BLOOD MOTHER/MILK MOTHER: BREASTFEEDING, THE FAMILY, AND THE STATE IN ANTONIO DE GUEVARA'S *RELOX DE PRÍNCIPES* (*DIAL OF PRINCES*)

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IN *The Origin of the Milky Way* Tintoretto paints Juno's lactating breasts creating the galaxy (Figure 1). In this scene, Jupiter attempts to guarantee the immortality of his son born of the mortal Alcmene by holding Hercules to suck on the sleeping Juno's breast. She awakens however, and her spilled milk gives rise to the Milky Way and to lilies on earth. While this painting points to the fascination lactating women held for artists of the day and to the power to create and nurture life, it also problematizes the role of the father at this stage of the child's life. Indisputably, breastfeeding is an area exclusively reserved for women.[1] Yet, in this work and many of the Renaissance treatises on how to raise a family, the father appears as a persuasive force in determining the child's best interests. How does this authoritative figure exercise his dominant role within the family structure? How is he able to govern the family politic even at the stage when the child's principal needs can only be fulfilled by the mother, either blood mother or milk mother (a term used to designate the relationship between wet nurse and child)? Is it possible that breastfeeding

[1] For a history on the perception of lactating women see Fildes, *Breasts;* Osborn, Pollock. For a history of lactating women in early modern Europe see King (12–18).



Figure 1: Tintoretto, *The Origin of the Milky Way*, c. 1580. Reproduced by courtesy of Trustees, The National Gallery, London.

forced men to concede at least some of the child-rearing authority to women and extend to them an independence that in other developmental stages was not granted?

In the *Relox de Príncipes* (*Dial of Princes*), Antonio de Guevara attempts to define the father's role in the traditional family structure. While the rules he lays down for marriage, pregnancy, and the child's education clearly point to the male as the authority figure whose decisions are incontestable, Guevara struggles to locate the father in an equally important role during the child's breastfeeding years.

Antonio de Guevara (1481–1545) is an overlooked Renaissance figure.[2] Bishop of Guadix in Granada and later of Mondoñedo in

[2] For an extensive and scholarly study on Antonio de Guevara, see Redondo and

Galicia, commissioner for the Inquisitor General, official chronicler and travelling companion of Charles I (Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire), he formed part of the main political circles of the day. Guevara was also a prolific writer, whose writing played an important role in the development of Castilian literature in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and was admired and translated all over Europe in his lifetime. In 1529 *Relox de príncipes*, which is an expanded version of his already famous *Libro áureo de Marco Aurelio* (*Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius*), is published and immediately becomes the favorite book of Charles I and later of his son, Philip II. In fact, according to Quentin Skinner, following the Bible the *Relox* is the most widely read book in sixteenth-century Europe (215). Guevara's manual for the education of princes was first published at a time when Charles I was struggling to unify Spain, a country whose customs, coinage, language and political institutions varied from one territory to the next. The *Relox* is divided into three books. The first explains how to be a successful Christian prince; the second, how the male reader should interact with his wife and raise his children; and the third describes the virtues of a prince. Located between two books dealing with the prince's role in governing the state, Book II's position within the text points to Guevara's attempt to link the needs of the state with the needs of the family.

It is only natural that Guevara would take a patriarchal view of the state and family and that he would feel entitled to speak on those subjects with authority because he himself was part of a patriarchal structure in a church that held enormous sway in Spain. The Holy Office of the Inquisition—an institution that was an instrument of royal policy and politically subject to the crown—regulated matters on family interaction. Although Alfonso el Sabio's *Siete Partidas* included laws that regulated family structures, including the role of the wet nurse and characteristics she should possess, official public policy on family values yielded to the provincial *fueros*.[3] Historians

for more on his influence in both the political and literary spheres see Grey, Jones, and Ralló Gruss.

[3] See, for example, Título VII, Ley III, in which Alfonso el Sabio writes about characteristics a wet nurse should have in order to nurse a royal child: "deven aver tales amas que ayan leche asaz, e sean bien acostumbradas e sanas, e fermosas, e de buen linaje, e de buenas costumbres, e señaladamente que non sean muy sañudas" (cited in Simón Palmer, 18) 'there should be wet nurses such that they have a lot of

have noted that although the individual territories enjoyed these provincial liberties (*fueros*), the crown could use the Inquisition to exercise unquestioned authority and serve royal absolutism (Kamen 242).[4] While the Inquisition focused on heretics and the political and economic repercussions of these "religious traitors," the Inquisition also continually attempted to rule on civil questions that were arguably related to the Catholic faith. In his recent historiography of the Spanish Inquisition, Jesús de Bujanda explains that although the exact mandate of the Inquisition was relegated to matters of faith,

> everything depends upon what is understood by *faith* and what is a transgression against faith . . . As the Roman Church considers itself repository of the revelation as well as legitimate and authorized interpreter of divine and natural law, it may pass judgment on morality and all human acts. (227)

Concurrent with the tensions between the Inquisition and the local civil authorities during the reign of Charles I, Spain, and particularly Castile, experienced a rise in nationalist sentiment.[5] Castilians were skeptical of their young foreign king whose role as Holy Roman Emperor would involve long periods of royal absenteeism and subject them to a higher rate of taxation. They demanded that no foreigners take internal posts at the court and that

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milk, and that are well-mannered and healthy, and beautiful and come from a good family, and are respectable, and especially, are not cruel.' All translations in this article are my own.

[4] The period from 1524–39, when Cardinal Manríquez was Inquisitor-general, was defined by quarrels between the Inquisition and the different civil authorities. Contrary to the oath the monarchy had taken to observe civil laws of the different kingdoms, the Inquisition would attempt to intervene in cases of bigamy and other crimes of that class (Llorente 71–133). For information on the Inquisition, medical practices and women healers, see Perry (14–32), and for cases dealing with love magic, see Sánchez Ortega.

[5] The relationship between the rise of nationalism and a focus on family structure shares certain parallels with recent history. Recently studies have shown a correlation between the rise of nationalism and the return to a nuclear family, giving special emphasis to the role of the mother as nurturer/provider. Barbara Einhorn maintains that in East Central European countries where nationalism has replaced communism as the prevailing ideological construct, gender specific elements of official public policy, such as paid sick leave to look after children and extended maternity and childcare leave, which were designed to alleviate women's burden actually reinforced traditional gender-based roles and women's disadvantaged position in the work force (47).

Charles conform to the customs of his grandparents, the Catholic monarchs, who were rapidly becoming a symbol of a golden age of "secure liberty" and a truly Castilian sovereign (Elliott 135–48).[6] Tensions also stemmed from failed harvests, inflation which diminished competition and caused businesses to fail, trade crises, foreign "investments," and an increasing intolerance of minority groups including conversos, moriscos, gypsies, beggars, and Africans. There was also a continual struggle between a new alien dynasty with an alien program and the traditional life style of the Castilians. Anti-imperialist and anti-Flemish sentiments were on the rise as the traditional powers and prerogatives of Castilian towns slowly eroded.[7]

It is within this cultural-political milieu that Guevara's instant "best-seller" *Relox de Príncipes* is located. Generally, the text follows the Renaissance tradition of manuals for constructing the perfect family.[8] Guevara's passage on the relationship between man and woman captures the tone of these treatises: "En nuestra sagrada religión christiana no ay ley divina ni ay ley humana que en todas las cosas el varón a la muger no se prefiera" (434) 'In our holy Christian religion there is no divine nor human law that does not give preference to man over woman in all matters.' This attitude makes the breastfeeding stage of a child's development all the more intriguing because here Guevara creates an authoritative space for the mother. Like other humanists and priests and physicians, Guevara advised

[6] For the relationship between Castile and the monarchy see Vassberg (104–28).

[7] These tensions led, of course, to the revolt of the *comuneros* (1520–21), which ended in defeat for the *comuneros* but left deep scars and led to family vendettas being played out at the court. For more on the historical situation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries see Elliott (129–60).

[8] Many Renaissance authors wrote on the relationship between husband and wife, particularly in the context of the education of women. Leonardo Bruni d'Arezzo was one of the earliest Renaissance writers to defend women's education in his treatise "Of Studies and Letters." He argues that women should study to make themselves intellectually worthy to their husbands. The Humanists, Erasmus (*De pueris*); Antonio de Nebrija (*De liberis educandis*); Juan Luis Vives (*Institutio feminae christianae*); Francesco Patrizi (*De institutio reip*), and Guevara supported the idea that the wife should be subject to her husband in every way: "amar y trabajar de ser amadas de sus maridos," (430) [love and work to be loved by their husbands]. Others, for example, Baltasar Cortegiano, offer women a greater degree of freedom in education, household affairs and mental capacities.

mothers to nurse their own children yet, unlike others, he also recommends that the mother take charge of certain decisions that need to be made on behalf of the child.[9]

In recent years, historical studies on the family that include the role of wet nurses and the contributions of breastfeeding to a child's successful development have been written but their primary focus is on other European countries, not early modern Spain.[10] In *Tuscans and Their Families*, David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zubar make a point of the gender difference between babies who nursed from their blood mother and those who nursed from a milk mother. "Among prosperous or even wealthy families, the parents were more likely to place their daughters, rather than their sons, with a distant nurse" (147). However, we cannot simply extropolate the findings from one country and century to another. Juan Luis Vives' prescriptive work, *Instrucción de la mujer cristiana* (*Instruction of a Christian Woman*), offers quite contrary advice. He suggests that more care be taken in breastfeeding a daughter because as she grows she will have fewer external influences affect her upbringing than a son; thus, breastfeeding affects her development more than his:

> a esta causa Crísipo, filósofo acutísimo, mandaba que las amas de leche fuesen cuerdas y buenas, lo cual nosotros debemos procurar y avisarlo a las madres que no podrán o no les será lícito criar a los hijos con su propia leche, *en lo cual no es tan necesario que se ponga diligencia en los hijos como en las hijas.* (10, emphasis added) for this reason, the cleverest of philosophers Chrysippus ordered that wet nurses be sound and good. Advise we should try to give to mothers who cannot nurse or to whom nursing is not advisable and *include that they need not worry about sons as much as the daughters* (emphasis added).

Granted, advice manuals and historic research that analyzes the actual practices are very different projects. I cite these two examples

[9] King discusses the difference between patriarchal advice to nurse one's own child and the actual practice of elite women who in fact did not nurse their own children but rather hired wet nurses, (12–14).

[10] Emilie Bergmann discusses the historical studies of David Herlihy, Shulmith Shahar and Linda Pollock that react against the commonplace of "cold and distant" family relationships in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. However, she points to the difficulty of interfacing this material onto Spanish cultural structures and cites the need for historical studies on the family, and the maternal role in particular, in early modern Spain (40–41).

only to point out that regarding early modern Spain historical research into the role of breastfeeding and wet nurses still needs to be explored.

In dealing with the paternal relation with the child, particularly during the breastfeeding stage, Guevara's work differs from the treatises on women that dominate the field of advice on the early modern family. By citing the mother as the one who decides to breastfeed her child and by instructing the mother how to select the most appropriate wet nurse, Guevara creates an authoritative space for her. The rubric for Book II states his goals: "Y tracta el auctor en el presente libro de la manera que los príncipes y grandes señores se han de aver con sus mujeres y de cómo han de criar a sus hijos" (401) 'In this present book the author deals with the manner in which princes and noblemen should treat their wives and raise their children.' Guevara focuses on internal family behavior and, although he directs his manual to "príncipes y grandes señores," 'princes and noblemen' virtually the whole book is dedicated to the duties of the wife and child care supporter who at times is the wife, other times the wet nurse, and other times the tutor.[11] Guevara dedicates seven of his forty chapters to the woman who breastfeeds, whether she be the blood mother or the milk mother. He divides his discussion into four parts: why mothers should breastfeed their children, what characteristics a wet nurse should have, how long one should nurse the child, and the detrimental effects that witchcraft and superstition have on nursing.[12]

Women, Guevara explains as he begins Book II, have a natural instinct to want things. "Infinitas son las cosas que naturalmente dessean las mugeres, y entre las otras son muy essenciales quatro o cinco dellas" (505) 'Infinite are the things that women naturally desire, and among them four or five are essential.' His list includes

[11] Apart from this rubric Guevara does not distinguish between different social classes when referring to the family, the wife, and so forth. However, his text is specifically directed to aristocrats and his notions of the family are defined by certain sixteenth-century class assumptions and views that must be taken into account when discussing Guevara's text.

[12] Although fourteen chapters (ch. 18–31) are dedicated to the influence of the wet nurse in the child's life, seven of these directly deal with breastfeeding. The other seven deal with other issues of language learning and women's intellectual capacity in general.

being beautiful, married, pregnant, and giving birth. He then turns to the first responsibility a woman has after giving birth, breastfeeding her child, and extensively defends why women should choose this source of nourishment for their children.[13]

Ya que Dios permitió que naciessen hermosas, ya que Dios permitió se viessen casadas, ya que Dios permitió se hiziessen preñadas, ya que Dios permitió se viessen alumbradas; ¿por qué las mugeres son tan ingratas que, en pariendo los hijos, los echan de sus casas y los embían a criar por las tristes aldeas? . . . Deve assimismo la muger, en acabando de parir a la criatura, darle a mamar de su leche propria; porque parece cosa muy monstruosa aver parido ella el niño de sus entrañas y que le críen y den a mamar mugeres estrangeras. (506)

As God has allowed them to be born beautiful, as God has allowed them to be married, as God has allowed them to become pregnant, as God has allowed them to give birth, how can women be so ungrateful that, after giving birth to their children, they throw them out of their house and send them off to the poor villages to be raised? The woman herself, after giving birth to the child, should nurse him with her own milk, because it seems to be a very monstrous thing for a woman to give birth to her child from her own womb and let strange women raise and nurse him.[14]

Guevara immediately turns to the animal kingdom, using wolves and pigs who can feed up to ten offspring at once, monkeys who never let leave of their babes until they have fully weaned, and birds who, in their own nests and without milk to feed their offspring, take care of them themselves. Guevara's comparison of women to animals, and as cited earlier as "monstruosas" 'monstrous' is the basis for Bergmann's article, "Monstrous Maternity" in which the author points out the ambiguous nature of the comparison:

[13] Fildes's study on wetnursing discusses the influential writings of the Persian physician Avicenna (980–1036), Rhazes (850–932), Haly Abbas (d. 994), and Moses Maimonides (1135–1204), a Spanish Jew and pupil of the Spanish Muslim physician Averroes (*Wet*, 29–30). All wrote instructions on health, diet, milk production, weaning, and general concerns for nursing women. Fildes also describes the restrictions put on wet nurses that aimed to segregate minority women.

[14] Although the masculine singular *niño* could refer to the generic child—either boy or girl—I have chosen to translate the word as *child* but its corresponding object pronoun as *him* because I think in Guevara's overall project of advising women how to raise their children he is mostly concerned with sons.

> On one hand, women's 'natural' tendencies toward nurturing and affection were viewed as dangerous to civilization and detrimental to the production of citizens to serve the modern state. On the other, it was 'monstrous' for them to conform to certain cultural norms, in particular sending infants to wetnurses, which diverged from exemplary maternal behavior among the other animals to which they were compared. (18)

Guevara's use of animal imagery to explore women's natural behavior is not uncommon among Renaissance writers and artists. In Melchior Lorck's woodcut, *The Allegory of Nature*, Ops, the goddess of fertility and wife of Saturn, is presented as a lactating woman nurturing the animal kingdom (Figure 2). Here, she expresses milk from her breasts and, like a fountain of life, provides nourishment for all animals.

There are many reasons a woman should want to nurse. First, Guevara explains that the child has great need after being born, "pues la madre le parió con tan malas condiciones de sus entrañas, no es justo en tiempo de tan gran necessidad le fíen de otras personas" (509) 'since the mother gave birth from her womb, under such difficult conditions, it is not fair that in time of such dire need she entrust him to others.' Second, Guevara argues that through nursing, not birth, the child will take on the mother's qualities. "porque mamando el niño leche de mujer agena, impossible es que tome la condición de madre" (510) 'by nursing from a strange woman, it is impossible for the child to take on the mother's disposition.' These ideas on the pre-natal and neo-natal stages of life raise questions about the child's relation with the father. If the womb stage becomes second to nursing and if the mother jeopardizes passing on her qualities to her child by giving that child to a wet nurse, then how does the child receive the father's characteristics, wet nurse or not? As Guevara continues with his list of reasons for nursing one's own child, the distinction between nursing a child and raising a child begins to blur.[15] In his third point, he explains that to be a complete mother one must fulfill two halves of the whole task: "ca la muger es media madre por el parir y es media madre por el criar" (511) 'a woman is half a mother when she gives birth and half when she

[15] Other reasons for women to nurse the child themselves are so the child will be safer, because Jesus chose to nurse only from Mary, because a woman is crazy if she does not want to, and because it is healthier for a woman to nurse (511–20).



Figure 2: Melchior Lorck, *Allegory of Nature*, 1565. Reproduced by courtesy of Abaris Books.

nurses/raises the child.' Here, Guevara's use of the word *criar* is ambiguous and takes on a meaning that implies both nursing and general care of the infant. Because a wet nurse was often a woman who lived out of the home and in many cases out of town, the wet nurse often raised the child for the first two or three years. Guevara's intercalated tale of a milk sister who convinced her milk brother to pardon soldiers condemned to death, after he had denied the same requests made by his blood brother, exemplifies the overlapping of breastfeeding and raising the child. As he explains to his blood brother: "Hágote saber, hermano, que yo tengo por más madre a la que me crió y no me parió, que a la que me parió y, en pariendo, me dexó; y, pues aquélla tuve por madre verdadera, justo es tenga a ésta por hermana muy cara" (513) 'Let it be known, brother, that the one who nursed/raised me is more a mother to me than the one who gave birth to me and left me, and since the former is my real mother, it is only fair that I appreciate this woman as my dear sister.' In this tale, *criar* like the English verb to *nurse* refers both to breastfeeding and to caring for the child. Guevara's use of a political military account to illustrate family bonds is not a singular case. His text is filled with many such examples, thus, in this descriptive way, he again joins the needs of the family with the needs of the state.

Throughout the text Guevara also switches from *padres* 'parents' to *madre* 'mother' to indicate parent-child relationships. When the situation involves privileges for the father, Guevara names the *padres* 'parents' but when the question can only involve the mother or when he discusses problems that arise from not nursing or from the child being raised outside of the home, then the parental figure is usually defined as the *madre* 'mother.' For example, the fourth reason mothers should nurse their own is so the child will later feel a greater sense of obligation to his or her parents (to both of them).

> Para que los *padres* tengan siempre de su mano a los hijos, no ay mejor medio que es *criarlos las madres a sus pechos*, ca la madre quando ruega alguna cosa a su hijo proprio, no le ha de mostrar el vientre de do le parió, sino los pechos con que le crió. (514, my own emphasis)

> In order for the *parents* to be able to rely always on their children, there is no better way than for *mothers to breastfeed* them, since when the mother asks something of her own child, she does not point to her womb from where she birthed but to her breasts with which she nursed him. (my own emphasis)

Guevara's seemingly arbitrary switches between *madre* and *padres* and between *criar al pecho* 'to breastfeed' and simply *criar* 'to raise,' can be interpreted in two ways. Either they are attempts to write the father into a relational role with his child or they are efforts to confirm the mother's authoritative role at this stage of the child's development. In terms of the former, creating a position for the father in assuming responsibility for child care goes hand in hand with a skepticism at best or more likely, a firm distrust of the mother for making responsible child-rearing decisions. As Bergmann has pointed out, "most advice books betray a distrust of maternal 'nature'. In order to integrate the family as metaphor, model and building block for political systems of power, family government could not be entrusted to mothers without careful acculturation" (39). However, his position that the mother decides if she will nurse, that the mother evaluate potential wet nurses, and that the mother establish a life-long bond with her child through nursing, cautiously opens an authoritative space for her in family governance.

The sixteenth-century Flemish drawing, *Allegory of the Power of Women*, visually describes this uncomfortable understanding of the mother's role (Figure 3). In the center of the drawing stands a woman holding a sucking baby in one hand, and a scepter in another, thus granting sovereign power to her as nurturer. However, this sovereignty can be interpreted in two ways. Either she is responsible for forcing men to worship idols as depicted in the upper right corner (with a Solomon episode), and for depriving man of his strength, as shown with the allusion to Delilah in the upper left; or, as the nurturing mother, she redeems the wickedness of the past and is more important than any temporal power, emblems of which lie scattered and broken around her feet (Borin 208). This image, like Tintoretto's painting of Jupiter insisting that his half-mortal son suck on Juno's breast, demonstrates the uneasiness that surrounds women who have certain authoritative roles. This apprehension is countered by innumerable visual images and written documents that glorify the bond between mother and child. One need only recall the portraits of the Virgin nursing Jesus to be reminded of the idealization of loving mother and secure child.[16]

[16] King points out that this type of idealization was far from the reality of the "pain of childbirth, the despair of child death, the stress of poverty, the insecurity of wealth, and the ferocity of the law [that] engulfed mother and child" (18).



Figure 3: Martin de Voss (?), *Allegory of the Power of Women*, late 16th c.

In discussing how to choose a wet nurse, Guevara once again gives mixed signals as to who is in charge of the decision. He begins by explaining that laws should be recorded for today and for the future because women make poor decisions:

imaginando que las mugeres que parirán después de nuestro siglo serán no menos presuntuosas que las de nuestro tiempo son regaladas, no dexaremos de poner algunas leyes y avisos cómo la señora se ha de aver con el ama y cómo el ama con la criatura; porque muy justo es que si la madre fue cruda y atrevida en dexar a la criatura, sea piadosa y cuerda en elegir a la ama. (523)

assuming that women who will give birth after our century will be no less vain than the women of our era are dainty, we will not stop writing laws and advice on how the woman of the house should act with the wet nurse and the wet nurse with the child because it is only right that if the mother was daring and cruel enough to leave the child, she should be compassionate and prudent in choosing the wet nurse.

The implied *we* of *dexaremos* 'we will (not) stop' reiterates Guevara's entire project, that the state impose its requirements on how to choose a caretaker for children, in short, on how to raise a family. Yet, he concedes that the mother is the parent who ultimately chooses the wet nurse.[17]

Following this passage, Guevara laments grown children who do not love their parents and gestures to the father as the responsible source: "y esto que haze el hijo con el padre y la madre justo juyzio es de Dios, en que assí como *el padre* no quiso críar a su hijo en casa quando era niño, que el hijo no reciba a su padre en casa quando es ya viejo" (524, my own emphasis) 'and what the son does to his father and mother is fair judgment from God because the *father* in refusing to raise his child at home when he was a boy, now the son does not receive his father in his home when he is old' (my own emphasis). It would seem, then, that although the mother is responsible for choosing the wet nurse, the father decides if one will be chosen or not. Guevara attempts to write the father into a significant role in the child's early development in spite of possible judgment errors. Keeping the child close to the hearth would allow the father more control in the child's upbringing and greater benefits when he is old.

Guevara gives seven conditions the mother must review while hiring a wet nurse. First, she should know well her own child's constitution. She should also look for the following qualities in the milk mother: that she possess healthy milk and a healthy body, that she be a moderate eater and abstain from wine, that she not conceive while breastfeeding, and that she be well-mannered, that is, not envious, proud, evil, etc. (522–41). However, in the examples Guevara gives to illustrate his reasons, he occasionally returns to the father's responsibility or lack there of in choosing a wet nurse. For example, in discussing the role of breastfeeding in the development of the child, Guevara cites Caligula as an example and begins by lamenting the father's misfortune: "nunca de tan buen padre como fue Drusio Germánico salió tan mal fijo como fue Calígula . . . ca no

[17] Guevara's stance that the mother choose the wet nurse differs radically from practices in early modern Florence where the father negotiated the appointment of a wet nurse with the wet nurse's husband (Klapisch-Zuber 139–53). However, even there sometimes women, not men, located wet nurses for wealthy Florentine families, as is the case with Margherita Datini who would also supervise the nurses once they were hired (Gies 202).

se hartan los historiadores de encarecer las excellencias del padre, ni jamás acaban de afear las torpedades del hijo" (539–40) 'never has there been such a bad son as Caligula from such a good father as Drusus Germanicus . . . that the historians never tire of praising the father's excellence nor of reproaching the son's indecencies.' By commending Caligula's father, Guevara exonerates him for his son's malevolent behavior. After lamenting the father's grief, Guevara blames the wet nurse's temper for Caligula's evil.

> Acontesció una vez que, estando para dar a mamar a Calígula, por un enojo que uvo despernó y desmembró a una muchacha y, sobre todo, con la sangre de la moça untó el peçón de la teta, y assí hizo mamar leche y sangre a la criatura." (540)

> It happened once that, when ready to nurse Caligula, due to some annoyance she tore off the leg and dismembered a girl and above all, with the girl's blood smeared on the nipple of her breast thus made the child nurse both milk and blood.

While this excessively violent example begins with the role of the father, and continues with the ill effects of the wet nurse, Guevara concludes that children are more often influenced by the one who breastfeeds than by the one who gives birth, "porque los hijos muchas vezes siguen más la condición de la leche que mamaron, que no la condición de la madre de do nascieron" (541) 'because children many times take after the one who nursed them and not the mother who gave birth to them.' This conclusion reiterates one of Guevara's major points in his introductory remarks on breastfeeding, that the impact of nurturance outweighs the effects of nature.

After stating the possibilities of the state's and the father's beneficial roles and the wet nurse's detrimental role for the child, Guevara once again turns to the role of the mother and cites her as being in charge of finding a responsible wet nurse for her child. Guevara first takes the opportunity to scold the mother on her decision not to breastfeed: "ya que se determina la muger de cerrar y secar las fuentes de la leche que le dio naturaleza, deve poner muy gran diligencia en buscar una muger para ama" (524) 'since the woman is determined to close and dry up the fountains of milk that nature gave her, she should take careful measures in looking for a wet nurse.' Implicit in these instructions on how a blood mother should choose a milk mother is Guevara's concession, or perhaps

recognition, that women do enjoy some independence in making childcare decisions.

In order to hire the right wet nurse, mothers should know their child's constitution, whether choleric, phlegmatic, sanguine or melancholic. She should also look for a wet nurse who is healthy—physically, mentally, and spiritually—has a sound disposition, eats moderately and does not drink. Overconsumption of food leads to poor quality of blood, and as white milk, Guevara explains, is nothing more than cooked blood, it will affect the baby (531). Wine works in the same way. Because of its warm characteristic, wine mixed with the cooked blood will produce bad milk: "no es otra cosa bever vino la muger que cría sino para cozer poca leche poner mucho fuego a la caldera, do la caldera se quema y la leche se assura" (534) 'a nursing woman drinking wine is nothing more than putting a high flame under a shallow pot of milk, where the pot will burn and the milk will spoil.'

Finally, it is essential that the wet nurse not become pregnant while she is breastfeeding because, "la sangre mestruada (como está retenida) mézclase con la sangre limpia, de la qual se haze la leche de la criatura; y desta manera, pensando criar al niño con leche, mátanle con ponçoña" (536)[18] 'menstrual blood (as it is retained) mixes with clean blood, from which milk for the baby is made, and in this way, thinking you are nursing the child with milk, you are killing him with poison.' The separation of nursing and pregnancy leads to the discussion of how long a woman should breastfeed and when she should begin to wean the baby. In her investigation of nursing in Castile during the Middle Ages, Heath Dillard found that most wet nurses were hired for a period of three years by which time the child would be fully weaned (156–57). Throughout Book II, Guevara alludes to a time period of two to three years (515, 527, 529). However, after citing a variety of cultures and classical texts, he concludes that although methods of nursing and weaning vary depending on time, place and culture, he agrees with Aristotle that, "el niño deve mamar

[18] Fildes notes that writers on education, such as Sir Thomas Elyot, and physicians and surgeons, such as, Bartholomaeus Metlinger and Eucharias Roesslin in Germany, Felix Wurtz in Switzerland, and Ambroise Paré and Jacques Guillemeau in France, noted the importance of the wet nurse not becoming pregnant because the best blood would go to the fetus first (*Wet* 69–70).

a lo más dos años, y a lo menos año y medio" (548)[19] 'a child should nurse at most two years and at least a year and a half.'

In his last section on nursing the child Guevara warns against the bad effects of witchcraft. Drawing from histories of Egyptians, Peloponnesians and other cultures, he describes how women channeled the influences of planets, elements and idols to improve their milk. Guevara explicitly warns against these practices because they are offensive to God and the Christian religion.

Todas estas antigüedades de la gentilidad he querido contar para que las princesas y grandes señoras huelguen de las leer y saber, pero no para que por ninguna manera las ayan de imitar; porque según la fe de nuestra religión christiana, quan ciertos somos de la ofensa que hazían a Dios en hazer tales supersticiones, tan ciertos somos del servicio que hazemos nosotros en dexarlas. (548)

I have told all of these gentile stories so that princesses and noblewomen may enjoy themselves reading them and getting to know them but not, under any circumstances, to imitate them because, according to the faith of our Christian religion, we are as certain at how much they offended God by doing such superstitious acts as we are of the service we do by not doing them.

Sorcery and witchcraft were frequently associated with minority women, both Moors and Jews. For example, in 1258 at the Court of Valladolid, Muslim and Jewish women were prohibited from wet-nursing Christians and vice versa (Fildes, *Wet* 39). Mary Elizabeth Perry, in her study on the condition of women in early modern Seville, points to the impinging restrictions placed upon midwives because of their association with sorcery.

In 1538 and 1558, it was requested in the *cortes* that midwives had to be examined by "the justice or government of the . . . cities or villages where they would practice their offices, taking with them for the said

[19] Blanco notes the difference between the Humanists like Guevara and the "naturalists" like Bernardo de Gordonio who, in his work, *El tractado de los niños y regimiento de la ama 'Treatise on Children and the Wet Nurse's Diet,'* indicates that lactation should last for seven years according to Galen and three years according to Avicenna. Ironically, Gordonio arrives at a similar conclusion as Guevara, except that he distinguishes on the length of time depending on the child's gender: "E si fuere fembra, conviene que mame dos años, o al macho dos años y medio" (548–49n) 'If it is a girl, two years suffices, and if a boy, two and a half.'

examination two doctors of science and experience, who finding them competent will license them to perform the said offices, and that without it they cannot perform them, [without incurring] penalties, nor can the justices consent to it." (27)

While midwifery and wetnursing are two very different professions, this denial of women to practice their profession, and in Guevara's text to benefit from certain remedies that stimulate milk production, are further examples of how women's role in childrearing must be authorized by patriarchal institutions.

Although he does not raise the issue of religious-ethnic status, Guevara does state that the skin color of the wet nurse is not an issue: "porque si la leche que tienen es dulce y blanca, poco haze al caso que el ama tenga la cara negra o hermosa" (525) 'because if their milk is sweet and white, little difference it makes if the face is black or beautiful.' He continues by citing an authoritative source. "Dize Sexto Cheronense en el libro *De criar niños* que assí como la tierra negra es más fertil que no la blanca, por semejante la muger que tiene la cara baça siempre tiene la leche más sustanciosa" (525) 'Sextus Cheronense states in his book *On Raising Children* that as dark soil is more fertile than light soil, by extension, the woman whose face is dark always has more substantial milk.'

Antonio de Guevara makes the family a subject of public policy as he seeks to offer guidance on the proper roles of mothers and fathers within an idealized family. However, in his section on the early childhood and breastfeeding stage, Guevara hesitates to authorize either the father or the mother as having more responsibility than the other parent for their child's early stage of development. Book II is written for men and how they should treat their wives and raise their children yet the language within these chapters is directed to mothers and wet nurses. He argues that women should make the decision to breastfeed yet distrusts their ability to make sound decisions. He repeatedly states that women have the responsibility to secure a sound wet nurse yet he fills his prose with examples of political and military male leaders, with father's misfortunes, and son's traits inherited from their wet nurse. He admonishes women's decisions to send their child to a wet nurse or to practice superstitious home remedies, yet again, suggests that the mother be responsible for employing a proper wet nurse. Clearly, Guevara is suspicious of women's capacity to make good decisions. Distrustful of her body,

skeptical of her intentions, he cannot endorse the power and independence that is appropriately hers, yet, neither can he fully yield that control to the father.

At a time when Spain is striving to become a modern, centralized state, Guevara is struggling to endorse fully either the father or the mother as the primary authority figure in this formative childhood stage. Guevara's uncertainty as to how both father and mother fit into an authoritative role in this decisive developmental stage is echoed by his incertitude when he claims himself as a reliable source. Several times in these seven chapters on breastfeeding Guevara seeks to legitimize his authority on the subject. In discussing how women should act he begins with a disclaimer,

> Escusado me sería hablar en este caso, pues soy religioso y no he sido casado, mas (por lo que he leydo lo uno, y por lo que he oydo lo otro) osaré tomar licencia de dezir una palabra; porque muchas vezes da mejor cuenta un sabio de una cosa que ha leydo que no la da un simple aunque la haya experimentado. (447)

> I would be excused from such topics as I am a religious man and have never been married however, (based on what I have read on the one hand and what I have heard on the other) I dare to take license and say a word. Often a wise man tells a better story of what he has read than a simpleton who has experienced it.

Later, when giving examples from the animal kingdom on why women should nurse their own children, he again qualifies his information: "Hallarán por verdad todos los que leyeren esta escritura, y si quisieren lo verán como yo lo vi por experiencia" (507) 'All who read this writing will find it to be the truth and, if they want to, can see it as I have seen it with my own eyes.' These mixed signals, validating himself because he is a wise man who reads or validating himself because he experienced first hand a specific incident, suggest that when he claims to be an authoritative voice, he is reassuring not only the reader, but himself as well.

This need to authorize—the father's role in family governing, Guevara's role as expert in the field of breastfeeding—also informs the very structure of Guevara's manual. As a Renaissance writer following the traditions of imitation theory, Guevara attempts to rewrite texts, both classical and contemporary, by placing them in a new context. Indeed, his *Relox* is to a great degree a rewriting of his

earlier work *Libro aureo de Marco Aurelio.*[20] Yet, beyond this, he needs to authenticate his writing by exposing himself to the strength of classical texts, struggling to find his own identity among them.[21] Written during a time when the needs of the state and official public policy on the family are fairly undefined, Guevara's *Relox de Príncipes* combines advice for the state and for the family signaling a new direction for a new centralized state. However, in Book II he struggles to locate the father as an influential figure during the breastfeeding stage of a child's life. For as uncomfortable as it may be, this area is exclusively the woman's domain.

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[20] While critics have discussed Guevara's borrowing of material from his previous work, *El libro aúreo de Marco Aurelio,* (*The Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius*) most of this transferal occurs in Book III. Book II, which is comprised of 40 chapters, contains approximately 10 chapters from *Marco Aurelio.* However, none of this borrowed material treats the subject of the mother and wet nurses as primary caregivers for children. For the influence of *Marco Aurelio* in *Relox,* see Blanco's edition of *Relox* (chap. XIII–XXXII), Grey (8–17), Rallo (296–98).

[21] For more on imitation theory and the anxiety it produced for Renaissance writers, see Greene and Cave.

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