood.[10] As early as the ninth century, the majority of theologians and lay people preferred a "frankly literal and physical" approach to the body of Christ (Bynum, Holy Feast 50). Peter Brown traces the early formulation of this literalist approach to the late-antique Christian cult of the saints (Cult of the Saints, passim). Members of this cult worshipped the dead bodies of holy people as a means of cultivating an intimate relationship with God. They also unearthed and dismembered the bodies and moved them from graveyards to towns which had until then excluded the dead. Such reverence and practices fundamentally altered Christian theology by inaugurating new conceptual relations between heaven and earth, the living and the dead, and the divine and the human. These relations themselves eliminated the clear distinction between the spiritual and the material, constituted the body as locus of the divine, and encouraged a new preoccupation with the significance of physicality in general.

Also contributing to the focus on the physicality or humanity of Christ were the views of body and spirit formulated by twelfth-century theorists such as Hugh of St. Victor and Bernard of Clairvaux.[11] For example, after careful consideration of the interaction of body and soul and of the central significance of the body in the Incarnation, Hugh of St. Victor concludes that sensuality, not just sense, plays an vital part in the formation of knowledge, and that the nexus of divinity and physicality in Christ is comparable to the nexus of the soul and the body in the human person. He further maintains that Christ's suffering and death clearly link him to humanity. Bernard of Clairvaux, too, emphasizes that Christ established a bond with humanity by taking on flesh and blood. He also argues that it is only through the body that the soul can act on behalf of itself or others--that is, work and endure physical pain for the sake of justice and salvation as Christ did.

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By the later Middle Ages, the bodies of saints and the body of Christ were frequently compared, the consecrated Host was often venerated as a relic of Christ, and the "reverence for the host was reverence for the divine *in the material*" (Bynum, Holy Feast 255 and Fragmentation and Redemption 144, 185). In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council officially recognized transubstantiation, firmly registering the late medieval perception of the Eucharist not as plant (grain and grape) or animal (lamb) but specifically as human, at the moment of consecration: "[Christ's] body and blood are really contained in the sacrament of the altar under the species of bread and wine, the bread being transubstantiated into the body and the wine into the blood by the power of God" (qtd. in Bynum, Holy Feast 50). This formal institution of the doctrine of transubstantiation provided a means by which to counter the Cathars (Bynum, Holy Feast 252-53), a heretical group who asserted Jesus was never really human and his body was an illusion, all material entities (including food) were evil, life consisted of the conflict of the material and the spiritual, and salvation required the soul to be free of the body.[12] In addition, with the official recognition of transubstantiation, the early medieval construction of the Eucharist as the bread of heaven gave way to its formation as the flesh and blood of Christ broken and bleeding.[13] Symbolic no longer, Christ's flesh and blood became a real and actual presence in the Eucharist, explicitly connecting God with the "food-that-is-body" (Bynum, Holy Feast 251). This ingestion of the incarnated Christ, the incorporation of his body into one's own body, was considered both spiritually and physically nourishing, a means of transforming oneself into Christ.[14]

Christ's body in the ideology of incarnationalism was construed as merging not only with the bodies of eucharistic recipients through the process of digestion, but also with the female body--or, more particularly, with the maternal body--through its very physicality as well as through the more specific processes of conception, gestation, birth, and lactation. The discourses of theology and of medicine and the practices of the calculative mothers who made up the majority of women at the time contributed to this association of the body of the divine with the body of the woman and especially the body of the mother.

To begin, though a maternal construction of God had appeared both in the Old Testament and in the works of the Greek and Latin fathers, its reemergence and the way it was used in the later

Middle Ages--initially by Cistercian monks such as Bernard of Clairvaux and Aelred of Rievaulx and later by many others--were aspects of the increasing emphasis on the actuality of God's presence in the Eucharist, the perception of God as loving and accessible, and, more generally, the valorization of physicality.[15] For example, in the late medieval period, the patristic alignment of the male with the spirit and the female with the flesh or matter was recast into the more cosmic division of divine and human, which, while not reducing humanity to physicality, relates the two and, in doing so, heightens the value of the physical as well as the feminine. Medieval texts and iconography also affiliate both humanity and physicality with Christ, and more specifically construe women as Christ's brides who, in mystical union, come to constitute Christ's body and to symbolize all of humanity, as is clearly represented in the female figure of *humanitas*. In addition, the discourses and iconography of the period portray *ecclesia* or the church--considered to be the mystical body and, again, Christ's body-- as female--sometimes as a bride but more often as a nursing mother, who feeds as well as creates, loves, and saves. The members of this maternalized, mystical body of Christ--men and women alike--are seen not only to partake of it but also to constitute it.

That Eve was made from flesh, unlike Adam who was made from clay, further underscores the theological affiliation of woman with humanity or physicality. That Christ also was made from flesh connects Eve's creation with the Incarnation, and Christ with woman and the mother of all humanity. That Christ, according to the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, had no human father, reinforces the association of Christ with the woman and flesh and, even more specifically, with the mother and maternal body. As Ash maintains, "Christ's flesh was Mary's flesh, was quite literally feminine fleshliness; for Christ's conception was without the participation of earthly paternity: in the bodily being of Christ, the Divine met with woman without masculine mediation" (90). Some statues of Mary from the later Middle Ages highlight this connection between her body and the body of God by opening to reveal the trinity painted or carved inside (Gibson 144-45; Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 212, 217; Coudert 85). One painting includes the "tiny naked figure of the Christ Child . . . in an aureole of light over [Mary's] womb" (Gibson 164-65). Statues and paintings which depict Mary's mother Anne holding Mary who herself cradles Jesus, and dolls of Mary's mother Anne that enclose Mary who herself contains Jesus, hint at a maternal genealogy for Christ and again

emphasize the absence of earthly paternity and the association with the mother's flesh (Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 80, 83; Atkinson, Oldest Vocation 160-61; Coudert 85-86). Devotional objects which feature the meeting of Mary and Elizabeth also stress the significance of Jesus's female relatives. One such object displays a very visible carving of the fetal Christ on Mary's belly and of the fetal St. John on Elizabeth's (Gibson 8-9), and another statue has a transparent crystal on the belly of each woman (Hamburger 167-68; Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 198, 201). Such devotional objects call attention not just to the importance of the women but to their wombs and their pregnancies.[16]

Conflation of body parts and their functions also contributed to the complex theological constitution of Christ's body as both food and mother in the later Middle Ages. Many texts and pictures of the period associate Christ's side wound with a womb or a vagina, which makes his bleeding and suffering analogous to giving birth; or with Mary's breast, which assimilates his bleeding and her lactating and construes both his blood and her milk as eucharistic food. Other paintings conflate the baby Jesus's entire body and Mary's breast. Late medieval writings also closely link the functions of the stomach and the womb. Christ's body through the digestion process nourishes eucharistic recipients just as the mother's body through the gestation period feeds the growing fetus. That the eucharistic recipients are digesting not merely food but the body of Christ connects the stomach with the womb in yet another sense. Because priests and lay recipients (whether male or female), in ingesting the Eucharist, have Christ's body within theirs, they are perceived as pregnant with him and able to give birth to their own salvation.[17]

Classical medical theories popular in the medieval period--though complicated and conflicted and often interpreted as misogynist--essentially supported the theological affiliation of Christ's body with the mother and food. Aristotle's theory of conception, in characterizing the father's physiological role as constitutive of the form and soul or spiritual component of the fetus and construing the mother's part as generative of the matter or physical being, underscores the theological connection between women and physicality as well as between Christ, who had no human father, and his mother.[18] Even Galen's subsequent, competing theory of conception, which insists that seeds are required from both the father and the mother, making the parental contribution

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of the matter of the fetus mutual rather than merely maternal, reinforces the link of the mother and the body of Christ, since it is still the mother's body that feeds and provides most of the matter for the fetus. Interestingly, the thirteenth-century scholastic, Giles of Rome, endorses Aristotle's notion of the formative role of the male seed on the passive material of the female, and explicitly rejects the Galenic alternative, arguing that if the paternal and maternal contributions to generation are too much alike, instead of distinct, the woman might be able to become pregnant with no contribution from the man. His perspective not only again associates the woman and physicality but also displays an anxiety about the significance of the paternal role in conception. The influential example of Mary, who required no earthly paternal contribution in her conception of Christ, could only have served to stimulate or exacerbate such an anxiety.

Though from our contemporary point of view Mary because of her virginity may seem too unique to trouble considerations about the relative importance of maternal and paternal contributions to human conception in general, during the later Middle Ages she was often construed as an intimate, homey figure.[19] First of all, in order to assert the full humanity of Jesus, the theologians of the time felt compelled to ensure Mary's. In their debates about Mary's reproductive processes, one group of theologians, for example, decided that Mary, because she had nursed Jesus, had to have menstruated, too, since the medical theory of the time connected lactation to menstruation as well as to the pregnancy which menstruation made possible. More specifically, this theory saw blood as feeding the child first in the womb and then, transmuted to milk, at the breast; hence, as both the basic fluid of the body and as the quintessential food which the mother's body produced. The theological attribution of menstruation to Mary and the physiological assumptions of medieval medical theory made it easier to blend and maternalize Christ's bleeding and feeding as well. As Elizabeth Petroff notes, Christ's blood is seen to be "womb-blood, birth-blood, and [breast] milk" (Consolation of the Blessed 75).[20]

The theological and medical association of menstruation with the mother and the son of God helped not merely to construe both of them in more personal and ordinary terms, but also to validate the often stigmatized functions of the mother's body and the essential food produced by means of these functions. In doing so, the value of the long-standing calculative version of motherhood

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practiced by the low-status, working women who made up the majority of women was also heightened. These women nursed their own children, the children of other women (typically high-status women who rarely nursed their own offspring), and weak, ill, or aged adults. The calculative mothers also used their breast milk to enhance the medicinal properties of eyewashes, ointments, and restorative concoctions consumed by mouth.[21] The practices of these mothers themselves contributed to the increasing alignment of Mary as well as Jesus with most women--more particularly, with most mothers--in the later Middle Ages. Mary, like the calculative mothers, is often depicted as giving the food generated by her body to nourish and to repair the bodies of others. She nurses her own child as well as offers the food of her body--both her breast milk as well as her baby Jesus, the salvific food of the Eucharist--in the late medieval texts and pictures which assimilate his bleeding and her lactating or conflate Jesus's entire body with her breast. Jesus, too, like the calculative mothers and his own mother, is portrayed in the writing and iconography of the period as offering the food of his flesh-and-blood for others to eat.

Overall, in the construction of Christ's body in the later Middle Ages, the discourses of dualism and misogyny are recast, and food and the maternal, and the sites of digestion and gestation and of menstruation and lactation, are intricately conflated. Through the "work" of the Eucharist, the members of the community partake of Christ's body--the body which provides both spiritual and physical sustenance and which redeems and restores the world by giving birth to salvation. They also make up the edible, maternal body of the divine and thus themselves participate in the salvific birth-work of the Eucharist--as Bynum contends, "this motherly body is all of [them]" (Fragmentation and Redemption 93).

Neither the consumption nor the constitution of this motherly body, however, was undertaken or experienced without a profound sense of ambivalence.


## 2.3    Contradictory Aspects and Effects of Incarnational Motherhood

The consumption of the Eucharist in the later Middle Ages generated considerable anxiety due to the contradictions which the period's very literalist construction of the body of God produced.[22] "[T]he introduction of the Host into the worshiper's mouth created a real trauma," Piero Camporesi

explains, because it meant that the body of God had to undergo the indignities of digestion and follow the "ineluctable route to degradation of all substances that enter the carnal labyrinth of the human belly," and that the stomach had to become "a hidden altar, . . . a zone of liturgical mediation between Heaven and earth, the divine and the beastly, where an unimaginable rite of transformation occurred" ("Consecrated Host" 227, 228, 232). Moreover, eating the Host was understood to actually recapitulate the Crucifixion or the murder of Christ--as Karl Young puts it, "not to represent or portray or merely commemorate the Crucifixion, but actually to repeat it" (84). Miri Rubin, too, argues that late medieval people tended to very literally conflate the Eucharist with the salvific sacrifice of Christ's body ("The Eucharist" 55-56). However, God in becoming food also made his encounter with eucharistic recipients extraordinarily intimate. As Camporesi points out, the Eucharist was the only sacrament which went beyond the surface of the body and "penetrated all the way into [the] bowels," and nothing mingles more closely with the body than food ("Consecrated Host" 229). The closeness of the eucharistic encounter with Christ thus provoked an intense desire for the consumption of the Host. The hunger to eat Christ's body was also incited because the assimilation of the Eucharist was perceived as reversing the usual principles of digestion so that the recipients turned into the salvific food they ate--that is, united with and became Christ--rather than the other way around.

That Christ was not just food but body intensified the ambivalence associated with eucharistic consumption. On the one hand, reception of the divine body in the belly provoked consternation because it made the sexes less distinct and linked the discomforts of pregnancy and the pains of labor to the suffering of Christ whose torture and murder the recipients, again, saw themselves as complicitous in. On the other, it fostered the anticipation and sense of intimacy which also tended to accompany pregnancy, as well as allowed the recipients, with the Savior's body in their own bodies nourishing and transforming them, to see themselves through this "bearing" of God, who also bore them, as giving birth to their own salvation. Bynum observes, "To become that body by eating was . . . to bleed and to save--to lift one's own physicality into suffering and into glory" (Holy Feast 251). Rubin also notes, "The promise of being one with God in a bodily sense could hardly be surpassed" particularly when "combined with the promise of all that was beneficial in this life and the next" (Corpus Christi 26).

The construction of Christ as food, body, and mother in the later Middle Ages thus generated both a fear of and a yearning for eucharistic consumption, which paradoxically offered eternal life through the eating of the slain, but still omnipotent, body of God, and which accomplished the "work" of salvation through both a breaking apart and a coming together in the belly. Not surprisingly, the literalist approach to the body of God--especially when this approach was officially established through the doctrine of transubstantiation--focused the attention of even theologians upon the intricacies of the physiological processes of the stomach (Camporesi, "Consecrated Host" 228). In addition, though the theologians urged reception and at the Fourth Lateran Council mandated a minimum of yearly confession and communion, they discouraged frequent reception, worrying that it might increase familiarity at the expense of reverence or, worse yet, produce contempt. This ambiguous counsel about the sacrament could only have served to exacerbate the already intense ambivalence experienced by the lay recipients during the moment of consumption (Bynum, Holy Feast 58).

The moment of transubstantiation itself was fraught with tension.[23] Though many critics point to the inauguration of the emphasis on "showing" and "seeing" which the heightened focus upon consecration in the Mass fostered as a clear indication of the increasing power of priests, the growing hierarchization of the church, the widening of the gap between clergy and laity, and the reduction of lay people into passive, even alienated onlookers,[24] other critics complicate this interpretation. They contend that the consecration which signified the awesome transformation of the "inanimate into the animate" (Camporesi, "Consecrated Host" 226) encouraged a greater theatricalization of the Mass and, consequently, new types of performance and interaction not just for the clergy but for the laity.[25]

Lay people came to see priests as "ritual performer[s] of sacramental acts" (Rubin, Corpus Christi 50) who, in elevating the Host at the moment of consecration, marked the "dramatic apex" of the Mass when God became present (Camporesi, "Consecrated Host" 225). Manuals were specifically written "to help priests *perform* better"--to direct them on aspects of their role such as how to make the sign of the cross, how to enunciate the words of the consecration, and when and how to elevate the Host (Rubin, Corpus Christi 94-96 and "The Eucharist" 47-49). As Camporesi

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maintains, "The delicate moment of transubstantiation--the transformation of nutritional substances into the blood and body of Christ--had to involve a faithful replica and precise repetition of both liturgical formulas and ceremonial prescriptions" ("Consecrated Host" 224-25). Moreover, the lay people themselves may have played an important part in the development of the theatrical, elevation gesture. Though the elevation of the Host is often construed as the necessary counterpart of the theological decision to identify transubstantiation with the first consecration (that of the bread) or even a didactic gesture to discourage heretical resistance, it could actually have been instituted due to the demands of the laity to see God in the eucharistic food (Rubin, Corpus Christi 55). After all, many people believed great benefits could be derived from even the sight of the Host--for example, protection against starvation, blindness, or sudden death, a blessing equivalent to that of Extreme Unction should the viewer die on the same day, forgiveness of venial sins, good health, safe delivery of infants, safe travel, and even good digestion.[26]

Architectural alterations in the churches of the late medieval period further heightened the mystery and theatricality of the consecration. Whereas in the early church the altar was a simple table and the priest faced the congregation, in the twelfth century the altar, placed against the wall of the apse, was often surmounted by a retable (either an overhanging shelf for lights and ornaments or a frame enclosing painted panels), and the priest faced the altar, his back to the people. In addition, a Rood-screen divided the high altar from the nave and, during Lent, a huge veil in the sanctuary area obstructed the congregation's view of the celebrant and the consecration. Eamon Duffy challenges critics who see this Rood-screen and curtain merely as a means of augmenting clerical power and privilege at the expense of the laity's influence and involvement. He asserts that the screen and the veil represented a "complex and dynamic understanding of the role of both distance and proximity, concealment and exposure within the experience of the liturgy." Whereas the screen did indeed mark a boundary between the laity's space and the clergy's space, it was "not a wall but rather a set of windows, a frame for the liturgical drama, solid only to waist-height, pierced by a door," through which both the clergy and the laity passed on various occasions, making the screen less of a barrier and the door more like a two-way street. Duffy extends this complex, theatrical understanding of obstruction and access when he contends that the veil suspended during Lent not

only, like the Rood-screen, marked spatial distinctions in the church, but also distinguished between festive time and penitential time, making for "a temporary ritual deprivation of the sight of the sacring [consecration]" and an intensification of "the value of the spectacle it temporarily concealed" (111-12). Such heightening of worth and effect would almost assuredly have stimulated more, not less, excitement and engagement on behalf of the members of the congregation.

The theatrical impetus transubstantiation gave to both "showing" and "seeing" at the consecration also eventually manifested itself in the special clothing priests wore for liturgical celebrations, the increasingly decorative pyxes and reliquaries, the stamping of hosts with images of Christ, the lighting of additional candles for the sacring, and, in churches with elaborately carved or colored altar-pieces, the drawing of a curtain across the retable during the moment of elevation and consecration--either a plain dark cloth to make the Host more visible or a cloth with a crucifixion scene on it to emphasize the Eucharist's reenactment of Christ's sacrifice.

Appeals to senses other than sight and the participation of the laity enhanced the dramaturgical and sensuous experience of the Mass even more. As Joseph A. Jungmann points out, "[a] clear parallel to the conception and presentation of the Mass-liturgy as a dramatic play which appeals primarily to the eyes of the onlooker was to be found in the efforts made to enrich . . . the audible side of the liturgical action," which included the development of new melodies referred to as the "chants of the Ordinary" and performed by the laity (1: 123-24).[27] In addition, bells rang and incense was burned. Lay people knelt with raised hands to offer personal prayers, stood at the reading of the gospel, genuflected before and after every touching of the Blessed Sacrament, orally expressed their supplications at the moment of elevation, prayed during communion, passed around and kissed the pax as a sign of charity or communal unity, and took turns providing loaves of bread to be blessed and distributed at the end of the Mass. They were also specifically instructed to cultivate an understanding of clerical speech, gesture, deportment, and dress.

The assertion that the late medieval Mass clearly separated the clergy and laity--increasing the power of priests and of the church hierarchy as a whole while reducing the laity into detached onlookers--is also challenged by scholars who argue that the making of God into body encouraged a greater intimacy in the liturgical experience through the assimilation of the priest's consecration and

the Virgin Mary's conception.[28]  In the priest's hands as in Mary's womb, God was incarnated.  The

priest offered the Host and Mary offered the Child as food for recipients to eat.  Theresa Coletti

quotes lines from the Middle English <u>Meditations on the Supper of Our Lord</u>, for example, which

illustrate the conflation of the Eucharist and the newborn Jesus: "þat sacrament þat þou seest þe

before / Wundyrfully of a mayden was bore" ("Devotional Iconography" 259).  Thus, despite the

sometimes awe-inspiring dramatics of the late medieval liturgy, the association of the priest's hands

with the mother's womb at the moment of consecration, as well as with recipients' mouths and

stomachs at the moment of reception, also generated in the priest's role a proximity to, and concern

about, bodies and functions usually identified with personal, homey activities, and with women, the

ones who conceived and gave birth and who typically prepared and served food.

      Nonetheless, the tension associated with the moment of consecration generated an

ambivalence analogous to that produced during the moment of eucharistic reception.  Together, the

experience of the concomitant theatricalization of the Mass and maternalization of the priest's

consecratory role, and the perception that eating the Host meant both breaking apart the literal body

of Christ and becoming one with it and thus with all past, present, and future members of Christ's

body as well, made "Christ's body . . . simultaneously the most public and the most intimate arena"

(Beckwith, <u>Christ's Body</u> 25) and the most awesome and the most common domain.  The

combination of dramatism and literalism in the late medieval Mass also demonstrates not only that

the Mass was both theatrical and ritualistic, rather than merely one or the other, but also that the

ritualistic belief in the literal presence of Christ's body encouraged the growth of theatricality, which

itself served to enhance the ritualistic constitution and experience--or efficacy--of the Eucharist.[29]

      Relevant to the connection between the consecration and the consumption of the Eucharist

and important to an understanding of eucharistic devotion in the later Middle Ages, where "seeing"

the Host was sometimes perceived as a kind of "eating," is the fluid treatment of the senses in the

secular domain.  Bynum, in surveying the work of several culinary historians, finds that medieval

secular feasts were as much aesthetic and social as they were gastronomical.  For instance,

medieval cookbooks show that food was often dyed to appeal to the eye even if the dye interfered

with the taste, fish was sometimes made to look like meat, and roast fowl was returned to its

plumage to create the illusion of life. This enthusiastic catering to senses other than taste in the preparation and presentation of food in the secular sphere makes it easier to understand the inclination to construe seeing as eating and the capacity to transform the taste of bread into the taste of honey or blood or meat in the sacred domain of the church (Holy Feast 60-61).

However, despite their tendency to conflate the senses of sight and taste, people in the later Middle Ages did not lose an understanding of either the distinction between seeing and eating the Host or the special religious significance of reception itself. They remained keenly aware that "[s]piritual nourishment could not spread out in all its fullness except through bodily nourishment" (Camporesi, "Consecrated Host" 230). Wolfgang Riehle observes that medieval writers, for example, repeatedly associate the tasting of God with the knowing of him, and points to one medieval author who goes so far as to highlight the etymological connection between *sapientia* (wisdom, good taste) and *sapere* (to taste or savor) and another who repeatedly uses the words "smacken" and "smac" to mean "feel" or "know" (Middle English Mystics 109).[30] The devotional writings of late medieval holy women also frequently and vividly emphasize the importance "of tasting God, of kissing him deeply, of going into his heart or entrails, of being covered by his blood," clearly "blur[ring] the line between spiritual or psychological, on the one hand, and bodily or even sexual, on the other" (Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 190). As Rubin points out, "eating by taste," unlike "eating by sight," was sacramental, and this critical distinction made the moment of reception--"the tasting, 'smackyng,' of the host-God"--the "highlight of sacramental experience" (Corpus Christi 64).

In addition, the anxiety about reception of the divine body, which the heightened theatricality of the Mass and the emergent emphasis on "showing" and "seeing" indeed may have exacerbated, remained significantly tempered by the "assimilation of eating, the most common of human functions, into the economy of the supernatural" (Rubin, Corpus Christi 26) and the "magnanimity of a God who [gave] himself into the . . . teeth of the lowly" (Bynum, Holy Feast 45)--that is, who merged in the most common and intimate way with bodies and who would go through the guts even of beggars as a means of providing all Christians with the opportunity to give birth to salvation.

## 2.4    The Pious Relationships and Practices of Male and Female Incarnational Mothers

The growth of a literalist and maternalized form of piety, along with its contradictions and tensions, extended far beyond the experience of the Mass in the later Middle Ages.

While the eleventh-century Gregorian reform of the church diminished the official religious status and influence of women by suppressing their quasi-clerical roles, outlawing clerical marriage, fostering a virulent fear of women in misogynist diatribes, and eliminating the double monasteries composed of female and male religious and controlled by the women,[31] other kinds of religious opportunities for women proliferated in the late medieval period.[32] New female monasteries appeared alongside the old Benedictine nunneries, so many that, before long, women made up the majority of the cloistered religious population. Holy women also developed alternative, less institutional and hierarchical forms of religious life, which closely linked an austere, poor, chaste existence to worship, charitable service, and manual labor. Moreover, growing numbers of pilgrimages provided even ordinary women at the time with more opportunities for devotional service and penitence. In the thirteenth century, St. Francis and his followers (both male and female) also encouraged and committed themselves to self-inflicted poverty, manual labor, and charity. A literal imitation of the suffering of Christ was central to the piety of St. Francis and his disciples because they, like the twelfth-century theorists Hugh of St. Victor and Bernard of Clairvaux, saw the human person as made in the image and likeness of the divine and the very physicality of Christ's suffering as a vivid demonstration of the depth of Christ's love for the human creation. The increasing preoccupation with intense emotion, with the literal imitation of Christ's suffering, and with charitable activity in late medieval piety as a whole marked a new sense of both self and neighbor and a significant departure from the monastic ideal of salvation through the life of withdrawal and prayer.[33]

Though it would be reductive to draw a complete contrast between the holy men and the holy women who contributed to the development of the affective, literalist, and simultaneously contemplative and active form of devotion over the course of the later Middle Ages, the relationships of the men and the women to the physicalized, maternalized representation of Christ in the period, as well as the practices which the men and the women undertook in their efforts to imitate Christ as literally as possible, were inflected by different assumptions about gender.

The holy men perceived the genders as dichotomous and hierarchical.[34] They aligned men with the spiritual and women with the physical; juxtaposed male power, judgment, discipline, and reason, with female weakness, mercy, lust, and unreason; and associated fatherhood with authority and discipline and motherhood with compassion and nurture. To formulate an intimate relationship with Christ who--as food, body, and mother--marked a reversal of the men's assumptions about gender and accentuated the renunciation at the heart of a religion which contradictorily proclaimed that life came through death and the last would be first, the men construed Christ's maternal affectivity as a complement to God's paternal authority and Christ's maternal status as a contrast to and critique of the advantageous worldly position which men generally occupied. In addition, the holy men referred to themselves as women, mothers, or fools--that is, as powerless, poor, or irrational--to show their own vulnerability and dependence upon a fatherly God or their repudiation of worldly influence and comforts, and hence draw an analogy between Christ's humble state and their own. Not just the religious beliefs and relationships but the religious behaviors of the holy men tended to involve sharp departures from the concerns and benefits of the ordinary lives of men. To become more Christ-like in practice, the holy men cast aside money, property, and power, and served the lowly and the poor.

The holy men's increasingly positive treatment of the image of woman was apparent not only in the appropriation of the feminine and the maternal in their descriptions of themselves and in their rejection of the power and privilege usually affiliated with masculinity, but also in their veneration of the Virgin Mary and women saints, in their holding up of saintly women as a reproach to prelates who were too proud, ambitious, and worldly, and in their recommendation that women, too, revere female role models such as the Virgin Mary. However, somewhat contradictorily, these men anticipated that women would adopt a strategy of gender reversal to develop a closer relationship with Christ. After all, the theological and medical affiliation of the male with the soul and divinity and the female with the body and humanity could suggest that women needed to become more masculine and, by association, more ethereal and less material in order to acquire a greater proximity to the divine. The men occasionally even urged women to become more virile in order to spiritually advance.

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Yet the pious women who actually crossdressed or grew beards made the men very apprehensive, likely because such visible forms of gender reversal, as Natalie Zemon Davis points out in her examination of traditional folk culture, may also have fostered a very real and thus threatening critique and transformation of the patriarchal status quo which typically gave men greater access than women to power, prestige, and privilege ("Anthropology and History" 267-75 and Society and Culture 97-151).[35] That the men were anxiously preoccupied with even stories of crossdressed and bearded women, some of which survived from the patristic period and some of which the men themselves fabricated (Anson 1-32; Bullough, "Transvestites in the Middle Ages" 1381-94), lends additional support to Davis's contention that a gender reversal accomplished through the very obvious alteration of clothing or hair could seriously challenge the cultural norms favoring men.

Though late medieval, holy women frequently crossdressed, they did not symbolically reverse their gender to grow closer to Christ as their male counterparts expected and periodically encouraged them to do. Whereas in early Christianity holy women occasionally used imagery and developed practices which suggest they felt a need to become more masculine to spiritually advance, in the later Middle Ages such beliefs and behaviors for the most part disappeared. Embracing maleness for the holy women of the later Middle Ages would have meant aligning themselves with the elevated status of men, who generally were dominant over women in medieval society. This approach would not have coincided with the renunciation at the heart of the period's religious understanding. Emphasizing their own femaleness, already assumed inferior, would also have been an inadequate strategy for the women. Besides, maleness and femaleness and the superiority of the male and the inferiority of the female were not as important to the holy women as they were to the holy men at the time.

Unlike the holy men who treated the genders dichotomously and hierarchically and clearly allocated some personal and social characteristics to men and fathers and others to women and mothers, holy women perceived the genders fluidly and the various personal and social characteristics as shared by, or distributed randomly between, the male and the female, and the father and the mother. When the women did distinguish between the two genders, they were less preoccupied with the personal attributes or social status of each gender than with the theological,

medical, and day-to-day association of the female with humanity and physicality and, more specifically, of the mother with food and flesh.

Substantial evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, exists for the focus on food and flesh in the piety of late medieval holy women.[36] For example, these women are the ones featured in records and stories about eucharistic miracles and food practices, in discussions of the Eucharist and Christ's humanity, in advice about fasting and feasting, and in the creation and development of special eucharistic devotions--even in writings by men for male audiences. In addition to being numerous, the references to food and flesh in writings about the women's piety are extraordinarily elaborate, especially in those works which the women themselves wrote.

To begin, the women, from their connection with food and flesh, developed a concept of "woman" more inclusive than men's--a concept which construed "woman" as "human," rather than as "other" than man, as a marked category, or as a sub-group of humanity. Whereas the theological formulation associating man with divinity could only be metaphorical, that same formulation's associating woman with humanity could function both literally and metaphorically, because "woman was, in fact as well as symbolically, human" (Bynum, Holy Feast 287).[37] Moreover, the women found the literal and symbolic association of woman with humanity and physicality enabling in the development of their piety since the period's texts and iconography also affiliated the incarnated, transubstantiated Christ with flesh and food. After all, as Caroline Walker Bynum points out, "it was human beings as *human* (not as symbol of the divine) whom Christ saved in the Incarnation" (Holy Feast 296), and, as Clarissa W. Atkinson observes, "[p]hysicality . . . is the source . . . of the Savior's relationship to all men and women" (Oldest Vocation 102). Thus, instead of reversing their gender as a means of becoming more ethereal and less material and closer to the divine, the women used the very physical images of kissing, tasting, drinking, nursing, suffering, and giving birth--"metaphors of bodily encounter [which] conjure up teeth and mouths, bowels and breasts, flesh chewed and swallowed and made into new flesh" (Bynum, Holy Feast 160)--to cultivate an intimate relationship with God. The women were also particularly obsessed with blood (Petroff, Consolation of the Blessed 75), the component of the body most affiliated with the "food" of procreation and with the "pain of the Passion" (Rubin, "Person in the Form" 114, 115), which was also the pain of the labor

associated with the birth of salvation. They constituted themselves as mothers, children, and brides in their relationships to Christ, whom they also variously construed as mother, child, bridegroom, and even a banquet.[38] Such body and food images, and maternal, androgynous, and erotic concepts of self and Christ, show the women comprehending their own gender's theological and medical association with humanity, physicality, the "flesh" of the "Word made flesh," and food, not as an obstacle to, but as an opportunity for, an intimate relationship with the incarnated God and transubstantiated Eucharist.

The holy women also cultivated a complex, multi-faceted, intensely literalist *imitatio Christi* focused on physicality and richly resonant with both the maternal and the erotic. They refused to eat ordinary food in order to recapitulate the agony of Christ and to prepare their bodies to receive the Eucharist. They construed their hunger as both the desire to unite with the suffering body of Christ and the pain of bodies separating in labor, and their consumption of the Eucharist as both the consummation of the desire for divine union and the birth of salvation. In their fasting from ordinary food and their eating of the Eucharist, their "agony was also ecstasy," because their "hunger [was] union with Christ's limitless suffering, which [was] also limitless love" (Bynum, Holy Feast 67).[39] The holy women also saw their personal rejection of ordinary food and their reception of Christ's body as a form of public service. As they feasted upon Christ who died to give birth to salvation, the women offered their own suffering, the pain induced by their extreme fasts, for the joyful salvation of others. Another component of the women's practice of holy feasting was to eat the pus and filth from the bodies of others who suffered, an act which again the women considered salvific both for themselves and for those who suffered. Finally, the women fed the sick or the poor either with the ordinary food which the women would not allow themselves to consume or to store, or with the milk or oil which the women's own sick, hungry bodies exuded. The women thus offered their very sickness as healing food for others.

The fluidity found in the concepts of personhood and gender as well as in the treatment of the senses in the late medieval period is again important to an understanding of eucharistic devotion at the time--particularly women's. Just as the boundaries between the soul and the body, the male and the female, and the sense of sight and the sense of taste blur, so too do those between sickness

and health, pain and pleasure, and self and others. Moreover, the holy women interrelated their seemingly diverse food practices to such a degree that these "works," as they were referred to, became "synonymous acts" (Bynum, Holy Feast 289). As Petroff points out, "visions of the loving encounter with the divine [were] accompanied by a burst of activity in the outside world" (Consolation of the Blessed 72). In addition, the conflation rather than the separation of the women's fasting, feasting, and feeding works drew upon and aptly imitated the incarnational pattern of Christ's body, which was both enclosed in the circular, white wafer, and broken open to bleed, feed, and serve--that is, to do the "work" of the Eucharist.[40] Through their refusal of ordinary food, the women closed their bodies, their very extreme fasting sometimes sealing their bodies even more tightly shut when it inhibited both menstruation and excretion. At the same time, the women opened their bodies by feasting upon the suffering body of Christ in the Eucharist, feeding from others' suffering bodies, and offering both ordinary food and their own bodies for others to eat, all of which were considered forms of public service--again, good works--inspired by the work of Eucharist. Not surprisingly, late medieval theorists characterized the piety of these holy women as the "mixed life"--a life which so thoroughly combined prayer and charity, contemplation and action, "that the contrast between the categories vanishe[d]" (Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 69).[41]

The religious concepts and practices of the holy women also demonstrate that their piety did not necessitate the kind of break with everyday concerns and conditions which the holy men's religious beliefs and behaviors required, but instead drew on and heightened the preoccupations and activities of most women at the time. After all, the calculative mothers or the working women who made up the majority of women were regularly involved with food and physicality. They used the food generated by their bodies in both nutritional and medicinal ways to sustain others. They typically prepared and served other kinds of food. They also were the ones primarily responsible for the physical care required by newborns, by pregnant women, or by ill, aged, or deceased relatives and neighbors. And, again, the late medieval constructions of both Mary and Jesus themselves were connected to the practices of these ordinary women in the majority. Mary was frequently depicted nursing Jesus or offering the food of her body, including Jesus, to others for purposes of nourishment or restoration. Jesus, too, was often shown or described as offering the food of his maternalized

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body for the sake of salvific salubrity. Thus, the holy women of the later Middle Ages--unlike the holy men of the time--were able "[to see] the humanity-physicality that linked them to Christ as in continuity with, rather than in contrast to," their own and most other women's day-to-day responsibilities and experiences of physical vulnerability (Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 172).[42] This perception encouraged the women, in their relationships to and imitations of Christ, to extend the association of the woman with food and flesh rather than to try to reject or to reverse it.

## 2.5     The Expansiveness, Value, and Influence of Incarnational Motherhood

Overall, even this partial exploration of the incarnational beliefs and behaviors of the later Middle Ages demonstrates that at the heart of the period's piety are blurred boundaries and exquisite anxieties rather than fixed, simplistic dichotomies and hierarchies. Alongside clerical power and privilege are the growing engagement of the laity and the heightened sense that even everyday activities could be religiously significant.[43] Concomitant with the formulations of dualism and misogyny are the discourses and practices of the incarnational version of motherhood which confers value precisely on what the dualist and misogynist formulations renounce: the most basic modality of matter, the physical, and, by association, the feminine.

By making the basic physiological processes of eating and digestion integral to salvation, incarnational motherhood not only connects the physical to the spiritual but also takes into account the primacy of food (the fact that all bodies need food) and the intimacy of the relationship between food and the body (the fact that the body is made of food). This recognition of essential physical need helped to forge a strong bond between the work of the Eucharist and the works of charity and to foster a greater desire for the sustenance of bodies than the propagation of them. By additionally conflating digestion and gestation in multiple ways, incarnational motherhood not only again acknowledges, in a very profound manner, the relationship between food and the body, but also recognizes the primacy of birth (the fact that everyone is born of a woman), the intimacy of the relationship between the mother's body and the child's (the fact that the mother's body sustains the child's not just within but without the womb), and, perhaps most significantly, the validity of the "re-

production" that may be achieved by feeding bodies instead of by breeding them--all of which served to make incarnational motherhood both paradigmatic and inclusive.

Humanity and the church as a whole were depicted as female or maternal, the priest's consecration of the Eucharist was regarded as comparable to Mary's conception of Christ, and eucharistic recipients, whether female or male, were viewed as pregnant. Holy men were able to describe themselves as women and mothers and to construe their sustenance of the poor in maternal terms as a means of breaking with, even repudiating, the earthly power and privilege monopolized by men. Holy women were able to render their multi-faceted association with food and body, physicality and maternity, as valuable rather than detestable and, in particular, to formulate a notion and experience of motherhood as physical as a motherhood based on the generation of children, but which focused on the food part of the food-body relation--again, on the kind of reproduction which could be accomplished through the nourishment of bodies.

That the medical discourses which circulated during the later Middle Ages sometimes blur the boundary between the sexes likely made it easier for the people of the time to manipulate gender in their constructions of themselves and Christ and in the development of their pious practices. These discourses, for example, interpret the various bodily functions such as menstruation, lactation, sweating, emission of semen, etc., all as bleedings.[44] They also construe the female's genitalia as an inverted, internalized version of the male's,[45] which makes the difference between the female and the male one of degree, not essence. In addition, Aristotle's theory of conception, while constituting the contribution of the form or spirit as paternal and the contribution of the matter as maternal, further maintains that the father's form or vital spirit must be transported *materially* in the father's seed to interact with and enliven the matter provided by the mother, and that all human beings are made of both form and matter--thus, of both masculine and feminine components.

The folk tradition, too, likely facilitated the ability of late medieval people to reverse or to subsume sexual difference in their approaches to and imitations of Christ (Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 221; Rubin, "Person in the Form" 101-102, 105-107). This tradition mingles the genders in its popular tales of bearded women and pregnant men and warns against the dangers of particular positions in sexual intercourse, demonstrating that late medieval people saw the male and

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the female as linked as well as played with the possibilities afforded by such a connection. Although neither doctors nor ordinary people actually believed males could become pregnant, the currency of the fanciful proposition that woman-on-top sex might reverse the process of conception and impregnate the man suggests that the people concocting such notions in stories understood the reproductive organs of the male and female to be related and could not fully explain why such reversed impregnation did not occur in reality.

An examination of the beliefs and behaviors of late medieval incarnationalism not only greatly complicates the "dark-age" critical perspectives which denounce the literalism of the laity, decry the growth of clerical power and lay alienation, separate the religious concerns of the laity from those of the clergy, and focus on dualist and misogynist discourses, it also significantly challenges the "dark-age" critical assessments of women's--especially holy women's--religious practices which construe them as desperate attempts to acquire masculinity, to mimic the oppressive model of womanhood set by the Virgin Mary, and to renounce physicality and sexuality.

First of all, the many connections between calculative motherhood--the most prevalent form of motherhood in the Middle Ages--and incarnational motherhood clearly demonstrate that the women who were incarnational mothers did not feel compelled to break with the concerns of most women's everyday lives and to strive to become more masculine in order to spiritually advance and grow closer to God. Instead the incarnational mothers subsumed gender dichotomies and incorporated sensory images and concepts of self which either mixed genders or elaborated rather than repudiated the physicality and humanity associated with the female and particularly with the many calculative mothers of the time who regularly used the food produced by their bodies to nourish and to restore the bodies of others. The incarnational mothers in their religious concepts and practices also specifically accentuated and celebrated that the incarnated Christ was made only of his mother's flesh and blood and, along with every other human being, born of a woman.

Though the frequent crossdressing of the holy women practicing the incarnational version of motherhood might seem to contradict the assertion that they were more focused upon humanity than gender and indeed to suggest that gender reversal was as powerful a religious symbol for them as it was for the holy men (and perhaps even more important for them than for the men if one considers

the greater frequency of the practice among the women), a closer examination of the evidence demonstrates that crossdressing was more of a "practical device" than a "religious symbol" for the pious women of the later Middle Ages (Bynum, Holy Feast 291)--that is, a mechanism by which to run away from families, escape marriage, enter monasteries, go on pilgrimages, or gain the physical protection offered by the superior status of a male disguise.[46] Actual crossdressing not only protected the women and provided them with more choices and greater freedom of movement but also was far less disturbing to them than to the men since it could not undermine their status, already assumed inferior, in the same way. The men, more free to roam and make choices and more physically safe than the women, did not require crossdressing as a practical device and rarely adopted it. They also probably feared both the contempt they might encounter if actually wearing women's clothes and, again, the possible threat to their status which such a visible gender reversal might pose. Moreover, though the presence of beards on some of the late medieval holy women might also seem to signify that they tried to develop intimate relationships with Christ through a strategy of gender reversal, careful scrutiny of the evidence indicates that any beards on the women were less likely to be a sign deliberately induced by them as a means of acquiring masculinity in order to foster their spiritual progress, than an inadvertent effect of their extreme fasting, an alteration of the body called hirsutism (Holy Feast 194). Such starvation, a central aspect of the holy women's religious practices at the time, provides more, not less, evidence of their preoccupation with food and flesh and the continuity between their religious concerns and the everyday preoccupations of most other women.

An investigation of late medieval holy women's piety or practice of incarnational motherhood also contests the view that the women felt oppressed by the Virgin Mary. For one thing, Mary in the later Middle Ages was often construed not as an unattainable ideal of womanhood or motherhood, but as an intimate, homey figure, who resembled the calculative mothers that made up majority of women in the period. Moreover, while pious men tended to venerate female figures such as the Virgin Mary, pious women tended to focus on the human figure of Christ.[47] Bynum also maintains that even when these women did attend to the Virgin Mary, it was more because Mary was the bearer of Christ than because she was a model for womanhood (Fragmentation and Redemption

149).[48] Interestingly, the available statistics further show that there was no distinct connection between men and women and saints of their own sex in the later Middle Ages (Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 153-54). The lack of a clear link between the gender of a deity or saint and the ones who venerated that deity or saint, along with the fact that it was male monks, not lay women, who first resuscitated the concept of God as mother, emphasizes yet again the tendency to blur gender boundaries in the later Middle Ages. It also complicates the views of such critics as Eleanor McLaughlin ("Equality of Souls" 245-51), Elaine Pagels (293-303), and Carol P. Christ (260-80), who argue that women need specifically female deities and symbols and that the presence or absence of such goddesses and feminine images affects women's religious and social status and opportunities quite directly.[49]

The contention that the holy women of the late medieval period saw virginity itself as either an oppressive choice or a repudiation of physicality and sexuality can also be seriously disputed. These women not only were well aware of the pain and dangers of actual childbirth, a point which preachers at the time emphasized in sermons and treatises on virginity,[50] but also were likely to have understood virginity to be an attractive alternative.[51] As Bynum observes, "the virgin (like Christ's mother, the perpetual virgin) was also a bride, destined for a higher consummation. She scintillated with fertility and power. Into her body, as into the eucharistic bread on the altar, poured . . . the fullness of the humanity of Christ" (Holy Feast 19-20). Moreover, the numerous writings of and about late medieval, pious women, many of whom were virgins, vividly demonstrate that they did not reject or transcend their physicality, but embraced, explored, and transfigured it, in their devotional practices. They developed and elaborated a sexuality aroused by Jesus Christ who himself, as food and as a "nursing mother and sensual male lover," fully participated in bodiliness (Bynum, Holy Feast 247). Both his edibility and complexly-gendered physicality were central to the piety of the holy women who, "[i]ntensely literal in their imitatio Christi," wanted "to fuse with the physical body of Christ that they chewed and consumed." Christ's food-body mingled at the most intimate level with the women's food-bodies: "flesh [was] taken into, eaten by, flesh" (Bynum, Holy Feast 119, 250). The holy women also constructed themselves as mothers and lovers and saw their eucharistic consumption not only as an integral part of their imitatio Christi but also as a consummation of their

desire for union with the divine, their descriptions of which seem "to report the experience of orgasm" (Bynum, Holy Feast 247)--or, in the words of Jeffrey Hamburger, "an erotically charged epiphany . . . reminiscent of Bernini's Saint Theresa" (177).[52] Both Petroff (Consolation of the Blessed 67) and Bynum (Jesus as Mother 257-58, Holy Feast 247, 248, and Fragmentation and Redemption 133-34) disagree with the suggestion that the intense eroticism of these women, as communicated by them or others who wrote about them, is only the sublimation of sexual desire.[53] Because "in the eucharist and in ecstasy, a male Christ was handled and loved," Bynum contends, "sexual feelings were, as certain contemporary commentators . . . realized, not so much translated into another medium as simply set free" (Holy Feast 248). The sexuality of these women was based upon the food-body of the Eucharist rather than the food-bodies of men. Just as Jesus did not require an earthly father for his conception, these women did not require an earthly husband for their sexual fulfillment; their encounters with the Eucharist sufficed. Petroff and Bynum also refute the view of critics like Elizabeth Castelli who, while acknowledging the eroticism of holy women's encounters with Christ, argues that sexuality with the "celestial Bridegroom" functions structurally in the same way as sexuality with an earthly husband--that is, in both cases, the woman is cast as the subservient possession of a male (84-88). Petroff asserts that the images and concepts which the women mystics employ in their writings clearly demonstrate that their eroticism was not stimulated by "the manhood, the maleness, of Christ" but by a "profound interplay" of masculinity and femininity (Consolation of the Blessed 66-67, 71, 73-76) and a "mutuality of desire" (Body and Soul 61-62). Bynum observes that the reactions of modern critics, "based in post-Freudian assumptions that 'normal' sexuality is genital and oriented toward a human, adult, heterosexual object, make a more polymorphous sensuality oriented toward the divine by definition 'abnormal'" (Holy Feast 403 n. 21). However repugnant, perhaps even nearly incomprehensible, such an alternative sexuality may be to our (post)modern sensibilities, we must resist the inclination to distort, diminish, or dismiss it.

The beliefs and behaviors of the late medieval incarnational mothers cannot easily be interpreted as the repudiation of physicality and sexuality urged by a misogynist clerical elite for yet another reason: theologians during the later Middle Ages increasingly began to encourage moderation in ascetic practices and to attribute new value to the body, health, marriage, sexuality,

procreation, and family.[54] They recommended that women avoid extreme fasts so as to keep their bodies healthy for marriage and the propagation of children. They emphasized aspects of Mary's motherhood (such as lactation and menstruation) which helped to link Mary more closely with ordinary women, spoke romantically of the Holy Family and of the marriage of Mary and Joseph, and made marriage a sacrament, recognizing it as both a spiritual and a physical union. Late medieval theologians also endeavored to make an honored place for all members of the church community, whatever their status or occupation, by employing metaphors of the body based upon classical and Pauline precedents (such as "there are many members but one body . . .").[55] Thus, the extremity of the religious practices of late medieval women, many of which unquestionably involved considerable pain and suffering, should not be construed as a simple consequence of misogynist clerical tirades, but as a complex response to such tirades, to the construction of Jesus as food, body, and mother, and to the emergent moderation urged by church leaders and their efforts to make a place--but a secondary place--for women within the Christian community.[56] Bynum contends that for the "pious women who wanted, without compromise or moderation, to imitate Christ and to elaborate a sense of self that was in no way secondary," the church's validation of more conventional activities seemed not just an opportunity but a threat (Holy Feast 218). After all, as Petroff notes, the women's "role as prophets and healers was the one exception to women's presumed inferiority in medieval society." Furthermore, she argues, the extraordinarily physically demanding aspects of the women's "works" were precisely what made their lifestyle into "a feminist issue for the medieval period." Their physical endurance demonstrated not only that the women were committed to and capable of imitating the suffering of Christ but also that they were as strong as men, did not have to be protected by either fathers or husbands, and could provide for themselves (Body and Soul 6, 75).[57]

And that the incarnational mothers exerted considerable influence over the course of the later Middle Ages cannot be denied. As discussed, the proportion of women in the cloistered religious population increased, new less institutional and hierarchical religious roles for women developed, and female figures and symbols in piety became more prominent. The number of female saints, of married female saints, and of lay saints--most of whom were female--also grew.[58] Bynum points out that the lay male saint, in fact, virtually disappeared, and most of the males who were

canonized were clerics. She also concludes that "the model of holy behavior offered to the Catholic laity was almost exclusively female," and contends that this feminization of lay piety demonstrates "the growing prominence of women both in reflecting and in creating [mainstream Christian] piety" (Holy Feast 13, 20, 21 and Fragmentation and Redemption 57). Women through their eucharistic visions and practices not only greatly enhanced the status of "those who receive[d] rather than consecrate[d], those who [were] lay rather than clergy" (Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 137), but also sometimes even bypassed or usurped the authority of the clergy by receiving the Eucharist in visions when religious authorities refused it to them in church, by constituting both their own suffering bodies and the suffering bodies of others as eucharistic, and by appropriating the doctrine of "vicarious communion" so that they, like the priests, could function as the "mouth" of the church by receiving communion for members of the community, whether living or dead, to serve and save them (Bynum, "Fast, Feast, and Flesh" 8, 13 and Holy Feast, esp. 227-37).

Not surprisingly, the pious women drew the attention of religious authorities, who viewed the women and their "works" with both suspicion and reverence.[59] The authorities were wary of them because, as Bynum asserts, the women, through their healing, teaching, and saving, forged a charismatic model of piety "authorized not by ordination but by inspiration, not by identification with Christ the high priest but by imitation of Christ the suffering man." This model offered "an alternative to, and therefore a critique of and a substitute for, the characteristic male form of religious authority: the authority of office" and, through extravagant visions and extreme ascetic practices, set a standard which religious men found they themselves were unable to achieve (Holy Feast 233).[60] The clergy, however, also welcomed and even encouraged the eucharistic focus of women's visions and devotional practices,[61] since it helped the women's spiritual advisors to keep them under close supervision as well as made the women more available to their advisors who periodically turned to the women for inspiration. The clerical authorities not merely held up the visions and devotional practices of the holy women as a means by which to admonish the pride, ambition, wealth, and power of the all-male church officials,[62] but also characterized the women as "the new mothers of the church" (Bolton 255) or as "'mothers' who [had] only 'sons'"--the "sons" of this formulation referring to the church officials themselves (Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 37 and Holy Feast 229).[63]

Theologians and prelates sometimes even associated the bearded female mystics with Christ himself (Petroff, Consolation of the Blessed 11; Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 39, 167), and additionally used the intensely somatic quality of the women's piety as an effective counter to heresy, particularly that of the Cathars (Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 143, 195-96).

The economic status of many of these women and what was happening in the environment where they were becoming more active and effective served to significantly enhance their influence.[64] Whereas in the early and central Middle Ages it had been primarily aristocratic women who played a more prominent religious role since entry into nunneries and monasteries had required large dowries, in the later Middle Ages it was predominantly women coming from the emergent "middling" group who exercised the greatest influence upon piety.[65] These women developed or took advantage of the alternative, less institutional and less hierarchical types of religious life, sometimes even continuing to live in the homes of their parents or husbands. They saw their poverty and charitable practices not only as an imitation of Christ but also as a repudiation of the ownership of property, a means of achieving economic independence through manual labor, and a way of sharing the lives of the disenfranchised and caring for them in the developing, urban economy. Petroff identifies all of these aspects of the women's lives at the time as "women's issues," often "viewed with much hostility by powerful groups in the Church and in secular society," since such features of the women's lifestyle demonstrated the women's capacity to function independently of men and their firm renunciation of both the advancing wealth of the Church and "the thrust toward capitalism" (Body and Soul 69, 130). However, that the growing commodification of food made it increasingly accessible to some but not others in the new towns also made eating, especially over-eating, a source of great pleasure or guilt,[66] the refusal of food much more spiritually significant than the renunciation of sex or money, and the giving away of food a sign of tremendous generosity--a context which inevitably generated a special reverence among many people for the women's form of devotion, centered as it was upon food and public service, and for the women themselves, whose fasts became more extreme and whose service in the world more extensive as famine, malnourishment, and disease became more noticeable in the towns of the later Middle Ages. As

Petroff contends, "the world would not let [the women] forget that they were needed" (<u>Consolation of the Blessed</u> 76).

The rejection of food also enabled incarnational mothers to exercise considerable influence at a more personal level.[67] Fasting gave them a great measure of control over their own bodies' functions, sensations, sexuality, and fertility. Food distribution and fasting also provided them with a means by which to manage, criticize, convert, or reject their families, to assuage their own guilt or the guilt of family members about the accumulation of wealth, to repudiate marriage, to practice a deeply valued, much needed form of service, and to belong to an alternative kind of family where Christ could be a husband, a lover, or a child, and bonds could be based on charitable works instead of on marriage and the propagation of progeny. Richard Kieckhefer asserts, "Compassion and imitation were responses that closed the distance between oneself and the suffering Christ" (105). Petroff contends that compassion was the "bond" between these women and Christ as well as between these women and others, and that such a bond strongly linked "the needs of the human realm and the joys of the heavenly one" (<u>Consolation of the Blessed</u> 76). Bynum also argues that "the mouth (breathing, kissing, spitting, swallowing, and sucking) was a way of [both] uniting with God and serving neighbor" (<u>Holy Feast</u> 140).

That such an eroticized, physical savoring of both savior and neighbor should be a principal means of salvation and a central feature of the incarnational version of the maternal may startle, even disgust, those of us who, more often than not, defer (despite all our protestations to the contrary) to the compartmentalized constructions and preoccupations of a modern frame of reference. Late medieval people themselves were deeply ambivalent about their erotic, physical encounters with the divine. However, we should not let either our resistance or their uneasiness impede an appreciation of the expansiveness and value of incarnational motherhood, or, for that matter, an acknowledgement of the very real, self-induced, physical pain endured by the incarnational mothers as an integral part of their "reproductive" practices. We also should not let our own discomfort prevent us from fully recognizing the widespread influence of these mothers as "highly respected leaders of the faithful" (Petroff, <u>Body and Soul</u> 6). Bynum contends that "for the first time in Christian history, we can identify a women's movement" (<u>Holy Feast</u> 14), one which

Susan Dickman boldly characterizes as "one of the most important feminist movements in history" (166).[68]

It was, in fact, one of these holy women--Juliana, prioress of Mount Cornillon, near Liege-- who, fairly early on in the movement, received a vision in which Christ ordered her to establish a new liturgical feast in the church.[69] That new feast was the Feast of Corpus Christi, a feast which itself helped to inspire the rise and development of plays focused on the construction of Christ as edible and maternal, the works of charity, and the relationship of even remunerative labor to the reproductive work of incarnational motherhood.

## 2.6     Incarnational Motherhood and the Development of the Corpus Christi Cycles

Juliana's vision of an organized, communal celebration of the body of Christ generated much interest and the Feast of Corpus Christi was founded in 1246 by the Bishop of Liege in his diocese. Then, in 1264, Pope Urban IV, a former archdeacon of Liege, issued a bull directing the whole Church to observe the new feast, marking the first time a pope had instituted a universal feast. However, due to Urban IV's death later that same year, his order was not carried out until Pope Clement V confirmed it at the Council of Vienne in 1311 and his successor, John XXII, re-promulgated it in the new canon law collection, the Clementines, published in 1317. Thereafter, the new feast spread rapidly, arriving in England in 1318.[70]

Processions were a part of festivals of all kinds, and the Feast of Corpus Christi was no exception. In fact, a procession particularly suited the new feast since it provided a very appropriate means of displaying the Host (Nelson 9, 11), which was carried in a monstrance, a vessel specially designed for exhibiting the consecrated wafer in such a procession or on the altar. Exactly when the Corpus Christi cycles developed out of the Corpus Christi procession is unknown. The performances of the plays cannot be dated earlier than the latter part of the fourteenth century (Rubin, Corpus Christi 273-74), and the manuscripts of the plays date from the beginning of the second half of the fifteenth century through to the start of the seventeenth century (Stevens, "Medieval Drama" 43). In addition, how the performances came about is a matter of speculation. Initially, the formation was conceived of rather simply: the guilds participating in the procession began to include static, biblical

scenes, *tableaux vivants*, to which they eventually added dialogue that, revised and elaborated, resulted in the creation of complex cycles of plays by the last third of the fourteenth century. Today, the scholarly consensus is that the development was more prolonged, complicated, and diversified than was assumed in the early histories of the drama (Stevens, "Medieval Drama" 42-44). The nature of the relationship between the Feast of Corpus Christi and the origin, subject, and form of the Corpus Christi cycles has also sparked debate. Alan H. Nelson gives a good overview of the key critical positions regarding the relationship between the two: first, that the cycles evolved from the Latin, liturgical plays performed in the church; second, that the cycles were influenced by not only the liturgical works but also vernacular traditions; and third, that the cycles were based upon a vernacular tradition which had established its autonomy from liturgical performances by the twelfth century. It is the argument of V. A. Kolve, however, that Nelson singles out to challenge most specifically (Corpus Christi 1-14).

    While acknowledging the importance of other historical influences and recognizing that cycles of plays could indeed have been inspired by occasions other than the Feast of Corpus Christi, Kolve contends that, as it turned out, the doctrinal concerns of the Feast of Corpus Christi not merely provided the particular impetus for the composition of the Corpus Christi cycles, but also exerted a considerable influence upon their content which focused on the eternal significance of the Corpus Christi sacrament, and their form which was a typologically-connected, episodic treatment of the biblical history of the world from the Creation to the Last Judgment (Corpus Christi, esp. 47-49, and also chaps. 3 and 4). Nelson counters Kolve's contention by pointing out that at least three of the extant complete cycles are much more intensely preoccupied with the Passion than with the Institution of the Eucharist, and that the sacred history of the world makes up the context not just for the Corpus Christi sacrament but for all historical events, liturgical rites, or theological doctrines. Nelson also maintains that "[t]he Corpus Christi cycles bear no distinctive relationship to the doctrines celebrated on Corpus Christi" but instead draw upon a variety of religious materials and pictorial traditions as well as the festival procession itself. He claims as well that the subject matter and form of the plays were more likely determined by civic authorities trying to organize the many participating guilds and maintain an orderly celebration, than by the specific doctrinal concerns of the

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Feast of Corpus Christi or the ecclesiastical authorities, emphasizing that "[t]hough Corpus Christi was initially an ecclesiastical festivity, the primary force behind the guild pageants was probably . . . secular rather than religious" (3, 4, 6, 10, 12, 13-14).

Nelson, however, makes a distinction between the Institution of the Eucharist and the Passion of Christ which late medieval people did not make. For them, the two events were intimately intertwined: the sacrament of the Eucharist recapitulated the torture and the murder of Christ. The sacrament of the Eucharist also recapitulated such precipitous happenings as the Incarnation and the birth of salvation. Nelson's critique additionally overlooks the central role which the embodying of Christ, as opposed to other events, rites, or doctrines, played in the history of the world, especially at the time the Feast of Corpus Christ was inaugurated. Further, as Nelson himself acknowledges, the distinction he makes between the religious and the secular "is not entirely valid" for the medieval period, and "the question why . . . pageants frequently achieved their fullest and most conspicuous development in the Corpus Christi procession rather than some other occasion" needs to be addressed (13).

The critical view of the relationship which has prevailed is that the Feast of Corpus Christi did provide some kind of special incentive for the production of vernacular, dramatic performances which, over time, evolved into complex cycles of plays (McDonald 117; Stevens, "Medieval Drama" 43; O'Connell, "God's Body" 66). Despite Nelson's contentions and reservations, the plays were composed for the occasion of this particular holiday, were performed on the holiday itself or a day close to it, and, like the Corpus Christi procession and sermons, did focus upon and exalt the body of Christ available to everyone for all time through the Eucharist.[71]

I would also more specifically contend that the late medieval vision and institution of the Feast of Corpus Christi, with its public procession and adoration of the Host, likely prompted a convergence of the concepts, relationships, and practices of the period's incarnational version of motherhood, and that this convergence was conducive to the development of plays that intricately connected sacred and secular, or religious and economic, concerns. As Michael O'Connell argues, it is a "short step" from the parallel between the union of divinity and humanity in Christ and the union of the soul and body in the human person, "to the enactment of Christ's physicality, his actions while

in the flesh, by means of other human bodies" ("God's Body" 71-72). As well, the portrayal of

ecclesia--Christ's body, the mystical body, the church--as a maternal body which members of the

community both partake of and make up established a model remarkably appropriate to a drama

which also depicted Christ as the food-that-is-the-mother's-body and which the entire community, to

a large degree, contributed to and participated in. Also likely adding substantially to the growth of

dramaturgical understanding and capability were the beliefs that the divine and the human

intermingled in the most primary physiological processes of digestion and gestation and that this

physiological intermingling was central to salvation. After all, these beliefs intensified the

experiences of seeing and of eating Christ's body, made Christ's body simultaneously the most

public and the most intimate, the most awesome and the most common body, and inspired new

forms of dramatistic participation and interaction for both clergy and laity. Finally, the prevalence

and influence of a deeply emotional piety which encouraged a very physical imitation of Christ as a

means of acquiring knowledge of him, suffering with him, and serving the needy as he did, must also

have fostered theatrical apprehension and aptitude. As Sarah Beckwith so astutely observes, it is

likely because "the human body (Christ's body, and the body of the addressee) is both an image and

a physical, experiential, felt presence" that "we return obsessively to the metaphor of theatre to

describe this form of spirituality, for it is in the nature of the theatrical medium to foreground the

human body through the mechanism of the actor as at once image and physical presence, at once

representation and experience" (Christ's Body 61). Perhaps even more specifically one could assert

that the practice of imitatio Christi intersects both theater in its presentation of the "images" of

suffering women and men "acting" on behalf of the salvation of self and others, and ritual in its

literalist or actual (not merely metaphorical) "performance" of eucharistic work. Just as the late

medieval Mass was both ritualistic and theatrical, or literalist and imagistic, so too was the practice of

imitating Christ.[72] We should also note that while many scholars direct attention to the relationship

between Franciscan piety which encouraged the literalist approach to the practice of imitatio Christi

and the rise of the vernacular drama,[73] the distinctive role of the pious women who most rigorously

undertook the literalist approach and who eventually set the devotional standard for the laity as a

whole should not be overlooked or minimized. Again, it was one of these influential women whose

vision inspired the Feast of Corpus Christi which most critics agree marks a significant moment in the history of drama.

Not only the Feast of Corpus Christi--and the convergence of the concepts, relationships, and practices of the period's incarnational version of motherhood which the new Feast likely encouraged--proved auspicious for the development of theatrical enterprises in the later Middle Ages. So, too, did the labor shortage of the fourteenth century. Climate change, famine, the Hundred Years' War, and especially the Black Death decimated the population of Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In England, during this period of time, the population shrank to half of what it had been in 1300. This precipitous decline led to a much greater demand for the labor which was in very short supply, and, thus, more employment opportunities, improved job security, and higher wages for both working men and working women.[74] John C. Coldewey observes, "As if God had decided to offer restitution for the terrible sufferings experienced by the victims of the plague, blessings were now conferred upon the survivors, with the last made first in his economic benediction" (79). While recognizing that the relationship between economic conditions and dramatic productions make up only part of a "larger cultural matrix," Coldewey also argues that the new valuation of labor and the growth of artisanal influence and prosperity greatly contributed both to the increase in the number and in the complexity of guilds in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and to the rapid spread and development of a great variety of dramatic activities during the same period--the "most popular" and "most frequently produced" of which were the Corpus Christi cycles, themselves both organized on the basis of guilds and financed and staged by them (passim). Scholars other than Coldewey highlight the ubiquitous development of a range of dramatic activities in the fourteenth and fifteen centuries--Alexandra F. Johnston, in fact, asserts, "All the world was a stage" ("Records of Early English Drama" 117)--as well as the special commitment to and sophistication of the Corpus Christ pageants in particular.[75]

The twentieth-century productions of the Corpus Christi plays, the increasing recovery and scrutiny of the historical records through the REED (Records of Early English Drama) project launched in 1975, and the proliferation of research and professional opportunities and historical and critical studies related to the subject of medieval drama over the last several decades have provoked

not only a wide-ranging critical reassessment of the drama of the later Middle Ages, but also an understanding of the diverse emphases, competing claims, and variable staging and organizational practices of the plays.[76] While I appreciate the textured and heterogeneous perspective on the cycle plays which such work encourages, I also want to assert that the Corpus Christi cycles as a whole served as a mechanism to disseminate and develop the many facets of incarnational motherhood, along with the contradictions and tensions they generated.

By examining particular episodes from the cycles, along with some aspects of late medieval stagecraft, of late medieval people's ritualistic modes of participation, and of the organization and financing of the cycle pageants, I will demonstrate that the Corpus Christi cycles: (1) incorporate the constellation of associations which constitute Jesus very literally as both food and maternal flesh; (2) emphasize the eating and seeing of the Eucharist as well as the personal and social transformation which the consumption and sight of the body of God effect; (3) construe the "body in pain"[77] as a valuable means of acquiring and communicating knowledge about Christ's salvific work; (4) correlate Christ's eucharistic labor with charitable labor; (5) relate the incarnational motherhood of Christ and those who imitated him to remunerative labor which is physical and which caters to physical needs; (6) encourage both a spiritual and a physical bond among past, present, and future members of Christ's body; and (7) generate anxiety precisely because of the close alignment of the divine with food, the body of the mother, the experience of physical pain, and the labor of artisans.

## 2.7    Incarnational Motherhood and the Corpus Christi Cycles

The references to Christ's being born of Mary, almost too numerous to count, function like a refrain in the Corpus Christi plays, going far beyond the dictates of what we would consider to be standard dogma. In the Towneley Cycle,[78] the prophet Daniel announces, "Of a madyn shal he be borne" (7: 232-33); an advisor warns Caesar Augustus, "[A] may . . . sall bere a chylde, thay say, / That shall youre force downe fell" (9: 70-73); God himself proclaims, "[Mary] shall of hyr body bere / God and man wythouten dere [harm]" (10: 73-74); and Jesus, too, talking to John the Baptist about his mother, asserts: "I was born of hir body" (19: 246).[79] Imagery further enhances the emphasis upon the womb of Mary. In the Towneley Cycle, Mary's body is described as "cristall," "puryd

syluer," and "shynand glas" (10: 308; 20: 567). In the same cycle, John the Baptist describes Jesus's conception: "[A]s the son shynys thorow the glas, / Certys in hir wombe so dyd hir chyld" (19: 19-20).[80] Like the late medieval statues which have a transparent crystal or a carving of the fetal Christ on Mary's belly and the late medieval paintings which display a small, naked Christ child surrounded by light over Mary's womb, the cycle pageants in their use of the images of crystal, glass, and silver to describe Mary's body, and of sun shining through glass to describe Jesus's conception, call attention to the close relationship between Mary and Jesus. In the N-Town Cycle, the stage direction, "Here þe Holy Gost discendit with iii bemys to oure Lady, the Sone of þe Godhed nest with iii bemys to þe Holy Gost, the Fadyr godly with iii bemys to þe Sone. And so entre all thre to here bosom" (122), suggests that Jesus's conception was also "ambitiously and impressively staged" with images of the three persons of God descending to Mary's body (Gibson 144, 146).[81] Such a dramaturgical rendering of Jesus's conception again corresponds to statues of the period--the ones which open to expose the trinity carved or painted inside and which, in doing so, accentuate the centrality of Mary's body and its special affiliation with the divine. The N-Town Cycle as a whole also helps to constitute the intimate connection between Mary and Jesus by dramatizing Mary's life-- including her conception and her childhood years--in a way which parallels her son's. As Gail McMurray Gibson observes, "[i]n the N-Town cycle compilation, . . . the play called Corpus Christi is also the play of salvation history heralded by the body of Mary" (168).

The issue of Mary's perpetual "vyrgynyté" (12: 527) and of Jesus's absence of earthly paternity is also a preoccupation in the cycles which clearly points to Jesus's maternal constitution, but which simultaneously produces anxiety because of the contradictory state that Mary's virginal maternity seems so obviously to represent. The cycle plays which portray Joseph's confusion about Mary's pregnancy and sexual purity, in particular, rigorously grapple with the plausibility of such a state.[82] And though an angel intervenes to affirm the pregnant Mary's virginity, a doctor later in the Towneley Cycle, for instance, still maintains, "A madyn to bere a chyld, iwys, / Without mans seyde, that were ferly [strange]" (18: 31-32).[83] The lingering confusion and concern about the possibility of an earthly maternity without an earthly paternal contribution, however, are tempered by the many references to Christ's being born of Mary and by even more explicit allusions to his maternal

composition. For instance, in the Towneley Cycle, one of the Apostles trying to convince Thomas that Jesus is risen in bodily form argues, "Goddys son toke of Mary flesh and bone; / What nede were els thertill?" (28: 383-84). The Apostle's pointing out that Jesus would not have bothered to take a body from Mary if he had not intended to rise in the same form both makes a compelling argument for the physicality of Jesus's risen form as well as underscores that Jesus's body was derived solely from his mother's. Jesus, too, shortly before his ascension, clearly states that his "[f]lesh and blode" is from his mother (29: 236-37).[84]

The cycles' frequent punning use of the word "foode," "fode," or "foyde" (which in Middle English usage can mean food as well as unborn child, baby, child, progeny, young man, young woman, person, or, more generally, one who is fed) to refer to Christ not only further encourages the alignment of Christ's body with his mother's, but also emphasizes the tendency to conflate food and body and, more specifically, the food of the Eucharist and the body of Christ in the late medieval period (Sinanoglou 504; Coletti, "Sacrament and Sacrifice" 239; Lepow, Enacting the Sacrament 83). The Towneley Joseph takes the bond between body and food for granted when he observes that Mary is "with chyld" and wonders who fathered "that foode" (10: 173, 178). In also alluding to Jesus's lack of earthly paternity, Joseph additionally helps to establish the connection between the "chyld-foode" and its mother. The third King in the York play of "The Magi" is explicit not just about the relationship between body and food but also about the relationship between the body of the newborn Jesus and the sacramental food when he addresses the Baby Jesus with "Hayll, foode þat thy folke fully may fede" (16: 321). Other characters in the pageants evocatively use the word "foode" to establish the affiliation of food and body, of the divine son's food-body and his mother's, and of the food of Christ's maternal body and the Eucharist.

Upon meeting with the pregnant Mary, the Towneley Elizabeth, pregnant herself, refers to Mary herself as "foode" (11: 85). Later, Mary, learning of Herod's threat, exclaims, "My hart wold breke in thre, / My son to se hym dy," to which Joseph responds, "lett vs hy / To saue thi foode so fre" (15: 159-60, 164). An angel, conferring with John the Baptist, calls Jesus a "dere chylde; . . . Born of a madyn meke and mylde" and "frely foode" (19: 161, 163-64). Like the iconography and the theological discourses of the late medieval period, the Corpus Christi plays correlate food and body

and associate the food-body of the divine with the food-body of the mother by construing Jesus as well as Mary as "foode" and by almost obsessively reiterating that Jesus was "born of a madyn." The Towneley John the Baptist not only refers to Jesus as "frely foode" (19: 39) but also, upon taking leave of Jesus, says, "Farwell, the frelyst that euer was fed! . . . Thi moder was madyn and wed; . . . Farwell, the luflyst that euer was bred!" (19: 257, 261, 263). These lines, as Lauren Lepow asserts, cleverly point to the "bred" of Christ's "sacramental form" (Enacting the Sacrament 99, 100-101). They also affiliate Mary's "bred[ing]" of Jesus with her "fed[ing]" of him, and once more allude to her virginity and, thus, Jesus's purely maternal physicality. That it is John who is saying these things to Jesus strengthens the association of Jesus's body with his mother's because it recalls the meeting of the two men's mothers in the previous cycle episode when the women were still just pregnant with them (11: 1-90). Like the devotional objects of the time which depict the meeting of the pregnant women, particularly those statues which have either carvings of the fetal Christ and fetal John or transparent crystals on the women's bellies, the theatrical portrayal of the women's encounter emphasizes not only the relationship between the two mothers and the two sons but also the significance of the women's bodies and pregnancies.

The categories of food, body, and mother again meaningfully intermingle in the Towneley Cycle during Mary's conversation with John at the foot of the cross. Mary, mourning for her son, cries out, "My foode that I have fed" (23: 319), to which John replies:

> He was thi fode, thi faryst foine [fawn (i.e., offspring)],
>
> Thi luf, thi lake, thi lufsom son,
>
> That high on tre thus hyngys alone
>
> With body blak and blo. (23: 349-52)

The food of Mary's body in the womb and at the breast fed Jesus's body, which, made only of Mary's body, is also maternal food--the sacrificial "fode" hung on the cross and the sacramental food eaten at the Mass, which nourishes eucharistic recipients through a salvific process that itself involves not just digestion but gestation. The Towneley Mary refers to Jesus as "foode" yet once more in this scene, as well as observes that Jesus is "all of [her] blode" (23: 446, 487). She then construes his body as clothing and conflates it with her own body and garments:

> To deth my dere is dryffen;
>
> His robe is all to-ryffen,
>
> That of me was hym gyffen,
>
> And shapen with my sydys.  (23: 404-407)

Mary's intense preoccupation with her close physical connection to Jesus again serves to accentuate the intimate relationship between food and body and between her body and her son's.

The Corpus Christi cycles extend the understanding of Jesus as the salvific food-that-is-made-of-the-mother's-body by repeated references to hunger, thirst, and sacrifice before his birth, and, subsequent to it, by the recurrent association of Jesus's newborn or wounded body with the consumption and sight of the Eucharist and with charitable works, or the kind of "reproduction" which may be achieved through attention to physical need.

"[S]tories of murder and sacrifice"--those of Cain and Abel, Abraham and Isaac, and the Slaughter of the Innocents--prefigure the torture and crucifixion of Christ and the breaking of his body in the Eucharist (Kolve, Corpus Christi 79; Sinanoglou 501-504; Lepow, Enacting the Sacrament 94 and passim).  In the Chester version of the Abraham and Isaac play, for example, the offer of bread and wine by Melchizedek, which the Expositor explicitly construes as the gift of the Eucharist by a priest (4: 3-5), establishes a connection between the sacrifice of Isaac and the sacrifice of Christ as well as between the suffering body of Christ and the sacramental food of the Eucharist.[85]  Declarations of hunger and thirst before the Incarnation in the cycles also allude to the forthcoming food of Christ's bread-flesh and wine-blood (Lepow, Enacting the Sacrament, passim).  In the Towneley cycle, Cain's servant Garcio protests that he has never been full, that he longs for a drink, and that his "stomak is redy to receyfe" (2: 430, 432, 434); Noah's Uxor declares that their "mete" and "drynk" are "veray skant" (3: 285-86); the shepherd Daw longs "[to] drynk" and "to dyne" (13: 211, 212), and Mak, after acknowledging his "belly farys not weyll," wishes that the sheep he has stolen was slain so he could "ete" (13: 330, 465-66).  With the Incarnation of Christ, appetite becomes even more intricately linked to the flesh and blood of Christ--whether newly born, viciously tortured, or triumphantly resurrected, and whether in the manger, on the cross, or at the altar.

Kolve contends that the very close proximity of the shepherds' feasts to the birth of Christ in the cycles suggests the eucharistic significance of the meals. He further asserts that in the later Middle Ages the Eucharist was often construed as a "banquet which had its beginning on Christmas Day," and examines other works of the time--sermons, stories, and prayers--which evoke Christ's presence as both a newborn child and a victimized adult in the consecrated bread and wine (Corpus Christi 47-48, 161, 165). The widespread use of the etymological interpretation of Bethlehem as the *domus panis* or the House of Bread in works other than the cycles also illustrates the strong connection made between the birth of Christ and the sacrificial, salvific food of the Eucharist at the time.[86] While Leah Sinanoglou finds that the conflation of the birth and the murder of Christ is indeed prevalent in the late medieval period--in Latin as well as vernacular writings, in painted and sculpted images, in the liturgical practice of using a crib as an altar, and in the dramaturgical practice of placing the manger on the high altar in liturgical plays--she also contends that it is in the literature affiliated with the Feast of Corpus Christi, particularly in the cycles' depictions of "the secular Christmas feast," that the association of the newborn Child and the sacrificial Host is most pronounced and pervasive (491-507). The Chester shepherds, reveling at their banquet, emphasize the restorative qualities of their food and drink and later describe the baby Jesus in "gustatory terms" as the "fruyt alsoe of that mayden free" (7: 109-48, 451). The feasting shepherds in the Towneley First Shepherds' Play call their beverage the "boyte of oure bayll," which is an epithet commonly used for Christ throughout the cycle, and refer to their banquet as "mangere," their eating as "mangyng," and to themselves as animals, all references which summon up the image of the newborn Jesus in a manger "betwixt [the] two bestys" that feed there (12: 291, 300, 303-304, 334, 357, 438).

Other critics discern a link between the food and drink of the shepherds' Christmas feast and the flesh and blood of Christ in the Eucharist.[87] They assert that the opulence of the meal, the incantation over the bottle, the vague nature of the beverage, and the joy resulting from drinking the beverage which seems to be in endless supply, all strongly suggest a connection to the Eucharist. They maintain that the kissing after the drinking of the beverage alludes to the kissing of the Pax which followed the partaking of the Eucharist, especially since the second shepherd's comment

about forgetting the kiss implies that the kiss is a part of a set ritual, and that the sequence of eating followed by drinking itself corresponds to the consumption of first the body, then the blood, of Christ in the Eucharist. Lepow contends that not only the abundance but the variety of foods consumed, including foods prohibited or restricted under the Old Law and foods with no special Scriptural meaning, signify that "the Old Law is superseded by the New" and, thus, that the shepherds' enthusiastic eating of once prohibited bloody foods is eucharistic ("'What God Has Cleansed'" 281, 282).[88] She further argues that the shepherds of the Towneley Cycle evoke the dual species of the sacrament when the first shepherd proposes a drink, the third shepherd who wants to eat responds with "what is drynk withoute mete?" (12: 280), and the third shepherd subsequently during the meal insists that he is "worthy the wyne" (12: 287) (Enacting the Sacrament 85).[89]

Like the First Shepherds' Play, the Second Shepherds' Play in the Towneley Cycle repeatedly points to the conflation of the newborn Christ Child and the salvific, eucharistic food. Daw's desire to "drynk" and "dyne" (13: 211, 212) draws attention to the hunger and thirst so prevalent before the Incarnation as well as evokes the dual species, or the bread-flesh and wine-blood, of the Eucharist (Lepow, Enacting the Sacrament 88-89). In addition, the link of the stolen sheep with childbirth and with food throughout the first half of the play strongly alludes to both the Nativity and the Eucharist.[90] For example, Mak who is hungry longs to eat the stolen sheep but, to save it from imminent discovery, he and his wife Gyll "hyde" it in Gyll's "credyll," after which Gyll proposes to "swedyll" and "lyg besyde" it "[i]n chylbed, and grone" (13: 465-66, 480, 482, 484, 485, 623). The body of the sheep, placed in a cradle, is construed as both food and a newborn child for whom Gyll plays mother. Despite the seemingly vast incongruities between this scene of birth and the Nativity, an image of Mary, stationed close beside the newborn Jesus who is also the sacramental food, is unquestionably elicited. When Mak returns to sleep by the shepherds and, upon being woken by them, tells them about his dream of the birth of "a yong lad / For to mend oure flok" (13: 559-60), both the birth of Jesus and the connection between Jesus and the lost sheep which Mak wants to eat are again called forth. Resolving to search for and find the lost sheep, Daw and Coll also unwittingly hint at the coming birth of Christ as well as the dual species of the Eucharist when Daw insists that he will "neuer ete brede" until he finds out the truth and Coll determines that

he will not "drynk" until he meets with "hym"--that is, with the sheep or, in consideration of the

episode's incarnational resonance, with Christ (12: 675-78). Mak himself once more inadvertently

refers to the coming birth of Christ, the eucharistic food, when he tries to persuade the shepherds

searching for their sheep that he is not the culprit who stole it. He points to the swaddled sheep in

the cradle and declares:

> As I am true and lele,
>
> To God here I pray
>
> That this be the fyrst mele
>
> That I shall ete this day. (13: 752-54)

Gyll offers a similar oath to persuade the shepherds of her innocence:

> I pray to God so mylde,
>
> If euer I you begyld,
>
> That I ete this chylde
>
> That lygys in this credyll. (13: 773-76)

Both Mak and Gyll's vows suggestively evoke the edible body of Christ. Sinanoglou, in her analysis

of Gyll's oath, points out that the incident of sheep-stealing and the device of the "equivocal oath"

were also common in folk tales at the time but that the tales and the play differed in their outcomes:

whereas the sheep-stealer in the tales typically succeeded in both deceiving his pursuers and eating

the sheep, Mak and Gyll do not. However, as Sinanoglou also emphasizes, Gyll's oath may also be

seen as "the greatest and most evocative Nativity prophecy of all" because though the sheep which

takes the place of a child is not eaten by Gyll (or Mak, for that matter), another Child who takes the

place of a sheep *is* consumed in the Eucharist (507-508). Moreover, as Rosemary Woolf shrewdly

observes, "the sheep purporting to be a baby" is not merely "a grotesque fulfilment of the lamb

offered by Abel and the sheep offered in place of Isaac" but also an anticipation of "the baby who

was symbolically a lamb" (English Mystery Plays 191).[91] Mak makes the relationship between the

sheep and the newborn Child even more resonant when he, after insisting to the suspecting

shepherds that Gyll's cradle contains their newborn, boasts of the child's special value and

desirability: "Any lord myght hym haue / This chyld, to his son" (13: 559-60, 801-802). The

connection between the sheep and Jesus is also made resoundingly clear when Daw, thinking the

sheep in Gyll's cradle to be a child, calls it "lytyll day-starne," an appellation which brings to mind the

association of the star of Bethlehem and the Christ Child in all the cycles and which Gyb later uses

again to refer to Jesus himself (13: 834, 1049). The very staging of the play, as Sinanoglou points

out, could have reinforced the link between the two scenes of birth if the same setting had been used

for both parts of the play (507).

The play's preoccupation with hunger and birth and its positioning of Gyll by the cradle with

the sheep point once more to the tendency of late medieval people to emphasize the central role

played by Mary in the generation of the Eucharist and to construe the food of the Eucharist very

literally as the flesh-and-blood body of Christ. Though the comedy of the Second Shepherds' Play--

as well as of the other shepherds' pageants which focus on the eating of food clearly conflated with

the bread-flesh and wine-blood of Jesus's body--likely eased some of the anxiety associated with the

rigorously literalist view of eucharistic reception, it could not have eliminated all of it, since

consuming the Host for the majority of people in the later Middle Ages did indeed mean making a

"mele" of the Christ "chylde" and recapitulating the torture and the murder of Christ. Again, however,

even the extraordinary tension produced by this understanding of eucharistic reception could be at

least partially ameliorated by the intense desire to unite with Christ through the very basic

physiological processes of digestion and gestation, to become the divine food of Christ's body, and to

give birth to one's own salvation--and, in the case of priests and holy women, to the salvation of

others as well.

Whereas the opening episodes of the Chester Shepherds' Play and the Towneley First and

Second Shepherds' Plays in their treatment of the Child-Host conflation encourage contemplation

and ambivalence about the consumption of the Christ Child in the Eucharist, the second half of all

three pageants encourage reaction to the sight of the Child both at his birth and during the moment

of consecration at the Mass.[92] The desire to see the newborn Child is repeatedly expressed. For

example, in the First Shepherds' Play, Gyb exclaims, "Wold God that we myght / This yong bab

see!" (12: 634-35), to which John Horne responds, "Many prophetys that syght / Desyryd veralee"

(12: 636-37). In the Second Shepherds' Play, Daw insists, "Full glad may we be, . . . That lufly to se"

(13: 985, 987). Then, upon actually seeing the newborn Jesus, the shepherds greet him with both awe and tenderness. In the First Shepherds' Play, for instance, the shepherds cry out, "Hayll, kyng I the call! . . . Hayll, lytyll mylksop! . . . "Hayll, maker of man!" (12: 660, 673, 686) and, in the Second Shepherds' Play, they shout, "Hayll, yong child! . . . Hayll, sufferan sauyoure! . . . Hayll, derlyng dere!" (13: 1025, 1037, 1050). Lepow contends that these rhythmic verses, based upon "prayers, written for the laity, intended for address to the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar at the moment of its elevation," not only stress the significance of the sight of Christ but also establish "an analogy between the greeting of Christ incarnate in historical time and the contemporary salutation of the Real Presence [in the Eucharist]" ("Middle English Elevation Prayers" 85, 87). Secured, then, yet again, is the compelling relationship between Jesus as the body in the manger and the consecrated food at the altar, the shepherds in Bethlehem and the Christians at Mass, and the stable and the church. Moreover, in these scenes, the awe which the sight of the "maker of man" and the "sufferan sauyoure" inspires for the shepherds is tempered by their intense personal affection for the "lytyll mylksop" and "derlyng dere" (Lepow, "Middle English Elevation Prayers" 88 and <u>Enacting the Sacrament</u> 87-88).[93] The simultaneous reverence and affection generated at the sight of the incarnated Christ, who is both the "sacramental Victim" and the "most winsome of children," produces a tension in the cycles' Nativity scenes (Sinanoglou 509) comparable to that experienced at the late medieval Mass.[94]

Not surprisingly, the correspondence between the body of Christ and the eucharistic food is depicted with particular explicitness in the N-Town Last Supper play (Coletti, "Sacrament and Sacrifice" 243, 245, 247, 260-61 n. 21, 261-62 n. 25). Christ's verbal acknowledgement of the doctrine of transubstantiation, "þis þat shewyth as bred to ȝoure apparens / Is mad þe very flesche and blod of me" (27: 382-83), and the physical presence of both him and the wine and bread, encourage the unabashedly literalist view of his body as food in the moment of consecration rather than the more sophistic perspective with its convoluted arguments about substance and accidents. In this pageant's portrayal of the moment of communion, the direct identification of his flesh and blood with the bread and wine is reinforced not just by the stage directions, "oure Lord ȝyvyth his body to his dyscypulys" and "þe dysciplys com and take þe blod" (280, 282), but by Christ's words,

"This is my body, flesch and blode / þat for þe xal dey upon the rode." Then, upon receiving the bread from Jesus, Judas insists, "Lord, þi body I wyl not forsake," which also refers specifically to the construction of Christ as both sacrificial body and sacramental food. Later the Devil, too, conflates Christ with the Eucharist when he declares to Judas, "Thow hast solde þi maystyr and etyn hym also!" (27: 449-50, 452, 470). Moreover, that Christ himself throughout this pageant repeatedly and unambiguously points to the relationship between his flesh and the Host (27: 364, 438, 493) as well as clearly explains the benefits of eating his body (27: 504-11) serves to highlight even more the literalist relationship between the Last Supper and the Mass and between his body and blood and the sacramental bread and wine which was so characteristic of and prevalent in the late medieval period.[95]

This literalist relationship is perhaps nowhere more accentuated than in the passion plays of the Corpus Christi cycles. In these pageants, Christ's silence, a silence which many critics have commented upon and which vividly contrasts with the vociferous rantings of his tormentors and inquisitors,[96] and Christ's enforced nakedness, which also stands out in the face of "the fully clothed and often sumptuously dressed characters around him" (Travis, "Semiotics of Christ's Body" 71), together draw attention to his extraordinary physical vulnerability, his suffering and sacrifice, and his body's alignment with the salvific food of the Eucharist. Lauren Lepow, in her analysis of the Towneley passion plays, asserts that it is Christ's "silent and sacrificial Presence [which] speaks out to the audience, establishing communion with those who are worthy" (Enacting the Sacrament 109). Jeffrey Helterman, in his examination of these Towneley pageants, argues, "[T]he tormentors and the high priests reveal, in their continual demand that the Word speak, their inability to realize that [Christ's] presence is itself the message He brings" (139). I agree with both critics but also want to add that what really needs to be stressed about Christ's presence, especially in the passion scenes, is its physicality. After all, as Clifford Davidson reminds us, it was the body of Christ which was given for the salvation of the world ("Realism of the York Realist" 280) and which continues to be eaten in the Eucharist. Moreover, as Peter Travis contends, it is precisely Christ's physicality which Christ himself before his ordeal, and his inquisitors and torturers during it, emphasize in the cycle passion plays. Travis points out, for example, that Christ, shortly before his arrest, directs attention

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to his fearful, shaking body and his watery, bloody sweat. Then, after he is captured, the inquisitors threaten to poke out Christ's eyes, wring his neck, and cut off his head, and the torturers describe the manner of their buffeting and whipping, the parts of Christ's body (head, hips, haunch, lips, and paunch) which are afflicted, and the wounds themselves (welts, lacerations, bruises, and sores). The torturers continue to anatomize Christ's body--referring to his breaking bones, snapping sinews, and bursting veins--as they stretch him to fit the cross and nail him to it ("Social Body" 26-28). In addition, because medieval people themselves saw sensory experience as epistemic (for example, the physical imitation or the physical savoring or "smackyng" of Christ's body as a means of acquiring knowledge of Christ), because medieval people also perceived their reception of the Host as an actual recapitulation of the abuse and crucifixion of Christ's body, and because, as Elaine Scarry has persuasively demonstrated, physical pain is so difficult to articulate in language, it makes sense that Christ's injured, laboring body, not his words, be given center stage in the cycles' passion scenes. As Lepow contends, "the suffering [Christ] . . . endures is among the greatest of his 'warkys.'. . . [He] stands central, silent and bleeding, and a powerful Eucharistic icon is created" (Enacting the Sacrament 109). His body is simultaneously macerated flesh and broken bread. The vulnerability associated with his body's nakedness and wounds also evokes the image of Christ as a newborn child. It helps constitute his body as female or maternal, too, since the characters who "maul and bludgeon" the "naked, weak, and passive" Christ are typically "four pronouncedly male figures (often dressed in the full armor of soldiers)" (Travis, "Semiotics of Christ's Body" 71). Moreover, Christ's bleeding, suffering body in and of itself recalls the texts, iconography, and the pious practices of the period which conflate his blood with breast milk, his side wound with a womb, and his agony with the labor pains of birth.[97]

The alignment of Christ's body with the maternal body is further heightened when Jesus specifically focuses on his wounds and construes his body as food. In the Towneley Cycle, Jesus on the cross urges the observers to attend to his bruised, battered, and bloody body (23: 233-91). Resurrected, he itemizes the kind and number of his injuries--"In body, hede, feete, and hand, / Four hundreth woundys and v thowsand / Here may thou se" (26: 291-93)--and unambiguously conflates his body with the food of the Eucharist--"I grauntt theym here a measse / In brede, myn awne body"

(26: 343-44).[98]  As Travis contends, "[t]he maternal side of Christ's feminine nature is emphasized in [the] . . . scenes in which he exposes the wound in his breast and beseeches his viewers to seek salvation in him" ("Semiotics of Christ's Body" 71).

The Corpus Christi cycles also directly correlate the maternal and edible body of Christ with the charitable impulse and good works.  For example, in the First Shepherds' Play, the shepherds complain about their destitution and oppression but, after eating a meal resonant with eucharistic associations, decide to share the leftovers of their feast with the poor.[99]  Their decision points to the customary, charitable practice of sharing food on Christmas Eve (Cawley 215), as well as connects the effects of eucharistic reception to the works of charity in general and to the relationship between the satiation of self and the satiation of others.  The sight of Christ at his birth or, by association, at the moment of consecration, is itself rendered as both personally and socially efficacious in the cycles.  After seeing the newborn Jesus, the Towneley shepherds acknowledge their restoration and sing in unison (12: 714-24; 13: 1085-88) (Sinanoglou 505-506), and the Chester shepherds kiss and part, vowing to make "amendes" for their "mysdeedes" and to dedicate themselves to a religious life of service (7: 651-84).[100]  The resurrected Jesus even more explicitly calls attention to the social efficacy of eucharistic eating in the Towneley Thomas of India play when he urges his "dere freyndys" to "[e]yttys for charité" (28: 171-76, 201-202).  As Lepow contends, "The Apostles . . . are to 'ette'. . . that they may accomplish, through the charity bestowed in communion, Jesus' work" (Enacting the Sacrament 129).  Like the influential practice of imitatio Christi in the late medieval period, the cycle plays of the time overtly and unequivocally link eucharistic seeing and eating with charitable serving.

Not only seeing and eating but touching Christ's body effects the desire for charitable service.  In the Towneley Thomas of India play, Thomas, though willing to concede that Jesus may be risen in spirit, refuses to believe that Jesus is risen in bodily form.  "Ye sagh hym not bodely; / His gost it myght well be," he says to the Apostles trying to persuade him of the physicality of the risen Christ (28: 323-34).  Thomas insists again and again on the spiritual form of the risen Jesus (28: 405, 450-51, 494-96, 543-44) and finally challenges the Apostles with this question:

Say, bad he any of you fele

> The woundys of his body,
>
> Flesh or bone or ilka dele,
>
> To assay his body?  (28: 389-92)

Jesus then reappears and insists that Thomas put his "hande" in Jesus's "syde," at which point Thomas exclaims, "Mercy, Iesu, rew on me, / My hande is blody of thi blode!"  Convinced by his physical contact with Christ's body that Christ is indeed risen in bodily not merely spiritual form, Thomas casts away his expensive clothing and dedicates himself to a life of religious poverty (28: 569-70, 585-592).  His transformation and dedication again show the Eucharist at work.

Later in the Towneley cycle, the physicality of Christ's body and its relationship to charity is once more underscored.  An angel describes Christ ascending to "heuen on hy, / In flesh and fell, in his body" (29: 299-300), and Jesus himself in the Judgment pageants not only affirms he "bere[s]" his body with him (30: 128), but also urges that even more attention be paid to it:

> Here may ye se my woundys wide
>
> That I suffred for youre mysdede
>
> Thrugh harte, hede, fote, hande and syde,
>
> Not for my gilte bot for youre nede.
>
> Behald both bak, body, and syde.  (30: 576-80)

Jesus then focuses on the charitable actions associated with the salvific food of his body or the Eucharist--that is, the care of the hungry, sick, weary, poor, homeless, or "any that nede had" (30: 616-97).  Jesus also conflates his own suffering with that of others when he declares that those who assisted "the lest of myne . . . [t]o me ye dyd the self and same" (30: 696-97).  The incarnational motherhood of Christ in the cycles--like the incarnational motherhood practiced beyond the cycles, most fervently and literally by women--thus clearly emphasizes and encourages the forms of "reproduction" which may be achieved through attention to physical need.

The dramaturgy of the cycle performances itself worked to provoke the charitable impulse.  That Christ was played by many different actors--either simultaneously on processional pageant-wagons or sequentially at a fixed location--served to link the plight of Christ to the struggles of ordinary men and women (Simon xvii).  That the actors playing Christ were not just actors but

relatives, friends, and acquaintances, as well as cobblers, bakers, and ship-builders, reinforced the connection between Christ and ordinary people, and, in doing so, encouraged people at the performances to attend to the needy "Christs" in their very own neighborhoods. As Peter H. Greenfield observes, multiple Christs played by actors the audience knows personally made people "more truly aware that . . . [they] feed, clothe, and shelter [Christ] by doing these things for the less fortunate members of [their] own human community" (105).

The ritualistic experience of the cycles further promoted the communal bond and a desire for charitable service.[101] Part of this experience was due to the literal presence of the entire community (Womack 99), part to the "representativeness of those in attendance" (Robinson, "Late Medieval Cult" 511), and part to the involvement of not only the actors but also the audience members in the pageant performances. Audience members were not "detached spectators" but "sharers or partakers with the performers" (Speirs 90, 91). For example, rulers in the pageants frequently address the crowd or command it to be silent, and Christ himself directly speaks to and intermingles with those in attendance.[102] Another part of the ritualistic experience was due to the widespread belief that both the actors and the audience members were participants in the actual events of biblical history. As Speirs contends, "these events were not merely being commemorated. They were thought of as being done over again, as having to be done over again; . . . indeed, they were probably experienced not so much even as events being redone but as if they were being done for the first time there and then" (91). Lepow also argues that the cycle pageants "[did] not memorialize a historical figure so much as they vivif[ied] the sacramentally present Christ" (Enacting the Sacrament 80). Thus, actors were perceived as being not only relatives, friends, and neighbors, and butchers, tailors, and carpenters, but also Eve, Herod, Judas, or Jesus. Audience members, too, were interpreted as not only the citizens of Chester or some other particular town, but also the people of Israel, the friends of Lazarus, or even humanity as a whole. As Martin Stevens puts it, "Christ lived and died in Yorkshire, and members of the Carpenters' gild were his executioners" ("Illusion and Reality" 453). Sylvia Tomasch discusses how the creating and the breaking of frames in the cycle pageants (for example, by making a character act in a play as well as comment on the play's action) contributes to this "simultaneous sense of distance and contiguity, separation and union." She contends that the

construction of frames "works to delineate boundaries, to focus audience attention, and to create

other worlds," while the destruction of frames serves to blur boundaries, to change the focus, to show

that "other worlds are . . . very much parts of this one," and, perhaps even more importantly, to

establish that this world is complicitous in the creation of the other one (81-91). Like the Mass, then,

the Corpus Christi Cycles were seen to recreate--to "re-produce"--not merely to commemorate, the

precipitous events of the Bible, and to connect present participants to each other and to both the past

and the future members of Christ's body.

It could be argued that the construction of the effects of many actors playing Christ and of

the ritualistic experience of the plays which I present is overly idealistic. I understand that seeing

Christ played by the baker next door, the cobbler across the back yard, and the ship-builder down the

street likely provoked humor, occasionally even scorn, not merely the impulse to care for the needy

"Christs" in the neighborhood; that the entire community mingling together likely produced discord,

not just harmony, precisely because of the "representativeness of those in attendance"; that the

involvement of the audience members in addition to the actors in the pageant performances likely

disrupted, not only enhanced, the performances; and that encountering the local butcher as Herod

and the local tailor-in-training as the pregnant Mary or the pregnant Elizabeth likely produced

resistance to, not just compliance with, a ritualistic experience of the precipitous Biblical events

being enacted by the butcher and the tailor.[103] However, I also want to contend that the

pervasiveness and the dominance of the period's unabashedly literalist construction of the body of

God himself as the bread that Mary "bred" and the "fode" that Mary fed--that is, as the most common

and most essential substance--gave the incarnational ideology of the cycles a holding power which is

hard for us (post)moderns, with our much more abstract and changeable ideologies, to imagine. This

literalist construction of the divine certainly gave the holy women, or incarnational mothers, a lot of

clout in the period. And, after all, the need to eat is a characteristic of all human beings and the

incarnational form of "re-producing" bodies by feeding them is a kind of reproduction everyone

depends on. This commonality thus probably made it easier to establish a bond among the citizens

of a town, of whatever standing, and between the citizens and the past and future members of the

body of Christ. Moreover, as Clifford Davidson observes, there is much evidence to indicate that

"the practical result" of the piety of the late medieval period "was [indeed] the unprecedented pouring of available wealth into the channels of charity" ("Devotional Impulse" 4).  Charles Phythian-Adams, in his examination of the ceremonies celebrated by the citizens of Coventry at the time, also finds evidence indicating that this town's citizens "themselves were convinced that ceremonial proceedings like the Corpus Christi procession and plays contributed to 'the welth & worship of the hole body'" (58).  Finally, let us not also forget that--in spite of the ambivalence they most assuredly helped to produce--the Corpus Christi cycles themselves did indeed hold--for two centuries.

That the incarnational version of motherhood depicted in and effected by the Corpus Christi plays was affiliated not just with the charitable care of "any that nede had" but also with remunerative labor which was both physical and attentive to physical need greatly contributed to the development and longevity of the cycles.

To begin, the long-standing calculative version of motherhood which significantly influenced the formation of the concepts and practices of incarnational motherhood was itself closely linked to remunerative work.  The productive work of calculative mothers was both essential and substantial.  It also informed their very approach to procreation.  These mothers saw the generation of offspring as only one of their many obligations, regarded the capacity to sustain a child without the womb to be as important as the capacity to sustain it within the womb, and considered the contributions even a young child could make to the work required to sustain the family as a whole.  The calculative mothers thus very carefully coordinated their reproductive and productive responsibilities and undertook the procreation of children only after a thorough evaluation of the material consequences.[104]

Like calculative mothers, incarnational mothers approached reproduction in terms of sustenance considerations.  However, the incarnational mothers conflated, rather than merely coordinated, productive and reproductive forms of work so that their sustenance of bodies--either with the food of their own bodies or with the fruits of their own manual labor--was itself categorized as reproductive work.  The conflation of production and reproduction in incarnational motherhood was what made this version of the maternal accessible to pious men as well as pious women.  This conflation also enabled a strong connection between the charitable works of incarnational mothers

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(female or male) and the remunerative tasks of artisans (female or male). Like incarnational mothers, artisans labored with their bodies to "re-produce" the bodies of others by ministering to their physical needs--that is, by producing items of food, clothing, shelter, etc., for them.

In addition, that Christ himself both in and beyond the Corpus Christi cycles was construed as the most common and necessary substance of "fode" as well as "treated as a workaday body, in its regular accessibility, in the pain of its suffering" (Rubin, "Person in the Form" 111) surely must have fuelled the theatrical interest in the cycles on the part of the artisanal "commonality."[105] Mikhail Bakhtin points out, "In the oldest system of images food was related to work. . . . Work triumphed in food. . . . As the last victorious stage of work, the image of food often symbolized the entire labor process. There were no sharp dividing lines; labor and food represented the two sides of a unique phenomenon" (281). Miri Rubin also observes, "Eating is a primordial function, the need for food motivates human action; labour is rewarded by food" (Corpus Christi 28).

Indeed, the close affiliation of the (re)productive labor of Christ and other incarnational mothers with the (re)productive labor of artisans helps explain why the new emphasis on work and the growth of the influence and prosperity of workers precipitated by the labor shortage of the later Middle Ages were such significant factors in the development of cycles of plays which specifically focused on the incarnational motherhood of Christ and encouraged incarnational motherhood in others. It also sharpens insight into why the Corpus Christi procession and cycle plays themselves were organized and financed on the basis of productive work, construed in bodily terms, and concerned with the relationship of specifically artisanal skills to the work of salvation.[106] Data from the texts of the plays and the guild and civic records indicate that the skills, tools, and goods of the guilds were sometimes explicitly featured in the plays the guilds put on--for example, when the Shipwrights would produce the play about the Flood and Noah's Ark, when the Bakers would produce the play about the Last Supper, and when the Carpenters would produce the play about the Crucifixion.[107] Sarah Beckwith explores the valorization of labor itself in the Fall of the Angels and the Building of the Ark pageants in the York Cycle. In the former, God repeatedly construes his creation as work and, in the latter, even more relentlessly and expansively, describes the building of the ark, the making of humans, the restoration of humanity, and the process of salvation, all

specifically as work. What Beckwith finds particularly noteworthy about this treatment of work and the formulation of "God as master-craftsman" in the plays is that they revise the traditional view, put forth by thinkers such as Augustine and Anselm, that God's acts of divine creation were effortless and not a product of labor, and develop instead the perspective of thinkers such as Hugh of St. Victor, who argues that the fall of God's creation not only inaugurated labor and mortality for men and women, but also the opportunity for salvation through the work of the sacraments ("Making the World" 255-59). The typological connection between the inauguration of labor and the salvific work of the sacraments affirms the importance of the role played by both "the human work" and human work in the redemptive process,[108] particularly in dramatic enterprises which themselves required the "work of many hands" (Richardson and Johnston 24).[109]

Like the later Middle Ages in general, the Corpus Christi cycles--despite having prevailed for two hundred years, even in the face of the economic decline of towns in the sixteenth century--were denigrated by the early modern humanists and reformers. The deprecatory perspective on the cycles became increasingly prevalent over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and eventually an integral part of what is now often referred to as the Protestant Whig-Liberal tradition. This tradition construes the Corpus Christi drama as the simple precursor of the far more sophisticated, secular achievements of the Renaissance, attributes its demise to its decadence and a general lack of interest, and credits the great developments of the emergent, professional, secular drama to the revolution wrought by the Reformation. Over the last half century or so, many scholars have vigorously disputed this diminution of late medieval drama.[110] Though critical disparagement continues to trouble views of the drama, an exploration of incarnationalism--incarnational motherhood in particular--demonstrates again the extraordinary dismissiveness and reductiveness of this derogatory kind of commentary. An investigation of the "Word made food and maternal flesh" in the later Middle Ages also produces a much more complicated view of the period as a whole and its piety--one which extensively revises the still too common "dark age" perspective. Whether examining the nuanced construction of Christ, the constitution and experience of the moment of consecration and the moment of communion, or the emergence and spread of an affective, active piety appreciative of the senses and attentive to physical need, what cannot be denied--despite the

sometimes provocative or even disruptive contradictions and tensions--is that the expansiveness of

the incarnational version of the maternal and its literalist inclinations and practices proved

remarkably amenable to women's influence within and beyond the household, as well as to

charitable, artisanal, and theatrical work.

# CHAPTER III
## MOTHERHOOD REFORMED AND ENCLOSED

### 3.1 Population Decline and the Rise of Pronatalism

A deeper understanding of the rise of "pronatalism" in the late medieval and especially early modern periods and its seemingly paradoxical contribution to the diminution of motherhood best begins with another look at the precipitous demographic decline of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, since this decline contributed not only to the need for and valuation of both reproductive and productive forms of labor--which strengthened calculative motherhood--and to the growth of drama--which extended incarnational motherhood--but also to the economic and ideological changes which would eventually undermine both of these expansive and influential forms of motherhood.

While the primary reasons for the sudden and dramatic population slump in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were climate change, famine, the Hundred Years' War, and the Black Death, other factors also played a significant role. A decreased proportion of both men and women were getting married, partly due to the proliferation, diversification, and attractiveness of religious opportunities at the time, especially for women. Even the people who did marry tended to marry only after achieving a particular standard of living, which meant they generally married later in life. In addition, wives as well as husbands were inclined to take a calculative approach to the generation of children--considering such matters as the resources available for the family's sustenance and the age at which the children themselves could begin to contribute to these resources.[1] Gunnar Heinsohn and Otto Steiger find graphic evidence of the relation between reproductive practice and economic matters in their investigation of the "medieval warm epoch," which lasted from 950 to 1300 and made for "an abundant basis of subsistence" while fostering a "slow but continuous rise in population," as well as in their exploration of the period immediately following the climate change in 1300, at which time the sudden drop in temperatures and contraction of arable land corresponded with a slump in the rate of population growth (195, 202). Interestingly, however, by the middle of the fourteenth century, when additional decimation of the population due primarily to the plague resulted in higher wages and greater job security for many peasants and artisans, and even in significant amounts of inherited wealth for some of them, a concomitant increase in the rate of population

growth did not transpire. Mary Nelson (346) and Nachman Ben-Yehuda (20) suggest one reason for this demographic plateau in the midst of such favorable economic conditions might have been that the majority of people did not want to jeopardize their suddenly higher standard of living by increasing the size of their families. That the extreme labor shortage necessitated the more extensive employment of women (Nelson 344-46) also likely contributed to the reduced birth rate.

The overtly economic approach to the generation of offspring has not, until recently, gained critical appreciation. Influential historians of the early modern and modern world, such as Philippe Ariès, Edward Shorter, and Lawrence Stone, contend that the calculative reproductive strategy, as well as other features of pre-industrial existence like the wet-nursing of children, the abandonment of infants, the practice of infanticide, and the high rate of infant mortality, demonstrate a lack of attention to and affection for children, especially on the part of their mothers. These historians also argue that a clearer understanding of childhood and a greater concern for the welfare of children began to develop only in the sixteenth century, first among the ranks of the gentry and emergent middle class and only much later in the stratum of laborers. However, growing numbers of scholars have begun to challenge these assertions.[2]

Shulamith Shahar, for instance, maintains that parents seeing their offspring "as a working force providing help for the future and security for their old age . . . in no way ruled out love" (234). If anything, the fact that children were not merely desired but needed for economic sustenance likely served to strengthen their parents' devotion to them. Stephen Wilson also contends that just because the members of a subsistence economy expected such things as the subordination of "personal interests . . . to the interests of family, kin and community" and the participation of children in the work which needed to be done--or, more generally, undertook a calculative approach to both productive and reproductive practices "in order to match resources to mouths to feed"--does not automatically denote callousness on the part of the members, mothers or otherwise. After all, he points out, the extended family and wider community provided "reciprocal protection and support" for its constituents, and the very survival of all members, including newborns, depended upon the careful evaluation of economic needs and means (186-87). As Heinsohn and Steiger insist, to procreate only when the livelihood of both the children and the parents could be assured indicates an

"unshaken . . . responsibility" on the part of the parents (200)--that is, a careful consideration of, rather than an indifference toward, the well-being of the youngest members of the families and communities.

Though a great deal has been made of the practice of wet-nursing in pre-industrial times by the historians advancing the thesis of maternal indifference and neglect, a more comprehensive look at the extant data demonstrates that maternal breastfeeding during the period in question, except among noblewomen and women of the newly prosperous middle stratum, was customary.[3] The available evidence also shows that the vast majority of the mothers who completely relinquished their babies had compelling reasons--such as illegitimacy or extreme poverty--for their decision. That these mothers typically left their infants at churches, convents, foundling hospitals, or the homes of the well-to-do--places where they would be quickly discovered and likely cared for-- demonstrates that the mothers, despite their plight, were concerned about the welfare of their little ones. Tags on the children's clothing which gave their names, ages, and baptismal status, and sometimes even the reasons for their abandonment also suggest that the mothers may have hoped to reclaim their children at some point--some in fact eventually did in the capacity of wet-nurse (Wilson 196)--and that their decisions were not heartless but, as Valerie Fildes contends, "heart-rending" ("Maternal Feelings Re-assessed" 139). The evidence further indicates that desperate circumstances were what motivated most of the mothers who resorted to either abortion or infanticide. To reduce the desperation of these women to malice or even indifference and, worse yet, to saddle the majority of the period's parents, particularly the mothers, with such cruelty or disregard is patently unfair. Overall, as Wilson contends, in examining the treatment of children at the time, "one is struck not so much by [the women's] callousness towards or neglect of their offspring as by their patient devotion, and of this we have abundant testimony if it is sought out" (198).

Dorothy McLaren and others also dispute that the high mortality rate of infants, especially those who were wet-nursed, is a clear sign of maternal inattentiveness and insensitivity in the pre-industrial period. McLaren, in her analysis of the data available for England, finds not only that the neonatal mortality rate was relatively low for the majority of mothers, but also that the working

women who made up the majority rarely experienced the high neonatal mortality rate of the wealthier women. She contends that the working women's typically-prolonged, often non-exclusive maternal breastfeeding was likely responsible for the lower death rate of their infants, since such breastfeeding made for fewer pregnancies and for pregnancies more likely to go full-term, both of which promoted the health and vitality of newborns ("Marital Fertility" 24-25, 27, 46). In addition, Fiona Newall (122-38) and Valerie Fildes ("Maternal Feelings Re-assessed" 162-68), while acknowledging the more widespread practice of wet-nursing in France and its link to high infant mortality, find that the less-intensive wet-nursing industry in England did not result in a comparably high rate of infant death. And, though comments on good outcomes associated with wet-nursing indeed are rare, McLaren astutely suggests we may perhaps assume that these outcomes were the rule rather than the exception, too common to warrant much observation, and that, consequently, as is so often the case, "the tragic and infamous" have received "a disproportionate share of the publicity" ("Marital Fertility" 32). Finally, historians such as McLaren ("Marital Fertility" 20-30), Newall (122-38), Fildes ("Maternal Feelings Re-assessed" 167-68), and Wilson (183, 186, 187) argue that even instances where the practice of wet-nursing can in fact be correlated with a high rate of infant death do not automatically denote a lack of concern on behalf of either the mothers or the wet nurses. Surely, these scholars insist, such circumstances as the prevalence of untreatable diseases and infections, particularly in urban and semi-urban settings, the deplorable conditions under which some wet-nurses were employed, and the very vulnerability of newborns in and of itself, must have contributed to the deaths of suckled infants.

To revise the largely negative assessments of pre- and early modern parents, these and other historians also highlight other evidence for parental commitment and love.[4] The data include parents' use of rituals and herbal remedies to ensure the health of pregnancies and the supply of breast milk, prompt baptism of infants to secure their salvation, and willingness to make huge personal sacrifices to keep their children or to provide for their futures. As well, collections recording the many lullabies sung to children at the time register affection on the part of parents or other care-givers. The revisionist scholars also draw attention to Thomas Aquinas's formulation of the notion of "limbo" for children who died without baptism, the prevalence of constructions involving childhood

and parental love in Christian writings and teachings, and the widespread devotion to the cults of Mary and Jesus, or the Mother and Child--all of which suggest a positive regard of and concern for children. In addition, the increasingly intimate, homey depiction of Mary as a mother who both menstruated and nursed, the concept of Jesus himself as a suffering, loving mother, and the widespread development and dissemination of these incarnational notions in charitable practices and religious dramas during the late medieval and early modern periods, attest to the prevalence, influence, and appreciation of maternal affection at the time.

Some observations about the poorer families are worth emphasizing and analyzing even further, particularly since, in Ariès's line of investigation, the practices and experiences of the subsistent majority are often eclipsed by those of the wealthy minority. As discussed, unlike many of their affluent counterparts, poor parents typically regulated the size of their families, poor mothers typically breastfed their own babies, and poor children typically remained at home, at least until adulthood, to work with their parents. That planned pregnancies are likely desired, that breastfeeding is conducive to the bonding of mother and child,[5] and that the interactions of the laboring parents and their children were based on early nurturance as well as on education and employment, all strongly suggest the relations between these parents and their children would have been close. It should come as no surprise, then, that a number of recent studies actually reverse the thesis formulated by Ariès and embraced by many historians after him, so that it is the mass of people in the laboring stratum, who are identified as the source of the appreciative, sensitive approach to children, which only much later infiltrated the ranks of the prosperous elite.[6] And, who knows, perhaps the low-status calculative mothers' wet-nursing of the children from wealthy families played a role in this "trickle-up" effect. After all, the children, once weaned at the age of two or three, were returned to their birth mothers and high-ranking stations. That the influential, affective maternal models of both Mary and Jesus were closely aligned with the calculative mothers rather than with the high-status mothers lends additional support to a reversal of the conventional thesis.

Even more compellingly, revisionist historians demonstrate that a calculative approach to reproductive practice was not limited to the mass of laborers.[7] More specifically, they link the formation and ascendancy of such ideas as procreation at all costs and parental affection unfettered

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by economic concerns during the late medieval and early modern periods--the very notions so lauded by the historians critical of the supposedly basely material reproductive strategy of working people--to the economically-motivated machinations of the factions who monopolized wealth and power.

Unlike the peasants and artisans, the elite factions, both religious and secular, did not find the rapid depletion of human resources during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries economically propitious. For the clergy and nobility the steep decline in population resulted in a marked shortage of people to work beyond the subsistence holdings as servants and soldiers and, even worse, on the subsistence holdings themselves to the degree required to maintain the income to which the privileged groups had become accustomed.[8] A significant number of English lords, for instance, lost most of their serfs to death or to desertion due to the peasant uprisings of the period. The shortened life spans which resulted from the plague further exacerbated the escalating labor crisis (Herlihy, Black Death 40-45). As Heinsohn and Steiger observe, the "aristocracy was then, correctly speaking, no longer an aristocracy, but merely a landed bourgeoisie with the pretension of nobility trying to work out how to attract labor to its land, without forcing this labor--which was scarcely available--into service" (200).

One well-known means by which the gentry grappled with the sudden labor shortage was the conversion of fertile fields into sheep-walks. These enclosures, as they are often referred to, enabled the landowners to procure earnings with fewer workers, "triggering modern capitalism" (Heinsohn and Steiger 200). What is not so well-known is that the clergy and nobility of the time, in confronting the severe depletion of labor, also undertook an approach to human reproduction which specifically aimed to undermine the capacity to plan families--a capacity of central importance to the calculative approach to procreation and, in particular, to the calculative form of motherhood which prevailed at the time.

Before the fourteenth century, the Church's position on birth control measures was variable and inconsistent. Generally speaking, the Church, while officially prohibiting contraception and abortion, in practice had largely tolerated both of them, except in extreme cases such as that of the Cathars, who promoted childlessness because they saw conception as the work of Satan.[9] For one

thing, communication of the prohibition was limited due to the lack of both literacy and a cost-and-time-effective means by which to disseminate the information en masse. Limited communication coupled with the fact that contraceptive behaviors were not self-evidently evil in the way that such acts as murder and robbery were meant that many people probably remained ignorant about the sinfulness of their birth control practices. Counter ideals also served to moderate the effects of the Church's official stance on birth control as well as its on-going promulgation of the Augustinian procreative purpose of marriage, even for those people who were aware of both positions. Theologians, for example, linked the procreation of children to their spiritual education and physical welfare, and generally were concerned less about the propagation of children than about their spiritual and physical well-being. "The universal acceptance of religious education [during the Middle Ages] as an element in the good of offspring," John T. Noonan argues, "is an emphatic rejection of the criterion of quantity. What is valued, in the very definition of the procreative requirement, is children of a certain quality" (Contraception 281). Shulamith Shahar also contends, "[W]ithin the family framework, the procreation of children is not a value in itself. . . . To have offspring is good because children can be trained in the worship of God, and not because of the desire to produce heirs or of the human race to proliferate" (99). Further, precisely because the "numbers" of children "[did] not matter" so much as the quality of the children, it was considered "better not to bear a child [at all] than to bear a child injured in his basic educational opportunities" (Noonan, Contraception 279). Families of faith, then, as opposed to large families were what the theologians encouraged. Despite the theologians' official prohibition of birth control and assertion of the procreative imperative of marriage, they did not construe fertility as preeminent in their ideal of the family. Valuing the education of children more than, or at least as much as, the propagation of them thus likely provided an ideological basis upon which couples could justify the use of herbal potions or the practice of prolonged breastfeeding to restrict family size. The Church's high estimation of virginity also worked against its official stance on birth control since virginity could, after all, be construed as a form of contraception.[10] Theologians additionally did not condemn or even analyze anaphrodisiacs, substances which purportedly dulled or destroyed sexual desire. Further, their admonitions against birth control sometimes seemed less about the protection of life than the control of lust.

At the height of what amounted to a demographic crisis in the fourteenth century, at least from the perspective of the clergy and nobility, the Church's general tolerance of the practice of birth control began to wane. Shahar observes, "It was in this period . . . that preachers first condemned the use of contraception for economic motives, whereas previously they had only denounced its use in the context of adultery and fornication" (230). Other historians find a compelling relationship between the escalation of the witch-hunts and the growing intolerance of birth control, beginning in the late medieval period.[11] They point to Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger's infamous 1487 work Malleus malificarum which was commissioned by the Pope to systematize the information about witches and to justify the persecution of them. It surveys the witch-hunting activities which had taken place specifically since the mid-fourteenth century, explains that all women but nuns and virgins were prone to witchcraft primarily because they were the ones who wielded power over sex and reproduction, and identifies the multiple forms of witchcraft, most of which associated witchcraft with the thwarting of the generative process. The very term *maleficium* was affiliated with magic and with contraceptive, sterilizing, and abortive concoctions and acts.[12] John M. Riddle argues that, with the growth of religious and legal sanctions, "[h]erbs that had been employed in the popular culture for millennia" to prevent and to end pregnancies quite successfully began to be seen less in terms of "medical lore" than in terms of "magic lore known only to those with malevolent motives," most of whom were women, many of whom were also midwives (Eve's Herbs 118). Mary Nelson asserts that midwives were often targeted in the witch hunts because of their expertise in contraceptive methods and because of the assistance with abortions and infanticide they provided to families who were either unable to sustain additional children or unwilling to jeopardize their well-to-do economic standing (346, 347).

Also emerging in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries among religious authorities were less restrictive attitudes and ideas about the purposes of marital intercourse for pleasure, health, and love, which suggested that the Augustinian purpose of procreation as well as the Pauline purpose of avoiding fornication were not absolute values and that other strict admonitions about sexual behavior might therefore be mutable as well.[13] While at first glance the concomitance of a heightened intolerance of birth control and a more lenient view of the ends of marital intercourse might seem

contradictory, a more careful consideration finds their coexistence entirely consistent with the formulation of a multi-faceted strategy aiming to increase the likelihood of conception and, hence, the birth rate. After all, the combination of a more stringent prohibition of birth control and a more permissive view of intercourse would serve to hinder the ability of women to plan and coordinate their reproductive and productive activities--a central component of the calculative version of motherhood. That late medieval theologians, as discussed in chapter 2, also began to assign new value to marriage and motherhood and to advise women against extremity in ascetic practices specifically so the women could keep their bodies healthy for marital and generative purposes, further encouraged the pronatal turn--in this case, at the expense of incarnational motherhood, the other influential version of the maternal in the period.

The economic and ideological shifts precipitated by the drastic labor shortage of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were extended and elaborated over the course of the early modern period, despite the fact that between 1500 and 1655 the population more than doubled (Wrigley and Schofield 528).

Whereas before the demographic recovery enclosures had provided a means by which to make the scarcely available labor sufficient enough to maintain income, after the population began to surge the capacity of enclosures to contribute to significant gain or profit came to be realized.[14] Enclosures in and of themselves enabled landowners to generate income with fewer workers, but, with a growing number of available workers competing for the same jobs, these few workers could be selected more carefully on the basis of skill and paid lower-than-subsistence wages. Both the higher skill and the lower pay of the workers served to substantially improve the earnings of the landowners. That the enclosure of common fields for grazing became increasingly widespread resulted in even more peasants losing access to the land which had formed the basis for much of their traditional production and being forced to join the growing numbers of landless poor people left with only their labor to sell. This growing surplus of labor permitted landowners to be even more selective in their hiring and to pay even lower wages. Master craftsmen in the towns also began to shift to a commercialized mode of production--by hiring labor only when it was needed and by paying lower

wages because of the plentiful supply of workers--either to maintain income as outside competition for goods and services increased or to generate greater profits.

While the need for sufficient labor had prompted the rise of a pronatal ideology, the desire for surplus labor helped to intensify it. Heinsohn and Steiger argue that because the "economic system was increasingly less based on the family unit of production, but had to draw its labour force from the family, . . . the reproductive rationale of the traditional family which produced children, i. e. labour, only for its *own* requirements" had to be undermined in order to compel "women to conceive and raise more children than they needed for the economic reproduction of their own families" (194, 204). Both the calculative version of motherhood which coordinated reproductive and productive forms of labor and the incarnational version of motherhood which conflated the two kinds of labor were in opposition to the relations of the emergent economic system which increasingly promoted the separation of reproduction and production and the specialization of women in the former and of men in the latter.

The early modern humanists and reformers played a vital role in intensifying the pronatal ideology which was informed by the relations of the emergent economic system and which itself was needed to legitimize and satisfy the demands for surplus labor. While their heightened pronatalism has often been construed as a boon for motherhood, I will demonstrate that it instead contributed to a greatly diminished and profoundly ambivalent view of the maternal by examining: (1) its repudiation of the concepts, devotional and charitable practices, artwork, and dramatic enterprises of incarnationalism; (2) its idealization of the married state and a "new" version of motherhood focused on the procreation and education of children (as many as possible), severed from both charitable and remunerative considerations and forms of work, and enclosed within the home; (3) its extension of the spiritual, familial, and political preeminence of fathers; (4) its differences in relation to incarnational motherhood; (5) its differences in relation to calculative motherhood; (6) its relationship to the changing economy; and (7) its alteration of the Catholic notion of the witch. I will also examine in particular detail the humanists and reformers' insistence on maternal nursing and denunciation of wet-nursing in order to sharpen insight into this new male interest in nursing practices--more specifically, to show how wet-nursing, in multiple respects, proved to be an especially formidable

impediment to the ascendancy of the new, much more limited and contained version of motherhood which the pronatal ideologues of the period so enthusiastically promoted.

## 3.2   The Repudiation of Incarnationalism

The reformers reject the doctrine of transubstantiation and develop their own eucharistic theories, all of which profoundly alter the relationship between the spiritual and the physical that they inherit from the late medieval period.[15]   They further insist that "[t]he eucharist . . . [is] not a 'work'" (Macy 146) which reenacts Christ's sacrifice and effects salvation, but instead a means of commemorating, strengthening, and confirming the gift of faith in salvation freely given to human beings by God through Christ.   Huston Diehl observes, "In opposition to the Mass, which the reformers believe encourages its worshipers to see, ingest, and adore an incarnate God, the sight [and ingestion] of whom is salvific, the Protestant Lord's Supper . . . invites its worshipers to remember, receive, and rise up to a transcendent God who cannot be seen, eaten, or touched" (103).

The changing understanding and experience of the Eucharist in England may be traced in the various editions of the new standard liturgical book, the Book of Common Prayer.   The passage about eucharistic reception in the 1549 edition reads: "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life."   In the 1552 edition, this passage was rewritten to read: "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving" (qtd. in Chadwick 121).   The rewrite, as Owen Chadwick points out, becomes a "vehicle" for those reformist doctrines "which taught that the eucharist was primarily a memorial of a sacrifice and that the gift [of salvation] was a purely spiritual gift received by the heart" (121).   Or, as one of the early English reformers, John Firth, puts it, the Eucharist "is not received with the teth and bellye, but with the cares and faith" (qtd. in Davies, Worship and Theology 95).   After the death of Edward VI and the accession of Mary I, a devout Catholic, in 1553, and the death of Mary only five years later, the country was badly divided when it came to religious affairs.   Elizabeth I, the new queen, attempted to steer a "middle way" for the Church of England, which saw itself both as independent from and in continuity with the Church in Rome.   The 1559

edition of the Book of Common Prayer provides a good illustration of this middle way because in its treatment of the Eucharist it includes both of the earlier editions' statements.

The reformers' rather profound alteration of the late medieval relationship between the spiritual and the physical is also evinced in their renunciation of the efficacy of religious vows, good works, and images, and in the new importance they attribute to *sola scriptura* or the Word of God by itself.

They dispute that there can be two classes of Christians, one clerical and one lay, with the former more perfect than the latter, on the basis of vows, and assert the priesthood of all believers.[16] They insist that no "work" can save a person since salvation, like faith, is a freely given gift of God, earned for human beings by Christ on the cross and not by any human action. Faith alone--not "the show and appearance of outward works" (Luther, "On Monastic Vows" 44: 263)--can save and justify Christians who remain sinners no matter what they do. And faith, again, is itself not a reward but a gift from God. The reformers construe even celibacy as an exceptional, often temporary gift of God, "a grace" rather than a "work" or "a state that can be achieved by human discipline" (Douglass 295-96). Martin Luther specifically denounces "work-righteous saints" ("Treatise on Good Works" 44: 47) and contends that too often vows of lifelong chastity are "purely bodily affair[s]" (44: 390), which lead to "horrible crimes . . . like fornication, adultery, incest, fluxes, dreams, fantasies, pollutions" and which hinder "many good things, like the bringing to life of children, the activity of the state, and economic life" (Table Talk 54: 335).

Images had been highly valued in the later Middle Ages. Gregory the Great's sixth century defense of images as books for the illiterate--a means for the unlettered to access the invisible through the visible--continued to circulate.[17] So too did the defense of the Iconodules of the eighth and ninth centuries who, to counter the claims of the Iconoclasts at the time, had insisted that the Incarnation both justified the use of the visual on the basis of its own *visibilia* and made it necessary to qualify the Decalogue's prohibition of images. In the twelfth century, St. Bernard of Clairvaux had added the argument that images helped to incite or intensify the affections of the simple people and, about a century later, St. Bonaventura emphasized that images not only served as educational tools and encouraged devotion but also assisted memory. By the fifteenth century, the "incarnational

image of the holy, both in Christ's humanity and in the *imitatio Christi* of his saints and believers . . . [had] become the primary justification for art, indeed, the very model for art" (Gibson 14).

The humanist Desiderius Erasmus challenges this justification for art by speculating that the Christ of the Gospels may be more vivid than the Christ of flesh and blood who walked on the earth, since the words of Christ are closer to the divine than the body of Christ and since "human beings [are] the 'image and likeness' of God principally in their invisible spiritual and intellectual capacities," capacities which are more closely linked to language than to the body (Eire 41). Erasmus's notion "that language [should] serve as the primary link between the human and the divine," Carlos Eire argues, "would become the heart and soul of the Reformed Protestant crusade against material objects of worship" (41).

While Erasmus himself saw "the material piety of the medieval church as an *indifferent* thing" and "as necessary for those who were not yet ready to accept a more mature spiritual faith" (Eire 47-48), other reformers such as Karlstadt and Zwingli were not so tolerant.[18] Karlstadt strongly promoted a revolutionary program of iconoclasm. Zwingli, exercising his power as the Great Minster of Zurich, convinced the town council to remove all the paintings, stained glass windows, statues, frescoes, crucifixes, vessels, lamps, and carvings from the churches, to whitewash the church walls, and to replace the altars with simple wooden tables, and the Mass with a new form of liturgy at which the congregation distributed unleavened bread and wine and the service centered not on the consecration and consumption of the Eucharist but on the sermon and the reading of the Bible.

Though Luther was concerned about the role played by religious images, he, like Erasmus, saw them as indifferent things. He strongly opposed the iconoclastic fury which his colleague Karlstadt had unleashed in Wittenberg. He construed iconoclasm as a religious work because of its focus on external rather than internal images, and accused Karlstadt of work-righteousness or a "misguided denial of *sola fides*" (Eire 69). Preaching against images, Luther argued, rather than destroying them would have been a more effective way to eliminate either the need for or the abuse of them. For Calvin as well, the root of idolatry lay not in the material world in and of itself but within human beings. However, for him, the inclination to idolatry was integral to the very depraved nature of human beings, due to their fallen condition, and thus could not be overcome. Since every human

being "even from his mother's womb" was "a master craftsman of idols" according to Calvin, idolatry was an ever-present threat (qtd. in Eire 208). Calvin's teachings, very influential in Switzerland, France, Scotland, and England, incited widespread iconoclasm.

Though in England Thomas More and William Tyndale debated about the legitimacy of images, and Luther had followers there soon after he emerged as a reformer, most of the budding English reformers were reluctant to speak publicly about their Protestant views until Henry VIII broke with Rome so that he could divorce his wife and marry again in the hopes of securing an heir. The dissolution of the monasteries in 1536 marked the first outbreak of widespread iconoclasm in England. Iconoclasm thereafter followed an erratic course due to the changing policies of the English monarchs. As Diehl points out, "iconoclasts [were] encouraged, indeed, stirred to action, under Edward VI, put to death under Mary, and tolerated under Elizabeth" (19). In addition, although Henry VIII's policy on iconoclasm had made a distinction between images which were idolatrous and images that were commemorative--a distinction which the succeeding monarchs, with the exception of Mary, retained--the actual practice of iconoclasm did not adhere to such a distinction. In most churches, pictures, sculptures, stained glass windows, and vestments were removed, mutilated, or destroyed; frescoes, painted rood screens, and walls were whitewashed and covered with scriptural texts or the royal arms; altars and roods were replaced with communion tables and the royal arms; and the furniture was rearranged so as to promote listening rather than watching. Sometimes the work of iconoclasm was officially and systematically carried out by commissioners; at other times, mobs of iconoclasts haphazardly smashed, burned, and defaced the trappings of the traditional church, often mocking their supposed power.

The reformers' repudiation of the doctrine of transubstantiation and of the efficacy of vows, works, and images alters not only the relationship between the spiritual and the physical but also the relationship between the masculine and the feminine. The new denigration of the body is accompanied by a rigorous masculinization of both divinity and piety.[19] The "feminine aspects" of the Virgin Mary and the female saints are "suddenly replaced by those of a transcendent, but overtly masculine God" (Eire 315) and Christ himself is construed "as a grown man or judgmental Father" (Roper, Holy Household 263-64). In addition, "God the Father, God the Son (the Word incarnate in

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the *man* Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit [become] the sole focus of devotion" (Eire 315). Neither are the saints--many of whom were female--to be venerated. They have no intercessory powers whatsoever, the reformers staunchly insist. Moreover, they distract people from God who is the only proper object of worship. Perhaps to diminish the seductive lure of such holy women, the numbers of which had grown so dramatically in the late medieval period, the reformers close down convents and forbid the formation of lay female confraternities.[20]

The Protestant polemicists not only censure adoration of the Virgin Mary and the female saints--the pictures, sculptures, and chapels of whom are the favored targets of iconoclasts as well-- they also assign all sacred images and the senses themselves a female gender. Diehl asserts:

> Invoking a symbolic order that aligns the masculine with the spirit, the feminine with the body, they identify all images with women and therefore denounce them because they are of the flesh and not the spirit. In their repudiation of a late medieval incarnational theology that focused on the body of Christ and even feminized that holy body, the reformers assert that the image seduces and deceives, drawing believers away from an invisible God rather than giving access to the divine. (160-61)

For this reason, the "masculine" spirit and will had to be ever vigilant to keep the "feminine" flesh and heart under control (Coudert 81). Diehl contends that the reformers, in acknowledging the desire provoked by images, especially female images, "call attention to the erotic dimension of late medieval sacred art" and clearly demonstrate that the "fear of idolatry" in the period is linked to the aspiration "to transcend the physical" as well as to the "fear of sexuality" (163, 170, 175)--or, perhaps more particularly, to the anxiety about the maternal, since, after all, the mother's body is what is most preeminent in the incarnational inheritance which the reformers tried so hard to suppress.[21]

Images are also construed in scatological and demonic terms.[22] A printer's apprentice in England on Ascension Day, in the year following that in which Queen Elizabeth was crowned, smashed the processional cross, removed the figure of Christ from it, and ran off with it, claiming that he was carrying away the "Devil's guts" (Davidson, "'The Devil's Guts,'" 92-93; Duffy 566). As Clifford Davidson observes, "That which had been regarded as [salvific] food for the soul [and body]

now [is] seen in terms of excrement, filth, and defilement" (Davidson, "'The Devil's Guts,'" 132-33). Iconoclasm in the period is employed as a means to purify the spirit of physical, feminine/maternal, and demonic contamination.

Comparable epithets are used to renounce theatrical enterprises. Though the first generation of reformers in England did author and put on plays to promote Protestant doctrine--plays which focused more on the historical books and parables of the Bible than on the Creation, Fall, and Incarnation, the second generation repudiated even this employment of drama. The Corpus Christi plays were subjected to particularly virulent attacks.[23] The anxiety about and challenge to the corporeality of medieval faith and drama can be discerned in the court document which aims to suppress the religious drama at Wakefield. This document specifically voices opposition not to "the content" but to "the form" of the show (Womack 98)--that is, to "the physical, visual portrayal of the sacred" (O'Connell, "Idolatrous Eye" 285). Such an aversion effectively sealed the sad fate of the cycle plays because, though the God of the Old Testament could be depicted with an offstage voice, the Christ of the New Testament simply could not; an actor's body was required.

Disgust for the physical depiction of the divine is also rampant in other criticism of the Corpus Christi plays. One of the antitheatricalists, Philip Stubbes, asserts that acting the Word is akin to abusing it and, in doing so, clearly aligns himself with the reformist perspective which valorizes a text-based, as opposed to a flesh-based, encounter with Christ. His alignment is made even more obvious when he addresses the issue as to whether plays, like sermons, may be used to teach: "Oh blasphemie intollerable! Are filthie Plaies and bawdie Enterludes comparable to the worde of God, the foode of life, and life it self? . . . The Lorde our God hath ordeined his blessed worde, and made it the ordenarie meane of our Salvation: the Deuill hath inferred the other, as the ordenarie meane of our destruction" (90). The Word by itself, not the Word made flesh, has become the food and the life. Denounced is drama's former relationship to both the sacramental body and the sacramental food. The characterization of the Word alone as life-giving food and the assertion of a clear opposition between the "worde of God" and the "Plaies" of the "Deuill" rely on a word-body dichotomy in stark contrast with the word-body harmony of late medieval incarnationalism which had emphasized the flesh of the Word Made Flesh, construed it as the salvific food, and understood

acting to be a particularly appropriate means of relating to and imitating the incarnated Christ. Stubbes also lashes out against the biblical plays for nourishing "Idlenesse" and drawing "the people from hearyng the word of God, from godly Lectures, and Sermons" (91). Stubbes's association of the cycle drama with idleness and juxtaposition of it with the "word of God" runs completely counter to its two-centuries-old association with the "work" of the Eucharist or the Word Made Flesh, the "works" of charity, and the work of the artisanal community.

The antitheatrical writers harshly critique even the new secular theater. Stephen Gosson contends that "those things which are neither necessary nor beneficiall vnto man, yet cary in their Foreheaddes a manyfest printe of their first condition, as Maygames, Stageplaies, & such like, can not be suffred among Christians without Apostacy, because they were suckt from the Devilles teate, to Nurce up Idolatrie" (155). Gosson then draws an analogy between the eating of meat sacrificed to idols about which St. Paul warns the Corinthians and the viewing and hearing of plays: "If we be carefull that no pollution of idoles enter by the mouth into our bodies, how diligent, how circumspect, how wary ought we to be, that no corruption of idols, enter by the passage of our eyes & eares into the soule?" (155). Gosson evokes the relationship of eating, seeing, and acting in the late medieval incarnational inheritance only to desecrate it by making the breasts those of the Devil and the milk that of "Idolatrie." Anthony Munday calls the plays the "workes of the Diuel" which make people "leaue the sacrament, to feede [their] adulterous eies with the impure, & whorish sight of most filthie pastime." "[The] vnsauerie morsels of vnseemlie sentences passing out of the mouth of a ruffenlie plaier," he contends, "doth more content the hungrie humors of the rude multitude, and carieth better rellish in their mouthes, than the bread of the worde, which is the foode of the soule" (13, 18, 69).

The new technology of print greatly contributed to the reformers' ability to sever the link between God and the nexus of food-body-mother at the heart of the concepts, charitable practices, artwork, and dramatic enterprises of incarnationalism.[24] It provided a cost-and-time-effective means by which to disseminate the new ideas of the humanists and reformers. It was particularly effective in helping to advance and to increase acceptance of the new relation between words and bodies which the humanists and reformers espoused since it itself inaugurated the historically unprecedented capacity for the widespread dissemination of disembodied words. As Stephen

Greenblatt puts it, "The word of God in the age of mechanical reproduction . . . has a new, direct force" (Renaissance Self-Fashioning 96). Martin Luther acknowledges the importance of print when he construes it as "God's highest and extremist act of grace, whereby the business of the Gospel is driven forward" (qtd. in Miles 114). Francis Bacon also highlights the impact of the new technology in Aphorism 129 of Novum Organum, written in 1620. "[W]e should note the force, effect, and consequences of inventions," he observes, "which are nowhere more conspicuous than in those three which were unknown to the ancients; namely, printing, gunpowder, and the compass. For these three have changed the appearance and state of the whole world . . . and innumerable changes have been thence derived, so that no empire, sect, or star, appears to have exercised a greater power and influence on human affairs than these mechanical discoveries" (446).

Overall, through ridiculing and renouncing the beliefs and behaviors of incarnationalism, diminishing the status of Mary and the female saints, and de-emphasizing or prohibiting religious roles for single women, while also altering the relationship of the spiritual and the physical, attributing new importance to *sola fides* and *sola scriptura*, and masculinizing the divine, the humanists and the reformers--greatly assisted by the new print technology, widespread iconoclasm, suppression of the Corpus Christi drama, and even the critique of the new secular theater--restrict the meaning, value, and influence of the maternal and extend the reach of the paternal.

### 3.3 The Idealization of Marriage and the New Motherhood

The humanists and Protestants also diminish the scope and leverage of motherhood by formulating a multi-faceted ideology which idealizes marriage and the propagation of numerous offspring. At first glance, however, their pronatalism seems to strengthen the position of women who marry and generate children.[25]

For one thing, the humanists and reformers specifically valorize and advocate marriage. Erasmus, for example, acknowledges virginity "hath been much commended," but also asserts it was suitable only for a "fewe" and "did chieflye belonge unto that time, when it behoved theim chieflye to be voyde of all cares and business of this Worlde" ("An Epistle" 117, 136). To those who try to make the case for virginity by pointing out that Christ was born of a virgin, Erasmus shifts the focus to

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strengthen his own pro-marriage stance with the shrewd counter: "Of a Virgine (I graunt) but yet of a maried Virgine" ("An Epistle" 101). He also disputes the opinion of religious men and women who construe married life as clearly inferior to their own celibate lives of service when he declares, "Let the swarmes of Monkes and Nunnes sette forthe their order never so muche, let them boaste and bragge their bealies full, of their Ceremonies and church service, wherin they chieflye passe all other: yet is wedlocke (beynge well and trulye kepte) a mooste holye kinde of life" ("An Epistle" 117-118). He further contends that because the very desire to procreate children is so natural itself serves to vindicate marriage ("An Epistle" 109). Luther, another of the many pronatalists in the period who ardently defend the value of the married state and repudiate the proponents of the celibate life, insists, "Even among the heathen married people are far more acceptable than all the philosophers who indulge in wonderful speculations about celibacy" ("Lectures on Genesis" 5: 354). While Luther recognizes the difficulties of supporting a household and raising a family, he also forcefully argues that every man and woman has "been created by God to be a husband or a wife" and must "learn to bear these troubles" ("Lectures on Genesis" 5: 363). For the Protestants and, later, the Puritans, the new marriage imperative applied even to the clergy. The influential ideologues as a group also promote their new stance on marriage by their discussion and endorsement of a particular kind of marriage, one based on the assertion of the spiritual and rational equality of men and women; the companionship of men and women who, because of their equal status, are able to freely choose to marry for the sake of love instead of money; and the growing acceptance of marital sexuality not only for procreation and for the avoidance of fornication, but also for health, pleasure, and the demonstration and generation of affection.

Accompanying the heightened advocacy of marriage in general, and a kinder, gentler ideology of marriage in particular, is a "new" version of motherhood, which emphasizes the propagation of children to such a degree that it becomes the essential task and divine vocation of women rather than either an inferior alternative to the good works of incarnational mothers or merely one of the many household responsibilities of calculative mothers. Cornelius Agrippa, for example, designates maternity as the "chiefest office of a woman" (qtd. in Cahn 94). Luther, especially insistent about women's duty to reproduce, asserts that "by nature woman has been created for the

purpose of bearing children" ("Lectures on Genesis" 5: 355), that "woman is created . . . particularly to bear children" ("Estate of Marriage" 44: 8), and that "God so created [woman's] body that she should . . . bear and raise children" (Letters of Spiritual Counsel 271). Other reformers concur, declaring that women are "created for maternity" (Crawford, "Construction and Experience of Maternity" 8).[26] The promulgators of the new motherhood also construe the generation of children as highly desirable. Agrippa claims it is not only the "chiefest" duty of a woman but the "greatest" (qtd. in Cahn 94). Heinrich Bullinger calls it a "blessing" (Jv). Luther not only hails the "blessing" of procreation and the womb and the "glory of motherhood" ("Lectures on Genesis" 1: 199, 201), but also maintains the bearing of children is such "a noble deed" and "[pleasing] work of God" that "[i]f [one] were not a woman [one] should . . . wish to be one for the sake of this very work alone" (45: 40). Again, numerous reformers in unison follow suit, construing women's fecundity in terms of praise and honor.[27] Finally, and perhaps even more importantly, the procreation of children is specifically characterized as central to women's redemption. The pedantic character of Eutrapelus in Erasmus's colloquy titled "The New Mother" informs the witty female protagonist Fabulla that, according to Paul, women will be saved through the bearing of children. Like Erasmus's Eutrapelus, many Protestants and Puritans refer to Paul's declaration in 1 Timothy 2: 15. Luther, in particular, emphatically instructs women: "You will . . . be saved if you . . . bear your children. . . . *Through bearing children*" ("Lectures on 1 Timothy" 28: 279)..

The discomfort and danger of this salvific undertaking are not discounted by its proponents. Erasmus, through the female character of Fabulla, maintains that a woman in labor displays as much, if not more, strength and courage as a soldier in combat since the woman has no choice but to "engage death at close quarters" ("New Mother" 271). Luther recognizes the heroism required of women who bear and give birth by detailing the ailments and fears they must tolerate during both the pregnancy and the delivery ("Lectures on Genesis" 1: 200). Thomas Becon considers the "cares and troubles," "labors and travails," and "pains and sorrows" of pregnant women, and urges husbands to reassure their wives with "most sweet and loving words" (Golden Boke, fol. XClxv v).[28] In general, the clergymen as well as the medical manuals of the period are attentive to the importance of

prenatal care, recommending such things as a good diet, comfortable clothing, moderate exercise, sufficient rest, and cheerfulness.[29]

Just as procreating children was considered vital, so, too, was caring for them in other ways. "[Married people] can do no better work and do nothing more valuable either for God, for Christendom, for all the world, for themselves, and for their children," Luther insists, "than to bring up their children well" ("Estate of Marriage" 44: 12). The early modern ideologues' preoccupation with the education of children is clearly evinced in their promotion of literacy for both men and women and in their seemingly relentless constructions of the family as "a school of faith" (Becon, Golden Boke 649) and a "Seminarie of the Church and Commonwealth" (Perkins 95).[30] Despite their new emphasis on child-rearing, however, the reformers do not indissolubly link progenitorship to the conditions necessary for both the spiritual and the physical well-being of progeny as the medieval Church had. Rather they intensify the pronatal thrust of their ideology by making the procreation of children, as many as possible, a value in itself. They maintain that maternity is the means by which women may contribute not just to their own redemption but also to the overall schema of salvation and that, consequently, the propagation of one child or even a few children is insufficient.[31] Numbers of children and family size in and of themselves thus most assuredly matter now. Luther refers to the model of fertility set by the wives of the Hebrew patriarchs and argues that these "saintly women desire[d] nothing else than the natural fruit of their bodies." Even when they had children, he contends, they were aware "that children are mortal" and thus "always . . . desired more" ("Lectures on Genesis" 5: 355-56). While Luther does allude to practical concerns when he observes that "most married people do not desire offspring . . . and consider it better to live without children, because they are poor and do not have the means with which to support a household," he finds even these people to be "more wicked than even the heathen" for their dereliction of such an essential, divinely-ordained task ("Lectures on Genesis" 5: 363). Here and elsewhere he makes it abundantly clear that women have "an honorable and salutary status in life if [they keep] busy having children" (28: 279). Other reformers point to the large families of the Old Testament, insist that God's grace is undoubtedly at work in parents who have many children, and argue that numerous progeny are required to increase the membership of the commonwealth as well as the elect of the body of

Christ.[32] Clearly, then, in the new version of motherhood, unlike in either the incarnational or the calculative versions, fertility was construed as preeminent.

## 3.4 The Extension of Paternal Preeminence

A closer look at the heightened pronatalism of the early modern period demonstrates that concomitant, contradictory ideological formulations significantly problematize an overly positive assessment of it.[33]

The proponents of companionate marriage, for all their discussion of the partnership of husbands and wives, still assume that women are inferior to men. The nature of the female form itself, according to the advocates of the egalitarian relationship, established gender difference and inequality. To make their case, they revert to the dualist and misogynist interpretation of theological, philosophical, medical, secular, and folk traditions, which separates the spiritual and the physical, denigrates the latter, and aligns men with the superior soul and intellect and women with the inferior body and appetites. Allison P. Coudert maintains that "the sheer quantity and viciousness of the Protestant misogynist satire available is second to none" (73).

The resuscitation of the dualist and misogynist point of view undercuts not only the assertion of marital parity in the companionate ideology of marriage, but also the avowed acceptance of sexuality in the period. William Perkins, for example, betrays an ambivalence about sexuality when he, on the one hand, depicts marital intercourse as "a figure of the conjunction that is betweene [Christ], and the faithfull" and, on the other, declares that "even in wedlocke, excesse in lust is no better then plaine adulterie before God" and advises the woman in particular "to observe that modesty which beseems her towards the man" (113, 116). Luther, too, reveals an ambivalence when he contends that without original sin the obligation to reproduce would have been a delightful undertaking, while with it the duty is forever defiled with a "detestable," "hideous," and "wicked" lust, which corrupts "the desire of the man for the woman, and vice versa" and results in "[s]hame, ignominy, and embarrassment . . . even among married people when they wish to enjoy their legitimate intercourse" ("Lectures on Genesis" 1: 104; "Estate of Marriage" 44: 8). Luther makes the limits to his acceptance of sexuality very clear by staunchly opposing the trend to a more lenient

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view of the purposes for marital intercourse. Unlike the vast majority of reformers in the period, he does not endorse the use of intercourse for any end but procreation, and lambasts those who do not reproduce because they "are devoted to idleness" and "pleasure"; those who, according to him, are "swine, stocks, and logs unworthy of being called men or women; for they despise the blessing of God" ("Lectures on Genesis" 5: 363)--the "blessing," of course, being fertility.

Again, the less restrictive perspective of intercourse coupled with the growing intolerance of birth control may very well have been just as effective as Luther's more traditional, Augustinian position[34] in fostering the increased pregnancy and birth rates of a pronatal agenda. Whatever the effects of the less restrictive perspective, however, we do know that the early modern reformers as a group also strongly encouraged the propagation of numerous children. That they were doing so at the same time they were reestablishing the dualist frame of reference and a dichotomous, asymmetrical construction of gender served to emphasize both women's association with the body and women's difference from man, and, consequently, to make it that much easier to justify women's secondary status, in spite of other proclamations on their part about the spiritual and rational equality of wives and their husbands. As Coudert contends, "women . . . were at the core of the 'other' against which Protestant males defined themselves. Polarization of the sexes was symptomatic of the kind of dualism characterizing early modern thought as a whole and religious thought in particular" (66).

The increasingly polarized view of the sexes facilitated a division of labor based on gender. While the early modern ideologues newly emphasize the importance of parenthood for both men and women, they assign the responsibility of childcare to women. Luther insists that "[women] cannot perform the functions of men, teach, rule, etc.," but nonetheless are "masters" when it comes to the "procreation," "feeding," and "nurturing" of children ("Lectures on Genesis" 1: 203). Becon declares that the mother "ought principally to attend upon the young ones in their infancy; forasmuch as the father is occupied abroad, about the provision for his family" (New Catechism 384). Erasmus's Eutrapelus links women's duty to educate their children directly to women's generative capacity when he cautions Fabulla, "You haven't fulfilled the duty of a childbearer unless you've first formed the delicate little body of your son, then fashioned his equally pliable mind through good education"

("New Mother" 283). Luther biologizes a gendered division of labor even more than Eutrapelus with his remark:

> To me it is often a source of great pleasure and wonderment to see that the entire female body was created for the purpose of nurturing children. How prettily even little girls carry babies on their bosom! As for the mothers themselves, how deftly they move whenever the whimpering baby either has to be quieted or is to be placed into its cradle! Get a man to do the same things, and you will say that a camel is dancing, so clumsily will he do the simplest tasks around the baby! ("Lectures on Genesis" 1: 202)

As Lyndal Roper asserts, Luther assumes that "biology itself dictated different destinies" for men and for women ("Luther" 38). An awareness of Luther's rigorously biologistic perspective of the capabilities of men and women makes it easier to believe that he at one point purportedly quipped: "Men have broad shoulders and narrow hips, and accordingly they possess intelligence. Women have narrow shoulders and broad hips. Women ought to stay at home; the way they were created indicates this, for they have broad hips and a wide fundament to sit upon" ("Table Talk" 54: 8).

The tasks associated with childcare not only are increasingly relegated to women, they also are often referred to in deprecating terms. While Luther ambivalently characterizes them as both "punitive" and "gladsome" ("Lectures on Genesis" 1: 203), Erasmus's Eutrapelus belittles them outright when he asks Fabulla, "[D]o you imagine anyone can put up with all the irksomeness of nursing as a mother can--the filth, the sitting up late, the bawling, the illnesses, the never sufficiently attentive watching?" ("New Mother" 283). Rogers, too, speculates that no one but a mother could "endure [the] clamour, annoyance, clutter, . . . clothing, feeding, dressing and undressing, pecking and cleansing" associated with the care of young children (161). The images employed to describe women's relationship to their newly circumscribed work space are also frequently derogatory, especially when compared with the terms used to characterize men's. Luther, for example, asserts that the woman "sits at home" and "is like a nail driven into the wall," while the man "rules the home and the state, wages wars, defends his possessions, tills the soil, builds, plants, etc." ("Lectures on Genesis" 1: 202).

Other contradictory formulations challenge an unambiguously positive account of the period's intensified pronatalism. Alongside the new praise associated with the propagation of numerous offspring, Gail Kern Paster finds many constructions of pregnancy as a disease, of birth as "a great emptying-out," and of the newborn as "excretory product" (Body Embarrassed 163-197). Moreover, while the spiritual leaders of the time sympathetically attend to the risks and inconveniences of pregnancy, they also forcefully insist that these burdens are due to Eve's transgression (Bullinger Jv; Becon, New Catechism 336; Smith, Sermons 3). In one of his addresses to women, Luther, for example, declares, "Eve's sorrows, which she would not have had if she had not fallen into sin, are to be great, numerous, and also of various kinds . . . particularly at birth and conception" ("Lectures on Genesis" 1: 200). Then again, as Luther so oxymoronically puts it, procreation is a "happy and joyful punishment" ("Lectures on Genesis" 1: 198). Far less paradoxical or ambivalent, however, is his remark: "[I]f [women] bear themselves weary--or ultimately bear themselves out--that does not hurt. Let them bear themselves out. This is the purpose for which they exist" ("Estate of Marriage" 45: 46). In addition, since pregnancy and childbirth traditionally had been a special domain for women, as Adrian Wilson so persuasively demonstrates (68-107), even the sympathetic attention of males in the early modern period may be construed less favorably as an unwelcome incursion into what had traditionally been a women's arena of expertise (Cahn 58-60; Wiesner, "Women's Response" 8-10; Paster, Body Embarrassed 185-90)--particularly in view of the emergent "regulatory mechanisms of shame" surrounding pregnancy, birth, and newborns (Paster, Body Embarrassed 163-197) and the ever more vigilant surveillance of midwives which accompanied the new male attention.[35]

Even in the spiritual domain--despite the assertion of the spiritual equality of men and women, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, and the avowal that bearing children enabled women to contribute to the overall schema of salvation--early modern women were treated as subordinates.[36] While the reformers had initially encouraged women's activism in the period, they never allowed women to be pastors and eventually condemned women even for such activities as preaching in public or leading sectarian groups, because they saw authority in women as a threat to the divinely-ordained patriarchal order and dominance of men. According to the reformers, Adam's

being created first and the father's being referred to first in the fifth commandment "Honor your father and mother," along with Eve's responsibility for the Fall, clearly established woman's need for male guidance and supervision. The subordinate view of women's spirituality held even within marriage. Women who converted from Catholicism but whose husbands did not, as well as women whose husbands repudiated Christianity altogether, were not allowed to leave or to disobey their husbands unless the women's lives were endangered or the women's obedience required them to sin against God. In almost all circumstances, the need for male supremacy superseded both the physical safety and spiritual beliefs of women. William goes so far as to declare, "Tho an husband in regard of evil qualities may carry the image of the devil, yet in regard of his place and office, he beareth the image of God" (275). The duty of wives is not to abandon their husbands or to disrupt the patriarchal order of the household but to change the erroneous beliefs of their husbands, eventually winning them over to the true faith. As Lyndal Roper asserts, "far from endorsing independent spiritual lives for women, the institutionalized Reformation . . . insisted on a vision of women's incorporation within the household under the leadership of their husbands" (Holy Household 2), and as Clarissa W. Atkinson contends, "[o]bedience replaced virginity and poverty as the essential female virtue and road to holiness; a good woman obeyed God and her husband--whose wills, increasingly, were identified" (Oldest Vocation 214; also 195, 215, 234). In fact, the reformers considered male authority so important that they themselves often advised husbands to resort to violence if necessary to exercise and maintain control. Coudert contends, "Protestants took it for granted that if wives failed to be duly submissive, they should be chastised by their husbands" (75). Addressing husbands, William Tyndale asserts, "Thou must bring all under obedience, whether by fair means or foul. Thou must have obedience of thy wife, of thy servants, and of thy subjects; and the other must obey. If they will not obey with love, thou must chide and fight, as far as the law of God and the law of the land will suffer thee" (238-39). With such a blatant endorsement of the use of violence by husbands to ensure the compliance of wives and other subservient household members on the part of an influential clergyman, it is not startling to find out that "[w]ife-beating was so common in sixteenth-century London that civic regulations forbade it after nine in the evening

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because of the noise," or that "[e]ven in cases of extreme battering, Protestant authorities were reluctant to sanction a wife's request for divorce or separation" (Coudert 75).

The secondary status of early modern women's spirituality was also forged as roles and functions formerly divided among husbands, priests, and rulers became consolidated in fathers.[37] Luther considered "the [male] head of the household as being a kind of priest or bishop in the home" (Roper, "Luther" 38). Smith urged the father to "rule like a king and teach like a prophet and pray like a Priest" (Sermons 29). Gouge, who refused the title of priest for himself, asserted the husband should be "as a Priest unto his wife and ought to be her mouth to God when they are together" (236). That God himself was construed in paternal terms also, of course, helped to secure the supremacy of men and the authority of fathers. As R. V. Schnucker in his analysis of the dynamics of the Puritan family observes, "the father was God's representative in the home" ("Puritan Attitudes" 113-14), and as Merry E. Wiesner contends, "stressing God's glory and power, archetypally male qualities, rather than God's accessibility and nurturing, made it more difficult for women to identify with God" ("Luther and Women" 305). And, again, the consolidation of divine and earthly power in husbands and fathers did not just diminish the spiritual status of wives and mothers, it also made them more physically vulnerable. Coudert points out, "Catholic women could at least go to a priest if things got tough at home; but for Protestant women, the priest in a very real sense lived at home" (70).

The reformers' ideology of companionate marriage itself may be construed as a means by which to subjugate women in the period. R. Valerie Lucas argues that the "notion of 'partnership'" in this ideology is merely a rhetorical device to encourage a wife's "voluntary subjection." This concept, she maintains, along with "the claim that obedience to one's husband is part of one's duty to God himself," disguises "the coercive and repressive nature of patriarchy" and makes "male authority and female submission appear as complementary halves of a partnership rather than as power relations of dominance/submission, of master/inferior" (228-34). Valerie Wayne also finds that "[w]hile women [in their demonstration of love] were encouraged to abandon their wills through total union with their husbands, the same degree of abandon was not asked of men: on the contrary, their love required a self-conscious volition, even a seduction, an awareness that by it they might steal their wives' private wills away" (Flower 64-65). Thus, the very emphasis on love in companionate marriage, like the idea

of partnership and the assertion that obeying one's husband was an aspect of one's duty to God, serves both to obscure the lack of parity in the marital relationship and to encourage "women's cooperation in their own appropriation" (Wayne, Flower 68).

## 3.5    The New Motherhood in Relation to Incarnational Motherhood

The incarnational version of the maternal, while informed by dualism and misogyny, subverted both discourses by valorizing precisely what they impugned: the physical and the feminine. It conceptually conflated divine, digestive, and gestative functions, and in practice focused on reproducing bodies by feeding instead of breeding them. The association of the spiritual and the physical, and the masculine and the feminine, in incarnational motherhood facilitated relationships between the divine being and human beings which involved the reversal or subsumption of gender and a mutuality of desire. These connections not only made motherhood valuable and accessible to men, but also enabled holy women to resist the secondary role of wife and progenitor increasingly recommended for them during the period of severe population decline, to establish a spiritual and physical standard for piety which even religious men could not achieve, and to exercise such clout they set the model for lay piety and inspired the universal Feast of Corpus Christi for the Church. The festival itself prompted the development of the Corpus Christi cycles, which further promoted the valuation of a motherhood preoccupied with charitable service rather than with the generation of children, and of a family formation based on shared need instead of on marital or lineal relationships. The emphasis on charity in the incarnational form of the maternal did not undercut the central role played by Mary's procreative capacity so much as an emphasis on the sexual difference which could be based on this female function. In fact, the absence of earthly paternity for Jesus, as well as the attention focused on Jesus's mother, Mary, and on Mary's mother, Anne, and pregnant cousin, Elizabeth, in the incarnational frame of relations, served to highlight the importance of the women's generative power. The lack of an earthly father for Jesus and the significance of the women and their pregnancies also hinted at a maternal genealogy for the incarnated Jesus and for all humankind, and at an expansive, inclusive understanding of "woman" as "human" rather than as merely man's "other" or a sub-group of humanity. This genealogy and understanding themselves

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contributed to the depiction of the body of Christ, the body of the Church, and the body of humanity as female and maternal, with both women and men designated as their constituents. Despite the anxiety or even disgust generated among contemporaries by the beliefs and behaviors of the incarnational form of motherhood--for example, by the thought of God's body in the mouths and guts of eucharistic recipients or by the sight of emaciated women or artisanal actors emulating the agony of Christ as a means of giving birth to salvation--its conceptual conflations, its practical focus on charitable service, and its widespread dissemination and development in the Corpus Christi festivals and plays made it an valued and influential version of the maternal, available to men as well as to women.

The new version of motherhood was far less expansive. Its resuscitation of dualist and misogynist formulations made it harder to conflate the divine and the human and to reverse or subsume gender, and easier to depose Mary and the female saints, to repudiate notions about an inclusive meaning for "woman" and a maternal genealogy for Jesus and humanity, and to depict women's association with the physical as a sign of their inherent inferiority instead of their special ability to relate to and imitate the incarnated Christ. Its demotion or outright prohibition of the single life of service and its strong advocacy of marriage and the procreation of children also significantly reduced women's independence and influence. Whereas the *imitatio Christi* of holy women in the later Middle Ages had inspired both lay men and lay women as well as the all-male clergy, and sometimes even challenged the authority of the church leadership, the piety of women in the early modern period was contained as well as subordinated in marriage, even in the face of egalitarian assertions about the spirituality of men and women and the priesthood of all believers. Moreover, no longer did women have access to the form of contraception which abstinence had afforded. No longer were they able to seek sexual gratification in the food-body of the Eucharist instead of the food-bodies of men. The restriction to earthly husbands eroded the women's resemblance to Jesus who had not required an earthly male for his conception. It also simplified and suppressed their sexuality. While incarnational relationships with Christ engaged women in a "profound interplay" of masculinity and femininity (Petroff, Consolation of the Blessed 66-67, 71, 73-76) and a "mutuality of desire" (Petroff, Body and Soul 61-62), marital relationships cast the women exclusively as female

and tried to supplant women's desires with those of their husbands (Wayne, Flower, esp. 60-68; Lucas 228-34; Cahn, passim).

Neither were women able to form families based on charitable relations rather than conjugal or blood bonds. Now "giving being to a creature with Gods Image" (Gataker 34), not feeding one, was construed as "the performance of God's work and will" ( Luther, "Estate of Marriage" 45: 40), as "the chiefe of God's works" (Gataker 34), or as "[God's] handi-worke" (Niccholes 1). Luther declares, "[I]f a [mother] of a household desires to please and serve God, she should not, as is the custom in the papacy, run here and there to the churches, fast, count prayers, etc. No, she should take care of the domestics, bring up and teach the children, do her work in the kitchen, and the like. If she does these things in faith in the Son of God, . . . she is saintly and blessed" ("Lectures on Genesis" 3: 204). Luther was adamant in his opinion that these duties, along with the "render[ing] of help and obedience to [their] husband[s]," were women's "truly golden and noble works" ("Estate of Marriage" 45: 40). Like Luther, the reformers as a whole characterized women as "domestic missionaries" (Wiesner, "Women's Response" 165) and depicted the home as "the new center of women's religious vocation" (Douglass 292).

While the medieval Church had also considered the bearing and rearing of children an important duty, the reformers of the early modern period departed from the traditional stance by ranking the procreation and instruction of children above all other religious "works." Again, according to Luther, no other occupations--whether going on pilgrimages, building churches, endowing masses, or "whatever [other] good works could be named"--should be given the same priority. Nor, in his estimation, could any other tasks provide a "short[er] road to heaven" ("Estate of Marriage" 44: 12). The propagation and education of offspring were considered the most difficult of religious works, too. Luther maintains that "it is nothing to wear a hood, fast, or undertake other hard works of that sort in comparison with those troubles which family life brings" (1: 60). Atkinson astutely points out that "[t]raditional medieval notions of holiness were definitively overturned when marriage [and the bearing and rearing of children were] identified with godliness and productive work, [and] celibacy with vice and idleness" (Oldest Vocation 215).

Important to note, however, is that the reformers, in their rather seductive deployment of the word "work," which had been associated with so many aspects of the incarnational legacy of motherhood, to promote their version of the maternal, also altered the nature of this "work" by denying women any credit for it. As Schnucker points out, Puritans such as Hooke (fol. D2 r), Perkins (115-16), and Hieron (159) maintained that "the ability to conceive and bear children" was solely due to "God's grace and mercy" ("Elizabethan Birth Control" 663). Just as faith in the early modern period was newly constructed as a gift, dependent on God's grace and not on human effort and merit, so too were fecundity and maternity. However, women were still very much held responsible for any problems they encountered in their pregnancies. While many of the spiritual leaders of the time sympathetically acknowledged the discomforts and dangers accompanying pregnancy, they also blamed the difficulty of labor, the death of a child, or birth defects on women's (or Eve's) foul imaginings, lack of faith, or sinfulness (Crawford, "Sucking Child" 27, 39, 41, 42 and "Construction and Experience of Maternity" 7; Willis 60-63; Paster, Body Embarrassed 181). That women's virtue--their virginity before marriage and their fidelity and fertility after it--was increasingly commodified for the marriage market at the time (Wayne, Flower 11, 51-59; Cahn 142-43) also seriously problematizes an unqualified acceptance of the construction of women's generative capacity as a gift. While the reformers maintained that only men and women who were on an equal standing with each other should marry so their marriage would be based on mutual love rather than on material gain, they used different criteria to determine the status of each sex--wealth for men and virtue for women (Wayne, Flower 3-4, 52-55, 67). These disparate criteria not only expose the contradictory nature of the notion of equality, based as it is in an "antecedent inequality of gender difference" (Wayne, Flower 55), but also point to the designation of women's virtue as a commodity. The reformers might very well have construed women's reproductive capability as a gift and registered a strong disapproval of marriage motivated by wealth rather than by affection, but, as Wayne contends, "[c]ounting a wife's virtues was not entirely unlike counting the money in her dowry" (Flower 11). Whereas in the later Middle Ages holy women had used their virginity to develop a deeply valued, influential form of charity which specifically repudiated both the established wealth of religious and secular elites and the new wealth of emergent capitalists, in the early modern

period the reformers' more widespread appropriation and commodification of women's virtue for marital and generative purposes meant that virginity, too, was reduced to just one more form of the wealth the medieval holy women had once so forcefully denounced. And, of course, the commodification of women's virtue indubitably served as yet another means by which to reinforce male control of women's sexuality. It gave fathers more license to place their daughters under careful surveillance, and husbands more latitude to regulate the activities of their wives (Cahn 162-63).

It is not surprising that the reformers in their development of the new motherhood focused on the husband-wife formation of Adam and Eve in the Old Testament rather than on the mother-son formation of Mary and Jesus in the New Testament, since the shift in focus would have helped to suppress the multiple associations between Jesus and Mary and, thus, to reinstate a dualistic perspective of the spiritual and physical aspects of personhood and a dichotomous and asymmetrical view of the sexes. The absence of maternity, earthly or otherwise, in the creation of Adam would also have been more amenable to the reformist, patriarchal agenda than the absence of earthly paternity in the incarnation of Jesus. After all, the lack of maternity, as Wayne points out, indicates "Adam was conceived apart from, and antecedent to, relation with women" and "his male descendants could trace their lineage back to one who was not of woman born" (Flower 15), whereas the lack of earthly paternity denotes Jesus was not only of woman born, but of woman made, too. And, again, the absence of a flesh-and-blood, male progenitor for Jesus, along with the centrality of the three pregnant women--his mother, Mary, his grandmother, Anne, and his mother's cousin, Elizabeth--hint at a genealogy for Jesus and for all humankind clearly different from the genealogy suggested by the conditions of Adam's motherless creation, and an expansive understanding of "woman" as "human," both of which would have been anathema to the reformers who aimed to restrict the scope of the maternal while extending that of the paternal. In this regard, Erasmus's retort about Mary's being a "maried Virgine" ("An Epistle" 101) as a means of supporting his pro-marriage stance and countering those who try to make the case for virginity is really avoiding most of the contentious issues surrounding the mother-son formation of Mary and Jesus in the New Testament. Mary was not married when she conceived Jesus, and even though she did eventually

wed Joseph, her marriage did not change the circumstances of Jesus's conception: that it had occurred both outside of marriage and without the involvement of an earthly father. Further, even after the marriage, Joseph's position as husband and father was depicted as peripheral.

Eve's being made of a man's rib would also have been more useful to the extension and reinforcement of patriarchal authority than Mary's pregnancy which did not require any part of an earthly male. So, too, would the circumstances of the Fall, especially Eve's pivotal role in it, since they make it easier to differentiate between the sexes, to establish the imperative for male dominance and female subservience, and to insist on women's responsibility to procreate numerous children. The marriage along with the father-dominated family of Adam and Eve, and the many other marriages and large, father-dominated families of the Old Testament, are also more appropriate for the pro-marital, pronatal, patriarchal agenda of the reformers, than are the virginity and post-conception marriage of Mary, the celibacy and single status of Jesus, the marginal position of Joseph, and the one-child Holy Family of the New Testament.

Resistance to the restrictions of the new motherhood, as well as the difficulty of suppressing the expansive legacy of incarnational motherhood, may be why Erasmus tried to dismiss and diminish the legacy by asserting that virginity was suitable only for a "fewe" and "did chieflye belonge unto that time, when it behoved theim chieflye to be voyde of all cares and business of this Worlde" ("An Epistle" 117, 136). It may also be why Luther, at one point, urges women to embrace their new vocation to propagate many children by pointing out that "even Christ . . . wanted to be called the Seed of a woman, not the Seed of a man," while also conceding, "how great would the pride of the men have been if God had willed that Christ should be brought forth by a man!" ("Lectures on Genesis" 1: 256).


3.6     The New Motherhood in Relation to Calculative Motherhood

Calculative motherhood did not construe women's reproductive functions as incompatible with, or even more essential than, their productive activities. Nor did it prompt women to generate children for the salvific sake of generation alone. Rather it encouraged women to carefully coordinate their various productive and reproductive duties and to generate children only when the

livelihood of both progeny and progenitors could be assured. Despite the careful distinction Luther

makes between men's and women's work sites in his promotion of the new ideology of the maternal,

there was no such clear line between "within" and "without" the household, or between the "private"

and "public" domains in the period (Amussen, Ordered Society, passim; Jankowski 31-32; Wiesner,

"Women's Defense" 1-27 and Working Women, passim). The labor of calculative mothers was also

as essential and substantial as men's. These mothers kept ale-houses and inns, participated in a

wide range of craftwork, practiced medicine and midwifery, and regularly bought and sold goods at

the market. Even when "at home" they did not just "sit," as Luther would have us believe ("Lectures

on Genesis" 1: 202). They contributed to the sustenance of their families not only by caring for

children, preparing food, and making clothing, but also through activities such as wet-nursing,

dairying, poultrying, fishing, gardening, ploughing, reaping, and brewing. While it is true that even

calculative mothers were more responsible for childcare and domestic tasks than their male

counterparts, "a sexual division of labour within the family labour force was by no means fully

developed" (Hilton 140). For one thing, as Roper points out, the care of children, especially in the

pre-Reformation period, "was difficult to distinguish from [the] co-ordination of the labour forces of

the household" and thus had yet "to develop its own discourse in civic culture" (Holy Household 42).

In addition, as Stephen Wilson maintains, the calculative mothers were less likely to have been as

"exclusively involved in rearing their children" since the responsibility was typically shared "with other

relatives, neighbors and employees, a reflection of the greater general reliance on networks of kin,

community and patronage" at the time (198). Because in the calculative version of motherhood the

domestic and public spheres of work were intertwined, the productive work of mothers was both

considerable and necessary, and the family income was shared, the belief that wives were subject to

their husbands and mothers to fathers did not in practice lead to the oppression of women. As

Thomas Smith explains, the household was best likened to an aristocracy, not a monarchy, in which

"e[a]ch obeyeth and commaundeth [the] other, and they two togeather rule the house," and "not one

[governs] alwaies: but sometime and in some thing one, and sometime and in some thing another

does beare the rule" (22-23)--suggesting that authority in marriage was determined on the basis of

expertise or skill rather than gender.

The early modern ideologues' formulation of the propagation of offspring as a value in itself and as women's foremost task, and their minimization or outright dismissal of the importance of economic considerations in reproductive practice, directly defied the inherited, calculative approach to motherhood. Their insistence on the centrality of maternity in women's lives made it easier to rationalize, even naturalize, a gendered division of both labor and work space, and thus more difficult for women to negotiate their many responsibilities and, worse yet, to participate at all in growing numbers of productive activities within and especially without the household. And, again, for all their talk of partnership and parity in marriage, the promulgators of the new motherhood conceived of the spousal relationship in very hierarchical terms. Richard Brathwait, for example, likened the family to a "domestic kingdom," and construed the marital relationship as monarchical because in it the husband ruled and the wife yielded (87). Other Puritan clergymen employed similar analogies. The wife was to serve as helper to the husband, Perkins maintained, "[f]or he [was] . . . the prince and chiefe ruler" and "she [was] the associate" (173).

Over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the shift in ideologies about motherhood coincided with economic changes which, though neither sudden nor absolute, and though diversely experienced on the basis of status, occupation, location, and recession or boom, served to hasten the demise of incarnational motherhood, to weaken calculative motherhood, and to encourage the new motherhood. It also coincided with an alteration of the Catholic notion of the witch which heightened opposition to the practice of birth control as well as to the inherited versions of motherhood with which the practice was linked, and, in doing so, helped to enforce--oftentimes at a very physical level--the restricted meaning and domain of the new motherhood.

I will explore early modern women's complicated relationship to the changing economy and to the intensified persecution of witches in some detail, since I believe that an investigation of the real conditions of early modern women's productive and reproductive lives, while often neglected or given short shrift in discussions of the intricacies of the period's competing and often contradictory ideologies, is crucial to a deeper understanding of the ways in which ideological and economic changes informed each other and contributed to the restriction of motherhood. Both the calculative version of motherhood which coordinated reproductive and productive forms of work and the

incarnational version of motherhood which conflated the two kinds of work were clearly in rather stark opposition to the relations of the nascent economy which increasingly fostered the separation of reproductive labor and productive labor and the specialization of women in the former and of men in the latter. An examination of the real conditions of early modern women's productive and reproductive lives is also critical to an appreciation of the ways in which women--especially those who were identified as mothers, of whatever kind--resisted, frequently out of dire necessity, the new ideological and economic imperatives and the diminution of their status and influence.

### 3.7    Economic Changes and the New Motherhood

Due to the on-going, increasingly widespread enclosure of common fields for grazing or for market crops and the trend to hire only those laborers who were needed and only for so long as they were needed as a way of maximizing profit--both of which practices had been initiated during the labor shortage of the fourteenth century--many poor women, along with their husbands, over the course of the early modern period, lost access to the land which had formed the basis for much of their traditional production.[38] They became members of a growing pool of poor people left with only their labor to sell and forced to participate solely as consumers at the market--if, that is, they were able to find work in a job market flooded by the newly landless and to earn enough to pay for basic necessities, the prices of which were rapidly inflating. Women, as members of this expanding stratum of landless laborers, were at a distinct disadvantage when it came to finding work because of the growing tendency at the time to hire men over women, particularly for the jobs with liveable wages. In work which required greater strength and mobility or more specialized training, the preference for men could be justified. However, the preference began to extend even to employment which did not require such brawn, mobility, or skill, to cases where hiring women would actually have been cheaper and to occupations which women had previously dominated. Justices of the Peace also mandated higher wages for men than women and for married as opposed to single men. Reasons other than job requirements thus played a role in the hiring and pay practices of the time. The employment of men, along with the better pay for men than women, especially for married men, helped to reinforce the period's new ideology which insisted that everyone marry, that women

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submit to men, and that women preoccupy themselves with the propagation of offspring rather than with remunerative work. Hiring men was also a means of containing evicted husbandmen who otherwise would likely have been most threatening in terms of tearing down enclosures, stealing, or rioting. Working men, mastered by employers and the responsibility of supporting families, were not only less likely to cause trouble, but also more inclined to adhere to the parameters of the new domestic order deemed appropriate by the authorities, particularly since the mastered men themselves were allotted the position of master in their families in this new order, which must have compensated at least somewhat for the self-sufficiency they had lost with their access to land. That men were often hired in preference to women is not to suggest, of course, that all, or even most, men at the time were employed, especially employed with good pay. The expanding use of enclosures, the growing population, and the skyrocketing inflation made for many who were jobless, men included. And, despite fear of these desperately poor masses, the desire for profit more often than not superseded the desire for order and security on the part of prospective employers, who with greater frequency hired workers only when they were needed and, to make matters worse, paid them lower-than-subsistence wages because of the plentiful supply of labor eager for any income at all. Still, the complex interconnections of the emergent economic relations and the new ideological paradigm in the early modern period particularly undermined women's opportunities to work and provide for their families. Not surprisingly, very low-paying work in domestic quarters instead of in other occupational venues was specifically encouraged for both married and unmarried women in need of employment since such work would keep them enclosed in households headed by male masters.

The transition to a capitalist economy also served to diminish the capacity of urban women to contribute to the provision of their families through craftwork, due to changes in the ways shops were run. To begin, many master craftsmen undertook a multi-faceted approach to secure greater profits. They not only reduced production costs by hiring labor only when needed, occasionally going so far as to seek it outside the town as a means of avoiding the costly regulations, steep rents, and higher wages of the city, they also increased productivity by employing new workers for very specific tasks and by encouraging greater specialization among the craftsmen already working for them. As

well, in the hopes of limiting the supply of their merchandise so that the demand for goods would exceed the availability of goods and enable them to raise the prices, the masters extended the length of apprenticeship terms and hiked the fees required for procuring the status of a master, which made it more difficult and expensive for other craftsmen to set up competitive shops. However, these attempts at limiting supply did not so much reduce the output of craft products as boost the number of skilled laborers. This increase lowered the cost of even the highly capable labor and, thus, again, the overall cost of production, while simultaneously improving productivity--which still, of course, resulted in the higher profits which the masters desired. As the opportunities for journeymen to become masters decreased, the journeymen began to think of themselves as a separate group and to develop an identity of their own, as opposed to being merely masters-in-training. Though the guilds passed new regulations specifically prescribing the hiring of skilled labor, these ordinances were not enough to appease the resentful journeymen who felt more and more threatened by the capitalist machinations of the master craftsmen. Before long, the journeymen formed guilds of their own. Their solidarity gave them more leverage with the masters' guilds, particularly in terms of determining who would work in the masters' shops. To reduce the number of people competing for the available jobs, the journeymen refused to work with women, who were an easy group to single out with the rise of the new ideology which underscored gender difference, advocated female subordination, and designated the bearing and rearing of children as women's primary duty. Stringent limitations began to be placed on the work of maids and female pieceworkers, on the tasks which could be performed by masters' wives and daughters, and on the rights of widows to continue operating shops. Although the restriction of women's employment often worked against the interests of the journeymen themselves, as when the journeymen's own wives and daughters were prevented from earning decent wages and were assigned to the poorly paid tasks of sales or domestic service, such restriction also assured the journeymen of more job opportunities and of a means by which to qualify the masters' authority as well as to avoid ever having to be "mastered" by a mere woman.

Thus, many of the rights and opportunities in craft guilds which urban women, including the wives and daughters of members, had enjoyed in the later Middle Ages were whittled away during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As Amy Louise Erickson observes, "[w]hen labor was

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needed, there was no objection to female craft and trade workers, but when competition was stiff or demand slack, then women were complained about and restricted" (xxxi). Though the numbers had never been high, fewer girls were taken on as apprentices, making it next to impossible for most females to acquire the kind of formal training which was becoming more necessary due to the new guild regulations and the growing competition among skilled workers, especially the journeymen unable to set up their own shops because of other regulations. The diminished opportunity even to work and learn alongside husbands and fathers because of still other ordinances instituted to satisfy the demands of the disgruntled journeymen further impeded women's ability to participate in the skilled production work of the craftshops. Even in fields which the women had traditionally monopolized, the new requirements for training detrimentally affected them. Cities and territories began to pass regulations expressly forbidding the practice of medicine by women lacking the proper training. Though these ordinances did not immediately stop women from practicing or people from seeking the women's care, over the longer term their work in this area was restricted and discredited. As Wiesner points out, "a line was gradually drawn between the skilled and unskilled spheres of labor" (Working Women 191). In the textile crafts and the brewing industry, both of which women had traditionally controlled, women also lost considerable ground. In the field of textiles, for example, they were excluded from the prestigious, well-paying occupations like weaving, and relegated to the tedious, low-paying tasks like spinning.

The constriction of women's work and pay was an aspect of the general trend in the sixteenth century and beyond to a more specialized division of labor throughout society and to an increasingly commercialized mode of production. The shift to specialization was disadvantageous for women not only because they were unable to acquire the necessary training, but also because they bore more of the responsibility for childcare and household chores than men did, and found it increasingly difficult to accommodate the single-minded focus and full-time effort such specialization often demanded to their work at home, especially as their husbands' own readiness for full-time work became dependent upon the women's attention to the domestic tasks. The shift to specialization was also deleterious for women because the new ideology designated their particular "specialty" to be the propagation and education of children, which further perpetuated and reinforced the gendered division of labor and of

work space and eroded women's opportunities for other kinds of employment and their ability to integrate their reproductive and productive contributions. The shift to commercialization--that is, to production for profit, not merely for use--also contributed to women's losses. As long as dairying, poultrying, gardening, brewing, and other home industries had remained essentially subsistent forms of production, generating only small surpluses if any, rural housewives had retained control of them. However, once these home industries were expanded and commercialized for the sake of more substantial profits, the husbands took them over. The same trend prevailed in urban centers, where women lost both the opportunity to practice crafts and their traditional dominance in certain craft occupations as production became more profit-oriented.

Changes in laws and customs demonstrate that the very estimation of women's productive abilities and activities deteriorated during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which further undermined women's ability, even women's willingness in certain circumstances, to carefully coordinate and execute their productive and reproductive tasks in a manner consistent with the practice of the calculative mode of motherhood. Traditionally, for example, guilds legally acknowledged the skills wives acquired through practicing a craft with their husbands by including the names of the wives or the words *et uxore* in apprenticeship agreements which suggested "they were partners" in the employment and training of the apprentices (Prior 104), and by granting the wives "freedom" or full membership in the guild when their husbands died. The contributions of women to the economy were also recognized in the custom of allowing women to retain control over any surplus they generated from their dairying, brewing, or other home-based industry. Moreover, though a distinction was made between "within" the home and "without" it, and women were typically placed "within," women's traditional involvement in the public sphere--whether buying and selling goods at the market, dining and drinking in taverns themselves often owned and staffed by women, or participation at feasts, christenings, and other public events--was accepted, even expected, by most people. For one thing, women were generally regarded as being more shrewd at marketing than men since, as the primary producers and purchasers of basic household goods such as cheese, butter, eggs, and vegetables, which had a more extended season than the crops characteristic of the men's domain of production, women were typically involved more closely and regularly in the local

markets than their menfolk and consequently more able to exercise clout than the men in the determination of the "market values" of the products most essential to household maintenance. In addition, precisely because the women were so routinely engaged in both economic and social life, their so-called "gossip" was considered "an important source of political, economic, and social intelligence" and, thus, a key element in the formation of public opinion (Cahn 39).

Not only did laws and customs traditionally accord worth to women's essential and substantial role in the economy, so too did the sixteenth-century writers on husbandry by urging single men, who were evaluating whether they had sufficient resources to marry, to consider the contributions of the prospective wives. Very straightforward in his attribution of value to women's productive capacity, Thomas Tusser in Points of Husbandry declares that "[t]o thrive, [men] must wive" and that "[h]ousewives must husband, as well as the man, or farewell thy husbandry, do what thou can." Tusser also pays tribute to women's economic importance as well as their expertise in a particularly specific way when he directs men to follow their wives' advice in the selection of cattle (40-41). That husbandry manuals of the sixteenth century such as Tusser's often acknowledge the complexity of many household undertakings but rarely offer specific instruction in the skills required for these tasks suggests the housewives responsible for much of this work already did it with a degree of proficiency which would make additional direction superfluous. Sir Anthony FitzHerbert in his Book of Husbandry states outright that he "needeth not" instruct housewives how to perform the necessary chores "for they be wise enough" (96). Such a candid appreciation of women's productive capabilities became increasingly rare over the course of the early modern period.

Apprentice agreements began to omit either the wife's name or the words *et uxore*, and guild regulations began to distinguish between the members of the guild who had earned their "freedom" through apprenticeship and the widows who had acquired it through marriage. The "freedom" of the widow began to be treated as a capital good to be sold, leased, or passed on through remarriage, rather than as a license for the widow to continue in the business on her own. Both legal trends suggest that men were increasingly skeptical about the ability of women simply to take over their husbands' enterprises--or, at the least, reluctant to let them do so in the face of irate journeymen. Seventeenth-century ideologues also more rigorously insisted upon the difference between "within"

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and "without," and the necessity of women to stay "within" as a means of protecting their chastity or even their reputation for chastity--a distinction and a requirement which were central to the ideologues' appropriation and commodification of women's virtue and reproductive capacity for marriage. Women, as a result, began to lose not only the surplus generated by home industries such as dairying, poultrying, gardening, and brewing, and, eventually, the very work itself with the commercialization of these industries, but also the "liberties" which they had traditionally exercised beyond the home to fulfill their household obligations, and which had enabled them to exert considerable influence on public opinion and the prices of household goods.

A significant shift in the appreciation and domain of women's work is additionally registered in seventeenth-century commentary about the household economy. Whereas some sixteenth-century writers had been willing to unabashedly acknowledge the importance and expertise of women's productive contributions, seventeenth-century writers not only discourage such contributions but also demean them when they are made. For example, Perkins contends that it is the duty of the husband, the *"paterfamilias"* or father of the family, "to provide for his family meat, drink and clothing," and that the wife's duty is merely to disburse the husband's provisions (164, 167, 173-75). William Whately also insists that the husband must provide for his wife and not expect her to contribute to the household economy, particularly in view of the incapacitating effects of pregnancy and her time-consuming need to attend to children. "Is she not sickly, is she not weak?" Whately asks. "Has she not breeding and bearing and looking to thy children to employ her? . . . Must she over and above earn her own living?" (Bride-Bush 180). Whately's rhetorical questions blatantly belie the fact that for centuries women had effectively coordinated their reproductive and productive duties as well as generated at least half of the total household income. As Cahn observes, "the very vehemence with which seventeenth-century men proclaimed the husband to be the sole support of and only real contributor to the family economy contrasts with the silence of sixteenth-century men on this same point, [and] suggests the novelty of such claims" (164).

Not only the designation of the husband as the sole provider for the family but also the construction of the idleness of the housewife as a sign of a family's high (even if not aristocratic) standing served to devalue and erode the productive role of women. While the wives of up-and-

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coming prospering farmers, craftsmen, merchants, and professionals did not lose their means of production, they did find their work increasingly frowned upon because it detracted from the reputations of their industrious husbands whose wives, while encouraged to breed and care for children, were otherwise expected to lead lives of leisure. As Mary Prior notes, "in prosperity the success of the husband was symbolized by the idleness of the wife and daughters; for the husband's power was shown most clearly where all was done by servants paid from his purse" (96). Before long, in this climate of growing disparagement, some of the wealthy women ceased to produce at all. Enclosed and idle in the home, they became increasingly dedicated to the tasks associated specifically with their reproductive capacity--the "truly golden and noble works" (Luther, "Estate of Marriage" 45: 40) valorized in the ideology of the new motherhood--and increasingly dependent on their husbands, whose own standing in the world outside the home was heightened by their wives' fertility and diminished productivity.

The growing tendency to construct the sphere "without" the home as productive and masculine and the space "within" it as unproductive and feminine made even the relatively new phenomenon of the exaltation of labor, which had benefitted working women along with working men in the late medieval period, a factor in the degradation of housewives in particular in the succeeding era. While working men continued to revel in the acknowledgement of their achievements, the growing disapproval of women participating at all in productive activities made it ever more difficult for women to attain such appreciation for their efforts or, again, even to work at all. Worse yet, in a social environment where new value was being attributed to effort and accomplishment, some of the well-to-do women who had withdrawn from, or been forced out of, production for the sake of their own and their family's reputation and status were sometimes criticized precisely for their employment of servants and their lack of productive labor--for their "idleness," that is. Not surprisingly, the available evidence suggests that the view of "wives as economic burdens rather than helpmeets" (Cahn 164) first took hold in the upper and middle strata of society. However, even the large majority of women who continued to perform essential, substantial work for the maintenance of their households in the period found their labor and its fruits degraded on the basis of the emergent model of the idle, incapable housewife. Clearly, the gender-inflected treatment of productive contributions

in the pronatal ideology of the time thrust women into the unfair and difficult predicament of being both "damned" if they worked and "damned" if they didn't.

The erosion and devaluation of the productive activities of one generation of well-to-do women compounded the losses of the next. Many of the seventeenth-century books on housewifery, for example, not only provide detailed instructions for household tasks which women had once been consulted about, but also suggest decorative projects for filling hours otherwise spent idle. In addition, instead of producing goods or supervising the labor producing them, seventeenth-century women of the upper stratum more frequently purchased or sold goods. They purchased manufactured goods only the well-off could afford--their conspicuous consumption, like their idleness, a means by which to enhance the reputation of their husbands and the standing of their families. While the poor women who came to the markets primarily as consumers and sellers of labor power were particularly disadvantaged since they were at the mercy of both those who set prices and those who did the hiring, the general diminution and disparagement of women's productive role served to undermine the consumer power of all women in the market, including those with resources, since as a group women had less and less expertise and esteem on the basis of which to determine and to bargain for fair prices. The wealthy women who sent servants to do the purchasing, of course, even further reduced women's collective market influence as well as their ability to participate in the information network and to affect public opinion. Not surprisingly, before long, clerics such as William Gouge were urging husbands not to name their wives as executors of their estates precisely because the women lacked the worldly experience for such an undertaking (97, 406).

Overall, the economic changes of the early modern period--though neither abrupt nor total, and though undeniably varied and unevenly felt according to status, occupation, location, and recession or boom--significantly constricted women's opportunities for employment both without and within their households, and undermined, absolutely as well as relative to that of men, the position and estimation of women in the sphere of production. This erosion and devaluation of women's productive work coupled with the new idealization and specialization of their reproductive labor served to weaken the inherited, calculative form of motherhood which very much depended upon a

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careful coordination of employment and procreation. Though the vast majority of early modern women did indeed continue to contribute to the economic sustenance of their families and to participate in family enterprises, the range of occupations open to them in the seventeenth century was much narrower than it had been in the sixteenth century and particularly in the later Middle Ages. In addition, the many women competing for positions in a limited number of occupations, along with the preferential hiring of men and women's lack of access to formal training as apprentices and, eventually, even as wives or daughters due to the demands of resentful journeymen, meant women were paid extremely low wages for whatever employment they were able to secure. As Wiesner asserts, "'women's work' came increasingly to be defined as that which required little training or initial capital, could be done in spare moments and was done by men only as a side occupation, carried low status, and was informally organized and badly paid" (Working Women 92). The growing separation of home and workplace also contributed to the decline of calculative motherhood by making it harder for women to integrate domestic tasks with other employment, and easier for employers to divide and disarm a growing number of potentially dangerous laborers on the basis of gender and for ideologues to insist on the need for marriage, the subordination of women, the incompatibility of productive and reproductive functions, the ineptitude of women in the productive domain, and, last but not least, the primacy of the procreation vocation for women. That productive work increasingly became identified with cash payment made the economic climate even worse for women, since their poorly paid employment beyond the home was seen as having little market value and their unpaid labor at home, no market value at all. "Although virtually every society has had a sexual division of labor, with men's labor generally valued higher than women's," Wiesner contends, "the Renaissance brought a much sharper division and a harsher devaluation of women's labor" ("Spinsters and Seamstresses" 205). In general, the typically higher wages of men yet once more reinforced the notion that men were naturally predisposed to be the providers and leaders of families and communities, and women, the breeders of them.

However, important to recognize in any examination of motherhood in relation to the economic changes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is that those changes which encouraged--at times, even enforced--the acceptance of the new motherhood at the expense of the

calculative form of the maternal inherited from the Middle Ages, contributed to growth in both the

relative and the real numbers of the poor, which meant that most women's productive contributions

to the sustenance of their households were required more than ever. This need countered instead of

reinforced the pronatal turn and made the practice of calculative motherhood more rather than less

essential. In poor families, as Susan Dwyer Amussen observes, "no one was allowed leisure"

(Ordered Society 94).

The evidence also shows that calculative mothers clearly struggled to maintain the traditional

scope of their activities. They resisted the notion of female subservience advocated in sermons and

conduct books.[39] After all, to function effectively, especially in the marketplace, required that they be

assertive rather than modest (Amussen, Ordered Society 119-23). They also contested the

increasingly sharp division between "within" and "without," opposed the efforts to enclose them within

the household, and defended their public role and their right and need to work (Wiesner, "Women's

Defense" 1-27 and Working Women 194, 196, 197-98; Prior 104). The need to work and, thus, to

practice the calculative form of motherhood was especially pronounced in the case of single or

"masterless" women--of whom there were significant and growing numbers.[40] The predicament of

these women and of the indigent in general was exacerbated all the more by the on-going

renunciation of "works-righteousness" and the emergence of a new attitude toward the poor.

Whereas in the incarnational frame of reference the poor had been strongly identified with

the suffering Christ, in the new ideology they tended to be denigrated or even demonized--regarded

both as clearly separate from the elect of God and as inherently disruptive to the proper social order

(Amussen, Ordered Society, esp. 25, 165, 170-73, 175; Roper, Holy Household 57; Jankowski 43).

Many of them, despite their desperate plight, were considered unworthy of charitable care, so much

so that, over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the incarnational tradition of

"indiscriminate charity" was eventually repudiated in favor of a "selective charity" (Cahn 160).[41]

Even this limited form of charitable care, however, continued to lose prestige as good works came to

be considered less important to salvation and construed more in secular than in devotional terms

(Wiesner, Working Women 187-88; Roper Holy Household 60-61, 237-38; Jankowski 40-41). For

example, the new assumption that assisting some members of the poor would be a worthwhile

investment whereas assisting others would not indicates "the language of capitalist investment" was being applied to the work of charity (Roper, Holy Household 60-61). Again, in the later Middle Ages, all people, including the lowliest, had been considered deserving or worthy enough to consume and to be transformed by the Eucharist and, thus, to count as members in the body of Christ and to receive charitable care if necessary. Moreover, the avowed purpose of charitable work had been to save bodies and souls. Now, some of the poor were judged to be more worthy than others, members of the body of Christ were construed as members of an elect group, and profit or what could be economically gained, more than either physical or spiritual salvation, was increasingly designated as the end of charitable work just as it increasingly was for many forms of remunerative employment in the period. Thus, whereas in the late medieval period incarnational mothers had specifically denounced the acquisitiveness and profiteering of emergent capitalists, in the early modern period the work of the charity-providers itself was more and more subsumed by the very capitalist economic practices and priorities which care-givers had once so energetically censured.

The shift to a secularized perspective of charity can also be traced in the changing status of the women who did the actual work. Incarnational mothers who had voluntarily served God and the Church by catering to the needs of the impoverished in small houses came to be viewed as low-wage, city employees when they were paid to cook, clean, and nurse the destitute in large hospitals. Wiesner asserts that while the nature of the care itself did not change much, "the Protestant deemphasis on good works may have changed [the women's] conception of the value of their work, particularly given their minimal salaries and abysmal working conditions" ("Women's Response" 155). As Roper puts it, charitable work was transformed from a valued "work of religious devotion" to "a low-status employment" (Holy Household 237). The women's conception of their charitable service may have been altered not just because the tradition of indiscriminate, "devotional charity" was replaced by a selective, "civic charity" (Roper, Holy Household 60), but because the management and direction of it--both in and out of the new institutional venues--was taken over by men (Cahn 160; Roper, Holy Household 60). The distinction between "within" and "without" and the erosion and devaluation of women's remunerative employment enabled clerics such as Gouge to claim that the same lack of work experience which made women inept executors also made them

incapable of judicious charitable distribution. While conceding women might know "what may in the house be best spared," he insists husbands do the actual giving since men's knowledge of the world beyond the household provided them with the necessary qualifications to determine who did and who did not deserve charitable assistance. For the same reasons, he encourages even unmarried women to make their donations not to the poor directly but to the institutions headed by men who would know best how to disburse them (265, 404)--even though the actual tasks of the charitable care in these same institutions continued to be performed primarily by women.

The secularization and institutionalization of charitable labor contributed to the demotion and discouragement of charitable acts in general (Wiesner, Working Women 155, 187-88; Roper, Holy Household 237-38; Jankowski 40-41). Villagers no longer felt as compelled to care for the spiritual and physical well-being of those who were struggling in their communities. Inhabitants of the burgeoning cities were inclined to feel even less concern about the dire straits of those suffering in their midst, most of whom were unknown to them personally. Vagrancy and begging--"behaviour which was a natural consequence of the lot of the poor"--were made illegal in the period (Amussen, Ordered Society 170).

In sum, despite the many ideological and economic forces conspiring to promote and establish the new motherhood, or women's new specialization in reproductive duties, the rise in poverty and the increasingly disparaging view both of the poor and of charitable service produced by the very same forces necessitated and, thus, helped to maintain, at least in the short term, the calculative version of motherhood, or women's careful coordination of reproductive responsibilities and of remunerative employment.


## 3.8     Witchcraft and the Competing Versions of Motherhood

Perhaps it was the very resilience of calculative motherhood, as well as the dire need for incarnational motherhood despite its loss of prestige, that prompted the early modern pronatalists to modify the Catholic perspective on the witch in such a way as to promote opposition not just to the practice of birth control but to the very versions of motherhood with which the practice was linked.

Unlike Sprenger and Kramer who juxtapose witches to nuns and virgins and who maintain that women are prone to *maleficium* because of their sexual nature, or the weakness of their flesh, Luther juxtaposes witches to the new ideal of the submissive, obedient, dependent wife and mother, and contends that women are especially susceptible to witchcraft due to their mental nature, or the weakness of their will.[42] In doing so, he formulates a view of witchcraft consistent with his prohibition of religious roles for single women, his promarital stance, and his acceptance of sexuality for the generation of children in the patriarchal family, the primary institution of state and church. Luther's characterization of witches, subsequently adopted by other Protestants as well as by humanists, is decidedly more virulent than Sprenger and Kramer's, since his depiction of them points to unmarried women as well as to married women who did not conform to the new ideal of the subservient wife and mother. Deborah Willis finds that the reformers, particularly in gentry-level and aristocratic texts, construe the witch as an unruly woman, whose weak will, shifting loyalties, and unstable affections make her a threat to patriarchal structures, whether religious, state, or familial. The witch also exhibits "masculine traits" which "recall that period of life when women dominate the lives of their male children, when the gender hierarchy of the adult world is inverted." This recollection, Willis contends, could only have been encouraged by the female rule of Mary I, Elizabeth I, and Mary Queen of Scots (esp. 83-158). Of course, it could also have been informed by the incarnational inheritance of the mother-son formation of Mary and Jesus, which depicts Mary as a powerful intercessor and which intimately links the maternal to the divine--a legacy the reformers were determined to suppress.

The Protestants' juxtaposition of witches to the new ideal of wife and mother not only demonizes both "masterless" women and "masterly" wives and mothers, but also specifically promotes suspicion of barren women, or women who helped to produce barrenness in others, either by practicing birth control or *maleficium*, which the Catholics also condemned, or by diverting young women "from holy, heterosexual matrimony" (Coudert 80), which is a specifically Protestant contribution to the depiction of witchcraft, one again consistent with the strong pronatal orientation of the reformers' ideology--more particularly, their repudiation of unmarried roles, even if religious, for women, as well as the form of contraception abstinence could provide for the single women who

chose to practice it. Many of the women actually accused of witchcraft were masterless (whether never married, widowed, or living alone) and/or past child-bearing age. However, even when they did not fit into these categories, they tended to be charged with crimes directly related to sexuality and reproductive capacity, such as adultery, abortion, infanticide, or illegitimacy. Many historians find extensive evidence in the period for the stricter surveillance and discipline of "masterless" women and midwives and for the increasing condemnation and criminalization of birth control practices and sexual and procreative activities outside of marriage.[43] And, again, the growth of literacy and the new technology of print played an important role in the promotion of the pronatalists' agenda. "Unlike the theological treatises on witchcraft written in Latin, such as the Malleus," Sigrid Brauner asserts, "most humanist and Protestant texts on the issue were printed in the vernacular and were intended for a lay audience" (41). Moreover, while "images of treacherous women originated long before the Reformation," Allison P. Coudert argues that "with printing they were more widely disseminated than ever before" (63, 73).

Whereas most recent historians agree the witch-hunts were instigated principally by the preeminent, male intellectuals of the time, whether Catholic, Protestant, or humanist,[44] other scholars insist the perspective of a top-down, male-driven witch-craze requires qualification, since many of the actual accusers were not just village folk but women.[45] In addition, while high-ranking ideologues may indeed have developed views of the witch consistent with the pronatal orientation of the elite of their time, the constructions of witchcraft found in the accusations of the early modern village women, struggling with the practical exigencies of day-to-day life and the growing threats to their family's very survival, exhibit vexed and often contradictory relationships to both the new and the old notions of the maternal.

Many accusations were provoked by an incident where one woman refused another woman's request for charity and the woman who denied the appeal typically experienced misfortune, interpreted this misfortune as retaliation on the part of her needy neighbor, and tried to assuage the guilt induced by both her refusal and her misfortune by identifying the neighbor as a witch, unworthy of charity and responsible for the calamity which had ensued (Macfarlane, esp. 150-55, 192-98; Thomas, esp. 548-69). While both the accused's expectation of charity and the accuser's experience

of guilt are informed by the tradition of incarnational motherhood, the accuser's characterization of the needy neighbor as unworthy of charitable assistance is influenced by the new ideology of the reformers.

The village women's very constructions of the witch are contradictory. At times the witch is depicted as an antireproductive force, an "antimother" (Purkiss 417), who disrupts the birthing process or induces a miscarriage or a child's death, who is often older and barren, and who, while incapable of producing milk to nurture human children, has an extra nipple, the "witch's teat" with which she feeds blood to her familiars or "imps," the demonic creatures who inhabit the bodies of small animals and help her to perform magical feats of destruction. At face value, the tendency to construe the witch as an antireproductive force when a pregnancy or child was lost would seem to be aligned quite clearly with the new notion of motherhood which strongly emphasized women's capacity to bear and give birth. As Coudert observes, "the premium placed on fecundity as the touchstone of a woman's worth" may have prompted both fertile women and menopausal women to seek out scapegoats--the former due to "cases of miscarriage and infant death" and the latter due to "the loss of a highly valued physical capability" (87). Depicting the witch as barren and as having an extra "teat," which produces blood to feed demonic imps, who in turn help her to wreak havoc in the families and households of other women, would also seem to coincide with the new pronatalism by juxtaposing the witch to the fertile woman and by subverting the incarnational construction of Christ's side wound blood as breast food for a salvific birth (Willis 55; Paster, Body Embarrassed 251). However, in the situation where the deceased child was not just desired but needed by the family-- that is, needed for his/her labor--which, as Diane Purkiss reminds us, was often the case (417), the relationship of the "antimother" witch to the contest over the scope and impact of motherhood in the period would be significantly altered. In such instances, the accusation of the mother whose child had died would be affiliated less with the new motherhood than with the inherited, calculative version of the maternal, which carefully evaluated the propagation of offspring in terms of household requirements and which typically depended upon the labor of children in addition to that of adults for the sustenance of the family.

That the witch is also portrayed as both a transgressor of household boundaries and an "antihousewife" (Purkiss 414) in the accusations of village women complicates the relationship of witchcraft to the competing versions of motherhood even more. Representing the witch as a transgressor of household boundaries at a time when the border between "within" and "without" was being construed as less permeable, women's enclosed state was being identified as an important sign of a family's higher status, and women's chastity was being more widely appropriated and commodified for the marriage market, reinforced the ideology of the new motherhood at the expense of the two inherited forms of the maternal, both of which required/expected women to work beyond the domain of the household. However, depicting the witch as an "antihousewife" in witchcraft accusations--that is, as one who interfered with productive tasks--provided a means for calculative mothers to resist both the territorial restrictions associated with the new motherhood and the attempts of the pronatalists to sever the link between women's reproductive and productive duties, to designate reproduction as the primary task of women and remunerative employment as the responsibility of husbands and fathers, and to construct the sphere "within" the home as unproductive. The greater incidence of poverty and the heightened competition for jobs, even very low-paying jobs, in the period, both of which gravely threatened the ability of calculative mothers to sustain their households, could only have encouraged these struggling mothers to characterize the witch as an "antihousewife" or antiproductive force. As Purkiss observes, "When the butter failed to churn, or the milk to skim, the result might be starvation" (413).

Overall, the complexity of the witchcraft accusations of village women not only complicates the perspective of the witch-craze as male-driven and top-down, but also the line of feminist criticism which characterizes the women accusers as simply the pawns of patriarchy, and the witches as merely the victims of it.[46] Still, that the depictions of witches by village women lack the greater consistency of the elitist representations and that neither the accusers nor the accused may be reductively construed does not mean that the witch-craze at the village level was not linked to the male elite's robust promotion of the new motherhood. If anything, the struggle over the meaning and domain of motherhood precipitated by the new pronatal ideology, along with the economic changes of the time, fuelled the anxiety of village women and the growth and intensity of their witchcraft

accusations, even if their characterizations of the witch lacked the coherence of those of their high-ranking, male counterparts.

That the connection between the village women's witchcraft accusations and motherhood was so strong and that the effects of their accusations were more contradictory than consistent may be why the construction of the witch was revised in gentry-level and aristocratic texts so that the witch was no longer depicted as a dominating mother who controlled childlike, demonic imps, but as the servant or "drudge" of a fully-grown, adult, male devil, who ruled both the witch and her imps and who was a rival of both God and the fathers who ruled on earth in God's name (Willis, esp. 15-16, 83-58, 242-43; Coudert 69). The reformulation of the "mother-child dyad" featured in the village-level constructions as a "perverse but patriarchal family" in the discourse of the elites (Willis 15) implies that "even evil, threatening, and castrating women, were ultimately controlled by men" (Coudert 69). Still, the ongoing preoccupation with the maternal may be discerned in what Gail Kern Paster characterizes as the "almost obsessive attention" paid to the witch's teat by the authorities (Body Embarrassed 247). This extra breast or "devil's mark," which provided food to reward the witch's imps for their services, was typically a key piece of evidence at the witch trials--one which was "confronted and allowed to become a target for aggression" in the public arena of the courtroom (Willis 64-65).[46]


## 3.9    Nursing Practices and the Competing Versions of Motherhood

Not only did the breasts and food of witches' bodies receive special attention in the early modern period. So, too, did the breasts and food of women's bodies in general. The significance of the humanists and reformers' insistence on maternal nursing and denunciation of wet-nursing in relation to the struggle over motherhood at the time warrants particular scrutiny.

The humanists and reformers forcefully argue that Nature itself dictates that birth mothers should nurse their own children. Erasmus's Eutrapelus subdues the clever Fabulla who has hired a wet-nurse when he points out, "[T]here's no class of living creatures that does not nurse its own young," and assures her, "When you see on your breasts those two little swollen fountains, so to speak, flowing with milk of their own accord, believe that Nature is reminding you of your duty" ("New

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Mother" 273, 282). Henry Smith illustrates how unnatural a mother's relinquishing her infant to another woman is by likening it to a cuckoo who lays eggs only to have its little ones hatched and fed by a sparrow (Sermons 33). Many other Puritans insist that the milk of a child's own mother is much more "natural" for the child than the milk of a stranger.[47] Not surprisingly, the pronatalists as a group just as adamantly contend that maternal nursing is the will of God (Cleaver and Dod P4; Perkins 135; Gouge 508, 509, 510). William Whately forcefully implies as much when he asks, "[T]o what purpose hath God given [women] breasts? . . . surely not to milk out on the ground, not to draw it back by medicines and devices, but to give it to the new inhabitant of the world" (Prototypes 140).

As with pregnancy, the advocates of the new motherhood attend to the obstacles birth mothers encounter in their efforts to nurse their own infants. Erasmus's Eutrapelus emphasizes the importance of the proper "choice and regulation of food and drink, movement, sleep, baths, oilings, [and] clothing" ("New Mother" 278), and Gouge reassures mothers who worry about the effects of infected breasts or bloody nipples (516-17). However, these men do not consider most of the inconveniences and complaints typically associated with nursing to be valid (Schnucker, "Puritans and Pregnancy" 646-48, 651; Paster, Body Embarrassed 203; and Cahn 104-105). They acknowledge that the absence from work which breastfeeding necessitates sometimes makes employing a wet-nurse more economical, especially for the women of the emerging middle stratum who practice a trade alongside their husbands, but do not consider this factor a worthy excuse for shirking the important duty of nourishing one's own newborn. As Gouge puts it, "other business must give place to this and this must not be left for any other business" (515). The promulgators of the new motherhood also scoff at the mothers who hire wet-nurses due to sore breasts and an avowed inability to tolerate the pain of nursing, arguing that if these mothers are able to withstand the discomforts of gestation and labor, they should be capable of nursing, too. Again according to Gouge, the proper attitude can make all the difference. "If women would with cheerfulness set themselves to perform this duty," he asserts, "much of the supposed pain and pains would be lessened" (514). The credibility of the typically well-to-do mothers who hire wet-nurses due to the problem of inadequate milk is disputed as well. "But whose breasts have this perpetuall drought?" Cleaver and Dod ask. "Forsooth, it is like the gout, no beggars may have it, but Citizens or

Gentlewomen" (P5). Even when the inability to lactate is genuine, mothers are often held accountable "because they will not use means (for means there are) to get and increase milk" (Gouge 516ff.). The Puritans are particularly intolerant of women's complaints that nursing impairs beauty or restricts freedom. They argue that nursing promotes health and vigor rather than diminishes attractiveness, and that women who place their ability to circulate and socialize before their responsibility to nourish their own children show they love themselves too much and God and their children too little (Gouge 515, 518). In the new version of the maternal, then, as Paster contends, "a women's ability to suckle her baby was promoted as . . . an important extension of her ability to bear children" (Body Embarrassed 198), and only the death of the mother, a threat to the life of either the mother or the child, or a sincere inability to lactate on the part of the mother was considered a valid excuse not to do so. However, that the ideologues of the time also were becoming less accepting of the traditional practice of prolonged suckling (Fildes, Breasts, Bottles, and Babies 368; Paster, Body Embarrassed 223) suggests that the new male interest in maternal breastfeeding is related not solely to the well-being of children or their mothers. After all, these promulgators of the new motherhood certainly set no such limits on the breeding of babies.

The pronatalists' denunciation of wet-nursing is as strident as their promotion of maternal nursing. Erasmus's Eutrapelus questions Fabulla, "[I]sn't it a kind of exposure to hand over the tender infant, still red from its mother, drawing breath from its mother, crying for its mother's care--a sound said to move even wild beasts--to a woman who perhaps has neither good health nor good morals and who, finally, may be much more concerned about a bit of money than about a whole baby?" He tabulates the "serious diseases and defects" which infants have suffered due to nurses. He warns Fabulla that the "characters" of children, too, "are injured by the nature of the milk just as in fruits or plants the moisture of the soil changes the quality of what it nourishes" and insists that Fabulla will "see the nurse" in her son's disobedience one day. He also argues that nursing one's own child strengthens the bond of affection between the mother and the child, while "banish[ing] [the child] to a hired nurse" as if to "a sheep or goat" may result in the child's "natural affection being divided . . . between two mothers" and in the birth mother's "devotion to him [cooling] in turn" ("New

Mother" 273, 278, 282, 283). The reformers after Erasmus continue to obsessively dwell on the physical, moral, and emotional contamination of infants at the breasts of wet-nurses.[48]

That more is at stake in the unqualified condemnation of wet-nurses than the well-being of children and their birth mothers is clearly shown by the recent work of Dorothy McLaren and other historians.[49] Their scholarship challenges a number of the assertions of the early modern pronatalists by demonstrating that the health of the low-status women who were wet-nurses was generally much better than that of their high-status counterparts--partly because of their non-exclusive nursing--and that the less-intensive wet-nursing industry in England did not result in a high rate of infant disease or death. Their work also finds that most of the women of the laboring stratum who were wet-nurses were also maternal nurses, which makes the early modern pronatalists' vilification of wet-nurses even more problematic, since simultaneously denouncing wet-nursing and praising maternal nursing when both were often practiced by the same women produces contrary effects, some of which would likely have discouraged maternal nursing on the part of well-to-do women. While the new insistence that all women could and should nurse their own children makes all women's bodies seem more alike, the new condemnation of the wet-nurses who also were maternal nurses serves to heighten the perception of breastfeeding as "a possibly demeaning form of labor" and of breast milk as "a commercial product," to accentuate the difference between the bodies of affluent women and the bodies of working women, and, as a result, to cast breastfeeding in an even more unfavorable light for women who could afford to do otherwise (Paster, Body Embarrassed, esp. 167, 198, 200, 215). So what else might be at stake in the new male preoccupation with nursing practices?

The tendency might be to minimize the significance of wet-nursing to the conflict over motherhood in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries precisely because the calculative mothers in the majority typically nursed their own children, which meant that the hiring of wet-nurses was a practice largely limited to the well-to-do women in the minority. One fact to consider in this regard is that the high-status women in the minority had greater numbers of children than the low-status women in the majority which made wet-nursing more prevalent than it would have been had the size of the well-to-do families corresponded more closely with the size of the poorer families. Still, even

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with the discrepancy in family sizes, the practice of wet-nursing would have been significantly more limited than the practice of maternal nursing. That the practice of wet-nursing was so limited, however, generates even more compelling questions about its relationship to the dissension over the meaning and domain of motherhood in the period. First of all, why did the humanists and reformers newly focus on the minority of well-to-do women who did not maternally nurse their children? The usual supposition is that the choice *not* to maternally nurse was one only the high-status women had. Paster, for example, assumes that because women of the laboring stratum "nursed their own babies out of custom and economic necessity . . . , they were serving food, satisfying nature, rather than exercising choice" (Body Embarrassed 199). Yet, as the growing body of evidence on nursing practices, family size, the knowledge and use of herbal forms of birth control, etc., generated by revisionist historians such as Dorothy McLaren, John M. Riddle, Gunnar Heinsohn, and Otto Steiger, has persuasively demonstrated, these mothers, like their wealthier counterparts, did indeed deliberate and make choices when it came to their reproductive functions.[50] Books on husbandry which began to emerge with the advent of print technology, the spread of literacy, and the use of the vernacular in written works provide additional support for the decision-making process of the calculative mothers. Thomas Tusser, for instance, in his Points of Husbandry, composed in the mid-sixteenth century and reprinted numerous times, construes reproduction as merely one of the many responsibilities of housewives, to be taken on only after careful consideration of material resources and consequences. He asserts that if children could not be "profitable" to the household economy, they were "better . . . unborn" (162). Tusser also evaluates maternal breastfeeding in terms of economics. Whereas he urges women to breastfeed their infants as a means of more likely ensuring their survival, he argues that there are situations which warrant the employment of a wet-nurse. The care of one infant, he insists, should not interfere with the needs of the entire household (33).[51] While working women's decisions were based on factors which differed from those of affluent women--that is, on the economic effects another child or nursling would have on the viability of the household as opposed to the social or aesthetic effects of pregnancy or of maternal nursing--the working women did deliberate and make choices.[52] The decision-making process of poorer women also differed from that of wealthy women because the poorer women's need to consider material

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resources and consequences and to carefully manage the reproductive and productive aspects of their lives made the ability to prevent or terminate pregnancies much more critical to their capacity to make choices than it would have been to the ability of the high-status women to do so. Paster herself recognizes that for women of the laboring stratum, wet-nursing, for example, was a source of "empowerment" because it provided a means not just to generate household income but to control family size (Body Embarrassed 201, 252). However, by also denying that low-status women exercised choice in their approach to reproductive responsibilities, Paster aligns herself with the traditional tendency to ignore key features of the calculative form of motherhood practiced by the working women of the time and, as a result, to make this version of the maternal far less visible and significant to the debate about motherhood in the period--again, in spite of the fact that the women who practiced it made up the vast majority of the period's mothers. The limited view of this form of motherhood on the part of Paster and other scholars may very well be related to the still widespread assumption that pre-industrial women had little or no access to other forms of birth control which were much more reliable than breastfeeding, and that therefore they were simply unable to exercise much choice when it came to their reproductive functions during the fertile years of their lives.

In any case, if the choice to maternally nurse was one both high-status and low-status women had, why the new focus on the choice of the minority of women? Further, why not praise the working women in the majority for their maternal nursing instead of vilifying them for their wet-nursing? Why not acknowledge rather than deny the vigor which maternal nursing promoted in these women? Why not highlight the vitality and low mortality rate of their children? Why instead condemn the practice of wet-nursing which had been going on for millennia?

To begin, wet-nursing made breast milk a "fungible resource" (Paster, Body Embarrassed 199). As Paster astutely observes, "even though the breast was closely related to the womb by the physiological theory of sympathy and consent of parts, its characteristic function to give milk could be assimilated into a competitive marketplace economy, as the womb's in giving birth could not" (Body Embarrassed 199). Its characteristic function also, of course, could be readily incorporated into the work of charity. The fungibility of breast milk, whether in the service of remunerative or of charitable ends, clearly posed a significant obstacle to the enclosure of motherhood in the home,

which helps explain why the humanists and reformers worked so hard to revise the relationship between the capacity of women's wombs and the capacity of women's breasts. Gouge, for example, attempts to dispel the difference between the two functions with his facetious suggestion that birth mothers who hire wet-nurses because they find nursing too painful should also hire other women to endure the discomforts of pregnancy (514). By aligning the function of women's breasts and the function of their wombs while also recommending what was impossible at the time, he rather cleverly alludes to, and thus helps to establish, a new understanding of women's bodies which makes the capacity of their breasts as "in-fungible" as the capacity of their wombs. The early modern pronatalists who disparagingly characterize birth mothers that choose not to nurse their infants as "half mothers" (Erasmus, "New Mother" 283; Cleaver and Dod P5; Gouge 518) also attempt to forge a stronger bond between the two generative capabilities of women's bodies and to promote an alternative view of breastfeeding and breast milk with their insinuation that "whole mothers" both procreate and nurse their children. Eutrapelus, in Erasmus's "New Mother" colloquy, further emphasizes the connection and minimizes the difference between the breeding and feeding functions when he proclaims, "The better part of childbearing is the nursing of the tender baby" ("New Mother" 282). How crucial maternal nursing is to the notion of the new--who is also the whole --mother enclosed within the household is made all the more obvious with Eutrapelus's assertion that the nursing of one's own child is not just a "part" of the work of motherhood, but the "better part." Eutrapelus's intense rhetoric also speaks volumes when he declares, "one who . . . rejects what she produced hasn't even borne a child; that's aborting rather than bearing" (Erasmus, "New Mother" 282-83). Because to abort means not even to bear, never mind to breastfeed, a child, the mother who refuses to nurse is now depicted as one who rejects not merely half, but all, of her maternal duties.

That wet-nursing made breast milk fungible was not the only problem it posed for the ideology of the new motherhood. Perhaps worse yet from the pronatalists' point of view was that the fungibility of breast milk which wet-nursing established contributed to the validation of both "blood mothers" and "milk mothers"[53]--whether or not they happened to be one and the same person--and, in doing so, made motherhood itself fungible. A newborn could have a blood and milk mother, a

blood mother and a (separate) milk mother, or a blood mother and more than one milk mother, as, for example, in the situation where birth mothers who initially were forced due to dire circumstances to relinquish their newborns to wet-nurses later reclaimed the children in the capacity of wet-nurse themselves. Even Erasmus's friend, Thomas More, recognizes mothers other than birth mothers in Utopia when he states that, in the event the birth mother cannot nurse her child due to death or disease, "women who can do the service offer themselves with the greatest readiness since everybody praises this kind of pity and since the child who is thus fostered looks on his nurse as his natural mother" (143). There was good reason, then, for the ideologues who wanted to consolidate and contain motherhood to be concerned about a traditional practice which facilitated an understanding of motherhood as a mobile designation, one that could be transferred from one woman to another or to several others, that could be conferred on the basis of either the function of the womb or the function of the breast or both, and that was an integral aspect of the two inherited modes of the maternal. The construction of breast milk as transmuted womb blood in the period's medical discourses surely contributed to this fungible understanding of motherhood and to the validation of the motherhood of wet-nurses, especially since both foods--the blood which fed the child within, and the milk which fed the child without--served to sustain the child, even if the blood and milk were not from the same woman. That the fungibility of the maternal additionally enabled the development of double or multiple maternal alliances for wet-nursed children also indubitably interfered with the pronatalists' agenda for a consolidated, contained motherhood.

That the practice of wet-nursing made motherhood itself fungible is registered in a very negative way in the humanists and reformers' forceful denunciation of both the wet-nurses and the influence they exerted upon the infants for whom they were hired to feed. The promulgators of the new motherhood warned birth mothers that their children's bodies and characters were transformed by the breast milk of the wet-nurses in such a way as to more closely resemble the defective bodies and characters of the wet-nurses than the wholesome ones of the birth mothers, and that the emotional bond between the children and their birth mothers was weakened, even replaced, by the affection between the children and their wet-nurses through the process of breastfeeding. Of course, the recognition that the consumption of food produced by the mother's body could effect multiple

changes extended well beyond the domain of calculative mothers' wet-nursing and was not always deployed to provoke solely disgust and fear. The legacy of incarnational motherhood depicted the divine body as maternal and edible, and the eucharistic recipients who embraced the incarnational understanding of Christ saw themselves as both physically and spiritually transformed when they ingested the food of his body. Through their bellies' bearing of the body of God who simultaneously bore them, they were able to conceive and give birth to their own salvation and, in doing so, become one with God. Holy women, especially of the late medieval period, extended this understanding in their *imitatio Christi* by construing their own suffering bodies as divine, maternal, and edible, by offering their own bodies as redemptive food for others, and by consuming Christ's suffering body and the excretions of other suffering bodies to effect the salvific transformation of themselves and others and to unite both physically and spiritually with the Savior.

The non-exclusive, prolonged breastfeeding typically practiced by calculative mothers constituted a particularly intractable form of resistance to the new motherhood promoted by the humanists and reformers not only because it made breast milk and motherhood fungible but also because it gave calculative mothers, who made up the vast majority of women, considerable control over their fertility[54]--a kind of control which perhaps became more important as the use of herbal forms of birth control became increasingly suspect over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[55] This measure of control enabled these women to plan pregnancies on the basis of available material resources and employment opportunities for themselves, their husbands (if they were married), and of other family members (including children). It also allowed them to coordinate their reproductive and productive household contributions. Whereas sometimes the women withdrew from other kinds of employment to nurse their children, at other times they were able to use their breastfeeding capacity to serve both reproductive and productive outcomes by nursing their children while continuing to contribute to the economic sustenance of their households through the remunerative wet-nursing of others' children (McLaren, "Marital Fertility," passim; Crawford, "Construction and Experience of Maternity" 8; Fildes, Breasts, Bottles, and Babies 159-63). This ability to plan pregnancies, to negotiate reproductive and productive responsibilities, and to make money did not fit with the new ideal of motherhood. Paster points out, "To the degree that effective

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contraception through suckling necessarily implies planning, self-management, and purpose, it may have symbolized female self-sufficiency in the socially crucial arena of fertility and reproduction" (Body Embarrassed 252). It signified female self-sufficiency in the critical arena of production as well, because the women were able to earn income--sometimes quite substantial income.[58] Moreover, because women were the sole producers of breast milk at a time when there were no good alternatives to the milk for the sustenance of newborns, this form of remunerative employment, unlike so many other home industries in the early modern period, could not be taken over by men with the shift to specialization and commercialization. Paster argues that wet-nursing also fostered an autonomous status for calculative mothers in the erotic domain since "prolonged suckling and the extension of the nursing dyad to include a succession of nurse-children" provided the women with "a reliable source of physical pleasure, obtainable apart from or even despite a male presence" (Body Embarrassed 252).

A comparable multi-faceted autonomy had been realized by the incarnational mothers of the later Middle Ages. While these mothers had usually controlled their fertility through abstinence rather than through either prolonged, non-exclusive breastfeeding or the consumption of herbal potions, their ability to control the generative capacity of their wombs, their understanding of their bodies as food and of feeding as an alternative form of reproduction, their achievement of economic independence through hard manual labor and an extremely austere lifestyle, and their sexual relationships with a complexly-gendered Christ rather than with heterosexual, earthly men, had served to generate self-sufficiency for them in reproductive, productive, and erotic domains.

Overall, examining the fungibility and self-sufficiency which the understanding of women's bodies as food made possible in both of the inherited versions of the maternal produces a far more complicated and less favorable view of the early modern pronatalists' insistence on maternal nursing and repudiation of wet-nursing than has typically been assumed by scholars. The humanists and reformers purport to be concerned about the physical and moral well-being of the young and the emotional bond between mother and child. Perhaps to a degree they were. However, their very preoccupation with maternal nursing in view of the facts that the majority of women in the period already did nurse their own children, that wet-nursed children generally did well, and that nursing

could be a fairly effective mode of contraception demonstrates that more is at stake in their promotion of the new motherhood than either the welfare or propagation of children. My contention is that they wanted to consolidate the blood mother and the milk mother--or the breeding and feeding forms of reproduction--in one woman, specifically because such a "two-in-one" version of the maternal made it that much easier to designate the generation and education of children as women's primary, divine, full-time vocation, to diminish the physical, economic, and social independence and influence of women, and to enclose motherhood within the patriarchal household.

They could not point to calculative mothers as examples to inspire well-to-do birth mothers to nurse their infants--even though the calculative mothers made up the vast majority of women and typically nursed their own children, and even though both the calculative mothers and their children generally fared better due to the longer intergestic intervals this maternal nursing promoted--because the calculative mothers often also nursed the children of others to earn income and to prevent conception and because the wet-nursing itself made the well-to-do parents too dependent upon the calculative mothers and gave the calculative mothers too much opportunity to affect the well-to-do children. The reformers also rarely pointed to the example set by Mary, despite the fact that depictions of Mary's nursing of Jesus had provided such a celebrated and well-known model of maternal nursing in the later Middle Ages, because the late medieval depictions of the mother-son relationship of Mary and Jesus had greatly contributed to the beliefs and behaviors of incarnational motherhood which the reformers were trying hard to suppress, and because the representations of the mother and the son of God often clearly aligned them both with calculative mothers. Mary nursed Jesus as well as offered her breasts or Jesus himself as food for others. Jesus, too, was construed as a mother who offered the food of his body to anyone--including the most lowly--who wanted to consume it. The association of the incarnational and calculative mothers with the mother and the son of God emphasized the commonality of food, the humility of both Jesus and his family, the accessibility of the divine, and the capability of even the destitute to be salvifically transformed. It also again validated feeding bodies as a form of reproduction. The close affiliation of both inherited versions of the maternal with Mary and Jesus proved intolerable for the reformers who were trying to establish the elect of the body of Christ as a select group and to encourage the propagation

of numerous offspring. Not surprisingly, then, "the image of the nursing Virgin waned in popularity" over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Warner 203) despite the concurrent rise of a forceful imperative for maternal nursing.

Nursing could not be eliminated altogether since there was no good alternative to breast milk for the nourishment of newborns. Wet-nursing also could not be fully done away with since there were circumstances--for example, the death or illness of the birth mother--under which a consolidation of the blood mother and the milk mother was impossible. However, the relationship between breeding and feeding, or between the function of the breast and the function of the womb, could be altered to make breast milk a less fungible resource. To make the capacity of the breast as "in-fungible" as the capacity of the womb, the humanists and reformers formulated a new understanding of the female body which separated the food of women's bodies from both the charitable work of incarnational motherhood and the remunerative labor of calculative motherhood, and linked it solely with the reproductive function. Women's breastfeeding only their own blood children would serve to arrest the fluidity or exchanges among bodies and mothers which wet-nursing enabled.

Despite the new imperative for maternal nursing and the new denunciation of wet-nursing, the degree to both were practiced did not change much during sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[57] I do not think, however, that this lack of practical change undermines the significance of both practices to the ideological struggle over motherhood in the period. For one thing, there are many possible and very compelling reasons for this lack of practical change, including the contradictory effects produced by the pronatalists' simultaneous praise of maternal nursing and condemnation of wet-nursing, the greater need for income, and the greater need for the contraceptive effects of breastfeeding. For another, examining these practices in relation to both the inherited versions of motherhood and to the new version of motherhood demonstrates just how much was at stake in the understanding of the capacity of the breast, the capacity of the womb, and the connection between the two.

### 3.10    The Diminution of Motherhood by Early Modern Pronatalists and (Post)modern Scholars

The early modern pronatalist Henry Smith asserts that "Mariage is called *Matri*monie" because it "signifieth mothers" or "maketh them mothers, which were virgins before," and because it is "the seminarie of the world, without with all things should be in vaine, for want of men to use them" (Sermons 5, my emphasis).  The implications of the multi-faceted ideology of Smith and the other pronatalists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for the history of motherhood cannot be overstated.  While, again, the critical tendency has been to see many, if not all, of the features of their version of motherhood as a boon for women in general and for mothers in particular, my investigation demonstrates that their new ideas and emphases (including even the new imperative for maternal nursing)--along with the widespread economic changes, the witch-craze, and the radical alterations produced by iconoclasm, suppression of the Corpus Christi plays, and print technology-- significantly weakened the incarnational and calculative forms of motherhood inherited from the Middle Ages and, in doing so, greatly contributed to the diminution of the meaning, value, and influence of the maternal and to the extension of the theological, familial, economic, and political preeminence of the paternal over the course of the early modern period.[58]  Their new ideas and emphases also indisputably helped "to replenish church and commonwealth" (Cahn 128)--to supply "Christians for the churches, workers for the marketplace, and citizens for the state" (Atkinson, Oldest Vocation 234).

The more complicated, less favorable view of the pronatalists' insistence on maternal nursing in particular sheds considerable light on our contemporary biases about medieval and early modern motherhood.  Our tendency to assume that the humanists and reformers' promotion of maternal nursing could only have been a favorable development for mothers and children has made it easy to minimize or to overlook altogether its larger significance in relation to the struggle over motherhood in the period.

Many commentators still rely on the view of the Ariès's school that maternal love was associated with the well-to-to women who chose to nurse their own children rather than with the laboring women.  Such presumed lack of affection on the part of low-status maternal nurses and the wet-nurses--who were typically the same people--is not supported by the investigations of revisionist

historians. Their work seriously challenges the tendency to separate affection from necessity as well as the related inclination to make a clear distinction between maternal nursing and wet-nursing, prevalent in orthodox discussions of the period's nursing practices. These historians also contend that because breastfeeding is conducive to emotional bonding--something which the reformers in the period themselves acknowledged[59] and which is still acknowledged today--makes it difficult either to automatically associate an abundance of affection with high-status maternal nurses and a deficit of it with their low-status counterparts, or to attribute sentiment to maternal nurses but not to wet-nurses. As Crawford asserts, some women "were deeply attached to the babies [they wet-nursed] and retained a life-long interest in their welfare" ("Construction and Experience of Maternity" 8 and "Sucking Child" 32-34, 36).

The distinction between the two kinds of nursing is especially insupportable in the situation where both forms of nursing were practiced by the same woman, which was often the case. Dorothy McLaren has shown that "prolonged and non-exclusive breastfeeding was customary and woven into the English economy and society during the pre-industrial period, and was a basic part of the reproductive pattern for the majority of women" ("Marital Fertility" 23). Even if the wet-nurse was not concurrently nursing her own child--for example, in the case where she lived in the same household as the birth mother whose child she was hired to feed--it is likely that she had nursed her own child before the contract to nurse the other woman's infant had been negotiated. That wet-nurses were often maternal nurses also clearly challenges the assertion that breast milk was completely commodified, particularly if one again considers the fact that the mothers who maternally nursed their children at the time made up the majority of mothers. Besides, breast milk could also be a charitable product. And the inherited charitable or incarnational motherhood, which understood women's bodies as food and feeding itself as a valid, valuable form of reproduction, was unquestionably affiliated with a great degree of affection.

In a variety of ways, then, the clear distinction between well-to-do maternal nurses and poorer maternal nurses and between maternal nursing and wet-nursing, which often informs the scholarship on pre- and early modern mothers in general and the practice of wet-nursing in particular, may be disputed. So, too, may the thesis that maternal affection came from above rather

than below.  Finally, on the basis of my examination of the struggle over motherhood in the early modern period, I would contend that it is not so much a lack of affection in the calculative form of motherhood as the lack of economic consideration in the new notion of motherhood which should warrant our close attention.

# CHAPTER IV
# MURDER AS BIRTH IN <u>MACBETH</u>

I

In the last several decades, many critics of William Shakespeare's <u>Macbeth</u> have examined the ambiguities produced by the play and by the history which informs the play.[1] Their analyses of the instability and questionable legitimacy of the patrilineal system, the inconsistency and duplicity of the characters, the eerie pattern of repetition and resemblance, and the pervasive violence in the play and its historical sources forcefully contest the recuperative construction of <u>Macbeth</u> as a coherent, relatively simplistic narrative, which explores the triumph of good over evil and pays tribute to James I's lineage and theories of political patriarchalism and royal absolutism.[2]

The most insightful investigations of motherhood in <u>Macbeth</u> have been carried out by psychoanalytic feminists, who assert that the diminution and repudiation of mothers in the play clearly signify in the complex formation of male subjectivity and patriarchy.[3] Janet Adelman, the most influential of the psychoanalytic critics, examines the malevolent maternity of the witches and Lady Macbeth and the ambiguous view of masculinity in the play in relation to the ambivalent male fantasies about maternal power and the development of male identity, and argues that the ending of the play enacts an escape from the female and the achievement of an all-male order ("'Born of Woman'" 90-121). Deborah Willis complicates the psychoanalytic interpretation of <u>Macbeth</u> by contending that not just the mother's but the father's world in the play "proves to be [a] site for malevolent nurture," since the patriarchal order customarily fosters rivalry among its sons--that is, "encourages the 'vaulting ambition' it must also contain" and "slights those whom it rewards" (209-37).

My reading of <u>Macbeth</u> will further illuminate the play's ambiguities as well as its treatment of motherhood by considering them in relation to the changing scope and leverage of the maternal in early modern culture. More specifically, it will demonstrate that the play: (1) explores the anxieties and risks produced by Elizabeth I's and James I's appropriations and alterations of the inherited and new ideologies of motherhood; (2) employs Scottish history in such a way as to draw attention to these anxieties and risks; (3) shifts from constructions of the maternal which are associated more

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with Elizabeth and with incarnational and calculative mothers, to constructions of the maternal which are aligned more with James and with new mothers; and (4) suggests that this shift in the approach to the maternal increases rather than decreases the potential for violence. I want to begin my analysis by examining Elizabeth I's and James I's adaptations of the available ideologies of motherhood and identifying the insecurities and dangers which their adaptations generated.

## II

Historians have extensively examined Elizabeth I's calculated employment of multi-faceted, ambiguous, and often contradictory self-representations to establish and maintain her political power and to palliate the tensions generated by her anomalous position as a woman ruler, her ambivalence about and resistance to marriage, and her failure to produce an heir to succeed her.[4] She portrayed herself variably as a bride/wife to England, a mother to her people, a cousin to the nobility, a sister to foreign princes, a stalwart king or queen, a powerful prince, a vulnerable woman, a poor maid, a virgin, and a (wet) nurse. In one of the multiple "fictional families" she constructed (Orlin, "Fictional Families" 85), she even depicted herself as a firstborn son, perhaps as a means of both displacing the troublesome history of her status as a daughter of Henry VIII and "embod[ying] her own succession" (Marcus 143).

Particular critical attention has been paid to Elizabeth's strategic appropriation of the many features of the suppressed Marian cult in her construction of herself as the Virgin Mother of her people, since this appropriation helped to redirect the intense devotion once centered on the mother of God to Elizabeth and, in doing so, to foster the growth of an Elizabethan cult and ease the transition from Catholicism to Protestantism in the country.[5] Recently, Carole Levin has explored how Elizabeth also worked to attract the pious affections of her subjects by continuing to perform charitable practices associated with the son of God and with the *imitatio Christi* of medieval holy women and of monarchs who preceded her (Elizabeth I, esp. 10-38). One practice, a part of the Easter vigil, and included in the church service for centuries, involved washing the feet of the poor on Maundy Thursday as Christ had washed the feet of his disciples after their last meal together. In Elizabeth's variant of this ritual, she washed the feet of poor women, the number of whom

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corresponded to her age, and then presented each woman with food, wine, shoes, cloth for a dress, the aprons of her gentlewomen, and "a small white purse containing the same number of pense as [her] age" (Levin, Elizabeth I 33-34). Another practice which Elizabeth performed throughout her reign, and which again alluded to capabilities associated with Christ and with sovereigns and saints who came before Elizabeth, involved the touching of people "to cure [them] of the disease, scrofula, known as the king's evil" (Levin, Elizabeth I 16). The replacement of the figure of the crucified Christ on the rood-screen in churches with the royal coat of arms, and the proliferation of depictions of Elizabeth--in paintings, woodcuts, miniatures to be worn on clothing, sculpture, and, perhaps most particularly, in John Foxe's popular and readily available Book of Martyrs[6]--even in the face of anti-Catholic and iconoclastic sentiments and activities, also helped Elizabeth to redirect the residual feelings affiliated with traditional forms of piety to herself.

Elizabeth made skillful use of the doctrine of the king's two bodies as well, in the self-images she constructed and disseminated.[7] This doctrine, a secular adaptation of the medieval ecclesiastical formulation of the duplex body of Christ or the church, described the king as having both a physical body, descended from royal blood and subject to death, infirmity, age, etc., and a mystical or political body, the eternal body of the realm or the state itself.[8] Most critics assert that Elizabeth's gendering of her physical monarchical body as female and of her political monarchical body as male was a way of making the "two bodies" doctrine work to her advantage, since it allowed Elizabeth to deemphasize and even disparage her femaleness and, thus, to assuage the apprehension produced by her anomalous and contradictory status as a female ruler. Philippa Berry, however, insightfully points out not only that the Latin terms for the church (ecclesia) and the state (respublica) are gendered feminine, but also that the bodies of both the church and the state had traditionally been depicted as feminine when priests or kings employed the marriage trope to represent their relationship to the bodies. Elizabeth's female gender, therefore, may well have been a source for some of the strength of her forty-five-year reign rather than merely a cause for its instability, Berry contends, since the female gender of the bodies of both church and state enabled "Elizabeth to be more closely identified with [these bodies] than any male Renaissance monarch, Catholic or Protestant, [could be]" (67). I would add that the dependency of the monarchical political

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body on the reproduction of actual physical bodies for its continuance may also have promoted its

strong identification with Elizabeth since her physical body would have been perceived as capable of

being engaged in the requisite reproductive process in a much more central way than a male

monarch's physical body. As Louis Montrose observes, "[t]hat seminal and menstrual fluids are in

some way related to generation and that people have both a father and a mother are . . . hardly

novel notions," but for early modern people "they still remained *merely* notions"--that is, "[w]hile

biological maternity was readily apparent, biological paternity was a cultural construct for which

ocular proof was unattainable." Montrose also notes that Elizabeth at times specifically directed

attention to the procreative capacities of her body by displaying her belly and her breasts ("Shaping

Fantasies" 66-67, 76). Important to keep in mind as well, of course, is that Elizabeth depicted her

political body as female on some occasions and as male on others, which indicates that she

employed gender in a much more flexible and ambiguous manner than a fixed construction of the

body as either solely masculine or solely feminine would permit.

I also want to add to the understanding of Elizabeth I's complex stratagems by suggesting

that the many self-images which she constructed and disseminated, including the representations

affiliated with the doctrine of the king's two bodies, were greatly influenced and sustained by the vast

legacy of incarnational motherhood and by the calculative version of motherhood which informed this

legacy. After all, incarnational motherhood specifically validated the physical, the feminine, and the

maternal by according an important stature and intercessory role to the Virgin Mother of God and by

depicting the church, humanity, and Christ himself in physical, feminine, and maternal terms. It had

enabled women to repudiate marriage and to function independently of men, whether fathers or

husbands; facilitated the construction of intimate, eroticized images and relationships which involved

the reversal or subsumption of gender; highlighted the importance of women's generative power

without mandating that they propagate children; and recognized the form of reproduction which

charitable works, or the physical sustenance and restoration of bodies, accomplished. It had given

women extensive control over their sexuality and fertility and considerable religious, social, and

economic clout in their families and communities. In sum, then, though subjected to considerable

vilification by reformers in the early modern period, the incarnational legacy proved to be a valuable

ideological resource (albeit a paradoxical one in view of Elizabeth's Protestantism) for Elizabeth's self-representations. It helped her to effectively manage her position as a female monarch and to generate support among her people, most of whom--due to the erratic course dictated by the changing policies of the English monarchs, including Elizabeth--were likely religious hybrids of sorts, still as much influenced by the old as by the new beliefs and behaviors.

The influential, affective incarnational maternal models of Mary, Jesus, and the late medieval holy women were also closely aligned with the calculative mothers in the majority, who regularly used the food produced by their bodies to nourish and to restore the bodies of others and who, as well, due to their knowledge and practice of birth control and their substantial contributions to the sustenance of their households, were able to control the functions of their own bodies and to exert significant influence in the domestic and the public arenas of their lives. The association of the calculative mothers in the majority with the once-powerful incarnational legacy as well as the centuries-old traditional leverage affiliated with the calculative version of motherhood suggest that Elizabeth may very well have had more in common with the majority of women than many critics have typically assumed she did. She may also have been more indebted to both the ideological and the practical strength of their model of motherhood than most scholars have allowed.

Certainly, in her self-constructions Elizabeth is much more easily aligned with the incarnational and the calculative forms of motherhood than with the new version of motherhood. The new motherhood resuscitated dualist and misogynist formulations, which made it harder to conflate the divine and the human and to reverse or subsume gender, and easier to demote the Virgin Mary and the female saints, to assert all women's secondary status, and to insist on marriage and the procreation of children. It renounced the practice of birth control and separated women's reproductive functions from both charitable and remunerative kinds of work, which diminished the independence and influence of women while extending the theological, familial, economic, and political preeminence of men.

Still important to acknowledge--despite the fact that the new version of motherhood being promulgated in the period was far less suitable for Elizabeth's careful negotiation of the contradictions produced by her female rule than were the two inherited versions of the maternal--is

that Elizabeth's negotiations for marriage were on-going and, as Susan Doran has demonstrated in her recent work, probably more serious than many historians have made them out to be.  Marriage for Elizabeth, however, would likely have qualified her authority, perhaps significantly.  As John King asserts, "[a]lthough the law of inheritance made her an exception to the rule of masculine supremacy in her public capacity as queen, husbands were the legal head of families" (37).  The multiple marriages of Elizabeth's father and the fate of her mother and most of her father's other wives surely must have heightened Elizabeth's sensitivity to such a concern and, thus, made her more cautious in the manipulation of her presumptive marriageability.  Moreover, the fact that all women were increasingly being subordinated in marriage, even in the face of egalitarian proclamations about the spirituality and rationality of men and women, and that paternal power was clearly on the rise in both domestic and public spheres during the period of her reign, could only have exacerbated Elizabeth's trepidation about the effects of marriage on her monarchical authority and her status as a female ruler.

Yet marriage remained the only legitimate means by which to produce the greatly desired and much needed heir to the throne.  Whereas Elizabeth's manipulation of the features of the legacy of incarnational motherhood, and the long-standing tradition of calculative motherhood which informed it, in many respects helped her to establish and maintain her position, her strategic appropriations and self-fashioning also generated considerable anxiety and increasing instability specifically because they did not in the end result in a child to succeed her.  Montrose asserts, "Elizabeth's parliaments and counselors urged her to marry and produce an heir.  There was a deeply felt and loudly voiced need to insure a legitimate succession, upon which the welfare of the whole people depended" ("Shaping Fantasies" 81).  "[E]ven among the Queen's most adoring subjects," Leah S. Marcus contends, "[t]he longing for a male successor to Elizabeth was . . . intense" (142).  Elizabeth might very well have construed her people as her children or herself as her own firstborn son as a means of diverting attention from, or easing her subjects' consternation about, her lack of progeny.  However, neither one of these fanciful and sometimes useful constructions generated the actual heir required to ensure a peaceful succession after her death.  Levin contends that the vicious rumors about Elizabeth's pregnancies, illegitimate children, and infanticidal practices,

which circulated for much of her reign, "reflect another level of the fear over the succession and the antagonism toward a queen who refused to provide for her people's future" ("Images of Elizabeth I" 103-105). Thus, despite Elizabeth's adroit employment of the incarnational inheritance, the form of motherhood this legacy validated and encouraged ultimately proved inadequate for her purposes.

Elizabeth's adaptation of the incarnational paradigm for a hereditary system of secular power also lent itself to another kind of dangerous instability. At the heart of incarnationalism was the conflation of the birth and the murder of Christ. Whereas such a conflation of birth and murder had for centuries meaningfully and safely served the salvific enterprise of Christians, it, in relation to a monarch at the head of a hereditary system of secular power, could be conducive to the conquest and murder of that monarch and, perhaps worse yet, to a legitimation of this violent form of succession. For one thing, history already gave abundant testimony for such an alternative means of acquiring monarchical authority. Matters are made worse by the fact that royal authority had typically been founded through force and violence--a fact which early modern political thinkers uneasily acknowledged.[9] As David Scott Kastan puts it, a monarch, if "not a usurper [was] . . . at [the] least a usurper's heir" (171). The clear distinction between lawful monarchs and usurping tyrants thus simply could not be sustained on the basis of history, which was filled with examples of "the successful legitimation of usurped authority" (Kastan 171). Further, in a situation where the monarch had borne no heir and where the insecurity and anxiety about who would succeed the monarch was intensifying, the adaptation of the incarnational legacy with its conflation of birth and murder for a hereditary system of secular power would tend to make that system all the more susceptible to an effort to attain the monarch's authority by means of force and violence. And, indeed, an attempt to seize Elizabeth's power was made by the Earl of Essex as Elizabeth's period of rule was near its end, a rebellion which Levin contends may be fruitfully understood "as a touchstone for the problems and fears" generated over the course of Elizabeth's reign (Elizabeth I 150).

III

James I, in his depictions of himself and his royal power, drew less on the inherited ideologies of motherhood and more on the new ideology of motherhood than Elizabeth I had. The

power associated with women and mothers in both of the inherited ideologies did not concur with James I's patriarchal view of monarchical rule. Aspects of the incarnational inheritance in particular-- such as the absence of earthly paternity, the suggestion of a maternal genealogy for Christ, and the conception of the body of the church or of Christ as a mother's body which women as well as men partook of and made up--were clearly at odds with James's theories of political and divine paternalism. Much more suited to his masculinist formulations was the theological, familial, economic, and political preeminence of husbands and fathers being encouraged by the ideology of the new motherhood in the period. The popular analogy between the patriarchal household and the patriarchal state in the new ideology proved especially useful to James. In fact, many scholars contend that James could not have developed his theories of political patriarchalism and of royal absolutism as fully as he did without the new familial model for the state, since this model enabled him to construe his monarchical authority in familial terms which coincided with his masculinist views.[10] "[A]s the Father of his fatherly duty is bound to care for the nourishing, education, and vertuous gouernment of his children," he asserted, "euen so is the king bound to care for all his subiects" (55).[11] "I am the Husband, and all the whole Isle is my lawfull Wife; I am the Head, and it is my Body," he declared (272). "Kings are . . . compared to Fathers of families," he argued, "for a King is truly Parens patriae, the politique father of his people" (307). James's aggressive promotion of masculinist familial formulations of royal power may also have been a reaction to the many difficulties he experienced in the relationships with his "two" mothers--his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, and his older cousin, Elizabeth I--who for years had alternately encouraged and undercut James's ambitions and claims to monarchical power in Scotland as well as in England.[12]

Whereas initially James construed his royal authority in both marital and paternal terms, as time went on he began "to elide the uxorial dimension of the citizenry entirely and to focus on its infantile character exclusively" (Jordan, "The Household and the State" 315). Lena Cowen Orlin observes that James's use of the family metaphor "was adapted to the new end of demanding from the people the obedience owed by a child to its father" ("Fictional Families" 91).[13] I want to argue that James's elision of the uxorial and, therefore, maternal dimension of the citizenry and his increasingly rigorous paternal conception of state power extends the ideology of the new motherhood

to such a degree that the mother is not merely diminished but eliminated altogether. As Stephen Orgel argues, "James conceives [of] himself as the head of a single-parent family" (59), and, as Jonathan Goldberg contends, "procreation becomes an extension of male prerogative and male power" ("Fatherly Authority" 16). Perhaps even more significant is that the elimination of the maternal in James's "of man" and "of man born" formulation inverts the "of woman" and "of woman born" construction of Christ at the heart of the incarnational legacy. It is this fantastical "of man born" configuration on the part of James, I want to contend, that Macbeth subjects to particular scrutiny.

James's secular inversion of the incarnational legacy, while a means of clearly locating royal power in the father's body and of accentuating patrilineal descent and, thus, of strengthening James's patriarchal conceptions of monarchical authority, and while merely an imaginary formulation (James, after all, was married), still was conducive to instability--at least according to Macbeth's portrayal and examination of the inversion. One part of the problem was again due to the use of the incarnational inheritance with its conflation of birth and murder for a secular or earthly form of power which itself was informed by the dangerous and well-established historical precedent of the acquisition of power through force. Even James I's assertion of divine authorization in the theory of absolutism could not conceal the violent means by which royal power historically had so often been established. Another part of the problem was due to the fact that James's particular deployment of the inheritance for a hereditary system of secular authority produced a contradiction--the simultaneous exclusion of women from and need of women for political influence. This contradiction intensified the potential danger associated with the incarnational legacy's conflation of birth and murder since the exclusion of woman from the political arena made the political system more vulnerable to the "murder" or "force" form of succession. Thus, whereas Elizabeth's actual failure to produce an heir had put her regime at risk, James's fantastical repudiation of women in his masculinist formulation of birth-based power served to destabilize his.

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However, the election falls on Macbeth because Malcolm and Donalbain are absent, the former having fled to England and the latter to Ireland for fear of being murdered themselves, their very flight having "[put] upon them / Suspicion of the deed" (II.iv.26-27),[14] and because Macbeth, with the departure of Duncan's sons, is next in line in the new system, which he himself informs us of when he refers to Duncan's naming Malcolm the Prince of Cumberland as "a step / On which [he] must fall down, or else o'erleap, / For in [his] way it lies" (I.iv.48-50). Moreover, the accession of Malcolm to the throne is clearly heralded as the restoration of the proper and legitimate order by the avenging Scots at the end of the play, who refer to Malcolm as "King of Scotland" (V.ix.25) even before he is officially crowned at Scone. I also would contend that Shakespeare's choosing to modify Holinshed's account of the Scottish monarchy by combining materials from the reign of Kenneth III, Duncan's grandfather--the monarch who, in fact, had introduced the new patrilineal system--and the reign of Duncan serves to heighten rather than to diminish a focus on the anxieties and problems associated with such a system, whether in or out of the play and whether in Scotland or in England.

Kenneth III poisoned the presumptive heir to the throne, appointed his own son Malcolm as the new heir, and persuaded the nobles to abolish the old law of tanistry and institute the patrilineal system. His actions establish a troubling relationship between a king and the illegitimate use of force and between murder and a political system predicated upon male birth. They also demonstrate that "the hereditary kingship that Macbeth assails--and that King James champions--originates with a king who is, in fact, Macbeth's double rather than his opposite" (Kastan 173-74). Shakespeare's decision to have Kenneth III's grandson Duncan introduce the patrilineal system so his son, another Malcolm,

would be the one to inherit the crown makes the troubling relationship in the history which informs the play bear more closely on the concerns of the play itself. It helps to link not just Macbeth but Duncan as well as the patrilineal system he introduces to a king who murdered to alter the means to achieve royal power. Having Duncan introduce the patrilineal system and frustrate Macbeth's ambition by doing so is also a way of subtly referring to an alternative patriarchal system which the majority of early modern play-goers, who saw the patrilineal form of patriarchal rule as the norm, would not have been familiar with. This subtle reference to an alternative may have encouraged the play-goers to focus more critically on the patrilineal system which they typically took for granted in England.

Duncan's institution serves yet another crucial purpose. In precipitating the shift from a patriarchal system which determines royal power on the basis of both birth and prowess to a patriarchal system which determines royal power on the basis of birth alone, it connects public power more closely to the propagation of offspring. In doing so, it intensifies the politicization of the domestic domain and the concerns and capacities typically associated with women/mothers. It also makes the contradiction at the heart of a patriarchal hereditary system--the simultaneous need for and exclusion of women/mothers--more conducive to instability, since public power, despite the heightened politicization of the domestic and the feminine/maternal, continues to be resolutely monopolized by men. This monopoly means that the repudiation of women/mothers becomes all the more necessary--even in the domestic realm--and that the use of force as opposed to birth as a method of acquiring power becomes more rather than less likely--that is, the use of force to kill the king rather than to defend him.

That the quasi-elective version of patriarchy at the beginning of Macbeth is already to a degree informed by the contradictory treatment of women/mothers is made clear by the association of sexuality with violence and of brutality with birth in the descriptions of the contests between men on the battlefield. The bleeding Sergeant describes Macbeth, fighting on behalf of Duncan, as "Valour's minion," and Fortune, fighting on the side of the traitor Macdonwald, as "a rebel's whore" (I.ii.15,19). Macbeth as "the chosen lover of Valor," Dennis Biggins observes, is able to disdain "meretricious Fortune" through "his triumphant slaughtering of the rebels" (265). Janet Adelman

argues that "the double action of the passage" also depicts a "fantasy of self-birth," since, after "Disdaining Fortune, with his brandish'd steel, / Which smok'd with bloody execution" and "carv[ing] out his passage" (I.ii.17-19), Macbeth "arrive[s] at the male," Macdonwald, whom he unseams. Macbeth's fantastical construction of "his own Caesarian section" by means of cutting through the woman to get to the man, Adelman further asserts, helps Macbeth to define his maleness, his invulnerability, and his "exemption from female power" ("'Born of Woman'" 106, 107). In Rosse's description of another battle, Macbeth is again partnered--this time with Bellona, the goddess of war-- and seems once more to effect a self-birth by means of his action in combat, with his "curbing" of the traitorous Thane of Cawdor's "lavish spirit" in this confrontation (I.ii.54-58) reminiscent of his carving out a passage through Fortune's womb in the other conflict.

However, what makes this version of the patriarchal hereditary system less dangerous than the version which Duncan introduces is that it enables royal power to be attained not just through birth but through worthy service of the king, which, while still conducive to the construction of murder as an alternative means of "being born" into the succession, tends to limit such a construction to the violent works performed for the monarch on the battlefield. With Duncan's institution of the patrilineal version of patriarchy, the dangerous conflation of murder and birth is "brought home." Eliminating meritorious service of the king as a means of acquiring royal power (a change which is accentuated by the poor battle performance of the new presumptive heir, Malcolm) and heightening both the importance of birth and the need to repudiate women/mothers in the determination of monarchical authority makes it more probable that "killing *for* the king" as a way of becoming king will be converted to "killing *of* the king."[15]

Indeed, it is precisely such a conversion which may be traced in Macbeth. The affiliations of murder with procreation and of sexuality with violence, no longer restricted to the battlefield after Duncan's alteration of the patriarchal system, permeate the speeches and deeds of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in the domestic sphere. In doing so, they greatly heighten attention to the dangerous defects in both Elizabeth I's and James I's deployments of the available ideologies of motherhood-- the very real lack of an heir which Elizabeth's formulations resulted in and the contradictory treatment of women which James's masculinist paradigm depended on.

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Macbeth, despite being a hardy and experienced soldier fresh off the battlefield, specifically describes the "Pity" which would result from the murder of the king as "a naked new-born babe" (I.vii.21). Lady Macbeth summons the "Spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts" to alter the reproductive functions of her womb and her breasts--to thicken her blood[16] and to exchange her milk for "gall" (I.v.40,48)--so as to transform her capacity to nurture a child into the capacity to murder a king, or to "impregnate" herself for another kind of "delivery." The heated exchange which Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have after they conspire to murder the king is particularly suffused with sexual innuendos and allusions to birth.

After Macbeth says, "We will proceed no further in this business," referring to their plan to kill Duncan (I.vii.31), Lady Macbeth retorts with:

> Was the hope drunk,
>
> Wherein you dress'd yourself? Hath it slept since?
>
> And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
>
> At what it did so freely? From this time
>
> Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
>
> To be the same in thine own act and valour,
>
> As thou art in desire? (I.vii.35-41)

She characterizes Macbeth "as emasculated" (Adelman, "'Born of Woman'" 101). She disparagingly compares his initial resolve to kill the king to the kind of short-lived desire which alcohol provokes only to thwart, and his current reluctance to perform the deed to "the symptoms . . . of the green-sickness, the typical disease of timid young virgin women" (Adelman, "'Born of Woman'" 101)--in essence, "accus[ing] him of arousing her [erotic] expectations and then failing to follow through with action" (Asp 160). She also very explicitly links the violent act of murder with the sexual act of love by asserting that Macbeth's inability to execute the murder will influence her perception of his love.

At first Macbeth tries to reject the connection his wife makes between his diminished desire to slay Duncan and a thwarted capacity to perform sexually. "Pr'ythee, peace," he says to her. "I dare do all that may become a man; / Who dares do more, is none" (I.vii.45-47). However, Lady

Macbeth persists in "making her love for him contingent on the murder that she identifies as equivalent to his male potency" (Adelman, "'Born of Woman'" 101). "When you durst do it, then you were a man," she asserts. "And, to be more than what you were, you would / Be so much more the man" (I.vii.49-51). James J. Greene observes, "The subject is Duncan's murder, but the language employed is the language of erotic love" (156).

After her forceful insistence on the relationship between sexual performance and the performance of murder, or virility and brutality, Lady Macbeth invokes a shocking image of her brutal destruction of a baby as a means of persuading Macbeth to stick to his commitment to kill:

> I have given suck, and know
>
> How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
>
> I would, while it was smiling in my face,
>
> Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
>
> And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn
>
> As you have done to this. (I.vii.54-59)

Her disturbing image connects reproductive and destructive capacities and a feeding, slain baby with the prospect of a bleeding, slaughtered king. In addition, her gendering of the infant as male "exactly at the moment of vulnerability, mak[es] her attack specifically on a male child" (Adelman, "'Born of Woman'" 101). This strategic gendering not only encourages Macbeth "[to] imagine himself as an infant vulnerable to [his wife as a mother]," thus enabling Lady Macbeth to exert greater influence over him,[17] but also helps to align the infant with the sleeping king when Lady Macbeth, after providing the details of the murder plan, asks Macbeth, "What cannot you and I perform upon / Th'unguarded Duncan?" (I.vii.70-71) (Adelman, "'Born of Woman'" 101). The association of first Macbeth and then Duncan with a male child further suggests that Macbeth, a mother's son, may become a father's son--more particularly, the king's son; that a reversal of the political "son" and political "father" configuration is possible; and that murder of the king may be understood as a means of becoming both the father-king's son and the father-king himself.

Lady Macbeth's final rebuke of Macbeth makes the relationship between sexual prowess and brutal action and between the murder of the king and success(ion) even more clear:

<pre>
Macb.                    If we should fail?

Lady M.  We fail?

         But screw your courage to the sticking-place,

         And we'll not fail.  (I.vii.60-62)
</pre>

While the metaphor Lady Macbeth employs is in all likelihood an expression from archery referring to

"a soldier screwing up the cord of his cross-bow to the 'sticking-place,'"[18] the content of the Macbeths'

exchange thus far seems to give the image a sexual resonance.  As D. F. Rauber notes, "[Lady

Macbeth's] attack is saturated with sexuality" (61), and, as Jan Kott observes, "She demands that

Macbeth commit murder . . . as an act of love" (79).  Moreover, the patrilineal system's contradictory

treatment of women itself contributes to the tendency to connect the implements of war with the

"implements" of love, or the act of making war with the act of making love--even in the domestic

domain.[19]  Killing in such a system becomes a way of conceiving and giving birth to royal power on

battlefields and in bedrooms.

Following her sexually resonant injunction, Lady Macbeth informs Macbeth about her intent

to intoxicate Duncan's chamberlains so that she and he may murder the "unguarded Duncan." Her

use of alcohol to thwart the guards' capacity to perform is not surprising.  Neither is Macbeth's

"elation at [the] transfer of vulnerability from himself to Duncan" (Adelman, "'Born of Woman'" 102)

or his use of an evocative reference to the birth of males.  "Bring forth men-children only!" he

ecstatically bids his wife, "For thy undaunted mettle should compose / Nothing but males" (I.vii.73-

75).  Lady Macbeth, who has helped her husband to construe the murder of the king as a means of

giving birth to a new version of himself as both a royal son and a royal father, has earned herself the

new identity of a male-mother to "men-children."

Macbeth persists in associating sexuality with Duncan's slaughter as he makes his way to

Duncan's chamber.  He describes "wither'd Murther" as moving "With Tarquin's ravishing strides,

towards his design" (II.i.52,55).  That Tarquin was an Etruscan tyrant in Rome who raped the virtuous

matron Lucrece "figure[s] the murder as a display of male sexual aggression against a passive

female victim" (Adelman, "'Born of Woman'" 95) and makes Macbeth's statement, "I have done the

deed" (II.ii.14), after his return from the king's bedroom, suggestive of sex, too.  Greene contends, "A

close analysis of the text leading up to and following the stabbing of Duncan reveals the following: Macbeth's slaying of the sleeping king is a surrogate act of copulation, [and] a murderous and twisted displacement of sexual energy for both husband and wife." Greene also points out that "with the translation of desire into act by the murder of Duncan . . . [Lady Macbeth's] taunting ceases," and her "first words to her mate as he emerges bloody-handed [are] . . . 'My husband!'--the only time she so addresses him in the entire play" (156-57). The Macbeths have successfully conceived royal power through Duncan's death.

The next morning, after checking on what Macduff later calls a "most bloody piece of work" (II.iii.126), Macbeth describes Duncan's dead body and Duncan's two grooms whose "hands and faces were all badg'd with blood" (II.iii.100) in terms both rapacious and procreative:

Here lay Duncan,

His silver skin lac'd with his golden blood;

And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature

For ruin's wasteful entrance: there, the murtherers,

Steep'd in the colors of their trade, their daggers

Unmannerly breech'd with gore. (II.iii.109-14)

The blood and "gash'd stabs" on Duncan's body, "the murtherers, / Steep'd in the colors of their trade," and the "daggers / Unmannerly breech'd with gore" are evocative of a horrific sexual ordeal, particularly in the context of the relentless association of violence and sex in the Macbeths' pre-murder dialogue and Macbeth's reference to Tarquin. The bloody body of Duncan with its open wounds looking like a "breach in nature" is also suggestive of a Caesarean birth--especially in view of the blood-covered daggers and the strong connection the Macbeths make between the murder of the king and a birth. The affiliation of Duncan's bleeding, wounded body with birth is further reinforced when Macbeth uses the language of procreation to inform Duncan's sons--Duncan's blood descendants--of their father's murder (Biggins 268). "The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood / Is stopp'd," he tells them, "the very source of it is stopp'd" (II.iii.96-97).

Even after Macbeth is invested with royal power, he continues to be preoccupied with matters of paternity and procreation and to resort to the use of violence in domestic arenas to ensure

his success(ion). Obsessed with the witches' prediction that Banquo would be "father to a line of kings" and with the prospect of the "unlineal hand[s]" of "Banquo's issue" wrenching away his "fruitless crown" and "barren sceptre" (III.i.59-62), Macbeth plans the murders of Banquo and his son. Angry at Macduff for fleeing the country to rally forces to overthrow him, Macbeth orchestrates the slaughter of all those that "trace [Macduff] in his line" (IV.i.153). Macbeth, who "has no children" (IV.iii.216), as Macduff astutely points out after hearing of the massacre of his own children by Macbeth's hired killers, takes to killing the children of others. Cleanth Brooks asserts, "It is the babe that betrays Macbeth--his own [lack of] babes, most of all . . . [which] force him to make war on children" (42). The babe signifies "the future" (Brooks 42) or the continuity of the public power which Macbeth has acquired. Because Macbeth has no progeny of his own, he fears that the sons of others may succeed him as king in a system which determines royal power on the basis of paternity and male birth. His murder of those sons may thus be construed as an attempt on his part to secure his own royal "birth," paternal power, and genealogical line.

It might be argued that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth employ procreative imagery solely due to a "history of frustrated attempts to have living issue" (Fox 129)--that their multiple references to reproductive functions and birth are merely an indication that the two of them have had a child but have lost it, or, if the child referred to by Lady Macbeth in her "I have given suck" speech (I.vii.54-59) was not Macbeth's, have tried to have a child but have thus far been unsuccessful, and that they, as a result, are grieving over their inability to sustain and/or create living flesh of their own. It is also possible to assert that their failure to generate children, one way of becoming more than what they are by producing a bloodline of their own, is what motivates them to contemplate another kind of success(ion).

However, my position is that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's consideration of "the swelling act / Of the imperial theme" (I.iii.128-29) is due less to such psychological factors than to Duncan's institution of the patrilineal version of patriarchy, in which "genealogy matters more than the individual and . . . children matter most who carry on the royal lineage" (Tennenhouse, "Theater of Punishment" 128). Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's construction of murder as an alternative way of "being born" into the succession specifically points to the systemic instability which the patrilineal

version of patriarchy intensifies by making birth a more integral part of its *raison d'être*, its way of determining who gets to be king, while also excluding women/mothers from the exercise and domain of political power.

The Macbeths not only have been unable to create/sustain living flesh and thus be a father and a mother, but, more important, because Malcolm, Duncan's son, was named the "Prince of Cumberland" (I.iv.48), have been unable to become a king and a queen. Birth is not an option for their success because biological parenthood and blood succession to the top have been blocked and, more particularly, because Macbeth, unlike Banquo and Macduff, is not a biological father in a patriarchal system which privileges both paternity and the birth of males, all the more so with Duncan's alteration of the system. These facts make Macbeth all the more receptive to Lady Macbeth's cajoling, to the idea of attaining the status of Duncan's son and Duncan's fatherhood by an alternative means, and to an opportunity to capitalize on the systemic instability of the patrilineal order. Furthermore, that Macbeth continues to be obsessed with fathers, children, and the destruction of both of them even after his coronation suggests that his attainment of royal power through murder necessitates his maintenance of it through murder, especially since he himself remains sonless, which continues to make procreation, even after he becomes king, unavailable as a means for his success(ion).

## VI

The shift from determining royal power on the basis of both male birth and male works to determining royal power on the basis of male birth alone in <u>Macbeth</u> intensifies the politicization of the domestic arena and contributes to the Macbeths' construction of murder as birth. It alludes as well to the anxieties and risks generated by the shortcomings of Elizabeth I's and James I's adaptations of the available ideologies of motherhood. Again, Elizabeth's lack of an actual heir and James's fantastical exclusion of women from a birth-based system of power both served to destabilize the hereditary system of power which the two monarchs headed by making it more susceptible to the alternative "murder" or "force" form of succession. The shift in the way royal power is determined in <u>Macbeth</u> also alters the treatment of the masculine/paternal and the

feminine/maternal in a way which traces the movement from versions of the maternal that are associated more with incarnational and calculative mothers and with Elizabeth, to versions of the maternal that are affiliated more with new mothers and with James.

That royal power in a quasi-elective patriarchal system is determined through meritorious service as well as through procreation means that birth and, by association, women/mothers are not as central to that determination. This more peripheral status makes the women/mothers less of a threat to the men/fathers in control and, as a result, a diminution of and separation from the feminine/maternal less necessary--at least in the domestic sphere. On the battlefield, matters are different. Adelman, in her discussion of the contest between Macbeth and the traitor, Macdonwald, points out that "[w]hat looks initially like a battle between loyal and disloyal sons to establish primacy in the father's eyes is . . . transposed into a battle of male against female," with Macdonwald's assuming the female part ("'Born of Woman'" 105). Macdonwald, after temporarily being replaced by Fortune, the "rebel's whore" (I.ii.15), with whom Macbeth fights, is then himself confronted by Macbeth, who "unseam[s] him from the nave to th'chops" and "fix[es] his head on [Scotland's] battlements" (I.ii.22-23)--an image which, Adelman contends, refers "both to castration and to Caesarian section . . . [and] remakes Macdonwald's body as female, revealing what his alliance with Fortune has suggested all along" ("'Born of Woman'" 106). That Macbeth's confrontations with Macdonwald as well as the Thane of Cawdor are also depicted as "self-birth[s]" which enable Macbeth to establish his virility, invulnerability, and "exemption from female power" (Adelman, "'Born of Woman'" 106, 107) clearly demonstrates that the quasi-elective version of patriarchy does encourage the separation of the male from the female and the degradation of the latter in the context of war. The introduction of the patrilineal version of patriarchy, because it determines monarchical authority on the basis of birth alone, precipitates a change which makes this kind of separation and degradation necessary in the domestic realm as well.

While this change is unquestionably evinced in Macbeth, the first half of the play continues to present relationships between men and women which are close, and characters who are more ambiguously gendered--male-mothers who exert influence over men and exercise control over matters related to birth and to politics, and mother-men who are affiliated with tears, fears, blood,

wounds, wombs, milk, breasts, kindness, and the bodies of babies. The interaction of men and women, the gender ambiguity of the strong male-mothers and the sensitive mother-men, as well as the connection between the capacity to control reproductive functions and the capacity to influence public affairs link the treatment of motherhood during the first acts of <u>Macbeth</u> in multiple respects to the discourses and practices of incarnational and calculative mothers and of Elizabeth I.

To begin, the witches, who consort with Macbeth and Banquo and who prophesy that Macbeth will "be King" and Banquo will "get kings" (I.iii.50,67), boldly interject themselves into the operations of patrilineal power. And that their prophecies for Macbeth and Banquo actually transpire --that "there come[s] truth from them" (III.i.6)--suggests that their ability to exercise influence over birth and royal succession (to promote, to prevent, or to end it)--or to "say which grain will grow, and which will not" (I.iii.59)--may be more than verbal. Just as their behavior and their prophecies intermingle the masculine and the feminine, so too does their appearance. Banquo acknowledges upon his encounter with them that "[they] should be women, / And yet [their] beards forbid [him] to interpret / That [they] are so" (I.iii.45-47). They "are placed outside and beyond the system of differences which defines and delimits men and women" (Belsey, <u>Subject of Tragedy</u> 185) and "are mysterious and powerful . . . [precisely] because of the spontaneity and unpredictability that [such] freedom from [gender] stereotypes allows" (Asp 165).

Lady Macbeth is another powerful woman who seems able to wield control over reproductive functions and matters which are both genealogical and political. She calls on spirits to alter the flow of her menstrual blood and the quality of her breast milk so that she may redirect her procreative capacities to the slaughter of a monarch and the satisfaction of her husband's desire to acquire royal power. She evokes a vision of herself first nursing an infant and then dashing its brains out to strengthen Macbeth's resolve to kill the king as a means of becoming the king. She construes regicide in sexual and procreative terms.

Her complicated gender status has prompted extensive critical discussion. One group of critics interprets her efforts to "unsex" herself (I.v.41) as basically successful, because through her alteration or outright repudiation of her maternal sensitivities and physical capacities, she is able not just to plan a murder but to persuade her husband to perform it, and, in doing so, to turn away from

the compassion and the creation of life typically affiliated with women in the domestic arena to the aggression and the destruction of life usually associated with men in the war zone.[20] Another set of critics contends that Lady Macbeth's attempts to make herself more masculine fail, because although she plans the murder of Duncan, she is unable to perform the violent deed herself, and because the content of her speeches is derived from the circumscribed experiential world of women.[21] She refers to menstrual blood, breast milk, nursing, and babies, to peeping and a blanket (with baby and bed affiliations), and to a knife (with kitchen and banquet associations) rather than a dagger (with battle and phallic connotations). In doing so, these critics argue, she draws attention to rather than detracts from her femininity and maternal capacities. Carolyn Asp claims that Lady Macbeth's pre-murder arguments "can only be successful if Macbeth perceives her as intensely female" since the "images she uses refer directly to her physical femaleness." And that Macbeth does respond to her femininity would indeed appear to be the case, Asp asserts, when he, upon being persuaded by her to murder Duncan, directs her to "Bring forth men-children only!" (I.vii.73), thereby "affirm[ing] the very maternal instinct she boasts of denying" (160, 161). How can Lady Macbeth be unsexed if her worst curse and her husband's best praise both refer specifically to the procreative capacities of women? Still other critics read Lady Macbeth as both female and male since even though the words of her arguments fill the mind with ideas about women, sexuality, and procreation, she dares "to intervene in the public world of history" (Belsey, "A Future" 261) and thus affect the operations of political power which a patriarchal system designates as masculine.[22]

All these critics, for the most part, assume there is a clear distinction between the man's world and the woman's world and between political matters and procreative matters--an assumption which is based on an understanding of the maternal as it is delineated in the new motherhood. As I have demonstrated, the play makes no such distinction. The patrilineal system directly connects birth to public power. This link makes all of the allusions to menstrual blood, breast milk, babies, etc., in Macbeth, including Lady Macbeth's, politically resonant, and thus contributes to the construction of Lady Macbeth's gender as profoundly ambiguous. Even in the sleepwalking scene, when alone, Lady Macbeth's character continues to display a gender ambiguity as her sleeptalking vacillates between the forceful admonition of Macbeth for his fear and the anguished admission that

the murder of Duncan and the slaughter of Lady Macduff are hard to bear. That procreation and politics are so thoroughly implicated in each other is why neither what is typically posited as feminine nor what is usually designated as masculine is neatly contained or fixed in the play. The critics who base their critique of Lady Macbeth's gender on the parameters of the new ideology of motherhood also overlook the contradiction at the heart of the patrilineal system which enables the Macbeths to relate male potency to female maternity and to construe murder as a form of birth.

Besides, Lady Macbeth and the "Weird Sisters" (I.iii.32) are anything but new mothers. Instead, their avid engagement in public matters and their ability to affect the generative process clearly differentiate them from the new ideal of the submissive, obedient, silent wife and mother, and align them with the calculative and incarnational mothers who exerted considerable clout beyond the household and over reproductive capacities. Lady Macbeth's amenorrhea and the witches' hirsutism[23] and Lady Macbeth's and the witches' political and procreative interests and influence may even more particularly elicit recollection of the holy women whose fasting inhibited their menstruation and promoted the growth of beards; gave them a great measure of control over their own bodies' sexuality and fertility and their families, communities, and religious authorities; contributed to the validation of their charitable works as an alternative form of reproduction; and helped to emphasize the importance of the women's generative capability despite the fact that most of the women did not propagate literal children.

That Lady Macbeth and the "Weird Women" (III.i.2) should be associated with each other as well as demonized in the play should come as no surprise since the reformers specifically altered the Catholic notion of the witch so as to heighten intolerance of both birth control and the two inherited versions of motherhood with which such control was linked. Infertile and/or birth-controlling women were construed as a threat to patriarchal structures, whether religious, state, or familial. So, too, were "masterless" women like the witches and "masterly" wives like Lady Macbeth. Moreover, such women tended to be charged with crimes directly affiliated with their sexuality and reproductive capacity, such as abortion and infanticide.

Witches in early modern culture were also depicted as having masculine characteristics which seemed to recall the power mothers exercised over young children, the intercessory force of

Mary, the mother of God, and the rule of Elizabeth, of Elizabeth's sister, Mary, and of Elizabeth's other "sister," Mary Queen of Scots (Willis, esp. 83-158). For early modern play-goers, then, Lady Macbeth's masculinity, perverse maternity, and allusion to the brutal destruction of an nursing infant may very well have brought to mind the anxieties about Elizabeth I's female dominion and lack of an heir and the on-going rumors about her clandestine pregnancies, illegitimate children, and infanticidal practices. After all, Elizabeth had depicted herself as both male and female and as a nursing mother despite her lack of children and despite the fact that aristocratic women at the time seldom nursed their children. She also had wielded enormous authority when it came to her subjects, including the men among them. Lady Macbeth's gender ambiguity and ability to make Macbeth feel vulnerable and infantile in the first part of the play may have reminded one member of the audience in particular--James I--of the maternal might of Elizabeth I as well as of Mary Queen of Scots, both of whom had very deliberately used their power "to check, interfere with, and call into question James's ambitions and assertions of kingly prerogative" (Willis 132).

Just as the witches' and Lady Macbeth's gender is represented as ambiguous, so too is Macbeth's, particularly in the first part of the play. The sensitivity Macbeth shows when he "start[s] at and seem[s] to fear" (I.iii.51) the witches' prophecies for him, and when the mere thought of a horrible deed, never mind the deed itself, "unfix[es] [his] hair, / And make[s] [his] seated heart knock at [his] ribs" (I.iii.134-36), is also acknowledged by his wife, who describes her husband's nature as being "too full o'th'milk of human kindness" (I.v.17) to kill the king. This milky nature aligns Macbeth with a female reproductive function and with the maternal capacity to nourish and nurture. In doing so, it conjures up an image of that other "milky-man," the incarnational Christ, whose wound blood was conflated with his mother's breast milk and, more generally, with womb blood (both menstrual blood and birth blood) and the food-body of the mother. The incarnational Christ also made for a form of motherhood which was accessible not just to women but to men. Consuming the Host enabled eucharistic recipients, with the divine body in their own bodies nourishing and transforming them, to see themselves through this "bearing" of God, who also bore them, as effecting their own salvific birth through the murder of Christ. Macbeth resembles the eucharistic recipients--albeit in a

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perverse way--when he intermingles violence and procreation, gives birth to an alternative version of himself through murder, and "catch[es] / With [Duncan's] surcease success[ion]" to royalty (I.vii.3-4).

The mutuality evinced in Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's relationship itself contributes to the blend of the masculine and the feminine within them and associates them with the inherited incarnational and calculative versions of motherhood. Macbeth refers to his wife as his "dearest partner of greatness" and anticipates sharing "greatness" with her (I.v.11,13), and Lady Macbeth orchestrates Duncan's murder and both makes herself more masculine and transforms her mother-man husband into a mother's son, a father's son, and, finally, a father to ensure their acquisition of monarchical rule in the patrilineal system. The very suffusion of the maternal and the erotic, the mutuality of desire, and the interplay of femininity and masculinity in the Macbeths' pre-murder encounter are reminiscent of the incarnational mothers' highly sensual and complexly gendered relationships with Christ. Further, that both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are especially preoccupied with blood--Macbeth, with the sight of it, following Duncan's murder, and Lady Macbeth, with the smell of it, when she sleepwalks--points to another link with the incarnational mothers who were particularly obsessed with blood since it was the bodily fluid most affiliated with both the "food" of procreation and the anguish of the Passion, which also was the pain of the labor required for the salvific birth-work of murder. Finally, the perverse maternity of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, I suggest, serves to highlight the dangerous instability which Elizabeth's adaptation of the incarnational paradigm for a hereditary system of secular power in particular was conducive to, since it was Elizabeth's lack of an heir which made the possibility of the use of murder as an alternative means of acquiring royal power--or of "being born" into the succession--all the more likely in such a system.

Not surprisingly, Duncan, the one who is murdered by the Macbeths, also evokes the incarnational legacy. For one thing, as Harry Berger asserts, the king is "the play's most conspicuous embodiment of the milky principle" ("Early Scenes" 27). While it is true that Duncan endorses excessive violence on the battlefield and awards titles and allots power to men only, he also receives reports of combat rather than participates in it, exhibits a "childish trust" (Adelman, "'Born of Woman'" 95) in the Thane of Cawdor and the Macbeths, and cries for joy when he greets

and expresses his gratitude to Macbeth and Banquo after the war has been won.  Moreover, he, while sleeping, is construed as a vulnerable infant by Làdy Macbeth, and, when dead, as a newly born baby and a raped woman by Macbeth.  These depictions of Duncan invoke the scenes from the Corpus Christi cycles which associate the naked and physically vulnerable body of Christ with the bodies of women and children and which affiliate the excruciating torture endured by the naked Christ at the hands of his armor-clad male tormentors with rape--that is, which conflate birth, murder, and rape.  Duncan's dead body is also described as "a new Gorgon" (II.iii.70-71) by Macduff.  Gorgon may refer to any of the three sisters in Greek mythology who had snakes for hair and eyes which turned the beholder into stone (Smith 102).  While Adelman contends that the power of this representation of Duncan "lies . . . in its suggestion that Duncan's bloodied body, with its multiple wounds, has been revealed as female" and that, in general, the "images surrounding [Duncan's] death make him into an emblem not of masculine authority, but of female vulnerability" ("'Born of Woman'" 95), I want to argue that the polysemous construction of Duncan's dead body is richly resonant with the mother-man/mother's-son formulations of the incarnational inheritance, which construe wounds as wombs and vaginas and which conceive the suffering which accompanies the torture and slaughter of Christ as the labor pangs of a salvific birth.  It is no coincidence that "this most bloody . . . work" (I.iii.126) follows Duncan's last supper.


VII

Somewhat ironically, it is Duncan's own introduction of the patrilineal system which intensifies the contradiction at the center of patriarchal power and which, in doing so, creates the conditions for his own destruction and for the destruction of the kind of gender ambiguity his character presents.  The new system necessitates the invigoration of the masculine/paternal and the suppression of the feminine/maternal within and between characters, which, as the play progresses, contributes to the diminution of the feminine/maternal in men and of the masculine/paternal in women and to the increasing separation of men and women.  These changes reflect the gender dichotomy and the restriction of the meaning, value, and influence of the maternal associated with the new version of motherhood and with James I's masculinist formulations of power.


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In the first half of the play, Lady Macbeth works hard to strengthen her masculinity. She asks the spirits to "unsex" her and to make her reproductive functions serve destructive rather than creative purposes so that her husband may be able--through murder instead of birth--to acquire the filial status of a king's son and the paternal power of the king himself in the new patrilineal system. Her depiction of an infant first at her breast and then with its brains dashed out also shows her trying to dry up the "milk of human kindness" in herself (I.v.17) in order to motivate Macbeth--who, according to her, is too full of such "milk"--to do the same in himself. The implication is that if she, once a mother, is able to "be so little the woman," surely Macbeth, a man with no children, must be able to be "so much more the man" (Heilman 27). Through her excision of sensitivity in herself and in Macbeth and her transfer of vulnerability to Duncan, Lady Macbeth provides the "spur / To prick the sides of [Macbeth's] intent" (I.vii.25-26) and, for doing so, is labelled "male" by her husband, who fantasizes about her being an "all-male mother of invulnerable infants" (Adelman, "'Born of Woman'" 103). Leonard Tennenhouse identifies the function of Lady's Macbeth's "all-male mother[hood]" as that of the "punitive patriarch" ("Theater of Punishment" 128).

Macbeth not only configures his wife in male terms but also makes an effort to overcome his feminine, virginal timidity, to assert his male potency, to align himself with a tyrant who rapes and Duncan with a rape victim, and to transform the body of the father-king he murders into the body of a mother and a child, and his own mother-man, mother's-son body into the all-male body of a royal son or father. He becomes obsessed with fathers and sons and male succession. In addition, when he later seeks guidance from the witches, he demands to hear the prophecies not from the weird sisters but from their "masters" (IV.i.63).

The Macbeths' changing relationship also shows clear signs of the suppression of the mother and the invigoration of the father. After Macbeth kills Duncan and becomes king--or the father of the entire kingdom--Lady Macbeth's diminished significance and estrangement from Macbeth are blatantly obvious. She sends a servant to "Say to the King, I would attend his leisure / For a few words" (III.ii.3-4)--that is, to ask if she may see him--and then questions Macbeth as to why he "keep[s] alone" (III.ii.8). Macbeth arranges the murders of Banquo and his son without her. Even when he informs her of his plan, he refuses to give her the specifics when she asks, "What's to be

done?" (III.ii.44). "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck," he admonishes her, "Till thou applaud the deed" (III.ii.45-46). He now construes her as merely a cheerleader for his violent exploits instead of a comrade in the conception and execution of them. Macbeth's exclusion of his wife from the planning process and his unwillingness to provide the details to her even after the planning has been done contrast noticeably with the mutuality evidenced between them in the discussion of the particulars for Duncan's murder and with his eagerness to tell her about the witches' prophecies so that she might joyfully anticipate not just his but her own "greatness" (I.v.13). Macbeth's use of a "patronizing term of endearment" (Harding 248) also marks a sharp departure from his earlier characterization of her as his "dearest partner" (I.v.11). After Duncan's murder and Macbeth's coronation, Macbeth no longer shares his life or plans with his wife. Neither are he and she partners any longer. As Kay Stockholder contends, "[t]he collusive intimacy between them fades almost immediately after Duncan's murder, for as Macbeth espouses her image of him as an unthinking man of action he redefines her in a more conventional feminine role" (113).

Although Lady Macbeth does revert to her former arguments about manhood and strength after Macbeth's first horrified reaction to Banquo's ghost, when she pulls him aside and asks, "Are you a man?" (III.iv.57), and when she belittles his "flaws and starts" as behavior which "would well become / A woman's story at a winter's fire, / Authoriz'd by her grandam" (III.iv.62,63-65), it is not she but the ghost's departure which finally subdues her husband. Moreover, that Lady Macbeth refers not to one but to two women--the one who tells the story and the one who before her authored it--in her rebuke suggests that she is less able to draw on her former male-mother role in her relationship with her husband and that the kind of female genealogy which she alludes to has become an object of contempt in a world where paternity and male genealogy are what matter most.

When the ghost reappears, it is Macbeth himself, and not either Lady Macbeth or the ghost, who stifles his sensitivity and energizes his capacity for aggression. He demands that the ghost take on a material form so he may duel with it and adopt the war-like posture with which he and other experienced soldiers are so familiar. He also insists that if he should tremble in such a contest that he be denounced as the "baby of a girl." In doing so, he, like his wife, disparagingly refers to the incarnational legacy which had celebrated rather than denigrated the baby born of a very young

woman. He additionally makes clear that, in the world as it now stands, it is not even womanly to fear but childish and, further, if he were to fear, he would deserve to be censured not merely as a boy-child but as a girl-baby.

Later in the play, though Lady Macbeth continues to exhibit a gender ambiguity while she sleepwalks and sleeptalks and even imagines her husband is with her for part of the time, the fact is that she is away from him and alone in their bedroom. And while it is true that Macbeth asks the doctor if he can help Lady Macbeth--"minister to" her "diseas'd mind" and "Cleanse [her] stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff / Which weighs upon the heart" (V.iii.40,44-45)--Macbeth's queries may also be construed as referring as much to his own as to his wife's troubles, especially since he, seemingly more concerned about putting on his armor to prepare for battle at the time, does not leave to try to comfort her himself. A husband and wife who once knew each other's thoughts when merely hinted at and who interchanged sexual roles to "echo and complement each other's strengths and weaknesses" (Brooke 140) now appear to be "divorced" and to live in very different worlds. That we last see Lady Macbeth in the bedroom and Macbeth on the battlefield both confirms and accentuates their estrangement from each other.

Just as Lady Macbeth becomes far less significant in Macbeth's life as the play progresses, so does the woman within Macbeth. Upon hearing the cry of women, he wonders, "What is that noise?" (V.v.7), which points both to the rarity of a woman's cry in this increasingly masculinized world and to Macbeth's diminished ability to comprehend it. He concedes:

> I have almost forgot the taste of fears.
>
> The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
>
> To hear a night-shriek; and my fell of hair
>
> Would at a dismal treatise rouse, and stir,
>
> As life were in't. I have supp'd full with horrors:
>
> Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
>
> Cannot once start me. (V.v.9-15)

The hardened Macbeth of this passage contrasts with the earlier more maternal version of himself who reacted with fear to the witches' predictions for him, whose hair stood on end and heart raced at

the mere thought of killing the king, and who experienced terror at the sight of Banquo's ghost. The

Macbeth who launches into a speech about the meaningless succession of tomorrows upon learning

of the death of his wife also exhibits more weariness and numbness than distress or sorrow in his

response to this "newest grief" (IV.iii.174). By the time Lady Macbeth's suicide ensures her

separation from Macbeth, most of the "woman" or "mother" within Macbeth has also been stifled.

The Macduffs' relationship in the latter part of Macbeth points to an even more pronounced

gender difference and distance between a husband and a wife and, thus, even more obviously to the

new version of motherhood which clearly distinguished between the roles of men and women.

Significantly, Macduff and Lady Macduff are never together in the play. Further, "we discover . . .

that Macduff has a family only when we hear that he has abandoned it" (Adelman, "'Born of Woman'"

108). This desertion emphasizes the widening gap between the man's world and the woman's world

and demonstrates that, in the patriarchal frame of reference, the former world is much more

important than the latter, not only because Macduff travels to a different country while his wife and

children are contained within the limited boundaries of a castle, but because Macduff's allegiance to

Duncan's son, Malcolm, clearly supersedes his duty to his wife and children, and Macduff does not

even tell his wife he is leaving, never mind give her any specifics about his trip or agenda. While it

is true that Macduff, when he meets with Malcolm in England, expresses dismay at the growing

numbers of widows and orphans in Scotland, Macduff himself, due to his sudden defection, is

responsible for making his own wife and children members of that very group of wives without

husbands and children without fathers--that is, of women and children without men. Even Lady

Macduff declares that "His flight was madness," that "He loves [them] not," and that his son is

"Father'd . . . and yet . . . fatherless" (IV.ii.3,8,27). She also twice informs her son that his father is

dead and twice asks her son, "how wilt thou do for a father?" (IV.ii.30,38,58-59). As Adelman

observes, "[Macduff's] unexplained abandonment severely qualifies [his] force as the play's central

exemplar of a healthy manhood that can include the possibility of relationship to women" ("'Born of

Woman'" 108). The slaughter of Macduff's wife and children in Scotland only reinforces their

alienation from Macduff in England and "the severance of male from female" (Erickson 121),

especially since Scotland itself--which under Macbeth's rule "cannot / Be call'd [the people's] mother,

but [their] grave" (IV.iii.165-66)--is figured as the woman's territory, while England, headed by King Edward--who "solicits Heaven" to cure "strangely-visited people, / All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye, / The mere despair of surgery" (IV.iii.149,150-52)--is depicted as the man's terrain.[24]

Macduff's response to his family's gruesome deaths further problematizes his status as someone who is interested in relating to, or even capable of caring about, either women and children in general or his own wife and children in particular. Granted, he initially cries upon receiving word of the massacre and rebukes Malcolm who, uncomfortable with Macduff's tears, urges him to "Dispute [the report] like a man" (IV.iii.220). "I shall do so," Macduff retorts, "But I must also feel it like a man" (IV.iii.220-21). However, while his reproof suggests that sensitivity and the capacity to cry may be considered a part of manhood or, even more radically, be construed as masculine rather than feminine, only a short while later, after Malcolm advises Macduff, "Be this the whetstone of your sword: let grief / Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it" (IV.iii.228-29), Macduff takes Malcolm's recommendation to heart--transforms his grief to rage, vows to take revenge on Macbeth, and stops his weeping as well as changes his characterization of it from "feel[ing] . . . like a man" to "play[ing] the woman" (IV.iii.230). Malcolm applauds Macduff's transformation by assuring him, "This tune goes manly" (IV.iii.235). Macduff thus "takes on full masculine power : . . as he loses his family" and "convert[s] his grief into the more 'manly' tune of vengeance" (Adelman, "'Born of Woman'" 108). Just as he abruptly left his wife to seek forces to overthrow Macbeth, he now quickly stifles the sensitive part of himself--a part usually gendered as feminine in the play--and makes his own gender more unambiguously masculine--at least in terms of how masculinity is typically constructed in the play--to enhance his ability to do the man's work of making war. That Macduff turns out to be the one "not born of woman" (V.vii.3) referred to by the witches' masters only reinforces his distance from the feminine and the diminution of the maternal in his life.

In the latter part of the play, a son and then a father allude to an even greater separation from and suppression of the feminine and the maternal than do the husbands and wives. Malcolm claims that he is as "yet / Unknown to woman" and that the "taints and blames" of sexual desire (124) are "strangers to [his] nature" (IV.iii.124,125-26). This avowal by Duncan's son hints at "a lack of desire to ever mingle his blood with that of a woman" (Tennenhouse, "Theater of Punishment" 131)

and seems to enhance his qualifications (Wheeler 146) to rule the emergent "all-male community" (Adelman, "'Born of Woman'" 105). It is Malcolm, after all, who reprimands Macduff for crying and recommends Macduff turn his grief into rage to make it the "whetstone of [his] sword" (IV.iii.228)--the sword which will eventually be the one to topple Macbeth and restore the legitimate masculinist order in Scotland.

Old Siward at the end of <u>Macbeth</u> sheds not one tear for his same-name son who died "like a man" and "paid a soldier's debt" on the battlefield (V.ix.5,9). And, after confirming that Young Siward "had his hurts before"--died fighting, not fleeing, that is--Old Siward declares, "Had I as many sons as I have hairs, / I would not wish them to a fairer death" (V.ix.12,14-15). Despite the fact that even Malcolm, not known for his great sensitivity, suggests that Young Siward is "worth more sorrow" and that he himself will "spend [more] for him," Old Siward, the father of the dead young man, insists, "He's worth no more" (V.ix.16,17).

Thus, as the play progresses, there is less of the man in mothers and less of the mother in men. Women's influence is diminished and, before long, two of the literal women themselves are eliminated. Whereas in King Duncan, the feminine/maternal is visible, by the end of the play the feminine/maternal in his son, Malcolm, the future king, is not. A new masculine order has been erected, by one "not born of woman," one "unknown to woman," and one who would not spend sorrow even for a dead son--an order which vividly brings to mind James I's extension of the ideology of the new motherhood so as not to just diminish but to eliminate the feminine/maternal.


VIII

A common critical assumption is that the increased dichotomization of gender, the decreased influence and eventual eradication of the literal women, the diminution of the mother in men, and the annihilation of the mother-man/son Macbeth by the end of the play indicate that the feminine and the maternal have been thoroughly eliminated from the order and operations of the resolutely masculinist and paternal political power. Carolyn Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely observe that "women in the tragedies almost invariably are destroyed, or are absent from the new order consolidated at the conclusions" (6). Adelman asserts that the last two acts of

Macbeth mark the "victory of a masculine order in which mothers no longer threaten because they no longer exist." She also argues, "The final solution, both for Macbeth and for the play itself, though in differing ways, is an even more radical excision of the female: it is to imagine a birth entirely exempt from women, to imagine in effect an all-male family, composed of nothing but males, in which the father is fully restored to power" ("'Born of Woman'" 103, 111).

While I agree, of course, that the murder of Lady Macduff and the suicide of Lady Macbeth eliminate two of the literal women from the new order erected at the end of Macbeth, and see much evidence in the play for the fantasy of male birth freed from the need of woman and of families "composed of nothing but males" and headed by an all-powerful father, I do not find that the need for the "woman" has been eradicated even if two of the literal women in the play have, or that "an even more radical excision of the female" is a "final solution" either for Macbeth or the play. Rather, the play in multiple ways, even in its later scenes, continues to evoke the importance of women/mothers and to demonstrate that male power and the patriarchal system in Macbeth are necessarily dependent upon the propagation of offspring--all the more so due to Duncan's introduction of the patrilineal system--and, thus, upon women/mothers, not just men/fathers.

For example, although the prophecies which are presented to Macbeth during his final episode with the witches are not from them but from their "masters" (IV.i.63), the witches make the brew which produces the all-male apparitions. The carefully selected and prepared ingredients of the broth--strongly evocative of birth and death, and procreation and violence--connect the witches' concoction to the herbal birth control recipes of calculative mothers[25] and, in doing so, suggest that the witches, like the calculative mothers, are able practitioners of birth control and thus powerful women, particularly in a system which determines political influence and rule on the basis of the blood relations of males. That the witches seem so clearly to be the ones with the "strange intelligence" about matters of birth and succession (I.iii.76)--as it is communicated either by them, "from [their] mouths" (IV.i.62), when they first encounter Macbeth and Banquo, or by the apparitions which now emerge from the special brew in their cauldron--helps explain why Macbeth's subordination of them to their masters in his final meeting with them is often minimized or even overlooked by critics of the play.

The apparitions and prophecies which are generated by the witches' brew are even more

unsettling to any notions or fantasies about the successful and complete expurgation of the maternal

in the latter part of the play. The first apparition, "*an armed head*," warns Macbeth to "beware

Macduff" (IV.i.71). The second apparition, "a *bloody child*," cries out, "Be bloody, bold, and resolute:

laugh to scorn / The power of man, for none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth" (IV.i.79-81). The

third apparition, "a *child crowned, with a tree in his hand*," states:

> Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care
>
> Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:
>
> Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be, until
>
> Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
>
> Shall come against him. (IV.i.90-94)

The last apparition is "a *show of eight Kings, the last with a glass in his hand*; BANQUO *following*"

(114). While these apparitions and prophecies clearly allude to brute force, male attributes, male

procreation, and male succession, they also indisputably link all of these matters to birth and point to

the destabilizing and potentially subversive contradiction at the center of the patrilineal system. The

armed head who alerts Macbeth to the threat of Macduff, the "bloody" child who urges Macbeth to be

"bloody," and the "crowned" child with a tree in his hand who advises Macbeth to be "lion-mettled,"

are evocative of other images of heads with no bodies and of bloody (men-)children, whether with

their brains "dash'd . . . out" (I.vii.58) or with "gash'd stabs" on their bodies (II.iii.11). They remind us

that violence is used both to maintain and to attain royal power in the play as well as in the history

which informs the play; that killing of the king becomes more likely if killing for the king as a means

of becoming king is abolished in a system of patriarchal rule; and that not only a child's gender but a

child's father or family tree determine whether that child gets to wear the crown and bear the sceptre.

That the image of the bloody child refers to the universal experience of birth at the same time the

words of the bloody child deny it also points to the contradictory treatment of women/mothers and to

the danger which such treatment is conducive to--the use of a bloody rather than a blood means to

succeed. Moreover, while M. C. Bradbrook asserts that "the prominence given to Banquo and his

descendants" in the fourth and final apparition heralds "the principle of hereditary succession" and

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clearly illustrates Shakespeare's intent in <u>Macbeth</u> to pay tribute to James I's ancestry and family pride (38), for me the procession of the many kings followed by their progenitor Banquo instead draws attention to the need for women/mothers and to the real illusion of James's inversion of the incarnational paradigm, which is that men can be "born of man." Upon encountering this royal line of males which Macbeth fears will "stretch out to th'crack of doom" (117), I feel compelled to ask, first, where the women/mothers are and, second, where, with no women/mothers around, the sons are coming from--particularly because James I's own mother, Mary Queen of Scots, from whom he claimed his inheritance, is not included in the string of kings, and because the scene which "succeeds" the all-male procession in the play specifically presents both a mother and a son.

The mother is the wife of Macduff. That Macduff is the character in the play who put the restoration of Duncan's son, Malcolm, to the throne before the safety of his own family, and with whom the "not born of woman" prophesy is affiliated, seems to carry forth the "of man born" illusion of the last scene. However, in this scene, Lady Macduff, both a wife and a mother, sharply criticizes her husband for abandoning her and the children without providing any information about either his whereabouts or his objective for leaving. She claims that he lacks "the natural touch; for the poor wren, / The most diminitive of birds, will fight, / Her young ones in her nest, against the owl" (IV.ii.9-11). Her assertion that Macduff should be home to protect his family just as the wren is in her nest to defend hers aligns the natural world with the maternal and suggests that Macduff, in lacking "the natural touch," is lacking the maternal touch as well, and that this deficit of maternal capacity in him as a man is a deeply problematic deficiency. Lady Macduff's words prove to be prophetic. She and her young son, whom she calls "Poor bird" and whom one of the murderers calls "egg" and "Young fry of treachery" (IV.ii.34,83), along with all the rest of those that "trace [Macduff] in his line" (IV.i.153), are brutally slaughtered in the "nest" with no mother-man to defend them.

What makes this mother-son scene even more disruptive to the fantasy of male parthenogenesis is that it evokes not just one but all three versions of motherhood. While the pronounced gender difference and distance between Lady Macduff and Macduff, and Lady Macduff's vulnerability and enclosure, point to the new motherhood, the mother-son scene overall brings to mind the Slaughter of the Innocents pageants in the Corpus Christi cycles, which dramatize King

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Herod's villainous decision to murder all boy-children in the hopes of killing Jesus and alleviating the threat of the son of God. These pageants feature working mothers using the tools of their trades-- their distaffs and their ladles--to resist the soldiers who kill with their characteristic tools--their swords and their pikes--as well as anticipate the subsequent arrest, torture, and crucifixion of Christ. The association of the mother-son scene in Macbeth with the pageants in the Corpus Christi cycles seems to exacerbate the plight of Lady Macduff, a new mother, who, lacking work implements, flees rather than fights and dies with her boy-child rather than survives him.

The immediate succession of this richly evocative and deeply disturbing mother-son scene after the patrilineal procession in the preceding scene, the harsh critique of Macduff as a husband and a father provided by his own wife, the identification of a serious maternal deficit in Macduff, and the murder of "all [Macduff's] pretty chickens, and their dam, / At one fell swoop" (IV.iii.218-19), clearly allude to the risks produced by the new ideology of motherhood, especially James I's extension of it, and by the patrilineal system's contradictory treatment of women and mothers and of the feminine and the maternal. While the blame for the cruel deaths of Macduff's wife and children are often laid solely at the feet of Macbeth and his hired killers, both the play and Lady Macduff herself strongly suggest that culpability for this horrific crime stretches far beyond Macbeth who is obsessed with procreation and succession and who construes the murder of Duncan as a birth, or the men Macbeth hires to kill women and children as a means of both punishing those who do not support his succession and ensuring his continued success.

For a patrilineal system so intent on the consolidation of masculine power and the elimination of women/mothers and feminine/maternal influence, Macbeth's seven references to the prophecy, "none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth" in the closing scenes of the play[26] prove equally disruptive. These multiple references highlight Macbeth's on-going preoccupation with procreation and, despite being in the negative, remind us again and again--just as the ghostly line of Banquo and his descendants does--that all men are indeed "born of woman," that the "woman" can never be completely eliminated in a system so dependent upon birth and bloodlines and succession, and that the real illusion being perpetuated by the patriarchal system is that men can be "born of man." They also are clearly reminiscent of the multiple allusions to the conditions of Jesus's birth in

the Corpus Christi cycles and hence of the once deeply valued, widely influential incarnational version of motherhood.

The revelation by Macduff that he "was from his mother's womb / Untimely ripp'd" (V.viii.15-16), like the line of kings and Macbeth's repetition of the "none of woman born" prophecy, directs attention to the patrilineal system's contradictory treatment of women/mothers. Even Adelman breaks with her main argument to assert that Macduff's revelation serves to "both den[y] and [affirm] the fantasy of exemption from women." While his disclosure makes clear that he did have a mother after all and thus renounces the "fantasy of male self-generation," she contends, it still "sustains the sense that violent separation from the mother is the mark of the successful male" ("'Born of Woman'" 108-109). I, of course, want to claim that this doubleness is integral to the patrilineal system as a whole and that understanding its integrality is what helps to illuminate the system's proclivity for violence.

Adelman reverts to the main thrust of her argument when she maintains that the men bearing the branches of Birnam Wood depict "a strictly patriarchal family tree . . . relentlessly male: Duncan and sons, Banquo and son, Siward and son," and illustrate "the extent to which natural order itself is here reconceived as purely male." She also contends that they serve as "the perfect emblem of the nature that triumphs at the end of the play: nature without generative possibility, nature without women" ("'Born of Woman'" 110).

I do not construe the "family tree" represented by the "moving grove" (V.v.38) as "strictly patriarchal" and "relentlessly male." Rather, I see the army of men bearing branches as yet one more variation of the patrilineal illusion of male autogeny. And, like the apparition of Banquo and his heirs and the reiteration of the "none of woman born" prophecy, it is the very "relentless maleness" of the family tree which the army of men depicts that provokes questions about the absence of women and, in doing so, points to the problem at the heart of the birth-based form of patriarchal power--its simultaneous exclusion of women and need for women's procreative capacity. While the literal women in the play have been eradicated--or at least two of them have, since we are not told or shown anything about the fate of the witches--the patrilineal system's need for mothers has not, even if the system tries to deny this need through a presentation of an all-male family tree.

I also would assert that the fact that the men chop down the trees of Birnam Wood and hide themselves behind them makes the "moving grove" less a "perfect emblem" of either masculine "nature" or its "triumph" than a vivid illustration of men's appropriation of nature--that is, of men's use of nature to legitimize/naturalize patriarchal rule. Adelman argues that the branches obscure "the operations of male power" which makes these operations seem to be "a natural force" ("'Born of Woman'" 110). However, "the operations of male power" would seem to be revealed more than concealed by the men who cut and then bear the branches because the reader/audience member is there at the moment of "conception," which is actually the moment of chopping, not planting, and is consequently able to see the "men behind the trees"--or, again, the men's appropriation of nature-- from the beginning, not only at the point when the men have thrown down their "leavy screens" (V.vi.1).

Finally, that the literal women have been destroyed but that the requirement for women has not does not eliminate "generative possibility" but--very ominously indeed--makes it more likely that "generation" will be achieved through murder rather than birth (through murder as birth) and that "blood will have blood" (III.iv.121) and one "Siward" will be violently succeeded by another "Siward" until such time as all the bearing men are dead.[27]

<center>IX</center>

In <u>Macbeth</u>, when the "leavy screens" have been thrown down (V.vi.1), there are armed men behind them and Malcolm, the rightful heir to the throne according to the patrilineal system established by his father, assures us in the concluding lines of the play that the recall of more such men, "exil'd" during the time of Macbeth's "tyranny," will "be planted newly with the time" (V.ix.31,32,33). Saying this, Malcolm disconcertingly echoes his father, Duncan, who announced to Macbeth, "I have begun to plant thee, and will labour / To make thee full of growing" (I.iv.28-29), just before he named Malcolm Prince of Cumberland--a naming which in the play introduced the patrilineal version of patriarchy to Scotland and sowed the seeds of Duncan's own destruction.

Could it be that Malcolm is also sowing his own doom? He, after Macduff has killed the rebel Macbeth, occupies a position similar to that which Duncan occupied after Macbeth killed the

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rebel Macdonwald and Thane of Cawdor. Is it therefore now Malcolm who should "beware Macduff"?

Macduff, in leaving his family without notice, showed a fervent interest in public affairs. Malcolm

suspected him then. Even Macduff's own wife had characterized Macduff as a "traitor" at the time

for abandoning his family without so much as giving them notice of his venture in England (IV.ii.44).

Her doing so had served not merely to trouble Macduff's loyalty as a husband and a father, but also,

by connecting Macduff with the other traitors in the play, including Macbeth, to raise questions about

Macduff's allegiance as a subject. So why should Malcolm not be wary of Macduff now, after

Macduff's, not Malcolm's, heroic defeat of Macbeth whose beheading so clearly replicates that of

Macdonwald? As Alan Sinfield astutely observes, "Macduff . . . is now the king-maker on whom the

legitimate monarch depends, and the recurrence of the whole sequence may be anticipated"

("History, Ideology" 70).

     Further, because of Macduff's success in his battle with Macbeth, is it not possible to

conceive that Malcolm himself may someday consider "Pour[ing] the sweet milk of concord into Hell"

(IV.iii.98) rather than have his better part of man "cow'd" (V.viii.18) by Macduff as Macbeth's was?[28]

As Asp observes, "The prince, in a performance convincing enough to have deceived Macduff,

claimed that he [was capable of such an act], had he the power. . . . Now that he is king, there is no

guarantee that he . . . could not be seduced into actually carrying out that claim" (169). The

patrilineal system Malcolm heads specifically requires the suppression of "milk" in men. Moreover,

Macduff resembles Macbeth now not only because he slaughtered a rebel for the king but because

he is son-less. What perhaps poses even more of a threat to Malcolm, however, is how Macduff's

current position differs from Macbeth's former situation: Macduff, unlike Macbeth, is wife/woman-

less. And there's the real rub.

     While it is often assumed that the diminution and eventual repudiation of the

feminine/maternal in Macbeth--especially the elimination of the mother-man Macbeth and his male-

mother-wife--strengthens and secures the patriarchal order presented at the end, what my

historicized investigation of the treatment of motherhood in the play suggests is that it is precisely the

absence rather than the presence of the feminine/maternal in that masculinist order which is

conducive to the greatest instability and the most excessive violence. If the Macbeths' lack of a child

created a problem for the patrilineal system, the lack of the woman/mother without and within men creates a bigger conundrum for it, since such a lack makes the prospect of succession by bloody rather than blood means far more likely. Donalbain's warning to his brother after their father's murder is instructive in this regard. "[W]here we are," he says to Malcolm, ". . . the near in blood, / The nearer bloody" (II.iii.137-39). That Shakespeare should choose to put these words in Donalbain's mouth and to have him communicate them to his brother is not surprising, of course, since the Donalbain of the history which informs Macbeth incites a rebellion in Scotland, collaborates with the King of Norway, and murders this same brother's son to seize the crown.[29]

The "Vaulting ambition" of Macbeth (I.vii.27) *and* the other "secret'st [men] of blood" in a patrilineal system (III.iv.125)--including James I--is to both refute the womb of woman and reproduce like the womb of woman so as to become fathers of sons "stretch[ed] out to th'crack of doom" (IV.i.117) and secure power and privilege on the basis of these male bloodlines. Yet it is precisely this contradictory treatment of women in the patrilineal system which ensures that the "Bloody instructions" return "To plague th'inventor[s]" (I.vii.9-10)--a return, again, made all the more probable with a king "unknown to woman" and a high-ranking soldier who, construed as "not born of woman," is left without a son and, worse yet, without a wife.

# CHAPTER V
## BELLY POLITICS IN <u>CORIOLANUS</u>

I

The treatment of motherhood in <u>Coriolanus</u> is more complicated than in <u>Macbeth</u>. Whereas <u>Macbeth</u> seems to shift from constructions of the maternal which refer more to incarnational and calculative mothers to constructions of the maternal which point more to new mothers, <u>Coriolanus</u> throughout--except perhaps for one brief moment when peace is achieved--appears to be deeply informed by the competition between the inherited and the new versions of motherhood.[1] In addition, the positions of the characters and the countries[2] in relation to this competition change over the course of the play.

<u>Coriolanus</u> starts off by presenting several conflicting stories about the "belly politic" in Rome (Riss 53) which allude in multiple ways to the larger cultural struggle over motherhood. I want to begin my analysis in a somewhat perambulatory fashion by exploring these opening stories in detail, since they so effectively set the stage for understanding the more major contests (within and between characters and countries) over the relations of words, food, body, son, mother, and the gods to follow. I will then review the pertinent criticism on the play, explain how a historicized investigation of motherhood in <u>Coriolanus</u> may extend this critical work, and examine the contending, often contradictory positions of the characters and countries in relation to the different versions of motherhood in the remainder of the play.

II

The first story about the belly politic is narrated by members of "*a company of mutinous Citizens*" wielding "*staves, clubs, and other weapons*" (95).[3] The main spokesperson for the insurgent group, the First Citizen, declares that in the current state of Rome the plebeians "are accounted poor citizens, the patricians good," and then proceeds to explain the situation of the "poor" plebeians in relation to that of the "good" patricians. "What authority surfeits on would relieve us," he asserts to his comrades. "If they would yield us but the superfluity while it were wholesome, we might guess they relieved us humanely; but they think we are too dear: the leanness that afflicts us,

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the object of our misery, is as an inventory to particularise their abundance; our sufferance is a gain to them." He further contends that "the gods know" he "speak[s] this in hunger for bread, not in thirst for revenge." While the First Citizen depicts Martius,[4] one of two patricians singled out for particular commentary in the rebellious citizens' account of the belly politic in Rome, as the "chief enemy to the people," and most of the other citizens concur with this assessment, in unison calling Martius "a very dog to the commonality," another citizen, the Second Citizen, challenges their characterization of Martius by reminding them of the services which Martius has rendered for his country. The First Citizen concedes that Martius's services are admirable but claims that they were performed not for the sake of the country but for the sake of his own pride. "He pays himself with being proud," the First Citizen insists. The Second Citizen urges the First Citizen not to "speak . . . maliciously," at which point the First Citizen qualifies his position: "[W]hat [Martius] hath done famously . . . he did . . . to please his mother, and to be partly proud." Though both the Second and the First Citizens agree that Martius is not "covetous," the First, again much more critical in his appraisal, asserts that Martius "hath [other] faults, with surplus, to tire in the repetition" and that the poor citizens' murder of him would enable them to "have corn at [their] own price." The Second and the First Citizens also differ in their opinions about Menenius, another well-known patrician in Rome--the Second Citizen describing him in out-and-out glowing terms as "one that hath always loved the people," the First somewhat grudgingly acknowledging that "He's one honest enough" (I.i.6-10,14-24,27-38,41-45,50-52).

That food, the gods, the common body, and a son and his mother are all referred to in the dissident citizens' story which begins Coriolanus immediately engages the play in the wider cultural contest over motherhood since it is precisely the relations between and among all of these elements which are being energetically fought over in the period's competing ideologies of the maternal. The connection between the surplus food of the patricians and the hunger of the common body of plebeians, or between the greed of the rich and the need of the poor, which the First Citizen insists on, seems to point to the effects of the new pronatal ideology and the nascent capitalist economy which were exerting such a huge and multi-faceted influence on the scope and leverage of motherhood in early modern England. For example, the shift to a commercial mode of production

was generating ever greater profits or surpluses for the few at the expense of the many as well as contributing to the growth in both the relative and the real numbers of the poor, among whom women, many of them mothers, were disproportionately represented. The opposition between "poor" and "good" instead of between "bad" and "good" in the First Citizen's declaration--an opposition which might initially strike us as odd, especially in view of the fact that the "poor" and poverty itself for the longest time had been so integral to the "good" works of incarnational mothers--actually fits in quite well with the new ideology, which tends to affiliate the destitute less with Christ or with other incarnational mothers than with the reprobate, so that "poor" often really is understood as equivalent to "bad." That "good" also could mean "wealthy," or well-stocked, in Shakespeare's time, makes the fit even better, it seems to me, since over the course of the early modern period the well-to-do increasingly came to be identified with the godly, or the virtuous, in the new ideology.[5] The First Citizen may also be construed as alluding to the shift from an indiscriminate to a selective charity, which accompanied the emergence of the new attitude toward the indigent and which was encouraged by the approach and priorities of capitalists, when he contends that the patricians consider the sustenance of the poor citizens as "too dear"--that is, as costing them more than what the citizens are worth, or more than what could be profitable, to the patricians. The focus on food and the price of food itself links the concerns of the "commonality" in the play to the debate about motherhood in the culture as a whole because the production of the means of existence--particularly when it came to basic foodstuffs--was still very closely associated with the production of human beings in the two versions of the maternal inherited by early modern people from their predecessors: calculative motherhood coordinated both forms of production and incarnational motherhood conflated them. While it is true that, over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, women's jurisdiction over many home industries was eroded with the shift to production for profit and the rise of the new, much more restricted version of motherhood, many women did continue to exercise significant control at the markets when it came to the essential foodstuffs and their prices during the period. In fact, as Susan Cahn observes, "[h]istorians today are discovering that it was women, not men, who precipitated food riots when prices rose in what the women believed to be unconscionable ways or when they suspected merchants of hoarding" (39). And, indeed, it is

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expressly because Coriolanus, both in this opening scene and throughout many of the scenes which follow, as I shall demonstrate, deals so centrally with divergent and rival constructions of the relationship between feeding and breeding forms of (re)production--or between the demands of the "stomach" and the demands of the "womb"--that I find Arthur Riss's formulation of the state of Rome as a "belly" rather than a "body" politic in Coriolanus (53) appropriate for my historicized examination of motherhood in the play.

The position of Martius is constituted as especially contradictory in the famished citizens' story about the belly politic. Though a member of the patrician class, Martius is differentiated from the other patricians because he is not covetous as they are. While he has accumulated a surplus, it is a surplus of faults, not of food, the worst of which would appear to be pride. Yet he is still linked to the scarcity of food among the plebeians and situated in opposition to the common body of the citizens, so much so that the First Citizen asserts that Martius's death would reduce the price of corn and enable the poor citizens to appease their hunger. Whereas Martius is set apart from both the patricians and the plebeians in the plebeians' narrative, his close bond with his mother is acknowledged. Overall, that he, an adult son, even at this very early point in the play, is associated with his mother on the one hand and the lack of food and the rejection of the "commonality" on the other at a time when the maternal was increasingly being distinguished from the masculine but was still often affiliated both with food--the presence, not the absence, of food, that is--and with the common body strongly suggests that his character is deeply informed by the larger cultural struggle over motherhood.

The second story about the belly politic in Rome is told by the second patrician mentioned in the plebeians' opening narrative. When Menenius arrives on the scene, he refers to the insurgent citizens as his "countrymen" and "good friends," which seems to corroborate the Second Citizen's assessment of him as one that loves the people (I.i.53,61). However, Menenius's representation of the belly politic in Rome contrasts sharply with the citizens' account. He insists that the patricians "charitabl[y] care" for the starving citizens--in fact, "care for [them] like fathers." The First Citizen immediately challenges Menenius's characterization of the patricians. "Care for us?" he asks incredulously. "They ne'er cared for us yet. Suffer us to famish, and their store-houses crammed

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with grain; make edicts for usury, to support usurers; repeal daily any wholesome act established against the rich, and provide more piercing statutes daily, to chain up and restrain the poor. If the wars eat us not up, they will; and there's all the love they bear us." Menenius tries to exonerate the patricians of any responsibility for the citizens' hunger by claiming that "[t]he gods, not the patricians, make [the dearth]" (I.i.64,71-72,76-85). This claim, however, is also dramatically at odds with the First Citizen's version of events--more specifically, with his assertion that the gods recognize literal hunger as the reason for the citizens' rebellion. Moreover, whereas Menenius insists that it is the citizens' "knees to [the gods], not [their] arms [against the patricians]" which will "help" the citizens and, in doing so, insinuates that the gods are punishing the plebeians for some wrongdoing (I.i.73), the First Citizen construes the gods as understanding the plight of the poor plebeians--as being on the side of the hungry, common body--in his account of the current situation.

The differences between Menenius's and the First Citizen's stories about the belly politic in Rome point to several aspects of the early modern debate about motherhood. Menenius's depiction of the patricians' care of the hungry citizens as charitable when, in actuality, it is marked by neglect and callousness refers again to the shift in the attitude toward and treatment of the indigent in early modern culture which coincided with the rise of the pronatal ideology and capitalist economic practices and the surge in the numbers of the impoverished. That Menenius also depicts the patricians' care of the plebeians as paternal alludes to the increasing prevalence of men in the management and direction of charitable relief as well as to the popular analogy of the patriarchal state and the patriarchal family in the period--both of which, too, were outgrowths of the emergence of pronatalism and capitalism at the time. In addition, Menenius's construction of the gods as wrathful and as distanced from the common body and insensitive to physical need may bring to mind the transcendent, retributive, paternalized God of the reformers--especially the reformers influenced by John Calvin's teachings--a God who, as a spirit or the Word alone, from his lofty residence in heaven, would deliberately induce calamities such as famine, pestilence, and war to punish the error or depravity of people on earth. The First Citizen's alignment of the gods with the common body and an understanding of the poor citizen's literal hunger for bread, on the other hand, may recall the accessible, magnanimous, mother-man Christ of the incarnational inheritance--the Word made literal

food and maternal flesh who would suffer with those who were afflicted and who would offer the bread of himself bred by Mary to the least of the brethren through his torture and murder to effect their salvific birth.

After Menenius dismisses the First Citizen's incensed rebuttal of his characterization of the patricians, he proposes to relate a "pretty tale" to the unruly group, although the First Citizen, now more skeptical and not easily subdued, warns Menenius that he "must not think to fob off [the poor citizens'] disgrace with [it]" (I.i.89,92-93). This tale and the First Citizen's and Menenius's adaptations of it for their disparate accounts of the belly politic in Rome, I want to suggest, engages Coriolanus even more substantially in the early modern cultural contest over motherhood.

The tale tells of "a time, when all the body's members / Rebell'd against the belly" and confronted it for its "idle[ness] and inactiv[ity]"--that is, for "never bearing labour with . . . th'other instruments" which "Did . . . mutually participate" so as to "minister / Unto the appetite and affection common / Of the whole body." The First Citizen, eager to find out the belly's response to the rebellious members, interrupts Menenius's narration of the tale to ask about the response, but Menenius takes his time getting to it by playing with the folds of his own belly to show that "the belly [may] smile, / As well as speak" and by correlating the belly and the "mutinous [body] parts" in the fable with the senators and the dissident citizens in Rome. The First Citizen, impatient, embellishes the tale by making up a more specific list of "th'discontented members" and demands to know "What could the belly answer" if these "agents" should "complain" about being "restrain'd" by the belly, which the First Citizen audaciously re-characterizes as "cormorant" (I.i.95-120). Perhaps affected by Menenius's stomach antics, the First Citizen accepts Menenius's correlation of the belly in the tale with the patricians in Rome but alters the depiction of the belly, construing it not as idle and inactive but as gluttonous and rapacious to make it fit with the mutinous citizens' version of events--more particularly, with the First Citizen's assertions that it is the greed of the patricians which is responsible for the need of the poor citizens and that the plebeians will be food for either the wars outside of Rome or the patricians within Rome. That's the First Citizen's story and he's sticking to it.

Menenius finally relents and provides the belly's response to the defiant members: the belly states that, as "the store-house and the shop / Of the whole body," it "receive[s] the . . . food at first"

but then sends it "through the rivers of [the] blood" to all the other parts of the body to sustain them--"deliver[ing] . . . the flour of all" and retaining for itself only the "bran" (I.i.130-45). The belly is thus once more re-characterized--this time as a receiver, a transformer, and a distributor of food. Like all "th'other instruments," then, it "mutually participate[s]" so as to "minister / Unto the appetite and affection common / Of the whole body."

Despite Menenius's alignment of the belly with the patricians and of the rebellious members with the insurgent citizens, there is a profound disjunction between the state of the belly politic in the pretty tale Menenius tells and the state of the belly politic in Rome, since the patricians in Rome, unlike the belly in the tale, are not providing nourishment to the other members of the common body. The patricians are taking but not giving, receiving/consuming/accumulating but not distributing--at least when it comes to literal food. Menenius does give the starving citizens clustered around him words about food, possibly expecting them to take the words as food. "But, as the plebs see it," Riss argues, "the problem is precisely that the patricians are unwilling to give the plebs anything but words to digest. Therefore, rather than quieting the rebels, Menenius reminds them of the literal cause of their rebellion: their empty bellies" (61), even as he fashions the folds of his own full and very literal stomach into a mouth. Menenius, in fact, strengthens the case for the plebeians' revolt through his physical presence and his actions in this scene. His literal patrician belly, generous enough to make a smile out of, in the midst of the hungry, and thus likely scrawny and scowling, citizens assembled around him, dramatically represents the "superfluity" of the patricians which the First Citizen refers to both in his initial account of the belly politic in Rome and in his subsequent and necessarily ugly adaptation of Menenius's pretty tale.

The First Citizen seems to sense the serious gap between the story Menenius wants the poor citizens to figuratively "eat" and the story the citizens are forced to literally live when he interrogates Menenius as to how the belly's answer applies to the situation in Rome. Menenius again contends that the "senators of Rome" are "this good belly" and that the citizens are "the mutinous members." Then, perhaps realizing the First Citizen may be about to call his bluff and becoming more keenly aware of the rather precarious status of his full belly in the midst of the rebels' empty ones, Menenius abruptly revises the original tale to suit his version of events by boldly asserting that all "public

benefit[s]," when they come, come from the senators of Rome and in "no way from [the citizens themselves]" (I.i.147-53). He alters the relationship between the belly and the other members of the body as it is presented in the original tale so that the belly--the "good" patrician belly, that is--no longer "mutually participate[s]" with the other members to "minister / Unto the appetite and affection common / Of the whole body" but instead gives everything and takes nothing in return. Making the patricians only givers, not takers, in this manner, as Riss astutely observes, is conducive to a perspective which actually inverts the circumstances of the plebeians and the patricians--which perversely depicts the plebeians as the members of the body who are hoarding food and the senators as the members of the body who are hungry (62). Menenius's revision also seems to undermine his earlier claim that the gods, not the patricians, are responsible for the lack of food in Rome, since aligning the patricians with the belly in the fable and asserting that all public benefits come from the senators prompts the question: if the patricians determine abundance, why not dearth? Then again, his revision may be construed as a means of linking the gods to the father-patricians and connecting them both to the shortage of food and the scarcity of charity for the poor citizens in Rome. The divine, the paternal, and the political are certainly all closely affiliated in the reformist ideology of the new motherhood in early modern England. And Menenius's expecting the plebeians to "digest [his words] rightly" (I.i.49) and to be satisfied after absorbing them may bring to mind the reformers' construction of the Word alone as the food and the altered perception of, and more selective and thus limited care for, the poor which accompanied the cultural shift from the formulation of the Word made food and maternal flesh to the formulation of the Word alone.[6]

Menenius's construction of the patrician belly as a giver, not a taker, is in direct opposition to the First Citizen's earlier depiction of that same belly as a taker, not a giver. However, Menenius's and the First Citizen's adaptations of the pretty tale do share two critical characteristics in common: the relationship of the belly and the other members of the body is marked by a lack of reciprocity--of give-and-take--and the belly is correlated with the ruling patricians. These common features make the relationship between the belly and the other members hierarchical in both adaptations, with the belly occupying the position of dominance and the other members of the body the position of subservience. In this regard, the adaptations differ from the original tale in which the belly and the

other members of the body mutually participate to contribute to the well-being of the body as a whole. This difference, I want to suggest, is central to the conflict over motherhood both in the play and in the wider culture of early modern England.

F. G. Butler (90-93) and Zvi Jagendorf (460-61) link the body of the "pretty tale" of the play to the body of Christ or *ecclesia*. I want more specifically to contend that the reciprocal relations of the belly and the other members of the body in the original version of the pretty tale are analogous to the relations informing the beliefs and behaviors of incarnational legacy of motherhood. The body of Christ, or the body of the church, in the incarnational frame of relations, was a body which all the members of the church both gave to and took from. The fasting, feasting, and feeding charitable works of incarnational mothers were interrelated and predicated upon a give-and-take *modus operandi*. And the Corpus Christi cycles promoted the reciprocal engagement of actors and audience members to connect present participants to each other and to both the past and the future members of Christ's body. In the longer-standing calculative version of motherhood, parts of bodies as well as whole bodies also interacted with each other to "reproduce" bodies either through digestive functions or gestative functions or both.

In fact, that Menenius and the First Citizen align the belly with the ruling patricians in Rome may initially have struck early modern play-goers as strange precisely because the belly was the body part usually affiliated with maternal (re)productive functions while the head was the body part typically associated with paternal political power. The more familiar "kingly crown'd head" is even referred to by the First Citizen in his embellished list of the rebellious members of the body (I.i.114). However, Menenius and the First Citizen's alteration of the relationship between the belly and the other members of the body so as to make it a one-way rather than a reciprocal relationship would have helped to make the belly in their adaptations of the tale--and in Rome, too--intelligible as a paternal belly to the play-goers, since such a relationship resembled the hierarchical relationship between those who ruled and those who were ruled in England's patriarchal political system, all the more so with James I's increasingly absolutist and paternalistic conception of state power. That the First Citizen characterizes the body parts in the list he generates in his adaptation of the tale in terms of functions which may be easily linked to militaristic enterprises--"the vigilant eye, . . . the arm our

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soldier, / Our steed the leg, the tongue our trumpeter" (I.i.114-16)--also helps to constitute the relations of dominance and subservience. Such relations inform conflicts between as well as within countries--at least, once one side has won and the other has lost--and are alluded to by the First Citizen in his assertion that the plebeians will be devoured either as soldiers in battles outside of Rome or as needy citizens by the greedy patricians within Rome. One side is the eater, the other side the eaten. That both the First Citizen and Menenius construe relations in hierarchical as opposed to reciprocal terms in their opening stories, I want to suggest, provides insight into why the conflations of food and the body and of killing and eating--conflations typically associated with the calculative and the incarnational forms of motherhood--are connected to destruction as opposed to salvation or (re)production in the First Citizen's story and many of the other stories about the belly politic yet to come in Coriolanus. Being just the eater or the eaten in a hierarchical scheme rather than both the eater and the eaten in a reciprocal scheme makes for very different effects.

Paternalizing the belly by aligning it with the ruling patricians and by construing its relationship to the other members of the body in hierarchical terms points as well to the larger cultural issue of the appropriation of the "belly" for patriarchal ideological and economic ends in the early modern period. The new motherhood severs the maternal from God's body and from charitable and remunerative labor, makes the capacity of the breast as "in-fungible" as the capacity of the womb, and restricts the maternal to the work of bearing and rearing children within the patriarchal family and household in order to subordinate the maternal to the paternal, to arrest the exchanges between and among bodies, and to ensure a ready supply of Christians for the churches, workers for the marketplace, and soldiers for the state. James I's even more extreme "of man born" formulation of political power extends the patriarchal familial model of the new motherhood to such a degree that the mother is not merely diminished but eliminated altogether. The father takes all. This kind of paternal appropriation of women's (re)productive capacities and consolidation of theological, political, social, and economic power may itself be seen as a form of hoarding.

Menenius, flustered by his inability to appease the plebeians, finally turns on the First Citizen--who, while he has been willing to ruminate about the words Menenius has tried to feed the mutinous citizens, has been particularly resistant to swallowing them, and has even dared to

reformulate them to his own tastes and spit them back out at the generously-girthed tale-teller. "What do you think," Menenius asks him. "You, the great toe of this assembly?" The First Citizen, somewhat startled by the designation, inquires, "Why the great toe?" Menenius replies, "For . . . being one o'th'lowest, basest, poorest / Of this . . . rebellion" (I.i.146-57). The contempt Menenius demonstrates seems yet one more time to recall the deprecatory attitude toward the poor which emerged with the shift from the incarnational to the pronatal version of the maternal. Whereas in the ideology of incarnational motherhood the "lowest, basest, poorest" is specifically identified with Christ, in the ideology of the new motherhood the least of these is considered simply that: the least. Moreover, that Menenius gives the hungry citizens food for thought instead of food for their bodies-- does, after all, try "to fob off [their] disgrace" with his story about the belly politic in Rome--as well as unabashedly calls them "rats" (I.i.161) when Martius arrives on the scene, strongly suggests that the hungry citizens' account of the situation in Rome could use some drastic revision when it comes to their depiction of Menenius, since he appears to be neither loving nor honest in his treatment of them.

Martius's arrival is akin to an explosion. Rather than offering words about food or words as food, he employs words as weapons. He calls the insurgent citizens "rogues," "scabs," "curs," "hares," and "geese" almost in one breath (I.i.165,167,170-71), derides them for their dislike of both war and peace, their cowardice, their fickleness, and their presumptuous commentary on what goes on at the Capitol, and staunchly refuses to validate their needs and complaints, or the demands of their "stomachs." He even denounces those who do give "good words" to them and "flatter" them "Beneath abhorring" (I.i.166-67), distinguishing himself from Menenius who has just tried to delude and placate them with a pretty tale. His resistance to any kind of exchange, or give-and-take, with the common body of citizens, and his determination to maintain the patricians' dominance and the plebeians' subservience is made all the more conspicuous when he tells the rebels, "Who deserves greatness, / Deserves your hate," and disparagingly characterizes their "affections" as "A sick man's appetite, who desires most that / Which would increase his evil" (I.i.175-78). Although he evokes the pretty tale with his reference to the affections and appetite of the mutinous members, he most assuredly does not advocate amity among, and the mutual participation of, all members of the belly

politic in his story about Rome. Indeed, any movement toward a greater reciprocity among all the members is precisely what most concerns and infuriates him. Catering to the cravings of rebels, he argues, only worsens their dis-ease, making them even more prone to demanding a greater proportion of the patricians' political authority. Without the patricians' authority, or "the noble Senate, who / (Under the gods) keep [the plebeians] in awe," he asserts, all kinds of reciprocity/mutuality would be likely to break out among the plebeians and perhaps, worse yet, between the plebeians and the patricians--so much so in fact that they "Would feed on one another"--a prospective scenario which he finds repugnant (I.i.185-87).

Martius's construction of the gods, like Menenius's, distances the gods from the "commonality," depicts them as unresponsive to physical need, aligns them with the fatherly senators, or with those who monopolize political power in the city (though Martius does so much more directly than Menenius), and thus again brings to mind the detached, disciplinary, paternal God of the new motherhood as opposed to the accessible, affectionate, maternal Christ of the incarnational legacy. Martius follows up his verbal assault on the hungry citizens with a physical threat. "Would the nobility lay aside their ruth, / And let me use my sword," he warns, "I'd make a quarry / With thousands of these quarter'd slaves" (I.i.196-99). Martius's threat seems to evoke the association of killing and eating not merely because he has just depicted the citizens' bodies as food, but because the First Citizen, too, had depicted the plebeians' bodies as food either for the wars or for ruthless, sword/knife-wielding patricians such as Martius. Further, that the association of killing as eating in Martius's story should be linked to destruction rather than to (re)production, just as it is in the First Citizen's story, I suggest, is again to be expected in view of Martius's defiance of any kind of interaction with the common body of citizens, his resolve to secure the dominant position of the patricians, and his use of even words as weapons to establish a militaristic, or rigidly hierarchical, relationship between him and the common body of citizens.

After Martius scares away the poor citizens or "fragments," as he calls them, including the First Citizen who gave Menenius so much trouble, he rails against the mutinous group of citizens in another part of the city. These insurgents, who protested "that the gods sent not / Corn for the rich men only"--and, in doing so, align the gods not with the ruling senators as Martius does but with the

poor citizens as the other rebels do--were granted "Five tribunes to defend their vulgar wisdoms," a concession which, in Martius's opinion, "make[s] bold power look pale" and will "in time / Win upon power, and throw forth greater themes / For insurrection's arguing" (I.i.206-207,211,214,218-21). Loath to think about the relationship of the patricians and the plebeians as reciprocal in any way, Martius comes across as much more absolutist in his treatment of power than either Menenius, who converses and debates with the plebeians, or the senators, who negotiate a deal with them. It is not surprising that one of the new tribunes, Brutus, asserts that Martius is "Too proud," and another one, Sicinius, wonders how Martius's "insolence can brook to be commanded / [even] Under Cominius" (I.i.258,260-62), a general of the Romans. It also is not surprising that Martius himself construes his relationship with another general--the general of the Volscians, Tullus Aufidius--in strictly hierarchical terms by casting himself as the "hunt[er]" and Aufidius as the "lion" to be hunted (I.i.234-35).

When Martius receives the "news" that "the Volsces are in arms," he welcomes it, since war, in his view, will provide the "means" for "vent[ing] / [Rome's] musty superfluity" (I.i.224-225). In saying this, he, like Menenius, seems to perversely associate the "superfluity" in Rome with the plebeians, not the patricians. However, that Martius has also constructed the bodies of the plebeians as food does shed some light on how such an association, though perverse, may be made. Too many bodies, when the bodies are depicted as food, may be construed as a surplus of food. Moreover, in early modern England, the ideological and economic changes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had contributed to such a substantial increase in the numbers of the poor that the poor did indeed make for a "surplus" of food-bodies--that is, of bodies needing food because bodies are made of food--which threatened both the "proper" order of the state and the enclosed properties of the elite. While the volatility of the growing masses of the destitute was acknowledged and feared, however, employers were reluctant to sacrifice profit either by hiring workers who could not be continuously employed, or by paying subsistence wages for those who were already working if a ready supply of labor enabled the employers to pay them less. In the play, according to Martius, the too numerous food-bodies of the rebellious plebeians can either be "sold" at war like food at a market (with perhaps the low "price" resulting from the "selling" of such a surplus alluding to the fact that at war, it is life, rather than labor, which is cheap), or can "feed" themselves there by killing and

pillaging. "The Volsces have much corn: take these rats thither, / To gnaw their garners," Martius declares (I.i.248-49). Either eat or be eaten would appear to be a key dictum of Martius's story about the belly politic in Rome.

Many critics of the play find the notion of bodies as food for other bodies here and elsewhere in Coriolanus to be disconcerting--more specifically, to be suggestive of cannibalism. Janet Adelman, for example, contends that "[i]n this hungry world, everyone seems in danger of being eaten" (136). Stanley Cavell, after exploring "the idea of cannibalization [which] runs throughout the play," ends up construing the notion of bodies as food for other bodies more positively than Adelman by linking it to Christ (245-72). However, the particular construction of Christ which Cavell connects the notion to--the construction of Christ as a "god" who "provid[es] nonliteral food, food for the spirit" (256)--is the construction which the reformers developed in the ideology of the new motherhood. I want to argue that a more historically specific analysis of the notion of bodies as food for other bodies in the play is necessary both to avoid an overly negative interpretation of the notion and to acquire a deeper understanding of it in relation to not just the new version of motherhood but the inherited calculative and incarnational versions of motherhood. Though it is true that eating the body of Christ had produced anxiety in eucharistic recipients partly because it meant they were making a meal of a body and thus suggested that their consumption of the Eucharist could be interpreted as a cannibalistic act, I would contend that the bond between food and body which informs both incarnational motherhood and calculative motherhood points far less to a cannibalistic apprehension than to a deep and nuanced understanding of shared physical need--to a recognition of the indisputable facts that bodies need food, are made of food, and provide food for other bodies-- whether in the womb, at the breast, or through physical work--or even, for that matter, through death, since the body when dead could most certainly supply nourishment either for other creatures or for the earth itself. And, again, I want to suggest that formulations typically associated with calculative motherhood and/or incarnational motherhood in Coriolanus--such as the formulation of bodies as food for other bodies--often are affiliated with destruction as opposed to (re)production in the play because the relations between and among the members of the belly politics presented are, for the most part, hierarchical as opposed to reciprocal. Hierarchical relations make the members into

either the eater or the eaten rather than into both, and thus impede an understanding of the members--all the members--as food-bodies who share needs, who are mutually dependent on each other, and who give as well as take.

I also want to suggest that Martius's concern about bodies feeding on other bodies has far less to do with cannibalism per se than with the contradictory position his character occupies in relation to the competing versions of motherhood. Martius is strongly identified with his mother right from the very beginning of the play. Though the patricians are characterized as fathers for the plebeians by Menenius, no mention is made of Martius's father, which heightens attention to Martius's relationship with his mother and helps to recall the mother-son bond at the heart of the incarnational version of motherhood. However, Martius also tries very hard to establish his separation from and superiority over the "commonality" and to arrest the ebb-and-flow between the "poor" plebeians and the "good" patricians in the belly politic of Rome, which brings to mind the divorce of the maternal from the common body, the enclosure of the maternal within the family and household, the division between the elect and the reprobate, and the attempt to limit or halt the transactions between and among bodies in the new version of motherhood. That Martius should employ not just swords but words as weapons in his encounter with the defiant plebeians aligns him with the new motherhood all the more since militaristic relationships are hierarchical and typically distinguish between males and females. At the same time, Martius's determination to separate himself from the "commonality" when he also is depicted as very close to his mother and as seemingly "fatherless" (DuBois 192) may suggest that his own body is the maternal body which he is trying to enclose. That it should be so, I want to contend, connects his character not only to the new version of motherhood, which is trying to enclose the maternal body, but to both of the inherited versions of motherhood--which recognize the intimacy of the relationship between the mother's body and the child's, whether the mother is a blood mother or a food mother or both, and whether the child is female or male--and to incarnational motherhood in particular, since this version of the maternal intricately conflates the bodies and body parts of a mother and a son. Martius's construction of the plebeians' bodies as food may be construed as linking his character to the inherited versions of motherhood, too, because it helps to make his rejection of the plebeians into a rejection of physical

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sustenance, or the demands of the "stomach," which suggests he may very well be as hungry as the plebeians are and thus not so separate from and superior to the "commonality" after all. He certainly is eager to fight with them within Rome and with the Volscians outside of Rome, and fighting, in the play, is construed as a kind of "eating," albeit one with eradicative as opposed to (re)generative effects. Brutus hopes that Martius will be the one who is "eaten" by the Volscians. "The present wars devour him!" he exclaims (I.i.257). That Brutus formulates Martius's body as food for the fight just as the First Citizen formulates the poor citizens' bodies as food for the wars or for the patricians, and that Martius's dictum about being the eater or the eaten itself formulates bodies, including his own body--at least, by implication--as food, aligns Martius even more closely with the common body of citizens which he tries so hard to repudiate and subdue, and thus again highlights the contradictory position he occupies, or the contradictory "story" he tells and enacts, in relation to the larger cultural struggle over motherhood.

The last story about the belly politic in Rome in the opening scenes of Coriolanus which I want to examine in terms of the competing versions of motherhood is that of Martius's mother, Volumnia. Like Martius, Brutus, and the First Citizen, Volumnia correlates killing and feeding as well as the body and food. She also very overtly affiliates them with the maternal when she, in discussing her own son's exploits in war, claims:

> The breasts of Hecuba
>
> When she did suckle Hector, look'd not lovelier
>
> Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth blood
>
> At Grecian sword, contemning. (I.iii.39-43)

Particularly in view of Volumnia's own intimate bond with her son, Volumnia's association of a mother's body and a son's body, of the breast, the wound, and the mouth, of milk and blood, and of feeding and bleeding in this passage is evocative of the incarnational motherhood of Christ whose wound-blood was conflated with Mary's breast milk, and even perhaps of holy women who, in their imitation of Christ, saw the sucking, swallowing, or spitting mouth as an especially effective means for savoring and interacting with savior and neighbor. However, the conflations in Volumnia's story, very unlike those in the incarnational version of motherhood, clearly serve extirpative as opposed to

salvific or (re)productive ends. The hierarchical relations which inform the wars between Rome and other belly politics require that soldiers either eat or be eaten, kill or be killed, dominate or submit, on the battlefield, rather than perceive each other in more reciprocal terms as both the eater and the eaten, or as food-bodies who have needs in common and who depend on each other for their sustenance or "reproduction." Volumnia, when she declares that Martius will "beat Aufidius' head below his knee, / And tread upon his neck" (I.iii.46-47) in the battle at Corioles, uses body parts--the head, the knee, and the neck--not to demonstrate how these parts "mutually participate" so as to "minister / Unto the appetite and affection common" to a "whole body," but to construct her son's dominance over Aufidius. Formulating her views within such a hierarchical scheme, Volumnia goes so far as to assert she would prefer to see her male progeny be killed at war than have them eat and grow fat at home. "[H]ad I a dozen sons," she tells her daughter-in-law, Virgilia, ". . . I had rather had eleven die nobly for their country, than one voluptuously surfeit out of action" (I.iii.22-25). In saying this, Volumnia indicates that she shares her son's disparaging attitude when it comes to matters of physical sustenance, or the demands of the "stomach," and, as a consequence, like her son, may be construed as both separated from and connected to the common body, since her very rejection of physical sustenance suggests that she may be as hungry as the poor citizens are.[7] Volumnia also seems to share her son's view that war provides a means to vent "superfluity."

Moreover, she--unlike the First Citizen who contends that Coriolanus "pays himself with being proud"--specifically construes her son's soldiering as a form of remunerative physical labor when she imagines him on the battlefield, "With his mail'd hand . . . wiping [His bloody brow]," going forth "Like to a harvest man that's task'd to mow / Or all, or lose his hire" (I.iii.34-37). Jagendorf observes that Volumnia portrays "the intrepid soldier" as "the lowest kind of agricultural laborer, a wage slave" (463). I want to suggest that Volumnia, in conflating her son's tasks with those of a lowly "wage slave," may be construed as connecting her son to the "least of these," exactly the kind of common, base human being whom Martius himself so detests. She also again correlates killing and eating, because harvesting obviously involves the gathering of food, and because, "[i]n the oldest system of images," as Mikhail Bakhtin reminds us, "food was related to work," "[w]ork triumphed in food," and "labor and food represented the two sides of a unique phenomenon" (281).

In connecting her son to the lowliest kind of human being and in correlating killing and eating, Volumnia again may be construed as invoking the two inherited versions of motherhood, especially the incarnational version.

Yet, while Volumnia invokes the inherited versions of motherhood in her discussion of her son's "harvest work," other aspects of her story undermine the invocation. Her son's labor on the battlefield annihilates life rather than (re)generates it. She herself, sewing and enclosed with two other women in the home in this scene, appears to be quite detached from her son's body as well as from remunerative labor. The preoccupation with bearing and rearing of sons to do the work of war and the separation of the mother's body from the son's body and from remunerative work point more to the early modern ideology of the new motherhood, which very deliberately appropriated women's (re)productive capacities for patriarchal political and economic interests and pursuits and which clearly distinguished between the female and the male and between feminine and masculine forms and spheres of work. That concerns typically associated with a patriarchal paradigm inform Volumnia's story about the belly politic is made even more blatant when Volumnia affiliates making war and making love and gives the former precedence over the latter. "If my son were my husband," she tells Virgilia, "I should freelier rejoice in that absence wherein he won honour than in the embracements of his bed, where he would show most love" (I.iii.2-5). Volumnia also indicates that she values murder in war as much as birth in peace when she insists that she "sprang not more in joy at first hearing" she had delivered "a man-child, than in first seeing [the only son of her womb] had proved himself a man" in the "cruel war" she had sent him to (I.iii.5-18). When Virgilia asks Volumnia, "But had he died in the business, madam, how then?" Volumnia responds, "Then his good report should have been my son" (I.iii.19,20). Volumnia's construction of good words alone as her son, like Menenius's construction of good words alone as food, brings to mind the reformers' construction of the Word alone as God and the Word alone as food and demonstrates once more that Volumnia's story, like her son's, is a contradictory one, informed not merely by the incarnational and the calculative versions of motherhood inherited from the medieval period, but by the new pronatal ideology elaborated and promoted by the early modern reformers.

Close consideration of just the competing accounts of the belly politic with which <u>Coriolanus</u> begins makes it easy to understand why the play has sparked such controversy in both theatrical and critical venues.[8] It also makes it easy to appreciate why the play has generated criticism which is so diverse and far-ranging. One group of critics firmly situates <u>Coriolanus</u> in the economic and political turbulence of early seventeenth-century England.[9] They consider the play in relation to the 1607 Midlands riots over food shortages, inflationary prices, the Enclosure Acts "depopulating" arable land, and James I's condemnation of the riots.[10] They also relate the struggles between the patricians and plebeians to the fierce quarrels between James I and Parliament regarding matters such as the king's absolutist views of royal authority and abrogation of parliamentary prerogatives, the role played by the House of Commons when it came to the prevention of tyrannical power, and the increased interest in the theory of mixed government. James, in fact, aware of the growing interest in the concept of mixed government as well as of its roots in classical republicanism, specifically lashed out at his opponents in Parliament in 1606 by calling them "Tribunes of the people whose mouths could not be stopped" (qtd. in Miller 289). This set of critics argues that Shakespeare's alteration of Plutarch's version of the Coriolanus story--for example, his choosing to conflate the two incidents of plebeian resistance and make the plebeians much more concerned about the scarcity of food than about wars or usury, to assign a much more substantial role to the tribunes, and to depict Coriolanus as more obdurate and isolated--clarifies all the more the play's connection to the contentious economic and political issues of Shakespeare's own time.

Psychoanalytic feminists--another group of influential critics--focus on the mother-son relationship which <u>Coriolanus</u> features so prominently.[11] They construe Volumnia as a mother who failed to sufficiently nurture her son, who himself, as a result, was forced to stifle his own capacity for nurturing, to redirect his need for maternal nurture into masculine aggression, and to seek out figures as rigorously masculine as himself to identify with. These critics also conclude that Volumnia's "bad mothering" is responsible for Coriolanus's demise. Though Volumnia's lack of nurture enhanced her son's ability to fight on the battlefield, it hindered his ability to function in the marketplace, which led to his banishment from Rome and fateful alliance with Aufidius.

Other critics take into account both political matters and familial relationships.[12]  Some of them contend that Roman culture/ideology is more to blame than Volumnia for the model of motherhood which Volumnia exemplifies.  According to the dictates of this culture, motherhood is a "civic obligation" (Paster, "Starve with Feeding" 129).  Roman matrons are expected to bear sons for the state, rear them according to the ideal of *virtus* (manly prowess), and glory in their sons' military achievements and brave deaths.  As Lisa Lowe asserts, both Volumnia and Coriolanus "as well as the patricians and plebeians and other members of the play's community, assume, perform, and develop the violent warrior ethos" (90).  Valeria, for example, delights as much in Coriolanus's son's violent treatment of a butterfly as Volumnia does in Coriolanus's war exploits and battle scars and wounds.  Both women's perspectives have been informed by and help to promote the state's ideological notion of *virtus*.  Critics who examine both political and familial concerns in the play also consider Volumnia in relation to the gender ideology of early modern England.  They argue that Volumnia's outspokenness, lack of a husband, control over an adult son, and political astuteness and power contrast sharply with--and, thus, pose a significant challenge to--the silence, obedience, and subordination being advocated for women in the sermons and marriage manuals of the time.  That Coriolanus's wife, Virgilia, basically conforms to the expectations of the sermons and manuals, of course, makes Volumnia's transgressions and potential threat to patriarchal ideology and authority all the more obvious and serious.

Yet one more prominent group of critics interprets the play in terms of its theatrical aspects.[13]  They highlight the play's great (almost inordinate) number of stage directions specifying complex sound effects and various postures, gestures, costumes, and configurations of bodies on stage, many of which are repeated and all of which seem to particularly stand out in this play because of the play's extraordinary emphasis on physicality and relatively austere language.  These critics not only explore the possible meanings generated by the stage directions and the corporeal emphasis but also maintain that studying Coriolanus on the page instead of on the stage makes it easy to minimize or even overlook the impact and significance of the dramaturgical components--for example, the ways in which they effect subjectivity/interiority and interact with the language of the play to generate meaning.

My investigation of motherhood brings a different history to bear on the understanding of Coriolanus and, in doing so, is able to extend all of these major critical readings of the play.

To begin, motherhood figured very centrally in the changing economy of England at a time when the production of the means of existence and the production of human beings themselves were still closely associated in the two inherited versions of the maternal but were also increasingly being separated from each other, with the former identified as the primary responsibility of men and the latter as the essential duty of women. The more widespread enclosure of common fields for grazing or for market crops as a way of maximizing profit, which resulted in an expanding pool of landless workers with only their labor to sell and desperate for any income at all, deleteriously affected calculative mothers in particular because men tended to be hired over women--a tendency which was encouraged all the more as the new version of motherhood began to take hold in the culture. And, again, women, most of whom were calculative mothers, did continue to wield considerable control at the markets when it came to basic foodstuffs and their prices in early modern England, and often were the ones to instigate food riots when merchants hoarded food or when food prices rose unfairly or too rapidly.

The changing notions about motherhood in early modern culture also had an impact on the conception and execution of royal power, as I made an effort to demonstrate in the last chapter. James I drew great sustenance from the theological, familial, economic, and political preeminence of husbands and fathers being encouraged by the ideology of the new motherhood. His theories of royal absolutism were especially indebted to the popular analogy between the patriarchal household and the patriarchal state which accompanied the development of the ideology, since this analogy enabled him to construe his monarchical authority in both marital and paternal terms and, eventually, in paternal terms alone. James's elision of the uxorial and maternal dimension in his characterization of the citizenry and his increasingly rigorous paternal formulation of state power made it easier for him to depict the citizenry as infantile, to demand absolute obedience from his subjects, and, thus, to insist on a more rigidly hierarchical conception of the king's authority and manner of governance.

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In considering the wider economic and political discourses and practices which Coriolanus is informed by and informs, it is worth looking again at how Shakespeare altered his source in terms of the circumstances that prompt Menenius to engage with the poor citizens and tell the belly tale to them, and of the role and behavior of Menenius himself. In Plutarch's account, the poor citizens, concerned about the oppressive effects of numerous wars and usurious practices, do not stage a revolt which threatens to become violent, but instead set up camp on a hill called the "holy hill," which makes their protest into a passive form of resistance. Menenius, as an emissary of the senators, climbs the hill to meet with the citizens. There he makes a formal speech which includes the tale, and successfully negotiates a deal which grants the poor citizens five tribunes "whose office [is] to defend the poore people from violence and oppression" in exchange for the citizens' willingness to serve their country in war (319-20).[14] That Shakespeare chose to make the plebeians' form of resistance active and threatening, as well as the plebeians' primary concern in this rebellion the scarcity of food--which, in Plutarch, is the main concern in a subsequent insurrection--serves to connect the rebellion in the play even more closely with the very active and intimidating food riots of early modern England. That Shakespeare selected to have the senators instead of Menenius negotiate the deal involving the tribunes, and to portray Menenius's approach to the insurgent citizens as condescending and contentious and Menenius's attempt to resolve the problem and appease the rebels as wholly inadequate, also serves to more intimately link the tumultuous economic and political issues of the play to those of Shakespeare's own time--for example, to James I's patronizing depiction of his subjects as children, forceful resistance to any ideas about a less hierarchical form of government, and heated arguments with Parliament about the allocation and distribution of political power, and even to the denunciation of the food and enclosure riots by James as well as by other well-fed members of the propertied elite. Moreover, as I have demonstrated in the first part of this chapter, telling the tale about the belly and the mutinous members in the context of a rebellion motivated primarily by starvation rather than by the burdensome effects of frequent military service and of usurious practices gives the tale a far different and much richer significance when it comes to the matters of the "stomach" and the "womb" both in and beyond the play.

The psychoanalytic reading of Coriolanus posits an ahistorical model of the family and of the formation of gender and, as a result, overlooks the larger cultural contest over motherhood informing the play, as well as the changing and contradictory positions of the characters, especially Coriolanus and Volumnia, and the countries, in relation to that contest, over the course of the play itself. The critical work which interprets the familial relationships in Coriolanus on the basis of Roman ideology also treats motherhood too reductively. That the play develops Volumnia's character much more extensively than its source,[15] repeatedly draws attention to the mother-son relationship of Volumnia and Coriolanus, and very overtly and almost obsessively deals with conflicts over the relations of words, food, body, son, mother, and the gods within and between characters and countries, indicates that the play is informed not merely by the ideology of *virtus* in Roman culture but also by the competing ideologies of motherhood in early modern England. Moreover, the ideology of *virtus* in Roman culture bears many similarities to the ideology of the new motherhood in early modern England, since both ideologies construe the relationships of the "belly politic" and of men and women in predominantly hierarchical terms and appropriate women's (re)productive capacities for the exercise of patriarchal power and the pursuit of patriarchal interests. The critics who highlight Volumnia's often dramatic deviation from the silence, obedience, and subordination being advanced for women in early modern sermons and marriage manuals again treat motherhood too monolithically, since they do not specify that the ideology being advocated in the sermons and manuals is only one of several ideologies of the maternal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or that the ideology of the new motherhood in those sermons and manuals is in competition with two versions of motherhood inherited from the medieval period which differ quite strikingly from it and which contribute to a much more nuanced understanding of Volumnia's outspokenness, relationship with her adult son, and political and theatrical astuteness and power.

An appreciation of the theatrical aspects of Coriolanus--its numerous stage directions, its unusual emphasis on physicality and on the agency/efficacy of the body, and its pervasive and "calculated dramatic rhetoric" (Holstun 495)--may also be immensely enriched if explored in relation to the extraordinarily theatrical incarnational legacy of motherhood. The theatricality of this form of motherhood had been cultivated by the portrayal of *ecclesia*--Christ's body, the mystical body, the

church--as a maternal body which members of the community both partook of and made up; by the belief that the divine and the human intermingled in the most basic physiological processes of digestion and gestation; by the personal and social transformation which not just the consumption but the sight of Christ's body were thought to effect; and by the prevalence and influence of a deeply emotional piety which encouraged a very literal and physical imitation of Christ as a means of acquiring knowledge of him, suffering with him, and serving the needy as he did. Further amplifying the theatricality of incarnational motherhood were the Corpus Christi cycles which entire communities, to a large degree, over a period of two centuries, contributed to and participated in. These cycles focused very explicitly on the multiple facets of incarnational motherhood--including the intimate physical connection of Mary and her "fode," Jesus, the torture and murder of Christ, and the spiritual and physical efficacy of both eating and seeing Christ's bruised and wounded body.

Overall, the larger struggle over motherhood in early modern culture is intricately implicated in the economic, political, familial, and theatrical aspects of Coriolanus. In the remainder of my critique of the play, I will explore how the contest over the maternal may inform these various aspects of Coriolanus in greater detail by examining the changing and often contradictory positions of the main characters and the countries in relation to the inherited and the new versions of motherhood: (1) when Rome is Martius's home; (2) when Martius, now called Coriolanus, is banished from Rome and makes a new home for himself at Antium with Aufidius; (3) when Coriolanus sets up camp at the gates of Rome; and (4) when Coriolanus returns to Volscian territory with news of the peace agreement he has brokered between the Romans and the Volscians.


IV

Rome, of course, is Martius's residence when the play commences. Martius's contradictory position in relation to the cultural contest over motherhood, which the opening scenes of the play help to establish, continues to be developed throughout the other scenes in which Rome is his home.

He persists in trying to maintain his separation from and superiority over the poor citizens of Rome. In the war with the Volsces when the "*Romans are beat back to their trenches*" (128), he curses the plebeian-soldiers and threatens to "make [his] wars on [them]." "He that retires," he

declares, "I'll take him for a Volsce, / And he shall feel mine edge" (I.iv.28-29,40). He defiantly

enters the gates of Corioles alone to battle the Volsces by himself, and willingly fights solo against

Aufidius and several other Volsces to beat them back. The very word "alone" echoes in speeches

about him and in speeches by him (Parker 4). Before Martius emerges from the gates of Corioles,

the First Soldier tells Lartius, one of the Roman generals, that "[Martius] is himself alone, / To answer

all the city" (I.iv.51-52). Upon encountering Aufidius on the battlefield, Martius proclaims, "Alone I

fought in your Corioles walls / And made what work I pleas'd" (I.viii.8-9). When the soldiers have

returned from the war, a herald announces, "Know, Rome, that all alone Martius did fight / Within

Corioles gates" (II.i.161-62).

Characters in the play also specifically acknowledge the contempt of Martius. Brutus,

concerned that Martius--now newly named Coriolanus for the prowess he displayed in the war with

the Volsces--will be nominated and elected a consul, tells Sicinius that they, as the poor citizens'

tribunes, must not just remind the citizens of Coriolanus's "hatred" for the people, but also convince

them that increased political power for Coriolanus could only be detrimental to the well-being of the

common body of Rome. Coriolanus, Brutus argues, would make the plebeians "mules," "[silence]

their pleaders," "Dispropert[y] their freedoms," and view them "In human action and capacity, / Of no

more soul nor fitness for the world" than work-horses for "war" (II.i.243-50). The First Officer, before

the assembly at which the Senate plans to nominate Coriolanus for consul, asserts that Coriolanus

"loves not the common people." Though the Second Officer defends Coriolanus, maintaining that

the people's fickleness and Coriolanus's unwillingness to flatter them to win their favor shows that he

"manifests the true knowledge he has in their disposition and out of his noble carelessness lets them

plainly see't," the First Officer insists that Coriolanus "seeks their hate with greater devotion than they

can render it him," "leaves nothing undone that may fully discover him their opposite," and

demonstrates a desire so strong for the "malice and displeasure of the people" that it is "as bad as

. . . flatter[ing] them for their love," the very tactic which he so disdains (II.ii.6,13-15,18-23). It is no

wonder, then, that Aufidius reads in a letter reporting on the state of Rome that Coriolanus is "worse

hated" by Romans than by Aufidius, the leader of the Volscians (I.ii.13).

Coriolanus in addition relates and repudiates all forms of physical and social sustenance--food, words, war spoils, rewards, payment, and praise--since they necessarily involve him in systems based on exchange and reciprocal engagement and thus pose a threat to his ability to retain his distance from and dominance over the common citizens--his "aloneness." He sneers at the plebeians, the "base slaves," for collecting the spoils after the assault on the city of Corioles. "See here these movers," he remarks, "that do prize their hours / At a crack'd drachma!" (I.v.4-5,7). He rejects the treasure which Cominius offers to reward him for his outstanding "day's work" on the battlefield. "[I] cannot make my heart consent to take / A bribe to pay my sword," he insists. "I do refuse it" (I.ix.37-38). When Cominius praises Coriolanus for his service, Coriolanus contends that his "wounds . . . smart / To hear themselves remember'd" (I.ix.28-29). He also dismisses the cheers of the Roman soldiers in terms which disparagingly affiliate their "acclamations hyperbolical" with food: "As if I lov'd my little should be dieted / In praises sauc'd with lies. (I.ix.49-52). For Coriolanus, as Phyllis Rackin observes, "feeding and nourishment, . . . activities that express love and sustain life, become . . . images of scorn and contempt" (710).

Coriolanus's dislike of praise is dramaturgically rendered as well at the assembly held to honor his achievements and to nominate him for consul. He stands while the patricians, the tribunes, the lictors, Menenius, and Cominius all sit on cushions. Though Coriolanus does sit for a few moments before Cominius's speech,[16] he "*rises, and offers to go away*" (172) just as Cominius is about "to report" on the "worthy work" which Coriolanus has "perform'd" (II.ii.44-45). When the First Senator asks him to sit and to listen to the account of his accomplishments, Coriolanus informs him, "I had rather have my wounds to heal again / Than hear say how I got them" (II.ii.69-70). When Menenius then asks Coriolanus to sit down, Coriolanus again insists that he is not interested in hearing his "nothings monster'd" and abruptly leaves (II.ii.77). He does not want his deeds put into words to be circulated among mouths. In repudiating all forms of physical and social sustenance, he lives up to the First Citizen's contention that "he pays himself with being proud," to the First and Second Citizens' assessment of him as someone who is not "covetous," and to Cominius's description of him as someone who "look[s] upon things precious as they were / The common muck of the world," who "covets less / Than misery itself would give," who "rewards / His deeds with doing

them," and who "is content / To spend the time to end it" (II.ii.125-29). As Hans-Jürgen Weckermann notes, Coriolanus refuses to allow the public to "share in [his deeds] . . . even by such indirect means as praise or reward" (336), and as Zvi Jagendorf points out, "Coriolanus, disdaining any reward outside the deed itself, is the hero of a one-man economy that boldly distinguishes itself from the market and the getting, spending, exchanging of ordinary men" (464). Coriolanus even resists his mother's adulation. He interrupts Lartius, who is about to commend him for his heroic deeds in the war with the Volsces, with the statement, "My mother, / Who has a charter to extol her blood, / When she does praise me grieves me" (I.ix.13-15).

Coriolanus's forceful repudiation of the common body and physical sustenance and staunch resistance to any kind of payment or praise for "good works" on the battlefield seem to align his character with the ideology of the new motherhood--more specifically, with its separation of God, both God the Father and God the Son, from common need and literal food; its contemptuous view of the "reprobate"; its divorce of the maternal from remunerative work and the marketplace; and even its constructions emphasizing "aloneness"--the formulation of the Word alone, and the rejection of the Word made food and maternal flesh which went along with this formulation of *sola scriptura*, and especially the formulation of faith alone, and the rejection of the idea that any reward could be earned for the performance of works which went along with this formulation of *sola fides*. In Plutarch's account of the Coriolanus story, there is no such emphasis on Coriolanus's "aloneness." Moreover, Plutarch's Coriolanus enters the gates of Corioles with a "fewe men" (322) rather than "alone."

Other aspects of Coriolanus's character, however, seem to recall features of the inherited versions of motherhood. For example, the depictions of his wounded body conjure up images and representations which may be associated with the legacy of incarnational motherhood. When Coriolanus emerges from the gates of Corioles during the war with the Volsces, he is "*bleeding*" and "*the enemy*" is "*assault[ing]*" him (131). After the battle has been won, he is described as "flay'd," and as "mantled," "smear'd," and "mask'd" in blood (I.vi.22,29,69 and I.viii.10). Back at the Capitol, Cominius, reviewing the confrontation with the Volsces, reports that "from face to foot / [Coriolanus] was a thing of blood" (II.ii.108-109). Menenius contends, "The wounds become [Coriolanus]"

(II.i.122). He also depicts "the wounds [Coriolanus's] body bears" as "graves i'th'holy churchyard" (III.iii.49-51). The Second Citizen calls them "marks of merit, . . . receiv'd for's country" (II.iii.162), and the Third Citizen overtly construes the wounds as mouths when he says that the citizens, upon seeing them, "are to put [their] tongues into [them] and speak for them" (II.iii.5-8). Even Coriolanus, who wants to minimize his wounds, refers to them rather evocatively as "Scratches with briers" (III.iii.51-52). That both Volumnia and Menenius in addition extol and count Coriolanus's numerous wounds as well as identify the particular sites of the wounds--in the "neck," the "shoulder," the "thigh," the "left arm," etc. (II.i.146,150)--may also bring to mind the extensive tabulation and specific description of Christ's many injuries, both by Christ's tormentors and by Christ, in the Corpus Christi pageants--all the more so because Coriolanus is very explicitly associated with killing and eating. When he enters the gates of Corioles alone and the First Soldier observes that he is "shut . . . in," the other Roman soldiers say in unison, "To th'pot" (I.iv.47)--to the "cooking-pot," that is--since they "believe that Coriolanus has been cut to pieces" (Brockbank 129-130 n. 47) and "devoured" by the rival Volsces. Cominius describes one of Coriolanus's battles with the Volsces as only a "morsel of [the] feast" at which Coriolanus "[Had] fully din'd before" (I.ix.10-11). And Aufidius acknowledges that he would likely be "beat" by Coriolanus in combat even if they encountered each other "As often as [they] [ate]" (I.x.8-10).

Perhaps the contradictions and tensions informing Coriolanus's position in relation to the competing versions of motherhood are nowhere more pronounced than when Coriolanus is coerced into wearing the "*gown of humility*" (181) and seeking the voices/votes of the "commonality" in order to secure the position of consul for which the Senate has nominated him.

Although Coriolanus does put on the gown of humility, he refuses to show his wounds to the citizens when he asks for their votes. Janet Adelman ("'Anger's My Meat'" 133, 136-38), Madelon Sprengnether (104-105), and Coppélia Kahn (Roman Shakespeare 17, 153-154) all relate Coriolanus's refusal to the contradictory significance of the wounds. They are bodily apertures which register not only Coriolanus's masculine valor but his feminine vulnerability. They show his body may be injured/penetrated, allude to the intimate bond with his mother who early in the play affiliates the bleeding body of the warrior with the feeding body of the nursling, and point to his own "oral

neediness," or kinship with the common body of citizens, as well as his fear of being eaten by that same body. I want to offer a more historically specific interpretation of Coriolanus's unwillingness to display his wounds to the plebeians. Coriolanus, I suggest, is uninterested in sharing his body with the common body because his character is informed by the ideology of the new motherhood which repudiated theatricality, divided the common body into the elect and the reprobate, and detached the mother's body from God's body, from the common body, and from the male body, and enclosed it within the patriarchal family and household. First of all, in Plutarch's account, the injured Coriolanus experiences no difficulty whatsoever in complying with the custom of exhibiting his wounds and asking for the people's voices in the marketplace (332). Secondly, in the Corpus Christi cycles, a two-centuries-old theatrical legacy with which the majority of early modern playwrights and play-goers would have been familiar, Christ implores those who are present to attend to his bruises and wounds and points out, in exquisite detail, the kind and the number of his injuries to them. Philip Brockbank asserts that "[b]y making Coriolanus shrink from displaying his wounds to the people . . . Shakespeare focuses further action and spectacle upon the hero's body" (46). I would argue that this focus is intensified all the more because of the sharp contrast between the behavior and attitude of Coriolanus in this play and the behavior and attitude of Christ in the cycle pageants. That Coriolanus should also come across as seeming to fear that his body will be eaten or rendered feminine or infantile when he must ask for and listen to the citizens' voices and show his wounds and be seen by the citizens also makes more sense in relation to the cultural inheritance of incarnational motherhood. The mouths of eucharistic recipients in the incarnational frame of relations were intimately linked to the Word made food and maternal flesh--that is, to words, food, the mother's body, pregnancy, and birth, and, thus, to speaking, eating, femininity, and infantility. Christ's side wound itself was construed not only as a mouth, but as a breast, a womb, and a vagina, and his blood as the food of either the breast or the womb. Further, his body in the belly of eucharistic recipients conflated the labor of digestion and the labor of gestation and birth. Christ also was depicted as simultaneously a newborn child and a sacrificial body. In addition, eating Christ's body was closely associated with seeing it. Jagendorf points out that "[t]he physicality of [Coriolanus's] encounter [with the citizens] is insisted on" both "by the language of tongue, mouth, teeth, and scar,

and by the spectacle of the hero dressed in the *toga humilis*, subjecting himself to the crowd's gaze" (466). Overall, Coriolanus, in refusing to share his body with the common body, may be seen as participating in the new effort to detach the mother's body from the divine body, the common body, and the male body, and to enclose it in the home--although, again, in Coriolanus's case, the mother's body which he is trying so hard to detach and enclose would appear to be his own.

That Coriolanus may indeed be construed as trying to detach and to enclose the mother's body is also suggested by his disparaging affiliation of the exchanges between himself and the common body of plebeians with eating and with charitable, remunerative, and theatrical work--all of which are intricately related in the inherited versions of motherhood. Brutus recalls hearing Coriolanus "swear" that he "never would . . . Appear i'th'market-place" to show "his wounds / To th'people" and "beg [the people's] stinking breaths" (II.i.229-30,233-34). When Coriolanus's request that he be allowed to "o'erleap that custom" is denied and Menenius instructs him to "fit [himself] to the custom," Coriolanus contends that "It is a part / That [he] shall blush in acting." He detests the thought of having "To brag unto [the people], thus [he] did, and thus" and to "Show them th'unaching scars which [he] should hide, / As if [he] had receiv'd them for the hire / Of their breath only!" (II.ii.136,142,144-45,147-50). When he does finally concede to wear the gown of humility and to seek the support of the citizens and Menenius advises him to "speak to [the people] . . . In a wholesome manner," Coriolanus retorts, "Bid them . . . keep their teeth clean" (II.iii.61-63)--in other words, not to eat. He does not want to become a part of their whole, to reciprocally engage with the common body, to be eaten. When he stands for election and actually encounters the plebeians, he assures them, "'twas never my desire yet to trouble the poor with begging," sarcastically equates the "worthy voices begged" with "alms," contemptuously asks the First Citizen what "price" he must pay for the "consulship," and mutters, "Better it is to starve, / Than crave the hire which first we do deserve" (II.iii.70-71,74,80-81,112-13)--associating the poor citizens' voices/votes with food, with buying and selling, and with charitable work and remunerative employment, and registering his resentment at having to interact with them and seek a job which he thinks he already deserves on his own terms. His rejection of the common body of citizens is a rejection of physical sustenance (whether that sustenance is food or is provided by means of charitable or remunerative labor); of

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reciprocal engagement; and, thus, of the inherited versions of motherhood which are deeply implicated in matters concerning the "stomach" and in relations which encourage and validate sharing, mutuality, and intermingling, or both eating and being eaten.

Coriolanus also specifically mocks the citizens' voices in a speech in which he repeats the word "voices" seven times (II.iii.124-30). Thomas Sorge observes that Coriolanus seems to regard speech "as hostile unless [it] originates from his own mouth" (235), and Stanley Cavell asserts that "Coriolanus wishes to speak, to use words . . . without exchanging words" (262). I want to argue that Coriolanus's "linguistic solipsism" (Tennenhouse, "History" 223), or desire for "one-way" speech, may again be related to the competing versions of motherhood informing his character. Just as the prospect of having the wounds of his body made into the mouths of the plebeians is repulsive to Coriolanus, so too is the prospect of "taking and giving in [his] mouth the very matter [the plebeians] are giving and taking in theirs" (Cavell 262). That Coriolanus so fiercely resists exchanging even words with the plebeians suggests that he fears that conversation has the power to affect him. Menenius acknowledges the efficacy of conversation when he, upon departing from a fairly contentious discussion with Brutus and Sicinius at one point in the play, declares, "God-den to your worships, more of your conversation would infect my brain, being the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians" (II.i.93-95). To be affected is akin to being infected if one has no desire to reciprocally engage with and be influenced by others. The election process in Rome grants the common body of citizens an agency, a capacity to affect Coriolanus's status, when what Coriolanus most desires is to separate himself from the common body and to enclose his (maternal) body. Coriolanus's disgust for reciprocal engagement with, and fear of being affected/infected by, the common citizens of Rome is why he also despises the tribunes. They, as the "mouths" of the people (III.i.35 and III.i.269), speak for the people, make their "voices" heard, contribute to the circulation of language, and encourage give-and-take among the plebeian and patrician members of the belly politic in Rome. As Cavell contends, "[w]hat matters to [Coriolanus] is that . . . all are members, that all participate in the same circulation, the same system of exchange, call it Rome; that to provide civil nourishment you must allow yourself to be partaken of" (262). However, that speaking and eating are so intimately intermingled for Coriolanus--that Coriolanus treats words so concretely--demonstrates again that his

character is affiliated with, rather than merely opposed to, the incarnational version of motherhood, since the Word in this version of the maternal was also construed very concretely as literal food for both the body and the soul, not just as spiritual food for the soul only.

Coriolanus continues to interlace references to physical sustenance, remunerative labor, and charitable work, in his tirade against "the mutable, rank-scented meinie" when they, following the tribunes' advice, revoke their votes for him:

> In soothing them we nourish 'gainst our Senate
>
> The cockle of rebellion, insolence, sedition,
>
> Which we ourselves have plough'd for, sow'd, and
>
> scatter'd,
>
> By mingling them with us, the honor'd number
>
> Who lack not virtue, no, nor power, but that
>
> Which they have given to beggars. (III.i.65,68-73)

He refuses to validate the plebeians' hunger and scorns those in positions of power who do and who also take action to appease the hunger. The shift from first person plural to third person plural in Coriolanus's speech demonstrates that, although he considers himself one of the "honor'd number" of the state, it is the Senate, not he, who has "given to [the] beggars." He again and again rails against those who gave "The corn o'th'storehouse gratis" to the poor citizens since such giving "nourished disobedience, fed / The ruin of the state" (III.i.113,116-17). To feed the beggars, to Coriolanus's way of thinking, is comparable to being eaten/diminished. He, determined to retain his dominant status, absolutely refuses to see the relationship between the patricians and the plebeians in more reciprocal terms.

When Menenius and the First Senator try to stop Coriolanus from saying any more and creating even more of an uproar, he retorts, "As for my country I have shed my blood, / Not fearing outward force, so shall my lungs / Coin words till their decay, against those measles" (III.i.75-77). While willing to spill blood, he, very unlike incarnational and calculative mothers, is not willing to mingle it with, or feed it to, the dis-eased poor people. He associates words and money, as he had earlier associated voices and prices, but again does not intend to use his "coined words" in a system

of exchange. Instead, he will use them to attack the common citizens as well as their "mouths," the tribunes. Coriolanus's remark provokes Brutus, one of these "mouths," to respond: "You speak o'th'people / As if you were a god to punish, not / A man of their infirmity" (III.i.79-81). Indeed, despite Coriolanus's close bond with his mother, his wounded food-body, and the other facets of his character which seem to link him to incarnational motherhood, Coriolanus, in his treatment of the poor members of the belly politic in Rome, would appear to be much more aligned with the retributive God of the new motherhood than with the compassionate Christ of the incarnational inheritance.

Incensed by the people's revocation of their voices, Coriolanus balks at submitting to them again. His mother intervenes and tells him that he is "too absolute" (III.ii.39) and that the current situation concerns not just him alone, but her, his wife, his son, the senators, and the rest of the patricians. He replies that if there were just the "single plot" or "mould" of himself "to lose, . . . they to dust should grind it / And throw't against the wind" (III.ii.101-104). Volumnia then shows her son how to act, tells him what to say, reminds him that her "praises . . . first [made him] a soldier," and insists that he will receive her praises again for "perform[ing] a part / [He] has not done before" (III.ii.108-110). Coriolanus, however, has repeatedly shown himself to be resistant to such praise for his deeds. In addition, he sees the acting she expects him to do to be elected by the citizens for the position of consul as infusing him with "Some harlot's spirit" (III.ii.111), since in his view it means selling himself and engaging in a system of exchange with the common body of citizens. He also uses terms to describe the acting--"the virgin voice," the "beggar's tongue," and the "knees" bent "like his / That hath receiv'd an alms" (III.ii.114,117-20)--which both evoke and belittle the highly theatrical practice of *imitatio Christi*. Yet, at the same time, he also acknowledges the efficacy of theatrical performance when he insists:

> I will not do't,
>
> Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth,
>
> And by my body's action teach my mind
>
> A most inherent baseness. (III.ii.120-23)

Both Anne Barton ("World of Words" 37) and Zvi Jagendorf (467) relate Coriolanus's concerns about the effects of acting to Plato's views about theatrical performance: Plato repudiated such performance because he believed that imitation could transform one into what one was imitating. Cynthia Marshall points out that, indeed, "[a]t the theatrical level, the 'body's action,' the actor's position and gesture, necessarily instructs, even creates, the meaning attributed to the character's 'mind'" (106). I want to suggest that Coriolanus's belief that his body's "action is determining" (Riss 56) may be related to the centuries-old inheritance of incarnational motherhood informing Coriolanus's character--more specifically, to the multi-faceted practice of *imitatio Christi* which also recognized the primacy and efficacy of the body's actions or "works" (including eating) and which had substantially contributed to the growth of a ritualistic theatrical apprehension and aptitude in both the mass and the Corpus Christi cycles. That it is Volumnia, Coriolanus's mother, who shows Coriolanus how to act to be elected by the "commonality"--what to do with his "hand," his "knee," and his "head" --and who explains to him, "Action is eloquence, and the eyes of th'ignorant / More learned than the ears" (III.ii.73,75-77), seems to me to make the connection between his theatrical performance and the inherited version of incarnational motherhood all the more obvious, since it was the distinctive role of women who rigorously undertook the practice of *imitatio Christi* that most influenced the model of incarnational motherhood which was both embraced by the laity and elaborated in the Corpus Christi pageants.

When Coriolanus persists in refusing to stand for election before the common body of citizens, his mother, infuriated by his resistance, declares, "The valiantness was mine, thou suck'st it from me, / But owe thy pride thyself" (III.ii.129-30). She makes it clear that his own body and character have already been affected--by hers--and, in doing so, recalls the intimacy of the relationship between the mother's body and the child's as well as the physical and spiritual efficacy associated with the food of the mother's body--whether breast-milk or womb-blood. Kahn asserts that the notion of the mother "pass[ing] [masculinity] on to a son . . . contrasts with one common to many cultures, and certainly prevalent in early modern England: that the male child must be separated from the maternal environment at a certain age, and definitely located in a men's world in order to realize his masculinity" (Roman Shakespeare 149). Kahn, however, is alluding to only one

of the versions of motherhood available in early modern culture--the new motherhood. Both of the versions of motherhood which the early modern period inherited from the preceding era enabled and encouraged far more intermingling between the maternal and the masculine--in the case of the incarnational motherhood of Christ, a thorough conflation of the two. Kahn (Roman Shakespeare 154-55), as well as Adelman ('"Anger's My Meat'" 140-41) and Sprengnether (103), also link Coriolanus's anxiety about acting to a fear of being feminized. I want to suggest that his anxiety about theatrical performance may be understood in much more historically specific terms. His refusal to act to be elected, or to engage in an exchange with the common body of citizens, may be related to the new ideology of motherhood which repudiated the theatrical God and the theatrical practices of the incarnational inheritance as well as theatricality in general, and which promoted the concept of an "elect" body which was not made up and partaken of by the common body of earthly citizens but by a heavenly God.

Coriolanus finally capitulates and agrees to go to the "market place" to "mountebank" the "loves" of the common people and "Cog their hearts from them, and come home belov'd / Of all the trades in Rome" (III.ii.132-34)--yet once more disparagingly affiliating the election process with remunerative physical labor as well as with the kind of reciprocal interaction which is required in theatrical performance. In the end, however, Coriolanus is unable to act to be elected by the people he so intensely despises. He does not want to allow his body to be seen/eaten and to exchange words with the citizens, yet that is what the acting to be elected consul in Rome requires--displaying the body and having it dismembered/devoured by a multitude of gazes, as well as circulating language among mouths. Sicinius accuses Coriolanus of "contriv[ing] . . . to wind [himself] into a power tyrannical" (III.iii.63-65), which incenses Coriolanus and incites his verbal abuse of the tribune "mouths" and the people whom they speak for. Brutus labels Coriolanus an "enemy to the people and his country," and Sicinius, "in the name o'th'people, / And in the power of . . . the tribunes," banishes Coriolanus from Rome (III.iii.99-100, 117-18). Coriolanus hurls more insults at them and the plebeians who are raising their voices in support of them, and then shouts, "I banish you!" to all of them (III.iii.123)--trying to make himself into the very "single" or enclosed "plot" of land--a country unto himself--which he had referred to earlier.[17]

It is not surprising that Rome and Coriolanus should banish each other at this point in the play. While the position of Coriolanus's character in relation to the competing versions of motherhood seems to have shifted more in the direction of the new version of motherhood during the time when Rome is home, the position of Rome itself seems to have moved in the opposite direction. When the play begins, Rome appears to be more aligned with the new motherhood and the economic and political changes which it informed and was informed by, because the connection between the surplus food of the patricians and the hunger of the common body of plebeians, the depiction of the patricians as paternal, the callous manner in which the patricians treat the poor citizens, the construction of the gods as wrathful and detached from the common body, and the hierarchical relationship between the patricians and the plebeians, all point to the effects of the new pronatalism, nascent capitalism, and heightened political patriarchalism and royal absolutism in early modern England. As the play progresses, however, Rome appears to become more affiliated with the inherited incarnational and calculative versions of motherhood, because the patricians relent and grant the plebeians five tribunes, or "mouths," to defend the poor citizens and present their concerns, charitably feed the plebeians with free corn, and insist that Coriolanus, despite his reluctance, must share his wounded body and seek the voices of the common people to be elected consul in the state.

As Coriolanus prepares to leave the Rome which is no longer his home, he tells his mother, wife, and friends that "The beast / With many heads butts [him] away" (IV.i.1-2). The one body with the many members which he refused to be a part of has now rejected him. Coriolanus's mother, who had insisted that Coriolanus theatrically engage--or share his body--with that same body in order to be elected by it, now, just as her son had previously done, verbally attacks it in terms which directly link it to disease and artisanal labor. "[T]he red pestilence strike all trades in Rome, / And occupations perish!" she exclaims (IV.i.13-14).

In Plutarch, Coriolanus leaves not "alone" as he does in the play (IV.i.29), but with several of his friends (343). Constance C. Relihan notes that "the final communication" in the play's departure scene "is made . . . not through language" but "through touch" (412). However, it is not his mother's hand which Coriolanus takes at the end of his time in Rome but Menenius's. That Coriolanus leaves Rome alone and, just before he does, takes the hand of the man who may be seen as a kind of

surrogate father for him, I want to suggest, may hint at a change in Coriolanus and anticipate Aufidius's taking Coriolanus by the hand and Coriolanus's "tak[ing] [the] friendly senators by th'hands" (IV.v.133) in Antium, the belly politic in which Coriolanus will make a new home for himself and occupy a very different position in relation to the contest over the maternal.

<center>V</center>

W. Hutchings observes that "[a] specific example of language is one's own name" (48). Naming involves being defined, acquiring an identity, in relation to something.[18]  Coriolanus-- banished from Rome, seeking to make a new home for himself in Antium, and unrecognized by Aufidius when he first encounters him in Antium--provides all three of his names to Aufidius but claims that "only [his surname, Coriolanus] remains," since "The cruelty and envy of the people [in Rome], / Permitted by [the] dastard nobles, who / Have all forsook [him], hath devour'd the rest" (IV.v.69,74-77).  Despite the fact that Coriolanus had so staunchly resisted sharing his body or reciprocally engaging with the citizens of Rome, he feels a part of himself has been eaten by them after all--the part linked with the two names, Caius and Martius, and, thus, with his relationship to Rome, his former home, and, most particularly, to his mother.  The part of Coriolanus that is left is thus connected not to his "birthplace" which Coriolanus insists he now "hates" (IV.iv.23), but to his "murderplace"--to a country whose "breast" he acknowledges he has "Drawn tuns of blood out of" (IV.v.100)--that is, at which he could eat without having to worry about being eaten, too.  Even Aufidius's servants recall Coriolanus's indisputable dominance over Aufidius on the battlefield in these terms.  "[B]efore Corioles he scotched [Aufidius] and notched him like a carbonado," the First Servant declares.  "And he had been cannibally given," the Second Servant adds, "he might have broiled and eaten [Aufidius] too" (IV.v.191-94).  It is not surprising, then, that Coriolanus should find that "the feast" at Aufidius's place "smells well" (IV.v.5), or that he, now seeking to make a new home at Aufidius's place, should propose turning the tables so he can now feed himself on the blood of Rome.  In Antium, he can more easily and clearly assume the role of eater, since this belly politic would seem not to be implicated in the maternal in the same way that Rome is.

<center>217</center>

Aufidius, persuaded that Coriolanus has changed, welcomes him by "twin[ing] / [his] arms about [Coriolanus's] body" and by telling him, "more dances my rapt heart / Than when I first my wedded mistress saw" (IV.v.107-108,117-18). Janet Adelman (139) and Maurice Hunt (312) maintain that the relationship between Coriolanus and Aufidius is informed by "likeness" and by their desire to be twins. Hunt contends that Aufidius's use of the word "twine" specifically points to this desire (312). Kahn also asserts that in "the Greco-Roman heroic tradition . . . the hero wins his name by pitting himself against his likeness or equal in contests of courage and strength" (Roman Shakespeare 15). However, as Sprengnether notes, it is "the rhetoric of heterosexual passion" which Aufidius uses "to express intensity of feeling for [Coriolanus]" (101). It is also Aufidius's wife, not brother, whom Aufidius associates Coriolanus with. That Aufidius depicts his affection for Coriolanus in heterosexual and marital terms, I want to suggest, makes the relationship between them more hierarchical. After Aufidius embraces Coriolanus, he takes Coriolanus by the hand and they leave for a feast with the "friendly senators" of Antium (IV.v.133), at which the Third Servant observes that Aufidius again "makes a mistress" of Coriolanus (IV.v.200).

It does not take long, however, for Coriolanus to regain the dominant position in his relationship with Aufidius. Soon Aufidius's lieutenant reports to Aufidius:

> I do not know what witchcraft's in him, but
>
> Your soldiers use him as the grace 'fore meat,
>
> Their talk at table and their thanks at end;
>
> And you are darken'd in this action, sir,
>
> Even by your own. (IV.vii.2-6)

By affiliating Coriolanus with the prayers before and after meals as well as with the main subject of discussion during the meals, the Lieutenant attributes to Coriolanus the status of a god among the soldiers. Aufidius himself articulates his resentment at having been "[empoison'd] by his own alms" and "slain" by his own "charity" in his relationship with Coriolanus (V.vi.11-12). "I took him, / Made him joint-servant with me, gave him way / In all his own desires," Aufidius complains, ". . . till at the last / I seem'd his follower, not partner" (V.vi.31-33,38-39). If Aufidius is to be taken at his word, the charitable and egalitarian way in which he treated Coriolanus was not reciprocated by Coriolanus.

Instead, Coriolanus, the recipient of Aufidius's one-way giving, has now gained the advantage in their relationship.

Cominius, upon learning that the Volscians led by Coriolanus are planning to attack Rome, also characterizes Coriolanus as a "god," one who "leads [the Volscians] like a thing / Made by some other deity than nature / That shapes man better," and Aufidius as merely the "officer" who "obeys [Coriolanus's] points" and who is now not the first but "The second name of men" in Antium (IV.vi.91-93,126-27). The relationship of Coriolanus and Aufidius would thus appear to be the hierarchical relationship no longer of a husband and wife but of a greater man and a lesser man--perhaps of a father and a son--with Coriolanus, not Aufidius, in the position of the father. Moreover, the diminution of the uxorial dimension in their relationship, along with the predominance of males--of senators and soldiers--in their sphere of social engagement, it seems to me, makes it possible to connect their bond to the new ideology of motherhood--especially James I's extreme formulation of it--since this ideology also construes the paternal role as preeminent and extends the domain and influence of men/fathers at the expense of women/mothers. In addition, that Coriolanus's affiliation with food in this new home comes not through his physical actions/works on the battlefield or in the marketplace, but through words--the "grace," "talk," and "thanks" of soldiers at their meals--and that Cominius construes Coriolanus as very distinct from ordinary men, may serve to recall the God who is the Word alone rather than the God who is the Word made food, flesh, and good works.

By the time that Coriolanus sets up camp with the Volscian army at the gates of Rome, he is very detached indeed from his "birthplace." Cominius tries to deter him from "forg[ing] himself a name o'th'fire / Of burning Rome" by "awaken[ing] [Coriolanus's] regard / For's private friends," but Coriolanus "for[bids] all names" and refuses to acknowledge any of his former relationships with the Romans, including his relationships with his mother, his wife, and his son (V.i.12,14-15,23-24).

The more spectacular failure to negotiate any kind of agreement with Coriolanus belongs to Menenius, whose attempt to dissuade Coriolanus counts on Coriolanus's having eaten. Before leaving to meet with Coriolanus, Menenius tells the tribunes, "With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls / Than in our priest-like fasts" (V.i.55-56). Then when Menenius encounters the Volscian guards, he asks them, "Has [Coriolanus] dined, cast thou tell? For I would not speak with

him till after dinner" (V.ii.33-34).  While Menenius may very well see the plebeians' hunger as "a discursive phenomena [sic] to be manipulated" rather than "a literal condition . . . [to] be acknowledged" in his story about the belly politic (Riss 62), he does not see Coriolanus's hunger in this way.  Menenius also does not perceive his own physical neediness in this manner since the play on a number of occasions refers to his great enjoyment of food and drink.  That the play depicts Menenius as a "voluptuary" who revels in feasts (Parker 269) compels one to be skeptical about what, if anything, Menenius would know about the "priest-like fasts" he makes reference to.  After all, in the legacy of incarnational motherhood, feasting, fasting, and feeding are so interconnected that they are considered synonymous "works," and it is this interconnectedness of the works--the give-and-take which they foster between and among people--not eating alone, which is what is conducive to tenderness.  Moreover, even in the play, it is precisely eating alone, or taking without giving, which is associated with contentious and often violent forms of engagement.  Riss notes, "This moment marks the second time that Menenius fails to understand the importance of food" and "the second occasion when Menenius's words fail to protect Rome" (68).  Maybe it is because Menenius is not just an eater but an over-eater that he has such a limited understanding of particular matters of the "stomach"--whether the forced fasts of the hungry plebeians at the beginning of the play, or the fact that it is precisely Romans such as he whom Coriolanus, now stationed at the gates of Rome, is saving his appetite for.  Maybe Menenius's tendency to gluttony is also why Menenius is so ineffectual in both of his attempts to quell rebellion--first the citizens' and now Coriolanus's.

Menenius appears to be naive about other matters related to the belly--matters of the "womb."  Despite the fact that Coriolanus had a very close relationship with his mother when Rome was his home, Menenius insists on basing his appeal on behalf of Rome not on that strong mother-son bond but on his own pseudo-paternal tie with Coriolanus.  Menenius refers to himself as Coriolanus's "old father" and three times calls Coriolanus "son" in his petition (V.ii.62,69-70).  Coriolanus abruptly dismisses Menenius's suit with the declaration: "Wife, mother, child, I know not.  My affairs / Are servanted to others" (V.ii.80-81).  Significantly, Coriolanus rejects Menenius's appeal in terms based not on the relationship which Menenius is trying to assert but on the relationships which Coriolanus once had with his mother, and with his wife and son whose bond, of course, is also

that of a mother and son. That he does so, I want to suggest, serves to underscore the inappropriateness of Menenius's emphasis on the paternal, to align Rome more definitively at this point in the play with the inherited ideologies of the maternal, and to intimate that Coriolanus, now camped before the gates of his old home, may be thinking about the very bonds he has so tried to sever. Further, that Coriolanus after dismissing Menenius demonstrates that he indeed now holds the upper hand in his relationship with Aufidius when he orders Aufidius, "report to th'Volscian lords, how plainly / I have borne [the] business" with Menenius (V.iii.3-4), seems to me to reinforce the link between Antium and the new version of motherhood, since this version of motherhood is much more informed by hierarchical/authoritarian relationships than the inherited versions of motherhood are. Coriolanus, the featured son of <u>Coriolanus</u>, stationed as he is between the two countries--between his old home and his new home--may thus be construed as being situated rather precariously-- perhaps more precariously than at any other point in the play--between the inherited forms of motherhood and the new form of motherhood in this scene. While not on a cross, he certainly would appear to be at a crossroads.

VI

When Volumnia, Valeria, Virgilia, and young Martius enter, Cavell contends that they "invoke the appearance, while Christ is on the cross, of three women whose names begin with the same letter of the alphabet (. . . [but] with Ms, not with Vs), accompanied by a male [whom Christ] loves [and] whom he views as his mother's son" (257). That the play departs from Plutarch's account where several children, rather than only a son, accompany Volumnia, Valeria, and Virgilia (360) further strengthens the connection of Volumnia and her entourage to the incarnational inheritance. Having only a son come along with the three women serves to emphasize the (grand)mother-son relationships--between Volumnia and Coriolanus, between Volumnia and Coriolanus's son, and between Virgilia and Coriolanus's son--all the more so when Coriolanus refers to his mother as "the honour'd mould / Wherein this trunk was fram'd" and to his own son as "the grandchild to her blood," and when Volumnia herself reminds Coriolanus that she helped "to frame [him]" and that Coriolanus's son is a "poor epitome" of Coriolanus who "by th'interpretation of full time" may come to

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fully resemble Coriolanus (V.iii.22-24,63,68-69). As Coppélia Kahn asserts, the association of "mould" with the body, the earth, and the dust which bodies after death eventually turn into, and with a pattern, such as that which might "frame" or form the fetus, "suggests that Volumnia has played not only the maternal but also the paternal role in childbearing as established in the prevailing Aristotelian medical model" (Roman Shakespeare 148). And the suggestion that Volumnia "has supplied both matter and form" (Kahn, Roman Shakespeare 148), of course, makes Coriolanus "remarkably fatherless," hints at the possibility that his "creation" was "parthenogenic," and evocatively points to "a virgin birth" (DuBois 192). Coriolanus's and Volumnia's statements regarding their physical bond may also bring to mind lines which are pervasive in the Corpus Christi cycles-- more specifically, Jesus's comments about his relationship to his mother--that he "was born of hir body" (Towneley Cycle 19: 246); Mary's remarks about her relationship to her son--that she had "shapen [Jesus] with [her] sydys" (Towneley Cycle 23: 407); and many other characters' observations about the relationship between Jesus and Mary--that "Goddys son toke of Mary flesh and bone" (Towneley Cycle 28: 383-84).

Volumnia, throughout the supplication scene, continues to emphasize her physical connection not just to her son's body but to the entire belly politic, or the common body, of Rome. "[T]hou shalt no sooner / March to assault thy country than to tread . . . on thy mother's womb / That brought thee to this world," she tells Coriolanus (V.iii.122-25). Volumnia also refers to Rome as "our dear nurse" (V.iii.110), which elicits recollection of Volumnia's own nursing of Coriolanus, and depicts Rome as a milk mother to all its citizens, explicitly associating Rome with the food of a mother's body. Kahn argues that Volumnia, "by identifying her womb with Rome, . . . evokes the peculiar value of women to Rome as the fertile resource without which the state cannot reproduce itself, cannot continue" (Roman Shakespeare 157). I agree, but would assert as well that Volumnia's alignment of Rome with the function of the breast in addition to the function of the womb also alludes to and validates the importance of the feeding form of reproduction to the state. In fact, at this moment in the play, Volumnia's story about the belly politic of Rome links the "womb" and the "stomach"--or the mother's body and the common body--rather than sets them in opposition to each other, and, in doing so, seems to even more forcefully evoke the incarnational legacy.

Many of the theatrical aspects of the supplication scene help to further affiliate it with the incarnational inheritance. Though Coriolanus insists, "I'll never / Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand / As if a man were author of himself, / And knew no other kin" (V.iii.33-37), he kisses his wife and kneels to his mother. Volumnia tells him to stand up and then kneels herself, at which point Coriolanus reaches out to raise her up. Their actions make for a physical interaction between mother and son which draws attention to, rather than severs, the bond between them. Coriolanus also directly aligns himself with the theatricality which he had once so fiercely denounced by depicting himself, albeit somewhat abashedly, as an "actor" (V.iii.40), and by asking Aufidius and the other Volsces to watch and to listen to what transpires between him and his mother. He as well acknowledges the efficacy of the theatrical when he concedes that he finds it difficult not to be feminized and sensitized by the sight of a mother and child. "Not of a woman's tenderness to be," he contends, "Requires nor child nor woman's face to see" (V.iii.129-30).

Volumnia's emphasis on the theatrical/physical aspects of her group's attempt to dissuade Coriolanus from destroying Rome seems to bring the incarnational legacy to mind, too. She assures her son, "Should we be silent and not speak, our raiment / And state of bodies would bewray what life / We have led since thy exile." She describes the women as "weep[ing], and shak[ing] with fear and sorrow," and asserts that Coriolanus is "Making the mother, wife, and child to see / The son, the husband, and the father tearing / His country's bowels out" (V.iii.94-95,100-103). Her "pleading rags," as Christina Luckyj observes, "look back to two earlier moments--to the gown of humility worn by Coriolanus when he sues for votes, and to the beggar-like disguise he dons when he turns to Aufidius and the Volscians" (336). They bind her to her son and may be construed as relating her performance before Coriolanus to Coriolanus's performance before the common citizens, and both of their performances to the practice of *imitatio Christi*--especially her performance, since she is very willingly interacting with her son for the sake of Rome's salvation. And Volumnia's construction of Coriolanus's threat as one which specifically affects the "bowels" of the country once again demonstrates that Volumnia's story about the belly politic of Rome now is taking into account the "stomach," not just the "womb"--or the common body as well as the mother's body--and, as a

consequence, is making her current story much more closely resemble the story of the incarnational inheritance than her former stories did.

When her son rises and begins to walk away, Volumnia calls him back. She asks him to "reconcile" the Romans and the Volsces so that both sides will be satisfied, reminds him "There's no man in the world / More bound to's mother," and insists that "the gods will plague [him]" if he "restrain[s]" her from "the duty which / To a mother's part belongs" (V.iii.136,158-59,167-68). When he turns away again, Volumnia requests that the other women kneel with her. Coriolanus's son also "kneels, and holds up [his] hands for fellowship" (V.iii.175). When not even their kneeling compels her son to relent, Volumnia declares, "To his surname Coriolanus longs more pride / Than pity to our prayers," and then informs Coriolanus that she and the other women and his son "will home to Rome" to "die among [their] neighbours" (V.iii.170-73). Volumnia advocates reciprocal exchange between the countries and between her son and herself, aligns the gods with her and her maternal responsibility to intercede on behalf of Rome to save it, and once again affirms the bond between the maternal entourage that she leads and the other citizens of Rome, which as Luckyj notes, is "in striking contrast to her earlier scorn for the people" (337). In doing so, Volumnia, at this point in the play, seems to recall multiple aspects of the incarnational version of motherhood, including the intercessory role of Jesus's mother, Mary; the intimate relation between the mother's body and the son's body and between the mother's body and the common body; and the mother-man Christ of the incarnational inheritance who, too, identifies himself with those who are most vulnerable and works for their salvation.

Unlike Cominius's and Menenius's petitions, Volumnia's suit succeeds. Her speech and the spectacle of the kneeling women and boy make Coriolanus's attempt to remain detached from his "birthplace" impossible. Coriolanus finally submits to his mother and "*holds her by the hand silent*" (296). R. W. Ingram highlights the impact of the silence here in a play that has been very noisy with voices, musical instruments, crowds, and battles (278). The image of the three kneeling women and one kneeling child and of a mother and a son holding hands--in a play made up of so much movement and so many short scenes and exits and entrances and battles with swords and with words--also makes for a "brilliant dramaturgical stroke," the effect of which "can be lost in just [a]

reading [of the play]" (Parker 274). Further, the silent hand-holding physicalizes/theatricalizes the relationship of the mother and the son and heightens attention to the reciprocal connection between them and, thus, to a possible link between their relationship and the incarnational legacy, which also accentuates and validates physical, theatrical, and reciprocal forms of engagement between and among mothers and sons as well as people in general.

Peace between mother and son and between the Romans and the Volscians thus is achieved--at least momentarily--at the crossroads where Coriolanus stations himself. Kahn observes that, "[i]n the Rome of this play, not only does the hero lack a father--none of the father surrogates wields much authority or wields it effectively. This vacuum of patriarchal power is accentuated when both the general Cominius and the politician Menenius fail in successive missions to Coriolanus; the women then move in, and succeed" (Roman Shakespeare 155). The women succeed in negotiating peace within and between characters and countries, I want to suggest, because the women-- Coriolanus's mother, Volumnia, in particular--have a much better understanding of matters concerning the "stomach" and the "womb," as well as the relationship between them, than the father figures of Rome do. The actions of the women's bodies along with the words of Volumnia's speech join together to enact the original version of the "pretty tale," in which the belly as well as the other members of the body mutually participate so as to contribute to the well-being of the body as a whole.

Coriolanus agrees to "frame . . . peace" rather than "make . . . war" and admits that "it is no little thing to make / [His] eyes to sweat compassion" (V.iii.190,191,195-96). He who had once "sweat[ed] with wrath" in the war with the Volsces (I.iv.27) now "sweats with compassion" in a moment of peace between the Romans and the Volsces. Coriolanus's agreement to negotiate peace between the two countries and acknowledgement of his own feelings of compassion recalls a remark made about him by the Third Citizen earlier in the play: "if he would incline to the people, there was never a worthier man" (II.iii.39-40).

VII

        When Coriolanus returns to Volscian territory with news of the peace agreement he has

brokered between the Volscians and the Romans, "*Drums and trumpets sound, with great shouts of*

*the people*" (305), and Coriolanus enters "*marching with drum and colours, the Commoners being*

*with him*" (306). The First Conspirator makes note of Coriolanus's stature when he says to Aufidius:

"Your native town you enter'd like a post, / And had no welcomes home; but he returns / Splitting the

air with noise" (V.vi.50-52).

        Aufidius, determined to "work / [Himself] a former fortune" (V.iii.200-202) and to "renew

[himself] in [Coriolanus's] fall" (V.vi.48-49), confronts Coriolanus by twice calling him a "traitor," and

four times calling him by the names "Martius" and "Caius" which Coriolanus had claimed had been

devoured when the people of Rome had banished him and which specifically link Coriolanus to

Rome, his former home, and, most particularly, to his mother (V.vi.85,87,88). When Coriolanus

indignantly reacts to Aufidius's name-calling, Aufidius asks him, "Dost thou think / I'll grace thee with

that robbery, thy stol'n name / Coriolanus?" (V.vi.88-90). Aufidius then revises the "pretty tale" which

had been told and enacted at the gates of Rome to suit his own invidious purposes. He tells the

crowd of adulators who had so jubilantly welcomed Coriolanus back to Volscian territory that

Coriolanus had "[Broken] his oath and resolution, . . . [and] at his nurse's tears . . . whin'd and roar'd

away [their] victory" (V.vi.95,96-98). He also verbally lashes out once again at Coriolanus, this time

calling him a "boy of tears!" (V.vi.101).

        Aufidius's distorted account of what happened at the gates of Rome and his reference to

Coriolanus as a "boy of tears" enrage Coriolanus even more. Coriolanus three times exclaims,

"Boy!" and reminds Aufidius, "like an eagle in a dove-cote, I / Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioles. /

Alone I did it" (V.vi.104,112,114-16). Unfortunately, in reminding Aufidius of his exploits in the

Roman war with the Volscians, Coriolanus also reminds the Volscian people of the many members

of their families who died at his hands. Being reminded of these murderous deeds infuriates the

people and compels them to turn on him and cry out, "Tear him to pieces!" (V.vi.120). Aufidius's

group of conspirators join the chorus of voices and chant, "Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him!" (V.vi.130), and

then carry out with their swords what they urge in words: they kill Coriolanus.

Critics, psychoanalytic critics in particular, often interpret Coriolanus's incensed response to Aufidius's name-calling in relation to his mother. They assert that Coriolanus must "deny that he played boy to Volumnia's 'mothering'" (Tennenhouse, "History" 232) and that he "yielded to the 'woman's tenderness' . . . within himself" (Sprengnether 105). I want to suggest that it is also possible to interpret Coriolanus's fury in relation to Aufidius.

Perhaps Aufidius calls Coriolanus "boy" as a means of reclaiming his dominant paternal status among the Volscians, and Coriolanus repeats the same word in order to reassert that he, Coriolanus, is the dominant father figure, and Aufidius the subordinate son, in the country which Coriolanus now considers his "home" (V.vi.77)--that is, as if to say, "Who is really the boy here?" or "Me, the boy?"

Or perhaps the tense interaction of Aufidius and Coriolanus may be interpreted in terms of a conflict between the new version of motherhood and the inherited versions of motherhood--with Aufidius affiliated with the former and Coriolanus with the latter. Coriolanus returns from his station at the crossroads with the commoners, or the kind of common body he had once so forcefully repudiated. He directs his insults not at these commoners but at Aufidius. He seems to construe his own body as food when he invites rather than threatens violence with his proclamation, "Cut me to pieces, Volsces, men and lads, / Stain all your edges on me" (V.vi.111-12)--especially since the body and food, and killing and eating, have so often been connected in the play. And Coriolanus does save Rome; is, in a sense, crucified for doing so; and has a mother who survives him and plays a very pivotal role in the salvation of the Romans.[19] All these aspects of Coriolanus's character seem to point to an identification with the mother and to suggest that it may very well be the authoritative father rather than the affectionate mother which Coriolanus, the featured son of the play, feels compelled to deny at this particular moment.

The final stage direction in the play even refers to Coriolanus by the name of his house and family, the name associated with his mother, rather than by the name derived from his battle at the Volscian city of Corioles, the name affiliated with the male-dominated country, the citizens of whom have now slain him. Aufidius and "three of o'th'chiefest soldiers" (V.vi.148) exit, "*bearing the body of Martius*" (311). Martius is dead, and it may indeed be possible to construe the father-men linked with

the new version of motherhood, not the man-mother linked with the inherited versions of motherhood, as responsible for his demise.

## EPILOGUE
## A MODEST PROPOSAL

Hunger, as Charles Lock contends, is both "a reminder of the body's lack of self-sufficiency" and "an affirmation of the body's connection, through orifices and apertures, with the cosmos" (74). It marks one kind of shared need, which, if left unsatisfied, turns into physical pain. The reality of hunger and other forms of physical need or pain has been largely ignored by the post-al or ludic academy in a world where the division between the haves and the have-nots is increasing. I want to close by again proposing that materialist critics resuscitate a historical analysis by considering ideological formulations in relation to very real physical need and the economic conditions of a particular moment and location--lest we privileged few become ever more complicitous in what Jonathan Swift, in the proposal of his very rational, dispassionate narrator, implies the privileged few are already complicitous in: the eating of the many poor to further fatten advantage.

I myself have tried to reinvigorate a historical analysis in my examination of motherhood in the late medieval and the early modern periods. I hope that my investigation of the variable and changing relations and gender inflections of "the production and reproduction of immediate life" has sharpened insight into the restriction of the scope and leverage of the maternal and the connection between the emergence of capitalist economic relations and the gendered division of labor. The suppression of birth control, the elaboration of notions about the propagation of offspring focused more on divine destiny than on material necessity, and the rise and reinforcement of economic schemes which eroded the ability of women to participate in production and trade, all contributed to the diminution of motherhood, while making for a ready supply of labor to work, to worship, and to fight.

I also hope that my investigation will foster a deeper understanding of early modern plays other than Macbeth and Coriolanus--for example, The Winter's Tale, which concludes with the "resurrection" of a mother thought to be dead for much of the play--as well as of early modern texts such as the mother-authored conduct books of the early seventeenth century, several of which begin with "the mother-author present[ing] herself as dead" before going on to justify her authorship on the basis of maternal love and maternal responsibility for the physical care and spiritual guidance of children (Rose, "Where Are the Mothers?" 310-13). The mother-authors of these books were new

mothers and members of the well-to-do economic class, and the publication record of their books suggests the books were popular and widely read (Travitsky, "New Mother" 33-43 and <u>Paradise of Women</u> 49-51; Beilin 266-85; Klein, <u>Daughters, Wives, and Widows</u> 287-91; Wall 283-96; Wayne, "Advice for Women" 56-79). My investigation may also be fruitfully extended, I think, by a closer look at the changing relationship between work (charitable and remunerative) and theatrical endeavor--or play--in the late medieval and early modern periods, and an exploration of the relationship between the increasing patriarchal control of mothers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the expansion of colonialist enterprises which found lucrative outlets for England's surplus population (Noonan, <u>Contraception</u> 351-52; Spengler 435; Chambers 27; Heinsohn and Steiger 194-95).

I hope that my examination of divergent notions of motherhood has also helped to shed more light on the connection between the relations of "the capitalist mode of production" and "the division between mental and manual labor" (Sinfield, "Introduction" 134)--a division which was greatly facilitated by the advent of print technology in the early modern period; which is being further extended today by the rapid growth of electronic technologies; and which, I would suggest, is linked to the current theoretical impasse troubling the efforts of committed materialist critics. The very fact that our labor is as intellectual as it is points to our on-going complicity with the new relations between the different modalities of materiality constructed by the humanists and the reformers. Like the early modern "Protestants [who] had little place in their theology for bodily pain" (Crawford, <u>Women and Religion</u> 12), many of us (post)moderns have little place in our theories for it. It is not surprising that the revival of the Corpus Christi cycles in the twentieth century should have encountered so many obstacles, and that contemporary audiences should experience so much discomfort with the prolonged scenes featuring the torture and the crucifixion of Christ (Elliot 42-70). I had the opportunity to experience this kind of uneasiness myself when directing a torture scene in Steve Wilmer's "Scenes From Soweto," a play set in South Africa and based on the 1976 student demonstrations against segregated education and the use of Afrikaans (the language of the oppressor) to teach black children about their place in the apartheid society. The audiences who came to see the play also were noticeably tense during the performance and subdued after it.

Teresa Ebert asserts that the "[t]extual politics" of ludic theorists "is especially blind to the connections and the complicities between the oppression of the many and the comfort and pleasures

of the few," and that ludic theorists "hold on to ideas since it is by the agency of ideas that [the upper-middle-class] (as privileged mental workers) acquires its social privileges" (Ludic Feminism 27, 207). I am very concerned that ludic theory is producing a more virulent version of the Cartesian subject and, by doing so, blunting the commitment and political impact of materialist critics. It behooves us, I suggest, to remember at this critical juncture of our work what Kenneth Burke is rumored to have said: that human beings do not live by the *idea* of bread alone (Spellmeyer 274). We eat, therefore we are, not just because we think.

## Chapter I

[1] My title, of course, is alluding to the seminal work, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" by the distinguished feminist historian, Joan Kelly-Gadol.

[2] I have chosen to call this version of motherhood "calculative" since "calculative" is a word which has often been used by a group of influential historians of the early modern period to describe this form of motherhood. However, as my exploration in chapter 3 will demonstrate, this group of historians has used the word to impugn the reproductive strategy of the women practicing this form of motherhood, while I use it to commend the approach.

[3] See discussion of the widespread assumption that pre-industrial Europe was unaffected by the practice of birth control in Riddle, Eve's Herbs 169. Even the outstanding authority on early modern women Betty S. Travitsky asserts that "the primitive state of . . . medical knowledge and practice created sex-specific danger for women of *all* classes because of the seeming inevitability of pregnancy among sexually active women at a time when contraceptive knowledge and practice were limited and largely ineffective and repeated childbearing and delivery were highly risky" ("Placing Women" 14).

[4] For a detailed examination of medieval and early modern birth control practices, see especially the two recent books by John M. Riddle, Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance and Eve's Herbs: A History of Contraception and Abortion in the West, and the works of Dorothy McLaren on the amenorrheal effects of prolonged and non-exclusive nursing. See also Noonan, Contraception, esp. 200-230; Schnucker, "Elizabethan Birth Control" 655-59; Ben-Yehuda 20, 21-22, 25; Roper, "Luther" 35-36, 37; Heinsohn and Steiger, passim; Fildes, Breasts, Bottles and Babies 107-109; Crawford, "Construction and Experience of Maternity" 18, 20-21; Pollock 54-58; and the references in the bibliography provided in Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial England (207-208).

[5] See, for example, Hajnal 132-34; Spengler 433-42; Noonan, Contraception 159-60, 220-22, 228-30; Nelson 344; Ben-Yehuda 18, 21; Wilson 186-87; Cahn, esp. 94-96, 104-105; Riddle, Eve's

Herbs, passim; and Herlihy, <u>Black Death</u> 53-55. See especially the work of Gunnar Heinsohn and Otto Steiger, who assemble various data and studies indicating that such economic calculation on the part of medieval parents, especially mothers, was commonplace (194, 195, 199-200, 204).

[6] My overview of women's traditional employment is indebted to Alice Clark's <u>Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century</u>. Though her research was limited to England, Clark's text, originally published in 1919, still stands as the most comprehensive introduction to women's changing relation to the economy in Europe as a whole in the late medieval and early modern periods. While historians since Clark have challenged and qualified her work by modifying her chronology, by highlighting variations in the economy based on region and the cycles of recession and boom, by pointing to the patriarchal restrictions and gendered inflections of women's labor in medieval, not just early modern, society (e.g. to women's greater responsibility for child care and domestic tasks), etc., Clark's text continues to provide a very useful introduction to women's traditional engagement in productive activities and to the erosion and devaluation of their involvement over the course of the early modern period. My discussion of women's productive contributions is additionally indebted to Amy Louise Erickson's introduction to Clark's seminal book (vii-xlii), as well as to Abram 276-85; Power 403-33; Davis, "'Women's History'" 83-103; Bridenthal and Koonz 1-10; Shahar, passim; Hilton 139-55; Prior 93-117; Amussen, "Gender, Family and the Social Order" 196-217 and <u>An Ordered Society</u>, passim; Cahn, passim; Brown 206-24; Wiesner, "Spinsters and Seamstresses" 191-205, "Women's Defense" 1-27, and <u>Working Women</u>, passim; and Roper, <u>The Holy Household</u>, esp. 1-55. For other references exploring the nature and status of women's work in the late medieval and early modern periods, see the bibliography in Erickson (xliii-lv). For a more extensive examination of the practice of remunerative wet-nursing, see the work of Dorothy McLaren, Valerie Fildes, and Gail Kern Paster.

[7] This term derives from "The New Mother," a colloquy written by Desiderius Erasmus which greatly contributed to the reformulation of motherhood in the early modern period.

[8] Mary Beth Rose ("Where are the Mothers in Shakespeare?" 295) identifies the most important of the psychoanalytic feminist studies of Shakespeare's tragedies, comedies, and romances: Adelman, "'Anger's My Meat'" 129-49 and "'Born of Woman'" 90-121; Neely, <u>Broken</u>

Nuptials, esp. 36, 167, 171-77; Erickson, Patriarchal Structures 3-4, 72, 110-12, 116-17, 145-49, 191; Sprengnether, "Annihilating Intimacy" 89-111; Kahn, "Absent Mother" 33-49 and "'Magic of Bounty'" 34-37; Orgel 50-64; Williamson, Patriarchy of Shakespeare's Comedies, esp. 160-67; and Boose, "The Father and the Bride" 325-47. Lynda E. Boose also provides an overview of the influential psychoanalytic criticism of Shakespeare's plays ("The Family in Shakespeare Studies" 714-17). For a critique of works by Melanie Klein, D. W. Winnicott, Nancy Chodorow, and Julia Kristeva--works which have played a major role in stimulating psychoanalytic feminist approaches to motherhood, see From Klein to Kristeva: Psychoanalytic Feminism and the Search for the "Good Enough" Mother, by Janice Doane and Devon Hodges. For a concise discussion of both classical oedipal theory and preoedipal object relations theory, see Sprengnether, "Annihilating Intimacy" 89-91.

[9] Jean E. Howard, for example, contends that "the historically-minded critic must increasingly be willing to acknowledge the non-objectivity of his or her own stance and the inevitably political nature of interpretive and even descriptive acts." She also suggests that, while "[s]elf-effacement, neutrality, disinterestedness . . . are the characteristics privileged in the Academy," the "claims to possess them [are no] more than a disingenuous way of obscuring how one's own criticism is non-objective, interested and political" ("The New Historicism" 43).

[10] My brief summary of significant theoretical developments is based on the works of numerous scholars, perhaps most principally Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, and Jean-François Lyotard.

[11] My discussion of this debate is again based on the works of many scholars, primarily Wayne, Matter of Difference 1-26; Jankowski 1-21; Howell 139-47; Howard, "The New Historicism" 13-43 and "Feminism and the Question of History" 149-57; Neely, "Constructing the Subject" 5-18 and "Constructing Female Sexuality" 1-3; Porter 743-86; Dawson, "New Historicism" 328-41; Haraway 575-99; Howard and O'Connor 1-17; Cohen, "Political Criticism" 18-46; Montrose, Purpose of Playing 1-16 and "Renaissance Literary Studies" 5-12; Miller 271-88; Dollimore, "Introduction" 2-17; Drakakis 1-25; and Kavanagh 144-65.

[12] For succinct and illuminating discussions of the development and range of feminist theories, see Belsey and Moore 1-20; Belsey, "A Future" 257-70; Wayne, Matter of Difference 1-26; and Jankowski 1-21.

[13] Both Scarry's The Body in Pain and Brown's The Gifts of the Body are books which have a deep personal resonance for me. I read both of them about six months after my sister died of cancer. Scarry's book addressed matters which I had encountered for the first time while helping to care for my sister in the last month of her life--more particularly, the difficulty of registering physical pain in language and the paucity of literature which even makes an attempt (never mind succeeds) at articulating this kind of pain. I, for example, was profoundly shocked and shaken when my sister lost the ability to cry. The two things I kept telling my friends were "she can't cry" and "I haven't even read about such a thing." I had anticipated the loss of appetite, of mobility, of consciousness, and of many other faculties, even of the ability to breathe at the end, but not of the capacity to cry. It was in Brown's novel that I read about this particular kind of loss for the first time. A whole chapter of the book is devoted to the "gift of tears."

[14] Contrary to what Riehle has to say, we have not *completely* lost this sensual way of knowing and acquiring knowledge. I, for example, grew up with farmers--one of whom was my father, and none of whom had taken any Chemistry classes--who would determine whether or not they should leave a field fallow for a year by first rubbing a small sample of dirt in the palm of the hand to carefully look at and feel it and then dabbing it on the tongue to taste it. Clearly, these farmers were evaluating the condition of the soil through their physical senses, a way of knowing and acquiring knowledge I'm sad to say I never learned.

[15] The apt expression, "Word made print," is Jane O. Newman's (95).

[16] Lisa Jardine in her work, Erasmus, Man of Letters, contends that "Erasmus's consummate mastery of his chosen medium, print" served to "[s]o strongly . . . [mark] the 'humanities' or the 'liberal arts' that we fail to recognize the strangeness and unfamiliarity of the . . . figure [of the European teacher and man of letters] he shaped" or its influence on our own work (9, 29, and passim).

[17] In considering these comments by Aers, I cannot help but think of Huston Diehl's recent book, Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage, which makes claims about the reformation of theatrical enterprises and the emergence of a distinctly Protestant theatrical aesthetic without once considering the most popular, elaborate, and frequently produced form of drama--the Corpus Christi cycles-- which preceded the emergence of the secular theater and plays in the sixteenth century. These cycles were developed over two centuries, a much longer period of time than that which marked Renaissance drama--especially the heyday of Renaissance drama. They also engaged the efforts and resources of huge numbers of people in towns all over the country, so much so that many scholars construe the cycles as a drama truly of the people, for the people, and by the people.

Unlike Diehl, Louis Montrose, in his analysis of the "reformation of playing" in the early modern period, does consider the civic religious form of drama which was elaborated and enacted in the towns of the later Middle Ages. He also acknowledges that the background of the majority of early modern playwrights and play-goers would have been informed by the artisanal milieu in which the Corpus Christi plays were performed, and speculates about how this inheritance may have affected the development of Renaissance drama (Purpose of Playing, passim). However, even Montrose, it seems to me, slights the significance of the centuries-old Corpus Christi pageants and the many other long-standing late medieval theatrical works when he credits Shakespeare's "dramatistic conception of social life," as it is evinced in the "metadramatic or metatheatrical dimensions of Shakespeare's plays," to "the historical circumstances of Shakespeare's experience as Elizabethan player, playwright, and theatrical entrepreneur" (208). First of all, the Corpus Christi cycles, too, are infused with metatheatricalism (see, for example, my discussion on pages 68-69). Secondly, theatricality abounded in the late medieval era, as my exploration in chapter 2 will demonstrate. The recovery and scrutiny of records through the REED (Records of Early English Drama) project testify to the veritable ubiquity of a range of dramatic activities in the fourteenth and fifteen centuries--so much so that Alexandra F. Johnston, the Coordinator of the REED project, has felt compelled to make the assertion that "All the world was a stage" in the late medieval period ("Records of Early English Drama" 117). Further, Martin Stevens persuasively argues that the early modern theater's "world as stage" construction is deeply indebted to medieval ideas about the mappa

*mundi* and the *theatrum mundi* ("'From *Mappa Mundi* to *Theatrum Mundi* " 25-49). The point I am trying to get at here is that the "dramatistic conception of social life" in Shakespeare's plays was more likely an ingenious appropriation of an already existing and long-standing dramatistic apprehension of human society, rather than an innovative idea due to the historical conditions of Shakespeare's experience as an active participant in the formation of the secular theater--although this experience of his, without a doubt, would have served to nurture and encourage his acceptance and deployment of the *theatrum mundi* metaphor.

**Chapter II**

[1] Theodor E. Mommsen also finds evidence of the conception of the Middle Ages as "dark" in the work of Petrarch, the "Father of Humanism" (106-29).

[2] Martin Stevens comments upon Huizinga's frequent use of the word "ignorant" to describe the mass of people ("Medieval Drama" 45).

[3] Other revisionist critics also acknowledge the influence of Huizinga's work. See, for example, Davidson, "Devotional Impulse" 3; Stevens, "Medieval Drama" 45, 46; Bynum, Resurrection of the Body 330-31, Holy Feast 250, 278, and Fragmentation and Redemption 92; Hamburger 164-66; and Duffy 301, 302, 304.

[4] Peter Brown (Cult of the Saints 13-22), R. W. Scribner (91-92), Jeffrey Hamburger (161-82), Gail McMurray Gibson (59-60), Thomas Kselman (6), Miri Rubin (Corpus Christi 7), and Eamon Duffy (1-3, and passim) discuss the limitations of the two-tier model. Brown (Cult of the Saints 17-18), Kselman (2-7), Rubin (Corpus Christi 7), and Duffy (1, 7) identify and challenge in particular the debilitating tendency to focus on the viewpoint of the elite. David Aers ("Introduction" 2), Sarah Beckwith ("Ritual, Church and Theatre" 81 and Christ's Body 6), and Jacqueline Murray (1-2) also contend that critical preoccupation with the accounts of clerics too often makes for a myopic perspective of the late medieval period.

[5] This perspective is also so pervasive that it hardly requires source notation. As Beckwith points out ("Ritual, Church and Theatre" 76 and Christ's Body 36), two historians of the liturgy, Dom Gregory Dix, in The Shape of the Liturgy, and Theodor Klauser, in A Short History of the Western

Liturgy, emphasize the degree to which the medieval Mass was a "clerical spectacle" rather than an occasion for lay participation. Duffy, in his recent work The Stripping of the Altars, highlights additional works and quotes which encourage the view of the clergy and laity as increasingly separated and estranged from the activities of the Mass (110-11). For example, though Duffy maintains that B. L. Manning's treatment of religion in The People's Faith in the Time of Wyclif, published in 1919, is still one of the most nuanced and sympathetic, he disputes Manning's perception that during the late medieval period the service tended to be left "more and more to the clerks alone." Duffy also suggests that Gibson (41), in referring to Clifford Flanigan's paper titled "The Medieval English Mystery Cycles and the Liturgy," presented at the seventeenth Medieval Studies Congress in May 1982, seems to endorse Flanigan's view that the lay people were alienated from the liturgy (despite, I must add, the predominantly revisionist thrust of her work when it comes to other stereotypical perpectives of the late medieval period). For two more of many scholarly works which construe the laity in the later Middle Ages as basically passive and detached during the ritual of the Eucharist, see McDonald 115-18 and McCue 428-29. Scribner, while acknowledging the importance of recent studies which make visible and valuable the long-neglected and much disparaged "popular" forms of late medieval religion, maintains that over-emphasis upon the distinction between the elite and the popular forms produces a "false polarization" (91-92). Kselman, in his brief review of different approaches to the history of religion, also recognizes both the value and the limitations of the recent investigations largely focused on beliefs and experiences of the laity (4-6).

[6] Works with a good overview of key misogynist texts include Rogers, passim; O'Faolain and Martines, passim; Miller 397-473; Bornstein 322-25; Salisbury 279-89; Camille 79-83; and Murray 3-5. For works which examine in even greater detail the scientific views of the male and female roles in conception, see Tress 307-341; Atkinson, Oldest Vocation 23-63; Laqueur, Making Sex, esp. 25-62, and "Orgasm, Generation, and the Politics of Reproductive Biology" 4-7; Allen 83-126; Robertson 142-50; Boylan 83-112; McLaren, Reproductive Rituals 16-18; Cadden 157-71; Wood 710-27; Morsink 83-112; Preus 65-85; Horowitz 183-213; Bullough, "Medieval Medical and Scientific Views" 485-501; O'Faolain and Martines 118-26; and Needham 18-109.

[7] Ruether, "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism" 150-83 and "The Feminist Critique in Religious Studies" 389-90; McLaughlin, "Equality of Souls" 213-266; McNamara 145-58; and Castelli 61-88. Even Renée Neu Watkins, in her recent work "Two Women Visionaries and Death," reproduces the view of late medieval women's devotion which emphasizes the hatred of flesh when she asserts, "It is disturbing to notice that, in content, the line of development to which women contributed was even more dualistic . . . than medieval Christianity in general" (183). R. Howard Bloch, however, perhaps posits the most extreme view of misogyny's preeminence in the period when he asserts that the title of his article, "Medieval Misogyny," may seem redundant "because the topic of misogyny . . . participates in a vestigial horror practically synonymous with the term *medieval*" (1).

[8] Ruether, "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism" 159, 160-61, 164, 176; McLaughlin, "Equality of Souls" 234-35; Pagels 294; McNamara 153-55; Castelli 74-76, 78, 88; Watkins 174, 188-89, and Travitsky, "Placing Women" 20.

[9] Ruether, "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism" 179; McLaughlin, "Equality of Souls" 245-51; Warner, passim; Bäl 39; and Kristeva 133-52.

[10] My work is deeply indebted to Caroline Walker Bynum's extensive exploration of the late medieval construction of Christ as food, body, and mother. See her Jesus as Mother, esp. 110-69, "Fast, Feast, and Flesh," esp. 7-9, 13-16, Holy Feast, esp. 260-76, "Bodily Miracles" 70, 73, 78, and Fragmentation and Redemption, esp. 80-83, 93-108, 205-222. Additional discussion and citations for earlier work on the subject of Jesus as food, body, and mother may be found in Constable 45-46; McLaughlin, "'Christ My Mother'" 228-28; Petroff, Consolation of the Blessed 60-76, 78-80 and Body and Soul 217-19; O'Meara 75-88; Coletti, "Devotional Iconography" 264-65; Beckwith, "A Very Material Mysticism" 51-54 and Christ's Body 78-94; Hamburger 167-80; Ash 75-105; Atkinson, Oldest Vocation, esp. 119-24, 162-63; Rubin, Corpus Christi 26-28; Watkins 179-83, 195; and Camille 77. Valerie M. Lagorio focuses on the construction of Christ as mother in English works in particular. She points out that this construction "used allegorically, affectively, intellectually and theologically, is in surprising evidence in both Latin and vernacular works written in England from the 12th through

the 15th centuries [sic], supplemented by Middle English translations of Continental mystical works, which were accomplished for the most part during the late 14th and 15th centuries" (15-37).

[11] For a detailed exploration of the well-documented shift in piety in the later Middle Ages and the contributing influence of Hugh of St. Victor, Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Francis, Thomas Aquinas, and others, see, for example, Southern, Making of the Middle Ages 237ff.; Sticca 74-83; Jeffrey, esp. 19-24; Beckwith, Christ's Body esp. 45-70; O'Connell, "God's Body" 62-87; and Bynum's works.

[12] For informative, succinct discussions of Cathar dualism, see Macy 81-84; Bynum, Holy Feast 252-53 and Resurrection of the Body 217-20; O'Connell, "God's Body" 68; and Noonan, Contraception (esp. 183-93).

[13] In-depth exploration of this shift in the construction of the Eucharist may be found in Rubin, Corpus Christi, esp. 12-82, and "The Eucharist" 44-47; and Bynum, Holy Feast, esp. 31-69. For a good overview of the changing perspectives of the Eucharist, see Macy's The Banquet's Wisdom: A Short History of the Theologies of the Lord's Supper.

[14] For extended investigation of the construction of the consecrated Christ as human flesh and blood and the Eucharist's capacity for spiritual and corporeal sustenance, see sources in note 13. See also Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption, passim, Holy Feast, passim, "Fast; Feast, and Flesh" 1-25, and Jesus as Mother, esp. 113-86; Camporesi, Anatomy of the Senses 159, 170-73 and "Consecrated Host" 220-37; Duffy, esp. 91, 93, 95, 100, 104, 106; Ash 75-105; Travis, "Semiotics of Christ's Body" 67-78; Porter, esp. 10; Gibson, esp. 7-8, 51; McCue 430, 432; Sinanoglou 504-505; and Jungmann 1: 118.

[15] See note 10.

[16] Helen Rosenau suggests that it was the preoccupation with the change of bread into flesh and of wine into blood which generated this new focus on the fetal Christ in his mother's womb (179).

[17] For a more comprehensive exploration of the construction of Christ as food, body, and mother, see sources in note 10.

[18] That Aristotle's theory of conception helped to connect the divine with the feminine, the maternal, and the physical, in the late medieval period, further complicates the debate about the

degree to which his theory was sexist. See, for example, Allen (passim) and Horowitz (183-213) who maintain that Aristotle's systematic devaluation of women laid the foundation for modern theories of sexual difference and male dominance, and Morsink ((83-112) and Tress (307-341) who, while acknowledging that Aristotle's formulations have often historically been used against women, contend that a more careful reading of Aristotle demonstrates that his theory, unlike earlier theories, recognized and validated the female contribution.

[19] Wood 717-23, 725; Bynum, Holy Feast 239; Atkinson, Oldest Vocation 118, 155; and Coletti, "Paradox of Mary's Body" 82, 85-86.

[20] For discussion of medieval theories of conception or bodily fluids, see sources in note 6 and also Bynum, "Fast, Feast, and Flesh," esp. 14-15, Holy Feast, esp. 262, 265, and Fragmentation and Redemption, esp. 87, 100, 214-15; Ash 86-90; Laqueur, "Politics of Reproductive Biology" 8-9 and Making Sex 103-107; Goodich, "Bartholomaeus Anglicus on Child-Rearing" 80; and McLaughlin, "Survivors and Surrogates" 115.

[21] For a closer look at the prolonged and non-exclusive aspects of breastfeeding at the time, see, in particular, McLaren, "Marital Fertility," esp. 25, 28-29; Fildes, Breasts, Bottles and Babies, passim; and Paster, Body Embarrassed, esp. 231-33.

[22] Bynum, Holy Feast 58-60, Fragmentation and Redemption 44-45, and Resurrection of the Body, esp. 148-50; Camporesi, "Consecrated Host" 220-37; and Rubin, Corpus Christi 64-72, 77, 147-50, 155-63 and "Person in the Form" 111.

[23] Jungmann 1: 119-21; Constable 44-45; Ash 81; Bynum Holy Feast 32, 53-59, 250-51 and Fragmentation and Redemption 127, 185; Rubin, Corpus Christi 49-64, 77, 93-98, 150-53, 155-63, and "The Eucharist" 49-50; and Duffy 95-104, 118.

[24] See sources in note 5.

[25] See, in particular, Duffy, esp. 20, 26-27, 31, 95-104, 109-116, 129-30. See also Hardison 35-79; Beckwith, "Ritual, Church and Theatre" 65-89; Rubin, Corpus Christi, esp. 35-82, 93-98, 103-108, and "The Eucharist" 47-50; Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 45; Sinanoglou 498; and Jungmann 1: 119-125.

[26] Jungmann 120-21; Macy 119; Sinanoglou 499, 506; Lepow, "Middle English Elevation Prayers" 85; Coletti, "Sacrament and Sacrifice" 240; Rubin, Corpus Christi 63, 159-60; and Duffy 100.

[27] See also Sandro Sticca's discussion of the importance of music and song to late medieval liturgy and devotion (esp. 70-72).

[28] Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 101 and Holy Feast 53, 57, 285; Gibson 174; and Rubin, Corpus Christi 142-43.

[29] For an overview of the debate about whether the Mass should be viewed as a ritual, which literally re-actualizes a past event, or as a theatrical performance, which merely acts out a past event, see Beckwith, "Ritual, Church, and Theatre," esp. 75-81.

[30] Riehle discusses in detail the late medieval connection of the spiritual and the sensual (Middle English Mystics, passim, esp. chap. 8). Lagorio not only recognizes the connection between wisdom and the physical senses in late medieval works but also explores their "treatment of Wisdom as mother" (19-21). Petroff alludes to the portrayal of Sapientia, and also Caritas, as female (Body and Soul 12).

[31] Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 59, Holy Feast 21-22, and Jesus as Mother 9-21, 185; Herlihy, "Women in Medieval Society" 8-10; McLaughlin, "Equality of Souls" 236-45; and Southern, Western Society 309-312. See also sources in note 7.

[32] For a more extensive examination of the growth in both the number and the types of religious roles during the late medieval period, see Petroff, Body and Soul 7, 51-79; Bynum, Holy Feast 13-30, Fragmentation and Redemption 59-60, and Jesus as Mother 9-21, 182-86, 247-62; Carpenter 57-93; Atkinson, Oldest Vocation 164-91; Herlihy, "Women in Medieval Society" 10-12, 13-14 and "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" 4-8, 15-16; Dickman 152-57; Goodich, "Contours of Female Piety" 20-32 and Vita Perfecta 173-85; Bolton 253-73; and Southern, Western Society 312-31.

[33] See note 11.

[34] My discussion of the gender inflections in late medieval eucharistic relationships and religious practices is again deeply indebted to Bynum's insightful exploration of them (Jesus as

<u>Mother</u>, esp. 110-262, "Fast, Feast, and Flesh" 3-16, <u>Holy Feast</u>, passim, "Bodily Miracles" 70-71, <u>Fragmentation and Redemption</u>, passim, and <u>Resurrection of the Body</u>, esp. 221-22, 334-41). See also the other sources listed in note 10.

[35] See also Anson 1-32 and Bullough, "Transvestites in the Middle Ages" 1381-94.

[36] Bynum, in particular, examines both the quantitative and qualitative evidence for the centrality of food and flesh in the piety of late medieval women (<u>Holy Feast</u>, esp. 73-186, and <u>Fragmentation and Redemption</u>, esp. 119-50). See also Bolton 262, 263-64, 266-67.

[37] See also Ash for an account of women's capacity "to make [this] metaphor literal" in ways not accessible to men (91).

[38] Women's use of images of food, eating, sexual union, and fertility to talk about the desire for union with God and the promise of salvation was encouraged by Scripture. Bynum provides the most important of the influential biblical passages (<u>Holy Feast</u> 411 n. 57): Song of Songs 1:2, Cor. 3:1-2, Heb. 5:12, and 1 Peter 2:2. Her secondary list includes: Isa. 49:1, 49:15, and 66:11-13, Ecclus. 24:24-26, and Matt. 23:37.

[39] See also Hamburger 173, 174 and Atkinson, <u>Oldest Vocation</u> 162-63 for an exploration of the simultaneity of pleasure and pain in women's devotion.

[40] For additional discussion of Christ's body in Bakhtin's terms as both the closed, classical body and the open, grotesque body, see Beckwith, <u>Christ's Body</u> 44, 63.

[41] For a more detailed examination of the development of this form of religious life, see Constable 40-44; Petroff, <u>Consolation of the Blessed</u> 72, 76 and <u>Body and Soul</u> 6, 11, 51-52; Dickman 156; Goodich, "Contours of Female Piety" 23, 30 and <u>Vita Perfecta</u> 175-76, 182-83; Bynum, <u>Jesus as Mother</u> 33-34, 50-52, 251; and Beckwith, <u>Christ's Body</u> 53-54. Wolfgang Riehle, in his study on late medieval mysticism, finds that "[t]he closest links between England and the continent" are "in the area of female mysticism" (<u>Middle English Mystics</u> 165).

[42] For additional discussion of women's identification with Christ's physicality and vulnerability, see Beckwith, "A Very Material Mysticism" 47-48.

[43] In addition to the aspects of this lay religious engagement which I've discussed here, see Duffy, <u>The Stripping of the Altars</u> 1-376 for a remarkable overview and very persuasive presentation

of what he refers to as "the range and vigour of late medieval and early modern English Catholicism" (6). See also Gibson's Theater of Devotion for a far-ranging examination of lay devotional activities.

[44] For a more in-depth exploration of medieval theories of bodily fluids, see sources in note 20.

[45] For a detailed examination of this model of sexuality see Bullough, "Medieval Medical and Scientific Views" 488-89, 492-93, and Laqueur Making Sex, passim, and "Politics of Reproductive Biology," passim. For discussion of late medieval, medical approaches to gender anomalies, fluidity, and ambiguity, see Rubin, "Person in the Form" 101-102, 103, 106-107 and "The Body, Whole and Vulnerable" 20-21.

[46] For examples of women who crossdressed for these reasons, see Goodich, "Contours of Female Piety" 25 and Vita Perfecta 177-78; Bynum, Holy Feast 417n.44; and Petroff, Body and Soul 106-107.

[47] Bolton 266; Weinstein and Bell 123-37; Goodich, "Contours of Female Piety" 32; Bynum, Holy Feast 26 and Fragmentation and Redemption 35, 59, 60, 149, 153; Atkinson, Oldest Vocation 123-24; and Carpenter 62.

[48] Jennifer Carpenter finds evidence of another view of the focus of women's devotion in her examination of the biography of Juette of Huy: that because Mary and Christ were so often conflated, "devotion to one" could be construed as "devotion to the other" (63).

[49] For a general overview of works which maintain that women need female deities, saints, or symbols, and that the presence or absence of them corresponds quite directly with women's experience, see Ruether, "The Feminist Critique in Religious Studies" 391-95; Silk 11, 20-21; and Bynum, "The Complexity of Symbols" 6, 9-10. Ruether, Silk, and Bynum (not only in "The Complexity of Symbols" 1-20, but in all of her works) also argue for an alternative approach to religious traditions--one which more carefully explores the complex interplay between religious constructions and social reality.

[50] See sources on misogyny in notes 6 and 7--in McLaughlin, esp. 101-115, and in Castelli, esp. 68-70. See also Bynum, Jesus as Mother 143 and Holy Feast 20, 226, and Gibson 61.

[51] Peter Brown investigates the significance of virginity in early Christianity (Body and Society, passim) and Clarissa Atkinson explores its changing meaning in the medieval period ("'Precious Balsam in a Fragile Glass'" 131-43). See also Ruether, "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism" 159; Jankowski 25-31; and Duffy 175-76.

[52] On women's very physical and erotic relationship with Christ see Taylor 442, 459-70; Kieckhefer 89-121; Hamburger 168-69, 171-75, 176-77, 180-81; Gibson 15, 47-65; Petroff Body and Soul 55-57, 61-62; and the sources listed in notes 10 and 28.

[53] Rosemary Radford Ruether, for example, characterizes the women's experiences as a "sublimation of sexual libido that rejected it on the level of physical experience, but allowed it to flourish on the level of fantasy elevated to represent the ecstatic nuptials of the bridal soul with Christ" ("Misogynism and Virginal Feminism" 167).

[54] Bynum, Jesus as Mother 142 and Holy Feast, 31-69, 237-44; Atkinson, Oldest Vocation 144-62, 191-92 and "'Precious Balsam in a Fragile Glass'" 142; Carpenter 57-93; Duffy 181-83; Duby 107-120; Herlihy, "Making of the Medieval Family" 127-128; Gold 102-117; Glasser 3-34; Wood 717-23, 725; Constable 42; and Noonan, Contraception, esp. 303-340.

[55] Bynum, Holy Feast, esp. 237-44, and Jesus as Mother 93-95; Beckwith, Christ's Body 27-28, 30-33; Camille 62-77; Le Goff 12-27; and Bernstein 9.

[56] Bynum, Holy Feast, esp. 208-18, 237-44; Petroff, Consolation of the Blessed 40-42 and Body and Soul 9-10, 18; and Duby 107-120.

[57] See also Theodora A. Jankowski's overview of the history of the virgin lifestyle and its disruptive effects upon patriarchal formulations (25-31).

[58] Petroff, Consolation of the Blessed 2; Glasser 23-32; Weinstein and Bell 123-37, 220-21; Herlihy, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" 2-8; Bynum, Jesus as Mother 137-38, Holy Feast 20-21, 239, and Fragmentation and Redemption 60; and Atkinson, Oldest Vocation 164, 186.

[59] Bolton 253-60, 267-73; Goodich, "Contours of Female Piety" 20, 30-32 and Vita Perfecta 183-84; Atkinson, "'Precious Balsam in a Fragile Glass'" 139-42; Rubin, Corpus Christi 120-21; Petroff, Body and Soul 139-81 and Consolation of the Blessed 13, 56-57; and Bynum, Jesus as

Mother 14, 142-46, Holy Feast 13-14, 99-112, 227-37, 244, and Fragmentation and Redemption 37, 39, 135-38, 143, 167, 195-96.

[60] Bynum, Jesus as Mother 9-21, 247-62, Holy Feast 227-34, 235-36, and Fragmentation and Redemption 135-37; Beckwith, Christ's Body 94-102, 111; Weinstein and Bell 228-32; and Bolton 253-73.

[61] Watkins 185-88; Beckwith, Christ's Body 94-102; and Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 138, 195-96 and Holy Feast 229.

[62] Bolton 253-73 and Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 36-37, 137 and Holy Feast 229.

[63] See also Bolton 255, 267-73; Atkinson, Oldest Vocation 94-95; and Carpenter 57-93.

[64] Bolton 256-62, 265; Rosenwein and Little 4-32; Little, passim; Weinstein and Bell 194-219; Goodich, Vita Perfecta 69-81; Kieckhefer 192-93; Bynum, Jesus as Mother 182-83, "Fast, Feast, and Flesh" 1-2, and Holy Feast 120, 226-27; Beckwith, Christ's Body, esp. 98-110; and Petroff, Body and Soul 68-71, 130.

[65] This trend parallelled developments in the secular domain. Between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, the capacity for aristocratic women to control property and exercise power declined while the opportunities for ordinary women to acquire employment, generate profit, and achieve greater independence in the small crafts, shops, and businesses of the new towns increased. See Power 410-433; McNamara and Wemple, "The Power of Women" 126-41 and "Sanctity and Power" 90-118; Kelly-Gadol 137-64; Hughes 262-96; Herlihy, "Women in Medieval Society" 4-8, 10, "Making of the Medieval Family" 116-130, and "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" 1-2, 8-16; Farmer 517-43; Castelli 82-84; and Bynum, Holy Feast 22.

[66] See Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, passim, and Camporesi, Bread of Dreams, esp. 25-44.

[67] Petroff, Consolation of the Blessed 40-42, 61, 81-82; Bynum, "Fast, Feast, and Flesh" 10-13 and Holy Feast 219-37; Dickman, esp. 158, 160; Carpenter and MacLean xvi; and Carpenter 57-93.

[68] For further discussion of the late medieval, holy women's movement, see Bynum, Fragmentation and Redemption 134-39, 195, Holy Feast, passim, and Jesus as Mother 9-21, 170-262; Petroff, Body and Soul, esp. 3-24, 51-79, 129-30 and Consolation of the Blessed 4; Beckwith, "A Very Material Mysticism" 35-36; Dickman 152-57, 166; Herlihy, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" 2-8, 15-16; Goodich, "Contours of Female Piety" 20-32 and Vita Perfecta 173-85; and Bolton 253-73. Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women, a collection of essays edited by Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth MacLean, explores the eminence not only of medieval holy women but also of medieval widows and queens. Sharon Farmer examines the religious influence of medieval wives (517-43).

[69] Goodich, "Contours of Female Piety" 31 and Vita Perfecta 184; McDonald 119; Dickman 152; Bynum, Holy Feast 55, 77 and Fragmentation and Redemption 41-42, 122; and Rubin, Corpus Christi 169-72.

[70] For a detailed look at Juliana's vision, her work and the work of others to get the new feast established, and the rapid spread and development of the new feast after its re-promulgation in 1317, see Rubin, Corpus Christi 164-212.

[71] See, for example, Sinanoglou 498-501; Davidson, "Realism of the York Realist" 280; Nitecki 231; Lagorio 17; and Richardson and Johnston 14.

[72] Throughout her book, The Theater of Devotion, Gibson adds to the discussion of the relationship between drama and ritual by exploring theatrical forms of devotion and devotional forms of theater.

[73] Robinson, "Late Medieval Cult" 509; Wickham, "Stage and Drama" 34, 35, 38; Sticca 69-87; Jeffrey 17-46; Davidson, "Realism of the York Realist" 274, 275, 276, 281, 283; Riehle, "English Corpus Christi Plays" 182, 192; Flanigan, "Karl Young" 158-59; Richardson and Johnston 65; and Rubin, Corpus Christi 276-77. O'Connell's recent work relates not only the mendicant movement of the Franciscans but also the late medieval theories of body and spirit and the early Latin liturgical drama, to the emergence of vernacular drama ("God's Body" 66-82).

[74] My overview of demographic trends and the key factors influencing them in early modern Europe is primarily based on Hajnal 101-143; Spengler 433-46; Noonan, Contraception 228-30, 345

and "Intellectual and Demographic History" 463-85; Chambers 9-32, 70; Nelson 343-48; Ben-Yehuda 13, 17-22, 25; Heinsohn and Steiger 193-214; Riddle, Even's Herbs, esp. 163-179; and Herlihy, Black Death, esp. 39-57.

[75] For discussions of the ubiquity and variety of late medieval drama, see especially Speirs 88; Johnston, "Records of Early English Drama" 1-19 and "External Evidence for Early English Drama" 117-29; Ashley, "Cultural Approaches" 57-66; and Richardson and Johnston 13.

[76] See, for example, Nelson, 15f; Baker, esp. 205-206; Gibson, passim; Stevens, "Medieval Drama" 36, 44; Johnston, "Records of Early English Drama" 118; and Rubin, Corpus Christi 272-73, 274, 275-76, 278-83. See also Wickham, "Introduction" 6-18, for an excellent overview of the developments which have influenced the contemporary study and understanding of medieval drama.

[77] This term is again from Elaine Scarry's The Body in Pain.

[78] I identify references to stage directions in the cycles by page number and references to speech by play and line numbers. For this study, I used the Early English Text Society editions of the N-Town, Towneley, and Chester cycles, and Richard Beadle's edition of the York cycle.

[79] Other statements about Christ's being born of his mother's body in the Towneley cycle include: 9: 164-65; 10: 35, 131, 334; 11: 31-33; 12: 493-46; 13: 977-78; 14: 417, 419-20; 16: 289-90; 306-08; 17: 58-59, 138; 18: 1; 19: 161, 163; 26: 658; 27: 2, 385; 28: 186-87, 243, 345, 598; 29: 443.

[80] For additional examples of a very similar image of the conception of Christ, see 10: 35-37 in the Towneley Cycle, and 12: 16 and 21: 97-100 in the N-Town Cycle.

[81] Gibson discusses many more aspects of the N-Town Cycle's dramaturgical rendering of Jesus's conception (144-52).

[82] Coletti not only explores the various versions of Joseph's struggle to interpret the contradiction of Mary's protestations of innocence and pregnant body but also analyzes in great detail the larger theological, social, and theatrical implications of Joseph's confusion and Mary's virginal maternity ("Paradox of Mary's Body" 65-95).

[83] See also 10: 113, 158-60, 204-206, 329, 331; 12: 527-28, 536-37; 14: 561-64, 569; 18: 33-34; 19: 165-66; 20: 70-71; 20: 159, 564-667.

[84] It's interesting to note in the context of this discussion that the long medieval poem Cursor Mundi which outlines the history of Antichrist, specifically states that the Antichrist will be born "'of a man and a wommon / But nat of a mayden allone' in Jerusalem" (qtd. in Manly 155 and Marshall 722-23).

[85] For additional analysis of the relationship between Isaac and Christ, see Woolf, "Effect of Typology" 805-25; Kolve, Corpus Christi 72-75; Sheingorn, "Typology" 92-98; and Lepow, Enacting the Sacrament 71-74.

[86] Sinanoglou 494-95; Travis, Dramatic Design 121-23; Coletti, "Devotional Iconography" 259; and J. W. Robinson, Fifteenth-Century Stagecraft 100.

[87] Nitecki 231-32; Roney 719; and Lepow, "'What God Has Cleansed'" 281, 282 and Enacting the Sacrament 85.

[88] Robert Adams also observes that the feasts of the Towneley and Chester shepherds feature prominently a number of items forbidden by the Levitical dietary laws (103).

[89] For additional analysis of eucharistic allusions in the Towneley First Shepherds' Play, see Roney 715-21 and Robinson, Fifteenth-Century Stagecraft 99-100. See also Margery M. Morgan's exploration of the relation between the secular meals and the Mass in the cycles' shepherds' plays (684, 687).

[90] Chidamian 186-90; Kolve, Corpus Christi 173; Sinanoglou 507-509; Roney 714-22; Coletti, "Sacrament and Sacrifice" 239; and Lepow, Enacting the Sacrament 88-91.

[91] Leah Sinanoglou, in her examination of the Second Shepherds' Play, also explores the relationship between the sacrifice of a sheep in the Old Testament and the sacrifice of Jesus in the New Testament (503-504).

[92] Sinanoglou 506, 508; Travis, Dramatic Design 111, 128-29; and Lepow, "Middle English Elevation Prayers" 85-88, "'What God Has Cleansed'" 283, and Enacting the Sacrament 81-83, 86-88, 91-92.

[93] See note 22. See also Coletti, "Devotional Iconography" 259.

[94] See also Lauren Lepow for an discussion of this tension (Enacting the Sacrament 88, 91).

[95] Theresa Coletti not only examines many of the other eucharistic resonances of Christ's body in the N-Town cycle but also draws extensive parallels between the cycle's approach to the subject and the iconographic treatment of it in numerous other visual works of the time ("Sacrament and Sacrifice" 239-64).

[96] Woolf, English Mystery Plays 257; Helterman 139; Stevens, Four Middle English Mystery Cycles 157; Travis, "Social Body" 27, 29; Lepow, Enacting the Sacrament 101-114; Hanning 120-21; Richardson and Johnston 68; and Sponsler 149.

[97] See also Claire Sponsler's discussion of the feminization and maternalization of Christ's body in these scenes (149, 152).

[98] My discussion of the eucharistic nuances in the Towneley versions of these plays is indebted to Lepow's examination of them (Enacting the Sacrament esp. 97-142). For other examples of the resurrected Christ's emphasis on the sight and the sacramental construction of his wounded body in the Towneley play, see 26: 237, 244, 250-53, 269-70, 283-89, 345-46. Other pointed references to Jesus's physicality throughout the Towneley Cycle are numerous. They include: 7: 185, 225-26, 229; 17: 61, 100; 19: 35, 45; 20: 535; 23: 284; 26: 414, 431-34; 27: 15-17, 187, 373-76, 409-12; 28: 14-16, 133-34, 139-140, 285-87, 289, 301, 318, 398, 565.

[99] Cawley 215; Nitecki 230-31; Roney 719-20; and Lepow, Enacting the Sacrament 86.

[100] Peter Travis investigates in more detail the beneficial effects induced by the vision of Christ in the Chester play (Dramatic Design 129-30).

[101] Explorations of the ritualistic or devotional aspects of the Corpus Christi drama include Speirs 86-92; Robinson, "Late Medieval Cult" 512-14; Davidson, "Concept of Purpose" 2-3, 14; Travis, Dramatic Design 22, 108, 117, 121ff.; Coletti, "Devotional Iconography" 249-71; Ashley, "An Anthropological Approach" 128; Gibson, passim; and Richardson and Johnston 21-23. Morgan 688; Righter 16, 17, 18-19, 23; Kolve, Corpus Christi 105; Stevens, "Illusion and Reality" 453; Marshall 736; Flanigan, "Roman Rite" 265; Sinanoglou 509; Tomasch 81-93; and Lepow, Enacting the Sacrament 80.

[102] For discussion of the cycle actors' involvement with the audience, see, for example, Righter 20; Robinson, "Late Medieval Cult" 512; Stevens, "Illusion and Reality" 455-56; Coletti, "Theology and Politics" 117, 118, 120; and Womack 99-100.

[103] Sponsler provides a good summary of the recorded instances of disruptive conduct and conflict at Corpus Christi performances (156-57).

[104] See notes 6, 7, and 8 in chapter 1.

[105] "Commonality" is the term used for the artisanal representatives on the medieval town councils. See, for example, Beckwith, "Making the World" 254-76.

[106] All these features of the Corpus Christi procession and cycles--the organicist conception of them, their organization, their financing, and their relationship to the artisans and their work--have provoked much discussion and debate. See, for example, James 3-29; Coldewey 77-101; Rubin, Corpus Christi, passim; Beckwith, Christ's Body, passim, and "Making the World" 254-76; and Sponsler 139-40, 153-54. While the dispute on these issues is beyond the scope of my work here, I do want to state my general position, which is that while the Corpus Christi plays may indeed have been a mechanism for the political regulation of artisanal labor in the towns, they themselves also provided a powerful medium for artisans to resist such regulation, to showcase their ingenuity and piety, and to establish the value of specifically artisanal skills to both the economy of the town and the work of salvation.

[107] Robinson, "York Play of the Birth of Jesus" 249-51; James 20; Coldewey 87; Justice 47-58; and Rubin, Corpus Christi 278.

[108] Clifford Davidson also finds a clear affiliation of artisanal labor with the work of salvation in late medieval art. A stained glass window in the Cathedral in York shows craftsmen performing their tasks, and paintings found in the West and South of England feature the Christ of the Trades--a wounded Christ in the center of "an aureole-shaped display of the tools of many trades." Davidson contends that the paintings "identify work as the appropriate offering of workmen to a Savior" whose laboring body "provide[d] a means of salvation" ("Northern Spirituality" 128, 146). O. Elfrida Saunders asserts that the depictions "of Christ in the apotheosis of manual work seem to reflect the . . . social ideas of the time" (131).

[109] See also Baker 207; Kolve, "Introduction" xv; Stevens, "Medieval Drama" 39; and Richardson and Johnston 13, 21-23.

[110] For a closer look at the older, reductive perspective of late medieval dramatic activities formulated by such scholars as E. K. Chambers, Karl Young, and Hardin Craig, and the serious challenges to this perspective by Harold C. Gardiner, Glynne Wickham, O. B. Hardison, V. A. Kolve, and many others over the last several decades, see Speirs 86; Davidson, "Concept of Purpose" 14 and "Introduction" xii, xiii-xiv, xv-xvi; Mills 81-82; Baker 189-90; Kolve, "Introduction" xiii-xiv; Stevens, "Medieval Drama" 41-42, 44-46; Flanigan, "Karl Young" 157-58 and "Teaching the Medieval Latin 'Drama'" 51, 52; Bevington, "Medieval Acting Traditions" 1-2 and "Why Teach Medieval Drama?" 153-54; Wickham, "Introduction" 1-18; Staines 81-96; and Kahrl 130-34.

**Chapter III**

[1] See note 5 in chapter 1.

[2] For overviews and critiques of the work of Philippe Ariès and other scholars who advance the thesis that pre-modern parents, particularly mothers, were indifferent and neglectful, and the attentive, affective approach to children was a development of modernization, see, for example, Herlihy, "Medieval Children" 109-41; Shahar, esp. 98-106, 140-45, 183-89, 230-36; Wilson 181-98; McLaren, "Marital Fertility" 22-53 and "Nature's Contraceptive" 426-41; Crawford, "Sucking Child" 23-52 and "Construction and Experience of Maternity" 3-38; Newall 122-38; Fildes, Breasts, Bottles and Babies 79-210 and "Maternal Feelings Re-assessed" 139-78; and Atkinson, Oldest Vocation, esp. 135-36.

[3] My discussion of the conditions associated with wet-nursing, as well as with infant abandonment and infant mortality, is based on the references provided in note 2.

[4] See sources in note 2.

[5] Dorothy McLaren maintains that both the process of breastfeeding and the chemistry of breastfeeding--more specifically, the production of the hormone prolactin--contribute to the bonding of mother and child ("Marital Fertility" 26). See also Valerie Fildes's exploration of the effects of

breastfeeding on the mother-child relationship (Breasts, Bottles and Babies 90, 98-133 and "Maternal Feelings Reassessed" 152-53).

[6] See Shahar, esp. 230-36, for an overview of a number of these revisionist studies.

[7] See Ben-Yehuda 13, 17-20; Riddle, Eve's Herbs, passim; and especially Heinsohn and Steiger 193-214.

[8] Heinsohn and Steiger remind us that at the time under investigation the Catholic Church was one of the biggest land owners in Europe (204).

[9] For a detailed examination of the Church's general tolerance of birth control and the reasons informing this position, see, in particular, Noonan, Contraception, esp. 143-300, and Riddle, Eve's Herbs, passim. See also Heinsohn and Steiger 193-214.

[10] See John T. Noonan's discussion of sexual continence as a form of contraception (Contraception 146, 276-79).

[11] See especially Heinsohn and Steiger 193-214 and Riddle, Eve's Herbs, esp. chaps. 4-6. See also the observations of Nelson (346-47), Christ (268-73), Ben-Yehuda (21-22, 25), Wilson (187 n. 20), Barstow (8), Brauner (29-31), Coudert 63-64, 80, 86, 87; Atkinson (Oldest Vocation 231-34), and Jankowski (41).

[12] Noonan, Contraception 144, 155-58, 160, 165, 166-67, 219, 350; Heinsohn and Steiger 205; and Riddle, Contraception and Abortion, passim, and Eve's Herbs, passim.

[13] For an detailed investigation of these emergent attitudes and ideas, see the sources provided in note 54 in chapter 2.

[14] My discussion of the changing economy is indebted principally to the sources provided in note 6 in chapter 1.

[15] Martin Luther asserts that the body of the risen Christ is as ubiquitous as his divine nature. Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin dispute that a human body can be everywhere as a divine presence can and contend that Christ's body has to be in a particular place, which is heaven. Zwingli further argues that Christ saved the world not because of his flesh but because of his divinity and that the eating of the eucharistic bread unites human beings not with Christ's body but with Christ's spirit since all physical things are worthless when it comes to matters of the spirit. Calvin, uncomfortable

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with Zwingli's uncompromising spiritualist theology, maintains that while Christ's body does not descend to human beings on earth, human beings can spiritually ascend to Christ's body in heaven through the consumption of the Eucharist. As Charles Lock observes, it seems that "all the Reformation disputes are postulated on the necessity of defining the sacrament in Neoplatonic terminology" (73). For a more comprehensive analysis of the various Protestant eucharistic theories and their relative importance in English theology, see especially Davies, Worship and Theology 76-123. See also Macy 135-88.

[16] My discussion of the reformers' views on vows and works is indebted to the work of Chadwick, Garside, Grimm, Phillips, Christensen, Ullman, O'Connell, Miles, Collison, Eire, Gilman, Aston, Davidson, Sheingorn, Macy, and Duffy.

[17] Garside 90-93; Kolve, Corpus Christi 6-7; Phillips 10-29; Gutmann 1-4; Jones 75-95; Eire 18-21; Hamburger 161-82; Gibson 12-15; Rubin, Corpus Christi 325-26.

[18] See the sources provided in note 16.

[19] Kelley 76; Eire 315; Wiesner, "Luther and Women" 303-305 and "Women's Response" 155-56; Roper, Holy Household 263-64; and Coudert 72, 83-86.

[20] Douglass 306; Wyntjes 186; Wiesner, "Women's Response" 154; and Roper, "Luther" 35.

[21] For a detailed examination of the relationship between "iconophobia" and "gynophobia," see especially Diehl 156-72. See also Coudert 81, 83-84.

[22] See note 16.

[23] Chambers 236-68; Gardiner 50-93; Rossiter 113-28; Wickham, Early English Stages 60-97; O'Connell, "Idolatrous Eye" 279-310; Collinson 8-15; Davidson "Anti-Visual Prejudice" 33-46 and "'The Devil's Guts'" 92-144.

[24] McLuhan, passim; Chadwick 31-32, 73; Davis, Society and Culture 189-226; Eisenstein, passim; Ong, Presence of the Word, passim, and Orality and Literacy, passim; Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning 74-114; O'Connell, "Idolatrous Eye" 293-94; Eire 95-98; and Jardine, Erasmus, Man of Letters, passim, and Worldly Goods, esp. 135-80.

[25] Betty S. Travitsky provides an excellent overview and annotated bibliography of humanist, Protestant, and Puritan tracts which energetically promoted the multiple facets of the pronatal

ideology in the early modern period ("The New Mother of the English Renaissance" 63-89). For the discussion and the development of my position on the many aspects of this intensified pronatalism, I am also deeply indebted to many other critical works on the subject, especially the following: Crawford, "Sucking Child" 23-52, "Construction and Experience of Maternity" 3-38, and Women and Religion, passim; Amussen, "Gender, Family and the Social Order" 196-217 and Ordered Society, passim; Cahn, passim; Newman, passim; Travitsky, "Placing Women" 3-41; Wayne, Flower 1-93; Jankowski 1-53; Lucas 224-40; Paster, Body Embarrassed, passim; Atkinson, Oldest Vocation 194-235; Neely, "Constructing Female Sexuality" 1-26; Coudert 61-90; Rose, Expense of Spirit, passim, and "Introduction" xiii-xxviii; Roper, "Luther" 33-38 and Holy Household, passim; Wiesner, "Luther and Women" 295-308; Klein, Daughters, Wives, and Widows, passim; Ferguson, Quilligan, and Vickers xv-xxxi; Hull, passim; Leites 383-408; Davies, "Continuity and Change" 58-80 and "Sacred Condition of Equality" 563-80; Todd 18-34; Fitz (now Woodbridge), "Marriage Theory" 1-22; Davis, Society and Culture 65-95; Rubin 157-210; Schnucker, "Elizabethan Birth Control" 661-67 and "Puritans and Pregnancy" 637-58; Wyntjes 165-91; Douglass 292-318; and Haller and Haller 161-82. See also the bibliography on "Marriage and Family Life" in Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial England (212-14).

[26] See, for example, Perkins 115, 134 and Gouge, esp. 282-94.

[27] Hooke, fols. D2 v, Ci v; Smith, Sermons 503; Perkins 115-16; Hieron 159, 409; Gouge 506; and Gataker 36.

[28] Most scholars now believe The Golden Boke of Christen Matrimonye was erroneously credited to Becon and is really a version of Miles Coverdale's translation of Heinrich Bullinger's The Christen State of Matrimony. See Hull 155.

[29] See Schnucker, "Puritans and Pregnancy" 638-39, 643, and Pollock 49-53, for a detailed look at early modern concerns and the recommendations of clergymen and medical manuals regarding prenatal care.

[30] See also the formulations of Gouge 17; Cleaver and Dod A and passim; and Griffith 3-8, 223-24.

[31] Bullinger Di, Dii, Jv; Becon, New Catechism 336; Smith, Sermons 3; and Gataker 18.

[32] Becon, Golden Boke fols. DCLi v-4; Stubbes Aii; Hieron 159, 409; Perkins 115-16; Whately, Prototypes 120, 132; and Gouge 209, 236.

[33] Again, my discussion is indebted to the extensive work of scholars listed in note 25.

[34] Noonan is right to characterize this influential reformer's strong assertion of the procreative purpose of intercourse as "Augustinian" (Contraception 353).

[35] Erickson xxxiv; Atkinson, Oldest Vocation 231, 232, 234-35; Coudert 64; Cahn 59; Crawford, "Construction and Experience of Maternity" 13, 21; Roper, Holy Household 264-65; Wiesner, "Women's Response" 156-57 and Working Women 188-89; and Forbes 112-55.

[36] Coudert 79; Wiesner, "Women's Response" 152 and "Luther and Women" 298; Cahn 133, 139; and Douglass 296-97, 299-301.

[37] Coudert 70; Roper, "Luther" 33-38; Crawford, "Construction and Experience of Maternity" 8-9 and Women and Religion 42; and Cahn 139.

[38] My discussion of early modern women's changing relation to the economy is based on the sources referred to in note 6 in chapter 1.

[39] Wayne, Flower, esp. 12-13; Lucas 232-35; Amussen, Ordered Society 44-46; Coudert 76-77.

[40] See in particular the recent collection of essays titled Singlewomen in the European Past, 1250 - 1800. See also Erickson xxxiv-xxxvii; Jankowski 40-41; Wiesner, "Luther and Women" 302 and Working Women, passim; Prior 96; Atkinson, Oldest Vocation 230; Comensoli 49; Ben-Yehuda 21.

[41] See also Roper, Holy Household 60.

[42] My discussion of the relationship between the reformers' altered construction of the witch and the growing opposition to the versions of motherhood associated with the practice of birth control is particularly indebted to Brauner 29-42; Coudert, esp. 63-64, 77-80; Macfarlane, esp. 150-55, 192-98; Thomas, esp. 548-69; Purkiss 408-32; and Willis, passim.

[43] Riddle, Eve's Herbs; Willis 66, 71; Jankowski 24, 34, 35, 41-45; Coudert 64; Erickson xxxiv; Travitsky, "Placing Women" 13-14; Crawford, "Construction and Experience of Maternity" 8-10, 13, 17-18, 21; Amussen, Ordered Society, passim; Atkinson, Oldest Vocation 201, 231-34;

Roper, "Luther" 33, 35, 37 and Holy Household 56-131, 255-60, 264-65; Cahn 59; Wiesner, "Women's Response" 156-57 and Working Women, passim; Bynum, Holy Feast 21, 23; Muchembled 187-208, 233-34; Heinsohn and Steiger 193-214; Davis, "'Women's History'" 91; and Schnucker, "Puritans and Pregnancy" 639-40, 641 and "Elizabethan Birth Control" 664-65.

[44] See, for example, the assertions of Christ 269; Larner, passim; Heinsohn and Steiger, passim; Stallybrass, "Macbeth and Witchcraft" 191; Barstow 17, 18; Brain 25; and Coudert 61-62.

[45] Macfarlane, esp. 150-55, 192-98; Thomas, esp. 548-69; Willis, esp. 13, 18, 27-81, 242; Purkiss 408-32.

[46] For discussions of and challenges to this overly-reductive line of criticism, see Willis 12, 13, 241-42 and Purkiss 409.

[46] While the witch-hunts in England were never as intense as they were on the continent, I think it is important to make note of the number of witches executed in Europe as a whole during the early modern period. The estimates range from 50,000 to hundreds of thousands, with the proportion of women--many of whom had worked as midwives--about 80 percent. Even the most conservative estimate is large, considering the size of the entire population of Europe at the time and the limitations of extant documentation--i.e. the loss and destruction of records. As Heinsohn and Steiger put it, "The result of the persecution of witches was large scale murder. . . . [H]uge numbers of women were burnt to death, drowned, beheaded, strangled, and hanged for witchcraft" (208). For discussion of the varying estimates of the number of witches executed and of the proportion who were women, see, for example, Nelson 336; Christ 269; Heinsohn and Steiger 208, 210- 11; Barstow 7, 9; Brauner 29; Coudert 61, 62; Atkinson 232; and Riddle, Eve's Herbs 110, 135. Anne Llewellyn Barstow also reminds us of another sobering fact: "European women *as a group* were first subject to criminal persecutions on witchcraft charges. Having been kept out of the courts because they were seen by law as minors, women suddenly were held legally responsible for their actions, once witch allegations were made" (8). See also the comments of Atkinson (Oldest Vocation 230).

[47] Gifford 138; Cleaver and Dod P4 - P5; Dillingham, fols. 39 v-r; Guillemeau 1; and Gouge 512.

[48] Smith, Sermons 33; Becon, New Catechism 347-48; Cleaver and Dod P4, P5; Dillingham, fols. 39 v-r; Guillemeau 1; and Gouge 509, 512-13.

[49] See sources in note 2.

[50] Riddle, for example, concludes his book on the history of abortion and contraception in the West with this statement: "[W]e must recognize that women in the past made deliberate decisions about whether to have children and when to have them. These decisions, and the knowledge behind the, left their mark on human history" (Eve's Herbs 259). See also sources in notes 4 and 5 in chapter 1 and note 2 in this chapter.

[51] For other early modern theological, clerical, and vernacular works which recognize the impact of economic factors on reproductive practice, see Noonan, Contraception 330-33, 335-36, 339, 342, 344.

[52] For an examination of the reasons why wealthy women chose not to breastfeed--including discomfort and pain, the loss of freedom, the impairment of beauty and erotic appeal, and the shame of being associated with remunerative labor and a fungible resource; see Schnucker, "Puritans and Pregnancy" 646-48, and Paster, Body Embarrassed, esp. 199-208.

[53] My terms for birth mothers and wet-nurses are based on the terms "blood parents" and "milk parents" used by Christianne Klapisch-Zuber (132).

[54] McLaren, "Nature's Contraceptive" 426-41 and "Marital Fertility" 22-53; Fildes, Breasts, Bottles, and Babies 107-109; Crawford, "Construction and Experience of Maternity" 8; Paster, Body Embarrassed 252. Susan Cahn does not take the reformers' increasing intolerance toward the traditional practice of prolonged suckling into consideration when she asserts that "[t]he clergy's call for maternal breastfeeding, coupled with their anger at attempts at birth control, suggests that the amenorrheal effects of lactation were not quite so well known as D. McLaren alleges in 'Marital Fertility'" (222-23 n. 105).

[55] Riddle, for example, contends that birth control information became "a subject to be dealt with cautiously, or not at all" over the course of the early modern period. As a result, the knowledge and practice of birth control declined. "[F]ewer physicians and fewer women themselves knew what once was known by many," Riddle asserts. "The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries seem to have

'deleted from the record' a great deal of knowledge from millennia past" (Eve's Herbs 166, 205)--so much so that by 1649, Nicholas Culpeper was able to declare: "[The College of Physicians has kept] the people in such ignorance that they should not be able to know what the herbs in their gardens are good for" (qtd. in Riddle, Eve's Herbs 167).

[56] Shahar 140; Klapisch-Zuber 136; Crawford, "Sucking Child" 31, 32 and "Construction and Experience of Maternity" 8; Fildes, Breasts, Bottles and Babies 159-63.

[57] Schnucker, "Puritans and Pregnancy" 644; Stone 114, 427-28; Cahn 105-107, 216 n. 67; Fildes, Breast, Bottles, and Babies 98-100.

[58] Stone 94, 109-46; Kelley 77; Goldberg, "Fatherly Authority" 3-32 and James I 85-112; Wiesner, Working Women 7; Cahn 212 n. 28; Amussen, Ordered Society 1, 54-56, 182, and passim; Roper, Holy Household 54, 56, 68, 69; Crawford, Women and Religion, passim and "Construction and Experience of Maternity" 9; and Atkinson, Oldest Vocation 211-12, 214.

[59] The early modern pronatalists' concern about the nurslings' affection for their nurses offers additional evidence with which to refute the principal contentions of Ariès and the influential historians who followed his lead--the contentions that pre- or early modern motherhood was characterized by a deficit of affection and that maternal affection when it did eventually develop began first among the well-to-do members of society and only later permeated the strata of the laboring and the poor.  The evidence is especially compelling because the early modern pronatalists specifically acknowledge such affection did indeed exist and assert that breastfeeding generated it; because the breastfeeding they were referring to was typically performed by women of the laboring stratum for the women of the well-to-do stratum; and because the situation they explicitly warn of concerns the well-to-do children's bodies and characters being altered in such a way that they more closely resembled those of their low-status, milk mothers, than those of their high-status, blood mothers--all of which corroborate the position of the revisionist historians who maintain that there was maternal affection in pre- and early modern times and that it may very well have trickled up instead of down.  It is somewhat ironic that the pronatalists should be the ones to provide additional evidence to challenge the Ariès's line of investigation since both the pronatalists who warn birth mothers of the affection between wet-nurses and their young charges, and the Ariès-influenced

historians who claim little if any such affection existed, especially in the laboring ranks, until much later, view the wet-nurses with disdain.

**Chapter IV**

[1] See, for example, Berger, "Early Scenes" 1-31 and "Text Against Performance" 49-79; Hawkins 155-88; Stallybrass, "Macbeth and Witchcraft" 189-209; Sinfield, "History, Ideology" 63-77; Norbrook 78-116; Goldberg, "Macbeth and Source" 242-64; Turner 119-49; Evans 111-41; Morse 129-91; Willis, esp. 209-237; and Kastan 165-82.

[2] For good reviews of this recuperative, reductive line of Macbeth criticism, see Evans 120-21; Sinfield, "History, Ideology" 66, 68, 73; Willis 210-12; and Kastan 165-66, 168. Alan Sinfield also traces a related but more "liberal" strand of Macbeth criticism which "hesitates to endorse any State power so directly, finding some saving virtue in Macbeth." However, Sinfield asserts that because the liberal critics do "not undertake the political analysis [of the Absolutist or Modern State] which would press the case," this "leaves the State virtually unquestioned, almost as fully as the conservative interpretation" ("History, Ideology" 74).

[3] See, for example, Adelman, "'Born of Woman'" 90-121; Gohlke (now Sprengnether), "Shakespeare's Tragic Paradigms" 150-70; and Kahn, Man's Estate 151-92.

[4] See, for example, the work of Allison Heisch, Louis Montrose, Leah S. Marcus, Carole Levin, Philippa Berry, John N. King, Constance Jordan, Theodora A. Jankowski, Susan Frye, Lena Cowen Orlin, and Susan Doran.

[5] See especially Montrose, "Shaping Fantasies" 66; Marcus 137; Levin, "Images of Elizabeth I" 95, 97; and King 31.

[6] See Allison Heisch's discussion of this image of Elizabeth (46).

[7] Axton, passim; Marcus 138; Berry 66-67; Jankowski 60; Frye 12-13; and Orlin, "Fictional Families" 86.

[8] For a detailed examination of the doctrine of the king's two bodies, see Ernst H. Kantorowicz's classic study of it.

[9] See David Scott Kastan's discussion of the well-established relationship between the acquisition of political power and violent action (169-72).

[10] Goldberg, "Fatherly Authority," esp. 3 and James I, esp. 85-91; Amussen, "Gender, Family, and Social Order" 198 and Ordered Society 54-55 and passim; Orlin, "Familial Transgressions" 45 and "Fictional Families" 91; Atkinson, Oldest Vocation 198; Jankowski 54-55; and Jordan, "The Household and the State" 307-326.

[11] All quotations from James I in my text are drawn from The Political Works of James I, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain.

[12] See Deborah Willis's excellent analysis of James's troubled relationships with Mary and Elizabeth (esp. 117-58).

[13] For additional exploration of James I's familial formulations of monarchical power, see, for example, Goldberg, "Fatherly Authority" 3-32; Orgel 59; Trubowitz 311-14; Callaghan 361; and Jordan, "The Household and the State" 307-326.

[14] All references to Shakespeare's Macbeth are to the Arden edition, edited by Kenneth Muir. Quotations are identified by act, scene, and line, and stage directions are identified by page number.

[15] These apt phrases are Kastan's (167).

[16] Alice Fox (129) and Jenijoy La Belle (382-86) contend that Lady Macbeth is asking the spirits to obstruct her menstruation.

[17] Reading Lady Macbeth's male gendering of the imagined infant as a means of making Macbeth identify with it and feel its vulnerability and, thus, of putting her in the position of mother and him in the position of infant makes Rosenberg's note about two performances where a mother and son played Lady Macbeth and Macbeth of particular interest (196).

[18] See the new Arden edition of Macbeth (42-43 n. 61).

[19] Sarah Wintle and René Weis make note of the "extraordinary domesticity" and "grim intimacy" of the "great murder scene," as "the Macbeths creep about their bedroom landing trying not to wake their guests" (143).

[20] Jardine, Still Harping on Daughters 94-95; Calderwood, "Disguise" 39; Wilks 125; Ramsey 287, 289; Greene 157-58; Veszy-Wagner 251; Ewbank, "Fiend-like Queen" 84, 91, 92; Stallybrass, "Macbeth and Witchcraft" 196-99; Richmond 338; La Belle 382; and French 244-45.

[21] Harding 246; Mackenzie 316, 325; Dusinberre 258; Fox 129, 138; Garber 154; and Asp 160, 161, 167.

[22] Jameson 317; Rosenberg 159; Novy 8; Klein, "Lady Macbeth" 240-43; Belsey, "A Future" 261.

[23] In Holinshed, the witches do not have beards (171-72). Kenneth Muir provides the Holinshed source for Macbeth in an appendix in his edition of Shakespeare's Macbeth. My page number reference to Holinshed is to that appendix.

[24] Both Janet Adelman ("'Born of Woman'" 110) and Peter Erickson (121-22) include enlightening discussions of the significance of the play's "psychological geography" (Adelman, "'Born of Woman'" 110) as it is figured in Scotland and England.

[25] See, for example, John Riddle's discussion of the growing association between herbal birth control potions and witches' brews in the early modern period (114-18).

[26] V.iii.4,6; V.vii.3; V.vii.11,13; V.viii.13; and V.viii.31.

[27] Elizabeth Sacks, in Shakespeare's Images of Pregnancy, examines the many meanings and rich nuances of the verb "to bear" and its uses throughout Macbeth (79-85).

[28] Coppelia Kahn explores the suggestiveness of the term "cow'd" (Man's Estate 191).

[29] That Roman Polanski in the very last scene of his 1971 film of Macbeth chooses to have Donalbain, Malcolm's brother, stop to visit the witches on his return home as if he were the next traitor in the line-up is an aesthetic choice entirely commensurate with Holinshed's historical account.

**Chapter V**

[1] Interesting in this regard is D. J. Enright's assertion that the play is more of a "debate" than a tragedy (qtd. in Brockbank 71).

[2] Although Rome, Corioles, and Antium are cities, they are often referred to as "countries" in the play. Perhaps Shakespeare called them countries since "country" was a familiar term to early

modern people and would therefore have helped to make the relations and conflicts within and between the cities in the play more intelligible for the period's play-goers.

[3] All references to Shakespeare's Coriolanus are to the Arden edition, edited by Philip Brockbank. As with Macbeth, quotations are identified by act, scene, and line, and stage directions by page number.

[4] The names of this character, Caius Martius Coriolanus, are significant in the play, a significance which I will examine later in this chapter. Until Caius Martius acquires the name "Coriolanus" for his performance in the war, I will refer to him by the name of Martius.

[5] Philip Brockbank also notes that the use of the word "good" in this context not just refers to the wealthy status of the patricians but alludes to the word's other meaning of "virtuous" (95 n. 15).

[6] See Stanley Cavell's (esp. 260-62) and Arthur Riss's (esp. 60) explorations of the associations between Menenius's story-telling and the Word-food of Christ. Their analyses differ from mine in a number of respects, however, principally because they consider only the reformist construction of Christ whereas I take into account both the reformist and the incarnational constructions.

[7] See Stanley Cavell's discussion of the hunger of both mother and son (esp. 248-49).

[8] See W. Hutchings's review of many of the controversial performances and critiques of the play (35-50). Stanley Cavell remarks, "A political reading is apt to become fairly predictable once you know whose side the reader is taking, that of the patricians or that of the plebeians" (247). Michael D. Bristol not only points out the important role played by the critic's "ideological orientation," but also asserts that both the critiques which focus on Coriolanus's psychological make-up and the critiques which find the "forces" in the play to be "balanced" are conservative or, at best, minimally subversive in their effects (212-13, 219-20).

[9] Pettet 34-42; Bullough 456-58; Gurr, "Body Politic" 63-69; and Miller 287-310.

[10] "Depopulate" was a term frequently used to describe the effects of the enclosure of common land (Riss 57-58).

[11] Adelman,"'Anger's My Meat'" 129-49; Kahn, "Milking Babe" 151-92; Sprengnether 89-111; Carducci 11-20; and Harding 245-53. See also Lisa Lowe's succinct review of the psychoanalytic criticism of the play (87-89).

[12] Paster, "To Starve with Feeding," esp. 129, 139; Rackin 68-79; Goldberg, James I 186-93; Parker 261-76; Dollimore 218-30; DuBois 185-208; Tennenhouse, "History" 217-235; Lowe 86-95; Luckyj 330; Williamson 147-66; Jankowski 105-106, 108-112; Kahn, Roman Shakespeare 146 and passim.

[13] Butler 79-108; MacIntyre 1-10; Ingram 277-94; Ripley 338-50; Trousdale 124-34; and Marshall 93-118.

[14] Philip Brockbank provides Plutarch's account of the Coriolanus story in an appendix in his edition of Shakespeare's Coriolanus. My page number references to Plutarch's account here and elsewhere in this chapter are to that appendix.

[15] See Brockbank's discussion of Shakespeare's extension of Volumnia's role (33).

[16] Jean MacIntyre notes that this is the last time Coriolanus sits until his mother pleads with him in the last act of the play (8).

[17] See Arthus Riss's discussion of the ideological homology between the enclosure of land and the enclosure of the body in the early modern period and in Coriolanus. See also the quotes from the play which help to construe the body as something to be trod upon like the ground/earth: I.iii.46-47; V.iii.116; V.iii.122-24; V.iii.27; V.iv.18-20; and V.vi.133.

[18] Ironically, as W. Hutchings points out (48), it is immediately after Martius is awarded the new name Coriolanus that he forgets another name--the name of the poor host who "us'd [Martius] kindly," who was taken prisoner by the Romans, and whom Martius wants to see set free (I.ix.81). In Plutarch's account of the incident, the host is not poor but rich and Martius does not forget the host's name (326). It is tempting to speculate that making the host poor was intended to recall another poor host, not just because of the evocative images of Martius's wounded body on the battlefield, the intimate relationship which has been established between Martius and his mother, and the construction of bodies as food and of killing as eating in the part of the play which precedes the incident concerning the poor host, but because Martius, immediately after he admits he cannot

remember the host's name, asks, "Have we no wine here?" (I.x.90). It is also tempting to construe the fact that Martius forgets the poor host's name at the very moment Martius himself is newly named after a Volscian city he has conquered as a sign that the connection of Martius's character to the incarnational version of motherhood may be weakened with the addition of the new name/relation, and that the belly politic of the Volscians from which his new name is derived may be associated more with the new version of the maternal than the belly politic of the Romans is.

[19] It is interesting here to note Madelon Sprengnether's observation that <u>Coriolanus</u> "is unique among the tragedies" because it allows "a central female figure to survive" (105). Archibald Henderson (71-79), Page DuBois (205), and Jane Carducci (19 n. 8) all suggest that the death of Shakespeare's mother may inform the play.

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