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Crossing Gender Boundaries: Women as Drunkards in Early Modern Augsburg

B. Ann Tlusty

Although drunkenness brings honor to none, it shames a woman more than a man.¹

I.

According to currently accepted theories of gender relations during the early modern period in Europe, honor for women was primarily defined as sexual honor, and was closely tied to the body – or as Susanna Burghartz put it, to "the use of women's bodies by men."² Another, more archaic model of female honor existed, however, that was clearly still a part of early modern mentalities. I refer to a notion of honorable behavior that was associated not just with sexual relations, but with the related functions of reproduction and the provision of nourishment. The most organic vision of this concept appeared in the popular medieval image of the lactating mother, both form and symbol of the eternal provider. Closely associated with this maternal image was the ideal of the 'house mother' (Hausmutter), whose primary role in the household was defined less by her chastity than it was by her serviceability – that is, her material role as nourisher and nurturer, preparing or overseeing the preparation of food for husband, children, and servants. The importance of these activities for a woman's reputation, and therefore her honor, is illuminated by the manipulation of household symbols in critical broadsheets and carnival scenes. A common theme, for example, was the use of

¹ Johannes von Schwarzenberg: Ain Büchle wider das zutringken. In: Der Teütsch Cicero. Augsburg: Heinrich Steiner, 1535. VD-16 S: 4746. Fol. 86.: *Wiwol di full/bringt nyemandt eher/So schemt si doch die Weybsbild mehr.*

² Susanna Burghartz: Rechte Jungfrauen oder unverschämte Töchter? Zur weiblichen Ehre im 16. Jahrhundert. In: Frauengeschichte – Geschlechtergeschichte. Hg. von Karin Hausen, Heide Wunder. Frankfurt am Main 1992 (Geschichte und Geschlechter. Bd. 1). 173-183, bes. 174.

spindles, pots, and other household tools by shrewish women as weapons against their husbands.³

The inverse of sexual honor – the darker side of the virgin maiden and the chaste wife – was represented in the early modern mentality by the prostitute. At the same time, the inverse of the image of 'good mother' and 'good provider' by the sixteenth century was represented by the witch. Good women produced and nourished children, bad women killed and consumed them. As the work of Lyndal Roper and Joy Wiltenburg has shown, for many women, especially in Germany, the point of issue in identifying a witch was not the legal question of the pact or the sexual issue of intercourse with the devil, but the interference of the witch with cycles of reproduction and nourishment; killing children, drying up milk in the breast, contaminating food, causing women to become barren and men impotent.⁴ Related to these perversions of motherhood and reproduction were the most fearsome witches of all – the weather witches, who brewed up terrible storms and caused crops to fail or rot in the fields. These women, instead of reproducing and nourishing, were accused of interfering with reproduction and the provision of food. This perversion of the household role is also evident in early modern scenes of witch's gatherings, where again, household tools such as brooms, spindles, and cooking utensils are depicted being abused by witches to stir up their evil and consuming magic.

An honorable woman, then, was not just chaste, but also productive, in the sense of actively managing provisions and taking the responsibility for the nourishment of the household. A dishonorable woman was unchaste, inviting sexual invasion, and destructive, consuming household resources. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the most common forms of insult used to dishonor women were the extremes of these two notions – "whore," the inversion of sexual honor, and "witch," the inversion of household honor.

For men, historians have identified a definition of honor that was broader and more public than that of women, including political and economic notions of status and power. Nonetheless, the honor of men could also be affected by their ability or inability to control household resources, as well as to control their own bodies. And one of the demands of honorable manhood was the ability to drink copiously, even to become drunk, without losing control – economically, physically, or verbally. What was appropriate, even necessary, to early modern definitions of male honor, however, could not possibly be appropriate for women. What happened, then, when women became drunk? How did the image of drunken women fit into the early modern world view? In fact, as we shall see, early

³ See for example Joy Wiltenburg: *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany*. Charlottesville 1992. 102, which notes that a woman's honor was lost when she hit a man.

⁴ Lyndal Roper: *Witchcraft and Fantasy in Early Modern Germany*. In: L. Roper: *Oedipus and the Devil*. London 1994. 199-225; J. Wiltenburg (cf. n. 3 above) 247-250.

modern men ascribed to alcohol the power to destroy the honor of women even as it enhanced the honor of men. Drunkenness for a woman was not only an encroachment on male territory that could bring her into disrepute; symbolically, it represented an inversion of the gender hierarchy and therefore a perversion of sexually-defined notions of honor.

II.

Why did people drink? Seventeenth-century German legalist Matthias Abele listed forty-five good reasons, among them friendship, honor, virtue, bravery, virility, business and trade, good taste and good company; equally compelling were malice and ill humor, roguishness, envy, defiance, and boredom and idleness, as well as *prospective thirst*.⁵ Although Abele's language was grammatically non-gendered, his vocabulary was clearly male – besides virility and business, he included knighthood and manliness as reasons to drink. Abele's list makes clear that the drinks shared by men in the company of their fellows had cultural uses that went beyond physical thirst. For men, social drinking was inseparable from social identity, which was a key element in early modern notions of honor and status. The crucial role played by alcohol in public rituals of male honor I have discussed in detail elsewhere and is not the topic of this paper. It is necessary here only to make a few observations about drinking and male honor to underscore the gender boundaries defined by drinking behaviors.

Male honor in early modern society was a fragile commodity. Honor had to be constantly reestablished and reaffirmed through public displays of honorable behavior. Among other things, this required the public demonstration of power and wealth, for honor was closely tied to a man's ability to provide, both for his household and in public displays of largess. For the early modern householder, then, male honor was defined not only by correct behavior, but also by the economic health of the household.⁶ At the same time, participation in the virtually compul-

⁵ Matthias Abele von und zu Lilienberg: *Metamorphosis telae iudiciariae: d.i. seltsame Gerichts-händel*. Bd. 2. Nürnberg 1668. 676: *von des zukünftigen Dursts wegen*.

⁶ In *Germanie, and in the low Countreyes to banquet and feast their friends often ys thought a great and magnificent thing, though not so in other places*. See Robert Ashley: *Of Honour* (c. 1596). Ed. Virgil Heltzel. San Marino/CA 1947. 53. See also Friedrich Zunkel: *Ehre, Reputation*. In: *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*. Hg. von Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, Reiner Kosselleck. Stuttgart 1975. Bd. 2. 1-64; George Fenwick Jones: *Honor in German Literature*. Chapel Hill/NC 1959. 23; Julius Hoffman: *Die 'Hausväterliteratur' und die 'Predigten über den christlichen Hausstand'*. Berlin 1959. 88. On the requirement for public displays of wealth in general, see Peter Burke: *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy*. Cambridge 1987; Fritz Blanke: *Reformation*

sory drinking rituals associated with craft and guild gatherings, business transactions, and male sociability, which were necessary to early modern notions of status and identity, could threaten the economic foundation of the household. In fact, as both feminists and writers in the 'men's movement' have come to realize, the constraints and contradictions of early modern patriarchy served not only as a basis for male power, but also as a source of control and constraint of the male psychic identity, which could be oppressive for men as well.⁷ A man was expected to verify his masculine identity through generous consumption and provision of alcoholic drinks, while maintaining control of his bodily functions, his household, and his economic viability.⁸

When the pressure proved too great, the household structure began to crack. Men who let tavern drinking get in the way of effective householding were placed by the council under a tavern ban. The ban on tavern visits, normally for one year, was applied most often in cases involving domestic violence and failure to provide. Certainly, one effect of banning a habitual pub crawler from visiting taverns would be a curtailment of his spending and drinking habits, and this was no doubt at least one motive that moved the council to establish such a penalty. The tavern ban, however, affected more than a man's expenditure on drinks. The exclusion from normal male society was an honor punishment with its roots in medieval Germanic law. The right to 'honorable society,' like the right to bear arms, was exclusive to men of honor, and those who were incapable of fulfilling their responsibilities as men were considered unqualified to carry weapons or participate in social rituals.⁹ Thus, the ban on tavern visits was often accompanied by restrictions on carrying weapons and walking the streets at night, also symbols of masculinity. However, these restrictions could be applied independently, and the application did not seem necessarily to relate to the crime. Restrictions on social drinking and carrying weapons struck at symbols and rites of masculinity that served to shame, rather than to control.¹⁰

und Alkoholismus. In: *Zwingliana* 9. 1953. 75-89; Fernand Braudel: *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible*. New York 1979. 183-186; Simon Schama: *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*. London 1987.

⁷ See for example Michael Roper, John Tosh: *Historians and the politics of masculinity*. In: *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*. Eds. Michael Roper, John Tosh. London 1991. 1-24, esp. 6-10.

⁸ For a description of the social pressure for maintaining bodily functions in spite of immoderate alcohol consumption see L. Roper: *Oedipus and the Devil* (cf. n. 4) 107-124; on drinking and manhood see B. Ann Tlusty: *Gender and Alcohol Use in Early Modern Augsburg*. In: *Social History/ Histoire Sociale*. November 1994. 241-259.

⁹ Rudolph His: *Geschichte des deutschen Strafrecht bis zur Karolina*. München 1928. 93.

¹⁰ A husband might therefore be banned from social drinking for suspicion of adultery, although his drinking habits did not seem to be at issue (Augsburg StadtA. Strafamt. Urgicht 28.3.1542, Jörg Fritz); in other cases, repeated drunkenness, household violence, or financial irresponsibility led to weapons restrictions, even when there is no indication that the defendant used a weapon in the incident (See for example Augsburg StadtA. Strafamt. Urgicht 4.10.1540, Hans

The tavern ban should not be understood as an indication that city fathers did not recognize the importance of drinking rituals to male public life. On the contrary; the council often allowed exceptions for men under a tavern ban for rituals associated with professional honor, such as guild drinking bouts or drinking to seal work and trade contracts.¹¹ In fact, the tavern ban only serves to illuminate the fact that visiting taverns, far from being 'disreputable' or 'undisciplined' behavior, as many historians have claimed, was the earmark of an honorable citizen. The right to participate in tavern sociability implied honorable status within the community; it was revoked only when men failed to live up to the expectations of their status.

III.

Expansive drinking and tavern sociability, then, were both closely associated with early modern codes of masculinity. These codes served not only to define levels of status and honor, but, as Michael Roper and John Tosh have pointed out, also served as "gender boundaries."¹² What happened when women crossed these boundaries? If social drinking and even drunkenness were acceptable, at times necessary aspects of an honorable man's social life, what did excessive or disorderly drinking mean to notions of female honor? After all, virtually everyone in early modern society drank alcohol, and naturally women could not be immune to its negative effects.

In fact, there were female drunkards, but in view of what we know about the general level of alcohol consumption in early modern Germany, drunken women seem to have been surprisingly rare. In the Augsburg case, less than one percent of the fines collected for drunkenness during the sixteenth century came from women.¹³ Folklorists have identified a number of types of exclusively female drinking parties that were formally tolerated especially in rural areas, such as those associated with childbirth and Carnival rituals (Hebammenauswahl, Kindsbettzeche, Weiberfastnacht). It is interesting to note, however, that all of these traditions were either associated with formal rites of fertility and reproduc-

Eisenhofer; Augsburg StadtA. Strafamt. Strafbuch 1540-42. Fol. 1^v, 4^v, 21, 24^v, 25, 31^v, 37, 39, and Strafbuch 1543-1553. Fol. 1, 3^v-4, 35; Gerichtsakten. Generalia. Falitten 1732-1736, in which persons declaring bankruptcy are forbidden to carry weapons or take part in public events.)

¹¹ Examples can be found in Augsburg StadtA. Strafamt. Protocolle der Zuchtherren 1540-1542. Fol. 64, 88, 132; 1542-1543. Fol. 83, 125.

¹² M. Roper, J. Tosh (cf. n. above 7) 4.

¹³ Based on two five-year samples of the records of the Discipline Lords (Augsburg StadtA. Strafamt. Protocolle der Zuchtherren 1540-1544 and 1590-1594).

tion, or at least with carnival, when cultural inversion was the norm. In addition, such events seem to have followed carefully prescribed rules of custom and were both financed and controlled by the invariably male village councils.¹⁴ Extremely sporadic evidence suggests the possibility that women in Augsburg occasionally gathered in public taverns in exclusively female social groups, which may have been acceptable behavior on certain occasions, but sources are too scarce to shed any light on such gatherings.¹⁵ Women were also important participants in the drinking rituals that took place at weddings, but while incidents involving men who became drunk at weddings were fairly common, I have not yet found any descriptions of women returning home drunk from weddings or other such gatherings. Whether the lack of further evidence of women's drinking groups is because of the rarity of such gatherings, or only because they rarely resulted in the kind of disorderly behavior that would bring them to the attention of the authorities, must unfortunately remain an open question. Either way, it is clear that public drunk and disorderly behavior resulting from social drinking bouts was the exception for women.

This observation is supported by the reports of visitors to Germany, who also tended to describe German women as remarkably sober, even as they invariably described German men as remarkably drunk. English traveler Fynes Moryson, for example, described German attitudes towards women drinking during the 1590's by noting that *it is a great reproach for any woman to be druncken or to drinke in any the least excesse*.¹⁶ Immoderate drinking, then, at least in public, was primarily a male behavior.

What happened in early modern Europe when women did cross the line into male behaviors? At the least, they would become the object of public ridicule, as occurred in the case of women viewed by their peers as overly domineering. Such women could be subject to charivaris or singled out for ridicule in Carnival rituals.¹⁷ Even more serious was any attempt by a woman to pass as a man, by dressing in men's clothes or even marrying another woman; this inversion of the

¹⁴ Fritz Heegen: Frauenrechtliches im fränkischen Brauchtum. In: Bayerisches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde 14. 1963. 133-143.

¹⁵ A group of seven women gathered at a tavern for an unidentified 'invitation' was described by a defendant in 1541: Augsburg StadtA. Strafamt. Urgicht 31.8.1541, Gerdraut Raumerin. Tradition also has it that the Augsburg tavern known from the 16th-century as the *Weiberschule* was so named because it was frequented by women after shopping at the city market; Ossip D. Potthoff, Georg Kossenhaschen: Kulturgeschichte der deutschen Gaststätte. Berlin 1933 (Reprint: Hildesheim 1992). 75.

¹⁶ Fynes Moryson: Shakespeare's Europe: a Survey of the Conditions of Europe at the end of the 16th Century. Ed. Charles Hughes. London 1903. 230-291.

¹⁷ Descriptions of charivaris directed against domineering women can be found in J. M. Beattie: The Criminality of Woman. In: Journal of Social History 8. 1975. 80-116, esp. 87, and Richard van Dülmen: Kultur und Alltag in der Frühen Neuzeit. Bd 1: Das Haus und seine Menschen. München 1990. 54-55.

natural order was punishable by death.¹⁸ And in accordance with late medieval anatomical theories, in extreme cases, women who exhibited overtly male behaviors could actually become men. According to the state of anatomical knowledge up to the late 16th century, still based largely on the theories of Aristotle and Galen, the woman's internal sexual organs were essentially the same as the male organs, only inverted. This was explained by the woman's colder nature; just as a flower does not bloom without the sun, the sexual organs remained inside the woman's cooler, moister body. Aristotle's biology was based on the premise that heat was the basis for the perfection of matter, fire being the highest and most perfect of the elements. The woman was thus an inferior creature.¹⁹ Since nature would always strive for perfection, Galen believed that it was possible for women to spontaneously be transformed into men, and a number of medieval writers documented cases of women whose inverted sex organs turned back out, suddenly providing the woman with a virile member and thus changing her sex.²⁰ Belief in such transmutations persisted until the seventeenth century.²¹

The colder nature of women also served as a context for their perceived sensitivity to alcohol, for alcoholic beverages were generally believed to have a fiery quality that was not compatible with the female temperament. Wine especially was believed to enhance the naturally 'sanguine' nature of men, purging the phlegmatic humors associated with female characteristics. Thus men when they drank became more virile, more sensual, and more ribald and witty, all character-

¹⁸ On women who dressed as men in order to gain the advantages of manhood see Kathryn Norberg: Prostitutes. In: *A History of Women in the West*. Ed. Natalie Davis, Arlette Farge. Vol. 3: Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes. Cambridge/MA 1993. 458-474, esp. 462. Rudolf Dekker, Lotte van de Pol: *Frauen in Männerkleidern. Weibliche Transvestiten und ihre Geschichte*. Berlin 1990. While German folklore abounds with images of women who successfully pass as men and are rewarded for their courage, cross dressing was in reality a dangerous game that was punishable by death. See Thomas Laqueur: *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. London 1990. 136-137.

¹⁹ Nancy Tuana: *The Weaker Seed: The Sexist Bias of Reproductive Theory*. In: *Feminism and Science*. Ed. Nancy Tuana. Bloomington 1989. 147-171, esp. 149-150. Fire, associated with the 'warmer' male temperament, was viewed as the highest, strongest, and purest of the four elements, and in some texts was described as a representation of God, Heaven and eternity. Helmut Gebelein: *Das Element Feuer in Haushalt und Familie*. In: *Haushalt und Familie in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*. Hg. von Trude Ehlert. Sigmaringen 1991. 137-151, bes. 140f.

²⁰ For example, as a result of vigorous physical activity; see Merry Wiesner: *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge/MA 1993. 46; see also Londa Schiebinger: *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science*. Cambridge/MA 1989. 163-164; T. Laqueur (cf. n. above 16) 123, 126-129; and Ian Maclean: *The Renaissance Notion of Women: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life*. Cambridge 1980. 38-39.

²¹ Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore: *The Discourse of Medicine and Science* In: *A History of Women* (cf. n. 18 above) 348-388, esp. 356-358.

istics considered completely inappropriate in women.²² Drunken women, by heating their temperaments and becoming more sanguine, were in effect guilty of inverting the natural order of the physical world.

Although 17th- and 18th-century physicians continued to be concerned that women could develop 'mannish' physical characteristics as a result of overly masculine behaviors,²³ stories of women spontaneously sprouting penises were by then relegated to folklore. Nonetheless, the provocative image of a woman turning into a man persisted, not as a medical reality, but as a symbolic or satirical representation. In his popular 16th-century satirical tract 'Der Zutrincker und Prasser. Gesetze, Ordnung und Instruction' Johannes von Schwarzenberg listed a series of diabolical wonders worked by wine. Under the influence of wine, he warned, shame becomes honor, and honor becomes shame; day is spent as night, and night as day; sheep become wolves, angels become devils, and women become men. It is worth noting that Schwarzenberg did not suggest the opposite possibility – that drinking could turn men into women – any more than he suggested that it could turn devils into angels.²⁴

A well-publicized incident involving such a transmutation is depicted on a popular 17th-century broadsheet.²⁵ In it, a woman who stepped over the line into male drinking territory is shown as being punished for her infraction by having to appear before her husband in a peculiarly male guise. The woman in this case was denounced for encroaching on her husband's territory in two ways – not only was she getting ready to go drinking with female companions, she tried to steal money from her husband's purse to finance the illicit drinking bout. As she pressed the purse against her abdomen to open it, the latch became caught on her skin, and she was forced to wake her sleeping husband to free her from what appears as second and ridiculously male genitals. Her husband, in one version of the story drunk himself when she woke him, agreed to help her only after eliciting a promise that she would remain sober in the future.

²² The association between blood, wine, and the sanguine temperament is discussed in detail in Bradley Brooks: *The Social Functions of Alcohol in Eighteenth-Century Maryland*. MA thesis. University of Delaware 1987. 42-52.

²³ Strenuous exercise, overstimulation, and excessive indolence were among causes listed for an interruption of menses, which in turn could cause a woman to lapse into hermaphroditism; suggested cures included feminine pursuits such as cooking, staying indoors, marriage and motherhood. See Alexandra Lord: 'To Relieve Distressed Women': Teaching and Establishing the Scientific Art of Midwifery or Gynecology in Edinburgh, London 1720-1805. Ph.D. Diss. University of Wisconsin-Madison 1995. 140, 146-150.

²⁴ Johannes von Schwarzenberg: *Der Zutrincker vnd Prasser. Gesetze, Ordnung vnd Instruction*. Oppenheim: [Jakob Köbel, um 1513]. VD-16 S:4743.

²⁵ The image circulated during the 17th-century in at least two different versions, which can be found in Zentralbibliothek Zürich. Einblattdruck, Elsass, Ia, 2. The example reproduced here is from 1620.

The purse often appeared in early modern German woodcuts as a point of contention between battling spouses, for like pants and sword, it was a symbol of male power in the household. This particular broadsheet, although somewhat absurd, thus illustrates both the inappropriateness of immoderate drinking among women and the assumption of male prerogative in paying for drinks. Although the temperance literature of the sixteenth century most often describes drunkenness as a male vice, drunkenness among women was also attacked, and the moral reformers of the period expressed concern over both of these issues. Not only was alcohol inappropriate for women for physical reasons, because it could heat up their normally cool temperaments and release their disorderly sexual desires, but their expenditure on drinks would undermine the financial authority of the household patriarch and waste household resources.²⁶

Drinking women, then, who threatened to invert the natural order of both their own anatomy and of household power, were a matter of particular concern to 16th-century moralists. As already noted, however, disorderly drinking by women seems in reality to have been the exception, rather than the rule. And the minority of women who did drink in a disorderly fashion did so in forms that differed from those of men. The scant number of women who emerge as problem drinkers apparently drank at home, and according to the accounts of their husbands and neighbors, did so alone or only in the company of other members of the household.²⁷ Thus, their behavior came to the attention of the authorities only when they stepped out of the bounds of their prescribed role as honorable women – when they neglected the household, engaged in illicit sex, fought with neighbors, consorted with Jews, or were labeled drunkards by their husbands as part of more general marital disputes. The consistent exception to this rule were prostitutes, who, as public women, were more likely to engage in public drinking and be found drunk in taverns or on the streets.

In all cases of women arrested for drunkenness, the drunken behavior was universally condemned by relatives, neighbors, and other witnesses, even other women. While drunken men could often count on the support of their fellows,

²⁶ See for example Hans Sachs' 16th-century tract 'Die Zwelff Eygenschafft eines boszhafftigen verruchten weybs'. In: *The Illustrated Bartsch. German Masters of the Sixteenth Century*. Vol. 13: Erhard Schoen – Niklas Stoer. Ed. Walter Strauss. New York 1984. 339, which lists drunkenness as one of twelve characteristics of a nasty wife; Sebastian Franck: *Von dem greüwlichen laster der trunckenhayt*. [Augsburg: Heinrich Steiner, 1528]. VD-16 F:2142. Fol. D₂, wine makes women into whores (*Wievil huren machet der weyn*). Additional literature addressing drunkenness among women is listed in Friedrich von Bassermann-Jordan: *Geschichte des Weinbaus*. Frankfurt 1923. Bd 2. 1177, and Johannes Janssen: *Geschichte des Deutschen Volkes seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*. Hg. von Ludwig von Pastor. 15. Aufl. Freiburg 1924. Bd. 8. 274-300.

²⁷ Augsburg StadtA. Strafamt. Urgicht 24.12.1641, David Lutz; Urgicht 10.6.1541, Anna Krug; Urgicht 16.11.1594, Michael Dielin. See also Lyndal Roper: *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg*. Oxford 1989. 184.

and even their wives, who might testify in their favor in spite of their drunken state, drinking women could not expect support from any quarter. Accusations by husbands and witnesses tended to concentrate on the failure of the female drunkard to live up to their expectations of female honor. Drinking women were charged with shortchanging the household as a result of expenditures on drinks, failing to care for children, abusing servants, or even threatening to burn down the house. Witnesses to Anna Krug's drunkenness in 1541, for example, although admitting that her husband did beat her 'rather viciously,' nonetheless characterized him as a 'poor martyr of a man' and Anna as a 'drunken pot.' In many cases, these charges would be accompanied by hints at unchaste behavior, even where little evidence of an affair existed.²⁸ Drunkenness, widely tolerated among men as an unavoidable side-effect of normal sociability, was universally condemned as unfitting for an honorable woman.

Also unacceptable were tavern visits by women unaccompanied by their husbands, even if they did not drink immoderately. Unmarried women could be arrested and interrogated for nothing more than sharing a drink with a man, especially if they had fallen under suspicion for sexual crimes in the past.²⁹ No other questionable behavior was necessary to raise suspicion, for the shared drink implied social intimacy. An expression of this attitude is provided in the case of Rosina Leinauer, wife of a clockmaker, who was arrested in 1591 after sharing two measures of wine in a public tavern with a journeyman formerly employed by her husband. Although she linked the drink to business they had conducted together, and pointed out that they drank only in the large common room in the presence of many witnesses, returning home 'in full light of day',³⁰ the council nonetheless characterized the behavior as not 'proper or fitting for an honorable woman.'³¹

Even in cases that did not directly involve accusations of sexual crimes, the language of tavern patrons seems to suggest that honorable women did not, or should not, visit taverns alone. Witnesses and defendants in tavern cases tended to describe women alone or in pairs as 'common' (*gemein*) or 'disreputable' (*unzüchtig*).³² And, although the tavern keeper's wife, daughter, and female servants were accepted members of tavern society, they also seem to have abstained from

²⁸ For example see Augsburg StadtA. Strafamt. Urgicht 10.6.1541, Anna Krug; 10.4.1550, Anna Eytlerin; 21.7.1574, Anna Keppelin; 16.11.1594, Michael Dielen; 27.4.1594, Sibilla Klausenburgerin.

²⁹ See for example Augsburg StadtA. Strafamt. Urgicht 9.2.1591, Anna Kienlerin; Urgicht 18.9.1592, Zacharias Prenner; Strafbuch 1588-1596. 101.

³⁰ Augsburg StadtA. Strafamt. Urgicht 16.8.1591, Rosina Leinauer: *beim hellen tag*.

³¹ Augsburg StadtA. Strafamt. Urgicht 16.8.1591: *ob sie auch vermain dz solches einer Erbarn frauen gebür oder wol ansthehe*.

³² For a discussion on the use of this term to describe prostitutes see Lyndal Roper: 'The common man', 'the common good', 'common women': Gender and Meaning in the German Reformation Commune. In: *Social History* 12/1. 1987. 1-2.

drinking with the customers. The one case I have seen in which a tavern keeper's wife admitted to drinking with her customers falls easily into the category of illegitimate behavior, for she, too, was accused of an affair with her drinking partner.³³

Particularly interesting is the attempt of the authorities to control these drunken women. Normally, women who drank were handled simply as unruly wives, and sent home with a warning to 'house well' under their husbands' authority. But when all else failed, a truncated version of the tavern ban might be applied, in which women had to take an oath not to drink outside the home, and possibly to limit their drinking to a given quantity of wine per day. The limiting of drinking to within the household was essentially a male punishment, intended to address a male behavior, and was part of the wording of the traditional tavern ban. In the case of women, however, it was not possible to underscore their dishonorable behavior by banning them from taverns, because tavern visits were not a right of honorable women. Thus the restrictions placed on women did not specifically include a ban on tavern visits, which would have been as inappropriate as a ban on carrying weapons. Here, the purpose of the restraint seems a rather frustrated attempt to control the offender directly, rather than an honor punishment. At the same time, such a restriction may well have been intended as a criticism of the ineffective husband, who was apparently unable to control the behavior of his unruly wife.

IV.

Perhaps the most telling aspect of early modern notions of female drunkards, however, is the reverse side of the association of drinking with dishonorable behavior. If immoderate drinking was unacceptable in women, then it seemed to follow that unacceptable women would engage in immoderate drinking. As I noted at the beginning of this article, the most unacceptable of women in early modern society were whores and witches, and these were also the groups most often associated with drunkenness. The association of public drinking with accusations of prostitution I have already touched upon. The effect of alcohol of heightening sexual desire, expressed positively by men as 'virility' or 'manliness,' would naturally lead to the downfall of women.³⁴

The most wanton of women in the early modern mentality, however, those most guilty of inverting the natural order, were the witches. Many representa-

³³ Augsburg StadtA. Strafamt. Urgicht 26.5.1542, Agnes Axtin.

³⁴ See for example the remark of 17th-century Englishman Richard Allestree: *She who is first a prostitute to Wine, will soon be to Lust also*. B. Brooks (cf n. above 20) 22.

tions of the witches' sabbath show women not only participating in unchaste behavior, but also decidedly drunk.³⁵ Some women accused of witchcraft also reportedly used a deep, masculine voice to sing ribald drinking songs.³⁶ The association of alcohol use with the wanton sexuality that supposedly characterized the sabbath is not surprising. Not only did alcohol incite female sexual desires, but contemporary theorists ascribed to women an irrational nature, which was also enhanced by alcohol.³⁷ The devil certainly would have been clever enough to use this tool to aid in his seduction of women, and such scenes might have served as a warning for women against weakening their ability to resist the devil's temptations by drinking immoderately. Yet the physical association of women with witchcraft was not limited to notions of a natural tendency towards disorder or weakness in the face of the devil's temptations. The bodies of women were themselves mysterious, and those attributes that differentiated them from men were often credited with magic powers – human milk, menstrual blood, after-birth, even a dead fetus could be used for magical purposes. Spells used by women to improve crops or quiet storms often involved exposing the vagina, which symbolized the female reproductive role.³⁸ When perverted, the very traits of womanhood that defined their natural role as mother and nourisher could thus become instruments of destruction and sin. As they perverted the female role of bearer and nourisher of children, and became murderers and consumers of children, witches also stepped across the gender boundary into male territory by engaging in disorderly drinking bouts.

V.

According to Elisabeth Koch, early modern theorists saw men as the norm in all social relations and at all levels of belief, and women as the deviation from that

³⁵ Examples can be seen in Thomas Hauschild e.a.: *Hexen: Katalog zur Ausstellung*. Hamburg 1979. 11-13, 19, 75; see also Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli: *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. Bd. 8. Berlin, Leipzig 1936-37. 1262-63.

³⁶ L. Roper: *Oedipus and the Devil* (cf. n. 4 above) 176 and 191.

³⁷ This was the view held by French political theorist Jean Bodin. Richard S. Dunn: *The Age of Religious Wars, 1559-1715*. 2nd ed. New York 1979. 129. On the disorderly nature of women, see also I. Maclean (cf. n. above 18) and J. Wiltenburg (cf. n. above 3) esp. 7-8.

³⁸ See for example Luisa Accati: *The Spirit of Fornication: Virtue of the Soul and Virtue of the Body in Friuli, 1600-1800*. In: *Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective*. Eds. Edward Muir, Guido Ruggiero. Baltimore 1990. 110-140; Lyndal Roper: *Exorcism and the Theology of the Body*. In: L. Roper (cf. n. above 4) 171-198. Matossian has identified similar rituals among the peasantry of pre-industrial Russia; see Mary Matossian: *The Peasant Was of Life*. In: *The Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Russia*. Ed. Wayne Vucinich. Stanford 1968. 1-40, 11.

norm.³⁹ Therefore what was the norm for men became the deviation for women, and what reinforced the honor of a man could taint the honor of a woman – whether it was tavern space, alcohol consumption, or power. Immoderate drinking by individual women was nearly always associated with either suspicious sexual behavior or a disorderly household. In its more extreme forms, particularly in the case of group drinking bouts by women that were not sanctioned by community norms, drunkenness among women came to be identified with the sexual power of the prostitute, and the magic power of the witch. Both represented inversions of the natural order and the ultimate perversions of early modern notions of female honor – and both inversions were aided, contemporaries believed, by the consumption of alcohol.

³⁹ Elisabeth Koch: *Maior dignitas est in sexu virili: Das weibliche Geschlecht im Normensystem des 16. Jahrhunderts*. Frankfurt am Main 1991. 233.