

# THE ARCHIVE REMEMBRANCE

## Mechanisms of Knowledge Suppression

Vol. I • Issue 01 • Focus Period: 1700s • Early Modern Europe and Colonial Expansion

### THE GREAT RECLASSIFICATION

The 1700s did not only silence knowledge, it reclassified it. Embodied wisdom was dismissed as superstition, intuition became suspect, and authority shifted from lived practice to credentialed control. Suppression moved through law, language, and “expertise”, hardening the mind-body divide into a system built for compliance. What could not be erased adapted; wisdom went underground and encoded itself in ritual, symbol, and dream continuity.

- In the 1700s, embodied knowledge systems were increasingly targeted by emerging institutional authority.
- Suppression operated through law, language, and the construction of ‘legitimate’ expertise.
- The mind–body split crystallized into a durable control structure: compliant bodies, abstracted minds.
- Knowledge survived through symbols, ritual, memory, and dream continuity.



*“When Knowledge Burned, the Body Remembered”*  
Engraving-style illustration • 18th-century visual language (book-burning motif)

Suppression rarely looked like silence. It looked like legitimacy.

# THE ARCHIVE REMEMBRANCE

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Vol. I • Issue 01 • I–III • Institutional • Linguistic • Somatic

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### THE SECRET THAT SHIFTED THE BIRTHROOM

#### Forceps, Authority, and the Quiet Replacement of Midwives

In the birthing chambers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, knowledge lived in the hands of women. Most births were attended by midwives; experienced practitioners whose skill was built through observation, repetition, and community lineage rather than institutional training. But when complications arose, options were limited. There were no modern hospitals to turn toward, and summoning a surgeon was often a last resort, associated with danger, pain, and outcomes that prioritized saving the mother over the infant.

Then, quietly, a “solution” emerged.

The Chamberlen family, Huguenot refugees who settled in England, introduced a hinged, spoon-like instrument capable of delivering babies alive during difficult labors. What would later be called *forceps* was known for decades as “**the secret.**” Their methods were surrounded by protection and mystique: closed carriages, rumors of concealed boxes, blindfolded patients, and rooms emptied before the device was used.

Whether theatrical or practical, the message was clear: this knowledge was guarded, controlled, and privately owned.

By the mid-eighteenth century, forceps spread beyond the Chamberlens and into wider medical practice. Yet the instrument’s most enduring impact wasn’t simply mechanical. It was cultural. Women in labor often never saw the device. Births were conducted beneath sheets for “propriety,” and some tools were designed not to clank, so their presence would remain unnoticed.

*“Forceps became a credential: only those permitted to use instruments were allowed to be considered legitimate.”*

Most significantly, **female midwives were not permitted to use instruments.** Forceps became a gatekeeping device: only surgeons could wield them, and only those who did were recognized as legitimate. Difficult births were increasingly reframed as the domain of men, and the surgeon-midwife began to replace the community midwife, not as an emergency option, but as the expected authority.

Forceps saved lives. But they also shifted power, turning embodied, communal care into credentialed control.

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### “Man-Midwife, 1793”

An 18th-century print depicting the rise of instrument-based obstetrics and the displacement of female midwives through credentialed authority.

### A. Institutional Erasure

- Criminalization of folk medicine, midwifery, ecstatic practices
- Embodied care reframed as illicit, unscientific, or dangerous
- Credentialed authority replaces lived competence

### B. Linguistic Fragmentation

- Loss of indigenous terms describing states of consciousness
- Translation bias (Greek → Latin → English) flattening nuance
- Symbolic language reduced into moral doctrine

### C. Somatic Disconnection

- Body framed as sinful, dangerous, or inferior
- Trance, altered states, and intuition pathologized
- Institutionalized separation of mind and body
- What could not be controlled was redefined as irrational

# THE ARCHIVE REMEMBRANCE

## The Fracture Point

Vol. I • Issue 01 • Mind–Body Divide as Control Structure

### Cartesian Dualism as a Pivot

- Mind treated as the seat of truth; body treated as mechanism
- Enables institutional authority and bodily mistrust as ‘rational’

### Industrialization Reinforcing Dissociation

- Efficiency demands predictable, compliant bodies
- Sensitivity and intuition become liabilities in mechanized systems

### Trauma as Stabilizer

- Chronic stress and suppression are both consequence and function
- Disconnection makes populations easier to regulate

\* Cartesian ; of, relating to, or derived from Descartes' philosophy, esp his contentions that personal identity consists in the continued existence of a unique mind and that the mind and body are connected causally.

*“Women have always been healers. They were the unlicensed doctors... doctors without degrees... passing on experience from neighbor to neighbor and mother to daughter.”*

— Barbara Ehrenreich & Deirdre English (on women healers)

*“The mind (a thinking, non-extended thing) is completely different from the body (an extended, non-thinking thing).”*

— IEP summary of Descartes' mind–body distinction

*“Time became money: employers had incentive to squeeze productivity out of every minute on the clock.”*

— E. P. Thompson (Time-Discipline, summarized)

# THE ARCHIVE REMEMBRANCE

## Case Studies: Who Was Silenced

Vol. I • Issue 01 • Focus Period: 1700s • Early Modern Europe and Colonial Expansion

### I — Midwives & Herbalists

- Role: primary community healthcare providers
- Silencing: legal restriction, persecution, professional exclusion
- Survival: oral transmission, domestic practice, encoded folk traditions
- Reappears: integrative medicine, herbal resurgence, midwifery revival

### II — Indigenous Cosmologies

- Role: land/time/consciousness as integrated intelligence
- Silencing: colonization, forced assimilation, language loss
- Survival: ceremony, oral myth, encoded ritual practices
- Reappears: ecopsychology, land-based healing, restoration movements

### III — Mystical Christianity / Gnosticism

- Role: direct experiential knowing of the divine
- Silencing: removal from canon, doctrinal consolidation
- Survival: symbolic art, allegory, esoteric orders
- Reappears: depth psychology, contemplative practice, symbolic literacy



#### Giving Birth in Eighteenth-Century England

*An 18th-century depiction of domestic childbirth and community-based midwifery care.*

*In the 1700s, wisdom moved through touch, presence, and practice—long before it required permission.*

# THE ARCHIVE REMEMBRANCE

## Survival Pathways

Vol. I • Issue 01 • What survived — and how

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### V. Survival Pathways

- Symbolic compression: myth, tarot, glyphs
- Somatic memory: the body retaining what language could not
- Ritual as data storage: practices encoding relational intelligence
- Dreams as continuity systems: non-verbal memory pathways
- When language was stripped, the body remembered.

### VI. Contemporary Re-Integration

- Trauma-informed therapy
- Somatic psychology
- Epigenetics
- Renewed ancestral practices
- Expanding consciousness studies

This is not rebellion. It is recovery.

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## Ethical Restoration

Vol. I • Issue 01 • Boundaries of this archive

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### VII. Boundaries

- Not appropriation
- Not reconstruction fantasy
- Not authority-claiming
- Honoring lineages
- Citing sources
- Restoring relationship, not ownership



*Image/source: Enlightened Living Yoga — “Community Healing Experience.”.*

### VIII. Closing Threshold

- Remembrance is not belief it is a physiological and psychological capacity that returns when conditions allow.

This archive exists for those sensing continuity where history claimed rupture.

# THE ARCHIVE REMEMBRANCE

## References

Vol. I • Issue 01 • Primary texts & scholarly anchors

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