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Potter, Ursula A. The Unruly Womb in Early Modern English Drama: Plotting Women's Biology on the Stage

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Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533): Faith, Antiquity, and the Witch Hunt

Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533) : Foi, Antiquité et chasse aux sorcières

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argument, Poeton throughout his work “blurs” the line between the various types of unlearned and unpractised healers (xxvii).

For the modern reader, Poeton’s *Winnowing* is not a simple text. In the last part of the introduction, Davies gives hints on how to read *Winnowing* effectively. The translated text itself is accompanied by footnotes that are helpful for understanding the context of not only the subject matter but also the writings of Poeton (xvii–xix). This printed version includes margin notes, which are not Poeton’s but are nevertheless relevant to the book. Poeton’s *Winnowing* is not an ordinary book about witch hunts or witchcraft but rather a great read on the perception and opinions of medical professionals toward a group of witches who were often accepted by the common people.

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Potter, Ursula A.

The Unruly Womb in Early Modern English Drama: Plotting Women’s Biology on the Stage.

Late Tudor and Stuart Drama: Gender, Performance, and Material Culture. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications / Walter de Gruyter, 2019. Pp. 263 + 6 ill. ISBN 978-3-11-066201-6 (hardcover) US \$89.99.

Building upon recent scholarship interrogating early modern English medical notions of female embodiment, Ursula Potter’s study, much like Amy Kenny’s *Humoural Wombs on the Shakespearean Stage* (Palgrave 2019), explores the intersections of medical, religious, and dramatic depictions and suggests that drama (particularly that of Shakespeare) subversively challenges the standard ideology by depicting the womb not solely as a site of porousness, pollution, insatiable hunger, and illness but also as a potent source of potential defiance and autonomy for female characters. Organizing her book around a chronological survey of drama, rather than (as does Kenny) womb characteristics, Potter follows her introduction with a chapter treating early modern medical and religious conceptions of fertility, menarche, fits of the mother, the wandering womb, and green sickness, including sections on terminology, symptoms, etiology, and potential treatments.

Potter's literary analysis begins with the anonymous early Elizabethan play *The Bugbears*, which is remarkable not only for recording the first literary depiction of green sickness, and gesturing toward the probability of popular awareness of its symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment, but also because the play serves as a prototype for future dramatic depictions of the disease. Featuring a daughter who has married without the knowledge of her parents and is hiding her subsequent pregnancy by feigning sickness, her diagnosis not only conflates dropsy (a swelling of the body) with green sickness but also avoids altogether the diagnosis of demonic possession deployed by the play's main source. As Potter remarks, the play's likely grammar school provenance and early performance by children together foreground the irony that schoolboys were better informed about women's sexual health than were many young women themselves. Turning in the next two chapters to Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Romeo and Juliet* respectively, Potter suggests that by having Petruchio employ in a romantic context methods for taming Kate—fasting, absence of meat, reduced sleep, denial of corporeal desires—that were recommended by both physicians and churchmen for controlling the lusty young body and libido, Shakespeare models and stages a humane and effective method for behaviour modification. Potter further contends that because Capulet's misreading of Juliet's grief as a symptom of green sickness deviates from Brooke's source narrative, which attributes her symptoms to envy of her married peers, Capulet embodies cultural fear of the female body and marks the first in a Shakespearean series of dramatic explorations of tragic father-daughter relationships. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* provide the backdrop for Potter's subsequent discussion of Shakespeare's interest in how aging fathers (mis)handle their daughters' puberty, with Ophelia providing a particularly poignant example of a young woman suffering symptoms of womb frenzy or uterine furor whose father unsuccessfully pimps her out as marriage bait, ultimately resulting in her degeneration into eroticized madness. In the latter play, penned by Shakespeare and Fletcher, the jailer's daughter suffers symptoms of lovesickness much like those exhibited by Ophelia, while the nobly born Emilia suffers from characteristics of incipient green sickness; by juxtaposing scenes between the two, the play provides audiences with alternate representations of conditions both caused by disorderly wombs. Providing a contrast to these two virgins is the Amazonian queen Hippolyta, wife to Theseus, who has her womb fully under control. Ultimately, only marriage and

hot male seed can provide these wombs with what they require, though for the jailer's daughter, who pines for an unobtainable Palamon, the play depicts the efficacy of a *dolus ad bonum* (or placebo), whereby the body is cured by trickery, when the doctor cures the girl by employing a wooer to "Please her appetite" (5.4.37) by any means necessary. Next, Potter reviews Fletcher and Beaumont's *The Maid's Tragedy* and John Marston's *Parisitaster; or, the Fawne*, the former of which focuses squarely on sexual frustration by opening with Evadne's refusal to consummate her recent marriage of convenience with Amintor, a union orchestrated merely to provide public cover for her clandestine erotic affair with the king. Amintor, meanwhile, was recently engaged to Aspatia, whose role as wronged virgin drives the tragedy when she plots her revenge on Amintor. Marston's play explores the theme of ill-matched marriages involving age disparity (possibly also a trigger for jealousy in Shakespeare's *Othello*) and focuses squarely on the ramifications of sexual anxiety and court debauchery by criticizing men who risk futurity through their misguided or vicious prejudices, leading Potter to deduce that Marston wrote with an audience of women in mind. In a chapter treating Middleton and Rowley's *A Fair Quarrel* and Henry Glaphorne's *The Hollander*, Potter considers the significance of dramatic depictions of physicians in light of the medical profession's increasing influence in the sphere of women's health by the seventeenth century. While the former is not the first to deal with the unethical medical treatment of women, it devotes an exceptional amount of stage time to the issue, highlighting the intimate, confessional nature of the physician-patient relationship and the potential for victimization, particularly of young girls. Testifying to the growth of gynecology as a specialized discipline, Glaphorne's play features an apothecary masquerading as a qualified doctor opening a residential brothel, which masquerades as a clinic wherein are treated a wife suffering from sexual frustration, her maiden sister with the symptoms of green sickness, and the doctor's ailing, puritanical, virgin daughter, whose condition results from religious suppression of the sexual body. In the final chapter, Potter uses the latter pattern to illuminate Shakespeare's depiction of Isabella's frigid virtue in *Measure for Measure*, and points to Milton's Lady in *Comus: A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle* to argue that since the symptoms of green sickness could be construed as evidence of virginity and privilege, the unruly womb could function as a badge of family honour.

Potter concludes with an Appendix that chronologically lists a selection of about fifty plays dated between 1540 and 1640, identifies the ailing female characters in each by type (i.e., lovesick daughter, neglected wife), and charts their relative symptoms/diagnosis, deduced through her reading of what she calls stage markers, a set of performative codes conveying female sexual health. For those interested in building on her work, Potter has left a clear set of blueprints.

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Ranson, Angela, André A. Gazal, and Sarah Bastow, eds.

Defending the Faith: John Jewel and the Elizabethan Church.

University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018. Pp. 342. ISBN 978-0-271-08208-0 (hardcover) \$129.95.

John Jewel helped to shape the Elizabethan Reformation with his sermonizing, evangelizing, and eager participation in pugnacious debates against opponents, Catholic and Protestant. His work became a touchstone for subsequent generations of English religious thinkers. This collection originates in a 2014 conference and features a multidisciplinary slate of contributors who tease out the story of Jewel's life and legacy in fifteen chapters of skilled and erudite scholarship. Readers will come away with a deep appreciation for how much more there is to the story of Jewel's impact on his contemporaries and the subsequent generations. While much of that stems from his famed Challenge Sermon of 1560, which served as the source for his best-known publication, the *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicane* of 1562, translated in 1564 as *The Apology of the Church of England* by Anne Cooke Bacon, the contributors show that Jewel's significance to early modern English religious culture is substantial and central due to his deep scholarship and intricate interconnections with both Catholics and Protestants disputing the faith.

The volume opens with Lucy Wooding's elegant and informative introduction that teases out links between the contributions and the original conference aims. A brief biography of Jewel's early life, penned by Angela Ranson, also prefaces the whole. It shows readers Jewel's early network of influences,