Blood Matters

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Chapter 14

Blood of the Grape

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This chapter examines the associations between blood and wine that are so central to the Christian Eucharist in a different context: arguments that the English should grow their own grapes and make their own wine. As we will see, these arguments link wine to blood in order to add urgency and prestige to economic and medical incentives, to demonize the widespread tampering required to make most wines palatable, and to characterize wine as, like the blood it resembles, equivocal, unstable, necessary yet dangerous.

In early modern England, blood and wine were associated at the most basic level by their appearance: the wine most widely drunk and discussed usually seems to have been red—because red wine did a somewhat better job of disguising the effects of time and decay. Even wines we might now think of as white, including sack or sherry, Rhenish, and canary, were sometimes made from red grapes, raisins, or a mixture of grapes. These “white” wines were sometimes associated with urine, as the red wine on which I will focus here was associated with blood. Wine was, for the most part, oxidized, dark, and sticky.¹

Blood and wine were also assumed to have analogous functions in human and plant bodies and to be compatible, even interchangeable. As we will see, promoters of growing grapes and making wine in England and its colonies drew on the association between blood and wine to justify their enterprise. The frequent analogies between these two fluids reveal the perceived affinities among plant, animal, and human bodies; the overlaps between agricultural
and medical discourses; the practical consequences and material manifestations of figuration; the complex entanglements of past and present; and the challenges of "drinking local."

Communion in both kinds, experienced physically or mystically, modeled the ingestion of blood and reinforced the association of wine with blood. Genesis prohibits the consumption of blood because it is the manifestation of vitality itself—"But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." Yet, elsewhere in Genesis and in Deuteronomy, we also find wine described as having a privileged and purifying status because it is the "blood of the grape." We see here a double view of blood and by extension wine. The association with the essence of life that makes the ingestion of blood prohibited also elevates wine as especially powerful and salvific. The medieval tradition of depicting "Christ in the winepress" imagined Jesus as both a winemaker and a "pressed grape." He is "crushed like a grape in a winepress" to yield the sacrificial blood that will redeem the faithful. In popular woodcuts of Christ in the winepress from the twelfth century through the fifteenth, the Western-style press, in which a screw or lever presses a weight down on the grapes, replaces the crucifix as the mechanism by which Jesus's sacrifice becomes sustenance. Through these representations, "belief in the symbolic unity of blood and wine trickled down to every level of society." This imagery also informed religious poetry from Lydgate through Milton. Following the Reformation, debate focused on whether wine figured or became Jesus's blood. But this debate did not rupture the perceived connection between these two ubiquitous fluids.

Despite widespread consumption of beer in England, wine was a favored beverage for most of the seventeenth century, until coffee, tea, chocolate, and distilled spirits diversified beverage options and challenged its monopoly. Most people drank fermented beverages of one kind or another rather than water. Valueless at best, contaminated at worst, water was only considered potable if it was amended with honey, sugar, or wine or boiled. Water was so disparaged that one English prisoner of war complained in his account of his captivity by the French that he and his fellow sufferers had "no other Drink but Water." He recounts the improvement in their circumstances in terms of their upgrade from water to wine. One kind of evidence about the ubiquity of wine as a generic beverage in early modern England is its presence on stage where, according to Alan Dessen and Leslie Thompson's Dictionary of Stage Directions, wine is "the most common item in tavern or banquet scenes or at other times when figures drink," appearing in about sixty-five stage directions.

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This stage wine is undifferentiated by grape or region. Wine, then, stands as daily "drink" in palaces and public houses even as it has particular significance in part because of its biblical and sacramental precedents and its visual resemblance to and conceptual resonance with blood.

Just as wine was ubiquitous, blood, too, was a familiar sight and smell, as other contributors to this volume attest. Public punishments and executions; blood sports such as bear baiting; butchery, often conducted at home, and its concomitant blood and guts; the use of blood as an ingredient in food and medicine; and bloodletting in medical practice all conspired to make the sight and smell of blood almost certainly more common then than now. Everyone consumed blood—in repurposed form as breast milk, in the communion cup, in various foods and medicines. Yet, at the same time, blood consumption was demonized in representations of cannibalism or of witches succumbing their familiars.

The biblical characterization of wine or juice as the blood of the grape suggests the ways that an understanding of human anatomy, however flawed, served as the model for understanding plant anatomy by analogy. As the circulation of blood was gradually understood, so the sap in trees and vines and the juice in fruits came to be understood as circulating through plants and essential to their vitality. The analogy between blood and wine both holds and breaks down in equally interesting ways. At the most basic level, the analogy obscures the distinction between the sap of a tree or vine and the juice of its fruit. It also ignores the fact that juice is not wine in the grape but requires time and intervention to become wine. Yet most early modern discussions of wine are acutely, uncomfortably aware that what was in the glass was not just what had been pressed out of the grape and that wine changed over time. Even before the operations of yeast and bacteria in wine were understood, wine was recognized as dynamic, for ill and for good.

William Harvey used the resemblance between blood and wine to explain what he saw as the loss in vitality that occurred when blood left the body:

in their different ways blood and spirit . . . mean one and the same thing. For, as wine with all its bouquet gone is no longer wine but a flat vinegar fluid, so also is blood without spirit no longer blood but the equivocal gore. As a stone hand or a hand that is dead is no longer a hand, so blood without the spirit of life is no longer blood, but is to be regarded as spoiled immediately it has been deprived of spirit."
Harvey compares shed blood to flat wine; both have lost their spirit. In her important study of humoral medicine and the early modern body, Gail Kern Paster points to the proverb “There is no difference of bloods in a basin” to demonstrate that blood could only do its job of asserting social distinctions when it was inside the body. Once out of the body, Paster argues, blood lost its “spirit or driving force” to become “waste matter to be disposed of.” Yet Harvey’s description of “equivocal” gore suggests that blood as it leaves the body is both in and out, living and dead. It is the sap of life in the process of coagulating into a thing.

Blood’s “equivocal” status outside the human body and the analogy between blood and wine informed even the most practical early modern agricultural advice. With regard to pruning, for example, one treatise advises that vines will bleed “themselves to Death” if they are pruned too late in the season. In agricultural manuals, we find both a lingering association of blood with pollution and blight—in the advisory, for example, that a menstruating woman who walks among plantings will wither them—and a particular value placed on blood as a soil enrichment, especially for vines. In several of his texts, Sir Hugh Plat reports that “Blood laide at the roots of old Vines, hath bin commended for an excellent substance to harten them,” although he advises care in the use of so rich and hot a compost. Ralph Austen suggests that the “blood of Cattle, dead Dogges, Carrion, or the like, laid or put to the Roots of trees . . . [is] found very profitable unto fruit bearing.” John Evelyn advises that “Blood is excellent almost with any Soil where Fruit is planted, especially the Mural [by which he means trees grown against and fastened to walls], to improve the blood of the Grape of great advantage, being somewhat diluted, and pour’d about the Roots.” The figuring of wine as the “blood of the grape” allows Evelyn to rhyme soil amendment and outcome, suggesting a natural affinity between the two. Spent blood found value as a fertilizer precisely because it retained some of the vitality it supposedly lost when shed, enabling it to add the juice of life to grapevines.

Just as blood’s analogy to wine distinguished it as especially beneficial compost, so wine’s resemblance to blood underpinned its medicinal value. Some discussions of the benefits of wine defended it not just as a supplement to the blood but almost as a substitute for it. In his treatise The Tree of Humane Life, or the Blood of the Grape, proving the possibility of maintaining human life from infancy to extreme old age without any sickness by the use of wine (1658, 1654), Tobias Whitaker, physician in the household of Charles I, argues that wine has a vital heat, as if it were exuded by a living body, as if it had a soul. It therefore benefits the body and especially builds up the blood because, he writes, “wine, especially red wine, is half blood before it be received”; it is already, he explains, “sanguinificed.” While “sanguification” had a highly technical meaning, Whitaker’s use suggests that he means that wine is always “equivocal,” part itself and part blood, and poised for further transubstantiation. In his own experience as a physician, he claims to have witnessed wine drinkers’ “consumptive and extenuate bodies restored to a farcocity [which seems to mean fullness or plentitude as if restuffed], and from withered Bodies to fresh, plumpe, fat and fleshy; and from old and infirme to young, and strong.” Wine suits itself to different humors and persons, giving each what he or she needs. Whitaker’s word for the affinity between blood and wine is “homogeneall”; wine is “Homogeneall, pleasant and familiar to humane constitutions and tempers.” Recounting that he himself was cured of consumption by wine, Whitaker concludes that wine “in purity . . . exceeds all spermaticque humors, sucked either from women, or breasts [sic].” Just as blood might fertilize vines, so wine is sometimes depicted as a kind of fertilizer for human health. For example, Falstaff attributes Prince Hal’s “heat” to his diet: “for the cold blood he did naturally inherit of his father he hath, like lean, sterile, and bare land, manured, husbanded, and tilled, with excellent endeavour of drinking good, and good store of fertile sherry, that he is become very hot and valiant.”

It is as if discussions of the medical benefits and risks of wine are rehearsing in advance arguments about transfusion: receiving wine as a kind of blood supplement or replacement can restore and replenish. But it can also invade and infect. If wine’s close association with blood constitutes its benefit for Whitaker, it is also what worries some other commentators. John Worlidge, in Vineum Britannicum: Or a Treatise of Cider (1691), first follows Whitaker in explaining that “there is no Drink more homogeneal to the Blood than Wine, the Spirit thereof being the best Vehicle of any Medicine to the most remote parts that the Blood circulates in.” But he goes on to explain that the “homogeneity” between blood and wine can also make wine dangerous: “therefore if any evil mixture be in it, the more it operates, and is soonest conveyed to the Heart and all other parts of the Body.” In other words, because wine is so like blood, it will convey contamination all too efficiently. “If it be new, that is to say, under the age of a year, or be set into a new fermentation by the addition of new Wine or Stum [which is grape must], it purges, and puts the Blood into a fermentation, that it indangers the health of him that drinks it, and sometimes his life.” Whereas relatively new wine that is being raised into a new fermentation is too busy for the blood, older wine poses the problem that it
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was usually spoiled. "If it be old Wine, which is commonly the best, then the Vintners cunning in preserving it, and making it palatable by his secret and concealed Mixtures, renders it dangerous to be drank either fasting, or in great quantity; many having died suddenly meerly by drinking of such Wine." The problem with wine, then, is a problem that every English writer on wine in the early modern period discusses: deterioration and adulteration.

It was so difficult to stabilize wine in this period that virtually everyone doctored it in one way or another. This might be as benign as the addition of herbs and spices. Strategies for preserving and improving wines included variations on what have since become reliable methods: increasing its sugar level (with added sugar, honey, or raisins or spirit of wine—a kind of wine concentrate—or bastard—a blend of wine and honey); or using a preservative in the form of vitriol (a metal sulphate) or sulfur. Early moderns knew that the ancient Greeks had put sulfur in their wines to keep them from "fuming." 20 Some experimented with this preservative, which is still widely used in winemaking, although early modern writers describe it as a purifier as much as a preservative. In addition, other attempts were made to clear cloudy wines or remove impurities. These included adding vinegar, wood shavings, powdered marble or alum (an astringent mineral salt), egg whites, parsel (a mixture of eggs, alum, and salt), and isinglass (a kind of fish gelatin), on the argument that it bonds with any foulness or filth in the wine and causes it to sink to the bottom. Pigeon's dung is even recommended to make wines sparkle. 21 This list itself should suggest the dangerous potential of such additions. Even housewives might righteously engage in vinous adulterations and bastardizings. 22 This ingenuity was required because most wine probably tasted pretty terrible. Making it tasty was as miraculous as turning it into blood or gold.

As a consequence, some discussions of the adulteration of wine, in the guise of amendment, assign to those who doctor wines a kind of priestly or alchemical presumption. Plat notes that cooper's not only "hoop the vessels" in which wine was stored but blend and often amend wines, to the profit of merchants and vintners. How, he asks, do they learn the "great variety of jugling" they practice? How is it that "these plain fellows that never read their Grammer, nor scarcely know their A, B, C, should be able to run through Ovid's Metamorphosis as they do at midnight"? Plat goes on to describe these alterations, transformations, and sometimes even real transubstantiations of white wine into Claret, and old lags of Sacks or Malmseys, with Malasses [molasses] into Muskadelts. 23 Evelyn, in his Pomona (1679), a treatise on cider making, reviews the various ways of amending wine in order to warm readers off wine and win them over to cider. He concludes: "If Health be more precious than Opinion, I wish our Admirers of Wines, to the prejudice of Cider, beheld but the Cheat themselves; the Sophistickations, Transformations, Transmutations, Adulterations, Bastardizings, Brewings, Trickings, not to say, even Arsenical Compassings of the Sophisticated God they adore." 24 Evelyn's exposé casts wine itself as a sophisticked god and reminds us that these arcane mysteries take place in local taverns, where vintners freely blend and amend.

In the satirical dialogue In Vino Veritas, Chip the Cooper presents the amendment of wine as a kind of alchemical transformation. "Wines in general are not only abominably Sophisticated, but lameutably [sic] metamorphized; The very Rosicrucians themselves transmute not metals so much as you and we do Liquors." 25 These comparisons simultaneously elevate and disparage the amendment of wine, expressing distrust of all processes of "sophistication." Rather than turning wine into blood, these magicians turn wine into poison. What's worse, relatively humble yet presumptuous workers undertake these transubstantiations and metamorphoses—and while they may clarify wines, they muddy their origins. When transubstantiations occur in English wine shops rather than in French vineyards, at the hands of coopers, tavern keepers, and housewives rather than priests, is the wine that results domestic or foreign? Amendment both adulterates wine and, arguably, domesticates it. Whereas the very name of "bastard" associates wine doctoring with illegitimacy, inferiority, and impurity, wine amendment was so widespread that there was probably little wine available that was not bastardized or adulterated.

Those who believed in the "real transubstantiations" of Catholic ritual and the Rosicrucian transmutations of alchemy were widely ridiculed as gullible, colluding in their own deception. Descriptions of wine amendment as parallel to transubstantiation or alchemy placed wine drinkers in their ignominious company: wine drinkers, too, were simultaneously desirous and dumb. Plat scolds that "we are now grown so nice in taste, that almost no wines unless they be more pleasant than they can be of the grape will content us, nay no color unless it be perfect fine and bright, will satisfy our wanton eyes.... This makes the Vintners to trick or compass all their natural wines." 26 Whereas wine drinkers want something more than grapes can really offer, they also know too little about wine. Merchants can get away with adulteration because "not one in ten of our Chapps knows the difference, if it be but (thought) Wine, it goes down cleaverly, poor fools, they have not Wit enough to distinguish good from bad, except it be very plain indeed, dead or sower." One vintner supposedly boasted "nothing was so easy, as to deceive Mens Palates, in Themselves various,
uncertain, and often misled by fancy and humour; that a little supple-cringing, a few fair words, and a positive asserting it to be such or such Wine, neat and rare, carried it off cleverly." In the epilogue to As You Like It, Rosalind reminds the audience of the proverb that "a good wine needs no bush," that is, that good wine needs no advertising. But exposés of winemaking reveal that bad wine needs only "a few fair words" to pass it off as good. Like alchemists and priests, the logic goes, vintners cunningly deceive their marks.

The widespread awareness that imported wines were almost invariably adulterated motivated the claim that honest beverages of English manufacture would be better for English constitutions—despite the fact that much of the alteration of imported wine, as we have seen, probably took place in England. The quest to make English wine that can rival that of the continent continues today, receiving an assist from global warming. The desire to make wine in England in the seventeenth century emerged first from concerns about punitive import taxes, the costs of transport, and, before reliable ways of stabilizing wines, the inevitable loss in flavor with time and transit, as well as the risks of additives. But it gained urgency from what Mary Floyd-Wilson calls geohumoralism—the presumed relationship between body and place, health and location. Sir Thomas Browne robustly refused this notion when he claimed, in Religio Medici, that "I am of a constitution so general, that it consorts and sympathizeth with all things. I have no antipathy—or rather idiosyncrasy—in diet, humour, air, anything. ... I am no Plant that will not prosper out of a garden; all places, all airs, make unto me one country—I am in England everywhere, and under any meridian." But many others persisted in the belief that sympathy bound body, birth, and diet (among other things) and that the foreign was antipathetic. By this logic, if blood and wine are analogous, even fungible, then it is perilous to infuse English bodies with foreign blood. At a time of agricultural innovation at home and colonial expansion abroad, defenders of English winemaking drew on the claim that wine was not just any food or beverage but had the potential for a more intimate relationship to the body—for good or ill—in order to argue that English wine would best suit English bodies.

One of the earliest and most influential articulations of this argument appears, ironically, in Richard Surfet's English translation of Maison Rustique or the Country Farm (first translated in 1600).

But howeversoever foraine wines, which are fetched from far countries may seeme pleasant unto our taste, yet indeede the truth is that we

Foreign wines keep secrets from their drinkers, chief of which is their own status as enemies rather than friends. In 1665, William Hughes's The Compleat Vineyard assures his English readers that English wine is "most natural to our constitutions" as part of a project to "advance our English wines." At the end of the seventeenth century, England's Happiness Improved ... Containing the art of making wine of English grapes ... equal to that of France and Spain, later reissued as Vinetum Angliae, stakes its case on the health benefits of English wine for English drinkers; "these Liquores produced from our natural growth ... are far more agreeable to the Constitution of English Bodies, contributing to Health and lively Vigor, and if not taken in excess, which indeed in all things is hurtful, they lengthen Years, and free Old Age from those Calamities that adulterate Wines and Foreign Liquors, make it obnoxious to, in the Pains Aches and many Diseases that their Sediments Entail, by corrupting the good, or creating Bad Humours in the Body." The sympathetic beverage, then, is not local as much as national.

There were counterarguments, often focused on substituting cider for wine, but these were also based on the idea that the locally produced would be most salubrious for English drinkers. Worlidge, in his treatise on beverage making in England, Vinetum Britannicum, argues that cider and juices of "English Fruits" are the best drinks for English bodies. Not only will it spare expense to produce cider and perry, but these drinks "(being once accustomed) will be as proper and wholesome for our English bodies, as French wines, if not more." Note that English bodies must become accustomed over time to this proper and wholesome beverage, as they have to French wines. This will be a process rather than a return to a given. But promoters of English beverages argue that imported wine renders the English slavishly dependent on other countries; it has suffered in transit; and it lacks some ineffable property that suits English-grown and -made drinks to English bodies. So even arguments for cider rather than wine depend on a subtle association of wine and blood, body, place, and drink.
Although geohumoralism underpins some of these arguments, whether in favor of making wine in England or replacing wine with other English-made beverages, the definitions of the English and the local remain pliant. To begin with, those who promote English winemaking argue that it is not new but rather a reclamation of a lost art, traces of which survive in English place names, histories, and gardens. What was once known has since, somehow, been forgotten. What’s more, the history of grape growing and winemaking in England is a history of colonization of one kind or another. In his history of Britain, William Camden dwells on the legacy of the Romans in planting vines “rather for shade than fruit.”

Camden also insists that the landscape itself reveals a past that might offer hope of a future: “Wee have no cause to wonder, why many places in this countrie and else-where in England are called Vine-yards, seeing it hath afforded wine.” John Parkinson adds that “manie Monasteries in this Kingdome having Vineyards, had as much wine made therefrom, as sufficed their co[n]vents yeare by yeare; but long since they have been destroyed, and the knowledge how to order a Vineyard is also utterly perished with them.”

The history of English vines and winemaking that serves as precedent and inspiration is, then, a history of transplants, occupation, and decline.

If vines once grew in England, as various writers aver, then why doesn’t England produce wines that can compete with French wines, already the gold standard? Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers acknowledge differences of soil and climate. Parkinson, for instance, argues that even those who have brought in French experts, “being skilfull in keeping and dressing of Vines,” have failed to make drinkable wine. “And indeed the soil is a maine matter to bee chiefly considered to seate a Vineyard upon: for even in France and other hot countries, according to the nature of the soil, so is the relish, strength, and durability of the wine.”

Acknowledging what is now called the little ice age (ca. 1550–1750), Parkinson argues that it is hopeless to make good wine in England especially because “our years in these times do not fal out to be so kindly and hot, to ripen the grapes, to make anie good wine as formerly they have done.” But many writers counter all arguments against disadvantages of soil and climate. Plat, for example, accuses “the extreme negligence, and blockish ignorance of our people, who do most unjustly lay their wrongful accusations upon the soil, whereas the greatest, if not the whole fault justly may be removed upon themselves.” The English must overcome their ignorance—by learning from skilled winemakers elsewhere.

Thus, paradoxically, the solution to the problem of imports and the mismatch of foreign wine with English blood lies in different imports: importing plant starts and know-how from the continent. “Vines themselves have sometimes been Strangers as well in Italy as in Britain,” one writer reminds his readers. Like other plants that have become stalwarts of English gardens, staples in the English diet, vines “in a few Years may become naturalized to our Soil.”

Again. Once we introduce the idea of naturalizing plants—a crucial consideration in the many treaties on soil amendment and agricultural innovation in the period—then the difference between native and imported quickly collapses—at one level. At another, this distinction proves remarkably flexible and therefore durable. The local is not what comes from here but what has been localized, made to flourish here. If one problem is the dependence on foreign imports, then any wine made from grapes under English control, wherever those may grow, and made for an English market, can be considered English. This is one of the rationales behind attempts to create vineyards in Colonial Virginia. This effort included shipping guidebooks, seedlings, and experts to Virginia in the early seventeenth century. Although Virginia is only now emerging as a winemaking region, the desire to plant vineyards in Virginia suggests that both Englishness and the local are adaptable, flexible concepts. Wine made in Virginia from imported vines by French experts might be English if the English control the colony and the plantings there. Wine made in England from imported vines that had been “naturalized” could become English enough to prove more wholesome for English bodies. But wines imported into England and doctoring there are not English, no matter how they are transubstantiated. The local is an achievement rather than a given, a process as much as a place. It must be created and asserted through occupation and narration.

The importance of English wine for English bodies was a story some promoters of an English wine industry told their readers, a story that drew on magical associations around blood that were simultaneously unravelling.

The early modern writers I’ve been discussing assert that one’s blood and beverage should share the same country of origin. But then again they also reveal that wine, wherever it seems to be from, is ultimately from “foreign” stock, at the same time that its adulteration is as likely to be domestic as outlandish: it is as much the composition of the merchant or cooper as it is the blood of the grape. The visual resemblance so crucial to the assumed affinity of blood and wine might itself have been fabricated. Still, it remains a compelling myth that nature matches place, body, and plants, so that at our doorstep we find those foods, drinks, and medicines best suited to our needs, whose appearance providentially describes the “sympathy” between them and human bodies.
An article in Woman’s Day magazine in 2012 argues that healthy foods resemble the body parts they benefit and is organized around paired images of comestibles and organs. Among its arresting juxtapositions of clam and testicle, sweet potato and pancreas, it includes red wine and blood. “Red wine, which is rich in antioxidants and polyphenols, including powerful resveratrol, looks like blood,” the article points out. This attempt to make recent scientific research readily accessible might seem at first to authorize and naturalize the venerable association of wine as “homogeneal” with blood. Early modern people sometimes claimed that resemblances between plants and bodily organs might indicate sympathy and thus be a guide to curative properties. In Robert Turner’s Botanologia: The British Physician or the Nature and Vertues of English Plants (1664), for example, he argues that “God hath imprinted upon the Plants, Herbs, and Flowers, as it were in Hieroglyphicks, the very signature of their Vertues; ... as, the Nutmeg being cut, resembles the Brain.” Resemblance might still be a useful mnemonic, as it is in the Woman’s Day story, but it is not proof of a relationship somehow both magical and natural. Indeed, resemblance can blind us to differences in substance.

Some foundational texts in what is sometimes called environmental humanities, or more narrowly, ecocriticism, focus on the persistence of outdated narratives and figurations, as well as their power to shape how we evaluate the past, ameliorate the present, and predict the future. Daniel Botkin, for example, exposes “the idea of a divinely ordered universe that is perfectly structured for life” as an “ironic” connection “between ancient beliefs and twentieth-century ecological assertions.” Humans often work hard to create the symmetry and order they then value as “nature,” Botkin argues. In The Moon in a Nautilus Shell (2012), Botkin revisits his influential but, he feels, misunderstood book, Discordant Harmonies (from 1981), in order to reiterate his argument that nature is neither stable nor orderly. Botkin blames ruinously inaccurate explanations of how nature works and should be managed on “inadvertent use of imagery, metaphor, and analogy.” Despite widely used figurations, Nature, he argues, is not a “living creature” with a life course or a machine. It is, instead, a system, “dynamic, imperfect, powerful,” and unpredicatable. To move forward in addressing urgent environmental issues, he argues, “We need not only new knowledge but also new metaphors.”

I share Botkin’s sense that the past bears down on the present by means of tenacious “old metaphors” and that figurations have material effects. Like equivocal gore, they retain vitality even when discarded as waste. My goal, then, is to create new knowledge about persistent metaphors and the unpredictable cultural work they continue to do. In order to recognize the persistence and implications of “old” metaphors, such as the metaphor that is my chapter’s title and topic, we might first explore the ways in which such metaphors were, from the start, internally fissured, problematic, and held in doubt. The early modern meanings of both blood and wine constantly moved back and forth from literal to figural, conjoining and separating as they did. Their resemblance can make it hard to see the ways in which their interrelation was debated in the early modern period, even as it was also relied upon and mobilized in highly interested ways. If, as Roland Greene argues, blood was a “concept under revision” in the period, wine was as well.

Promoting a dream of English wine, the writers discussed here exploited the instability and figurative power of these two categories. In the process, they suggested, on the one hand, that blood and wine are markers of identity, rooting body, home, and dietary habit in one’s native soil, and, on the other, that one’s constitution, as fundamental as the blood in one’s veins, might be remade by daily practices and dietary choices. Describing the transformations required to make imported wine drinkable as transubstantiations and alchemic transformations, they simultaneously exposed them as frauds and emphasized their remarkable power. They argued that blood is precious and, ultimately, another waste product to be fed back into that hungry canibal, the earth. They vested practical advice with enormous consequence. In discussions of English wine, then, we see yet again how, long after the Reformation, blood remained both a substance available for practical uses and a sign freighted with figural meaning. Perhaps knowing this history will enable us to resist the story of nature as purposeful and human-centered, cunningly providing in the blood of the grape the perfect match for our own constitutions.
CHAPTER 14

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1. Through the logic of resemblance that linked red wine to blood, white wine was particularly recommended to men as a remedy for “the stone” and various urinary disorders because it “provoketh urine.” See William Turner, A Book of Wines (1668) (New York: Scholars’ Facsimiles, 1941).

2. Genesis 41:4; King James version.


5. William Vaughan, Directions for Health, Both Natural and Artificial (London, 1625), sig. G7v; see also Tobias Whitaker, The Tree of Humane Life, or The Blood of the Grape, proving the possibility of maintaining human life from infancy to extreme old age without any sickness by the use of wines: Republished and enlarged by the Author (London, 1634), sig. C9v.


8. See, for example, Wendy Wall, Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), esp. 189–230, as well as the Lander Johnson, Decamp, and Zucollin and King chapters in this volume.


12. [S. J.], The Vineyard: Being a Treatise Showing the Nature and Method of Planting, Manuring, Cultivating, and Drawing of Vines in Foreign-Parts (London, 1727), sig. C9v. Sir Hugh Plat advises that if you prune vines “when the sap is up,” you should cover the cut with turpentine to “stay bleeding” (Flores Paradisi [London, 1668], sig. L3r). Worlidge extends this advice to include the idea that trees from which sap has been extracted will not yield fruit: “you must expect no Fruit from the Tree out of which you thus extract its Blood” (J. Worlidge, Vinerum Britannicam: Or a Treatise of Cider, And other Wines and Drinks Extracted from Fruits Growing in this Kingdom [London, 1691], sig. C9v).


17. Tobias Whitaker, Tree of Humane Life, or the Blood of the Grape, sigs. Crv, C2v, B3r, E6v. Whitaker may well mean beasts rather than berries since he has been discussing the inferiority of milk (human or animal) to wine.


20. [S. J.], The Vineyard, sig. 13v.


23. Plat, Jewell Hour, sigs. 13v–14r. Elsewhere, Plat accuses cooperers of "sleights, sophistications, and parrelings" and directs readers to his unpublished manuscript, Secreta Dei vampirae (Flores Paradisi, sigs. E6v–E7r).
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24. John Evelyn, Sylva, Or a Discourse of Forest-Trees . . . To which is annexed Pomona (London, 1679), sig. X5r.
26. Plat, Jewell House, sigs. 1v–14r. On the status of blood within early modern alchemy, see Tara Nummedal’s chapter in this volume.
27. In Vine Veritas, 16, 24.
28. As You Like It (Epilogue, line 3).
32. William Hughes, The Compleat Vineyard: Or A most excellent Way for the Planting of Vines: Not onely according to the German and French way, but also long experiment in England (London, 1665), sig. A3v.
33. [D. S.], Vinum Angliae: Or, A new and easy Way to make WIne of English Grapes and other Fruit, equal to that of France, Spain, &c with their Physical Virtues (London, 1700), 2.
35. Worlidge, Vinetum Britannicum.
38. Camden, Britain, sigs. Gg3r–w.
39. John Parkinson, Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris. A Garden of all sorts of pleasant flowers which our English ayre will permit to be nurserd up (London, 1629), sig. Zb4v.

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Edelen (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), 435, 264; Camden, Britain, sigs. Gg3r–w; and Samuel Hartlib Historic Legacies, sig. E3r.
42. [S. J.], The Vineyard, sigs. A4v, A8v.

Chapter 15

1. Some examples of this scene from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries include: British Library Arundel 157, fol. 18v (St. Albans, ca. 1240); British Library Lansdowne 381, fol. 8 (England, 2nd quarter 12th c.); British Library Royal 2 B II, fol. 6v (Paris, ca. 1250); British Library Royal D X, fol. 141 (Oxford, before 1220); BNF Latin 12834, fol. 84 (France, ca.1266–1279); The Hague KB 76 J 18, fol. 215f (Cambray, ca. 1275–1300); St. John’s College N9, fol. 9v (Flanders, 13th c.); The Walters Ms. W. 35, fol. 6v (Bruges–Ghent, ca. 1270–1280); The Walters Ms. W. 36, fol. 6v (Bruges, ca. 1250–1260). British Library Lansdowne 381, fol. 7 (Germany, ca. 1168–1189) appears to be an exception to the rule of living pigs as it shows a man standing over a pig with its mouth open lying on a table. The man is holding some kind of instrument to the pig’s neck, perhaps to bleed it, yet there is no blood shown in the image.
2. For a full discussion of how to read a medieval calendar page, see “Appendix: The Calendar Page Decoded,” in Bridget Ann Henisch, The Medieval Calendar Year (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).
3. The calendar cycle is common in medieval church architectural and furniture decoration as well as in manuscripts, but those other contexts will not be discussed in this chapter.