SEL 47, 1 (Winter 2007): 1–28
ISSN 0039-3657

Bearded Women in Early Modern England

MARK ALBERT JOHNSTON

"An old man, whose beard was all ouer-growne with gray haires, ask'd a Foole how he might do to become yong again: The Fool answered: Goe to the Barber: But how if that will not serue (said the old man) how then? The Foole reply'd: Then bind your selfe Prentise to some body for a 100. years."[1] As this passage from Anthony Copley's late-sixteenth-century collection of witticisms succinctly demonstrates, there was a pervasive association between male beard growth and economic social status in early modern England. The old man in Copley's anecdote who asks a fool how to attain youth is told that he should either visit the barber, ostensibly in order to have his beard removed, or else bind himself apprentice to a master in perpetuity; according to the fool's rhetoric, the two acts are equivalent. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century London, in fact, the one signaled the other: the presence of a beard advertised the completion of apprenticeship and the acquisition of freeman status.[2] So, the fool's logic correctly assumes that maturity and youth are primarily *economic* constructions that are constituted by the (regulated) presence or absence of facial hair.[3] Furthermore, since English boys who had not yet completed the terms of their apprenticeships were not permitted to marry, the presence of a beard heralded both the socioeconomic and sexual viability of its host to the early modern English imagination, mapping sexual prerogative over economic privilege.[4]

Facial beardlessness, then, by comparison—no less constructed than beardedness, though patriarchy tends to naturalize the distinction—acquired significance as a visual manifestation of the

Mark Albert Johnston is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Southern California where he conducts research on barbers in early modern English drama.

smooth-cheeked individual's deference or subordination to the patriarchal privilege inhering in the beard. But if the prospect of a boy's sporting a beard posed enough of a threat to patriarchal ideology to register as illicit, then how, we might well wonder, did that same ideology construe *female* beardedness? In what follows, I will contend that the female facial beard confronted early modern English culture with a profound contradiction that symbolically threatened the gendered economy of patriarchy with economic and sexual castration. Since the male facial beard operated in both economic and sexual registers to signal the privileges of autonomous viability, the female facial beard challenged that spectacular system of signification by which patriarchy naturalized its own constitution and so figured as a site at which the female body's economic/erotic significance required reassertion. Evidently, the female facial beard's subversive referential power could be mitigated only one of two ways: either through reinscription of the bearded woman's body as subordinated to the patriarchal imperative of reproductive marriage (since, within that context, the female beard signals neither the economic and erotic independence of its host nor the failure of the patriarchal system of signification but merely an anomalous aberration of nature) or through annihilation of either the facial beard or the facially bearded woman herself. The bearded woman, then, whose beardedness might otherwise signal a viable *ideological* alternative to the gendered economy, is insistently reinscribed as an anomalous *natural* wonder whose beard does not challenge or contest patriarchal prerogative.

Furthermore, the female beard was imagined to exist in manifestations other than literal, facial beardedness. An overtly sexual or economically independent woman could, as we shall see, be allusively or metaphorically rather than literally bearded. But there was another more *natural* variety of female beardedness that, according to the dominant cultural rhetoric, signaled not female insubordination but rather female adherence to the patriarchal ideal. Take, for example, the anonymous "The Ballad of the Beard," which was first published in a collection entitled *Le Prince d'Amour, or the Prince of Love* in 1660. Although Frederick W. Fairholt, in his introduction to the poem for the Percy Society, reasons that "[the ballad] is evidently a production of the time of Charles I, if not earlier," recent scholarship has confirmed that the collection is in fact a souvenir pamphlet of the Middle Temple Christmas revels of 1597–98, the same revels of which Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night, or What You Will* formed a part in

1602.[5] The ballad spends most of its fifteen quatrains predictably extolling the virtues and cataloging the stylistic variations of the early modern English male beard, making metaphoric associations between facial hair and masculinity, beard type or cut and occupation, and, through bawdy wordplay, between the beard and phallic weaponry, confirming the beard's operating in both economic and erotic registers.[6] But in its thirteenth quatrain, the ballad shifts its focus to consider a variant of the beard that is decidedly less conspicuous than those treated in the rest of the poem:

> I have also seen on a woman's chin
> A hair or two to grow,
> But, alas, the face it is too cold a place,
> Then look for a beard below.[7]

While the bulk of the ballad insists that the male facial beard functions emblematically as a visual signifier of economic and sexual primacy, the thirteenth quatrain concedes that women can possess not only degrees of facial hair ("a hair or two" occurring "on a woman's chin") but also, more *naturally* (since "the face it is too cold a place"), *nether* beards, which, according to the poem's rhetoric, are (like the penis and testicles in the Galenic medical model) hidden rather than displayed and so require male surveillance.[8]

In its naturalized, subordinate position, the "beard below" signals its object status—its submissive presence as both a source of male pleasure and mirth and also the site at which male privilege is both assured and reproduced. There is, however, always the danger (though the ballad seems interested in eliding this possibility) that, in the absence of male surveillance, a beard will appear on the female face and signal the woman's lack of adequate male headship—her economic and erotic independence, or, in Galenic terms, her *unnatural* masculine heat. Unlike the facial manifestation of female beardedness, then, the female "beard below" does not threaten notions of male economic and erotic primacy; rather, it confirms them by remaining discreetly hidden in a subordinate position relative to the male facial beard and by being complicit with patriarchal economic strategies such as patrilineal inheritance through its production of *heirs*. It is significant, in this light, that the transvestite women who cross-dress as males in early modern English comedy and romance uniformly present themselves as beardless boys rather than as

bearded men, thereby deftly avoiding the spectacle of the facially bearded woman. So, even though Olivia apparently overlooks the disparity between Cesario's lack of a beard and potential as a suitable mate in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, there is a moment in the play in which Feste does not.

After Viola, cross-dressed as Cesario, gives Feste money for his "expenses," the clown prays that Jove will send the youth a beard.[9] Viola/Cesario tells Feste that s/he is "almost sick for one," to which statement Viola adds in an aside, "though I would not have it grow on my chin" (III.i.46–8). What, then, do we make of Viola's proclamation that she would not have the beard she apparently yearns for grow upon her chin? Is Viola implying that she would not have a beard grow on *her* chin (i.e., that she would have it grow on the chin of a husband instead), or that she would prefer it grow elsewhere on her person (i.e., not on her *chin*)?[10] Viola may be alluding here to her "beard below," acknowledging, like "The Ballad of the Beard" does, that such is the *natural* expression of female beardedness. These two readings of Viola's aside, then, may be mutually informative rather than mutually exclusive since both imply that Viola desires a beard that would both express her submission to male headship and elide any possibility that she might want to be a facially bearded woman. Moreover, Feste's and Viola's conversation about beards is initiated by an economic exchange, and the conversation ostensibly returns to money when Feste asks "Would not a pair of *these* have bred, sir?" (III.i.49, emphasis added). But Feste's breeding reference may well constitute further quibbling about *beards*, in which case the clown is bawdily alluding to the potential for beards to breed, a sense that is validated by Viola/Cesario's concession that a pair could reproduce "being kept together, and put to use" (III.i.50). So Viola's and Feste's bawdy double entendres throughout the scene tantalizingly allude to Viola's willingness to vocalize her own sexual desire, even if that desire apparently coincides with the patriarchal imperative that female beardedness be limited to the relatively *natural* "beard below," which signals its inferiority by dutifully *breeding*.

But few early modern English comedies secure the subordination of as many economically independent and libidinally outspoken women as Lording Barry's *Ram Alley, or Merry Tricks* (1608). The three main female characters in Barry's play all vocalize their sexual desires, possess or earn personal wealth, and, crucially, lack male headship; as a result, each of these female characters—a widow, a whore, and a female heir—is represented in the drama

as possessing a metaphoric beard. Like Viola, however, each of the allusively bearded women in Barry's play makes it clear from the outset that she desires male headship through marriage and so aligns her potential beardedness with the patriarchal imperative. The complicated main plot of Barry's city comedy revolves around the efforts of Will Small-Shanks, a younger son who has led a riotous, prodigal existence and lost his estate to Throat the lawyer and his money to dicing and women, to win back his estate and trick Throat into marrying Francis, a prostitute, by having her masquerade as Constantia Sommerfield, heir to the Sommerfield fortune. Part of Francis's disguise as Constantia obtains in her possessing a servant named *Beard*, a lieutenant Will hires but who, within the fiction of the grift, is alleged to have belonged to Constantia's recently deceased father. Francis, then, has putatively appropriated the patriarch's Beard. And although Constantia ostensibly forsakes her status as *heir* in the opening lines of the play, that epithet, which is informed by obvious early modern wordplay associating it with *hair*, is used in reference to her throughout. But since it is clear from the outset that both Francis and Constantia are pursuing marriage, audiences know that whatever economic and erotic autonomy these metaphorically bearded women exercise in the course of the comedy will, in the end, be subsumed under male headship. Similar to Francis and Constantia, the widow Taffata initially appears engaged in a conversation about what sort of beard best suits her, so it is immediately apparent that she, too, is scouting out a husband for herself.

Taffata's inheritance of her late husband's pewter works signals both her own wealth and the lucrative potential she constitutes for any man who can manage to marry her. Taffata, a childless widow, occupies a problematically independent position within a patriarchal economy that demands female subordination to male prerogative. In the play's final moments, Will proposes marrying the widow as an alternative to killing her, a comedic act that would transfer her economic and erotic value to him: "I'll be thy merchant," he tells her, "And to this wealthy fair I'll bring my ware, / And here set up my standing."[11] Will's wordplay here calls attention to how his proposal to marry the widow is informed by his desire to take both economic and erotic possession of her; his reference to himself as Taffata's "merchant," moreover, which clearly signals her status as a commodity, points us outside the play and the theater to the literally bearded women who were reportedly exhibited on Fleet Street, just blocks from the Whitefriars and Ram Alley.

Richard D. Altick refers to the bearded lady or "hairy Maid" in *The Shows of London* as "a perennial attraction among the London freak shows" and cites John Evelyn's diary entry for 15 September 1657, which records Evelyn's visiting "the hairy Maid, or Woman whom twenty years before I had also seene when a child: her very Eyebrowes were combed upward, & all her forehead as thick & even as growes on any womans head, neately dress'd: There come also two locks very long out of Each Eare: she had also a most prolix beard, & *mustachios*, with long lockes of haire growing on the very middle of her nose, exactly like an Island [Iceland] dog."[12] Evelyn's memoir documents an early modern fascination with the spectacle of the bearded woman, and Altick notes that, throughout the seventeenth century, inns in Fleet Street rented space and, in effect, clientele, to itinerant exhibitors.[13] That Evelyn paid to see this "hairy Maid" on two occasions separated by twenty years' time not only confirms the longstanding appeal of the bearded lady as a London attraction but also suggests that the female beard could generate as well as symbolize wealth. As Evelyn's account continues, however, he mentions having viewed more than just the face of this bearded lady: "the rest of her body [is] not so hairy, yet exceeding long in comparison, armes, neck, breast & back; the Colour of a bright browne, & fine as well dressed flax: She was now married, & told me [she] had one Child, that was not hairy, as nor were any of her parents or relations: she was borne at Ausburg in Germanie, & for the rest very well shaped, plaied well on the Harpsichord &c."[14] Evelyn admits to having viewed the hairy lady's "breast & back," which implies that the hirsute figure was either exhibited partially exposed or may have bared herself at some point in the show, possibly in order to present spectators with the profound contradiction (and ocular proof) of her possessing both breasts and a beard. But the potentially subversive erotic significance of the spectacle—any suggestion that the bearded lady is sexually autonomous—is defused here by Evelyn's assurances that the woman is "now married" and "has one Child." Moreover, the economic potential of the maid's beard obtains only inasmuch as the wealth that that beard both generates and signals contributes to a domestic economy over which her husband and his heir preside. Evelyn's acknowledging that the "hairy Maid" plays "well on the Harpsichord" implies that the bearded figure also provided her customers with musical entertainment that showcased her social skill and domestic graces, as would her "neately dress'd" appearance. In this light, the maid's beard, contextualized by

symbols and assurances of her domestic propriety, functions neither to signal her economic or sexual subjectivity nor to contest patriarchal ideology but merely to signal her status as a *natural* anomaly whose potentially ambivalent beardedness is situated by her supporting the *social* order.

Even if Evelyn's bearded lady did expose her breasts during the show, her doing so may have operated to counter any subversive eroticism that the spectacle of her facial beard might otherwise have instantiated by emphasizing her body's patriarchally proscribed maternal function. As Jusepe de Ribera's famous 1631 painting of the bearded Magdalena Ventura (see Figure 1) demonstrates, the exposed breast could operate as a visual strategy for confining the bearded woman to the specifically domestic space implied by the spectacle of nursing motherhood. Ribera's icon situates the display of female facial hair within the economics of domesticity and so spectacularizes not the figure's gender indeterminacy but rather proof of her being a *real* woman subordinated to the patriarchal procreative imperative who, in opposition to nature rather than to culture, happens to possess a facial beard. By comparison, the late sixteenth-century Juan Sánchez Cotán painting, *La Barbuda de Peñaranda* (Figure 2), with which Ribera was likely familiar, associates its bearded woman—one Brígada del Río, who reportedly traveled to the court of Madrid in the 1590s—with docile domesticity merely by depicting its subject in a strikingly timid pose with her (rather masculine) hands folded in an attitude of gentle placability.[15] Both Brígada and Magdalena wear plain, homely caps and garments that lack any fashionable trappings of ostentation or extravagance and signal the women's submissive propriety. The stone slab or plinth in Ribera's painting—the Latin inscription on which attests not only to Magdalena Ventura's being "a great wonder of nature" (EN MAGNṼ NATVRA MIRACVLVM) but also to her having borne her fortunate husband, Felici di Amici, not one but three sons—additionally displays two objects on its top surface: a spindle of thread and a snail, both of which symbolize traditionally feminine domestic space and work. With Ventura's husband looming in the background and her infant son feeding in the foreground, Ribera's sensational portrait of a *natural* wonder is surrounded, grounded, and largely defused by symbols of her submissive domesticity, while Magdalena's medial position in the composition makes it apparent that she is not the possessor of the privilege inhering in the beard but the vehicle by which it is passed from father to son.[16] The Latin inscription on the plinth

Figure 1. *Magdalena Ventura with Her Husband and Son*, Jusepe de Ribera, 1631. This item is reproduced by permission of Museo Fundación Duque de Lerma, Hospital de Taverno, Toledo. © Fundación Casa Ducal de Medinaceli.

further notes that Magdalena's prodigious beard "seems more like that of any bearded master than that of a woman who has borne three sons" (my translation), a statement that simultaneously denaturalizes Magdalena's beard and contextualizes its erotic and economic significance.[17] So, while Magdalena's facial beard might otherwise have signaled economic and erotic autonomy to an early modern English viewer, Ribera's composition works to render apparent that beard's deference to patriarchal primacy within a household in which Magdalena's body serves to bear her husband heirs and to provide them sustenance. The most powerful cultural symbol offsetting Magdalena's beard in Ribera's painting, in this light, is the beard of her husband, which both visually superates and ideologically subsumes her own inferior and comparatively insignificant facial adornment.

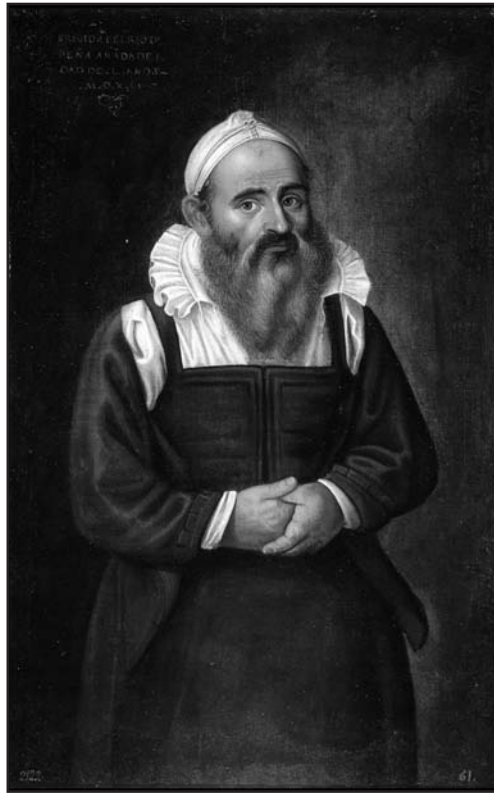

Figure 2. *La Barbuda de Peñaranda*, Juan Sánchez Cotán, 1590s. Cat. 3222. This item is reproduced by permission of and © Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

Returning to Evelyn's account of the bearded woman he visited, William Bray, in his edition of Evelyn's diary, concludes that the woman to whom Evelyn refers is one Barbara Vanbeck, who appears in the 1824 edition of Rev. J. Granger's *Biographical History of England* as Barbara Urselin/Urselerin—the etymology of which suspiciously arouses images of bears and beards—wife to one Michael Vanbeck.[18] Indeed, Evelyn himself makes reference in a section of his *Numismata. A Discourse of Medals, Antient and Modern* to the authenticity of one "*Barbara* the hairy Maid, whose Picture we have from the Life by *Hollar*."[19] Opposite an illustration depicting Barbara playing the virginals (Figure 3), an arrangement that operates to neutralize the ideological threat posed by Barbara's beard by offsetting it with a symbol of domestic and social decorum specifically appropriate for use by young maidens,

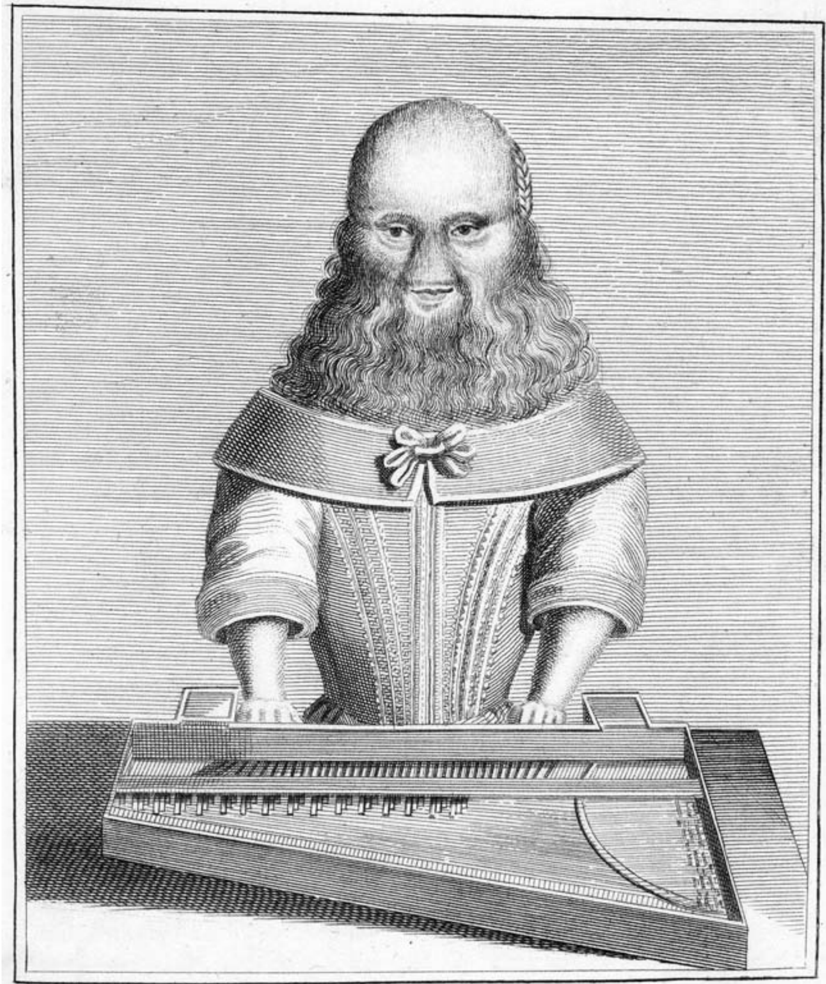

Figure 3. *Barbara Urselin* [Brunn, 1653?]. James Granger, *A Biographical History of England,* v.4, op. p. 98. Cat DA28.G7. This item is reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Granger places a quote by John Bulfinch that Granger claims was written under one of the prints that he viewed: "This woman I saw in Ratcliffe Highway, in the year 1668, and was satisfied she was a woman."[20] How Bulfinch received this satisfaction we cannot be certain, but it may have entailed a similar revelation to the one that Evelyn hints at in his own diary. Granger comments, "The face and hands of this woman are represented hairy

all over. Her aspect resembles that of a monkey. She has a very long and large spreading beard, the hair of which hangs loose and flowing like the hair of the head. She is playing on an organ. Vanbeck married this frightful creature, on purpose to carry her about for a show."[21]

This identical illustration appears in G. H. Wilson's 1842 edition of his *Wonderful Characters* as a representation of Barbara Urselin with the claim that

> In the year 1655, was publicly shown for money, a woman named Augustina Barbara, the daughter of Balthazer Ursler, then in her twenty-second year; her whole body, and even her face, was covered with curled hair of a yellow colour, and very soft like wool: she had besides a thick beard that reached to her girdle, and from her ears hung long tufts of yellowish hair. She had been married above a year, but then had no issue, her husband's name was Vanbeck, and it is said he married her merely to make a shew of her, for which purpose he travelled into various countries, and among others visited England.
>
> Her picture deserves a place in any gallery or collection, to be preserved for its extreme singularity.[22]

Wilson's description, like Evelyn's account, situates the bearded lady within a domestic context by making note of her married status and procreative potential. Wilson's asserting Augustina Barbara's "singularity," moreover, construes her as a "wonder of nature" rather than of culture, a visual rather than ideological anomaly, in much the same way as the inscription on Ribera's plinth does Magdalena Ventura. An apparently later portrait of Barbara than that in Granger's 1842 edition appears in the 1869 edition of his text (Figure 4), where both the section title and portrait caption identify the depiction as that of Barbara Urslerin, the Hairy-faced Woman.[23] Wilson's text comments,

> This remarkable monstrosity was born at Augsburg, in High Germany, in the year 1629. Her face and hands are represented to have been hairy all over. Her aspect resembled that of a monkey. She had a very long and large spreading beard, the hair of which hung loose and flowing, like the hair of the head. She seems to have acquired some skill in playing on the organ and harpsichord.

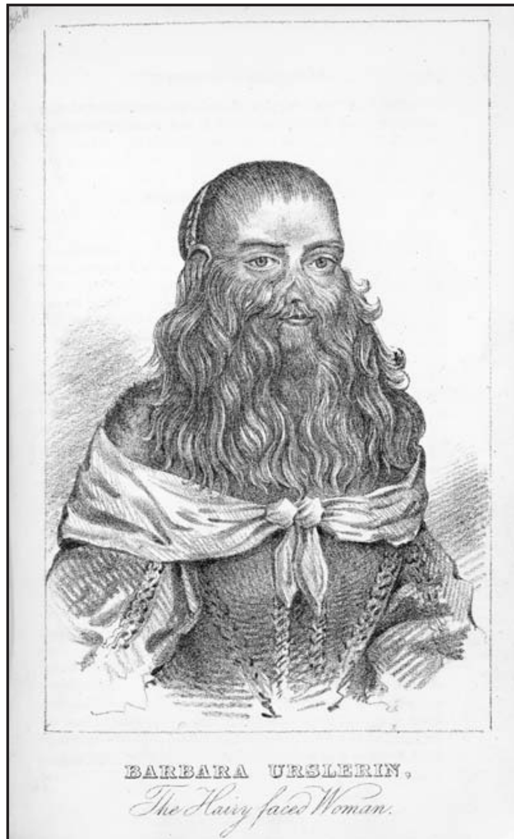

Figure 4. *Barbara Urslerin, the Hairy-faced Woman* [Gaywood, 1658?]. Henry Wilson, *Wonderful Characters*, 1869, p. 386f. Cat. 2407.bb.2. Reproduced by permission of and © The British Library. All Rights Reserved.

> A certain Michael Vanbeck married this frightful creature, on purpose to carry her about for a show. When she died is uncertain, but she was still living in 1668, when a Mr. John Bulfinch records that he saw her in Ratcliffe Highway, and "was satisfied she was a woman."
>
> There are two portraits of her extant—one by Isaac Brunn, taken in 1653, and another by Gaywood, of five years' later date.[24]

Granger and Wilson, then, both document Barbara's appearance being compared to that of an animal, "a monkey," which recalls

Evelyn's comparing the "hairy Maid" he viewed in September 1657 to an "Island [Iceland] dog," a breed of terrier with long hair and pointed ears that had become a popular lapdog in England by the seventeenth century.[25] What seems to be at stake here, as Will Fisher points out in relation to John Bulwer's comment in his *Anthropometamorphosis* that "Woman by Nature is smoothe and delicate; and if she have many haires she is a monster," is not the gender of the bearded woman *per se* but her "very humanity."[26]

But Bulwer's and Wilson's commentaries may imply simply that hairy women constitute a deviation from nature since the word *monster* (or *monstrosity*), from the Latin *monere* (to warn), could be employed in the period to indicate any sort of prodigious marvel.[27] Evelyn's account and Granger's and Wilson's texts all compare bearded women not to men or to animals generally but to fashionable pets, purchasable beasts that lack subjectivity but symbolize the privileges of ownership. The insistent declarations of satisfaction that the bearded woman is *really* a woman, that she is married and has (or had not *yet*) borne children, and that she resembles an exotic, domesticated beast, then, may be mutually informative since they all assert rather than elide the bearded woman's submissiveness and her lack of economic and erotic autonomy. Bullfinch's declaration that Barbara is *really* a woman and Evelyn's assurance that she produced a child for Vanbeck contextualize her as a deviant from the natural, not the social, order. Moreover, the charge that "Vanbeck married this frightful creature, on purpose to carry her about for a show" situates the spectacular economic significance of Barbara's beard within the context of marriage, figuring her not as an independently wealthy woman but as a lucrative commodity for her husband to market.

Early in Barry's *Ram Alley*, Constantia, heir to her late father's fortune and disguised as a smooth-chinned pageboy in order to serve the man she secretly loves, relates the story of a city dame who went "to see the baboons / Do their newest tricks" and articulates a tale of carnivalesque inversion that plays with the notion of a transmigrated female beard:

> They say some of our city dames
> Were much desirous to see the baboons
> Do their newest tricks; went, saw them, came home,
> Went to bed, slept; next morning one of them,
> Being to shift a smock, sent down to her maid
> To warm her one; meanwhile she 'gins to think

On the baboons' tricks, and naked in her bed
Begins to practice some. At last she strove
To get her right leg over her head—thus—
And by her activity she got it
'Cross her shoulder, but not with all her power
Could she reduce it; at last, much struggling,
Tumbles quite from the bed upon the floor.
The maid, by this return'd with the warm smock
And seeing her mistress thrown on the ground,
Truss'd up like a football, exclaims, calls help,
Runs down amaz'd, swears that her mistress' neck
Is broke. Up comes her husband and neighbours,
And, finding her thus truss'd, some flatly said
She was bewitch'd, others she was possess'd;
A third said for her pride the devil had set
Her face where her rump should stand. But at last
Her valiant husband steps me boldly to her,
Helps her, she ashamed, her husband amaz'd,
The neighbours laughing, as none forebear,
She tells them of the fatal accident.
To which one answers that if her husband
Would leave his trade and carry his wife about
To do this trick in public, she'd get more gold
Than all the baboons, calves with two tails,
Or motions whatsoever.[28]

Constantia's remarkable anecdote, with its image of the naked city dame's face appearing "where her rump should stand" and vice versa, gestures toward the reverse inversion of bodily strata that "The Ballad of the Beard" makes in reference to the "beard below."[29] By mimicking the tricks of the baboons, the city dame herself becomes the equivalent of one: a freakishly topsy-turvy spectacle that, according to the couple's friends, has the potential to earn her husband enough money to enable him to stop working his legitimate trade altogether. The dame's metaphorically transmigrated beard figures as a lucrative source of potential revenue not for the dame herself but for her husband who could, just as Vanbeck does with Barbara Urselin according to Granger's accusation, "carry his wife about" and market her as a natural wonder in order to accrue wealth for himself.

Samuel Pepys records in his diary on 21 December 1668 that he went "into Holborne, and there saw the woman that is to be seen with a beard. She is a little plain woman, a Dane: her name,

Ursula Dyan; about forty years old; her voice like a little girl's; with a beard as much as any man I ever saw, black almost, and grizly; they offered to shew my wife further satisfaction if she desired it, refusing it to men that desired it there, but there is no doubt but by her voice she is a woman; it begun to grow at about seven years old, and was shaved not above seven months ago, and is now so big as any man's almost that ever I saw; I say, bushy and thick. It was a strange sight to me, I confess, and what pleased me mightily."[30] Pepys's Ursula Dyan may be yet another incarnation of Barbara Urselin/Urslerin, though she was, by Evelyn's report, German rather than Danish. Although Pepys does not say whether or not his wife ever received the "further satisfaction" that she was offered, Pepys admits to being mightily pleased by the sight of the bearded lady, perhaps due in part to his comparing her voice to "a little girl's." Since young girls fail to register as socially significant in either economic or erotic terms, Pepys's infantilization of Dyan, which entails his visualizing a seven-year-old girl rather than a forty-year-old woman with a beard, has much the same effect as Evelyn's and Granger's comparing the bearded women they see to pets does. Pepys's equivocation mitigates Dyan's subjectivity and her beard's subversive significance, leaving Pepys with a titillating visual rather than disturbing ideological disjunction. And although Pepys repetitively compares the size of Dyan's beard to that "of any man I ever saw," the qualifying *almost* that he adds on second thought diminishes any equivalence that he initially erects: Dyan's beard seems *almost* as big as a man's but, like her voice, finally registers as a diminutive inferior.

Most representations of facially bearded women that were available in early modern England seem to have been of foreign provenance; some of those foreign depictions, however, seem to have had their beards excised in the process of translation. Vincenzo Cartari's collection of classical myths, for example, refers to a statue of Venus in Cyprus possessing not only "di aspetto pareva huomo" and "vesti di donna" (the aspect or visage of a man and the clothing of a woman) but also "la barba," or a beard.[31] The illustration that accompanies the 1571 Venetian edition of Cartari's Italian text (Figure 5) shows two portrayals of Venus: that on the left depicts her shrouded, mourning the death of Adonis, her beloved, while that on the right depicts her bearded, holding in the hand of her outstretched right arm a comb, which is poised between her own facial beard and the "beard below" of her shrouded alternate. Present in the Italian text's illustration but exaggerated in the comparatively compact composition that ac-

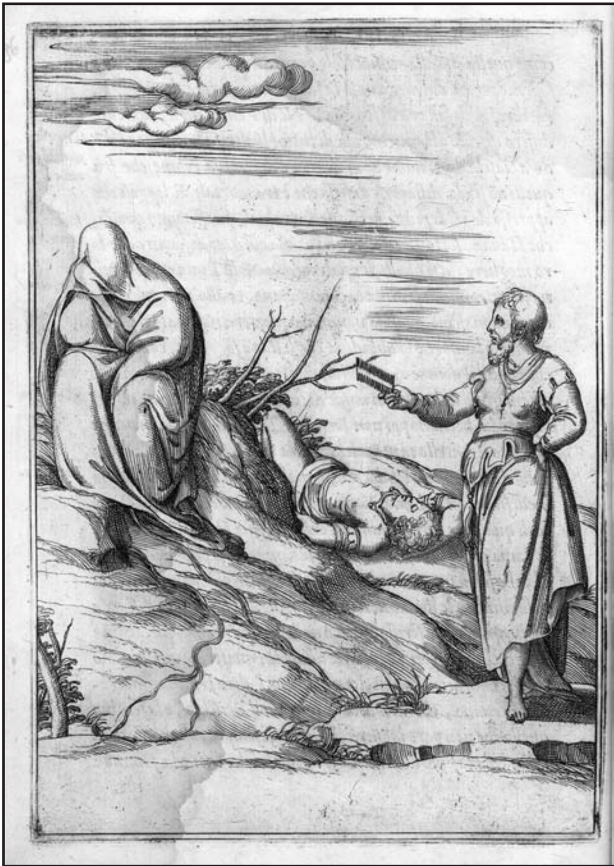

Figure 5. *Venere con la Barba.* Vincenzo Cartari, *Le Imagini de i Dei de Gli Antichi,* 1571, p. 552. Cat. RB375693. This item is reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

companies the French text of 1624 (Figure 6) are the jagged teeth of the comb that the bearded Venus offers her mourning alternate and the position of the comb, poised over the generative organs of Adonis's corpse, which together invoke the female beard's castrative potential. Furthermore, the apparent positioning of the veiled Venus's hands over her mouth and her vagina, indicating the two sites of the female beard, is made more obvious in the later than in the earlier portrait. The Venus depicted in her association with Adonis appears limp and resigned, her potential beardedness hidden and only alluded to; by comparison, the facially bearded, independent Venus appears erect and self-assured, extending the

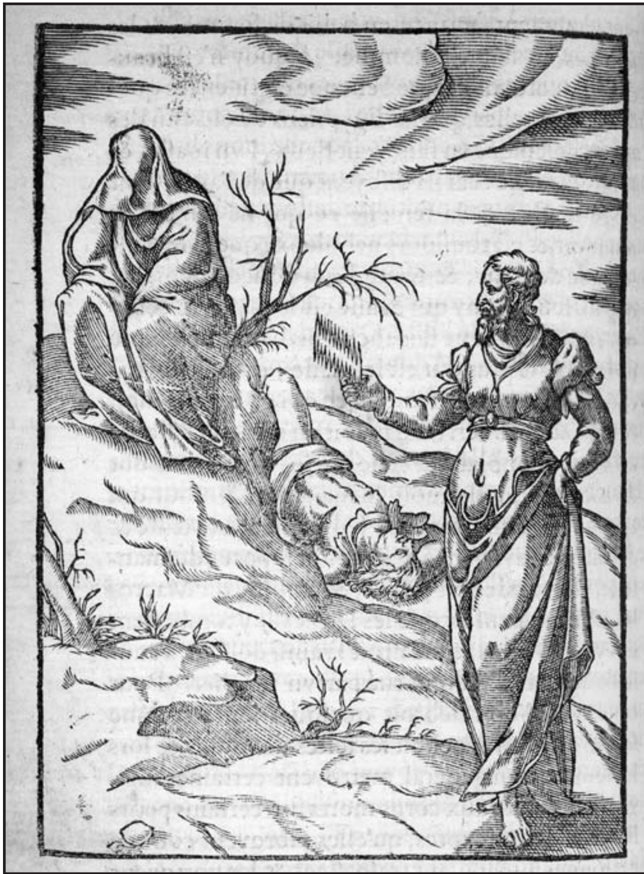

Figure 6. *Venus, à la mort d'Adonis son amoureux.* Vincenzo Cartari, *Les Images des Dieux,* 1624, p. 670. Cat. RB343271. This item is reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

symbolic comb to her shrouded alter ego as if it poses an alternative as well as a threat to the male figure it hovers above. It seems no coincidence, then, that the bearded Venus in both of Cartari's texts presides over the scene of her own metaphoric widowhood since, for many early modern women, widowhood would have entailed precisely the sort of economic and erotic independence that the female facial beard apparently signaled. But the single contemporary English translation of Cartari's treatise, Richard Linche's 1599 *The Fountaine of Ancient Fiction*, completely omits both visual and verbal accounts of the bearded Venus; apparently Linche found the spectacle of the bearded goddess too subversively suggestive for his English audience.[32]

Nevertheless, two legends of bearded female saints may have been familiar in early modern England, and the stories seem to suggest that a woman's refusal to marry and reproduce in defiance of the patriarchal imperative could result in the miraculous appearance of a facial beard. Pursued by an enamored youth and threatened with the prospect of rape, St. Paula of Avila, Spain is reported to have confounded her attacker by miraculously growing a "beard . . . on her chin, and moustaches on her lip after her embracing the crucifix in an oratory to which she fled."[33] Similarly, St. Wilgefortis, who was venerated in England as Saint Uncumber, was reputedly a daughter of the king of Portugal who "had taken a vow of perpetual virginity" and wanted to avoid an arranged marriage to the king of Sicily. Praying to heaven for assistance, Wilgefortis received "a beard, moustache, and whiskers, sprouting on her face, [which] indisposed the prince of Sicily to accept her hand. Her father, in a rage, had her crucified."[34] According to another legend, "a poor minstrel [who] one day played an air under the statue of the Saint" was rewarded when she gave him one of her golden shoes (Figure 7).[35] The defiance of male desire by both bearded saints is mitigated by their submission to God's supreme patriarchal authority, but Wilgefortis was further reputed to bring comfort to women who were in need of deliverance from encumbrance. In his dialogue of 1529, Sir Thomas More charges that "women [in England] hath therfore chaunged her name, and in stede of saynt Wylgeforte call her saynt Uncumber, bycawse they teken [that] . . . she wyll not fayle to uncumber them of theyr husbondis."[36] In this light, the bearded Uncumber might have symbolized for early modern Englishwomen the significant economic and erotic autonomy that could result from widowhood—a state of being unencumbered with a husband—but, as Carole Levin reports, icons of Uncumber that had existed from the fourteenth century in England were despoiled during the Reformation.[37]

Thomas Hill's 1576 book of dream interpretations offers the exemplary case of a woman who "dreamed, to haue a halfe a bearde, who after lyued seperate from her husbande, so that if she had thought to haue a whole bearde, then after to be a wydowe."[38] Evidently, Hill was convinced that the appearance of female facial hair, whether real or imagined, signaled a corresponding increase in female independence within the household economy. Alexander Read, in a series of lectures delivered in the barber-surgeon's hall in 1632–34, claims, "in women their courses being stopped, vapors ascend to the chin, from whence a beard doth bud out.

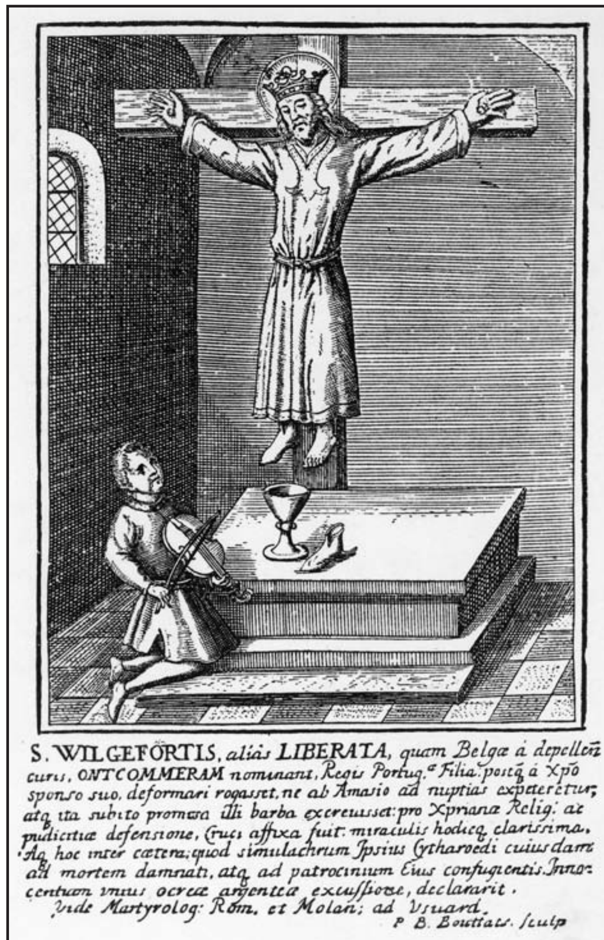

Figure 7. *S[aint] Wilgefortis*, Baring-Gould. *Lives of the Saints*, 1914, v.8, p. 348. Cat. RB607454. This item is reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

As Hippoc[rates] . . . doth report of *Phaetusa* the wife of *Pytheus*, who got a beard by reason of her husbands absence from her."[39] In the minds of some early modern medical men, too, then, the female beard's appearance was imagined to be the direct result of either a lack of male headship or the female body's refusal to adhere to the patriarchal reproductive imperative.

In James Mabbe's 1631 translation of Fernando de Rojas' *La Celestina*, re-titled *The Spanish Bawd, Represented in Celestina*, the titular Celestina is variously described as a witch, a whore,

a bawd, a widow, and a bearded woman, each of which epithets tends to inform the others.[40] At least one earlier English translation of Rojas' novelistic play, the 1527 interlude *Calisto and Melibea* attributed to John Rastell, had censoriously omitted the detail of Celestina's possessing a beard.[41] In Mabbe's closet drama, Semprino, Calisto's servant who introduces the scheming wise woman to his master, tells Calisto that she is "an old bearded woman, called Celestina; a which [*sic*], subtill as the diuell, and well practis'd in all the rogueries and villanies that the world can affoord."[42] Calisto is later informed that Celestina is reputed to have worked at "sixe seuerall Trades: shee was a Laundresse, a Perfumeresse, a Former of faces, a Mender of crackt maidenheads, a Bawd, and had some smatch of a Witch" and that "She professed her selfe a kinde of Phisician" in order to gain access to young virgins (pp. 15, 16). Celestina's facial beard functions as more than an artistic embellishment in this light; it is part of a complex rhetorical and visual system in which her assuming male economic, professional, and erotic prerogative is signaled. Referring to her trafficking in maidenheads, Celestina tells Sempronio, "Few virgins (I thanke Fortune for it) hast thou seene in this Citty, which haue opened their shops, and traded for themselues, to whom I haue not beene a broaker to their first spunne thread, and holpe them to vent their wares" (p. 38). Celestina's telling the whore Elicia to fetch "the bloud of the hee Goat, and that little piece of his beard which you your selfe did cut off" as she concocts a love spell with which to ensnare the young virgin Melibea not only makes it clear that she *is* a witch (and early modern witches were commonly believed to be bearded) but also alludes to the castrative method by which she appropriates the male beard for her own use (p. 42).[43] Moreover, Celestina's widowhood, lack of legitimate heirs, and assumption of the mastery of several traditionally male dominated trades all make her a particularly fitting figure for the possession of a facial beard. "I husband all things my self, and am at mine own finding," she asserts, a self analysis that agrees with Thomas Hill's interpretation of women who imagine themselves being bearded (p. 52).[44]

Celestina's death, it should come as no surprise, results from her desire to control both the reward she receives for soliciting Melibea's chastity and female sexuality generally; the horrific nature of her demise cautions against the monstrous consequences of female economic and sexual insubordination.[45] Mabbe's epistle dedicatory figures the translated play itself as the bearded Spanish bawd who has been imported from afar, staged as a spectacle

for public consumption, and reinscribed as a commodity comparable to "coorse and sowre bread" and "plaine houshold-bread," metaphors that underscore Celestina's being transformed into a specifically domestic commodity. Mabbe's interest in marketing Celestina as a "Carcass," rather than as a living woman, suggests that he would have his English audience read her life through her death, that she be reduced from speaking subject to muted object before any reading of her temporary economic and erotic autonomy commences (sig. A3r).

But perhaps the most pervasively unsettling representation of female beardedness on the early modern English stage is that of Shakespeare's facially bearded witches in *Macbeth*. Banquo tells the *weïrd* (or *weyward*) sisters, "You should be women, / And yet your beards forbid me to interpret / That you are so."[46] Here, he articulates how his confrontation with their bearded visages frustrates his interpretive urges both because of the autonomous authority that those beards signal and because he is unable to mitigate their culturally castrative threat by contextualizing the sisters' bodies as submissive to patriarchal privilege. Although Banquo wants to reinscribe the trio and thereby render them subordinate, their beards *forbid* his doing so, and it is precisely the frustration of this desire that causes Banquo's and a contemporary audience's profound discomfort with the sisters' unrestricted performance of female waywardness.[47]

Shakespeare's bearded sisters, unlike the other representations of bearded women that we have encountered here, are not reinscribed, corrected, annihilated, or forced into procreative marriage: their beards refuse to signify as *beards below* those of men. The bearded triumvirate—crucially functioning not as single anomalies but as a homosocial group and, therefore, not reducible to individual wonders of nature—suggest that communities of economically and erotically independent women (not unlike the Amazons in the early modern English imagination) resist reinterpretation by dominant culture by constituting an alternate economy to that of patriarchal prerogative. Samuel Pepys notes that he saw a performance of *Macbeth* at the Duke's playhouse immediately after viewing Ursula Dyan, but he does not mention whether he recognized the significance of the coincidence or whether he derived the same mighty pleasure from the spectacle of the bearded sisters as he did from that of Dyan.[48] Banquo, unlike Evelyn or Pepys, is not able to console himself with assertions of the bearded woman's conformity to social stereotypes of female submissiveness; Shakespeare's bearded women defy male

desire and refuse to be defined by an artificially naturalized binary in which their beardedness—the visual signal of their *weïrdness*—figures as a hairy secret that must be negotiated, hidden, or erased.[49] These unabashedly bearded, wayward, insubordinate sisters, then, constitute cultural wonders within the gendered economy of early modern England.

NOTES

I would especially like to thank Bruce R. Smith, Paul Werstine, and Elizabeth D. Harvey for their generous comments and suggestions. Margaret Jane Kidnie, Madeline Lennon, J. A. B. Somerset, and an anonymous *SEL* reader also helped to shape this essay at various stages. I am grateful for doctoral and postdoctoral funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, without which the completion of this paper would not have been possible.

[1] Anthony Copley, *Wits Fittes and Fancies. Fronted and Entermedled with Presidentes of Honour and Wisdome. Also: Loves Ovvle. An Idle Conceited Dialogue Between Loue, and an Olde Man* (London: Richard Johnes, 1595), p. 143.

[2] The London barber-surgeons' company ordered in 1556, for example, that "no apprentice should wear a beard of beyond fifteen days' growth, and that on breach of this order the master of the apprentice was to pay a fine of half a mark" (Sidney Young, *The Annals of the Barber-Surgeons of London* [London: Blades, 1890], p. 261). Various other London livery companies and fraternities enforced similar proscriptions among their memberships. See, for example, Lincoln's Inn, *The Records of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn: The Black Books*, 5 vols. (London: Lincoln's Inn, 1897–1968), 1:259, 328.

[3] For a more sustained reading of the ways in which the early modern English beard was economically informed, see Mark Albert Johnston, "Playing with the Beard: Courtly and Commercial Economies in Richard Edwards's *Damon and Pithias* and John Lyly's *Midas*," *ELH* 72, 1 (Spring 2005): 79–103.

[4] Young, for example, records the following entry in his *Annals* for 2 December 1600: "This daye uppon complaynt made to this Courte it was ordered that Henry Needham should put awaye his apprentice Willm Webbe for that it was then apparently p'vd that hee is marryed wthn his terme" (p. 264).

[5] Frederick W. Fairholt, introduction to "The Ballad of the Beard," in *Satirical Songs and Poems on Costume: From the Thirteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Fairholt, vol. 27.2 of *Early English Poetry, Ballads, and Popular Literature of the Middle Ages*, ed. Percy Society, 30 vols. (London: Percy Society by C. Richards, 1849), pp. 121–4, 121–2. Bruce R. Smith notes that ambiguous integration of masculine identity with the feminine other is "a recurrent theme in these pamphlets and plays" (*Twelfth Night: Texts and Contexts* [Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001], pp. 117–8, 313). See also Anthony Arlidge, *Shakespeare and the Prince of Love: The Feast of Misrule in the Middle Temple* (London: Giles de la Mare, 2000). I am grateful to Smith for both of these references.

[6] The eighth quatrain of the ballad, for example, reads,

> The stilletto-beard, oh! it makes me afeard,
> It is so sharp beneath,
> For he that doth place a dagger in's face,
> What wears he in his sheath?
>
> (Fairholt, p. 123)

[7] Fairholt, p. 124.

[8] For one of the most sustained accounts of the Galenic one-sex model of gender operating in early modern medical treatises, see Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990), especially chaps. 1–3, pp. 1–113.

[9] Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans et al., 2d edn., 2 vols. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 1:437–75, III.i.43. Subsequent references to this play will be from this edition unless otherwise noted and will appear parenthetically in the text and notes by act, scene, and line number.

[10] Anne Barton comments in her gloss to the line in *The Riverside Shakespeare* that "the stress belongs on *my*" (p. 458n48). Stephen Greenblatt, as it were, brings the gloss into the text by italicizing the word "my" in the line without comment (Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus [New York and London: Norton, 1997], pp. 1761–1821, III.i.42). But Eric Partridge has noted how "Viola and the Clown pun, rather obscurely yet with obvious bawdiness, upon *beard* in its ordinary sense and upon *beard* as 'hair growing upon the *mons Veneris*', or, rather, 'pubic hair'" (*Shakespeare's Bawdy*, 3d edn. [London and New York: Routledge, 1990], p. 63).

[11] Lording Barry, *Ram Alley, or Merry Tricks*, ed. Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge (Nottingham: Nottingham Drama Texts, 1981), p. 76, V.i.2127–9.

[12] Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (London and Cambridge MA: Belknap, 1978), p. 36. John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. Guy de la Bédoyère (Dorchester: Dorset Press, 1994), p. 114. Evelyn also documents in his diary on 22 August 1667 the appearance of one Anna Wilde, a bearded hermaphrodite, as a popular attraction in London, but I have chosen to exclude this and other reports of bearded hermaphrodites from this discussion precisely because issues of gender seem to be at stake. For Evelyn's discussion of Wilde, see Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E. S. de Beer (London, New York, and Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), p. 513. For further discussion of how beard growth signaled gender status, see my "(Mis)Taken Masculinity: Prosthetic Absence in Ben Jonson's *Epicoene, or the Silent Woman*, *The Alchemist*, and *Bartholmew Fair*," *ELR* (forthcoming).

[13] Altick, p. 35. The continued popularity of the bearded woman as a sideshow spectacle is documented well into the twentieth century. For a brief modern history of the phenomenon, see Allan Peterkin, *One Thousand Beards: A Cultural History of Facial Hair* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2001), esp. pp. 97–111.

[14] Evelyn, ed. de la Bédoyère, p. 114.

[15] See the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth TX exhibition catalog, ed. Craig Felton and William B. Jordan, *Jusepe de Ribera lo Spagnoletto 1591–1652* (Seattle and London: Washington Univ. Press, 1982), pp. 129–31.

[16] Will Fisher remarks: "[T]he number and variety of compensatory elements included in the painting might ultimately be seen as a testament to the power of the beard—an indication of the massive cultural work which must be done in order to offset it" ("The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England," *RenQ* 54, 1 [Spring 2001]: 155–87, 171).

[17] The inscription on Ribera's plinth here reads, "EOQVE BARBA DEMISSA AC PROLIXA EST VT POTIVS ALICVIVS MAGISTRI BARBATI ESSE VIDEATVR QVAM MVLIERIS QVAE TRES FILIOS ANTE AMISERIT."

[18] Evelyn, *Memoirs Illustrative of the Life and Writings of John Evelyn*, ed. William Bray (1819, rprt. London: John Murray, 1871), p. 253n1. Rev. J. Granger, *A Biographical History of England, from Egbert the Great to the Revolution*, 5th edn., 6 vols. (London: William Baynes and Son, 1824), 4:98. Bray adds in the note that "there are two portraits of her . . . and also another representation of her in some German Book of Natural History," but I have not been able to substantiate his last claim. An account of one "Barbara, wife to Michael Vanbeck . . . daughter of Balthasar and Anne Ursler" also appears in the 1769 edition of Granger's text (36 vols. [London: T. Davies], 21:107).

Etymologically, *Urselin* seems derived from the Latin noun *ursa*, "she-bear," or adjective *ursinus*, "bear-like." The name *Barbara*, moreover, etymologically seems to be a derivative of either the Latin *barbatus*, "having a beard," or *barbarus*, "an uncivilized person, barbarian" (*Oxford Latin Dictionary*, s.v. "ursa," "ursinus," "barbatus," and "barbarus," def. 2). Notions of animality, beardedness, foreignness, and incivility, then, all inhere in Barbara Urselin's name, making it seem more than a little contrived.

[19] Evelyn, *Numismata. A Discourse of Medals, Antient and Modern* (London: Benj[amin] Tooke, 1697), p. 277.

[20] Granger, 4:98.

[21] Ibid. This commentary also appears verbatim in Granger's unillustrated 1769 edition (see note 18, above), 21:107. I consulted two different copies of Granger's 1824 edition at the Huntington Library, one of which, inexplicably, never included the illustration of Urselin.

[22] G. H. Wilson's commentary continues: "If I conjecture right she is that very hairy girl mentioned by my celebrated friend Bartoline, and appears to me not to differ from her whom Borelli describes by the name Barba; who he believed, improved if not procured that hairiness by art. But whether she is the same that the famous Vitrilius saw at Rome and Milan, I dare not affirm; for he hath no where mentioned this countryman of his that I know of" (G. H. Wilson, *Wonderful Characters: Comprising Memoirs and Anecdotes of the Most Remarkable Persons, of Every Age and Nation . . .* [London: J. Barr, 1842], p. 153). By ostensibly referring to the bearded woman as *Barba*, Borelli exposes how her name is etymologically informed, while his charge that her hairiness is a product of art rather than nature demonstrates a resistance to the idea that even nature could produce such an anomaly. I was regrettably unable to locate any of the sources G. H. Wilson cites here.

[23] If the "hairy Maid" Evelyn saw was indeed Urselin and Figures 3 and 4 faithfully depict her attire, Evelyn may have seen the hairiness of Urselin's "breast & back" simply because the low collar of her bodice exposed them.

[24] Henry Wilson and James Caulfield, *The Book of Wonderful Characters: Memoirs and Anecdotes of Remarkable and Eccentric Persons in All Ages and Countries* (London: John Camden Hotten, n.d. [1869?]), p. 386. Urselin looks

more than five years older in the 1658 portrait than she does in the 1653 portrait, but the earlier depiction is likely infantilized, perhaps due to her lacking offspring at that time.

[25] OED, 2d edn., s.v. "Iceland," 2. P. M. Gent's English translation of Henry Schooten's fictionalized account of islands located off the coast of southern Chile asserts that "The Women here are very comely, and well featured; their faces indifferently smooth; but the Men are so rough and hairy in the Face, that they look like so many Island-Shocks [Iceland dogs]" (*The Hairy Giants: Or a Description of Two Islands in the South Sea, Called by the Names Benganga and Coma* [London: A. Maxwell, 1671], sig. C3r). In Shakespeare's *Henry V*, Pistol employs the term derogatively as he and Nym quarrel: "Pish for thee, Iceland dog! Thou prick-ear'd cur of Iceland!" (Shakespeare, *Henry V*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 1:974–1020, II.i.42–3).

[26] John Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis: A View of the People of the Whole World* (London: William Hunt, 1654), p. 215; Fisher, p. 170.

[27] OED, 2d edn., s.v. "monster," 1.

[28] Barry, I.ii.200–30.

[29] The inversion that the "beard below" invokes is a carnivalesque exchange of upper and lower bodily strata whereby the face and the genitals are imagined as displaced versions of one another. Mikhail Bakhtin explains, "The rump is the 'back of the face,' the 'face turned inside out' . . . In this dense atmosphere of the material bodily lower stratum, the formal renewal of half-effaced images takes place. Objects are reborn in the light of the use made of them . . . As we have said, they are renewed in the sphere of their debasement" (*Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky [Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1984], pp. 373–4). The "beard below" apparently undergoes just such a renewal or reversal of significance in its upward transmigration to the female face.

[30] Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Henry B. Wheatley, 8 vols. (London: George Bell, 1900), 8:174. Wheatley's note adds: "[T]his was probably the woman described in *Wonderful Characters* as Barbara Urslerin, the hairy-faced woman. She was born at Ausburg in 1629, which gives us exactly the age Pepys mentions." Henry Wilson includes, in his biography of Matthew Robinson Morris (Lord Rokeby), an extensive exposition on the history of the beard, the conclusion of which considers the female beard throughout history (*Wonderful and Eccentric Characters with Portraits* [New York: Harper, 1834], pp. 201–7). Henry Wilson claims, "In the cabinet of curiosities of Stutgard, in Germany, there is the portrait of a woman called Bartel Graetje, whose chin is covered with a very large beard. She was drawn in 1587, at which time she was but twenty-five years of age. There is likewise in the same cabinet another portrait of her when she was more advanced in life, but likewise with a beard" (p. 207). Urselin appears neither in this edition nor in four other editions of Wilson's work that I consulted at the Huntington Library and the British Library, all entitled *Wonderful Characters, Comprising Memoirs and Anecdotes of the Most Remarkable Persons of Every Age and Nation*, 3 vols., London: Robins, 1821; 3 vols., London: Robins, 1826; London: Jones, 1841; and Louisville KY: Morton and Griswold, 1854.

[31] In his monumental work, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (2 vols., 3d edn., revised and enlarged [London: Macmillan, 1936] vol. 2, part 4, p. 259n3), Sir James George Frazer notes that "in Cyprus

there was a bearded and masculine image of Venus (probably Astarte) in female attire."

[32] See Vincenzo Cartari, *Le Imagini de i Dei de Gli Antichi . . .* (Venice: Ziletti, 1571), pp. 550–3; Anthony Du Verdier, trans., *Les Images des Dieux Contenant levrs Pourtraits, Coustumes & Ceremonies de la Religion des Payens . . . : Augmentees de L'histoire et Génealogie des Dieux des Payens* (Lyon: P. Frellon, 1624), pp. 667–71; and Richard Linche's ostensible translation, "out of Italian," which is actually almost entirely original, *The Fountaine of Ancient Fiction. Wherein is Liuely Depictured the Images and Statues of the Gods of the Ancients, with their Proper and Perticular Expositions. Done out of Italian into English, by Richard Linche Gent* (London: Adam Islip, 1599). I am grateful to Madeline Lennon for this reference.

[33] Rev. S. Baring-Gould, *The Lives of the Saints*, 3d edn., 16 vols. (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1914), 2:348.

[34] Baring-Gould, 8:488.

[35] Baring-Gould, 8:489.

[36] Sir Thomas More, *A Dyaloge of Syr Thomas More Knyghte* (London: J. Rastell, 1529), sig. L2v.

[37] Carole Levin asserts that St. Uncumber had a cult following that "was well developed by the fourteenth century," with a number of images attesting to her popularity, including "a statue of her in the Henry VII chapel in Westminster," but during the Reformation in England, "shrines to St. Uncumber were despoiled" including images of her in St. Paul's in 1538 ("St. Frideswide and St. Uncumber: Changing Images of Female Saints in Renaissance England," in *Women, Writing, and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor and Stuart Britain*, ed. Mary E. Bruke, Jane Donawerth, Linda L. Dove, and Karen Nelson [Syracuse NY: Syracuse Univ. Press, 2000], pp. 223–37, 228, 229). Levin's assessment that the "cult of the bearded woman saint that spread through Western Europe is at least suggestive of the female response to the potential power of male anger at a woman's wish for autonomy" is particularly relevant to my own argument (p. 226). There is a large body of work attesting to the relative freedom enjoyed by early modern widows. See, for example, Joan Larsen Klein, ed., *Daughters, Wives and Widows: Writings by Men about Women and Marriage in England, 1500–1640* (Urbana and Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1992), especially pp. 43–4, 50–1, and 121–2; Margaret L. King, *Women of the Renaissance*, Women in Culture and Society (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1991), especially p. 125; and Alan Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction, 1300–1840* (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), particularly the reiteration of one lawyer's advice to a widow who is considering remarriage: "Therefore let me advise you, that is now a freed woman, a widow, that hath full power as nay lord in the land, over your husband's estate . . . so you are the lady of all, and hath the possession of all, as your husband had; and for you to make over your estate to another man, you will become a mere servant" (p. 112). Merry E. Wiesner claims that widows were "very disturbing to notions of male authority . . . both because they were economically independent and because they were sexually experienced women not under the tutelage of a man" (*Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 2d edn., New Approaches to European History [Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000], pp. 90–1).

[38] Thomas Hill, *The Moste Pleasuante Arte of the Interpretacion of Dreames* (London: Thomas Marsh, 1576), sig. I3r.

[39] Alexander Read, *The Chirurgicall Lectures of Tumors and Vlcers . . .* (London: Francis Constable, 1635), p. 253.

[40] James Mabbe, *The Spanish Bawd, Represented in Celestina: Or, The Tragicke-comedy of Calisto and Melibea* (London: I[ohn] B[eale], 1631). Celestina is referred to as a witch on pp. 11, 15 [sic], 46, 54, 64, 71, 95, 116, and 147; as a bawd on sigs. A4v and A8v and pp. 14, 15, 33, 36, 45, 54, 63, 71, 105, 116, 130, 147, and 201; as a whore on pp. 15, 23, 45, 71, 130, 146, and 147; mention is made of her being a widow on pp. 15 and 52; and her beardedness is mentioned on pp. 36, 54, and 71. Further reference to Mabbe's plays will refer to this edition unless otherwise noted and will appear parenthetically in the text by page number.

[41] Alfred Harbage lists two English translations of Ferdinand de Rojas's *La Celestina* that appeared after John Rastell's interlude, the 1580 *Calistus* and the 1598 *Celestina*, but both of those plays are now unfortunately lost (*Annals of Early English Drama, 975–1700: An Analytical Record of All Plays, Extant or Lost, Chronologically Arranged and Indexed by Authors, Titles, Dramatic Companies, &c.*, rev. S. Schoenbaum [Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1964], pp. 48–9, 68–9).

[42] Mabbe, p. 11. In Rojas's original Spanish, Sempronio refers to Celestina as "*una vieja barbuda*," which translates literally as "an old woman with a long beard" (Rojas, *Celestina. Tragicomedia De Calisto y Melibea* [Antwerp, 1595], sig. C3r).

[43] In his discussion of the inscrutability of the witches in *Macbeth*, Sylvan Barnet asserts that "[t]hey have the traditional petty malice (and beards) of witches," suggesting that witches were routinely bearded, though he offers no further explanation of this assumption ("Introduction" to *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, in *The Complete Signet Classic Shakespeare*, ed. Barnet et al. [New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Atlanta: Harcourt, 1972], pp. 1227–32, 1229). Carol F. Karlsen has discovered that many of the women accused of being witches in New England were either widows or unmarried women who had inherited or expected to inherit property and thereby posed a challenge to male economic control (*The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* [New York and London: Norton, 1987], esp. pp. 77–116). In Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Mrs. Page, in a plot to misuse Falstaff, proposes that she and Mrs. Ford "dress him like the witch of Brainford." Evans's mistaking Falstaff for a witch crucially relies—as does Mrs. Page's plan—on the visual disjunction presented by Falstaff's donning the fat woman of Brainford's gown, hat, and muffler while still sporting his own beard: Falstaff looks like a witch precisely because he appears to be a bearded woman (Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 1:320–60, IV.ii.98).

[44] "If a woman thinketh in her dreame to haue a bearde . . . yf shee shalbe maryed she shal then lese her husbande, or shal departe from hym and shall gouerne her house, lyke as shee were husbande and wyfe" (Hill, sig. J4r).

[45] Similarly, Goneril and Regan are depicted in Shakespeare's *King Lear* as formidably powerful women whose economic and erotic seizure of control results in their being metaphorically figured with facial beards (Shakespeare, *King Lear*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2:1297–1354). After the eye-plucking

scene, in which Regan participates in the generically male ritual of defiantly plucking hair from an opponent's (in this case Gloucester's) beard, she is affronted by a servant who reminds her that she is but a woman: "If you did wear a beard upon your chin, / I'ld shake it on this quarrel" (III.vii.76–7). The servant's quibble points to the disparity between Regan's assumption of male prerogative and her smooth chin. Later in the play, King Lear raves, "Ha! Goneril with a white beard? They flatter'd me like a dog, and told me I had the white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there. To say 'ay' and 'no' to every thing that I said . . . Go to, they are not men o' their words: they told me I was every thing" (IV.vi.96–105). Lear's figuring his daughters as bearded men seems to have everything to do with their unnatural seizure of his and their own husbands' economic and erotic privileges.

[46] Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2:1355–90, I.iii.45–7.

[47] James Schiffer's analysis of the bearded witches focuses on them as Freudian psychosexual "'vaginas dentatas'—vaginas with teeth" and charges them with presenting Macbeth with "a double threat of castration" ("*Macbeth* and the Bearded Women," in *In Another Country: Feminist Perspectives on Renaissance Drama*, ed. Dorothea Kehler and Susan Baker [Metuchen NJ and London: Scarecrow Press, 1991], pp. 205–17, 211). Indeed, I would argue that the threat the sisters pose to patriarchal ideology in the play can be read as both economically as well as sexually castrative. The fate that the sisters foretell threatens not Macbeth's sexual potency *per se* but what Hecat refers to later in the play as his "security" (III.v.32). Moreover, the *weïrd* sisters never ask Macbeth for financial recompense for the service of foretelling his royal future, nor does he ever offer them remuneration once he becomes king: Hecat tells the sisters that their "trade and traffic" with Macbeth "Hath been but for a *wayward* son, / Spiteful and wrathful, who (as others do) / Loves for his own ends, not for you" (III.v.11–3, emphasis added).

[48] Pepys, 8:174.

[49] At I.iii.78, Macbeth charges the sorority to speak, but the sisters disobediently vanish without a sound (78 s.d.) and leave Macbeth's desires ["would they had stay'd" (I.iii.82)] unfulfilled.