

Deceitful Bodies: Ideas, performance and the physicality of bodily fraud, 1540 – 1750

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– 1750.

In early modern England it was believed that many people possessed the ability to alter and thereby mispresent their bodies. Various texts claimed that they were able to do so by either creating or restoring different aspects and features of the body.

This dissertation investigates the defective and deceptive body in early modern England. It considers how bodies like these and the methods used by people to manipulate the body were portrayed in medical, religious, literary and popular works to the early modern populace. In considering attitudes towards bodily fraud and deceit it assesses early modern attitudes towards deformity and its causes. The dissertation argues that people were aware that defective and deceptive bodies existed and were visible in a range of printed texts and in everyday life. It examines the extent to which cultural representations of criminal and dishonest behaviour fuelled anxieties about fraud and duplicity. It considers the ways in which writers and readers connected and distinguished between bodies, that while all deceptive, were not all fraudulent.

By establishing the origins of deformity, such as birth, injury and illness, this dissertation shows how some of these contexts were used by fraudulent beggars to invoke sympathy or were concealed by individuals who wished to hide the extent of their bodily defect to minimise their social and economic exclusion. Different types of deceptive behaviour were motivated by economic factors. Those who wished to conceal their defective body did so to promote work and marriage opportunities increasing their chances of financial stability in the long term. Fraudulent beggars reshaped their narratives and manipulated their bodies to appear deserving of charity and it was believed that women were able to recreate their virginity to please a new husband or to increase profit from prostitution. Overall this dissertation demonstrates that regardless of the context, defective and deceptive bodies were profitable socially and financially.

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Introduction

This project investigates the different types of bodily fraud and deceitful behaviour that existed in early modern England and it claims that their performances varied as they were shaped by intent and agency. It uses a qualitative approach to show how defective and deceptive bodies were presented in published texts and begins to assess how these may have shaped cultural responses to these bodies in day-to-day life. The term ‘deceptive behaviour’ refers to a wide range of performances, many of which are examined in this dissertation. When the possessor of a body underplayed, overexaggerated, denied, or invented health issues, bodily defects or deformities, they committed bodily fraud. When a man reshaped the narrative of an injury to appear respectable, worthy of sympathy and charity, he deceived those around him. When a woman recreated her virginity to either appease her sexual partner or to demand a higher fee for her services, she deceptively reshaped and manipulated her body. However, when an individual chose to conceal their deformities by using prosthetics or cosmetics, they were only guilty of misrepresentation. All of these were ways in which the body was used to perform deceitful or fraudulent behaviour in early modern England and are considered here.

This dissertation originally questions how defective and deceptive bodies were performed in early modern England between c.1540 and 1750 and how this performance was reshaped in different contexts. There are however, several other questions which this project must also consider; To what extent was the defective and deceptive body a social and cultural construct? To what extent were these bodies imagined? Were defective and deceptive bodies created or concealed for economic purposes? Did varying medical and cultural definitions of ‘the norm’ allow bodies to deviate easily from expected forms? Lastly, how did social attitudes differ in response to different types of deceitful behaviour? In answering these questions this project argues that representations of defective and deceptive bodies were prevalent within early modern England, that they were frequently presented to the populace in a multitude of printed sources, that their performance and reception was influenced by

social contexts and cultural imagination, and lastly, that they occurred as a response to desires for increasing one's finances.

For the purpose of this dissertation, the term 'agency' is used to refer to an individual's 'capacity to act or exert power,' in this case, over their own body as an act of empowerment.¹ Empowerment is therefore used to define the purpose of an individual's agency as their bodily deceit was enacted for their own gain, as individuals had the power and authority to change their own bodies if they so desired.² This thesis focuses on purposeful and goal-directed actions as all the behaviour depicted in this project were consciously chosen and personally motivated.³ An early modern person's body was the only thing they possessed full control over, and each of the chapters of this dissertation discusses different types of people who knowingly changed how they presented their bodies to different audiences. The individuals examined in this research performed differently to one another and the lengths they were willing to go to was perhaps indicative of what they thought they could gain from their performance financially.

The different levels of agency are reflected in the real, or potential, physical damage the individual was willing to inflict for the purposes of sustaining their deception. As shown in the discussions of fraudulent beggars and false virgins, these individuals were thought to harm and mutilate their bodies to enhance the believability of their performances and narratives. It was not enough to claim to be injured or a virgin because the body was expected to show physiological signs, and if the body did not display these legitimately then they were to be purposefully created. Through four chapters specifically designed and positioned to show the increasing amount of agency and performance used by those with defective and/or deceptive bodies, this dissertation demonstrates how each type of bodily performance was shaped by a varying level of deceitful behaviour and intent.

¹ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/3851?redirectedFrom=agency#eid> last accessed 04/07/2019 at 15:31

² *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/61400?redirectedFrom=empowerment#eid> last accessed 21/11/2019 at 12.55

³ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/3851?redirectedFrom=agency#eid> last accessed 21/11/2019 at 12.47

The timeframe for this project has been established as between 1540 and 1750 as this was the time that ideas about the body became more readily available in print and therefore more accessible. The first printing press was established in England in 1476 and the expansion of printed works grew over the entire early modern period as all types of texts were widely produced. There has been controversy between historians about whether this constituted as a print revolution in the early modern period.⁴ R. A. Houston estimates that before 1500 twenty million books were being published across Europe, between 150-200 million between 1500 and 1600, and 1,500 million copies between 1700 and 1800, demonstrating the expansion of the printing press as more texts were dispersed through to the public.⁵ Elizabeth L. Eisenstein claimed in 1979 that the early modern printing press acted as an agent of change.⁶ She argued that it encouraged the standardization of texts, dissemination of knowledge as printed works became shared, and, lastly, the preservation of ideas and data.⁷ She reasoned that these elements created a new 'print culture' in early modern Europe.⁸ Adam Fox claims that the expansion of production of all types of texts during this period 'helped, in the long run, to promote a mentality which valued the fixity of writing over the casualness of speech.'⁹ The written word was respected over oral testimony due to its 'fixity, durability and longevity.'¹⁰

This dissertation focuses on printed texts because over the early modern period it became more common for the populace to refer to textual transference of knowledge rather than oral, the printed word could be passed on to others in full, with little to none alteration. However, Julia Crick and Alexandra Walsham have more recently argued that the revolution of hand written and oral culture to

⁴ Mark Knights and Angela McShane, 'From Pen to Print – a Revolution in Communications?', In Beat Kümin (ed), *The European World 1500-1800. An Introduction to Early Modern History*, (London and New York, Routledge, 2009) pp187-189

⁵ R. A. Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed (London, 2002) chapter 8

⁶ Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*, vol I and II (Cambridge University Press, 1979)

⁷ Ibid, p703

⁸ Ibid, p703

⁹ Adam Fox, 'Custom, Memory and the Authority of Writing,' from eds. Paul Griffiths, Adam Fix and Steve Hindle, *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (Macmillan Education, 1996) p91

¹⁰ Ibid, p90

a print culture has been overly exaggerated.¹¹ They instead claim that it was not the printing of texts that influenced culture, but instead the growing rates of literacy, as it was the ability to read that helped spread ideas more than anything else.¹² Regardless of whether there was a print revolution or not, the mass publishing of different types of texts meant that more people were able to access ideas about the body and behaviour, which went on to shape cultural responses to defective and deceptive bodies. It is because of this expansion of texts, that this thesis focuses on printed works which discussed the defective and/or deceptive body in early modern England.

From the mid-sixteenth century, vernacular medical books began to appear which informed readers of their bodies in more detail than before. Elizabeth Furdell claims that the high volume of vernacular medical texts being printed informed readers how to bypass professional medical help and diagnose and treat conditions themselves.¹³ She argues that older medical texts written in Latin only reached a minute amount of society, the learned readers, whereas producing texts in English meant that these ideas were more readily accessible and sellable to society at large.¹⁴ Elaine Leong and Sara Pennel have argued that ‘individuals mostly saw their own corporeal care as a domestic matter, rather than a cause for outside intervention,’ and that it was due to this mentality that many people went to texts for medical treatment rather than professionals.¹⁵ They claim that texts were part of a domestic ‘knowledge bank’ and that the readers had to place a certain level of trust in the writers of texts and the suppliers of medicinal recipes.¹⁶ Medical texts existed within the knowledge economy of early modern England and played a key role in shaping attitudes towards the body and its treatment, these mentalities went on to influence how individuals chose to present and perform their bodies as well as influencing how audiences responded to them.

¹¹ Julia Crick and Alexandra Walsham (eds) *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300-1700*, (Cambridge University Press, 2004) pp3-5

¹² Ibid, ‘Introduction’; Knights and McShane, ‘From Pen to Print’, p189

¹³ Elizabeth Furdell, *Publishing and Medicine in early modern England*, (University of Rochester Press, 2002) p49

¹⁴ Ibid, p50

¹⁵ Elaine Leong and Sara Pennell, ‘Recipe Collections and the Currency of Medical Knowledge in the Early Modern ‘Medical Marketplace’ from eds. Mark Jenner and Patrick Wallis, *Medicine and the Market in England and its Colonies, c.1450-c.1850* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) p134

¹⁶ Ibid, p134

Though many medical texts discussed diagnosis and treatments for ailments or the humours, sex and reproduction became a focus of pseudo-medical texts in the seventeenth century.¹⁷ Laura Gowing claims that the ‘careful reader’ may have used these texts to ‘put together clues about the management of fertility (and hence contraception)’ overall stating that the visibility and accessibility of these ideas allowed individuals to interpret their own form of sexual and medical knowledge.¹⁸ It is this presentation and interpretation which is key to the themes discussed in this dissertation as, for example, some women were thought to use medical texts as instructional manuals and were able to use the texts to help them fake their virginity or to how to explain away the absence of its loss after sex . By the 1750s, French and German doctors began to call for a ‘finer delineation of sex differences,’ and the investigation and distinction between the two sexes became a research priority for anatomical science.¹⁹ Londa Schiebinger claims that the first drawings of skeletal differences appeared in England, France and Germany between 1730 and 1790, indicating the shift from traditional humoral medicine to anatomical by the end of the eighteenth century and that it impacted the presentation of the human body in all types of medical texts.²⁰

The period assessed in this dissertation also included several religious and political changes which shaped the environment that anxieties of bodily fraud existed within. Prior to the commencement date of research for this dissertation the Dissolution of the Monasteries had recently taken place alongside a number of other religious/political changes.²¹ It can however be claimed, that it was due to Henry VIII’s shift from Catholicism to Protestantism which began to change the way in which bodies and illnesses were treated. Under Catholicism, nuns and churches provided their communities with medical help and were the first port of call for those suffering and in need of help. Geoffrey Blainey claims that the Catholic Church provided ‘hospitals for the old and orphanages for the young; hospices for the sick of all ages; places for the lepers; and hostels or inns where pilgrims could buy a

¹⁷ The greatest example of a pseudo-medical text is Anonymous, *Aristotle’s Masterpiece* (London, 1684) which continued publication in to the nineteenth century.

¹⁸ Laura Gowing, *Gender Relations In Early Modern England*, (Pearson Educated Limited, 2012) p16

¹⁹ Londa Schiebinger, ‘Skeletons in the Closet: The First Illustrations of the Female Skeleton in Eighteenth-Century Anatomy,’ *Representations*, No 14 (1986) p42

²⁰ *Ibid*, p42

²¹ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2005) P437

cheap bed and meal,' demonstrating how they sought to help many different types of people in their time of need.²² After the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536 and the removal of nuns from communities, there grew a need for a different type of medical help, one that was perhaps met by the growing number of printed medical texts in the following century. Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham have claimed that the religion of the country impacted the spread of medical knowledge, as religion and medicine were perceived to be 'organically linked' in many ways.²³

The country's changes in religion over the early modern period were largely due to the desires and ideas held by the monarchs, as well as the power associated with the monarch's reshaped role as Supreme Head of the Church. David Loades claims that only a minority of ordinary people saw their patriotism in 'religious terms' as many followed the religion of the monarch because of his power, not because of their belief in his conviction.²⁴ Religious ideals and morality are clearly reflected within themes researched in this thesis such as printed representations of and public responses to monstrous births in early modern England, as well as attitudes towards female sexual behaviour and lewdness.²⁵ Morality, behaviour and religion were therefore linked in many cases such as fraudulent begging and counterfeiting virginity. This period of investigation demonstrates how attitudes shifted from perceiving God as being the cause of all bodily deformities to a wider social acceptance, by the end of the eighteenth-century there was, in many cases, a medical/explainable cause which was recognised. As healthcare was, arguably, removed from religion and religious life, a gap opened in the marketplace as it was recognised that early modern people still required help but that they were not always able to access medical professionals. Over the course of the eighteenth century trained medical professionals and institutions became more readily available. Medical texts were utilised by fraudsters

²² Geoffrey Blainey, *A Short History of Christianity*, (Penguin Viking; 2011) pp. 214–15

²³ Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham (eds) *Medicine and the reformation* (London and New York:, Routledge, 1993) p9

²⁴ David Loades, *The Mid-Tudor Crisis, 1545-1565*, (Palgrave, 1992) P188

²⁵ Attitudes towards monstrous births; Hermann Levy, 'The Economic History of Sickness and Medical Benefit Before the Puritan Revolution,' *The Economic History Review*, Volume a13, Issue 1-2 (October 1943) p135 and female sexual behaviour; Keith Thomas, 'The Double Standard,' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol 20, (April 1959) p195; Men's sexual reputation has been investigated however by Bernard Capp, as he argues that men were also anxious about their reputation, Bernard Capp, 'The Double Standard Revisited: Plebian Women and Male Sexual Reputation in Early Modern England', *Past & Present*, no162 (February 1999)

such as counterfeit beggars and fake virgins, as they could be used to instruct their behaviour and to provide recipes for the creation of their ailments/symptoms.

Ultimately this project is situated within a time in which there was a clear model of the body, but that debate and varied ideas about certain aspects of how the body functioned allowed for a range of beliefs and behaviours that facilitated bodily fraud. Overall, the period of 1540 to 1750 saw a shift from healthcare being provided in the local communities by those such as nuns, as part of their religious and moral responsibility, to becoming professionalised and institutionalised by the end of the researched period. We do know, however, that many still chose to bypass medical expertise and refer to medical texts instead due to their consistent publication over the entire period. Even though this dissertation does not directly focus on the early modern populace's access to healthcare, it is important to understand that during this period there was a lot of ambiguity about the body and that many chose to treat it or change it themselves, and that they were able to do so due to their access to other forms of medical knowledge such as texts. Other features such as the numerous Poor Laws of the early modern period (which is discussed in more detail later on) used the assessment of bodies as a way of measuring an individual's vulnerability and thus their right to financial assistance off of their parish by labelling them as either 'deserving' or 'undeserving'.²⁶ The end date of this thesis has been chosen as 1750 as from the mid eighteenth-century onwards it can be argued that England engaged in its next stage of scientific and medical developments, one which became even more separated from religion, morality and the medieval forms of healthcare.

The first chapter acts as a foundation for the rest of this dissertation, assessing how society was informed of the composition, shape and appearance of the body by medical doctrine and popular works, it demonstrates how the understanding of the body created the context in which people may have altered or reshaped the body by dishonest methods and narratives. The following three chapters are: Chapter Two discusses the concealment of a defect using cosmetics or prosthetics, Chapter Three

²⁶ For more information on the treatment of the poor please see: Deborah Stone, *The Disabled State: Health, Society and Policy* (Temple University Press, 1984); Paul Slack, *The English Poor Law, 1531-1782* (Cambridge University Press, 1995); Audrey Eccles, *Vagrancy in law and practice under the old poor law* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2012)

focuses on the artificial creation of bodily defects such as injuries and sensory impairments used by fraudulent beggars, and finally Chapter Four examines women's deceitful restoration of virginity. Each of these chapters offers a detailed examination of specific forms of deceit discussed and feared in early modern society. They relate back to the medical and social context of the human body demonstrated in Chapter One and allow us to further understand how and why bodily defects could be either a hindrance or provide an opportunity for early modern individuals. The analysis in these chapters reveals that responses to bodily defects and deception were influenced by its context and social implications. For some it was problematic to have a defective body as it restricted work opportunities or the likelihood of marriage, but it could be symbolic of honour if a defect was created in warfare, and for others the artificial creation of a defective body was a methodical response to economic hardships.

As emphasised in the previous discussion of terminology and the impaired body, when discussing the use of altered/concealed/manipulated bodies, the thesis uses three key terms; 'fraudulent,' 'deceitful' and 'misrepresentation.' These demonstrate the varying contexts and the degree of malicious intent on the part of the performer. As the chapter's discuss different themes, they also use slightly different terminology to one another, which reflects the distinction made between the actions and motives of the individuals portrayed in this thesis. Chapter's One and Two do not refer to 'bodily fraud' but instead discuss different types of bodily alteration and misrepresentation, cosmetics and prosthetics. This thesis argues that within these contexts the use of bodily alteration (meaning only cosmetics and prosthetics) was indicative of misrepresentation and non-malicious deceit. These individuals sought to improve their quality of life and opportunities, not to fraudulently cheat those around them. All the chapters refer to a cultural concept of deception, however the response of the public towards these individuals was shaped and determined by the bodies and the behaviours of the performer. Counterfeit beggars and fake virgins can be clearly defined as fraudulent because the individuals were claiming bodily difference or feigning specific qualities in order to financially benefit from others, whereas the use of cosmetics and prosthetics did not fall under the same category and social stigma. The term 'deceitful' has however been sometimes used as an umbrella term in this thesis to refer to behaviour

that was untruthful but not criminal or regarded as fraudulent, merely as misleading. The three key terms are however used to distinguish between the contexts of behaviour and the motivation behind the performances discussed in this project. As the historical actors in each of the chapters increasingly demonstrated agency as a form of empowerment so the language used to describe these situations changes and adapts.

Each of the three chapters provide evidence of agency and performance in early modern England, demonstrating how concealment, creation and restoration required different methods and recipes to alter the body, behaviours, narratives and environments. Many of the bodies examined in this thesis existed in a liminal space between health and disability, and between performance and reality. Those who altered their bodies by using prosthetics were not fraudulently performing their reshaped bodies because the amendments used became part of their new reality. An individual who used a prosthetic leg, not only invoked its use to facilitate the appearance of a complete body, but also to aid their mobility and function. Whilst their body was defective, the use of a prosthetic allowed the body to be both complete and atypical at the same time and is therefore indicative of 'misrepresentation'. All the bodies discussed in this dissertation were deceptive to an extent, but they were not all fraudulent. A performance was deemed as fraudulent when acts of deception were used for unlawful and undeserved gain, which refers to the figures discussed in both chapters three and four. Therefore, how the behaviour discussed in this dissertation is labelled, as misrepresentative, deceitful or fraudulent, is entirely based on the context and the supposed motivations of the performers during the performance.

Scholarly attention to performativity and performance has developed in the last sixty years which Peter Burke refers to as the beginning of a 'performative turn' in historical studies.²⁷ As early as the 1950s sociologist Erving Goffman used theatre and drama to explain the nuances and influences of social interaction, commenting on the 'dramaturgical' approach to everyday life.²⁸ According to Goffman every individual wears a series of masks as their roles change continually during their lifetime. He argued that there is no one true self, but instead everybody is made up of numerous

²⁷ Peter Burke, 'Performing History: The Importance of Occasions,' *Rethinking History*, 9:1, (March 2005) p36

²⁸ Erving Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life*, (Doubleday, 1959) pp17-18

/characters and personas which are employed at certain times to please and interact with certain audiences.²⁹ All individuals perform their bodies and personalities every day. Goffman identified two different types of performer, the ‘sincere’ and the ‘cynical.’³⁰ The former is defined as being an individual who believes that ‘the impression of reality which he stages is the real reality,’ and is fooled by their own redeveloped narrative.³¹ They are performing an altered persona, but they can believe that that is who they truly are. The latter ‘may obtain unprofessional pleasures from his masquerade, experiencing a kind of gleeful spiritual aggression from the fact that he can toy at will with something his audience must take seriously,’ meaning that one was manipulating the desired audience for some deceitful purpose.³² Goffman’s analysis of performativity has moral implications as he discusses its purpose and the emotions incited in both the performer and the audience.

By the early 1960s the notion of performativity was also associated with linguistics as *How to do things with words*, was published two years after English philosopher John Austin’s death, in which he discussed ‘performative utterances’ and the significance of words and phrases.³³ His emphasis on the narratives voiced by individuals and discussion of how words could be performed, such as promises, emphasises the significance of language and the performativity of speech and sound. This argument describes the behaviours discussed in this dissertation as in many contexts’ words were important to the execution of bodily deception, such as beggars claiming their financial need and a counterfeit virgin’s false cries of pain. Whilst Goffman depicted how a body was shaped entirely through agency and interaction, in 1990 philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler extended this argument explaining that gender performativity was/is executed by everybody.³⁴ Butler claimed that gender is not a naturally inherent feature of our bodies and mindset constructed through a set of acts that follow leading societal norms and are culturally shaped and forced upon us.³⁵ Gender performativity produces a series of effects such as speech and movement which are encouraged by

²⁹ Ibid, pp17-18

³⁰ Ibid, pp17-18

³¹ Ibid, pp17-18

³² Ibid, pp17-18

³³ John Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, eds J. Urmson and Marina Sbisa (Cambridge, 1962)

³⁴ Goffman, *The presentation of self*, p17-18; Judith Butler, *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity, Part 1* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990) chapter 1

³⁵ Ibid, chapter 1

gender norms, but the domain still allows for agency and freedom which is demonstrated when someone from one sex performs in a way associated with the other. No one is gendered from birth, instead they accrue it and continue to display it over their lifetime. These philosophical and sociological views of performance have influenced the analysis of performance in this project. More recently Robert Henke has argued that beggars were regarded as ‘consummate actors’ who could feign ‘maladies and fictions’ to manipulate those around them and invoke compassion and belief in their tales.³⁶ Henke has emphasised the theatricality of their methods and narratives, and labels early modern begging as a ‘poor theatre’ which was characterized by different degrees of belief in the performance.³⁷ All performances are crafted and shaped, either by social constructs, social interactions or personal motivations and this project begins to establish the context surrounding the presentation of and response to defective and deceptive bodies. This thesis builds upon the claims of those such as Austin, Goffman and Henke as it shows that different types of performance were prominent in different social contexts of deceitful behaviour. Language, for example, was especially important to fraudulent beggars and fake virgins, as they relied on their narratives to add validity to their claims, whereas others, such as those who employed the use of prosthetics, perhaps allowed their bodies to speak for themselves rather than always offering a vocalised narrative to explain it.

The four themes of this dissertation: deformed bodies, concealed bodies, damaged bodies and restored bodies, are used to demonstrate the visible nature of bodily performance, performativity and agency which was reliant on context, environment and motivation. Furthermore, each chapter refers to a different level of performativity ranging from the subdued and less definable performance of naturally deformed bodies to the incidents of damaging genitalia and cries of pain to mimic the loss of virginity (as depicted in popular works of the early modern period),³⁸ to illustrate the diversity and broad context of bodily performance in early modern England.

³⁶ Robert Henke, *Poverty and Charity in Early Modern Theatre and Performance*, (University of Iowa Press, 2015) p4

³⁷ *Ibid*, p4

³⁸ John Cleland, *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, (London, 1743); Sara Read, “Gushing Out Blood’: Defloration and Menstruation in *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*,” *J Med Humanitat* (2018) 39:165-177

The central focus of this project is the body and how it was defined, altered and responded to. Chapter one examines medical beliefs about the human body, its humours, development, shape, structure, genitalia and how some bodies may have naturally deviated from the established criteria which informed the concept of a normative body. It demonstrates that the flexibility in defining the human body created a culture which allowed for deception. Susan Broomhall has claimed that ‘the body, led to a plurality of voices about health and illness, rather than the creation of a single knowledge community,’ everyone had access to a body and therefore everyone was given the ‘opportunity to observe and to develop theories’ about all bodies.³⁹ Medical and sexual knowledge was therefore common as individuals relied on their own experiences. Indeed, Doreen Evenden Nagy argues that it is ‘untenable’ to assume that ‘a body of superior, scientific medical knowledge’ was only accessible to educated and trained professionals, and so is ‘the conception of popular medicine as being in essence illiterate folk remedies.’⁴⁰ The types of bodily fraud considered in this project required a combination of both learned knowledge established by the dissemination of medical sources as well as an individual’s personal knowledge of their own body. It is almost impossible to accurately define the spread of medical knowledge and to understand how every individual understood their body and those around them, and their assumption of knowledge was not always due to their social status. Every single person accrued their own form of medical and sexual knowledge, which was in part shaped by popular works such as ballads and folktales but was also influenced by experience and observation, and medical doctrine (when they could access these texts). As this project does not focus on ego documents and private correspondence, it does not consider at first-hand what people believed about their own bodies and the validity of those around them. This project focusses on cultural mentalities and attitudes towards defective and deceptive bodies rather than personal ones, and therefore its assessment of printed sources illustrates the prevailing attitudes and the information that people had access to.

³⁹ Susan Broomhall, ‘The Body in/as Text: Medical Knowledge and Technologies,’ eds Linda Kalof and William Bynum, *A Cultural History of the Human Body In The Renaissance* (Bloomsbury, 2014) p75

⁴⁰ Doreen Evenden Nagy, *Popular Medicine in Seventeenth-Century England*, (Bowling Green State University Press, 1988) p78

Whilst there was a degree of common knowledge regarding the body, the female body appears to have been under wider speculation and continually surrounded by ambiguity over the early modern period. Thomas Laqueur argued that the two genders were corresponded to only one sex, which were partially determined due to their humoral balances, and claimed that over the early modern period society shifted from the one-sex to the two-sex model.⁴¹ Chapter one establishes early modern medical doctrine's ideas of the female body, claiming that there remained a lack of universal consensus and showing that women were consistently compared to men rather than being regarded as a separate body. Mary Fissell claims that women's bodies provided an 'interpretative space' as little was known about their reproductive organs and qualities.⁴² As will be shown in Chapter Four, women's bodies were disbelieved even when they presented the signs of virginity and within wider social and legal contexts were indicative of how the woman (or man) involved in the case was able to use the lack of certainty to their benefit.⁴³ Concerns about counterfeit maidenheads allowed women the power of duplicity, whether they were enacted or not.⁴⁴ Whilst it is not included in this project, pregnancy was also difficult for medical professionals to confirm during the early modern period as the signs and symptoms could vary or be indicators of health issues, many would not declare pregnancy until a baby arrived.⁴⁵ The inability to declare pregnancy is indicative of the cultural ambiguity of the female body and demonstrates that even those who possessed medical knowledge were, on some occasions, uncertain of their claims. This uncertainty allowed women the opportunities to commit bodily deceit and as medical professionals lacked the confidence to declare something much more visible than virginity, it is no surprise that some women may have used this lack of certainty to their advantage.

⁴¹ Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body And Gender From The Greeks To Freud*, (Harvard University Press, 1994) p25

⁴² Mary Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies: The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004) p1

⁴³ With social and legal contexts such as impotence and rape, the appearance or absence of female virginity was crucial to the woman's defence and reputation; Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003) p59

⁴⁴ Tassie Gwilliam, 'Female Fraud: Counterfeit Maidenheads in the Eighteenth Century,' *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (April, 1996)

⁴⁵ A variety of primary sources referred to the difficulty in declaring pregnancy, this is indicative of medical difficulty in understanding the female body; Jakob Reuff, *The Expert Midwife*, (London, 1637ed) p183; John Pechey, *The Compleat Midwives Practice*, (London, 1656) p54; Nathaniel Brook, *The Compleat midwife's practice*, (London, 1663) p72; Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (London, 1684) p119

As the histories of women's bodies have garnered attention in recent years, so have the histories of men's. The study of masculinity stemmed from social historians' initial focus on women and gender and has been expanded to include themes such as patriarchy, men's bodies, sexual behaviour and effeminacy, some of these underlie the themes of this thesis.⁴⁶ Deborah Simonton claims that as historians have sought to understand the history of femininity they have also had to examine men and masculinity.⁴⁷ Masculinity is, however, difficult to accurately define because it applies to a variety of behaviours and environments, and one definition of masculinity in the sixteenth century is not the same as the one used to refer to the eighteenth century. Therefore, as John Arnold and Sean Brady have claimed, we research different types of masculinity depending on the era and the context of study.⁴⁸

John Tosh has examined hegemonic masculinity and its use in gender studies, claiming that the definition was based on the masculine norms and behaviours of the politically dominant class, rather than the everyday man.⁴⁹ Michèle Cohen similarly argues that it was the 'polite and refined gentleman that represented hegemonic masculinity,' demonstrating that this form of masculine behaviour was tied to ideas of gentlemanly performances.⁵⁰ Politeness and its role, in regards to shaping the body, is discussed more explicitly in Chapter Two as it can be argued that people were expected to change the ugly elements of their body as it was more polite and kinder to the rest of society who had to look at them. Alexandra Shepard claimed that certain types of masculinity were formed independently from dominant norms and hegemonic masculinity, and not because of them.⁵¹ Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard claim that a majority of research on masculinity has focused on 'culturally and commercially

⁴⁶ Deborah Simonton, *The Routledge History Handbook of Gender and the Urban Experience*, ed Deborah Simonton (Routledge, 2017) Introduction pp3-4p

⁴⁷ Ibid, pp3-4

⁴⁸ John H Arnold and Sean Brady, *What is Masculinity?: Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World*, eds John H Arnold and Sean Brady (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011) Introduction, p2

⁴⁹ John Tosh, 'Hegemonic Masculinity and the History of Gender,' in ed. Stefan Dudnk, Karen Hazagemann and John Tosh, *Masculinities in politics and war* (Manchester: Manchester university press, 2004) p48

⁵⁰ Michèle Cohen, "Manners" Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750-1830', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol 44, No (April 2005) p312

⁵¹ Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History, circa 1500 - 1950', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol 44, No 2 (April 2005) p278

dominant groups of men,' such as those in positions of authority, mainly because these were the men recorded.⁵² The first two chapters of this thesis make reference to both the bodies of men and women in early modern England, and Chapter Three focuses only on fraudulent male beggars who manipulated their bodies. While this thesis does not directly focus on the differing definitions of masculinity in this period, some of its sub themes, such as patriarchy, are underlying the topics examined and can be considered alongside particular themes such as bodily alterations and begging. Ideas of early modern masculinity and its relation to the misrepresentation of the body has not been explicitly researched for the purpose of this thesis but would perhaps offer a different perspective for a future research project.

Thomas Laqueur's one-to-two sex model argues that during the seventeenth century, men's bodies (alike women's) became recognised as being different.⁵³ Women may have had identifiable bodies and gendered characteristics, but so did men, and as women's bodies became defined, so were those belonging to men. Tim Hitchcock and Michelle Cohen have claimed that the two-sex model contributed to perceptions of men's behaviours and how they opposed women's.⁵⁴ By the end of the eighteenth century men and women were seen as inherently different, in bodies and in behaviour.⁵⁵ Karen Harvey has investigated the links between male clothing and sexual difference, gender roles and masculinity, claiming that 'clothing is tied closely to categories of sexual difference.'⁵⁶ As discussed in Chapter Three, men used a variety of costumes and props during their deceitful performances, these would have helped them with their characterisation of a vulnerable and deserving man of charity. Clothing and its relation to the fraudulent presentation of the body is something which could be considered more in a later research project. Harvey argues that the 'changing material experience of the clothed male body had a direct impact on masculinity as embodied identity' and

⁵² Ibid, p277

⁵³ Thomas Laqueur, 'The Rise of Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Historical Context and Historiographical Implications,' *Signs*, Vol 37, No 4, Sex: A Thematic Issue (Summer 2012) pp802-809

⁵⁴ Tim Hitchcock and Michelle Cohen, *English Masculinities, 1660-1800*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1999) P6

⁵⁵ Ibid, p7

⁵⁶ Karen Harvey, 'Men of Parts: Masculine Embodiment and the Male Leg in Eighteenth-Century England.' *Journal of British Studies* 54 (October 2015) p799

changed the way men experienced their own bodies.⁵⁷ Harvey claims that clothing emphasised men's thighs, groins and legs and links these to a specifically heterosexual form of masculinity, as opposed to the sodomite and effeminate other.⁵⁸

Randolph Trumbach has argued that by 1750 there was no longer a unitary sexual system in western societies, as a new minority of men developed.⁵⁹ This new group of men created their own subculture as they sought to only have sex with other men.⁶⁰ Prior to this it was accepted in western societies that adult men may want to penetrate other men, as long as 'they were not themselves penetrated,' demonstrating a preoccupation on the power dynamics of sex and how this related to notions of masculine sexual behaviour.⁶¹ Tim Hitchcock has also argued that over the eighteenth century there was a change in sexual behaviour, in the prior period, he claimed, there was an emphasis on mutual pleasure from sexual fondling.⁶² By the latter part of the century, he argued that society became phallogocentric as penetrative vaginal sex became the dominant sexual activity.⁶³ Hitchcock and Cohen similarly claim that prior to 1750 many men engaged in non-penetrative and non-reproductive sex, with women and sometimes even with men for pleasure, but that after the mid-century there was a social shift which saw more emphasis placed on procreative sex.⁶⁴ They claim that this is reflected in the growing bastardy rates of early modern England.⁶⁵ Therefore, sex changed. Women became defined as sexually passive and the male orgasm was the 'all important outcome' to both sex and procreation.⁶⁶ Men were, by the mid eighteenth century, expected to be sexually dominant rather than a partner in a mutually pleasurable act.⁶⁷ This shift in attitudes towards men's sexual behaviour also

⁵⁷ Harvey, p801

⁵⁸ Harvey, p818

⁵⁹ Randolph Trumbach, 'From age to gender, c1500-1750. From the adolescent male to the adult effeminate bod,' in eds Sarah Toulalan and Kate Fisher, *The Routledge History of Sex and the Body: 1500 to the Present*, (Routledge, 2013) pp123-124

⁶⁰ Ibid, p124

⁶¹ Ibid, p124

⁶² Tim Hitchcock, "Redefining Sex in Eighteenth-Century England," *History Workshop Journal* 41, no. 1 (Spring 1996) p79

⁶³ Ibid, p79

⁶⁴ Hitchcock and Cohen, *English Masculinities*, p11

⁶⁵ Ibid, p11

⁶⁶ Hitchcock, "Redefining Sex", p79

⁶⁷ Ibid, p79

affected how the broader themes of masculinity and manhood was understood during the early modern period, and ‘reflected an increasingly restrictive form of masculinity, which was policed by a highly effective public and print culture.’⁶⁸ Whilst sexual behaviour of men is not a core focus of this thesis, the fraudulent behaviour of women described in Chapter Four does demonstrate that there was a cultural focus on men’s sexual preferences as women were altering their bodies to fit the desirable criteria of some men, supporting this claim that men’s desires became increasingly important.

Jennifer Jordan argues that the medical and anatomical understanding of manhood in early modern England was that it was a specific and ephemeral life stage, and that ‘in strictly prescriptive terms manhood was identified as being that married, economically independent householder whom patriarchy insisted.’⁶⁹ Thus Jordan claims that men (husbands and fathers in particular) were expected to lead and financially support their families. This argument can be applied to some of the themes considered in this thesis as it suggests that some men chose to alter their bodies for financial motivations. However, it is not clear from the sources used in this project if those amending their bodies were family men or single men who were unwilling/unable to work due to circumstance and body. Although it is not explicit in the sources, it is plausible that some of the fraudulent beggars in early modern England begged to support their families and thus establish themselves at home as the patriarch and bread winner, even if they appeared as vulnerable or undesirable in public. How these men presented themselves in public and in private spheres differed due to their circumstance and the purpose of their performance.

Through discussion of defective and insufficient bodies, this dissertation also engages with the histories of disability which were established in the 1980s. According to sociologist Tom Shakespeare an ‘impairment’ is an attribute which differs from what is considered normative or healthy, while the

⁶⁸ Ibid, p85

⁶⁹ Jennifer Jordan, ‘To Make a Man Without Reason’: Examining manhood and Manliness in Early Modern England’ in eds. John H Arnold and Sean Brady. *What is Masculinity?: Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World*. (Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 2011) p245

term ‘disability’ refers to the social consequences and restrictions of that impairment.⁷⁰ This means that it is not necessarily the body itself that it is labelled as ‘disabled’ but is instead defined by its social context and environment which places limitations and restrictions on the body’s interactions. Whilst this thesis does not investigate the history of disability in the early modern period, it does discuss how different impairments, such as deafness and blindness, were thought to be have been copied by individuals and used by fraudulent beggars. Impairments such as these would not have been counterfeited if the fraudster did not believe that the public would respond positively and charitably to these personas. Therefore, attitudes towards the cause and origin of disability and deformity would have influenced whether fraudsters chose to invoke the use of their replication. Roger Cooter explains that the phrase ‘disabled’ has become an umbrella term which is used to encompass everyone who was or is impaired in any way. He points out that the word did not exist before in history as it does now and that instead the ‘disabled group (is) a product of twentieth century economic and social policy.’⁷¹ Cooter’s argument is correct; it is important that we incorporate many of the terms that early modern contemporaries may have used at the time rather than labelling bodies as ‘disabled.’ The more commonly used terms of weakness, lameness, unable, inability and incapacity, are used more commonly than ‘disabled’ in this research, because they were understood more clearly when discussing bodily difference or abnormalities. The most common way the word ‘able’ existed within this period is in conjunction with the word ‘bodied,’ meaning that someone who was ‘able-bodied’ was healthy and competent to work. David Turner suggests that by the end of the eighteenth century ‘able-bodied’ meant ‘free of (any) impairment.’ This phrase has been identified by historians in advertisements of work and conscription, as it appears to have been the desired working male and can also be used to differentiate between class as well as gender.⁷² The term was primarily used to refer to a manual labourer or serviceman and would not have been used to refer to those of a higher social status, nor to women due to their stereotypically feminine qualities.⁷³ Turner argued that the term

⁷⁰ Tom Shakespeare, *Disability Rights and Wrongs*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2006) pp11-13

⁷¹ Roger Cooter, ‘The Disabled Body,’ in Roger Cooter and John Pickstone (eds) *Companion to Medicine in the Twentieth Century*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2003) p369

⁷² David Turner, *Disability in Eighteenth Century England: Imagining Physical Impairment*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2012) p19-20

⁷³ *Ibid*, p19-21

‘disabled’ was coined in regards to ex-servicemen, those no longer able to serve in the army, and he claims that due to the changing nature of warfare over the early modern period caused an increase in the visibility and occurrence of disabled ex-service men.⁷⁴ The increasing use of guns and numerous wars such as The Civil War and the Anglo-Spanish War meant that wounded soldiers were more common and were injured in different ways than before.⁷⁵ Marjorie McIntosh claims the problem of fake soldiers increased after the 1580s due to the difficulty in identifying genuine soldiers returning from war from others who had been injured in some other way, which was partially due to the variety of wounds produced in warfare, a theme which is discussed in Chapter Three.⁷⁶

This project claims that the variety of bodily deceptions occurring in early modern England were perceived and executed as logical responses to economic hardships. Almost all individuals were expected to work (in some capacity as per according to their gender and status), marry and reproduce, but possessing deficient or defective bodies may have limited these opportunities. This dissertation argues that employing certain bodily performances empowered the poor as it gave them agency and control over their lives. Those who concealed defects, wore prosthetics or restored natural beauty and typicality through using cosmetics sought to promote the image of independence and normativity and by doing so they increased the likelihood of marriage and encouraged work opportunities thus assisting their financial security. Fraudulent beggars counterfeited the symptoms and narratives of ailments, sensory deprivations and mental illness to benefit from another’s charity and avoid legitimate work, some even assumed the persona of a Ruffler (a counterfeit ex-soldier) and played upon its honourable and patriotic associations to invoke charity. Ex-soldiers were in many cases provided with legitimate financial aid, not only to assist them with living expenses, but as according

⁷⁴ Ibid, p60

⁷⁵ England was involved in wars between 1540 and 1750 such as; The Italian War of 1551-59, French Wars of Religion 1562 – 1596, The Eighty Years War 1568 – 1573, Anglo-Spanish War 1585 – 1604, Nine Years War 1594 – 1606, Uskok War 1615-1618, Thirty Years War 1618 – 1648, First Bishops War 1639, Second Bishops War 1640, First English Civil war 1642-1646, Second English Civil War 1648-1649, Third English Civil War 1649-1651, First Anglo-Dutch War 1652-1654, Anglo-Spanish War 1654-1660, Second Anglo-Dutch War 1665-1667, War of Devolution 1667-1668, Franco-Dutch War 1672-1678, Nine Years War 1688-1697, War of the Spanish Succession 1701-1714, Queen Anne’s War 1702-1713, Jacobite Rising 1715-1716, Jacobite Rising of 1745.

⁷⁶ Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England, 1350 – 1600* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011) p176

to Geoffrey Hudson to encourage others to sign up and serve.⁷⁷ Finally, women who recreated the signs of their virginity to please men did so to garner more money from male patrons, or to mitigate the ‘lowered’ socio-economic status of a non-virgin in marriage.⁷⁸

The English was split between rural and urban, with each economic environment directly impacting the lives of those in the area. Mark Overton claims that for those living in rural parts of England (a majority of the population) agriculture was central to their lives, and poor harvests had a detrimental effect.⁷⁹ For the beginning of the early modern period agricultural production was increasing along with the population rate, however, after 1650 farmers all over Europe found it difficult to meet agricultural demands due to the rise of labour costs and the falling of food prices.⁸⁰ Steve Hindle argues that it was in response to these difficulties that countries began to engage in the trade of food, as well as textiles which had largely dominated the trade markets up until this point.⁸¹ One way that farmers try to combat their economic pressures was by shedding labourers, which led to an increase of unemployment in certain rural areas, and may have encouraged some to use deceptive behaviour to increase their finances during difficult times.⁸² Anthony Wrigley estimated that during the sixteenth century, urban growth was small, with 5% of the population residing in London, and another 3% living in other towns.⁸³ This meant that over 90% of the population lived in rural areas and were reliant on agriculture. If a harvest failed or a farmer reduced his workforce, then many may have struggled financially. John Landers has argued that the population growth of ‘the metropolis’ (London, Westminster and the Borough of Southward) was significant over the course of the early modern period as it grew from approximately 100,000 people in 1547 to around half a million by

⁷⁷ Geoffrey Hudson, ‘Disabled Veterans and the State in Early Modern England’, in David A Gerber (eds), *Disabled Veterans in History*, (University of Michigan Press, 2012) p117

⁷⁸ Loss of female virginity was symbolic for the transference of power from father to husband; Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution: Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London* (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1998) p23; Gwilliam, ‘Female Fraud,’ pp518-9

⁷⁹ Mark Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England: The Transformation of the Agrarian Economy 1500 – 1850*, (Cambridge University Press, 1996) p133

⁸⁰ Steve Hindle, ‘Rural Society’, In Beat Kümin (ed), *The European World 1500-1800*, p44

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p44

⁸² *Ibid*, p44-48

⁸³ Anthony Wrigley, ‘Urban Growth and Agricultural Change: England and the Continent in the Early Modern Period’, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol 15, no 4, Population and Economy: From the Traditional to the Modern World (Spring, 1985) p685

1700.⁸⁴ Rapid increase of population in urban areas would have placed more pressure on the workforce and may have led to some choosing other means to financially support themselves, such as fraudulent behaviour.

Poverty could affect almost anyone. It affected those suffering from poor harvests (such as in the 1580s and 1590s), disease whether short term or chronic, and those restricted from full time employment because of their gender or age.⁸⁵ Robert Henke has claimed that early modern poverty was complex and elusive because of ‘the sheer variety of the poor.’⁸⁶ Responses to economic hardships also varied according to gender, age, occupation (if any) status and body. Paul Slack claims that factors such as growing population from the 1520s, increasing food prices paired with issues of unemployment and low wages meant that ‘it is not difficult to see why poverty seemed a threat and improved policing a necessary response in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.’⁸⁷ Many of those who were suffering financially took to the streets to beg for informal forms of charity, and beggars were common figures on the streets of early modern England, indicative of financial hardships.⁸⁸ In answer to the issue of begging Audrey Eccles argues that ‘vagrancy laws were enacted to control disorderly poor, ensure the able bodied worked and keep them in their place.’⁸⁹

One of the most widely known economic enforcement structures of the early modern period were the numerous Poor Laws, which over the period differed in instruction, action and effect but were ultimately introduced to assist with the problem of the poor. Paul Slack states that there were three stages of the poor law, prior to 1630 the labouring poor were the central focus, women and children who were unable to support themselves but were able bodied. Between 1660 to 1760 it increasingly

⁸⁴ John Landers, *Death and the Metropolis: Studies in the Demographic History of London, 1670 – 1830*, (Cambridge University Press, 1993) p41

⁸⁵ McIntosh, *Poor Relief*, p1

⁸⁶ Henke, *Poverty and Charity*, p4

⁸⁷ Paul Slack, *The English Poor Law, 1531-1782* (Cambridge University Press, 1995) p4

⁸⁸ Audrey Eccles, *Vagrancy in law and practice under the old poor law* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2012) p4; Tim Hitchcock, ‘Begging on the streets of eighteenth-century London,’ *Journal of British Studies*, vol 44, No 3, (July 2005); Tim Hitchcock, ‘All beside the rail, rang’d beggars lie’ trivia and the public poverty of early eighteenth century London,’ In Claire Brant and Susan Whyan (eds) *Walking the Streets of Eighteenth Century London: John Gay’s Trivia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

⁸⁹ Eccles, *Vagrancy*, p4

assisted the old and decrepit, relieving families of the duty and financial responsibility of caring for older relatives, and finally the system reverted to assisting the able-bodied again after 1780.⁹⁰ The poor were categorized in to three groups as established by their ability to financially support themselves: the impotent poor, poor by casualty and the thriftless poor.⁹¹ The first two were defined as deserving of charity as the definition was founded upon their circumstance, age, gender and body, whilst the latter was deemed as unworthy of financial support as they were thought to be idle. The largest proportion of the poor according to Marjorie McIntosh were those unable to support themselves such as orphans, widows with children, the elderly infirm, and essentially anyone who ‘lacked sufficient sources to provide for themselves.’⁹² Any funds were to be prioritized for those classified as deserving, and not to be used for ‘idle, sturdy and disorderly beggars.’⁹³ Many of these Poor Laws were perceived to be unhelpful though. William Hay, a member of the House of Commons, declared that even after the evolution of the Poor Laws over the early modern period, by 1751 they were still insufficient and that ‘so many turn beggars and thieves out of necessity.’⁹⁴ Slack has argued that even the poorest of individuals maintained some degree of agency, as they ‘moved into and out of poverty’ and were ‘able to manipulate the system for their own purposes,’ claiming that some chose to enter the workhouse when requiring housing.⁹⁵ The argument that beggars chose to be on the streets is discussed in Chapter Three as this project demonstrates the narratives and methods available to use for fraudsters who wished to appear more deserving of charitable support as they sought to stay out of employment.

⁹⁰ Slack, *The English Poor Law*, p47

⁹¹ All of the following sources noted the differences between the types of poor people: William Sheppard, *The offices of constables, church wardens, overseers of the poor, supravisors of the high-ways, treasurers of the county-stock and some other lesser country officers plainly and lively set forth.* (London 1654) p171; George Meriton, *A guide for constables, churchwardens, overseers of the poor, surveyors of the highways,* (London, 1669) p161; Anonymous, *A new guide for constables, headboroughs, tythingmen, church-wardens, overseers and collectors for the poor* (London, 1692) p109; Anonymous, *The laws concerning the poor. Wherein is treated of overseers, and their office.* (London, 1705) p3

⁹² McIntosh, *Poor Relief*, p7

⁹³ Anonymous, *The Laws Concerning the Poor: Or, A Complete Treatise of the Common and Statute Laws,* (London, 1720) p123

⁹⁴ William Hay, *Remarks on the laws relating to the poor* (London, 1751) p4

⁹⁵ Slack, *The English Poor Law*, p48

Beggars were often dramatized characters in ballads, pamphlets and novels of the early modern period and were visible to the public in an assortment of ways other than their appearance on the streets. Tim Hitchcock, for example, argues that John Gay's depiction of predatory beggars informed public perceptions of the poor, but that evidence shows they existed differently in day-to-day life.⁹⁶

Historians are aware that public representations of beggars were not always truthful, but in this project it has been increasingly helpful to be able to understand how they were being depicted to the early modern populace to examine cultural attitudes and representations rather than the social and political impact of fraudulent beggars, which has already been established in the historiography. This dissertation does not seek to examine the quantity of fraudulent beggars existing in early modern England, but instead to demonstrate how they were shown in published sources as their fictional depiction may have shaped cultural responses to all beggars. Historical studies of vagrancy and begging have usually focused on men, however David Hitchcock has recently examined female vagrants and described how their appearance was 'a problem of the life-cycle' linked to domestic service, pregnancy and childbirth and that they became more common after 1650.⁹⁷ The beggars examined in this project were men, as Canting Dictionaries and other popular sources showed that women were thought to use other types of facades to assist with their fraudulent ploys.⁹⁸ Men reshaped their bodies to demonstrate a physical inability to work, whilst many representations showed how women used their gender, lack of marital status and number of children to indicate that they could not support themselves. This plays upon certain themes of masculinity as men were expected to work, unless their bodies were insufficient, whereas women were provided with more socially acceptable excuses for not working, this was arguably due to perceptions of patriarchy and the man's duty of financially providing for themselves and their dependants. The themes of poverty and economic hardships are threaded throughout this project as it argues that many people attempted to alter their body to increase their earning potential in some way or other.

⁹⁶ Tim Hitchcock, "All besides the rail," p75

⁹⁷ David Hitchcock, *Vagrancy in the English Culture and Society 1650-1750* (London: Bloomsbury 2016) p128

⁹⁸ Richard Head, *The canting academy; or, Villanies discovered Wherein is shewn the mysterious and villanous practices of that wicked crew* (London, 1674) p61-2

This dissertation uses an empirical and qualitative approach to assess how the defective and deceptive body was presented in published texts during the early modern period to gain insight into how these bodies were explained, performed and defined by early modern people to wider audiences. Using published sources such as ballads, sermons, medical doctrine and other types of popular works, it demonstrates the variety of these types of bodies in early modern society and culture and shows how commonly defective and deceptive bodies were presented to the populace. The printing press was used for a variety of reasons, whilst some authors aimed to push their ideology on to their readers, others used print to reinforce their power and position meaning that it is sometimes difficult to truly ascertain the author's aims.⁹⁹ Natasha Glaisyer and Sara Pennell have demonstrated that the expansion of vernacular printing grew in the mid-sixteenth century (determining the start date for this project as 1540) and that as medical texts in particular were translated in to English it allowed for 'wider information dissemination.'¹⁰⁰ Some medical texts used in this project were originally written in languages other than English, but it was their translation and introduction into English at later points that allowed ideas to spread. Sometimes the vernacular version was created decades after the original text was written demonstrating the consistency of medical ideas being published. One example of this is Michael Etmüller's *Etmullerus abridg'd* which was published in English in 1712 nearly thirty years after the author's death.¹⁰¹ Other texts such as Genevan medical writer Daniel Le Clerc's *The history of physick* appears to have been published in English in 1699 shortly after its original publication in French and Nicolas Andry's *Orthopaedia* was translated in to English only two years after its initial publication, perhaps demonstrating a desire to sometimes disseminate medical texts more quickly.¹⁰² It is difficult to assume what early modern people believed about their bodies and deceitful presentation from only assessing one type of primary source, therefore this dissertation

⁹⁹ David Adams and Adrian Armstrong, *Print and Power in France and England, 1500 – 1800* (Ashgate, 2006) introduction.

¹⁰⁰ Natasha Glaisyer and Sara Pennell, *Didactic Literature in England 1500–1800: Expertise Constructed*, (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003) p10

¹⁰¹ Michael Etmüller, *Etmullerus abridg'd: or, a compleat system of the theory and practice of physick. Being a description of all diseases incident to men, women and children. With an account of their causes, symptoms, and most approved methods of cure, both physical and chirurgial. ... Translated from the last edition of the works of Michael Etmullerus*, (London, 1712)

¹⁰² Daniel Le Clerc, *The history of physick or, An account of the rise and progress of the art, and the several discoveries therein from age to age with remarks on the lives of the most eminent physician* (London, 1699); Nicolas Andry, *Orthopaedia: Or, the Art of Correcting and Preventing Deformities in Children* (London, 1743)

examines medical doctrine alongside sermons, ballads and other literature to develop a broader understanding of early modern mentalities. The diversity of texts, authorial intentions and readership mean that even by using a broad scope of sources it remains difficult to discern early modern attitudes to defective and deceptive bodies, but using a combination allows us to decipher how these types of bodies were being written about and what people were being told about their possessors and performances.

James Raven, Helen Small and Naomi Tadmor have described the problems of using printed sources, many of which are kept in consideration throughout.¹⁰³ It is impossible to determine how many books were printed, who chose to buy and read them, and whether readers agreed with and believed everything that they read. They also point out that even if someone bought a text, it does not necessarily mean that they read it, and the sale of second-hand books show that books could have numerous owners and readers indicating that readership could be larger or smaller than assumed.¹⁰⁴

Adam Fox argues that historical attempts to understand how men and women read cheap prints is problematic, because early modern historians have ‘assumed’ a humble audience and ‘imagined’ popular culture.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, as Fox claims ‘we have the texts, but not the contexts’ in which they were written or read, meaning that it is difficult to accurately assume who read what and how they interpreted it. While we cannot claim to know for sure which texts were more engaged with by readers than others, we can begin to acknowledge that different texts reached different audiences. It is probable that families shared and discussed texts they had accessed with one another when the topic was relevant, such as medical texts and recipe books in incidents of sickness. We can also begin to establish that during this period increasing numbers of texts were being bought and owned simply because more variety and greater amounts (at different prices) were being printed than before.

We cannot claim that all texts bought and owned were read, but it is plausible that their content was engaged with on some level by the text’s owners. It would have been problematic to rely on one or

¹⁰³ James Raven, Helen Small and Naomi Tadmor (eds) ‘Introduction,’ *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996) (2007 digital edition) pp6-7

¹⁰⁴ Raven, Small and Tadmor, *The Practice and Representation*, pp6-7

¹⁰⁵ Adam Fox, ‘Ballads, Libels and Popular Ridicule in Jacobean England,’ *Past & Present*, no145 (Nov 1994) p44

two genres of text for this research, and therefore a wider array of sources has been used to help establish a broader understanding of what was being written and printed, not necessarily what was being read and believed. This thesis does not claim that all of the texts included in the research were read, believed or influential, but the fact that they were written is indicative of the authors' belief the contents would be interesting to the reader, and perhaps of some use to them in some manner. Another key factor for consideration is that it is difficult to accurately determine the prices of different texts, meaning that it is hard to assume how these prices may have influenced purchases and readership.¹⁰⁶ Raven, Small and Tadmor do recognise that broadsheets and ballads were a lot cheaper than other types of texts however, and therefore claim that they would have reached wider audiences.¹⁰⁷

Tim Harris has argued that historians should consider culture, and acknowledge the diversity and range between status and other distinctions such as gender and age, as these varying components led to different readings.¹⁰⁸ Harris' argument is supported by Barry Reay who claims that 'the social plurality of early modern England makes it likely that popular culture was experienced in a variety of different ways,' and that we cannot truly comprehend how everyone interacted with it as popular culture was continually being reshaped and reshaping itself.¹⁰⁹ Beyond the difficulty in establishing readership habits in the period, the defining of 'early modern culture' itself is also subject to debate. Peter Burke claims that 'popular culture' went from originally meaning the culture of everyone to the culture of 'ordinary people,' those below the levels of the elite.¹¹⁰ Bernard Capp claims that the term 'popular culture' is problematic, and that while cultural divisions did exist, ideas did overlap and were exchanged 'in both directions.'¹¹¹ Popular culture is used in this dissertation to refer to the beliefs and attitudes of the many.

¹⁰⁶ Raven, Small and Tadmor, *The Practice and Representation*, pp6-7

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p8

¹⁰⁸ Tim Harris, 'Problematising Popular Culture,' ed Tim Harris, *Popular Culture in England, c1500 – 1850*, (Macmillan Education UK, 1995)

¹⁰⁹ Barry Reay, *Popular cultures in England 1550 – 1750*, (New York, Longman, 1998) p110

¹¹⁰ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, (Ashgate Publishing, 2009) p51

¹¹¹ Bernard Capp, 'Popular Culture(s)', in Beat Kümin (ed), *The European World 1500-1800. An Introduction to Early Modern History*, (Routledge, 2009) pp215-217

In addition to medical and ephemeral literature, the dissertation draws on a handful of sermons and religious texts. The religion of the country had a role in shaping the forms of religious texts published during this period, and these texts dealt with a range of themes including social norms, behaviours that were condemned and the physicality of the body. Patrick Collinson, Arnold Hunt and Alexandra Walsham argue that the term ‘religious book’ is extremely vague as it could have referred to a single page or a bound edition and that prices would vary accordingly.¹¹² They estimate that religious texts accounted for around half of the total output of the printing industry, and that popular and cheap literary genres were used to serve ‘pious and polemic aims in the seventeenth century.’¹¹³ Pamphlets which reported on fascinating news of monstrous births, heavenly apparitions and other portents were used to espouse moral messages to the public in a more accessible manner. Indeed, as Tim Reinke-Williams has argued, many forms of popular works such as ballads and jestbooks ‘mixed escapism with godly moralising,’ as they were used as moral tools whilst also providing readers with entertainment.¹¹⁴ Chapter One cites a selection of pamphlets on monstrous births to demonstrate how attitudes towards them and other types of deformed bodies varied.¹¹⁵ This project uses single page or small religious texts which were more likely to have been sold cheaply and therefore were theoretically more likely to have reached a wider audience, rather than large texts which may not have circulated as easily.¹¹⁶ The central position of religion in shaping beliefs about the body means that it is to include these texts in this project to some extent as beliefs of the body were established in classical thought and religious beliefs.¹¹⁷ However, there are still limitations to its use, for many of the

¹¹² Patrick Collinson, Arnold Hunt and Alexandra Walsham, ‘Religious publishing in England 1557 – 1640,’ in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol 4 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002) p29

¹¹³ Ibid

¹¹⁴ Tim Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) p10

¹¹⁵ John Mellys, *The True Description of Two Monsterous Children Lawfully Begotten between George Stevens and Margerie his wife...* (London, 1566); Anonymous, *The Description of a Rare or Rather Most Monsterous Fishe.* (London, 1566); Anonymous, ‘The True Report of the Forme and Shape of a monstrous Childe, Borne at Muche Horkesley ...’ (London, 1562) from Anonymous, *A Collection of Seventy-nine Black-Letter Ballads and Broadsides, printed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, between the years 1559 and 1597. Accompanied with an introduction and illustrative notes. A new edition of ‘Ancient Ballads & Broadsides published in England in the sixteenth century.’* Edited by Alfred Henry Huth. (1870)

¹¹⁶ Anonymous, *Outward deformity a very unfit subject for ridicule: a sermon preached to a society of young men in Crooked-Lane, London, on Sunday, Nov. 11. 1733* (London, 1733)

¹¹⁷ William Clowes, *A proved practice for all young chirurgians*, (London, 1588) chapter 8; John Woodall, *The Surgeons Mate* (London, 1617) p42; John Brown, *The Surgeons Assistant* (London, 1703) chapter 8

sermons included in this project the origin of the source and the individual who delivered it to the congregation is unknown, this means that the geographical area where these sermons were read and how far they spread is difficult to identify, therefore it is difficult to comprehend exactly how static these ideas were. The inclusion of themes such as cosmetics and the body in sermons and forms of spiritual guidance indicates a concern of Christian conduct in relation to the body.

Medical texts are used throughout this project to demonstrate medical understandings of the human body and show how different methods and recipes were used to alter, mutilate or damage the body for deceitful purposes.¹¹⁸ This project includes pseudo-medical texts such as *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, alongside surgical and anatomical texts, books of domestic medicine and physician's texts.¹¹⁹ It has been important to include different genres of medical texts as they were all written by different types of medical authors and directed at diverse audiences, therefore including a range offers a more rounded picture of how the body was medically presented to early modern readers. Some medical texts were written for large scale readership whilst others were used to teach and instruct other medical professionals, yet ultimately, they were all printed for financial gain. Elizabeth Furdell argues that it was the profit of selling medical texts which encouraged their publishing rather than the desire to spread ideology, and that economic pressures reshaped the medical marketplace.¹²⁰

Some medical texts were increasingly published over the early modern period to, arguably, undermine medical professionalisation as they sought to allow the reader to become their own physician as they were informed of different ailments and injuries and how to treat them at home.¹²¹ Mary Fissell however claims that we do not know how medical texts were read; some may have been used to help treat illness whilst others were read as entertainment.¹²² They were not exclusively read as medical texts but also used as memory devices and statements of man's relationship with nature, demonstrating how versatile these texts were and thus how broad the reader's interests were deemed

¹¹⁸ Furdell, *Publishing and Medicine*, p75

¹¹⁹ Anonymous, *Aristotle's Masterpiece* (1684)

¹²⁰ Furdell, *Publishing and Medicine*, p75

¹²¹ Ibid, p49

¹²² Mary Fissell, 'Readers, texts, and context. Vernacular medical works in early modern England,' in ed Roy Porter, *The Popularization of Medicine*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) p92

to be.¹²³ Their multitude of uses created a larger consumer base and may have led to larger profits. This project includes the use of medical texts to demonstrate how medical professionals believed the body to be created, how they acknowledged that it was be damaged or altered through illness, defect or injury and how they presented these ideas to their readers. Some surgical texts, for example, dedicated numerous chapters to gangrene and amputation, instructing readers on how surgery and treatment should be performed by the surgeon.¹²⁴ The analysis of medical texts also illustrates the gaps in contemporary understandings of the body, especially regarding women's bodies. Much of their understandings varied between decades and authorship, yet many inconsistencies remained due to the lack of hands-on examination available throughout this period.¹²⁵ Furdell claims that dissections were rare during the early modern period and usually only performed on those whose souls were damned.¹²⁶ She argues that this meant that anatomical knowledge remained 'static' and 'little-related to the true structure of the body,' as knowledge was built upon theories of the body rather than dissection and examination, it was not until after the end of the eighteenth-century that they became more common.¹²⁷

Alongside these more established and recognised texts, there was a very different type of reference book which existed in early modern print culture, the canting dictionary. These texts depicted another level of society, and their publication demonstrated a popular interest in the behaviour of the characters depicted. Tobias Hug claims that after the fourteenth century it became important to emphasise the physical descriptions of criminals, and that rogue literature emerged in the Elizabethan era to provide stereotypes and enforce social order which suggested a desire to unmask criminals.¹²⁸ Janet Sorenson has argued that the status of canting dictionaries changed over the eighteenth century, as they went from being used as a way to define and differentiate the criminal and 'vulgar' class from

¹²³ Ibid, p92

¹²⁴ Browne, *The Surgeons Assistant*, chapter 8; Hugh Ryder, *The New Practice of Chirurgery* (London, 1693) pp64-81 discusses gangrene, mortification and subsequent amputation

¹²⁵ Furdell, *Publishing and Medicine*, p50

¹²⁶ Ibid, p50; Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham have similarly claimed that during this period dissections across Europe were only carried out on criminal corpses, meaning that the advancement and education of medicine circulated around the local law courts. Grell and Cunningham (eds) *Medicine and the reformation*, p3

¹²⁷ Ibid, p50

¹²⁸ Tobias Hug, *Impostures in Early Modern England: Representations and Perceptions of Fraudulent Identities* (Manchester University Press, 2009) p17

labouring people, to later being revalued as a form of popular culture.¹²⁹ Originally conceived as a ‘singular subculture’ to define thieves, prostitutes and con artists, it eventually was perceived to be indicative of freedom.¹³⁰ It was through the reading of these sources that I was originally able to identify the different terms which were used to describe the men and women who committed bodily deceit and attempted to deceive those around them by inventing new tragic narratives. Language is an important element of this dissertation.

Canting dictionaries were used to refer to and describe the criminal and the ‘vulgar’, therefore the terms they used to label these individuals were indicative of anxieties of duplicity. Many of the sources used a similar terminology, and in some cases the definitions were identical. The anonymous *A New Canting Dictionary* is just one which named ‘abram-men,’ ‘blind-harpers,’ ‘Clapperdungeons,’ ‘counterfeit cranks’ and ‘rufflers’ as different types of deceitful personas.¹³¹ Each had an individual quality which they used to appeal to the charitable instincts of those around them. Abram-men were eccentrics but also ‘shabby beggars, trick’d and patched up with ribbons... pretending to be beside themselves to palliate their theft,’ ultimately falsifying mental illness.¹³² ‘Blind-harpers ... counterfeited blindness’ and either played an instrument or were led around by a dog or young boy.¹³³ A ‘clapperdungeon’ with an earliest use of 1567 was simply a ‘beggar born and bred,’ whilst a ‘counterfeit crank’ was a ‘sham or imposter’ who disguised themselves into various shapes in order to ‘serve his villainous purposes.’¹³⁴ Other texts however specified them as being individuals who claimed to be suffering from the falling sickness (epilepsy) and would fake the symptoms publicly to

¹²⁹ Janet Sorenson, ‘Vulgar Tongues: Canting Dictionaries and the Language of the People in Eighteenth Century Britain,’ *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol 37, no 2, Critical Networks, (Spring, 2004) pp435-454

¹³⁰ Sorenson, ‘Vulgar Tongues,’ p439

¹³¹ Anonymous. *A New Canting Dictionary: comprehending all the terms, antient and modern, used in the several tribes of gypsies, beggars, ... To which is added, a complete collection of songs in the canting dialect.* (London 1725); Head, *The canting academy*, p54

¹³² Anon, *A New Canting Dictionary*; Head, *The canting academy*, p54

¹³³ B.E, *A new dictionary of the canting crew in its several tribes of gypsies, beggars [sic], thieves, cheats &c., with an addition of some proverbs, phrases, figurative speeches &c. : useful for all sorts of people (especially foreigners) to secure their money and preserve their lives ; besides very diverting and entertaining being wholly new.* (London, 1699); Anonymous, *A New Canting Dictionary*

¹³⁴ B.E, *A new dictionary of the canting crew*; Anonymous, *A New Canting Dictionary*.

gain sympathy and attention.¹³⁵ Finally, a ‘ruffler’ was a false maimed soldier or sailor used to ‘implore the charity of well-disposed persons.’¹³⁶ It is important to note that many of these types of fraud revolved around bodily deceit and manipulation as the body was reshaped in structure and clothing as well as physical mutilation. Richard Head designated an entire section in his text to female styles of deceptive begging, terms such as ‘strowling-morts,’ and ‘doxies.’¹³⁷ The first term referred to a false widow who used a tragic past to appeal to charitable almsgivers, whilst a ‘doxie’ referred to a woman either offering her counterfeit maidenhead to a customer, or who had fraudulently advertised herself as a first-time prostitute.¹³⁸

Using the combination of printed sources this project shows how the different performances of defective and deceptive bodies were portrayed to early modern readers and assesses how their presentation influenced cultural responses to deformed and damaged bodies as a whole. The structure of the chapters are as follows:

Chapter One is based on medical texts, discusses the defective body in its natural state, and the origins of defect from birth, illness or injury. It discusses typical bodily formation in the womb, how it was understood to occur and the factors which could prohibit the correct development of a foetus. The chapter also begins to examine medical and environmental factors which could damage the body later in life such as disease or injury, however, the chapter does favour the examination of soldiers wounded at war and ex-seamen because these were the respectable narratives commonly employed by counterfeit beggars, as to be shown in Chapter Three. This chapter’s discussion of the humours, genitalia, skeletons, natural formation and alteration by disease, injury or birth demonstrates the variability in defining the human body in early modern England and how men and women were able to misrepresent their bodies in a variety of contexts.

¹³⁵ Thomas Dekker. *The belman of London Bringing to light the most notorious villanies that are now practised in the kingdome. Profitable for gentlemen, lawyers, merchants, citizens, farmers, masters of houtholdes, and all sorts of seruants to mark, and delightfull for all men to reade.* (London, 1608)

¹³⁶ B.E. *A new dictionary.*

¹³⁷ Head, *The canting academy*; p62

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, p62

The subsequent chapter focuses on the individuals who attempted to conceal these defects or restore functionality and typicality using prosthetics and cosmetics. By including a variety of text genres, this chapter demonstrates how the amended body was portrayed in medical texts, religious sermons and fiction. Whilst this chapter does not focus on the artificial creation of beauty, it does discuss how texts instructed women to restore natural beauty and typicality to their features. Religious sermons encouraged people to not mock those suffering from bodily deformities. David Turner claims that ‘deformity carried moral stigma and could also be a source of laughter and contempt.’¹³⁹ Therefore the themes of humour and satire are discussed in this chapter as an explanation for why some people chose to alter and conceal their bodily defects, showing how the incorporation of these methods were perhaps seen by some to be a productive and logical response to social hardships and cultural mentalities.

Chapter Three examines the portrayal of fraudulent beggars who damaged and altered their bodies to invoke sympathy and charity from almsgivers. Their performance went a step further than those who amended their defects, as many chose to harm and mutilate their bodies or use external props such as crutches to change the way their body moved, performed, or interacted with the outside world. This purposeful reshaping was negatively viewed by their communities, as they did so to redefine their bodies as deserving of charity. Fraudulent beggars were shown in popular works to have adapted their performances and bodies so that they could attract attention and be easily identified as atypical and in need. By using herbal and chemical concoctions described in medical texts, tools and bandages, they were able to alter their body, sometimes even causing permanent damage to enhance their fraudulent performance.

The final chapter assesses the extent to which society feared recreated virginity, but also claims it was desired by men, arguing that some women were thought to use this amendment to increase the socio-economic value of their body. Medical texts of the early modern period are indicative of the ambiguity of the female body in this era, and alongside fictional representations, shaped cultural

¹³⁹ David M Turner, ‘Approaching anomalous bodies,’ in David M Turner and Kevin Stagg (eds) *Social Histories of Disability and Deformity: Bodies, Images and Experiences*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2006) p5

attitudes of false virginity. As shown, some members of society were anxious about the mystique of women's bodies and whether they possessed this ability or not, and some men appeared to have desired the eroticism of deflowerment, whether it was real or not. This chapter argues that fears and/or desires of false virginity existed in cultural imagination as many sources who referred to this type of deceptive behaviour did not refer to real women who were known to use the methods described.

This dissertation shows how the defective and deceptive body was performed and portrayed in early modern culture. It demonstrates the complexity of determining bodily fraud in this period and shows that a multitude of altered bodies co-existed alongside one another, some of which were more visible than others. The four chapters are indicative of different early modern mentalities towards defective and/or deceptive bodies, and their portrayal in early modern print is representative of the different ways they were responded to by readers. Some of these bodies were feared, others were ignored, few were eroticised, but all of them were accepted and acknowledged at some level. During a period of religious and political upheaval, numerous wars, disease epidemics, and economic crisis, one's ability to alter and present their body remained consistent even if their performance and motivation differed. This dissertation is one of the few research studies which shows how early modern people were thought to be able to control the presentation of their bodies within different deceptive contexts, and how they adapted their performances to suit their own goals. It is important we understand how the body was malleable and changeable in the early modern period, because it was usually the only thing that people had full control over. Rarely could individuals change their circumstance or environment, but by utilising their own agency they were able to empower themselves by creating the body that they wanted and/or needed. This dissertation is new and original and demonstrates how the early modern body was susceptible to change from external influences. It provides three different examples of groups of people who changed the presentation and performance of their own body. The examination of prosthetics and cosmetics, fraudulent beggars and counterfeit virgins demonstrates the wide spectrum of bodily misrepresentation and deception occurring in early modern.

Chapter One: Degrees of Deformity

Within early modern England there were different types of deformed and atypical bodies. Some forms originated in the mother's womb but were blamed on God, nature or the mother's imagination. Many were the lasting reminder of a current or previously treated disease, such as the Pox, and existed as symbols of ill bodily or sexual health. Others were created by surgeons in response to accidents and war wounds, as amputation was used to save one's life whilst simultaneously changing the shape of a human body forever. Regardless of the origin, there were a multitude of atypical bodies visibly coexisting in early modern society.

In his 1736 edition of *Dictionarium Britannicum* Philip Miller described the body as meaning an entity 'composed of bones, muscles, canals juices, (and) nerves.'¹ Although Miller supplied a general description of what the body consisted of, he did not specify how it should look.² Modern society defines the body as "the complete physical form of a person or animal; the assemblage of parts, organs, and tissues that constitutes the whole material organism."³ Both defined the entirety of the body and mentioned the internal elements, neither however referred to the appearance of the body supporting the idea that there was no normative template.

This chapter provides the framework for the rest of this dissertation, as it establishes what the typical body was in early modern England, and some of the ways in which bodies deviated from this. It provides an important grounding for the further chapters as it discusses the types of deformities which some sought to conceal or artificially create and shows how the ambiguity of the genitalia allowed anxieties and desires of female virginity to flourish. Yet whilst this dissertation focuses on different types of defective and deceptive bodies, not all types of deformity could be faked. This chapter displays the wide scale of atypical bodies within early modern England and demonstrates how they

¹ Philip Miller, *Dictionarium Britannicum: or a more compleat universal etymological English dictionary than any extant. Containing words from the antient British, Teutonick, Dutch Low and High, Old Saxon, German.* (London, 1736ed) p114

² Phillip Miller, *Dictionarium Britannicum*, p114

³ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/20934?rskey=jT8NvM&result=1#eid> accessed 10/06/2019

were shaped by birth, illness or injury, before refining the focus in the subsequent chapters to only discuss the defective bodies which were deceitfully created or concealed.

According to published texts from early modern England, we can see that many authors believed the body should have intact limbs, digits, senses, working reproductive organs (according to age and sex), and a mental comprehension of its surrounding.⁴ As shown in discussions of foetal development, typical conception and growth meant a healthy baby with a complete body. A body that deviated from these established criteria was atypical, but not necessarily classified as deformed. A defective or unattractive body was a hindrance for many people living in early modern England as it could limit their opportunities for work and their chances of marriage, thus threatening their financial stability. Felicity Nussbaum has discussed the gendered distinction made between types of deformity, arguing that men could overcome theirs by their intellectual promise, but women could not.⁵ She argues that women did not have the same opportunity as they were judged by their attractiveness, fecundity and ability to contribute financially and socially to the household meaning that their physical deformities were linked with marriage prospects and quality of life.⁶ David Turner has published the first book-length study of physical disability in the eighteenth-century and examined themes such as self-identity and the cultural perception of those with physical disabilities.⁷ He also discussed the shift in social and cultural interpretations of the deformed body determining that attitudes changed depending on circumstance and environment. Turner claimed that during the Roman period the populace saw the disabled body as an ‘embodiment of magic,’ whilst medieval society regarded it as an ‘object of derision.’⁸ Hermann Levy argued that the evolving attitudes of society from the end of the sixteenth

⁴ Thomas Bartholinus, *Bartholinus Anatomy* (London 1663); Thomas Gibson, *The anatomy of humane bodies epitomized wherein all parts of man's body, with their actions and uses, are succinctly described* (London, 1682) The entire texts discuss the formation of and the parts of the human body.

⁵ Felicity A Nussbaum, ‘Feminotopias: The Pleasures of “Deformity” in mid Eighteenth-Century England,’ in David T Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder (eds), *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability*, (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1997) p170

⁶ *Ibid*, p170

⁷ Turner, *Disability in Eighteenth Century England*

⁸ Turner, *Disability in Eighteenth Century England*, p2

century meant that the sick poor no longer held the medieval attributes surrounding ‘the victim of misfortune,’ but instead were seen as partially to blame for their circumstance and body.⁹

As discussed in the introduction, one of the central themes of this dissertation is performance. This chapter discusses bodies which offered a natural performance, meaning the behaviour it executed naturally on a day-to-day basis, rather than one that was consciously manipulated by fraudulent motives. It follows Erving Goffman’s argument that all bodies perform every day, and that that performance is shaped by social interaction and the body.¹⁰ Whilst the atypical bodies discussed in this chapter acted differently to typical ones, their performances were inherent to the individual and were influenced by environment and ability rather than personal aims. These performances of atypical bodies underlie the entire chapter and allows the discussion of performance to become more apparent throughout the rest of this dissertation as each subsequent chapter investigates a specific type of deceitful behaviour.

This chapter illustrates how medical texts presented the correct development of the human body to early modern society and illustrates how it was expected to look and perform. It then assesses the different ways in which it was thought that the body could be misshaped or damaged through birth defects, illness and injury, and how these causes of deformity were perceived in medical texts and popular works. Lastly, this chapter argues that there was an understanding and acceptance of the existence of defective bodies in early modern England, but that public responses towards them varied according to their social and cultural connotations. Overall this chapter demonstrates the variability of deformity and atypical bodies co-existing in early modern England, what people were told about them, and begins to demonstrate why some of these bodies were falsified or concealed and others were not.

⁹ Hermann Levy, ‘The Economic History of Sickness and Medical Benefit Before the Puritan Revolution,’ *The Economic History Review*, Volume a13, Issue 1-2 (October 1943) p135

¹⁰ Goffman, *The presentation of self*, pp17-18

The development of the body in the womb

All human bodies, whether typical or atypical, were formed in the mother's womb during pregnancy.¹¹ For a child to be conceived, some authors believed that the man and woman had to orgasm to emit their seed, preferably at the same time.¹² Laura Gowing claims that sex was linked with generation in early modern England, and that it was well established that 'reproduction depended on sexual pleasure.'¹³ Yet according to Thomas Laqueur the importance of the female orgasm decreased over the period as it was no longer perceived to be necessary to conception.¹⁴ Seventeenth-century midwife and author Jane Sharp argued,

True conception is then, when the seed of both sexes is good, and duly prepared and cast into the womb, as into fruitful ground, and is there so fitly and equally mingled, the man's seed with the woman, that a perfect child is by degrees framed; for first small threads as it were of the solid and substantial parts are formed out, and the woman's blood flows to them, to make the bowels and to supply all parts of the infant with food and nourishment.¹⁵

Sharp's choice of language is telling, she specifically used the term 'equally mingled' regarding the seed of both men and women, demonstrating that both were important to conception without one acquiring dominance over the other. The creation of a 'perfect child' was also discussed and illustrates a belief that the mother's blood (along with the male's agent) created the ideal baby's body parts, whether large or small. Sharp stated that 'conception is performed in less than seven hours after the seed is mingled, for nature is not a minute idle in her work but acts to the utmost of her power;'

¹¹ Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies*, p33 compares the womb to a 'good housewife,' always ready for a guest even if the woman was unable to conceive

¹² Le Clerc, *The history of physick*, argued 'seed both of the male and female being mingled in the womb, grow thick and hot, or spirituous; after which, the spirit contained in their centre expands itself and draws a part of the air' p189; Nicolas Culpeper, *A directory for midwives: or, a guide for women, in their conception, bearing, and suckling their children*. (London, 1701) p41

¹³ Gowing, *Gender Relations*, p16; Jennifer Evans, *Aphrodisiacs, Fertility and Medicine in Early Modern England*, (Past and Present, 2014)

¹⁴ Thomas Laqueur, 'Orgasm, Generation, and the Politics of Reproductive Biology,' in Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur (eds) *The Making of the Modern Body. Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, (London: University of California Press, 1987) p1

¹⁵ Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book* (London, 1671) p65

supporting the belief of nature's role in the formation of the child, even though the foetus was in the mother's body.¹⁶

In the mid seventeenth-century Physician Nicolas Culpeper argued that it was increasingly difficult for medical professionals to accurately define how a child was formed in the mother's womb and to assess the 'proper parts of a child.'¹⁷ The ideal way to assess a foetus was by dissecting the mother after death, but Culpeper argued that many women would 'miscarry before they die(d),' meaning that it was rare for anatomists to dissect a child in the womb.¹⁸ Despite these difficulties, he did describe how he believed a child was formed. He suggested that bodies developed in a specific order. This process started with the skin, then the 'naval-bein bred' which carried blood from mother to baby (possibly the umbilical cord), and formed the liver.¹⁹ From there was the vena cava, or chief vein, 'from which all the rest of the veins that nourish the body spring, and now that the seed something to nourish it, while it performs the rest of the work, and also blood administered to every part of it to form the flesh.'²⁰ Next were 'all arteries' formed 'before the heart,' followed by the brain and the nerves to give 'sense and motion to the infant.'²¹ In advocating this order Culpeper claimed that Aristotle's classical ideas of foetal development were wrong as Aristotle thought the 'heart formed first' and was the 'most noble part of the body,' whilst Culpeper believed 'the brain is more noble.'²²

In 1699 Genevan medical writer Daniel Le Clerc quoted Hippocrates's ideas about the manner of conception, and the formation of the foetus in the womb, further demonstrating the long-term impact and discussion of classical concepts.²³ He wrote that the flesh was created first, formed by the mother's blood,

¹⁶ Ibid, p65

¹⁷ Nicolas Culpeper, *A directory for midwives* (London, 1651ed) P36

¹⁸ Culpeper, *A directory for midwives*, p40

¹⁹ Ibid, p43

²⁰ Ibid, p44

²¹ Ibid, p44

²² Culpeper, *A directory for midwives*, p44

²³ Le Clerc, *The history of physick*, p189

After this, the extremities of the body shoot outward like the branches of a tree; the parts, as well internal as external, are better distinguished, the head erects itself above the shoulders, the arms separate themselves from the sides, and the legs spread themselves out; the nerves or ligaments go to the joints, the mouth opens, the nose and ears shoot out of the head and are perfected, the eyes are fill'd with a pure humour, and the distinctions of sex appear.²⁴

Le Clerc's ideas were similar to Culpeper's published almost fifty years earlier and show a continuity of belief that different parts of the body developed at different times of the human gestation period of forty weeks. Whilst he did not discuss the creation of the organs, nor of the internal structure, he offered a detailed description of how some medical writers thought the external parts of the body were formed, including limbs and facial features.

This was not the only theory regarding conception that existed though, some authors such as French Physician Nicolaas Hartsoeker believed in preformation.²⁵ This was the idea that the human body existed in the male sperm, but that it was too small to be seen by the naked eye. Preformationists believed that the foetus was already present before conception and required only to be nourished during the gestation period.²⁶ Peter Bowler argues that pre-existence theories developed in response to particular philosophical problems, and that the idea was based on the concept of *emboîtement*, the belief that all new organisms were stored up as one generation in another and that they all originated during the creation of the universe.²⁷ Believers of this concept thought that all individuals were previously designed and that all bodies were created similarly. The image below shows a child folded up in the sperm, making genitalia impossible to see, thus making the sex difficult to establish in these images.²⁸

²⁴ Ibid, p190

²⁵ Nicolaas Hartsoeker, *Essai de Dioptrique*, (Paris, 1694)

²⁶ Gowing, *Gender Relations*, p21

²⁷ Peter J. Bowler, 'Preformation and Pre-Existence in the Seventeenth Century: A Brief Analysis,' *Journal of the History of Biology*, Vol 4, No 2 (Autumn, 1971) pp221-244

²⁸ Cera R Lawrence, "Hartsoeker's Homunculus Sketch from *Essai de Dioptrique*". *Embryo Project Encyclopaedia* (2008-08-14). ISSN: 1940-5030 <https://embryo.asu.edu/pages/hartsoekers-homunculus-sketch-essai-de-dioptrique>

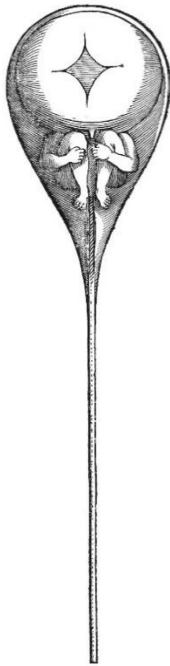


Figure 1: Image of a child contained in male sperm. Nicolaas Hartsoeker, *Essai de Dioptrique* (Paris, 1694). Photo Credit: Wellcome Collection. CC BY.

Medical writers also described the order in which the skeleton was formed. Culpeper, for example, stated

if you ask me which of the bones be formed first, I answer the vertebre and skull; of the order of forming the rest, as also of forming the flesh, I am ignorant; Aristotle was of opinion the vertebre was first formed of all the bones, and there the man hit the nail on the head.²⁹

Whether this idea was widespread, that the spine and skull were formed first, is unclear as few other authors went in to as much detail as Culpeper did.³⁰ William Cowper also offered an interpretation of how the skeleton formed in the womb, and described what the skeleton looked like each month of its

²⁹ Culpeper, *A directory for midwives*, p45

³⁰ Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (1684); Sharp, *The Midwives Book*. Both were popular texts of the seventeenth-century but neither discussed the development of the foetus.

development and how the size varied.³¹ Cowper described what he thought the skeleton to look like a month after initial conception and over the course of another five figures showed the steady development of a foetal skeleton.³² All bones were claimed to have appeared and taken shape by the third month of gestation.³³

Authors rarely referred to the development of a deformed foetus and instead focused on how the typical body was formed in the womb. While these authors only described typical development of a growing foetus this did not preclude acceptance of a range of differences and abnormalities. As will be seen below writers described physical differences including hermaphroditism. Yet reading the descriptions of how foetuses developed could give the impression that they all assumed correct formation would occur and understood that all body parts developed in different ways and at varying times, but the order varied between authors. This shows that there was a general contemporary understanding that foetuses should and would develop naturally and correctly, unless there was a significant reason why they were unable to. This understanding allowed fears of external influences to exist, and as will be shown further on many sought an explanation for deformity from birth so that they could better understand the presence of defective bodies in early modern society.

The internal nature of the body

To describe early modern perceptions of the physiological ‘norm’ and to help identify how and why defective bodies were thought to differ from this, it is useful to consider medical understandings of the inner workings of the human body from this period. This section will establish how the humours were believed to influence the body, and how the appearance and function of the genitals compared between each sex. It is important to understand the observed differences between men and women, as the ambiguity surrounding the female body was what allowed concerns of women’s bodies and counterfeit virginity to exist.

³¹ William Cowper, *The Anatomy of the Humane Body* (London, 1698) The Hundredth Table

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid

Early modern medical doctrine states that each body contained four humours and four qualities.³⁴ The components of the Galenic model were yellow bile, black bile, phlegm and sanguine (blood); along with the qualities of hot, cold, dry and moist.³⁵ Each sex was believed to contain a higher proportion of two humours, and to exhibit two of the four qualities. Men's bodies were expected to be hot, dry, and to contain high levels of bile and blood, whereas women were cold and moist with greater amounts of phlegm.³⁶ The humours and their importance to the body and sex were not disputed or opposed by contemporaries, and instead were relatively universal aspects of medical knowledge.³⁷ Early modern interpretations of Galen, understood that the balance of these humours provided the only distinction between male and female bodies as the preponderance of humours in the body altered its form and the position of the genitalia, making it either internal or external.³⁸ The difference between both men's and women's bodies were constructed and distinguished by oppositional qualities, ones which were emphasised by contemporaries as numerous medical authors described the contradictory humoral aspects of each sex.³⁹

A key area of discussion for historians considering sex-difference in the early modern era has been the understanding of the genitals, something which a typical body of either sex contained. During the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries sex was written about in an accessible form for the first time, with authors basing their ideas in part on the classical notions of Galen and Aristotle, as well as taking inspiration from contemporary arguments.⁴⁰ In 1992 Thomas Laqueur offered the one to two sex theory, arguing that men and women were regarded throughout most of history as having identical

³⁴ Thomas Walkington, *The optick glasse of humors*. (London, 1607) The entire text is dedicated to discussing the four different humours and their balances; Simon Grahame, *The anatomie of humors* (London, 1609) is again solely about the humours in the body; Levinus Lemnius, *The Secret Miracles of Nature*, English Translation (London, 1658 ed.) p86

³⁵ Tim Hitchcock, *English Sexualities 1700-1800*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997) p43

³⁶ Lemnius, *The Secret Miracles of Nature*, p86

³⁷ Hitchcock, *English Sexualities*, p63; Vivian Nutton, 'The Rise of Medicine', In Roy Porter (ed) *Cambridge Illustrated History of Medicine*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p58-50

³⁸ This is in reference to Thomas Laqueur's theory of the one-to-two sex model which argued that women had inverted penises, for more information see Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex*, p149

³⁹ Lemnius, *The Secret Miracles of Nature*, p86; Walkington, *The optick glasse of humors*, discusses this theme in his text, and so does Grahame, *The anatomie of humors*

⁴⁰ Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies; Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-century England*, (London: Yale University Press, 2003) p17

genitalia, except that women's' were inverted.⁴¹ This idea has proved to be controversial with others such as Michael Stolberg, Donald Beecher, and Helen King, who have argued that the idea is too simplistic and that the Aristotelian-Galenic one-sex model had been abandoned by 1600.⁴² Laqueur's work however, has started a historiographical debate, and has drawn the attention of medical historians as interest in this field has grown. It does appear though that Laqueur's argument has some grounding in early modern mentalities, for Jane Sharp noted in *The Midwives Book* 1671, that Galen had argued that men and women were the same, the only difference being in that the man's penis is exterior and women's interior arguing that genital difference was the only element of sexual difference.⁴³

Men's penises were external, which was explained by their high levels of heat, paired with their dry humours. The placement of male genitalia was important because if the male's seed was contained within the hot body it would not be able to survive. Women's genitalia were positioned internally so that the moderate warmth of the womb would provide an inviting habitat for conception.⁴⁴ This, it was argued, promoted fertile copulation. Each sex had to display the contrasting qualities to promote their chances of reproduction and it was the correct combination of the two that encouraged conception.⁴⁵ *Aristotle's Masterpiece* noted in 1697 that the differences between men and women were minimal, their organs were manipulated by their heat, which also affected the substance of their genitalia. The unknown author argued,

For there is not that vast difference between the Genitals of the two sexes, as Pliny would have us believe there is, for the woman has in a manner the same members with the man, tho' they appear not outwardly, but are inverted for the convenience of Generation, the chief

⁴¹ Laqueur, *Making Sex*, pp149-155

⁴² Katherine Park, and Robert Nye, "Destiny is Anatomy." *The New Republic* (18 Feb. 1991) 53-57; Patricia Parker, "Gender Ideology, Gender Change: The Case of Marie Germain," *Critical Inquiry* 19 (1993): 337-64; Michael Stolberg "A Woman Down to Her Bones: The Anatomy of Sexual Difference in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries." *Isis* 95 (2003) pp274-299; Donald Beecher, "Concerning Sex Changes: The Cultural Significance of a Renaissance Medical Polemic." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 36(4) (2005) pp991-1016; Helen King, *The One-Sex Body on Trial: The Classical and Early Modern Evidence*. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013)

⁴³ Sharp, *The Midwives Book*, p18

⁴⁴ Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (1697 ed.) pp98-99

⁴⁵ Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (1697 ed.) p99

difference being, that one is solid, and the other porous; and that the principal reason of changing sexes is, and must be, attributed to heat or cold, suddenly, or slowly contracted, which operates according to its greater or lesser force⁴⁶

Regardless of where the genitals were positioned, both male and female reproductive organs were described in a similar way, highlighting just how fluidly contemporary authors regarded them. The word *pudenda* meant penis but was also used to refer to a woman's entire outer part of her reproductive organs, particularly her *fissure magna* otherwise known as the *great chink*.⁴⁷ Mary Fissell has argued that one of the key differences between the male and female body was the vagina, and its recognition as a separate reproductive organ, only found in women's bodies.⁴⁸ It was because of the gendered existence of the vagina that medical texts were unable to provide as much information about its existence and function. It was this ambiguity and uncertainty which arguably allowed for anxieties and concerns of counterfeit virginity to exist, and this is shown more clearly in chapter four. When the vagina became regarded as a female specific body part it became increasingly significant to medical understandings of the female body, and Fissell argues that this reflects a longer-term process of sexual differentiation than Laqueur argued for.⁴⁹

Another part of a woman's anatomy to be detailed by medical authors was usually the *clitoris*, it was however, continually compared to the male's penis rather than regarded as a female specific feature. The clitoris was described as looking like wings made of flesh and was understood to be the centre of venereal pleasure; similarly to the male penis it was believed to grow in times of 'extreme lustfulness'.⁵⁰ Physician Thomas Gibson stated that the clitoris was similar to the penis in regards to 'shape, situation, substance, repletion with spirits and erection' and differed only in 'length and bigness'.⁵¹ The early modern populace observed that during stimulation the male penis would fill with blood and grow erect, and that when the blood left the penis it would then become 'limber and

⁴⁶ Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (1697 ed.) p72

⁴⁷ Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (1690 ed.)

⁴⁸ Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies*, pg46

⁴⁹ Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies*, pg46; Laqueur, 'Orgasm,'

⁵⁰ Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (1690 ed.); Stolberg, 'A Woman Down to Her Bones,' p287

⁵¹ Gibson, *The anatomy of humane bodies*, p159

flaggy'.⁵² When aroused the woman's vagina was thought to fill with blood and become narrower in an attempt to direct the male's penis to a place safe for conception to occur and where there would be no risk of injury during penetration.⁵³ That many authors compared parts of women's genitalia to men's, encouraged a continued lack of understanding about what a woman's body consisted of, and this allowed society to doubt and question elements of a woman's body throughout the entire period. It is important to include a discussion of sexual and gender differences within this chapter as it demonstrates the ways in which women's bodies were explained and defined by early modern authors to their reader for as will be shown in further detail in chapter four, women were believed to have the ability to alter their genitalia, something which seems not to have also been suspected of men.

Whilst there was understood to be two typical and distinguishable sexes, it was acknowledged that sometimes a body was born whose sex was not as easy to identify. The fluidity of sex meant that many publications informed their readers about hermaphrodites and women who could change their genitalia at will.⁵⁴ Thomas Gibson, for example, alongside his description of the clitoris, believed that in some cases, its large size made it 'able to accompany with other women like unto men' and that these women could be referred to as hermaphrodites due to the physical appearance and size of their genitalia, as well as how they could use it.⁵⁵ Sex was thus, in some cases, deemed as interchangeable. Hermaphrodites, though social anomalies, were included in key texts from the seventeenth-century such as the anonymous *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, and Jane Sharps midwifery text which briefly mentioned their existence alongside other forms of monstrous births.⁵⁶ Many of the explanations provided for their existence stemmed from the idea that they were between sexes and genders, as their foetal development and growth was not constrained to one or the other. There was a flurry of texts produced about them in the early modern period which only helped to fuel and reinforce the recognition, and perhaps fears, of their appearance in society. Jenny Mann has examined the hermaphrodite in early modern England, arguing that a fascination with monsters and oddities meant

⁵² Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (1690 ed.)

⁵³ Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (1690 ed.)

⁵⁴ Peter Chamberlen, *Chamberlain's midwives practice*, (London, 1665) p56

⁵⁵ Gibson, *The anatomy of humane bodies*, p159

⁵⁶ Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (1690 ed.) see image on opening page and pp47-52; Sharp, *The Midwives Book*, pp116-20

that the appearance of hermaphrodites in literature and popular works greatly increased from the start of the sixteenth-century.⁵⁷ She argues that readers were encouraged to look and find entertainment in these bodies as texts trained their readers to want to look at these bodies.⁵⁸ Laqueur argues that ‘sex is a shaky foundation,’ and that the ambiguous genitalia of hermaphrodites allowed society to fear the personally constructed gender the affected person chose to assume.⁵⁹ Rather than a biological or monstrous matter, Laqueur has insisted that hermaphroditism challenged social and cultural constructs of gender and social standing.⁶⁰ Hermaphrodites, and the flexibility of gender and bodily difference, created a culture which acknowledged genital deformity and allowed different forms of gendered and sexual deception to exist, such as cross dressing.⁶¹

Many genital deformities existed from birth, M De La Vauguion described in the English translated version of his text *The Compleat body of chirurgical works* in 1707, that he knew of children born with damaged/indistinguishable genitalia.⁶² He had been told of a surgeon who treated a child born with no urethra, and ‘its testicles were contained each in a separate scrotum.’⁶³ The penis had a ‘slit’ between the two testicles ‘which resembled the privities of a woman, which made most people, though untruly, mistake this child for an hermaphrodite,’ but upon dissection the child did not have any internal female genitalia.⁶⁴ The child that Vauguion discussed, had unidentifiable genitalia, however medical professionals decided that the child was male, but that his organs were deformed. The existence of fascinating figures such as hermaphrodites show that there was a clear diversity in the bodies being presented to readers in early modern England, and that bodies were acknowledged to

⁵⁷ Jenny C Mann, ‘How to Look at a Hermaphrodite in Early Modern England,’ *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, Volume 46, Number 1 (Winter 2006) pp67-91

⁵⁸ Mann, ‘How to Look at a Hermaphrodite,’ p68

⁵⁹ Laqueur, *Making Sex*, p136

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p136

⁶¹ For more information on cross dressing which was perceived to cross gender boundaries and is not included elsewhere within this project, please look at the following; Lesley Ferris (eds) *Crossing the Stage: Controversy on Cross-dressing*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993); David Cressy, ‘Gender Trouble and Cross-Dressing in Early Modern England,’ *Journal of British Studies*, Volume 35, issue 4 (October 1996) pp438-465; David Cressy, *Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England: Tales of Discord and Dissension*, (Oxford University Press, 1999); Anna Bayman, ‘Cross-Dressing and Pamphleteering in Early Seventeenth-Century London.’ In D Lemmings and C Walker (eds) *Moral Panics, the Media and the Law in Early Modern England*. (Palgrave Macmillan, London 2009) pp63-77

⁶² M De La Vauguion, *A compleat body of chirurgical operations, containing the whole practice of surgery. With observations and remarks on each case*, 2nd ed (London, 1707) P324

⁶³ *Ibid*

⁶⁴ *Ibid*

vary in sex as well as appearance. This increasing recognition of diversity allowed different types of bodies to co-exist.

It is therefore easy to ascertain that medical authors had a detailed understanding of how the internal nature of the human body functioned, where the genitals should be positioned and how they operated according to gender. By understanding the normative inner functions of the human body and genitalia, this section has provided the grounding for each section of this dissertation as the humours and one's sex defined the workings of their body and shaped the forms of bodily deception they were able to enact.

The Look and Shape of the Body

A body that developed correctly, according to authors expectations of foetal growth in the womb, was expected to appear in a certain manner. It was to have all limbs and digits intact and be shaped according to its sex. The anatomical text of William Cowper, from the late seventeenth century, discussed the physical and structural differences between the male and female form.⁶⁵ As can be seen in the two images below, both the male and female were portrayed as having desired bodily qualities and features.

⁶⁵ Cowper, *The Anatomy of Humane Bodies*, p73

Figure 2. Cowper, *The Anatomy of Humane Bodies*, first table. Photo credit © Royal Academy of Arts, London;
photographer: Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd

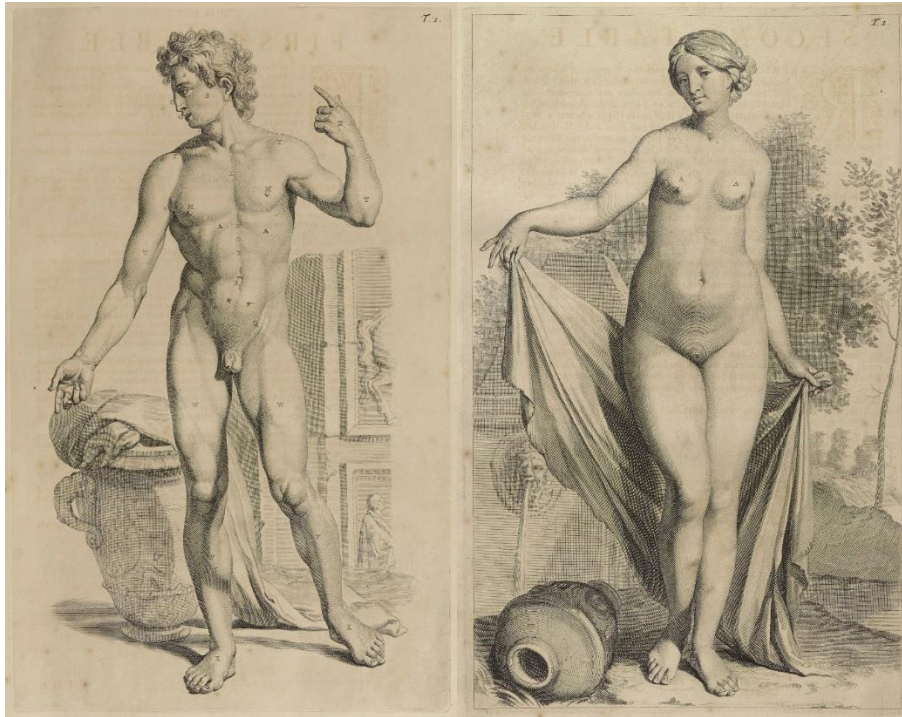


Figure 3; Cowper, *The Anatomy of Humane Bodies*, second table. Photo credit © Royal Academy of Arts, London;
photographer: Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd

It is clear from the illustrations that Cowper understood male and female bodies as different in appearance. However, both sexes were expected to contain the same fundamental bodily elements to meet the definition of typical and healthy. Both images show bodies with the correct physical features and imply good physical health due to their positioning and height. Each stands proud as if they are declaring their sex to onlookers, the male's genitalia are obvious as are the woman's breasts, a bodily feature which distinguished the sexes at first glance and was also used to show that their bodies contained the typical and expected qualities. A clear difference however, was the distribution of fat. The woman's body was shown as softer and fuller than the man's and this was used to promote her health and fertility whilst the male's muscular physique highlights his virility and strength.⁶⁶ Weight and body shape was an issue of discussion between authors, for example, Andry deemed fatness as a

⁶⁶ Cowper, *The Anatomy of Humane Bodies*, the second table

type of deformity, one that should be corrected.⁶⁷ Sarah Toulalan has investigated the links between fatness and fertility in early modern England and discusses how fat bodies were perceived as less sexual than their healthier counterparts.⁶⁸ A large body was problematic to conception as physician Ambroise Paré argued that fat ‘hindereth them that they cannot join their genitals together’ and therefore those with large bodies were unable to engage in the sexual activity necessary for conception.⁶⁹ Extra weight around the stomach hindered a couples ability to perform penetrative sex, and therefore made conception unlikely.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, referring to the illustration above, only the female’s body was portrayed as soft and rounded, showing that typical women were perceived to carry more weight whilst men were more likely to have defined muscles which may have been due to the likelihood they were employed in physically challenging occupations.

Another area, in addition to the genitalia, where bodies could be thought of as defective was the skeletal structure and how it differed between the sexes. Many authors depicted the typical skeleton of both sexes as similar, with a handful of noticeable differences such as width of the shoulders and size of the pelvis.⁷¹ Londa Schiebinger argued that the introduction of a female specific skeleton in anatomical books in the eighteenth century was merely used to define women’s position in European society.⁷² She also stated that prior to this period, medical writers such as sixteenth-century Andreas Versalius drew only a ‘human’ skeleton, indistinguishable of sex, showing the lack of distinction made between the two. Schiebinger states that Versalius ‘did not sexualise the bones of the “human” body,’ as he believed sexual difference to only be skin deep.⁷³ Michael Stolberg conversely has argued that the female skeleton was seen as distinct from the sixteenth century in a range of anatomical books.⁷⁴ He argues that some authors chose to only write how the female skeleton

⁶⁷ Andry, *Orthopaedia*, p134

⁶⁸ Sarah Toulalan, “To(o) much eating stifles the child’: fat bodies and reproduction in early modern England,” *Historical Research*, Vol 87, issue 235 (Feb 2014) pp65-93

⁶⁹ Ambroise Paré, *The Works of Ambrose Paréy*, bk. xxiv, *Of the Generation of Man*, trans. Thomas Johnson (London, 1691) p. 567.

⁷⁰ Toulalan, “To(o) much eating stifles the child’

⁷¹ Cowper, *The Anatomy of Humane Bodies*, p73 discusses the narrowness of women’s shoulders and the wideness of their hips and pelvis; Bartholinus, *Bartholinus Anatomy*, also discusses these same differences.

⁷² Schiebinger, ‘Skeletons in the Closet,’ p42

⁷³ Andreas Versalius, *Compendiosa totius anatomie delineatio*, (London, 1559)

⁷⁴ Stolberg, *A Woman Down to Her Bones*, p279

differed, rather than showing it in picture form alongside a male one. This allowed ideas about the similarity of the male and female skeleton to continue to circulate but also perhaps prevented the idea from being common knowledge due to the lack of visual representations. For example, the below image appeared in Physician Thomas Bartholinus' *Bartholinus Anatomy* (1663) and shows a human skeleton, indistinguishable of gender.⁷⁵

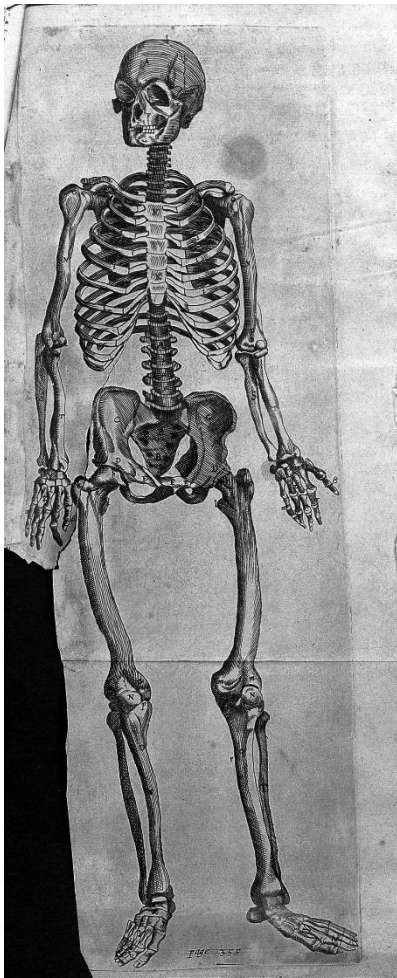


Figure 4: Bartholinus, *Bartholinus Anatomy*, 'Skeleton of a grown body' p354. Photo Credit © Wellcome Collection

Early modern beliefs prevailed that there were more similarities than contrasts between the skeletons of men's and women's bodies. Moving away from sexual difference, there were elements of the skeleton which were interpreted as typical and atypical. For example, one of the key parts of the

⁷⁵ Bartholinus, *Bartholinus Anatomy*, p354

skeleton was the spine, responsible for shaping the stance and posture of the body. French Surgeon Nicolas Andry offered a description of the spine,

The spine is that long chain of moveable bones, placed one upon another, all along the back, from the top of the neck down to the rump, and composes that flexible columns upon which the head is placed, as on an axis, with respect to the first vertebrae. When the spine is strait, well set, and finely turned, it makes a handsome body, and when it is crooked and ill turned, the body is deformed.⁷⁶

Andry detailed how the formation of the spine could manipulate the positioning of the body and make it either ‘handsome,’ or ugly and ‘deformed.’ Whilst a straight spine was more typical, crooked and damaged spines were noted in early modern society. Notable figures such as Alexander Pope, William Hay and Mary Chandler were all aware to have had atypical spines and structures.⁷⁷ Hay and Chandler wrote about their deformities and the impact they had on their lives, for example Chandler never married even though she was proposed to as she thought herself unsuitable for married life due to her deformed spine.⁷⁸ The visibility of these individuals in historical record demonstrates cultural acknowledgement of deformed spines and skeletons in early modern England, whilst they may not have been desired or wanted they were still accepted demonstrating the variety of bodies visibly existing alongside one another. David Cressy argues that the early modern era saw a shift from superstitious to scientific attitudes towards monstrous and deformed bodies, which influenced how comfortable individuals such as Pope, Hay and Chandler were with writing about their bodies and lives for public consumption.⁷⁹ The change in attitudes allowed a medical and scientific understanding of the body and variation to develop, which is why this thesis also includes a discussion of monstrous births.

⁷⁶ Andry, *Orthopaedia*, p77

⁷⁷ Theophilus Cibber, *The Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland* (1753) Vol. V; William Hay, *Deformity: an essay*. (London, 1755)

⁷⁸ Mary Chandler, *My Own Epitaph* (1734); Hay, *Deformity*

⁷⁹ David Cressy, *Agnes Bowker's Cat: Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England*, (Oxford University Press, 2000) p30

French physician Charles Le Clerc's posthumous English translated *The Compleat Surgeon* (1710) offered a description of the 'bones in general' including shape and sometimes texture, saying 'there are those that are long and slim, as the Prone; large, as the os sacrum,' 'some are smooth as the frontal-bone' and 'some of a middling size.'⁸⁰ Whilst he agreed that a majority of people had the same bones, he also believed there could be bodily differences between people. In regard to the amount their body contained, for example 'there are some people that have not about eight and twenty teeth; others have two and thirty.'⁸¹ It is probable that Le Clerc was talking about the appearance of wisdom teeth, which are now known to only appear in some people, and when they do they can appear later on in life. Other variables included the number of vertebrae in the spine for 'some have eight vertebrae in the neck, tho' the usual number is seven.'⁸² Similarly to Paré, Le Clerc understood how the spine should have been correctly formed, and how a deviance from this could result in a deformity,

when the vertebrae of the loins alone bend forwards, while those of the back continue in their proper places, they are a little pressed behind, which occasions a convexity in this place. Then the fore part of the cartilages, which lies between the body of the vertebrae, grows very small, and the hind very thick: The oblique and spiny Apophyses open a little, and separate from one another, for reasons before assign'd. But as the vertebrae in the middle is the most press'd of any, this is that which forms the point of the bunch, which many times resembles a sugar-loaf. This point is more or less obtuse in proportion to the number of the vertebrae of which 'tis form'd. These sort of people are only hump'd behind; but in case they are thus deform'd by reason of the vertebrae of the back being put into disorder or disjointed, they are hump'd before and behind at once.⁸³

Le Clerc described how the condensing and bunching together of the vertebrae could lead to physical signs of spinal deformity, that the centre of the spine was more susceptible to visible damage and that the spine could be manipulated in two different ways. It appears as if he was describing the

⁸⁰ Charles Le Clerc, *The second part of The Compleat Surgeon, containing an exact and compleat treatise of osteology, the decipher'd skeleton, together with the diseases of the bones, and their cure.* (London, 1710) p2

⁸¹ Le Clerc, *The second part of the compleat surgeon*, p2

⁸² *Ibid*, p2

⁸³ *Ibid*, P282

appearance of a spine bent forward, meaning that from the side it would resemble the letter C, and other types of deformity potentially resulted in a back resembling the letter S if damaged in more than one area as it was bent forward and backwards simultaneously, potentially referring to what modern day society understands as scoliosis. He also argued that there were ‘several sorts of bunches or deformities that are occasion’d by crookedness, whether before or behind, of all the vertebrae of the spine, or of some of these pieces.’⁸⁴ Le Clerc believed that it was ‘no easie matter to remedy or cure these evils; they are not easily discovered till they are past help; that is, we do not perceived them till they are fully form’d.’⁸⁵ Le Clerc thus admitted that the lack of visible symptoms early on in these conditions meant that those who suffered from the conditions would not receive medical attention until later in life following growth and maturity when it was too late to treat. The difficulty in identifying some forms of deformity at birth meant that they were able to develop over time, which meant that these defects had to be acknowledged.

The authors in this section detailed how they believed the body should look and internally work. They all understood the typical functionality of the human body, and any deviance from its expected appearance or function was indicative of a bodily defect. Early modern authors acknowledged that different bodies existed and could still be deemed as typical though, for example the number of teeth may differ between people, but was not indicative of deformity, only variation. Different bodies co-existed alongside one another, individuals may have been affected by their humoral levels, genitalia, fat distribution or shape and structure. No matter how they differed they were described on a sliding scale defining deformity and typicality. This section has shown how the body was expected to appear and function, the following half of this chapter will demonstrate a variety of causes for a body’s diversion from the established criteria of a normative and expected body.

⁸⁴ Ibid, P284

⁸⁵ Ibid, P287

Causes of Atypical Bodies

Not everybody lived with a typical body. In fact, the human body was susceptible to different types of deformity, both defects from birth, and those caused by illness and injury. The origins of deformity and atypicality were understood through published texts and observation. Some causes of atypical bodies were thought to be humorous or pitiful depending upon the context, narrative or affliction, whilst others were regarded as signs of God's judgement.⁸⁶ The consistent representations of different body types in early modern England created a culture which acknowledged a differentiation but responded to defective bodies in different ways, based on their origin. The understandings of the origins of deformity shaped responses to the atypical body and explains why some were concealed or altered (as to be shown in Chapter Two), and how they were susceptible to fraudulent recreation (as examined in Chapter Three). Not all types of bodily defect were falsified, and as will be shown in this section, this was due to the extremeness of the affliction or the narrative which explained its existence.

During the sixteenth century a vast number of texts and ballads were published that described monstrous births as they became topics of fascination. The wide scale of published texts allowed a wider audience to read about those with deformed bodies, but they did not offer a medical explanation for why these bodies existed. They instead offered a different context of deformity, one distanced from medical understandings. Tales were used to explain a baby's deformity, with some authors describing the parent's lewd sexual behaviour as the cause, but not all texts gave a legitimate reason why these births occurred. On the 21 April 1532, a baby boy was born with a 'maymed form' between a 'naturall father and a naturall mother.'⁸⁷ The baby had,

⁸⁶ On humour: Simon Dickie, "Hilarity and Pitilessness in the Mid-Eighteenth Century: English Jestbook Humour," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37.1 (2003), 1–22; On signs of God's judgement, Katharine Park and Lorraine J Daston, 'Unnatural Conceptions: The Study of Monsters in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France and England,' *Past & Present*, No. 92 (August 1981)

⁸⁷ Anonymous, 'The True Report of the Forme and Shape of a monstrous Childe, Borne at Muche Horkesley', (London: T. Marshe, 1562), in Anonymous, *A Collection of Seventy-nine Black-Letter Ballads and Broad-sides*, printed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, between the years 1559 and 1597. Accompanied with an introduction and illustrative notes. A new edition of 'Ancient Ballads & Broad-sides published in England in the sixteenth century.' Edited by Alfred Henry Huth. (London, 1870)

neyther hande, foote, legge, nor arme, but on the left syde it hath a stumpe growynge out on the left syde out of the shoulder, and the ende thereof is rounde, and not so long as it should go to the elbowe; and on the right syde no mencion of any thing where any arme should be, but a litel stumpe of one ynche in length; also on the left buttock there is a stumpe coming out of the length of the thigh almost to the knee, and round at the ende, and froweth something ouerthwart towards the place where the right legge should be, there is no mencion of anye legge or stumpe. Also it hath a codde and stones, but no yearde, but a lytell hole for the water to issue out. Finallye, it hath by estimation no tongue, by reason whereof it sucketh not, but is succoured wyth liquid substaunce put into the mouth by droppes, and nowe begynneth to feede wyth pappe, being very well favoured, and of good and cheareful face.⁸⁸

The description depicts the baby as having no limbs, penis, or tongue. The implication of this was that if the child continued to live, he would never be independent. He did not have the desired motor skills and movement, could never speak, nor reproduce. The monstrous child was not fit to live in early modern society as it would never be able to contribute to its community, earn an honest living or live independently of carers. Many of these forms of texts were written to instruct men and women on their behaviour and, as Tim Reinke-Williams has suggested, were used to combine issues of morality with objects of public fascination.⁸⁹The baby died soon after its birth due to the condition of its body, and the ballad explained the reason for the child's deformed existence was God, nature and sin, the three factors which were thought to influence the shape of a person's body. The story continued as follows,

By birthes that shewe corrupted natures strife,
Declares what sinnes beset the secrete minde.
Were always linkd with fraughted minde with vice,
But that in nature God such drughtes doth shape,

⁸⁸ Ibid, p29

⁸⁹ Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability*, pp10-12

Resembling sinnes that so bin had in price.⁹⁰

It was believed that God judged people's sins and punished them in life, as well as in death. In this case though it is unclear what sin the parents had committed as the child was born within the legal and moral confines of matrimony even if it had not been conceived so.

A later ballad from 1568, however, showed that a baby boy was born to an unmarried mother, one who 'played the naughty packe, and was gotten with child.'⁹¹ The baby was severely deformed, and the description before the ballad described the child as having

the mouth slitted on the right side like a Libardes mouth, terrible to beholde, the left arme lying upon the brest, fast therto joyned, having as it were stumps on the handes, the left leg growing vpward toward the head, and the ryght leg bending toward the left leg, the foote therof growling into the buttocke of the sayd left leg. In the midst of the backe there was a broad lump of flesh in fashion lyke a Rose, in the myddest whereof was a hole, which voyded like an Issue. Thys sayd Childe was borne alyue, and lyved xxiii houres, and then departed this lyfe.⁹²

The circumstances surrounding the birth of the deformed child were used to understand his existence, he was illegitimate and therefore his appearance had been created as a punishment for his mother's lewd sexual behaviour. The description of the baby's deformities was very detailed and left little to be assumed by the readers. The combination of a slitted mouth, stumps for hands, crooked legs, and a curved spine, made the child sound unusual and unsettling due to the detail of his atypical body. The story was ostensibly used as a warning against immoral and lewd behaviour, as the ballad itself stated 'Let this Monster them teach: To mend the monstrous life they show.'⁹³ Stories such as this one from Kent were not uncommon, and during the sixteenth century there were many of them published. This shows that there was a common discussion in popular works that deformity and monstrous births existed. Whilst not all deformed bodies were defined as monstrous, it does appear as if babies born

⁹⁰ Anon, 'The True Report of the Forme and Shape of a monstrous Childe, Borne at Muche Horkesley...' p29

⁹¹ Anonymous, *The Forme and Shape of a Monsterous Child Borne at Maydstone in Kent...* (London: 1568)

⁹² Anon, *The Forme and Shape of a Monsterous Child*

⁹³ Anon, *The Forme and Shape of a Monsterous Child*

with extreme defects were reframed in this way. Rather than being labelled as deformed or disabled, the term monstrous was used to define them as something different to the other types of atypical bodies existing. Though monstrous births were difficult to **falsely** produce, their existence in early modern society meant that extreme deformity was widely understood and may have helped to lessen the social stigma of those deformed to a lesser extent or from a different cause. As stories were told through word-of-mouth or by print, the fascination and humour found in their bodies continued to exist. As stated earlier, many of these babies died soon after birth as their deformities made it impossible for them to survive outside of the womb, but their presence in early modern culture was a consistent reminder of just how badly shaped and damaged a human body could be.

To allow readers to understand the range of bodies that existed in their communities, some authors chose to explain the origins and different causes of monstrous births. God and nature were the two most prominent explanations. Park and Daston have argued that the meaning of "natural causes" changed significantly during the early modern period and could have meant almost anything.⁹⁴ Therefore almost any defect could be blamed on 'natural' factors. Levinus Lemnius's seventeenth-century text *The Secret Miracles of Nature* blamed a variety of natural things such as the mother's imagination, her humours, the quality of the seed during conception, her health and the stars. He stated;

Daily examples shew that some are born with double limbs, and such as grow to the rest, as with appendixes to their feet, armes, head, and sometimes they are distinguished by joynts. And as deformed, and monstrous shapes proceed from faulty and corrupt seed, and the ill constitution of the womb, the stars also joyning their forces in the production of them: so by redundance of humours and plenty of seminall excrement, the parts of the body come forth double, the imagination of the parents being busied about some such thing in the formation of it. For if at any time that sex, which is shaken with the smallest affections and prints them upon the child, conceives anything in the mind; or thinks that things are double before their

⁹⁴ Park and Daston, 'Unnatural Conceptions' pp24-26

eyes, by the concourse and flux of humours, that fall down on those parts, about which the thoughts are employed, do serve to frame double parts that are superfluous, or parts of some other kind.⁹⁵

The first noteworthy thing to be taken from Lemnius' depiction was that he referred to the daily occurrences of monstrous births, indicating that he perceived this to be a regular issue, and therefore it may be argued that their appearances were expected rather than shocking. The variation and broad spectrum of causes of deformity offered by Lemnius demonstrate the uncertainty in explaining the existence of monstrous births. It is probable that authors deemed it more informative to offer a dozen possible causes, rather than a small handful which many could contradict due to the circumstances and context of the conception.

Ambrose Paré likewise noted a variety of reasons for the existence of a monstrous birth, he wrote in his sixteenth century illustrated encyclopaedia of curiosities *On Monsters and Marvels*, thirteen explanations.⁹⁶ They were,

- The first is the glory of God.
- The second, his wrath.
- The third, too great a quantity of seed.
- The fourth, too little a quantity.
- The fifth, the imagination.
- The sixth, the narrowness or smallness of the womb.
- The seventh, the indecent posture of the mother, as where, being pregnant, she has sat too long with her legs crossed, or pressed against her womb.
- The eighth, through a fall, or blows struck against the womb of the mother, being with child.
- The ninth, through hereditary or accidental illnesses.
- The tenth, through rotten or corrupt seed.

⁹⁵ Levinus Lemnius, *The Secret Miracles of Nature*, p253

⁹⁶ Ambrose Paré, *On Monsters and Marvels*, (first published 1573) English translated by Janis Pallister (University of Chicago Press, 1982) pp3-4

- The eleventh, through mixture or mingling of seed.
- The twelfth, through the artifice of wicked spital beggars.
- The thirteenth, through Demons and Devils.

These were common beliefs of the early modern populace explaining how deformity was created.

Whilst most of them referred to monstrous births, number twelve described fraudulent beggars counterfeiting bodily defects, something which is further assessed in Chapter Three. The categorising of beggars alongside deformity from God's wrath or the Devil, perhaps implies that in popular thought, all these types of deformity were connected in some way.

Early modern mentalities did not believe there to be only a single cause of deformity from birth.

Instead authors such as Paré assembled lists to give their readers as many explanations as possible.

Society did not necessarily fear the appearance of monstrous births, but instead were concerned with their origin and the wider social implications these could have on to their communities. Babies could not have fraudulent or deceitful bodies, but the common discussions of monstrous births and birth deformities illustrates the diversity of deformed bodies in early modern English culture and demonstrates a variability in the ways which people chose to interpret the existence of deformity.

Monstrous births were not the most common origins of bodily defects, though they were recorded and publicised in numerous ways to the early modern populace. The more common causes of defective bodies were illness and injury, and it was these bodies which were more likely to be fraudulently created in a fraudster's façade.

Throughout the early modern period there were a range of diseases prevalent in England such as the Plague and the Pox, but not every disease left behind visible reminders of its occurrence. Michelle Webb claims that facial disfigurement was 'not a rare phenomenon,' and that disease was responsible for 'much of the damage.'⁹⁷ Damage to women's faces was framed by contemporaries as something which would alter a woman's future, and rather than being linked with ugliness and monstrosity,

⁹⁷ Michelle Webb, 'A Great Blemish to her Beauty': Female Facial Disfigurement in Early Modern England,' in *Approaching Facial Difference*, ed Patricia Skinner and Emily Cock (London: Bloomsbury 2018) pp24-26

deformity was more closely associated with old age and the decay of beauty.⁹⁸ It has been argued by Margaret Pelling that the visibility of the face meant, that it was more susceptible to comment when it was damaged or altered due to disease.⁹⁹ Clothing was able to conceal the body meaning that other types of bodily deformity could be hidden, but the face could not and therefore facial disfigurements were more likely to be commented upon.¹⁰⁰ Noelle Gallagher has recently examined early modern portrayals of the lost nose, caused by venereal disease.¹⁰¹ Even as she argues that some texts such as Lawrence Stone's *Tristram Shandy* used the nose as a literary and visual symbol of sexual health, not everyone who had the disease carried the prevalent reminder of it on their face, and not everyone who had a lost or deformed nose had syphilis.¹⁰² The 1738 English translation of French Anatomist Pierre Desault's text on venereal disease vaguely referred to cases he had encountered, 'I have seen some who lost their nose, the bone being rotten, the teguments sunk in after the cure for the Pox, and they retained this Deformity all their Life time.'¹⁰³ Desault's reference showed that he understood the severity of the deformity and knew that its existence was untreatable even if the disease had been cured, however it's visibility was able to be altered (as will be shown in Chapter Two, prosthetic noses were sometimes used to fill a void on the face). The Pox nevertheless, caused other symptoms such as skin rashes, bone pain, spinal deformity, and tumours, with the most obvious one being the collapse of the bridge of the nose.¹⁰⁴ The symptoms became more severe over the duration of the patient's life. Many other symptoms such as numbness in the limbs, weakness in the back and dizziness affected the health of the body and thus its behaviour, whilst these symptoms were not reflected on the face they were revealed by the movement and performance of the body.¹⁰⁵ The

⁹⁸ Webb, 'A Great Blemish,' pp27-33

⁹⁹ Margaret Pelling, 'Appearance and Reality: Barber-surgeons, the body and disease,' in A L Beier and Roger Finlay (eds), *London 1500-1700: The making of Metropolis*, (London: Longman 1986) pp82-122

¹⁰⁰ Pelling, 'Appearance,' pp82-122

¹⁰¹ Noelle Gallagher, *Itch, Clap, Pox: Venereal Disease in the Eighteenth-Century Imagination*, (Yale University Press, 2018) pp160-161

¹⁰² Ibid, pp160-161; Lawrence Stone, *Tristram Shandy* (London, 1759)

¹⁰³ Pierre Desault, *A treatise on the venereal distemper, containing a method of curing it without salivation, danger, or great expence. With two dissertations; the first on madness from the bite of mad creatures; the second on consumptions. By Pierre Desault. Translated from the French by John Andree, M.D.* (London, 1738) p148

¹⁰⁴ Gallagher, *Itch*, p161

¹⁰⁵ Charles Peter, *Observations on the venereal disease with the true way of curing the same* (London, 1686) pp9-11; George Warren, *A new method of curing, without internal medicines, that degree of the venereal disease, call'd, a gonorrhœa or clap* (London, 1711); Anonymous, *The practical scheme explaining the*

shameful nature and connotations of venereal disease meant that while many of the symptoms were visible in some manner, many wanted to be treated privately or even by their own sex. Kevin Siena has identified that women with the Pox wanted to be treated by other women, and thus many women engaged in partnerships with male practitioners so that they could assist these patients.¹⁰⁶ Dozens of medical treatises on the treatment for venereal disease were published during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, indicating that as the disease was becoming more prevalent published works were used to inform readers of how to treat it.¹⁰⁷ The social connotations of having the Pox and its symptoms which were spread through sexual acts, meant that it was unlikely someone would falsify this disease, instead it was much more likely they would attempt to conceal its existence and effects. This meant that whilst certain diseases may have been used to explain deformities or ill health, it was highly unlikely someone would choose to enact this disease in their narrative if appealing for charity or sympathy due to its illicit sexual connotations.

Smallpox was another common disease which resulted in significant scarring and most notably affected Elizabeth I in the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁸ Alun Withey claims that it was a ‘disease to be feared’ and that cultural concerns of both adults and children, meant that smallpox scars were perceived as marks of ‘shame.’¹⁰⁹ The disease was thought to be airborne but could also spread through contact with a diseased corpse or by handling infected clothing and bedding.¹¹⁰ The development of the illness progressed in a distinctive way, starting with high temperatures and headaches, and followed by a rash

symptoms and nature of the venereal or secret disease, a broken constitution, & a gleet. ... with the appendix to the quarterly journals. ... (London 1725) p13

¹⁰⁶ Kevin P. Siena, ‘The “Foul Disease” and Privacy: The Effects of Venereal Disease and Patient Demand on the Medical Marketplace in Early Modern London,’ *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Volume 75, Number 2, (Summer 2001), pp199-224

¹⁰⁷ Peter, *Observations on the venereal disease*; Warren, *A new method of curing without internal medicines*; Unknown, *The practical scheme explaining*; Daniel Turner, *Syphilis. A practical dissertation on the venereal disease. In which, after an account of its nature and original, the diagnostick and prognostick signs, with the best ways of curing that distemper, ... are ... communicated. In two parts. The second edition, revised, corrected, and improved*, (London, 1724); John Douglas, *A dissertation on the venereal disease. Wherein the opinions of the antient writers, about the use of mercurial frictions, are examined* (London, 1737)

¹⁰⁸ Anna Riehl, *The Face of Queenship: Early Modern Representations of Elizabeth I*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2010) p53

¹⁰⁹ Alun Withey, *Physick and the family: Health, medicine and care in Wales, 1600-1750* (Manchester University Press, 2016)

¹¹⁰ David Shuttleton, ‘A Culture of Disfigurement: Imagining Smallpox in the Long Eighteenth Century,’ In Rousseau G.S., Gill M., Haycock D., Herwig M. (eds) *Framing and Imagining Disease in Cultural History*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) p69

covering a majority of the face and body which produced pustules. Many of these erupted and produced harsh smells and would stain clothing and bedding.¹¹¹ David Shuttleton claims that smallpox has become most commonly known for leaving behind survivors with facial scarring, rather than its death rate.¹¹² Depending on the strain of the disease it resulted in blindness if the disease had spread to the eyes and could affect the mouth and throat leaving it almost impossible for the patient to eat or drink, resulting in death or long term implications caused by malnutrition and dehydration.¹¹³ Shuttleton has also used literary figures and representations to demonstrate how smallpox was depicted in the literary imagination, whilst he claims that many texts from the early modern period were written in response to concerns of women contracting smallpox, it did also affect men and their appearance meaning that, like the Pox, this disease was not constrained by gender.¹¹⁴ He argues that the disfigurements of smallpox were consistent reminders of the threat of ‘monstrous disruption’ to the body, meaning that this disfiguring disease created fears and anxieties of its occurrence and effect regardless of gender.¹¹⁵ Smallpox marks and pitting were noticeable and difficult to falsify as their appearance was easily identifiable in early modern society, meaning that it was unlikely that someone would choose to replicate smallpox. Also replicating this disease was counterintuitive as it would encourage those giving alms to keep away because of fears of its spreading. It is instead possible that some may have attempted to cover up the marks using cosmetics, as to be shown in the next chapter. Falsifying a disease and its symptoms did not mean that an individual was likely to receive charity or sympathy from others, especially during times where disease rates were high. Instead, men and women had to provide a sympathetic and honourable narrative for their defective body if they wanted to be able to benefit from it. As discussed in the introduction to this project, it was difficult for men and women to access financial aid, and any support was based on their need and ability.¹¹⁶ Those who suffered from facial or bodily defects by diseases such as venereal disease and smallpox were still

¹¹¹ Ibid, p69

¹¹² Ibid, p69

¹¹³ Ibid, p69

¹¹⁴ David Shuttleton, *Smallpox and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp115-136

¹¹⁵ Shuttleton, ‘A Culture of Disfigurement,’ p68

¹¹⁶ Slack, *The English Poor Law*

able to work in some capacity, and although marriage prospects and opportunities may have been limited, disease alone was not regarded as a useful narrative in fraudsters ploys. It is useful to understand how disease was able to leave lasting effects on the external surfaces of the body, as they did create deformities, but these were not bodily defects which were artificially created but instead were perhaps concealed or hidden wherever possible.

Many men were injured, or even killed, by their occupation, and both men and women were susceptible to accidents in the home or on the streets. In a recent study Craig Spence has examined accidents and violent deaths in early modern England and provides a quantification of the frequency of different types of unfortunate accidents happening inside and outside of work, such as crushing injuries and fires.¹¹⁷ Spence claims however, that there was limited attention paid to accidents and injuries if they did not result in death, because historical records note the dead more than the living and injured. Many minor injuries were treated at home, and the rise of published medical texts were used to inform households of how to treat many wounds and illnesses themselves.¹¹⁸ Medical professionals were called upon to treat serious injuries such as broken bones which were deemed unpredictable and required a degree of professional or experienced medical knowledge to be able to treat.¹¹⁹ There were many different types of injuries that occurred in early modern England, and they ranged in severity, context and impact. Not all injuries had a lasting effect on the body, and not all accidents were regarded in the same manner. Though Spence's investigation in to the day to day accidents which occurred in early modern London is useful, not all of the resulting physical symptoms were able to be faked by fraudsters and not all of them were surrounded by honour and respect in the way that imposters needed. As this dissertation is investigating the bodies which were faked or concealed, it refers to only a proportion of defective or injured bodies existing in early modern England. A broken limb was likely to heal and still allow the patient to stay relatively mobile, however when injury or illness was deemed too dire amputation was used to treat the wound and stop

¹¹⁷ Craig Spence, *Accidents and Violent Deaths in Early Modern England 1650-1750*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016)

¹¹⁸ Medical texts became available to lower levels of society and informed them of how to treat basic illnesses and injuries, for example, Richard Hawes, *The poore-mans plaister box* (London, 1634)

¹¹⁹ Spence, *Accidents*, p170

the spread of gangrene and mortification. Whilst an initial injury was unlikely to be faked by fraudsters in early modern England, a missing limb was susceptible to being employed in a new narrative which was used to invoke sympathy and charity, such as a limb being lost at war or at sea. General and common injuries were therefore not useful for fraudsters, instead they required the use of ailments which were known to either never improve or that would worsen over time. Hence, this chapter includes a limited discussion of accident and injury occurring in day-to-day life, for they were not necessarily drastic or theatrical enough to be used in someone's deception.

One of the most obvious (and potentially sympathetic) forms of bodily deformity was the loss of a limb, usually because amputation was performed by a surgeon to treat an injury or illness. English Civil War surgeon Thomas Brugis wrote in 1640 that the body contained 'such things as grow against nature,' multiple bodily features and limbs were susceptible to damage caused by unnatural influences such as disease or injury.¹²⁰ He wrote 'if a member be cut off either in part or in all, it is a disease of defect,' or

if any part be either bigger or lesser than is necessary, it is called a disease of greatness; for nature hath given to every part of a certaine kind if species, and bigness, which if it exceeds or be lesse, then it is not right.¹²¹

Brugis showed an understanding of the uses and sizes of body parts, and that they could become defective either by their removal by amputation or through swelling or shrinking, which could have perhaps been a symptom of illness or injury.¹²² In regard to amputation, it was not the initial ailment and cause which was a cause of sympathy but instead the lifelong effects of its existence and treatment of removal. To be missing a limb was perceived by many people as a hindrance, and therefore worthy of sympathy (if its cause was respectable or if the individual was blameless).

¹²⁰ Thomas Brugis, *The Marrow of Physicke* (London, 1640) p73

¹²¹ Brugis, *The Marrow*, p73

¹²² Browne, *The Surgeons Assistant*, chapter 8; Hugh Ryder, *The New Practice of Chirurgery* (London, 1693) pp64-81 discusses gangrene, mortification and subsequent amputation.

In 1656 the posthumous edition of German Physician Daniel Sennert's text stated that amputating body parts was only necessary when there was 'no hope of curing' the diseased limb.¹²³ Amputation was the last resort, and only to be performed by surgeons if other forms of treatment had been exhausted and proved inefficient. It is likely that this was because removing a limb, promoting healthy healing and limiting the hindrances to the body were difficult to perform. Amputation at worst threatened a patient's life, at best altered the patient's life and redefined how their body performed in every-day life, but this was preferable to allowing them to die. Although Sennert did not detail the different types of causes of mortification and gangrene, he did believe that leaving an affected limb would put the entire body at risk. He argued, 'whatever therefore is corrupted, is to be cut off, but the manner of cutting off is various according to the variety of the parts that are hurt,' demonstrating that Sennert was aware that different types of amputation were to be treated differently.¹²⁴ Sennert however, failed to include the various reasons why patients needed amputations, excluding the personal stories of an injury's origin allowed the patients a level of anonymity, one which they were able to be distanced from.¹²⁵ It was clear that an initial injury led to gangrene or mortification and necessitated an amputation, but hardly any information was given about what caused the initial injury. It is likely that this absence of information was done purposefully, as many other authors also chose not to include this evidence, anatomy and surgical texts were published and were promoted to help inform and educate other medical men or those with medical interests on the procedure, rather than to entertain the general populace with someone else's bodily tragedy.¹²⁶ Medical texts had different purposes, Mary Fissell has argued that pseudo medical texts such as *Aristotle's Masterpiece* were more widely read due to the texts' use of 'conventions associated with reading,' such as their accessibility to be read aloud to others, but other texts were directed at the educated and professionals

¹²³ Daniel Sennert, *The institutions or fundamentals of the whole art, both of physick and chirurgery divided into five books* (London, 1656 ed.) p327

¹²⁴ Sennert, *The institutions*, p327

¹²⁵ Samantha Sandassi, 'Evidence-based medicine? Patient case studies in English surgical treatises, 1660 – 1700', *Medical Humanities*, 34 (2008) 11-18

¹²⁶ Furdell, *Publishing and Medicine*, p75

who wanted to learn how to perform surgery or practice medicine.¹²⁷ Many surgeons wrote on amputation and surgery to teach and inform, not to entertain.

In 1746 John Griffin proposed a pension scheme for ‘aged and disabled seamen in the merchants service,’ because injury was common.¹²⁸ His scheme suggested that seamen should pay in for several years before ever being able to receive funds during their time of unemployment or injury, meaning that the scheme was intended to provide long term support rather than short term. This also meant that if a man was affected by an injury too early in his service and contribution period that he would be unable to profit. Griffin wrote that,

If a seamen, who enters himself, or is impressed into the King’s service, by any accident wounded or disabled, to recompence him for the loss, he received a pension during life, which is proportioned to his hurt; so ‘tis but reasonable, that a poor man, who loses his limbs which are his estate in the service of the government, and is thereby disabled from his labour to get his bread, shou’d be provided for, and not suffer’d to beg or starve for want of those limbs he lost in the service of his country. But if you come to the seamen in the merchant’s service, not the least provision is made.

Griffin advocated for the rights of seamen working for the merchant’s service and strived to prevent any of them being reduced to poverty and starvation through no fault of their own. On the one hand he appears to applaud the government’s efforts to support the men who directly worked for them, but then condemned merchant services and any other private industry which did not provide the same amount of support to their sailors. Griffin’s text emphasises the respectability of these sailors’ wounds, and specifically refers to their loss of limbs, suggesting that this was a common injury and that these men required financial support.

¹²⁷ Fissell, ‘Readers, texts, and contexts’ p92

¹²⁸ John Griffin, *Proposals for the relief and support of maimed, aged and disabled seamen in the merchants service of great Britain. Humbly offered to all lovers of their country, and to all true friends to trading and navigation.* (London, 1746) p4

Overall this chapter explored how early modern society understood foetal formation and the development of the body. It has shown contemporary understandings of the foetal development of typical bodies, and how medical texts and wider society accepted a degree of variety between bodies which was demonstrated by the noted differences in number of teeth and vertebrae. However, whilst this chapter has shown that different bodies were visible in print and therefore expected and acknowledged in society, misshapen or damaged body were responded to and portrayed differently according to their causes. Bodies deformed from birth were linked with sin, God and nature, rather than biology. Monstrous births and hermaphrodites were objects of fascination in popular works and ballads, and whilst some of the authors tried to use the tales of deformed babies as a tool to promote morality and police behaviour they remained entertaining. Many authors were concerned with the moral implications of the birth of monsters and deformed bodies, but hardly anything was written about in the same context regarding damage from illness and injury as many of these defects were created in accepted and recognisable contexts. A wide range of accidents and injuries affected the early modern populace, but not all of them were counterfeited by fraudsters or concealed to promote typicality. Instead, if there was a relatively normative context for the origin of a defect such as illness or accident at home, then there was no reason why someone would choose to either fake it or hide it. Those whose bodies were damaged at sea or in war however, were more likely to have had their narratives adapted and employed by fraudsters who wished to invoke sympathy and charity because the context had greater impact. Not everybody reacted to illness, amputation, concealment or mutilation in the same way, and therefore not all bodies looked the same. The defining factor of 'typical' bodies was, ultimately, one of function rather than appearance.

The ideas presented in this chapter provide the basis for the analysis presented in Chapter Three, the discussion of genitals and sexual difference are discussed further in Chapter Four, and the lasting impact of disease, illness, or injury is further investigated in Chapter Two's focus on concealment of defects and Chapter Three's examination of fraudulent beggars' methods. Though this chapter has demonstrated the variety of atypical bodies co-existing in early modern England, the rest of this

dissertation only discusses the minority of bodies which were either created, concealed or replicated for the purpose of committing bodily misrepresentation, deception or fraud.

Chapter Two: Restoring Typicality to the Body

Deformed persons are despised, ridiculed, and ill-treated by others; are seldom favourites, and commonly most neglected by parents, guardians and relations: and therefore, as they are not indebted for much fondness, it is no wonder if they repay but little.¹

The above passage comes from English Whig Politician William Hay's text *Deformity: An Essay* published in 1754 and describes how he perceived society to interact with himself and others who were deformed or defective. Hay suffered from a crooked spine and in his text, he made numerous references to how his shape and height were hindrances to everyday life. Those who possessed atypical and deformed bodies were susceptible to becoming the object of mockery, satire or as Hay argued, abuse. Regardless of the origin of a deformity, many who possessed defective bodies chose to use external props and tools to facilitate the creation of a complete body (or at least the illusion of a complete body), or to promote mobility and function. Some with limited movement used crutches or wheelchairs, babies were swaddled to promote the correct development of their young bodies, and makeup, clothing, prosthetics and wigs were used to conceal the true nature of the body and exude the image of natural beauty or typicality.² All of these are ways in which early modern people were able to engage in their own type of bodily deceit by concealing or limiting access to the parts of their body that they believed to be unsightly. This chapter argues that by using cosmetics and prostheses, some people engaged in their own form of dishonesty, and that it was the satire and disparagement that they

¹ Hay, *Deformity*, p24

² For more information about these mentioned topics of study please see: For wheelchairs, Kay Nias' blog <https://blog.sciencemuseum.org.uk/history-of-the-wheelchair/>; For orthopaedic devices see; Alun Withey, *Technology, Self-Fashioning and Politeness in Eighteenth-Century Britain: Refined Bodies*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); For swaddling; Catherine Morphis, 'Swaddling England: How Jane Sharp's *Midwives Book* Shaped the Body of early Modern Reproductive tradition,' *Early Modern Studies Journal*, Vol 6: Women's writing/Women's work in early modernity/2014, pp166-194; Nicholas Andry, *Orthopædia*, pp43-44; William Cadogan, *An essay upon nursing, and the management of children, from their birth to three years of age*, (London, 1748) p10; For makeup, clothing and wigs see; Richard Corson, *Fashions in Makeup: From Ancient to Modern Times* (Indiana University, 1972); Katie Aske's blog post <http://earlymodernmedicine.com/beauty-spots-and-french-pox/>; Anne Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes*, (Berkley. Los Angeles. London, University of California Press, 1993); Mary Rogers, 'Beauty and Concepts of the Ideal', in eds. Linda Kalof and William Gynum, *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Renaissance*, (Bloomsbury, UK, 2010) For the history of smell and perfume see; Holly Duggan, *The Ephemeral History of Perfume: Scent and Sense in Early Modern England*, (The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2011)

were met with, as mentioned by Hay, that motivated some to manipulate their performance and apply these amendments to their bodies.

Similarly, to Chapter One, this chapter refers to Erving Goffman's claims that the body naturally performs every day but goes a step further as the people discussed in this chapter began to employ agency in how they presented their bodies.³ The use of cosmetics and prostheses thus provided people with disabilities and deformities agency over their lives. This means that people were purposefully reshaping the appearance of their body and its performance. Included alongside clearer themes of deceptive behaviour such as fraudulent beggars and false virginity, the individuals discussed in this section altered and disguised certain elements of their body not to cruelly deceive those around them but to increase their own opportunities and avoid unwanted attention. Rather than the use of prostheses and cosmetics being indicative of bodily fraud, like the following chapters, perhaps a better definition of this chapter would be the misrepresentation of the body. The absence of malicious intent means that the themes discussed in this chapter could be deemed as indicative of deception and misrepresentation, rather than fraud.

In making these arguments the chapter engages with the work conducted by Simon Dickie who argues that some people took pleasure in the mocking of those with deformed or atypical bodies, and rather than greeting them with politeness they used humour and satire to depict and interact with defective bodies.⁴ The theme of humour and public disregard for those with deficient bodies is an important element of analysis in this chapter as it illustrates one reason why some people may have chosen to use the methods described further on to conceal or reshape their bodies. Contingent to these questions, the histories of cosmetics and ugliness have gained attention in recent years as scholars have examined the ideal of temporarily shaping or manipulating the body through the application of makeup to the face. Kimberly Poitevin argues that cosmetics were used during the Roman period, before they fell out of favour, and that they were not mentioned in literature until the latter part of the

³ Erving Goffman, *The presentation of self*, pp17-18

⁴ Dickie, "Hilarity and Pitilessness," p16

sixteenth century.⁵ The use of cosmetics was a consistent source of conflict between authors, and as shown in this chapter, the motivation behind using cosmetics were important in shaping cultural responses and mentalities. David Turner and Alun Withey have researched the different types of prosthetic aids available in the eighteenth century and have noted that those who obtained them were treated as customers rather than patients.⁶ They have also explained how those with aids may have fitted into a society concerned with politeness and etiquette.⁷ However, it is difficult to ascertain how consistently these objects were used as part of dressing the body, and whether a distinction was made between instances when it was essential to wear an object and when it was not.

This chapter illustrates the different motivations behind the use of makeup and prostheses and assesses how some artificial aids were used for superficial and cosmetic purposes, whereas others assisted the body regain some of its mobility or actions. Whilst counterfeit eyes and noses did not help the wearer regain their senses of sight and smell, false teeth and limbs did offer some functional aid to the wearer and took on some of the purposes of their real counterparts. Therefore, some prosthetics could assist the wearer practically as well as cosmetically. Turner and Withey have claimed that ‘few questioned the purpose of assistive technologies such as wooden legs or rupture trusses in restoring the maimed and injured to economic productivity,’ because authors discussed cosmetics and prostheses differently as according to their purpose and the intent behind their use.⁸ This chapter supports their argument and demonstrates that it was the motivation behind the use of prostheses and cosmetics which was important to shaping cultural responses to their use. As Withey argues ‘to alter the body for mere fashion was frowned upon’ and this chapter similarly claims that it was because many of these alterations were thought to assist the individual that in many cases they were not shamed or condemned.⁹

⁵ Kimberly Poitevin, ‘Inventing Whiteness: Cosmetics, Race, and Women in Early Modern England,’ *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2011) p60

⁶ David M Turner, and Alun Withey, ‘Technologies of the Body: Polite Consumption and the Correction of Deformity in Eighteenth-Century England,’ *The Journal of the Historical Association*, Vol 99, Issue 338 (2014); Alun Withey, *Technology, Self-Fashioning and Politeness in Eighteenth-Century Britain: Refined Bodies*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Turner and Withey, ‘Technologies of the Body,’ p778

⁹ Withey, *Technology, Self-Fashioning and Politeness*, p131

This chapter argues that it was expected that people with atypical bodies would help themselves by amending their body's appearance and limitations to promote independence, increase opportunities and escape the mockery of their peers. Although this dissertation has established in Chapter One that all types of bodies were visible in society, they were not all necessarily liked. Therefore, this chapter assesses the extent to which the concealment or alteration of bodily defects was perceived as a logical and productive response to social and cultural pressures, rather than being indicative of fraudulent behaviour. It demonstrates that although the use of cosmetics and prosthetics can be labelled as misrepresentation or deceitful, they were not used in a fraudulent performance to manipulate but instead one that sought to redefine perceptions of their body and restore its socio-economic value.

For 'men naturally despise what appears less beautiful or useful.'¹⁰

As social perceptions of the creation of the body and deformity changed over the early modern period, so too did beliefs about alteration and how these were linked to polite ideals. As discussed in the previous chapter, Hermann Levy claimed that from the end of the sixteenth century individuals were seen as partially to blame for their circumstance and body.¹¹ During the middle ages it was thought that deformed or defective bodies were created by God as signs of His anger, and it was because of God's workmanship that any alterations were perceived to be wrongful and/or offensive.¹² The shift from God to an individual responsibility over the body (deformed or otherwise) meant that early modern people were granted more and more control over how they chose to alter, redefine and present their body to others.¹³ Alun Withey has claimed that the eighteenth-century was a 'period of flux in attitudes towards the body, appearance and gender.' He has shown that new enlightened ideas meant that amendments to the body were believed to be indicators of improvement and self-control rather than earlier concepts of vanity and pride.¹⁴ Therefore over the early modern period it became more

¹⁰ Hay, *Deformity*, p20

¹¹ Hermann Levy, 'The Economic History of Sickness,' p135

¹² Ibid, p135-137

¹³ Virginia Smith claims that as attitudes towards the body, hygiene and appearance changed, it allowed a new healthcare marketplace to open up in early modern England. Virginia Smith, *Clean: A History of Personal Hygiene and Purity*, (Oxford University Press, 2008) chapter 8

¹⁴ Withey, *Technology, Self-Fashioning and Politeness*, p2

and more expected that individuals would refashion their bodies to fit certain social ideals of civility and politeness.

Indeed, as Kathleen Brown has claimed, for early America, ‘body care is never entirely private’ as the visibility of the body to society was tied in to social beliefs of spiritual purity, health, manners and decency.¹⁵ Addressing the English context Keith Thomas argued that ‘common civility’ meant that the body was to be taken care of, and that individuals were not to allow fellow citizens to be exposed to the unpleasant sights and smells of neglected bodies.¹⁶ The body was an ‘opaque canvas on which polite appearance could be painted while hiding the true self carefully from sight,’ and Soile Ylivuori claims that ‘politeness became a performative identity.’¹⁷ This chapter supports the arguments of both Withey and Ylivuori as it claims that many people were expected to cover and conceal their deformities, not only to improve their life prospects, but so as not to offend others with their appearance. This suggests that as attitudes towards the creation of the body changed (as discussed in Chapter One), so too did perceptions of the extent to which it should be managed and designed by social ideals of polite behaviour.

Lawrence Klein argues that politeness was ‘an important eighteenth century idiom’ and differs to earlier concepts of gentility and civility as it could be used to refer to more things.¹⁸ Moreover, Paul Langford claims that over the early modern period it went from being solely associated with those who were wealthy enough to accrue it, to eventually being recognised that it had to be accessible to all of society, for if it was not within reach of everyone then it ‘had no claim to recognition.’¹⁹ Conduct books became widespread during the sixteenth and seventeenth century as many different aspects of

¹⁵ Kathleen Brown, *Foul Bodies. Cleanliness in Early America*, (2009) pp4-5

¹⁶ Keith Thomas, *In Pursuit of Civility: Manners and Civilization in Early Modern England*, (Yale University Press, 2018) p17

¹⁷ Ylivuori, *Women and Politeness*, pp14-16

¹⁸ Lawrence Klein, Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century, *The Historical Journal*, vol 45, no 4 (December 2002) pp870-874

¹⁹ Paul Langford, The Uses of Eighteenth-Century Politeness, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol 12, (2002) pp311-316; Paul Langford, ‘British Politeness and the Progress of Western Manners: An Eighteenth-Century Enigma,’ *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol 7 (1997)

society were explained and established to their readers. They had a wide range of contents and were written to address matters such as manners, hospitality, education, women's roles, and social etiquette. Anna Bryson claims 'in our most basic experiences of our bodies and in our most common place, social transactions with others, we are crucially influenced by notions of the 'polite', the 'decent', the 'rude', and the 'disgusting.'²⁰ She claims that early modern authors believed that good manners could 'make or unmake' society and that courtesy and civility were core values of Tudor and Stuart social order.²¹ It is therefore of no surprise that some authors of conduct literature chose to discuss the presentation of the body. Conduct books, however, are not included in this thesis as the vast amount of them available makes them ideal for a standalone piece of research regarding the presentation of the defective and deceptive body in early modern England. It is important however, to establish that conduct literature was apparent in early modern society, and that read alongside the other types of texts included in this thesis, informed readers about the body and its social implications.

Historians have considered politeness in a variety of ways and settings. R.H Sweet has argued that politeness is an urban concept and that much of historiography claims that London was the centre of 'true politeness' and contrasted against the 'vulgarity of other areas.'²² David Turner, Alun Withey and Tim Hitchcock have discussed notions of public politeness and the treatment of those with a deformity in the eighteenth-century, stating that etiquette set a precedent in the treatment of the poor and deformed.²³ It was not only the observers whose behaviour was shaped by early modern concepts of politeness. Individuals with deformed or defective forms were arguably expected to alter their bodies to fit in to early modern concepts of politeness. Politeness 'meant regulating and refining the ways in which people interacted with each other,' meaning that both the performer's and the audience's behaviour was idealised.²⁴

²⁰ Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility. Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998) p2

²¹ *Ibid*, p3

²² R.H. Sweet, 'Topographies of Politeness,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol 12 (2002) p355

²³ Turner and Withey, 'Technologies of the Body' pp775-796; Tim Hitchcock, 'Begging on the streets,' p478

²⁴ Soile Ylivuori, *Women and Politeness in Eighteenth-Century England: Bodies, Identities, and Power*. (Routledge, 2019) p15

The recommended behaviour towards those with defective or deformed bodies was public politeness and a silent tolerance of their existence, meaning that they were encouraged not stare or mock someone's deformity. This is demonstrated in the religious sermons discussed below, however, many members of society still found humour in the bodies that they could not comprehend. Churchmen and moralising pamphleteers warned people not to mock those with unfortunate bodily conditions. In 1642 churchman and historian Thomas Fuller condemned the mockery of deformed individuals, he wrote,

Mock not at those who are misshapen by Nature. There is the same reason of the poore and of the deformed; he that despiseth them despiseth God that made them. A poore man is a picture of Gods own making but set in a plain frame, not gilded: a deformed man is also his workmanship, but not drawn with even lines and lively colours.²⁵

According to Fuller, deformity had strong religious connotations. The appearance of deformed bodies was natural, and they existed in the same broad context as other social categories such as the poor. Deformity was to be accepted patiently and understood to be what God had willed for the individual. Questioning God's creation, or disrespecting a body that He had formed, was construed as a criticism of God and His order. The disapproval of satirising the deformed body is clear, and Fuller makes a point to discuss how common public ridicule was during this period. His inclusion of the artistic references to lines and colour, alongside his mentioning of the non-gilded frame, perhaps shows that Fuller did regard bodies of the deformed and misshapen as lesser than some others in early modern society. Those who possessed defective bodies lacked the same social value as other people, similarly to how a plain frame was contrasted against a more expensive gilded one. Yet Fuller's sermon was not necessarily about the bodies themselves, his condemnation of mockery was directed at those who used it to ridicule Gods work.

²⁵ Thomas Fuller, *The Holy State*, (London, 1642) p190

Over ten years later physician and natural philosopher John Bulwer stated, ‘man is a most beautiful creature, framed by a most wise artisan,’ strongly supporting the belief that each body was made in a specific manner by an almighty presence, who was aware of the consequences of his design.²⁶ This links back with the literature on monstrous births, as discussed in Chapter One, as many argued they existed as a sign of God’s judgement or had been shaped by nature.²⁷ Again, Bulwer like Fuller, claimed that deformity was designed by God, and therefore was not to be criticised or mocked by others. Eighty years later the 1733 sermon *Outward deformity a very unfit subject for ridicule* similarly declared,

if any of you have been so indiscreet as to fall in with this fashionable folly, (mocking deformed) which is everywhere so much practiced at this time, that for the future you would not only neglect, but detest and abhor, this abominable custom.²⁸

According to the sermon, when a body was not formed in the typical way many believed it to be a ‘fashionable folly’ to find humour in it. Rather than encouraging their audience to ignore this behaviour, the author wanted people to condemn it, demonstrating that some encouraged public intervention in these situations. The existence of defective bodies, they argued, was a natural element of early modern society and because the occurrence of deformity was willed by God it should not be treated as a lesser body. In some ways these attitudes were reflected in how monstrous births were written about in the early modern period. Tim Reinke-Williams has argued that while pamphlets were used to push forward moralising ideology, they were used primarily as entertainment.²⁹ Though some argued it was immoral to mock deformed persons, many still attempted to find humour in their bodies. While it is evident that some mocked deformed bodies, we do not know why. Some may have used

²⁶ John Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis: Man Transform'd: Or, the Artificiall Changling Historically* (London, 1653) p44

²⁷ Alan W Bates, ‘Good, common, regular, and orderly: Early modern classifications of monstrous births,’ *Social History of Medicine*, 08/2005, Volume 18, Issue 2, also argues that whilst monstrous births were believed to be shaped by God, they were also signs of complexity and order; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth And Seventeenth-Century England*, (Oxford University Press, 1971) pp89-96; Linda Charnes, *Notorious Identity: Materializing the Subject in Shakespeare*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, Harvard University Press, 1993) pp22-24

²⁸ Anon, *Outward deformity a very unfit subject for ridicule*, p22

²⁹ Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work*, p10

humour to understand and accept bodies which startled or concerned them, others perhaps used mockery to placate a personal need to shift focus to another, and some chose to ridicule and cause suffering to those they deemed as lesser or insignificant. Regardless of the cause of this treatment, it may have emotionally affected some of its targets, such as Hay and influenced their interactions with others.³⁰

The 1742 book *Joe Miller's Jests*, remarked however, that although the 'infirmities of nature' were 'not a proper subject to be made a Jest of,' it was 'ridiculous' to 'take a great deal of Pains to conceal what everybody sees,' indicating that the humorous aspect of deformity was its 'disguise rather than the affliction.'³¹ It can also perhaps be inferred from the comment that the reader did not understand why someone would cover a bodily deformity because it was accepted to be caused by nature. Overall this statement supports Simon Dickie's argument that the populace possessed the ability to find any type of atypical body humorous, whether individuals attempted to conceal it or allow it to remain visible, and claims that this mentality continued into the eighteenth century.³² Dickie argued that the confusion of the deaf or blind, and the stomping of a peg leg were humorous sights to behold, and that each type of deformity or insufficiency was treated as a subject of ridicule, with no thought to the victim's suffering³³.

Drastic alterations to the defective and unattractive body were viewed by some as even funnier than bodies left natural. One of the most identifiable works of satirical fiction from the eighteenth-century which described excessive alterations made to the body, was Jonathan Swift's *A beautiful young nymph going to bed* which described a woman's disassembly at night.³⁴ Swift's humorous language discussed the removal of her 'artificial hair,' the 'picking out (of) a crystal eye,' eyebrows made of mouse fur, prosthetic teeth and more.³⁵ The depiction in the poem illustrates an extreme representation

³⁰ Hay, *Deformity*

³¹ Anonymous, *Joe Miller's Jests: Or, the Wits Vade-Mecum*, 5th edn (London, 1742), p. 4

³² Dickie, 'Hilarity and Pitilessness,' pp1-22

³³ Dickie, 'Hilarity and Pitilessness,' p16

³⁴ Jonathan Swift, *A beautiful young nymph going to bed. ... To which are added Strephon and Chloe. And Cassinus and Peter*, (London, 1734)

³⁵ Ibid

of bodily alteration in early modern England, one constructed to mock the women who perhaps used these different types of amendments to create false beauty and manipulate men. Corinna, the focus of his poem, was not restoring natural beauty, nor was she necessarily concealing a deformity, but instead was covering up her unattractive features and creating new beautiful ones. The poem is a misogynistic and extremely satirical representation of how women were thought able to disassemble themselves and then 'recollect the scattered parts' the next day and is indicative of one perception which was that the use of these amendments was deceitful as it could be used to cunningly attract men.³⁶ This text supports Frances Dolan's claims that many published works presented female agency as destructive as women asserted 'themselves as creators' to 'disrupt social and cosmic order as well as gender hierarchy.'³⁷ Popular representations of amendments, such as Swift's may have therefore influenced public perceptions of women's use of makeup and perhaps fuelled some anxieties concerning the motivations for its use. This dissertation assesses the use of cosmetics to appear as naturally beautiful or typical, rather than the creation of false beauty, as it is used alongside the discussion of prostheses to demonstrate that not all types of deception were fraudulent.

Eighteenth-century MP William Hay, previously mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, commented on how he perceived humour and deformity from the potential target's point of view. He suffered from a bent spine and argued that many men, feeling a sense of 'superiority' liked to laugh at those with insufficiencies, 'for men naturally despise what appears less beautiful or useful' than themselves.³⁸ Yet it appears that Hay questioned why those with typical bodies found atypical bodies so amusing, especially when it was something they could not help nor conceal.³⁹ He critically questioned these responses stating, 'But it is not easy to say why one species of deformity should be more ridiculous than another, or why the Mob should be more merry with a crooked man, than one

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Frances E. Dolan, 'Taking the Pencil out of God's Hand: Art, Nature, and the Face-Painting Debate in Early Modern England,' *PMLA*, Vol 108, No 2 (March 1993) p225

³⁸ Hay, *Deformity*, p19

³⁹ Dickie, 'Hilarity and Pitilessness,' p16, Dickie queries why certain deformities were more humorous than others.

that is deaf, lame, squinting, or purblind.⁴⁰ Hay claimed that people found humour in the atypical features of bodies that were not easily changed, and that the degree of humour and ridicule varied according to the deficiency. He also argued that although weight was viewed as an undesirable bodily attribute, it did not receive the equal degree of humour to ‘crooked’ men (though he does not suggest why he necessarily believed this to be the case).⁴¹ He offered no explanation for why the populace found incurable deformities funnier than bodies which were reshaped or altered through weight loss, but perhaps satire was used as an alternative to fear. Finding a deformed body funny rather than intimidating or frightening, allowed the general populace agency in how they interacted with these forms in everyday life. If those who possessed these bodies were feared, then perhaps it granted them more power in these interactions. Therefore, humour was used as a tool to manipulate the social dynamics between the deformed and able-bodied.

Fuller, and others, strongly believed in God’s influence over the formation of the body, but he also believed there were other causes of deformity, ones which were probably more humorous, he claimed that,

Deformitie is either Naturall, Voluntary or Adventitious, being either caused by Gods unseen providence (by men nicknamed, Chance) or by mans cruelty.⁴²

Fuller believed that naturally deformed bodies were not to be mocked or satirised, however he did discuss other causes of bodily defect in the same manner. He acknowledged that there were different reasons why the body may have been altered or damaged through nature, self-infliction or by accident. He also appeared to have accepted that these bodies may have been humorous. It was only when humour and satire was used to challenge God’s authority however, that Fuller fully condemned its use. In addition to discussing the legitimacy of mocking individuals afflicted with bodily conditions, these authors also discussed whether or not it was appropriate to amend, reshape, and

⁴⁰ Hay, *Deformity*, p20

⁴¹ Hay, *Deformity*, p20

⁴² Fuller, *The Holy State*, p190

conceal the body. Fuller suggested that it was ‘lawfull and commendable by art to correct the defects and deformities of nature.’⁴³ He referred to important figures such as Anne Boleyn, who according to Fuller, covered her neck with ruffles to disguise blemishes.⁴⁴ It is possible that Fuller encouraged people who used these and other methods to conceal defects because it allowed them to avoid the mockery and the disdain that Hay outlined. Whilst arguing that the populace should respect deficient bodies as products of God’s order, he had no issue with people amending their own bodies. Perhaps he was encouraging individuals to treat and present their bodies as they wanted to, rather than being influenced or pressurised into a certain form by public attitudes and attacks.

Not all commentators agreed with Fuller’s considerate approach. Bulwer condemned those who sought to defy God’s will and change their body as according to their own ideas. To change or adapt a natural body which God had designed was wrong, and instead the atypical body should be accepted as it was, whether it was desirable or not:

Yet the blind impiety of some hath led them to such heights of presumption, as to finde fault with many parts of this curious fabricke, and to question the wisdom of God in the contrivance thereof, upon such Blasphemous fancies men have taken upon them an audacious art to forme and new shape themselves, altering the humane figure, and moulding it according to their own will and arbitrement, varying it after a wonderfull manner, almost every nation having a particular whimsy as touching corporall fashions of their own invention. In which kind of mutations, they do schmatize or change the organicall parts of their bodies into diverse depraved figures.⁴⁵

It was blasphemous to change what one had been granted by God, and to seek its alteration was to insult Him. Fuller thought that it was sinful for an individual to personally decide how their body should be shaped, claiming that they did not possess the right or the power to change the body that had been designed by God. It was an insult to alter one’s body. Fuller also claimed that people of

⁴³ Ibid, p190

⁴⁴ Ibid, p190

⁴⁵ Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis*, p44

different nations would alter and present their bodies differently, as its new appearance would be a influenced by their own tastes as well as the fashions of their location. He also referred to these alterations as being ‘mutations,’ perhaps implying that their alterations changed more than just their appearance. It is clear from Bulwer’s statement that he did not believe that early modern people had the right to enact their free will and change their body, in any way.

Popular seventeenth century works such as Richard Allestree’s *The Whole Duty of Man*, supported these religious ideas and encouraged a ‘quiet yielding’ to affliction, urging readers to follow the biblical example of Job in bearing with life’s misfortunes.⁴⁶ Those who took excessive measures to hide their impairments and subvert the natural order of their insufficient body, created by God, were, in accordance with these sentiments, mocked for their affectation.⁴⁷ If God represented nature, then anything that subverted or challenged His order was immoral and wrongful. Tassie Gwilliam claims that ‘the use of cosmetics to erase differences between women or to counteract the effects of age produces some of the fiercest moral condemnations and the sharpest mockery’ of the early modern period.⁴⁸ In most cases this mockery was aimed at ‘the glaring failure of makeup to mask age and ugliness in women,’ for true defects and ugliness could not be hidden.⁴⁹

It appears as if many were able to find humour in the deformed and defective body in early modern England, however others deemed it impolite or immoral to regard the distorted body too closely. Even though it was accepted that their existence was due to God’s judgement or any number of other natural causes (as outlined in Chapter One), their bodies could still be regarded as funny or be mistreated. This section has illustrated the complex cultural perceptions of the deformed body and demonstrated the disagreement in how individuals chose to portray and interact with individuals who possessed an atypical body. It has also provided context surrounding attitudes towards the amendment

⁴⁶ Richard Allestree, *The Whole Duty of Man Laid Down in a Plain and Familiar Way for the Use of All, but Especially the Meanest Reader* (London, 1657)

⁴⁷ Allestree, *The Whole Duty of Man*

⁴⁸ Tassie Gwilliam, ‘Cosmetic Poetics: Colouring Faces in the Eighteenth Century’, in V. Kelly and D. von Mücke (eds), *Body and Text in the Eighteenth Century* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, CA, 1994) p146

⁴⁹ Gwilliam, ‘Cosmetic Poetics,’ p146

of the defective body, demonstrating that many texts that discussed this issue also considered the ways in which these bodies were mocked and jeered.

'The greatest counterfet:' Cosmetics and Typicality

In early modern England there was a contemporary understanding of what qualities were deemed as typical and desirable, especially in women. Naomi Baker has argued that to be 'ugly' in early modern England was unwelcome as ugliness provoked repulsion and distaste from onlookers, referring to the previous discussion on humour.⁵⁰ Therefore, it is not surprising that some people chose to conceal their unattractive qualities when possible. As previously discussed early modern standards of politeness and polite bodies had an impact on ideas about how the body was to be presented, and how it was to be responded to. As 'ugly' faces were thought to be offensive to others, it made sense for some individuals to do what they could to amend, correct or conceal these unattractive features. Mary Rogers argues that as 'cleanliness, grace in body' and clothing became a central topic of treatises on behaviour, this became facilitated due to the wide expanse of tools which became more readily available.⁵¹ These tools included cosmetics, medicines, hair tweezers, toothpicks and larger mirrors, all of which only helped individuals to change their appearance.⁵² This section shows how some elements of the skin and face were altered by using cosmetics and discusses some of the different types.

In 1606 Venetian Thomasso Buoni wrote that there was a difference between men of what they found to be beautiful, caused by their own 'complexions.' Their bodily differences were reflected in the 'diversitie' of their desires.⁵³ Many authors possessed an understanding of attractive features and qualities, especially in women, but ultimately, as Buoni claimed, beauty was subjective.⁵⁴ This has

⁵⁰ Naomi Baker, *Plain Ugly. The unattractive body in early modern culture*, (Manchester University Press, 2010) p11

⁵¹ Mary Rogers, 'Beauty and Concepts of the Ideal', in eds Linda Kalof and William Gynum, *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Renaissance*, (Bloomsbury, UK, 2010) pp125-126

⁵² *Ibid*, p125

⁵³ Thomasso Buoni, *The problemes of beautie and humane affections* English translation (London, 1606) p14

⁵⁴ For more information on the beautiful qualities of women please see; Francis Ames-Lewis, and Mary Rogers (eds) *Concepts of Beauty in Renaissance Art* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1998) Erin J Campbell, "Unenduring" Beauty: Gender and Old Age in Early Modern Art and Aesthetics,' *Growing Old in Early Modern Europe: Cultural Representations*, ed. Erin J. Campbell (London and New York: Routledge, 2006)

been made evident by the volume of texts which discussed the use of beautifying treatments but lacked a description of exactly what the product would alter or correct and provided little to no detail of what the face would look like after its application.⁵⁵

Gwilliam claimed that the use of cosmetics exemplified ‘the pervasive anxiety about female surfaces, but because cosmetics have such a volatile, transferrable presence, they also become available as the site for other anxieties, other concerns,’ such as race, femininity and representation.⁵⁶ In addition both Frances Dolan and Tita Chico have claimed that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the use of cosmetics and adornments were thought to threaten social order.⁵⁷ Dolan also states that many early modern men and women believed that cosmetics worked to ‘undermine the male subject-spectators,’ and was therefore thought to manipulate and deceive men.⁵⁸ Swiss Physician and Philosopher Johann Wecker’s English translated text stated in 1660 that there were two different types of cosmetics.⁵⁹ One helped the body restored its natural attractive state, and the other artificially crafted a beautiful face and was used to deceive men.⁶⁰ This chapter only investigates the former type of cosmetics said to restore natural beauty and typicality of features, rather than ones which attempted to fraudulently create beauty as the overall themes of this chapter are concealment and restoration, not creation. This is because the deceitful nature of makeup has already been established in the historiography, and this project will look much more closely at women’s bodily fraud in Chapter Four’s discussion on counterfeit virginity.⁶¹

⁵⁵ Johann Jacob Wecker, *Cosmeticks or, the beautifying part of physick* (London, 1660) pp107-109; N.H, *The ladies dictionary, being a general entertainment of the fair-sex a work never attempted before in English.* (London, 1694); Anonymous, *The only delicate beautifying cream, for gentlemen and ladies* (London, 1716)

⁵⁶ Gwilliam, ‘Cosmetic Poetics,’ p144

⁵⁷ Tita Chico, ‘The Arts of Beauty: Women’s Cosmetics and Pope’s Ekphrasis,’ *Eighteenth-Century Life*, Volume 26, Number 1, Winter 2002 p2; Dolan, ‘Taking the Pencil,’ p224

⁵⁸ Dolan, ‘Taking the Pencil,’ p225

⁵⁹ Wecker’s *Cosmeticks* provides the clearest example of this distinction as he categorises the different types of cosmetic or recipes based on their purpose. The entire section dedicated to beautifying the face infers that there was a separation between use and purpose of using cosmetics.

⁶⁰ Wecker, *Cosmeticks*, recipes to aid the beautification of the face p15, pp17-25, pp53-54; he also includes recipes to be used to restore the natural appearance of the face such as ointments to minimise the scars left from smallpox p104, and ointments for scabs p105.

⁶¹ Gwilliam, ‘Cosmetic Poetics,’; Dolan, ‘Taking the Pencil,’; Caroline Palmer, ‘Brazen Cheek: Face-Painters in Late Eighteenth-Century England,’ *Oxford Art Journal*, vol 31, No 2 (2008) p198

Caroline Palmer has investigated the physical connections between cosmetics and portraiture, as many portraits showed women possessing desirable complexions and beautiful qualities which were constructed through the use of makeup.⁶² She claims that the ideal of natural English beauty was constructed in opposition to the alleged ‘artificiality of the French’ during the late seventeenth century, and thus became the ideal for all early modern English women.⁶³ This idea of preservation of natural beauty rather than creation of false beauty is reflected in Physician Nicholas Culpeper’s text as he claimed,

Beauty is a blessing of God, and every one ought to preserve it; they offend as much that neglect it, as they do that paint their faces. They are appropriated to the skin, hair and teeth. The skin is pestered with spots, pimples, freckles, wrinckles and sunburning. The hair either falls off, or hangs not as it should do. The teeth are either loose, or fal out, or stink, or are black.⁶⁴

Culpeper argued that to fail to preserve natural beauty was against God’s order and to allow it to physically deteriorate was wrong, yet he also declared that to use methods to recreate or invent false beauty was deceitful. He was not telling women how to be beautiful, but instead what features they should correct or avoid so as not to be deemed as ugly. He understood that natural decays of the skin such as wrinkles and spots occurred and were to be amended but gave no suggestion of how it should be done, therefore his text informed rather than aided. Culpeper only discussed the elements of the body which could be rectified and restored. He made no mention of severe defects which required substantial correction. It also appears as if Culpeper’s argument is non-gender specific, he made no attempt to label this as an issue specific to women, and all the defects he described were applicable to both sexes. Black teeth, smelly breath and spots were deemed unattractive regardless of sex as they tainted and spoiled one’s features and were treated or amended without extensive interaction, they were visible to others and it was perceived as impolite to allow these bad qualities to remain when

⁶² Ibid, p198

⁶³ Ibid, p198

⁶⁴ Nicholas Culpeper, *Pharmacopœia Londinensis, or, The London dispensatory further adorned by the studies and collections of the Fellows* (London, 1653) p321

they could be so easily rectified by the individual.⁶⁵ Virginia Smith has discussed how changing ideals of body care resulted in a growing marketplace for health and body products, she claims authors of the early modern period were writing recipes for individuals to use to correct these sorts of problems.⁶⁶ Corrective cosmetics and concoctions were becoming more and more accessible and early modern consumers could either buy or make what you needed depending on their resources.

Although early modern writers were clear about what constituted an unattractive body, many writers were vehement in their condemnation of practices designed to ameliorate the appearance of these blemished. Erin Campbell argues that the natural face allowed observers to gain insight in to the woman's life, whereas once painted it concealed her emotions and history.⁶⁷ The face was viewed as a map to the self as one's wrinkles and blemishes told a story of a life lived, but once painted or altered it could no longer be read, 'so hypocrisy, vanity and corrupt sexuality were all linked to the painted face and notion of 'painted harlot' due to her concealed character and motives.⁶⁸ Pamphleteer Philip Stubbes' text *The Anatomie of Abuses* was originally published in 1583 but editions were reprinted up until the late nineteenth century, showing the continuity of his ideas.⁶⁹ He wrote, do women 'thinkest that thou canst make thyself fairer then God, who made us all? ... Doo they think thus to adulterate the Lord his workmanship, and to be without offence?'⁷⁰ Stubbes believed that women's behaviour was indicative of their disregard and lack of respect for God; by choosing to alter their bodies they had deemed God's work as insufficient. This links in with the ideas discussed in Chapter One, that the body was shaped by God and his judgement, and by amending the natural body, individuals were editing God's design. Stubbes' opinions were not confined to the use of cosmetics though as he also discussed other forms of immoral behaviour including attending the theatre, visiting prostitutes and wearing fancy clothing.⁷¹

⁶⁵ Thomas, *In Pursuit of Civility*, p17

⁶⁶ Smith, *Clean*, chapter 8

⁶⁷ Erin Campbell, "Unenduring" Beauty," p158

⁶⁸ Farah Karim-Cooper, 'To glisten in a playhouse: cosmetic beauty indoors,' In Andrew Gurr and Farah Karim-Cooper (eds) *Moving Shakespeare Indoors: Performance and Repertoire in the Jacobean Playhouse*, (Cambridge University Press, 2014) p190

⁶⁹ Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (London, 1583) (London, 1877 ed.)

⁷⁰ Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses*, p189

⁷¹ Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses*, p189

Thomas Tuke's 1616 *Discourse against painting and tincturing of women*, contained short poems and statements criticising the use of artificial aids, such as makeup, to manipulate and counterfeit a beautiful face;

Describe what is faire painting of the face, It is a thing proceedes from want of grace: Which thing deformitie did first beget, And is on earth the greatest counterfet.⁷²

In his *Discourse* Tuke was clear that this practice began with those who were trying to hide a bodily deformity, yet it is likely that some women engaged in the use of make up for a variety of personal reasons, including their desire for beauty.⁷³ Tuke rhetorically asked, by painting her face 'doth she therefore thinke to gaine an husband, who knows an ill face wel painted, his but as a peece of counterfeit silver, or as a faire carpet over an unhandsome table?'⁷⁴ He compared the use of cosmetics to create beauty, with the fraudulent value of fake money or unattractive furniture, ultimately comparing false female beauty with inanimate objects of lacking or questionable quality and hinting at its socio-economic value. This meant that Tuke perceived painted faces to not only be less authentic than natural beauty, but also to be worth less financially and socially in a period where it assisted a woman's chances of marriage. Amy Froide has shown that physical attractiveness, or ugliness, could have an impact on a woman's marriage prospects.⁷⁵ Illnesses such as smallpox resulted in 'deformity' and 'factored into a woman's marriage opportunities,' meaning that the scars left behind by such illnesses were perceived as a defect caused by ailment and some may have attempted to conceal their marks in an attempt to restore their natural looks.⁷⁶ The opinion projected by Tuke would explain why some authors chose to emphasise their discussion of natural beauty and its restoration, rather than encouraging the use to cosmetics to artificially create beauty. By rectifying the defects caused by age or illness, early modern people were not fraudulently deceiving those around them as they were restoring something real, but if they created artificial beauty then they were manipulating and reshaping others' perceptions of them based on a false image. This demonstrates a consistent

⁷² Tuke, *A Discourse against painting*, p13

⁷³ *Ibid*, p13

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p13

⁷⁵ Amy Froide, *Never married: single women in early modern England*, (Oxford University Press, 2005) p185-6

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p185

distinction made between the different types of beauty and how they were treated by authors over the early modern period. There was no singular consensus of attitudes towards the use of cosmetics and the variety in public response depended on the purpose of its use.

While several writers were particularly vociferous in their condemnation of makeup and aligned it with deceitful and dishonest behaviours, it is evident that other writers were more lenient and suggested to readers that the use of makeup was widespread and acceptable. For example, Bishop of Exeter and Worcester, John Gauden used his text *A discourse of artificial beauty, in point of conscience between two ladies* to differentiate between attitudes towards the use of cosmetics.⁷⁷ It was written during the time of the commonwealth in 1656 and demonstrates that self-adornment was still prevalent during this period even after the fall of the monarchy and the rise of Puritanism. The text was republished in 1662 and 1692, showing its continuity through the restoration period, and claimed that whilst many men believed adornment to be ‘monstrous fictions,’ he believed its use was dutiful.⁷⁸ Tita Chico claims that Gauden believed it was women’s duty to face paint as they served as objects of men’s desires and should therefore do all they could to promote the image of beauty.⁷⁹ Chico states that face painting was an ‘important method for women’s self-improvement and self-expression,’ and is a theme built upon in this chapter as it similarly claims that people were expected and accepted to have altered their bodies if it was for self-improvement and politeness, rather than deception.⁸⁰

Gauden’s text was written as a conversation between two women, one who strongly condemned the use of makeup, and the other who approved of its use if used correctly. The first woman started the text by bluntly asking whether the other had used makeup as she noticed her complexion was different and claimed that she was jealous if it was natural, but not if it was artificial.⁸¹ The second responded with an implication that she had used something but was not clear what. She claimed that ‘natural’ beauty was envied, but women are quick to judge anything that seems ‘artificial beyond what

⁷⁷ John Gauden, *A discourse of artificial beauty, in point of conscience between two ladies*. (London, 1662ed)

⁷⁸ Gauden, *A discourse of artificial beauty*, (London, 1656ed) p125

⁷⁹ Chico, ‘The Arts of Beauty,’ p7

⁸⁰ Ibid, p7

⁸¹ Gauden, *A discourse of artificial beauty*, p3

themselves are wonted to or acquainted with.’⁸² She then went on to state that there were a variety of methods which could be used to rectify the damage done by age and nature,

against the defects, deformities and decaies of nature and age, as may be by washings, anointings and plasterings, by many secret medicaments and close receipts, which may either fill and plump their skins, if flat and wrinckled, or smooth and polish them, if rugged and chapt, or clear and brighten them, if tann’d and freckled.⁸³

Gauden’s text therefore offered several ideas about the acceptability of makeup and facial amendments and claimed that their proper use was tolerable.⁸⁴ The use of makeup was largely seen as a female activity, as many authors such as Gauden, directed their discourses directly at women.⁸⁵ This was even though men in theatre companies used makeup in a variety of ways for much of the early modern period.⁸⁶

Likewise, in Swiss physician Johann Wecker’s posthumous text *Cosmeticks or, the beautifying part of physick* (1660) there was a wide range of recipes used to treat several blemishes or defects.⁸⁷ Wecker recommended that to treat minor burns, patients should,

Take oyl of roses, rose water, whites of eggs, each a sufficient quantity; mix them, and for four days apply them to the burnt place, the fifth day lay on the following plaster: Take of Oyl of Nuts, new wax each one ounce, melt them together.⁸⁸

⁸² Gauden, *A discourse of artificial beauty*, (1662 ed.) p3

⁸³ *Ibid*, p3

⁸⁴ Chico, ‘The Arts of Beauty,’ p8

⁸⁵ Thomas Tuke, *A Discourse against painting and tincturing of women*, (London, 1616); John Donne, ‘That Women ought to Paint’, *Juvenilia: Or Certaine Paradoxes and Problemes* (London, 1633); Gauden, *A discourse of artificial beauty*; Thomas Jeamson, *Artificiall Embellishments. Or Arts Best Directions How to Preserve Beauty or Procure it* (Oxford: 1665)

⁸⁶ Cressy, ‘Gender Trouble,’ pp438-65; Farrah Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2006); Richard Blunt, *The Evolution of Blackface Cosmetics on the Early Modern Stage*, (Ashgate, 2012); Anna Swärdh, ‘Hiding the Peacock’s Legs: Rhetoric, Cosmetics and Deception in Shakespeare’s *Lucrece* and Trussel’s *Hellen*,’ *European Journal of English Studies*, (2015) pp148-162; Katherine Aske, ‘Such gaidy tulips raised from dung’: Cosmetics, Disease and Morality in Jonathon Swift’s Dressing-room poetry,’ *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* (2017) pp503-517; Morwenna Carr, ‘We’ll Imagine, Madam, You have a beard’: Beards and Early Female Playwrights’ in Jennifer Evans and Alun Withey (eds), *New Perspectives on the History of Facial Hair: Framing the Face* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) pp189-212

⁸⁷ Wecker, *Cosmeticks or, the beautifying part of physick*, pp103-108

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, pp103-108

Many of Wecker's proposed treatments for burns included rose or rose oil/ointment as an ingredient, but he offers no reason for its recommendation, though it is now understood by many to reduce reddening. Although it is probable that many of these ingredients were readily available to those practicing domestic medicine, the measurement of the composition is not made clear and instead suggests that those mixing should be able to judge the 'sufficient quantity' for themselves, displaying the author's expectation of experience and knowledge on the part of those mixing and using these mixtures. Another recipe he commended was the use of melted lard and rose-waters, 'Take old lard, and put it upon a red hot iron, then receive the hot drops falling into cold water, and take the fat which swims a top, and work it with rose-water, and lay it on the burn.'⁸⁹ This time Wecker does not explain how long the mixture should be applied to the skin for, and whether it had to be repeated, thus implying that it was possibly a one-off treatment or something to be used when the situation called for it.

Wecker's entire text was dedicated to various recipes which were intended to treat or cure certain defects of the skin, but he never discussed how they worked or how much improvement the patient could expect to see in their skin after its use. Both recipes discussed before are listed under the heading 'Of ointments that cure the faults of the skin of the head,' and explained treatments for 'running sores of the head' which recommended the application of 'cerusse,' 'scum of silver,' 'brimstone,' 'oyl of roses or myrtles' and 'wax.'⁹⁰ Contrary to the recipes above for the treatment of scars, this recipe included a significant number of chemical compounds; cerusse was a mixture of vinegar and lead mainly used for skin whitening and used alongside silver and brimstone. Another recipe called for the use of 'the filings of lead, vine-branches, frankincence, myrrhe, scum of Niter, each fifty drams, oyl of myrtles, vinegar as much is sufficient, mix them.' Yet again the recipe called for the use of chemicals and metals, asking for lead filings alongside Niter which is a naturally occurring mineral form of potassium nitrate. Both frankincense and myrrh were possibly difficult to get access to, as they respectively come from east and north-east Africa, meaning that the user needed

⁸⁹ Ibid, p105

⁹⁰ Ibid, p105

access to items of trade which were possibly more expensive, meaning that this was a more restrictive recipe.⁹¹ Wecker continually offered more than one recipe per condition, meaning that he provided his readers with a multitude of options which ranged in access, ease of use and price. This shows that Wecker was keen to make his treatments accessible to as many people as possible, and he offered no indication in his text of which mixtures were better than others, allowing his readers agency to decide for themselves as according to their circumstance and budget. This meant that using these recipes for deceit or dishonest purposes required access to different ingredients and the knowledge or finances needed for their acquisition.

The 1743 edition of the periodical *The Family Magazine* defined a cosmetic as something which ‘signifies any compositions that may be used for whitening and softening the skin, or which, in general, tend to promote beauty.’⁹² The authors of the magazine believed ‘natural beauty’ to be ‘preferable to that which is aimed at by art’ and described ‘only such directions under this head, as are innocent, wholesome, and laudable in themselves.’⁹³ For ‘spots in the face, put a lemon to the fire, and the liquor which will sweat out of it, clears the face from redness and spots.’⁹⁴ For ‘a pimply face’ use ‘rose water, finely beaten brimstone, copperas burnt and beaten to fine powder, and starch a like quantity; put all these together in a glass, close stopped; and shake the glass when you use it; wipe your face with it on a fine linen cloth.’⁹⁵ Ingredients such as lemon, rose water and egg whites were more easily accessible, but others such as brimstone (sulphur) and copperars (ferrous sulphate) might have proved slightly more difficult to access. While the magazine lacked much of an explanation for why exactly these methods were thought to be useful, they described dozens of different recipes which could be used to not only amend the complexion, but also to treat bad breath and thinning hair, demonstrating that there was a wide range of amendments that the author (and possibly readers)

⁹¹ Neither frankincense nor myrrh appear in the *Online Dictionary of Traded Goods and Commodities 1550-1820*, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/traded-goods-dictionary/1550-1820>

⁹² Anonymous, *The family magazine: in two parts. Part I. Containing useful directions in all the branches of house-keeping and cookery ... Part II. Containing a compendious body of physick; explaining the virtues and properties of all sorts of meats, drinks* (London, 1743) p114

⁹³ Ibid, p114

⁹⁴ Ibid, p115

⁹⁵ Ibid, p115

deemed to be acceptable. This variety shows that early modern society did accept that some elements of the body were allowed to be altered or restored.

This section has discussed why some women (and men) may have found it practical and necessary to improve or amend their bodies through the application of cosmetic concoctions. Changing ideas of politeness and tolerance meant that particular types of cosmetics became more acceptable over time, as individuals were seen as engaging in self-improvement rather than acts of vanity. The skin conditions which required treatment ranged in severity and impact. Not all types of facial defect could be cured or concealed however, and that is why this section did not include the use of cosmetics to treat facial sores or burns. Regardless of the origin of the defect, it appears as if many people were under the impression that by amending the flaws that affected their face, whether natural or brought on by accident or illness, they were rectifying their social value. Women were arguably judged on their looks, and therefore by amending atypical or unsightly features to allow their natural beauty to be visible, they were merely performing a practical and necessary act.⁹⁶ The range of conditions noted by authors, and the vast amount of remedies they offered, provided readers with the information necessary to correct what they perceived as deformities and defects. Whilst some of the recipes used included easily accessible items such as rose oil or egg whites, others called for the use of harder to source ingredients such as lead or other chemical compounds which could have resulted in long term damage to the skin if repeatedly applied. The ambiguity surrounding the effects of these concoctions, meant that many readers were able to judge for themselves whether their treatment had worked or not and to what extent, meaning that they possessed the ability to alter their body or face to their own desirable specifications. This section has illustrated the discord between authors about whether cosmetics should have been used at all and has demonstrated a way that some were able to rectify damage done to their bodies and restore the natural beauty and typicality of their features when required. It is indicative of how some early modern people committed deception on a regular basis as they misrepresented themselves by using makeup.

⁹⁶ Baker, *Plain Ugly*, p11; Gauden, *A discourse of artificial beauty*, p125

Prostheses

Ambrose Paré's work, published posthumously in the late seventeenth-century, observed that it is the job of surgeons to 'repair those things that are wanting by nature, through the default of the first confirmation, or afterwards by some mischance,' meaning that he believed it to be the duty of surgeons to correct and amend patients' deformities.⁹⁷ He descriptively accounted different types of prosthetics and amendments, including gold eyes, paper noses, ivory teeth, silver mouth palates, leather ears and wooden peg legs.⁹⁸ Each of these different types of prosthetics had different purposes, some were purely for cosmetic reasons and others aided the body with one of its natural functions. Whilst this chapter assesses the use of prostheses as tools for amending the defective body, it is important to understand the distinctions made between their purposes as it impacted cultural understandings of deformity as well as heteronormativity. Referring to the prior section on humour, many people may have decided to use false features and counterfeit limbs to disguise the humorous aspects of their bodies and to fill any voids caused by deformity. Therefore, this section explores the use of prostheses as a method of self-assistance and improvement, which concealed bodily defects and allowed the wearer to project the image of a complete and typical body. By including this theme in the broader research topic of deceptive and defective bodies, it illustrates another context in which concerns about deceit existed and argues that all types of bodies were expected and visible in society, even ones altered by artificial additions. The wide variety of prostheses used in early modern England are considered here and their comparative ease of use is assessed. This chapter also examines to what extent the use of these tools was practical and necessary but might also be deemed dishonest.

Prosthetics were used when the original facial feature, limb or digit was missing; following either an illness, injury or birth defect which damaged the body. As discussed in Chapter One, amputation was one of the key ways which a limb or digit was removed, usually used as a treatment for a wound that

⁹⁷ Ambrose Paré, *The works of that famous chirurgeon Ambrose Parey*, English Trans (London, 1678) p526

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, pp526-533

proceeded to gangrene and mortification.⁹⁹ In 1707 the English translated version of M de La Vauguion's *A Compleat Body of Chirurgical Operations* defined prosthetics as

the artificial of supplying some part which is deficient in humane bodies. The cause the most ordinary occasion of this, is the extirpation or amputation of some limb which cannot be cured by any other means; sometimes indeed some member or other is wanting in children when they are born, or is after eaten off by venereal distempers.¹⁰⁰

This variety of deformity, treatment and material was a consistently evolving matter over the early modern period, and attitudes towards their use was shifting. De La Vauguion informed his readers of the multitude of ways by which the human body could be damaged or misshapen and therefore required the addition of prosthetics. By supplying readers with this background knowledge De La Vauguion was able to reduce some of the uncertainty behind the origins of missing limbs and allowed multiple narratives of deformity to be prevalent knowledge to his readers. He referred to the use of prosthetics as a final resort, discussing their use when no other treatment or cure could be found, and suggesting that their use was intentional and with purpose. De La Vauguion's text was primarily written for those training in surgery or with an educated interest in the topic of medicine, but his ideas may have gone on to influence other authors writings and thus disseminated through to the populace in other ways.

Prosthetics, both facial and limbs, were created and worn for a multitude of situations, and their construction and use varied depending on practicality and purpose. The eye was one of the most commonly described types of prostheses as they could be made from a variety of materials and were arguably cheaper and more accessible than some other forms. Paré originally wrote in the mid sixteenth century that eyes could be constructed and worn when the original was missing or damaged. He said that upon treating any problems in the eye socket

⁹⁹ For more information on gangrene and amputations see Browne, *The Surgeons Assistant*, chapter 8; Ryder, *The New Practice of Chirurgery*, pp64-81.

¹⁰⁰ de La Vauguion, *A compleat body of chirurgical operations*, p354

you may put another eye artificially made of Gold or Silver, counterfeited and enamelled, so that it may seem to have the brightness or gemmy decency of the natural Eye, into the place of the eye that is lost. But if the patient be unwilling, or by reason of some other means, cannot wear this eye so prepared in his head you may make another on this wise. You must have a string or wire of iron bowed or crooked, like unto womens ear-wires, made to bin the head harder or looser, as it pleaseth the patient, from the lower part of the head behind above the ear, unto the greatest corner of the eye; this rod or wire must be covered in silk, and it must also be somewhat broad at both ends, lest the sharpness thereof should pierce or prick any part that it cometh unto. But that end wherewith the empty hollowness must be covered, ought to be broad than the other, and covered with a thick piece of leather, that thereon the colours of the eye that is lost may be shadowed or counterfeited.¹⁰¹

Paré described application of either a gold or silver eye into the socket, or if better suited to the patient, a frame that sat on the face such as an eye patch. The first method was invasive, and most likely uncomfortable for the patient due to the surgeon's interference with the eye socket, whilst the latter was less intrusive and easier to remove or alter. Paré was clear that the eyes were made of gold or silver, but that they were to be 'enamelled' or painted so that they possessed a colouring more natural and distinctive to the human body. Whilst Paré offered two different types of prosthetics, in detail, de La Vauguion only vaguely referred to their use, by stating 'if the ball of the eye fall out of the orbit, make one of glass and put it in instead.'¹⁰² De La Vauguion referred to the use of a glass eye, something which Paré did not, perhaps because of a later development in using glass, but offered no detail as to whether it should attempt to look realistic, or whether it was to be used only to fill a facial void.

Seventeenth-century German anatomist and botanist Lorenz Heister's text was published in English in the mid eighteenth-century and again included a discussion of the variety of prostheses.¹⁰³ Regarding

¹⁰¹ Paré, *The works of that famous chirurgion*, p524

¹⁰² De La Vauguion, *A compleat body of chirurgial operations*, p354

¹⁰³ Lorenz Heister, *A general system of surgery. In three parts. Containing the doctrine and management I. Of wounds, fractures*, (London, 1745)

eyes, he wrote ‘the modern artificial eyes are made of concave plates of Silver, Gold, or Glass stained or enamelled, so as to resemble the natural eye.’¹⁰⁴ Heister’s depiction is similar to that of Paré, as he described how it should replicate nature as closely as possible, and combined the use of materials individually discussed by Paré and De La Vauguion. He claimed that an accurately formed artificial eye would be able to deceive those around, yet as supported within the entirety of this chapter it is not thought that the deception was intended to be malicious or fraudulent, ‘the nearer it approaches the sound eye in size and appearance, the more firmly it will stay under the eyelids, and the more easily deceive the spectator.’¹⁰⁵ The more realistic the eye looked the less likely the wearer was to be identified, ridiculed or mocked for their deformity. Unlike other authors, Heister recommended that they should be properly cared for and cleaned, as a build-up of dirt emphasised their falseness. He also recommended that everyone receive several ‘of these artificial eyes, that if one should happen to be lost, broke, or disfigured, its place may be immediately supplied with another,’ demonstrating the consumer/seller relationship as owning multiple prostheses was costlier.¹⁰⁶

A false eye was to be taken out before bed and put back in in the morning, it was not to be slept with.¹⁰⁷ This instruction demonstrated the temporary nature of prosthetics, as they did not exist alongside or in the body continually but instead were to be removed or cleaned and treated as separate entities. The maintenance of prostheses only enhanced their differences from the human body, as they could not be treated in the same way as legitimate body parts but instead required intervention. Yet regardless of what the eye was made of, how it looked or was cared for, it was unable to rectify the true damage of the body. A false eye was unable to allow the wearer to see. Therefore, false eyes were used solely as cosmetic embellishments of the body, useful props which allowed the body to appear complete but did little to alleviate the patients suffering or limitations. This demonstrates that some types of prostheses were used solely to alter how the exterior of the body looked and indicates one way in which their use was perceived to be untruthful, rather than fraudulent. This argument has been

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, P429

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, P429

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, P429

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p429

supported by Neil Handley, who states that facial prosthetics, such as false eyes, were the result of a social concern with the ‘minimization and concealment’ of absence rather than the ‘replacement of function.’¹⁰⁸ He also argues that prosthetic eyes were ‘not for seeing, but are for being seen,’ due to their central positioning in the face their absence could be uncomfortable for observers to witness and so an artificial replacement was needed to fill the void on the face.¹⁰⁹ False eyes were therefore too visible to be strictly defined as deceitful, but were instead indicative of a desire to appear as typical, otherwise they would not have been used.

There were other facial features which could also be replicated by art. To have no nose in early modern England, as argued by Emily Cock, was shameful and degrading, and thus the reconstruction of the nose did occur.¹¹⁰ French surgeon Andry argued that ‘it is a very great deformity to have no nose at all, or to have it so short, as to appear almost the same as if there was none,’ and that ‘there are some people who pretend that it may be repaired, and that to such advantage, that a person who wants a nose may make a real one to himself, as long and as well-proportioned as he pleases, without any one’s perceiving that it is the effect of art.’¹¹¹ His text contained a section dedicated to the subject of ‘How to reattach a nose struck down with a back-sword’ and contradicted others who argued that ‘the nose cannot be repaired unless it be taken that moment that it is separated, and it be still attached more or less to the face.’¹¹² Instead, he explained that it was possible to reattach a nose after complete removal from the face, even telling the story of a nose reattachment, referring to it’s over exaggeration and fictional qualities.

Certain robbers, who having fallen upon some travellers in the night-time, one of them received such a blow as cut his nose entirely off, and going to have the wound dressed, the surgeon asked for the end of the nose, that he might sew it on again. His companions when out immediately, and cut off the nose of some unfortunate person whom they met with in the

¹⁰⁸ Neil Handley, ‘Artificial Eyes and the Artificialization of the Human Face,’ in C. Timmerman and J. Anderson (eds), *Devices and Designs: Medical Technologies in Historical Perspective* (Palgrave, 2006) p97

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p98

¹¹⁰ Emily Cock, ‘Lead[ing] ‘em by the Nose into Publick Shame and Derision’: Gaspare Tagliacozzi, ‘Alexander Read and the Lost History of Plastic Surgery, 1600-1800’ *Social history of medicine*, vol 28 (2015), pp1-21

¹¹¹ Andry, *Orthopædia*, pp43-44

¹¹² Ibid, p43

way, and having brought it to the surgeon, he sewed it upon the Robber's face, whereby it was grafted, and took root, in the same manner as a slip that is grafted on a tree.¹¹³

The nose was perceived as an important element of the body, and therefore its damage or absence had severe social and cultural connotations for the sufferer and was to be treated as soon as possible.

Noelle Gallagher has investigated cultural beliefs that 'used the nose as a gauge of sexual health, and that equated a damaged or disfigured nose with the threat of venereal infection,' arguing that a nasal deformity was symbolic of venereal disease.¹¹⁴ Contrary to other prosthetics however, there has been an increase of historiographical interest in the artificial nose in early modern Europe, most likely due to these widescale connotations associated with it. When a nose could not be reattached, it was up to the surgeon to find an alternative solution, therefore they were told to encourage the use of a false one. Fake noses could be made of gold or silver, as well as other materials such as linen cloth or paper, but Paré believed that they

must be so coloured, counterfeited, and made both of fashion, figure and bigness, that it may as aptly as is possible, resemble the natural nose: it must be bound or staid with little threds or laces unto the hinder part of the head or in a hat. Also if there be any portion of the upper lip cut off with the nose, you may shadow it with annexing some such thing that is wanting unto the nose, and cover it with the hair on his upper lip, that he may not want anything that may adorn or beautifie the face.¹¹⁵

Yet again Paré described the application of visibly false noses, made of gold, silver, paper or cloths, but should be 'coloured' and made to 'resemble the natural nose.' How easy it was to make a metal nose appear natural is difficult to ascertain, as can be seen below in this extant seventeenth-century nose housed in the Science Museum. However, at least one edition of Paré's work included a hand coloured illustration of the false nose that implies it may have at least resembled the colour of flesh.

¹¹³ Ibid, p44

¹¹⁴ Gallagher, *Itch, Clap, Pox*, see chapter 4 for more information on noses; also see Webb, 'A Great Blemish to her Beauty' pp26-44

¹¹⁵ Paré, *The works of that famous chirurgeon*, p525

Moreover, existing examples show that some materials potentially looked more natural than others, like this early eighteenth-century ivory piece, although as it was carved from a single piece it would have been very expensive and not available to all consumers. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent the use of visibly false amendments was perceived to be deceitful; they were untruthful but lacked the malicious context which was used to help construct social and cultural attitudes towards bodily fraud and deceit. The wearer of a metal nose was not misleading those around him as it would not have been mistaken for a real nose, whereas one that was painted or coloured to mimic a more lifelike nose may have. This meant that it was the material and appearance of the nose itself which determined whether its use was concealing something or drawing more public attention to the body's missing feature.

Figure 5: Artificial nose, Europe, 1601 - 1800. Photo Credit © Science Museum, London.



Figure 6: Ivory artificial nose, Europe 1701-1800. Photo Credit © Science Museum, London.

Similarly, to one method of securing false eyes, prosthetic noses were to be tied around the face to the back of the head. It is not apparent how visible these laces were, especially given that extant examples do not always, as above, include the straps. Paré's text suggested that the straps were thin. It appears that whether prosthetic noses managed to appear convincingly natural, the reforming of the shape of the face was preferable to appearing with a clear nasal deformity. Heister's eighteenth-century translation supported the notion that it was more important to have a nose, visibly artificial or not, than to go without. He claimed,

When this member is lost, we must supply its defect with an artificial nose of wood or silver, unless by being on the spot, you can instantly replace and conjoin the real nose just separated ... such an artificial nose, painted to the life, and adapted by proper springs and screws, may render the accident and deformity imperceptible.¹¹⁶

Heister discussed the construction of a nose from silver, or wood, and made no mention of other materials mentioned by other authors of the early modern period. He did discuss the painting of one though and argues that, if properly created then no one would know it was artificial. It is possible that the wooden one was easier to paint than a silver one due to its texture and absorbency ability.

However, yet again, a false nose did little to help the wearer, rather its use may have decreased any ability to smell due to its placement. A nose of either gold or paper could not smell, and, similarly to glass eyes, served solely as a cosmetic amendment to the body. This again shows that prosthetics, while established and created to enhance and aid the body, sometimes only covered something unsightly or missing rather than replacing it. The visibility of the false nose, regardless of material and fixture, was visible and therefore it was unlikely that anyone was duped by its use supporting the argument that these aids were deceitful but not fraudulent.

Arguably the most overlooked type of facial prosthetics were artificial ears. The ear,

must be made of paper artificially glewed together, or else of leather, and so fastened with lace, from the top or hinder part of the head, that it may stand in the appointed place; and so

¹¹⁶ Hester, *A general system of surgery*. P446

the hair must be permitted to grow long, or else some cap worn under the hat, which may hid or cover the deformity, unless you had rather have it be shadowed or counterfeited by some painter, that thereby it may resemble the colour of a natural ear; and so retain it in the place where it ought to stand, with a rod or wire coming from the top or hinder part of the head, as we have spoken before in the loss of the eye.¹¹⁷

Paré discussed the two different materials that he encouraged to be used and stated that long hair or a cap should be used to help conceal the missing ear.¹¹⁸ The artificial ear could be painted to appear natural, but it would have still been visible that the ear was counterfeit. A false ear did not allow the wearer to hear, and similarly to false eyes and noses, was used for appearance and embellishment rather than function. A counterfeit ear was obvious regardless of its material or fixture and the only way to minimise the visibility of a fake ear was by covering it with something else, which meant that if someone truly sought to conceal this defect they were able to do so by using tools other than false ears, which were easier to access and most likely cheaper. While we can include the different types of facial prostheses noted above as under the broad category of deceitful bodies because the wearers were attempting to present their bodies differently, their visibility meant that they did not actually deceive anyone but instead covered a void on the face and perhaps helped the wearer emotionally and mentally rather than physically.

Other less frequently described elements of the face which could be corrected using prosthetics were the teeth, the tongue and the palate. Paré wrote,

it oftentimes happeneth that the fore-teeth are moved, broken or stricken out of their place by some violent blow, which causeth deformity of the mouth, and hinders plain pronunciation. Therefore when the jaw is restored (if it were luxated or fractured) and the gums brought into their former hardness, other teeth artificially made of Bone or Ivory may be put in the place of those that are wanting, and they must be joined one fast unto another, and also so fastened

¹¹⁷ Paré, *The works of that famous chirurgion Ambrose Parey*, p528

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p528; Heads and hats were ‘immediately visible’; Dave Postles, ‘Flatcaps’, *Fashioning and Civility in Early-Modern England*, *Literature & History*, vol 7, issue 2 (Nov 2008) P4

unto the natural teeth adjoining, that are whole: and this must chiefly be done with a thred of Gold or Silver, or for want of either, with a common thred of Silk or Flax, as it is declared at large by Hippocrates.¹¹⁹

Paré recognised that injury could result in the loss of teeth and that this influenced the individual's speech as well as appearance, demonstrating that he regarded the impact that the damage of teeth had. He claimed that once the gums had sufficiently healed that artificial teeth may be inserted in to the mouth and tied to the surviving real teeth using thread. The positioning of the teeth and these attachments may have meant that false teeth had to be inserted by someone other than the wearer, due to the limitations of being able to see within one's own mouth and tie thread around the teeth. This meant that unlike other prosthetics mentioned, where the wearer was able to attach it themselves, this form of amendment required assistance.

Later in 1733, Henry Beighton's *The Ladies Diary: or, the woman's almanack* contained an advert for false teeth, showing a straightforward selling approach as the advert was directed at customers who were missing teeth and wished to conceal their loss.

Artificial teeth set in so firm as to eat with them, and so may not be distinguished from natural, they are not to be taken out at night as some falsly suggested, but may be worn years together: yes are they so fitted as that they may be taken out, and put in by the person that wears them, at pleasure, and are an ornament to the mouth, and greatly helpful to the speech. And teeth clean'd or drawn by J. Watts and Sam Rutter, operators, who apply themselves wholly to the said business, and live in Raquet-court , Meetfleet, London.¹²⁰

The advert outlined where to buy false teeth and who could fit them, indicating their accessibility and providing potential customers with the necessary information. There is however no indication of their cost, perhaps showing there was no fixed price as not everyone required the same number of artificial teeth. In comparison to the other prostheses mentioned so far, this is the only type found to be

¹¹⁹ Paré, *The works of that famous chirurgion Ambrose Parey*, p530

¹²⁰ Henry Beighton, *The ladies diary: or, the woman's almanack, for the year of our Lord, 1733*. (London, 1733) p24

promoted in an advert, possibly due to their more common nature as tooth loss occurred for a variety of reasons such as by an accident or poor oral health. It was also during the eighteenth century that sugar became more widely introduced in to the English market and may have, in part, contributed to poor oral hygiene as an increasing amount of people began to consume it.¹²¹ De La Vauguion, again, offered only a vague description of false teeth. He claimed that when teeth fell out one should have replacements made from ivory, and that they should be put in place by ‘fastning them with a silver wire.’¹²² Similarly to Paré’s depiction, it was only briefly mentioned how the teeth were to be attached in the mouth. Andry’s mid eighteenth-century orthopaedic text offered an alternative view and discussed how tooth transplants may have been used, rather than the creation and insertion of false teeth.¹²³ By planting a healthy tooth, from a young donor, in to the gap of the patient’s mouth, the theory was it would take root and remain in the mouth. After the initial transplant it had to be fixed in the mouth, and the patient could not eat for thirty days to give it enough time to heal.¹²⁴ If this proved successful it removed the need for false teeth.

Heister yet again, was found to go into more detail and to discuss other elements of using prosthetics, he argued,

The great deformity of the face, and the impediment of the speech, occasioned by the loss of one or more of the teeth in the anterior part of the mouth, has occasioned the art of framing other teeth to supply their places, made of ivory, bone, or the tooth of a sea-horse. When several teeth are out in the same place, it is best to make a set, or the number wanted, out of one piece, all adhering together, which may be fastned to the two next of the sound or natural teeth. But to preserve these artificial teeth clean and sound, it is advisable to take them out at going to bed, to wipe them clean, and to insert them again in the morning. But if any stump or

¹²¹ Following the sugar revolution in the late seventeenth century, sugar became more accessible in trade after 1640 and was England’s leading colonial import; B.W. Higman, ‘The Sugar Revolution’, *The Economic History Review, New Series*, Vol 53, no 2 (May 2000) p225

¹²² De La Vauguion, *A compleat body of chirurgical operations*, p354

¹²³ Andry, *Orthopaedia*, pp174-5

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, p174

splinter should resist and obstruct the replacing of the artificial teeth, it must be either extracted, or taken down by the file.¹²⁵

Similarly, to Heister's advice regarding the cleanliness of false eyes, he again encouraged patients to clean and remove artificial aids at night and reinsert at the morning. Contrary to what other authors recommended, such as Beighton, he did not state that they should be worn continually and permanently but instead removed and cleaned regularly.¹²⁶ False teeth could provide similar functions to real ones such as helping the wearer to eat and articulate and may have appeared more attractive than an empty mouth. Unlike false noses, eyes and ears, fake teeth were therefore able to assist the body with its natural functions as well as appearance, meaning that this type of prosthetic had multiple purposes. Therefore, it is likely that these types of prosthetic amendments were perceived differently to others because the users were trying to help their bodies and restore its actions rather than using them to deceive or alter the appearance of their face. It would have been regarded as a logical response to an issue which had limited the function of their mouths and bodies. If fitted correctly, it is unlikely that anyone ever knew that the ivory teeth were false, therefore it can be argued that the use of fake teeth was more deceitful than other types of facial prostheses as they were naturally half-hidden in the mouth and may have gone unnoticed.

Other facial elements susceptible to damage or defect was the roof of the mouth (otherwise known as the palat), and the tongue. Paré claimed that the palat could be 'broken with the shot of a gun, or corroded by the virulency of the Lues Venerea,' it was known that it could also be damaged due to birth, accident or illness.¹²⁷ By inserting a 'gold or silver' plate in to the mouth, and attaching it to the roof of the mouth, it was thought to allow the wearer to articulate and pronounce their words more efficiently, demonstrating the practicality and necessity of its application. As this was an internal application, it is possible that this may have been one of the easiest to disguise from the public. The tongue could also be repaired by placing a plate in to the mouth, and it would, again, assist with

¹²⁵ Hester, *A general system of surgery*, P460

¹²⁶ Ibid; Beighton, *The ladies diary*, p24

¹²⁷ Paré, *The works of that famous chirurgeon*, p527; De La Vauguion, *A compleat body of chirurgical operations*, p354

communicating effectively.¹²⁸ Paré did not however mention what the dish was to be made with, or how it was to be kept in place in the mouth. Again, these types of aids were able to assist the wearer perform natural bodily functions such as speech and pronunciation. The positioning of these aids in the mouth meant that they were not as visible as eyes or noses, and therefore their use was for practical reasons rather than for cosmetic ones. Rather than being indicative of deceit, their use could have been perceived as the wearer's attempt at helping themselves. Intraoral prostheses helped the wearer to eat and speak, necessary bodily functions which helped an individual in their day-to-life. Counterfeit teeth, mouth plates and tongues do not seem to have been prominent in the minds of those who feared bodily fraud, as they were not mentioned in popular works in the same manner as other forms of deceitful behaviour but were instead discussed in medical texts or about their commercial ability.

Other than facial amendments, prosthetics could be used to rectify and repair the damage done to limbs or extremities such as fingers. Many of the tools used regarding the legs were to do with reframing and reshaping the limb, to treat both damage at birth or through accident/injury. Whilst prosthetic limbs were not uncommon elements of medical and popular texts, it does appear that medical writers and others did not devote as much attention to these aids as they did to facial prostheses and cosmetics. Whether this was since missing limbs were less common, or because they were viewed as less important as people possessed the ability to conceal their loss through clothing, is uncertain. De La Vauguion offered a vague description of prosthetics limbs, merely stating 'when you make an artificial member, let them have the same motion as the natural.'¹²⁹ He only discussed the practical element of false limbs, ignoring any other detail, including its appearance, perhaps demonstrating that the author's key focus was their mobility rather than their appearance, differing to facial prostheses. It is however, also important to note that many of the authors who wrote about prostheses were not the ones creating them as they may not have possessed the carpentry and engineering skills to shape a prosthetic limb. Medical authors were able to advise on their use, but,

¹²⁸ Paré, *The works of that famous surgeon*, p528

¹²⁹ De La Vauguion, *A compleat body of chirurgical operations*, p354

unlike Beighton's *The Ladies Diary*, did not visibly promote their commercial value, just their functional value to the body.¹³⁰

Ambrose Paré has been a consistent feature of this chapter, and his expertise and knowledge did not wane when discussing limbs. Unlike some other authors Paré described different types of aids for the limbs.¹³¹ From the image below it is clear that his depiction of a false leg was not meant to look realistic, but instead serve a purpose, though perhaps under long clothing its visibility was limited. Paré's illustration originally dated from 1564 shows two different types of legs.

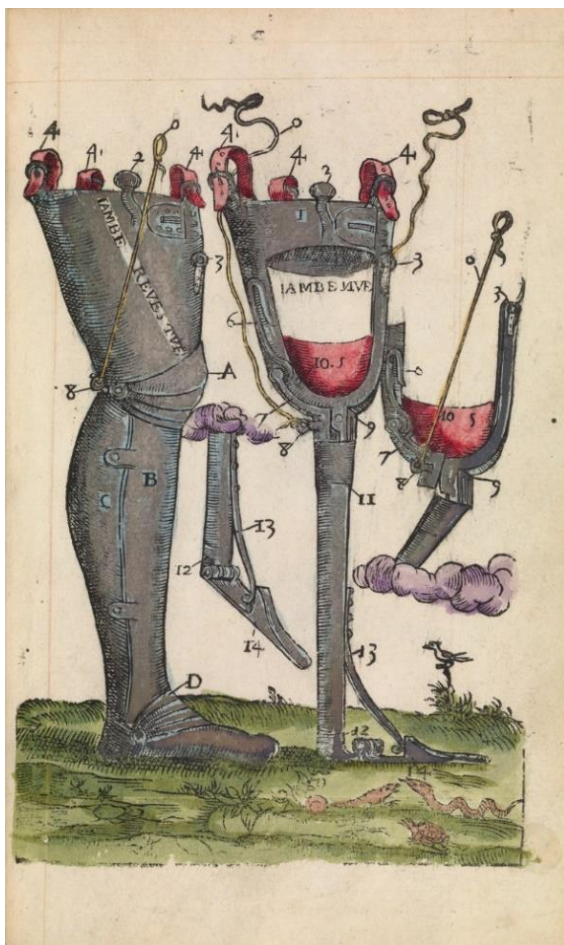


Figure 6: Illustration of prosthetic legs. Ambroise Pare, 1564. Photo Credit © Wellcome Collection

While the one on the right closely resembles a peg leg, the one on the left looks like a leg from a suit of armour. It appears as if the legs might be iron, if not wooden, and perhaps indicate the two different

¹³⁰ Beighton, *The Ladies Diary*, p24

¹³¹ Paré, *The works of that famous chirurgion*, pp532-535

types of market, one for the poorer and another for wealthier customers. Both appear to have been fitted to the body in a similar manner, with straps above which possibly tied on to something like a garter belt or to a woman's stays. These false legs could have been hidden under trousers, long skirts or cloaks, and enabled the wearer some degree of concealment, although it is impossible to decipher whether other factors may have alerted others that they were wearing a false limb. The sound of the limb every time it met the floor, or the altered movement of the wearer may have been indicators of its use, but ultimately it was created and worn to restore mobility and independence to the wearer. Dutch surgeon Pieter Adriaanszoon Verduyn developed the first below-knee prosthetic that allowed for knee movement, as described in his text from 1696, however due to a lack of access to an English translation it is difficult to ascertain how exactly it operated and what it was made of.¹³² Prosthetic legs were beneficial for anyone missing a limb and allowed a greater level of independence and mobility. Unlike facial prosthetics they were easily covered but depending on the performance of the wearer may have still been visible. They were mentioned less commonly than the other forms of prostheses discussed before, potentially due to their niche market and because many who lost a leg may have been informed of their options by their surgeon at the relevant time. The size of the prostheses also had an impact as the creator of the false limb had to possess certain skills to be able to build it, and it required greater time than the creation of false eyes, ears or noses, meaning that it was likely made only when required.

The Wellcome Collection also contains several artificial arms, and illustrations, the one below is from the mid sixteenth century. The arm was made of iron, and it appears as if the fingers were able to bend. The thought and consideration that went into the development of these items was exceptional. The identity of the owner of the prosthetic arm is unknown, as is the extent to which it offered practical support to its wearer. As shown in the image, false arms did not look realistic in appearance and colouring, but they did mimic the shape of their inspiration. It appears as if the use of false arms was perhaps more to do with helping the wearer feel complete and to reduce the chances of ridicule or mockery, however a false arm could not be used in the same way as a real one. Unless covered by

¹³² Pieter Adriaanszoon Verduyn, *Dissertatio epistolaris de nova artuum decurtandorum ratione*, (1696)

clothing false arms would have been just as obvious to onlookers as a missing one, again supporting the idea that the use of prosthetics was not fraudulent.



Figure 7: Iron artificial arm, Europe 1560-1600. Photo Credit © Science Museum, London.

Although Páre is widely regarded as containing some of the most detailed illustrations of early modern prosthetics, his posthumous text *The works of that famous chirurgeon Ambrose Parey* (1678) only included minimal detail and discussion alongside his handful of images.¹³³ He claimed that it was important for missing parts to be replaced when possible, but provided no description of how they were to be manufactured or where they could be purchased from. His text appears to have only provided the most basic information about prosthetic limbs, showing that they did exist and thus encouraging his readers to accept and understand the bodies that used them. The two images below, also taken from the Wellcome Collection, show the detail incorporated in Páre's depiction of prosthetic arms and hands and are indicative of the workmanship that went in to their creation.

¹³³ Paré, *The works of that famous chirurgeon*, pp532-535

Figure 8: Ambroise Pare: Prosthetics mechanical arm. Photo Credit © Wellcome Collection, London.

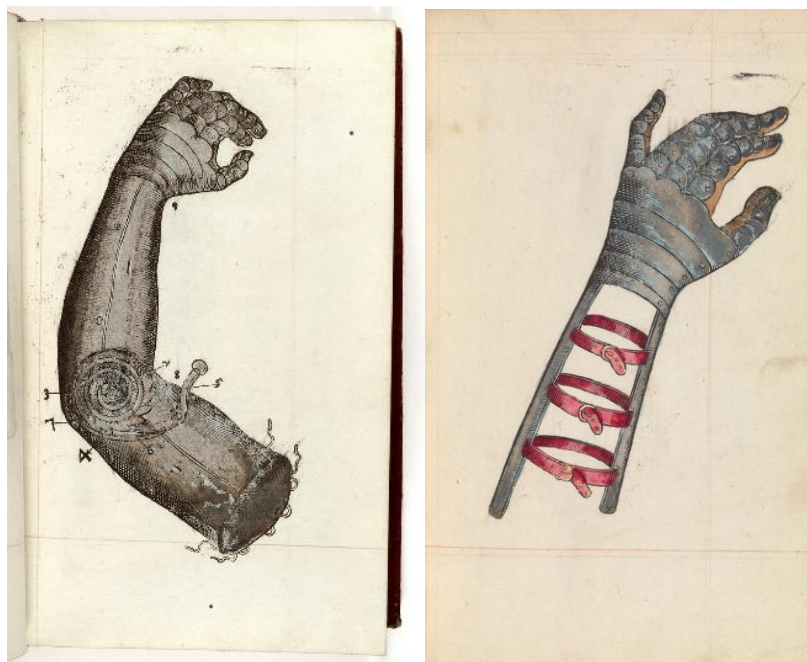


Figure 9: Illustration of a prosthetic hand. Ambroise Pare 1564. Photo Credit © Wellcome Collection, London.

Excluding Paré's text there appears to have been very little written of prosthetic arms in medical text, and many of the advancements that followed the men described in this section, did not occur until the mid-nineteenth century. It is possible that the rareness of missing limbs on adult patients meant that prosthetics were only designed and manufactured when required, and that patients would choose to receive treatment from someone already established as an expert. As warfare evolved over time and more soldiers became affected by missing limbs, it is arguable that the production of prosthetics also developed. The more common an issue, the higher the demand and supply. The variety in other forms of supportive aids such as crutches, and later wheelchairs, meant that the patient's use of a prosthetic may have depended on their circumstance and occupation, meaning whether they needed to be independently mobile or not.

It is plausible that the use of fake legs and arms was perceived to be comparable to the use of false teeth, practical and logical. Indeed, their use may have been viewed by some as deceitful, especially if they were used for some time before being sighted, but ultimately its use was not to manipulate nor to attract, but instead to help the wearer. The use of facial and bodily prosthetics to help complete the body was not fraudulent as the malicious context was not present, it was dishonest and indicative of misrepresentation, however, as it did help the wearer to perform and move differently than if their damaged body was left natural and unaltered.

Overall, this chapter has highlighted some of the key ways which the defective body was amended by both cosmetics and prostheses in early modern England. The number of cosmetic recipes, and the visibility of prosthetics in periodicals and surgical texts, demonstrate that correcting the defective body was a concern of many early modern people. The public desire for typicality led to the creation of treatments for burns and scars and allowed people an element of artistic licence with their own bodies. The painting of eyes, ears and noses, to reflect nature and the natural form, infers that some did not want their deficiencies to be obvious, but it is also possible that some may have used these to illustrate their bodies. It is difficult to ascertain how many people chose to use these types of prosthetics or cosmetics, as the central aim was to appear as typical and expected as possible, which meant that passers-by may have been unaware of their true afflictions. The publications of attitudes regarding prostheses appears to be more difficult to decipher, surgeons such as Paré wrote in detail of how an artificial limb could be used on the body, but no author has been found to have explicitly recorded their personal beliefs about whether they should be used or not, unlike those who wrote on cosmetics. It is probable that the absence of opinion is merely reflective of a contemporary understanding that everyone was expected to have four limbs, whether real or not, and that by aiding in their creation and fitting, they allowed people to live independently and for their quality of life to improve. Yet regardless of how or why people chose to conceal or correct a deficient form, they still deceived those around them as their presentation was untruthful. The visibility of some aids due to their material, placement or attachment meant that they are unable to be defined as fraudulent.

Whether a person chose to wear a prosthetic or use cosmetics was a personal choice, one perhaps influenced by social standing, gender, marriageability, morality and occupation. The humour that many found in the deformed and defective body, could have provided a catalyst for some who actively chose to remove themselves from the category of satirical and mocked figures. Contemporary understandings of deformity, as depicted in chapter one, allowed many different types of bodies to co-exist within society but that did not mean that everyone had to like them. Fundamentally the use of these aids was positive, as it demonstrated people helping themselves and amending features they thought unsightly or prohibitive to the functionality of the body. While some still found humour in these amended bodies, the focus of conversation between authors appears to have been concerned why individuals chose to use these aids. If they were using them to create false beauty or deceive then their use was bad. Whereas if they used cosmetics to restore natural beauty or typicality, or used prosthetics to restore functionality, mobility and independence, then their use was accepted and encouraged. It appears as if the deciding element between common attitudes to the use of cosmetics and prosthetics was whether they artificially created something new to that individual body, or if they helped restore something which had been lost by nature or circumstance. This chapter has depicted one framework of deceptive and defective bodies and leads on to the fraudulent contexts of begging and counterfeit virginity which demonstrate that there was a social anxiety of people altering their bodies and manipulating their presentation for unlawful gain.

Chapter Three: Creating the Deserving Beggars Body

As Audrey Eccles and Tim Hitchcock have argued, the sight of a beggar in early modern England was unavoidable, and between 1540 and 1750 whose responsibility they were was a serious issue of contention between local parishes and the government.¹ Minimal access to financial aid meant that many beggars used fraudulent means to invoke charity from passers-by. The false beggar has been examined by Tobias Hug, who argued that the image of the fraudulent beggar goes back to the thirteenth century but that they became more high-profile due to the growing issue of poverty across Europe in the sixteenth century.² Hug therefore implies a direct correlation between poverty and the appearance of fraudulent beggars, in real life and in fiction. This chapter builds on this picture by arguing that although they may have been more prevalent at certain moments, they were perceived to be a consistent feature of society. Anxieties about false beggars were shaped by their presentation within culture and remained more consistent than their fluctuating numbers in reality. Hug claims that authors depicted the fraudulent beggar in literature as ‘anti-culture’ and as threats to the divine order through their presentation in texts such as canting dictionaries and ballads, and the negative connotations surrounding their existence in society were consistently reinforced through their portrayals in popular works.³ For any beggar to receive charity they had to appear as deserving, and their performance had to be believable. The main way that beggars were able to redefine themselves as deserving of one’s charity, was by altering and manipulating their body to reflect a new self-imposed tragic narrative of injury, illness or defect from birth, examples of which were examined in chapter one. This chapter investigates counterfeit beggars in early modern England to illustrate some of the ways by which the performance of the body and its manipulation was used for financial gain. Rather than investigating the extent to which these types of counterfeit beggars existed in early modern society, it instead focuses on their cultural portrayals to the public and demonstrates how the

¹ Audrey Eccles and Tim Hitchcock have discussed the impact of the Poor Laws on the lower classes and how the beggar was a disliked but expected public figure within the local communities, ultimately arguing that their appearance within society was unavoidable; Eccles, *Vagrancy in law*; Hitchcock, ‘Begging on the streets’; Hitchcock, ‘All beside the rail’00

² Hug, *Impostures in Early Modern England*, p17

³ *Ibid*, p18

presentation of fraudulent beggars in different popular works helped to create a culture of suspicion and entertainment.

The performance of the body has already been discussed in each section of this dissertation, and this chapter continues to build on this theme. Erving Goffman's claims of a 'cynical performance' is reflected in this chapter as it shows that beggars were thought to assume a fraudulent persona to add theatrical elements to their performance of bodily fraud.⁴ This chapter also considers the work of John Austin who examined the performative elements of language and sound, it was because many beggars used speech in their performance that it is important to identify how it was manipulated alongside their bodies.⁵ The previous chapter examined the themes of restoration and concealment as forms of bodily fraud, this chapter investigates fraudulent creation. It reveals that a central fear about dishonest beggars was that they altered the appearance of their bodies at will. It further suggests that this manipulation required the execution of a different form of performance and agency than those who uses makeup or prosthetics. as this form of fraud was shaped more clearly by deceptive and financial means. Fraudulent beggars employed theatrical and dramatized elements to their appearance, behaviour and narrative to manipulate others into believing that their naturally healthy and complete body had been damaged by illness, injury or birth. In particular herbal applications to exacerbate existing injuries or cause new ones, over emphasis of pain and limited physical mobility, dishonest narratives about the origins of injuries were all used in the beggar's façade of creating a deserving beggar's body. Robert Henke has explored the performativity of begging, arguing that the physical form was a prop used by the beggar to appeal to the charitable needs of passers-by.⁶ This chapter supports the idea that physical behaviour paired with the body's altered appearance and re-established narrative allowed fraudsters to project the image of a worthy individual. It was the believability of the combined elements of the performance that determined whether a fraudulent beggar would successfully deceive passers-by and receive charity, and thus this chapter investigates the appearance, methods and narratives supposedly used by fraudsters. This chapter also argues that the balance of

⁴ Goffman, *The presentation of self*, pp17-18

⁵ Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*,

⁶ Henke, 'Sincerity, Fraud,' p4

these three factors was not always equal and that in certain plays and personas some elements, particularly the body, were more crucial than others in the execution of a believable performance.

One of the reasons why some people chose to engage in deceitful behaviour was a lack of access to financial aid during times of poverty, or their inability to work and thus sustain themselves. As mentioned in the introduction, only certain individuals in society who displayed the correct characteristics were able to receive financial help from their government or parish for much of the early modern period. Deborah Stone has argued that Poor Law administrators established five categories which were important in defining the 'internal universe of paupers:' children, the sick, the insane, 'defectives,' and 'the aged and infirm.'⁷ Contemporaries such as country lawyer William Sheppard and legal writer George Meriton discussed each identifiable category.⁸ Every individual poor person was defined as either deserving or undeserving of charity, a label which was based on their background, circumstance and physical health, just as Stone claimed. The first category in the wider definition of deserving poor was 'poor by impotency and defect,' for example the aged and decrepit. This group also included those 'naturally disabled either in wit or member, as an idiot, lunatick, blind, lame (and) not being able to work.'⁹ A consistent feature of those in this group was the permanence of their condition, or a possible deterioration of their health over time, with no possibility of their circumstances or body improving. The second category distinguished was 'poor by casualty' including 'a person casually disabled or maimed in his body, as the soldier or labourer maimed in their lawful callings.'¹⁰ This applied to all men injured in war, or through their physical jobs, anything which caused a legitimate ailment that was a direct consequence of their occupation and generated public respect. The third and final division of the poor was the 'undeserving,' otherwise referred to as 'the thriftless poor,' this distinguished the individual 'that consumes all (money) with play or

⁷ Deborah Stone, *The Disabled State: Health, Society and Policy* (Temple University Press, 1984)

⁸ Sheppard, *The offices of constables*, p171; Meriton, *A guide for constables*, p161; Anonymous, *A new guide for constables*, p109; Anonymous, *The laws concerning the poor. Wherein is treated of overseers, and their office*. (London, 1705) p3;

⁹ Sheppard, *The offices of constables*, p171; Meriton, *A guide*, p162; Anon, *A new guide for constable*, p109; Anon, *The laws concerning the poor*, p3

¹⁰ Sheppard, *The offices of constables*, p171; Meriton, *A guide*, p162; Anon, *A new guide for constable*, p109; Anon, *The laws concerning the poor*, p3

drinking' and 'slothful person(s) that refuseth to work.'¹¹ The descriptions offered in these texts illustrated a strict criteria differentiating the deserving from the undeserving poor, but ignored other causes of poverty such as unemployment as they did not refer to loss of income; instead the only way to be deemed as deserving was to have an ill, decrepit, or injured body. For many who needed financial assistance, but were healthy and whole, there were limited options. Thus, it is easy to decipher why some men, and occasionally women, fraudulently altered their body to fit the criteria established by society and the law. Rather than approaching the parish directly for aid, these individuals established themselves on the streets as beggars deserving of charity through performance and adapted physiques. There were two different and distinct ways in which the body was manipulated by fraudsters that allowed them to redefine themselves as 'deserving' and so receive attention and charity. The first was the production of visible signs of deformity and illness, such as skin conditions, sores and damaged limbs. Many beggars physically manipulated their body with herbs, ointments and tools to bind limbs or irritate the skin to provide validity for their claims. The second type of bodily fraud was the performance of invisible defects with a physical effect; this included sensory deprivations such as blindness, and deafness, and mental illnesses. These deceitful people had to reshape and manipulate their entire body to be able to physically support the duplicitous narratives they had constructed about themselves. These individuals acted similarly to those who used prosthetics and cosmetics examined in Chapter Two who were also responding to their social and cultural environment by trying to escape mockery and fit in. Fraudulent beggars however, were retaliating against their economic hardships and some believed their behaviour to be a logical and valid response to their financial difficulties as their bodies was one of the few things that they could possess full control over. This chapter acts as a case study assessment of how the definitions of defective and deceptive bodies became intertwined, as the beggars examined were fraudulently creating a defective body to suit their deception.

Cultural Representations of and Responses to the Fraudulent Beggar

¹¹ Sheppard, *The offices of constables*, p171; Meriton, *A guide*, p162-3; Anon, *A new guide for constable*, p109; Anon, *The laws concerning the poor*, p4

Fraudulent beggars were presented in a multitude of popular works in early modern England, and it was their presentation which shaped cultural perceptions of beggars. This section establishes how some authors presented counterfeit beggars to their audiences and demonstrates the variety of narratives and contexts available for fraudulent use, before leading in to the following sections to explain the methods and tactics thought to have been used by specific categories of deceptive beggars.

While this dissertation focuses on printed sources, representations of fraudulent beggars could be informed by appearances in manuscript papers. In an archival source dated to 1633, a letter between two men has been found to refer to an incident of a fraudulent beggar in their local community. The letter was written by Thomas Cocks and addressed to Sir Robert Berkeley, justice of the bench in the King's Court during the reign of Charles I, and described his recent encounter with a fraudulent beggar who had approached his home.

a poor wandering fellow came not long since to my door counterfeiting himself to be blind lame and taken most perilously with a shaking palsy which part of an infirm man in these several particulars, he performed so artificially that he made my wife to take great compassion of him, for besides meat and drink she gave him money and a piece of bacon which he no sooner had than he went away with a snail's pace halting downright and shaking and groping with his staffe, till he thought he was out of sight and then he was an upright man on the sudden and without any lameness, blindness, quaking or quivering, could find the way to Careless's house presently where he called for a pot of ale a pipe of tobacco and a pennyworth of eggs to fry with his bacon and Careless rose up from other company and sat down by him where my two witnesses left them who heard and saw all their passage and after told it to me and my wife.¹²

After the beggar departed Cocks' home he went to the pub, run by a local surgeon and beer seller, James Careless, who Cocks appeared to blame for the beggar's appearance in the local community due to his kindly nature. The performance of the beggar was clearly described by Cocks as he

¹² Letter sent from Thomas Cocks to Sir Robert Berkeley, Knight. (2nd September 1633), The National Archives, ref 1/1/58/71, Held by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service.

mentioned his speed, posture, blindness and lameness (perhaps indicative of an injury). Yet upon the beggar's departure all these symptoms disappeared. The man who walked away from Cocks' home was not the same as the one who approached asking for charity. This source is illustrative of the beggar's counterfeit performance and not only depicts his theatrical behaviour, but also shows the transition process between beggar in need to fraudster. This source provides an interesting account of fraudulent beggars in early modern England and shows their visibility in society, making this an ideal account to use alongside published texts. This source shows that the fears touted in popular works were real factors affecting people's lives and social interactions, and incidents such as these may have gone on to influence the presentation of false beggars in published works. Many accounts of fraudsters were presented in popular works such as ballads, pamphlets, and canting dictionaries, making Cocks' depiction useful and incredibly insightful. Cocks' source is indicative of how contemporaries regarded the beggar when they were physically confronted by him. Cocks and his wife provided the beggar with sympathy and charity, and it was not until after he left, and they realised he was a fraudster that their discontent developed. However, it is unknown whether they gave him charity because they were truly moved by his plight or because it was what they were expected to do, meaning that even in private correspondence it is still difficult to decipher true intent and opinions on either's behalf.

The beggar's performance as a deserving individual worthy of another's charity had to be as believable as possible. Beyond clothing and gesture, some beggars calculatingly manipulated the body to elicit sympathy and make their performances believable. As mentioned in Chapter Two however, the deformed or damaged body was not to be assessed too closely because of cultural beliefs of politeness and etiquette. Tim Hitchcock has shown that public politeness and social etiquette in the eighteenth-century dictated that the body was not to be stared at in early modern England.¹³ Instead, early modern society was to regard the ill or damaged body from a distance and were not to engage too closely with beggars. Hitchcock states that the beggar's 'calls of pity had to be answered with just the right combination of sympathy and disdain, just the right flourish of lace and charity,'

¹³ Hitchcock, 'Begging on the streets,' p478

emphasising the relationship between beggar and almsgiver.¹⁴ Erasmus Jones' 1737 *The Man of Manners*, typified this thinking stating that it was not only the beggar whose behaviour was monitored, restricted and even judged, but also the alms giver.¹⁵ Jones discussed the correct ways someone should give alms to a beggar or pauper, and emphasised the need for a lack of public acknowledgment of the beggars. Lastly, he prohibited charitable men and women from openly staring at those begging on the streets.¹⁶ This meant that some contemporaries believed it was inappropriate to pay too much attention to a beggar's body, and that the moral duty of almsgiving was more important than inspecting the validity of the ailment. This is supported by certain seventeenth-century sermons, alongside philosophical and religious texts, which remarked on the importance of almsgiving, and how it could cleanse the giver of their sin.¹⁷ This could also indicate why many passers-by gave charity, which was perhaps less to do with the beggars' plight, and instead because they wanted themselves to be cleansed.¹⁸ This alone is indicative of how religion had a direct effect on the relationship between beggar and almsgiver, and thus the beggar's performance. The giver's relative lack of interest in the beggar, also accounts for why many did not look extensively at the ailments and discover the beggars' fraudulent behaviour.¹⁹ It seems apparent that the behaviour, attitudes, emotions and façade of both the alms-giver and beggar were equal, as both were tied to social restraints and expectations of their positions, though not everyone abided by these rules as some may have still believed that the beggar's body was open to physical scrutiny. The only

¹⁴ Hitchcock, 'Begging on the streets,' p478

¹⁵ Erasmus Jones, *The man of manners: or, plebian polish'd. Being plain and familiar rules for a modest and genteel behaviour, on most of the ordinary occasions of life.* (London, 1737) p2

¹⁶ Jones, *The man of manners*, p2

¹⁷ John Gauden, *Three sermons preached upon severall publike occasions*, (London, 1642) p18; Isaac Ambrose, *Media: the middle things in reference to the first and last things: or, The means, duties, ordinances, both secret, private and publike, for continuance and increase of a godly life, once begun, till we come to Heaven.* (London, 1650); Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *Three books of occult philosophy*, (London, 1651) p527; Henry Valentine, *Private devotions digested into six letanies; I. Of confession. II. Of deprecation. III. Of supplication. IV. Of Thanksgiving. V. Of intercession. VI. For the sick.* (London 1654); Richard Young, *The prevention of poverty, together with the cure of melancholy, alias discontent.* (London, 1655) p63; Richard Young, *A Christian library, or, A pleasant and plentiful paradise of practical divinity in 37 treatises of sundry and select subjects* (London, 1660) p63.

¹⁸ Gauden, *Three sermons preached*, p18; Ambrose, *Media: the middle*; Nettesheim, *Three books of occult philosophy*, p527; Valentine, *Private devotions digested into six letanies*; Young, *The prevention of poverty*. p63; Young, *A Christian library*, p63. Each of these texts discussed the effect of almsgiving on the givers soul, none of them mentioned the impact it would have on the beggar, nor did they mention the plight of those begging.

¹⁹ Jones, *Man of Manners*, p3

difference was that the poor beggar intended to invoke compassion, whereas the almsgiver was to appear moral and giving. It was perhaps these social and moral expectations that allowed fraudsters to believe that they could financially benefit from others, but that they knew they still had to provide a performance worthy of sympathy and charity.

Despite the fact the beggar Cocks described was dishonest, he was not necessarily a criminal. Rather than committing a violent crime, the beggar used his behaviour and speech to manipulate others' perceptions of him. Many authors though linked this form of dishonest behaviour with moral crimes and other more serious incidents. Dramatist and Poet John Gay's *Trivia: or, the art of walking the streets of London* (1716) made reference to the 'the lurking thief' who 'made the walls echo with his begging tone' and had a crutch, but the public were told 'trust him not' for if they gave him charity he would 'share the booty with the pilf'ring band.'²⁰ Elaine Clarke claims that even in regard to honest beggars in medieval England, an individual beggar was 'pathetic and vulnerable' but a collective group of beggars were perceived to be 'dangerous and wilfully idle,' therefore it is plausible that it was anxieties of numerous beggars working together that was the true focus of concern for society.²¹ Gay referred to the appearance of one beggar working on behalf of a larger group, implying anxieties about a large-scale duplicity of early modern society.²² This suggests that some authors feared that the duplicitous could offer an authentic performance, then take his proceeds back to a criminal ensemble and possibly use it to assist with criminal behaviour in the future. Reverend and author Thomas Dyche defined fraudulent beggars in his text *A new general English dictionary* (1740) where he stated 'the imposter... pretending great pain, deceives the compassionate, charitable and well-disposed passengers, whom when opportunity presents he can recover his limbs to rob and even murder.'²³ Within his definition Dyche depicts fraudulent beggars as counterfeiting their ailment, and that they used their bodies as a distraction whilst they stole or harmed the almsgiver. Dyche believed beggars' fraudulent behaviour to be tantamount to criminal acts and was unable to efficiently differentiate

²⁰ John Gay, *Trivia: or, the art of walking the streets*, (London, 1716) pp38-39

²¹ Elaine Clarke, 'Institutional and Legal Responses to Begging in Medieval England,' *Social Science History*, vol 26, No. 3 (Fall, 2002) p448

²² Gay, *Trivia*, pp38-39

²³ Thomas Dyche, *A new general English dictionary; peculiarly calculated for the use and improvement of such as are unacquainted with the learned languages. ...* (London, 1740) p604

between the two in his classification, as he implied that one was synonymous with the other. The depiction of fraudulent beggars in popular works was almost always a condemnation of their behaviour that sought to inform readers of these threats as well as entertain them.

Ballads from the seventeenth century describe a range of different scenarios commonly used by beggars to appeal to the charitable instincts of local almsgivers and community members. Each of the roles required a degree of commitment, performance, and theatricality. The narratives they employed and the sympathy they invoked varied. The most frequently noted scenarios were pretending to be a 'poore old soldier,' 'a saylor' who has lost his ship, a cripple, faking an illness by attaching fake sores to the body, blindness and finally playing the classical role of a tragic victim of misfortune.²⁴ In 1763 Irish novelist Charles Johnstone depicted a character in his novel *The Reverie* who assumed a variety of identities; including a broken soldier, shipwrecked sailor, a fool, a madman and a gypsie.²⁵ The variety of narratives proposed in these sources demonstrates that there were a range of contexts available for fraudsters to assume and is indicative of the diversity of fraudulent beggars existent in cultural imagination.

The tone and language used in ballads such as *The Cunning Northerne Begger*, *The Jovial Beggars Merry Crew*, and *The Jovial Crew* explicitly present fraudulent beggars as humorous individuals who had worked out how to manipulate those around them.²⁶ These personas became objects of satire and humour, and cast beggars in the role of perpetrator rather than as a helpless individual, which may have increased public suspicion of beggars. Given that any of the narratives described above may have easily been falsified, it is no surprise that David Turner has stated that many beggars were treated with suspicion, even if their ailment or tragic past was true.²⁷ The regularity with which fraudulent beggars appeared in popular culture meant that people may have found it difficult to

²⁴ Anonymous, *The cunning Northerne Begger Who all the By-standers doth earnestly pray, To bestow a penny upon him to day. To the tune of Tom of Bedlam.* (London, Circa 1624 – 1680); Anonymous, *The Jovial Beggars Merry Crew. When Beggars that have Coyn good store, yet still like Vagrants live, They do but onely Cheat the Poor, tis pittie them to give. Tune of, A figg for France.* (London, Circa 1671-1702)

²⁵ Charles Johnstone, *The Reverie*, (London, 1763)

²⁶ Anonymous, *The cunning Northerne Begger*; Anonymous, *The Jovial Beggars Merry Crew*; Anonymous, *The Joviall Crew, OR, Beggars-Bush. In which a mad Maunder doth vapour and swagger: With praising the Trade of a Bonny bold Begger. To the Tune of, From hunger and cold.* (London, c.1678-88)

²⁷ Turner, *Disability in Eighteenth Century England*, p73

discern between theatrical characters displayed in fiction, and vulnerable beggars on the streets. Yet for some audiences these ploys worked. Whether they decided to grant charity was dependent upon the believability of the beggar's tragic tale of bodily misfortune, as well as the disposition and attitude of the almsgiver. The personas noted are clear examples of characters which were assumed by many fraudsters. Each of these characters invoked more sympathy and charity than a healthy individual begging due to lack of work or idleness. The following sections examine some of the methods supposedly used by fraudulent beggars, and their use was reliant on accessibility, visibility, believability and the quality of the narrative.

Sores, Skin and Limbs

At first glance, a beggar was expected to appear physically vulnerable damaged by either disease, injury, or birth, as each provided a valid reason behind their inability to work and thus their appearance on the street. One of the easiest ways to make themselves outwardly appear as deserving of charity, was by reshaping the exterior of their body to present vulnerability and invoke sympathy. Tobias Hug has claimed that popular literature and prints focused their attention on 'body expressions, dress, demeanour, gestures' and other characteristics which could be used to define counterfeit beggars.²⁸ However, the creation of bodily defects such as scars, sores, damaged limbs and falsifying the loss of a limb was just as important and shows how beggars were able to use their artistic licence to alter their bodies and mimic the presence of disease or injury.

Two of the ways in which a fraudster manipulated his body was by replicating scars or by reshaping the narrative surrounding their existence. The scars that some beggars chose to falsify were linked to notions of honour and warfare, rather than disease.²⁹ Robert Woosnam-Savage and Kelly DeVries have identified the different types of weapon wounds common in the medieval period and described

²⁸ Hug, *Impostures*, p3

²⁹ Diseases such as the pox and smallpox left visible reminders of the disease on the face of the patient, even after treatment, yet their common appearance within early modern society meant that claims of a previously treated disease would not have been sufficient enough to invoke sympathy and charity; Shuttleton, 'A Culture of Disfigurement:' p69

how they varied.³⁰ Some of these weapons were still prevalent in early modern warfare. Sharp force trauma wounds were created from being cut or stabbed, penetration force trauma wounds from being shot by projectile weapons such as arrows, and blunt force trauma wounds from being smashed by a weapon.³¹ While they made no reference to gun-shot wounds as these weapons were not common until later years, the consistent variety of weapons used in warfare and the types of injury they caused demonstrates that there was a diversity of wounds/scars and narratives employed by fraudulent beggars. The phrase ‘soldiers mawns’ refers to a feigned injury specific to the left arm only and used to imply the respectability of a war wound.³² Thomas Dekker stated that the Rufflers would ‘swear they lost their limbs in their countries quarrels, when either they are lame by diseases, or have bene mangled in some drunken quarrell’ and that these were usually men who had deserted the army.³³ Anna Bayman has argued that Dekker is notorious for recycling other sources and cheap pamphlets, meaning that his accounts were more likely to draw from popular cultural assumptions than first hand encounters or documented accounts.³⁴ The variation of wounds and scars prevalent on soldiers’ bodies allowed fraudsters greater agency in how they damaged their bodies and how they chose to explain its origin.

One type of scar which may have proved difficult to fake was a gunshot wound and its impact on the limb or body part, something which become more and more common over the period because of the increasing volume of wounded ex-servicemen following the numerous wars between the sixteenth and

³⁰ Robert Woosnam-Savage and Kelly DeVries, ‘Battle Trauma in Medieval Warfare: Wounds, Weapons and Armor,’ In Larissa Tracy and Kelly DeVries (eds), *Wounds and Wound Repair in Medieval Culture*, (Brill, 2015) p28

³¹ Woosnam-Savage and DeVries, ‘Battle Trauma,’ p28

³² Anonymous, *A New Canting Dictionary*, p111; Those that were left-handed were so because their body encouraged heat into the left side as well as the right, which could also cause ambidexterity. These notions link to beliefs of the body, the humours, and also reproduction as the right side of the womb and the right testicle were thought to produce perfect boys due to the heat; Some examples of texts which discussed the importance of heat and/or the right side of the body; Nathaniel Highmore, *The History of Generation*, (London, 1651); Anon, *Aristotle’s Masterpiece*, (1684 ed.) p10, (1690 ed.) p96, (1697 ed.) p96; Bartholinus, *Bartholinus Anatomy*, p63; Anonymous, *Aristotle’s book of problems*, (London, 1710 ed.) p32

³³ Thomas Dekker. *The Belman of London Bringing to light the most notorious villanies that are now practised in the kingdome. Profitable for gentlemen, lawyers, merchants, citizens, farmers, masters of housholdes, and all sorts of seruants to mark, and delightfull for all men to reade*. (London, 1608) p26

³⁴ The difficulty of assessing Thomas Dekker has been discussed by Anna Bayman in, *Thomas Dekker and the Culture of Pamphleteering in Early Modern London*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014)

eighteenth centuries.³⁵ Ex-army surgeon Richard Wiseman stated in 1676 that a gunshot wound was ‘always round’ as the impact of the round bullet caused the skin to concave around it, therefore it required knowledge and precision for the beggar to have been able to counterfeit the scar left from a bullet wound.³⁶ Wiseman also discussed the consequences of gunshot, such as haemorrhages and inflammation, features which resulted in a long term effect on the body.³⁷ Naval surgeon John Atkins claimed in 1737 that ‘scars are always equal to the loss of substance in wounds at first: Nature has a measure in the cover she makes of flesh.’³⁸ Surgeons and physicians shared an idea of what a scar should look like and believed that the seriousness of the initial injury would be reflected within the resulting scar produced. The numerous complications which resulted from a single gunshot wound meant that the scar was not only indicative of the patient’s tribulations and luck, but also of the surgeon’s ability. Other scars were the result of wounds inflicted by arrows, darts and swords and differed greatly in shape and size as they were designed by the weapon which had caused it and the success of its treatment.³⁹ The feasibility of accurately falsifying any of these types of scars was reliant on the beggar’s knowledge of wounds, and therefore their choice of injury was dependant on what they believed they could accurately fake.

Rufflers (counterfeit ex-soldiers) were commonly documented characters in canting dictionaries and their presence in popular works was due to the growing visibility of injured soldiers over the early modern period. It has been argued though that the bodies of injured soldiers presented a ‘political problem’ for early modern England because someone had to pay for their sustenance.⁴⁰ Geoffrey Hudson has claimed that it was in response to the growing number of disabled ex-servicemen that a

³⁵ Between 1540 and 1750 England was involved in a high number of wars and rebellions, many of which led to high amounts of wounded servicemen. These wars included but are not limited to; The Anglo-Spanish Wars (1585-1604) (1625 – 1630) and The English Civil war (1642 – 1651)

³⁶ Richard Wiseman, *A Treatise of Wounds* (London, 1672) p9

³⁷ *Ibid*, p4

³⁸ Atkins, *The navy-surgeon*, p150

³⁹ Ambrose Paré dedicated an entire text to the curing of wounds caused by gunshot, arrows and darts, but made no mention to the lasting scar left after its treatment; Ambrose Paré, *The method of curing vvounds made by gun-shot Also by arrowes and darts, with their accidents. Written by Ambrose Parie of Lauval, counsellor and chiefe chirurgeon to the French King. Faithfully done into English out of the French copie, by Walter Hamond chirurgeon*, (London, 1617)

⁴⁰ Hudson, ‘Disabled Veterans’p117

nationwide pension scheme was created in 1593.⁴¹ Hudson argued that one of the reasons behind the development of legitimate financial aid for these figures was the belief that if soldiers were treated respectfully, and financially supported when injury prohibited their service, then others would sign up to serve, meaning that there would be continual recruitments for the army.⁴² One of the reasons why the pension scheme was introduced was because it was regarded as more respectful than charity and was used as a practical preventative measure against desertion or begging.⁴³ This indicates that the government was attempting to financially assist injured ex-servicemen and that they understood how the presence of an ex-soldier begging on the streets may have had an effect on public perceptions of the state.

Hudson's argument is supported by William Sheppard's *The Offices of constables*, a published text asserting the roles of offices and legal statutes, which claimed that 'every soldier, or mariners, impotent, sick and disabled by the publique service, having a certificate' were to be provided for as 'it is the duty of this officer, to give such a portion of relief to him at his present necessity.'⁴⁴ This form of financial support was for the 'sick, hurt and maimed soldiers and mariners that have lost their limbs or disabled their bodies in the publique service,' and shows a public awareness of the extreme damaged that could be caused to the body at war and sea. Yet even though some contemporaries did believe these ex-soldiers deserved help, Audrey Eccles states that the government was a 'complete failure' at supporting ex-soldiers, seamen and dependants up until the Victorian Era.⁴⁵ Contemporaries were quick to determine who was deemed as deserving of charity. *A New Guide for Constables* from 1692, yet again supports the argument that maimed soldiers were to benefit from financial aid given by their local community.⁴⁶ What these indicate is that there was a form of public ownership regarding wounded soldiers, as it was understood that those men would not be in that financial, social and bodily position if it was not for their service to the country. Due to this public acceptance, soldiers

⁴¹ Ibid, p117

⁴² Ibid, p117

⁴³ Ibid, p117

⁴⁴ Sheppard, *The offices of constables* (p19)

⁴⁵ Eccles, *Vagrancy in law*, p1

⁴⁶ Anonymous, *A New Guide for Constables*, pp169-172

were exempt from standard vagrancy acts throughout the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.⁴⁷ The honourable and wounded men who served in the war or at sea were used by fraudulent beggars who sought to replicate a respectable and tragic narrative for their use. The respect accompanying real injured individuals meant that they were the prime targets for fraudsters attempting to present themselves as in need, and it was because of this context that these injuries and narratives were exploited over common day-to-day accidents.

It has been argued, however, by Simon Parks that the ‘broken soldier’ was a consistent reminder of warfare and has showed that they were treated better in fiction than they were in real life because they were ‘held in contempt by much of the society that sent (them) to fight and die.’⁴⁸ Parks believed the literary depiction of the injured soldier was perceived as more sympathetic and honourable than real life ex-servicemen, perhaps because they could be romanticised in fiction but in day-to-day life they were permanent reminders of mortality and war. If these claims are to be believed then perhaps the role of a wounded soldier did not invoke as much sympathy or charity as first assumed, for their occurrence was a public reminder of the country’s involvement in war and the government’s inability to financially provide for the men that had been sent off to fight as the presence of wounded soldiers on the streets was common. Maybe these conflicting attitudes to injured soldiers demonstrates why there were many other characters used in the fraudulent beggar’s repertoire alongside Rufflers and demonstrates that public attitudes towards who they wanted to help did consistently change.

The cunning Northerne Beggar describes one way in which a fraudulent beggar may have presented himself and manipulated his body to appear as a wounded ex-soldier.⁴⁹ The ballad depicts a beggar who waits by the side of the road until coaches or noblemen on horses pass by. When they do he

⁴⁷ Anonymous, *Southt. ss. Ad General. Quarterial. Session.* (London, 1678); Anonymous, *A new scheme for reducing the laws relating to the poor into one act of Parliament, and for the better providing the impotent poor with necessaries, ... The second edition. To which are added reasons for making no other alterations in the poor-law, than ... necessary.* (London 1737) Both sources note how soldiers and sailors were excluded.

⁴⁸ Simon Parks, ‘Wooden Legs and Tales of Sorrow Done: The Literary Broken Soldier of the Late Eighteenth Century,’ *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 36, no. 2 (2013)

⁴⁹ Anonymous, *The cunning Northerne Begger*

would assemble his ‘crutch’ and get off of his ‘couch’ and approach the roadside.⁵⁰ The author detailed,

Now like a wandring Souldier

(That has ith warres bin maimed

With the shot of a Gunne)

To Gallants I runne,

And begg sir helpe the lamed.⁵¹

The way the beggar walked, spoke, expressed his need, and used the prop of the crutch were all considered by passers-by as they assessed whether they found him deserving of their charity. The ballad referred to a gunshot wound but makes no direct reference to what damage it caused. It is unclear whether the beggar showed a scar, open wound, or whether he was emphasising the structural bodily issues the original wound created. It did however discuss his lameness, implying that he had difficulty in walking. The beggar continued to explain the other scenarios he used to gain money, yet none of them would have arguably received the same amount of attention and respect as the maimed soldier. The entire ballad not only showed how he manipulated the passers-by but is also a piece of satirical literature which allows the beggar to brag about his ability whilst also condemning the vulnerability of charity givers.

The slightly more generic type of counterfeit sores were known as ‘cleymes.’⁵² They were usually associated with the public figure of the Palliard, who appears to have been an extension of the Clapperdodgeon (a beggar born and bred).⁵³ In 1612 Thomas Dekker explained how ‘artificial Clapperdodgeons were known as Palliards because of their use of false sores.’⁵⁴ Dekker, unlike other

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Randle Holme, *The academy of armory, or, A storehouse of armory and blazon containing the several variety of created beings, and how born in coats of arms, both foreign and domestick.* (Chester, 1688)

⁵³ Anon, *A New Canting Dictionary*

⁵⁴ Thomas Dekker, *O per se O, Or A new cryer of Lanthorne and candle-light Being an addition, or lengthening, of the Bell-mans second night-walke. In which, are discovered those villanies,* (London, 1612)

authors on the subject, provided a step by step guide on how fake sores were applied successfully to the body. He explained that crowsfoot, spearwort (two types of herbs) and salt, were mixed and applied to the skin. This was then covered gently with an open linen cloth.⁵⁵ Once the cloth was stuck to the skin firmly, it was ripped off to give the skin a damaged and raw look. Next katsbane was rubbed on the affected area to make it ‘look ugly’ and then it was finally covered over with a blood stained and ‘filthy’ bandage or cloth.⁵⁶ What Dekker described was a carefully planned procedure which the Palliards may have used to make their skin appear unattractive and unnatural. Whilst his description could have been read as instructions, it is difficult to ascertain the number of beggars who used his methods to create false sores, or whether he got his recipe from those who used it. Regardless of where Dekker’s method originated, very poor individuals were unlikely to have had access to these pamphlets and his ideas, meaning that information must have spread through oral culture as well as printed works. Mary Fissell has examined how texts were consumed during the early modern period and investigated reading habits, arguing that there was more to assuming knowledge than reading.⁵⁷ It is then plausible that many of these methods were shared between individuals rather than through printed works as information disseminated in a variety of ways. Eighteenth-century physician Robert James explained that some of these ingredients grew in ‘low meadows and pastures’ and were easy to access.⁵⁸ He also described the medical uses of crowfoot and how it was used as a natural way of encouraging a wound to stop bleeding and prevent haemorrhages.⁵⁹ The drying quality of the herb reveals why it was an ingredient used to make a wound appear sore. It is possible that some authors wrote what they medically thought to be concoctions which would cause irritation if applied to the skin, perhaps assuming others might also be aware of the qualities of ingredients, such as herbs.

By the end of the seventeenth century the definition of male Palliard had changed to one who would bind a body part tightly with pieces of rusty metal and leather in order to irritate the skin and induce

⁵⁵ Dekker, *O per se O*.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*

⁵⁷ The dissemination of ideas has been discussed by Fissell, ‘Readers, texts, and context,’

⁵⁸ Robert James, *A medicinal dictionary; including phisic, surgery, anatomy, chymistry, and botany, in all their branches relative to medicine. Together with a history of drugs* (London, c1743-45)

⁵⁹ *Ibid*

body sores, rather than one who used only herbs.⁶⁰ The binding of a body part, rather than solely the application of a herbal concoction, shows the physical lengths some fraudsters resorted to so that they could manipulate their bodies. Contemporary B.E described them as ‘sores without pain raised on beggars’ bodies, by their own artifice and cunning (to move charity).⁶¹ B.E explained that their aim was to induce passers-by to offer them charitable donations, thus showing that their financial motivations were prevalent. Canting dictionaries noted cleymes as ‘sores without pain’ and explained how they could be done by ‘bruising crowsfoot, spearwort and salt’ which was mixed with ‘powder arsnick’ and applied to the skin to make it appear sore.⁶² Over one hundred years after Dekker’s text was published, Thomas Dyche described cleymes in his detailed and graphic depiction of a Palliard. Alongside the use of ‘arsnick,’ leather and rust, Dyche also outlined that lime and unflacked soap could be used to produce a sore. Some ingredients such as leather, salt, lime and herbs were relatively easy to access on the markets while arsenic may have been more difficult to access without the required knowledge.⁶³ Dyche also explicitly described the application of these sores to the leg, rather than any other body part. Yet no reason for the location of the sore was offered, though it is perhaps because their location may be easily covered by clothing when desired and that its position on the leg allowed the beggar to imply that the sore affected their mobility meaning they could appear even more vulnerable. Each of the sources examined here provided a slightly different recipe and method for producing sores on the body, and what this shows is that there was no singular universal method. Instead various methods apparently evolved over time and perhaps reflected ingredients different people had access to.

⁶⁰Anon, *A new canting dictionary*, p89; Dyche, *A new general English dictionary*,

⁶¹B.E, *A new dictionary of the canting crew*, p39

⁶²Anon, *A New Canting Dictionary*, p33

⁶³Salt and lime were readily accessible in early modern England, and the production of leather was beneficial to the English economy: L. A. Clarkson, ‘The Organization of the English Leather Industry in the Late Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, *The Economic History Review*, New Series, vol 13, No. 2 (1960) pp245-256; Arsenic was understood to be a poison, one which could be ‘digged out of the earth’; Joannes Jonstonus, *The idea of practical physick in twelve books* (London, 1657) p4; it was also used as an ingredient for ‘recreative fireworks,’ John White, *A rich cabinet, with variety of inventions; unlock'd and opened, for the recreation of ingenious spirits at their vacant hours* (London, 1651) L2. The use of arsenic as both a poison and as a component in fireworks demonstrates its harmful qualities.

The terms Palliards and Clapperdungeons also applied to those that fraudulently limited the use of or concealed a limb, limited their ability to walk, or were generally noted as ‘those that counterfeit lameness.’⁶⁴ Surgeon Richard Wiseman discussed many of the causes of lameness in his text *Severall Chirurgical Treatises* published in 1676, and explained how each differed and could have been treated.⁶⁵ The variety of causes of lameness, and that many of the causes lay beneath the skin and within the bodily structure, meant that this type of injury was easily adopted by those committing fraudulent behaviour. Beggars had to overly emphasise a limp or bandage a limb to the body and argue that they were unable to use it, which was perhaps easier and less damaging than creating a sore on the skin, but they may perhaps have still found themselves challenged by passers-by. They may have also incorporated the use of crutches to make it appear as if their legs were unable to support their body weight, indicating that external props were used alongside the body to project the image of a dependant form. The physicality involved in performing a defective bodily structure was different to that required for applying false sores and may have been difficult to prove unless they were examined by a trained physician or surgeon. A limp or lameness would not have left the same visible mark on the exterior of the body as a sore or open wound, and therefore required a different style of performance, one which focused on the movement of the body as well as the appearance. Chapter one established that there was believed to be a typical shape of the body but that it could be altered or damaged in a variety of ways, many of which would not have been visible at first glance and may have therefore allowed fraudsters a certain degree of licence in how they chose to explain the narrative surrounding the origin of their deficiency.

The Jovial Beggars Merry Crew discussed a group of beggars who used different means to deceive the public, including the replication of limbs.⁶⁶ It is stated that one

framd himself a Wooden Leg,

⁶⁴ Anonymous, ‘Life and death of the English Rogue, or, his last legacy to the world’ within *Winter evening amusements. Being a collection of curious and entertaining histories ...* (London, 1742) A2

⁶⁵ Richard Wiseman, *Severall Chirurgical Treatises*, (London, 1676) pp312-313, 491

⁶⁶ Anon, *The Jovial Beggars Merry Crew*

Which pittie movd as he did Beg;
And mournfully he did complain,
That from his Cradle he was Lame.⁶⁷

Whilst the ballad referred to the wooden leg and how it invoked sympathy, there was a clear acknowledgement of the narrative needed to explain why he was begging on the street. To have only one leg was not a reason to be begging rather than working as some strict beliefs of the time argued that a man did not need two legs to be able to work, if he had at least one working hand.⁶⁸ Many popular depictions of fraudulent beggars provided them with ailments other than a missing arm or leg, and lameness along with its implications was used in narratives to offer another reason why the beggar was unable to work. The manipulation of the body's physicality was central to gaining status as a beggar, as it was the body which showed that the individual was unable to financially support themselves. The beggar described in the ballad had to provide legitimate reasons for his inability to work and his appearance on the streets. *The merry beggars of Lincolns-Inn fields* is another example which yet again mentions the deception of limbs.⁶⁹ As beggars discuss their tactics, the first states he has a wooden leg which he uses to gain sympathy. The second beggar said that he 'tye(s) up' his leg, and that due to it and his 'wry face' he earns 'good money' when he begs.⁷⁰ It is likely that the leg was tied behind his back so that from the front it would give the illusion of him having only one leg. As mentioned in chapter two, wooden legs were used by individuals to replace the limb that they had lost, it is plausible that false legs were visible only if the wearer chose to make them so. This meant that fraudsters who chose to use a prosthetic, or a prop that resembled a prosthetic limb, had to make it noticeable if they wished to use it deceptively and may have emphasised its use by exaggerating their movements and bodily behaviour. Therefore, props such as long cloaks and a crutch were

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ Richard Haines, *A model of government for the good of the poor, and the wealth of the nation with such a method and inspection that frauds, corruption in officers, abuses to the poor, ill administration of materials, &c. therein may be prevented.* (London, 1678) p5

⁶⁹ Anonymous, *The Merry BEGGARS of Lincolns-Inn-Fields. OR, The Beggars Art to get Money. Shewing all the Pranks and Tricks they use, to make people believe they are Poor* (circa 1685-1688)

⁷⁰ Anonymous, *The Merry BEGGARS of Lincolns-Inn-Fields*

necessary to fulfil the façade, demonstrating the premeditation and design involved in physical types of deceptions

Sailors, alongside soldiers, were perhaps the most susceptible to accidents and injuries which resulted in the loss of a limb, or at least perhaps the easiest to identify due to their presence within popular works as well as other different types of records, and this honourability was something which appealed to some fraudsters. Between the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century there were numerous cases recorded of ex-sailors with one leg either seeking honest work on board a ship or asking their county to be provided with a pension due to their service. In 1675 James Barnes, who lost his leg in battle sought work on the Kings ships because they had a reputation for hiring maimed men, he said he was unable to find work in the merchant service.⁷¹ Also, in 1680 Colonel G.Legg wrote a letter to the courts and asked for John Flood to be hired and for him to be allowed to enter on a ship.⁷² Legg served alongside Flood in the Dutch war, where Flood lost a leg, and could no longer support his family on his pension. This shows that there were some maimed ex-servicemen eager to work and remain independent, yet it also shows that injuries such as missing legs were common effects of service and therefore a beggar's claims of similar injuries were likely to be believed.

This section has shown how the skin and limbs were susceptible to being used by fraudulent beggars in their performances. It has demonstrated that many types of injuries or scars were created and redefined because of the honour of wounded ex-servicemen and their visibility on the streets in early modern England, which meant that their narratives were attractive to fraudsters who wanted to financially profit from begging. The skin and limbs were two highly visible elements of the human body and susceptible to a multitude of ailments and injuries which may have occurred in numerous ways, however as shown in this project so far, the context of a deficient body, and its origin, were just as important as the defect itself. Some people would not have had sympathy for those suffering from disease, which they could catch, or from a common injury at work. Instead, it appears as if the respectability of injured ex-soldiers was appealing to fraudsters, and it was by altering and damaging

⁷¹ The National Archives, Kew. ADM 106/308, folio 44 (March 16th, 1675)

⁷² The National Archives, Kew. ADM 106/351/267, folio 267 (May 6th, 1680)

the exterior of their bodies that they were able to perform their fraud and their new narrative creation. This section has therefore demonstrated the most visible way that the body may have been altered by fraudsters and had shown how an honourable narrative facilitated the performance of bodily fraud.

Dommerars

A Dommerar is defined by the *Oxford Online Dictionary* as ‘the cant name for a beggar who pretended to be dumb,’ and the term ‘dumb’ means the inability to speak.⁷³ Those who were unable to speak were included in the definition of ‘deserving poor,’ under the categorisation of ‘poor by casualty’ if it was an injury from war or they were noted as ‘naturally disabled’ if it was a defect from birth.⁷⁴ It is possible that the appeal for beggars to employ this persona, over the ones discussed previously, was the performance it required. It is arguable that the persona of the Dommerar and his tactics were used as a simple and direct response to the categorisation of ‘deserving’ poor and was a method which men could use to fraudulently apply themselves to the established criteria. The extent of their performance and behaviour could vary, some might have merely ceased to speak in public, but others manipulated the shape of their tongue and mouth or damaged them, showing that even in this category of bodily fraud there remained diversity. This section shows how the ability to speak was suppressed by some fraudsters who chose to use this sensory deprivation to appear vulnerable and worthy of charity.

Those who were dumb were described as ‘one born without the use of organs of speech or rendered so by force or accident,’ and meant that an individual was unable to verbally communicate.⁷⁵ In order for one to learn to speak however, they must be able to hear and learn language at some stage of their development. Emily Cockayne has written on the experiences of the deaf in early modern England and has identified the different definitions of deafness.⁷⁶ She argues that a ‘prelingually deaf’ person

⁷³ <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/58404?redirectedFrom=dommerar#eid> : The term’s etymology has not been able to be located on <https://www.etymonline.com/>

⁷⁴ Sheppard, *The offices of constables*, p161; Anon, *A new guide for constables*,) p109; Anon, *The laws concerning the poor*, p3

⁷⁵ Dyche, *A new general English dictionary*, p232

⁷⁶ Emily Cockayne, ‘Experiences of the Deaf in Early Modern England,’ *The Historical Journal*, vol 46, no 3 (September 2003) p494

was someone who was either born deaf and thus unable to ever learn a language, or who became deaf through illness or injury before their development of language; meaning that they would never have possessed the ability to talk.⁷⁷ Someone who lost their hearing at a later stage in their development was still able to verbally communicate to some degree.⁷⁸ Therefore, one's ability to speak and hear were interlinked in many cases. A beggar pretending to be dumb needed to decide whether they were also pretending to be deaf, as this could facilitate their fraudulent narrative and performance but also provided them with another falsified sensory impairment. If they were claiming to have been injured in war or through accident later in life, then there was no need to conceal their ability to hear, but if they chose to employ the narrative of dumb from birth then the performance of deafness may have been a required addition to their repertoire.

Dommerars were described in Canting texts and publications which noted criminal personalities, due to their manipulation of the public and their greed for financial aid. Across the early modern period they were generally referred to in a similar way and it was claimed that 'dommerars are such as counterfeit themselves dumb; they have an art to rowl their tongue up into the roof of their mouths, so as you cannot see it.'⁷⁹ Author Thomas Harman wrote in 1592 that Dommerars were 'lewd' individuals and stereotyped them as usually being Welsh men rather than English.⁸⁰ Harman is the only contemporary found to have mentioned the stereotyping of this form of fraud by nationality, and it is likely that it reflected his attitude and personal beliefs rather than a broadly shared mentality of early modern culture. He noted that these men 'will never speak unless extreme punishment, but will gape, and with a marvellous force will hold down their tongue doubled, groaning for your charity.'⁸¹ Within Harman's text it is implied that he has met many of these counterfeit individuals, and states that he has only ever met one that he believed had truly 'lost their tongue.'⁸² In many cases the true task a Dommerar had to undertake was learning to manipulate the movement of their tongue, rather

⁷⁷ Ibid, p494

⁷⁸ Ibid, p494

⁷⁹ Anon, 'Life and death of the English Rogue,' p433

⁸⁰ Thomas Harman, *The groundworke of conny-catching, the manner of their pedlers-French, and the meanes to vnderstand the same with the cunning slights of the counterfeit cranke ...* (London, 1592)

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Ibid

than falsifying a wound. Many anatomy texts such as Christof Wirsung's *The general practise of physicke* 1605 and William Cowper's *The Anatomy of Humane Bodies* 1698 discussed the muscles connected to the tongue and how they could manipulate and move into any position; it is possible that with some practice these types of fraudsters were able to master this skill.⁸³ By restricting speech, a Dommerar had to execute a different type of performance to those who damaged their skin and limbs, as they were unable to use cries of anguish or pain to provide their body and narrative with a sympathetic soundscape. If they were also pretending to be deaf, it meant that they had to be careful with how they interacted with those around them, for they could not respond in the expected way. A Dommerar pretended they could not hear nor speak, but that does not mean that they could not communicate in some other manner such as writing, facial expressions or body language. Dommerars thus demonstrate the variety of bodily fraud prevalent in early modern England and shows that there were many ways which fraudsters believed they could make themselves deserving of charity.

Regarding the detection of fraudsters, it was perhaps sometimes easier to recognise a Dommerar if they portrayed their deception inaccurately, for example if they responded to sounds or language then it was assumed that they had lied. At the start of the seventeenth century Thomas Dekker referred to one case that he supposedly knew of, describing that,

This dommerars name was W, he made a strange hoyle, shewing his fingers across that his tongue was cut out at Chalke-hill. In his hand he carried a sticke, about a foote in length, and sharpe at both ends, which he would thrust into his mouth, as if he meant to shew the stumps of his tongue. But in doing so, he did of purpose hit his tongue with the sticke to make it bleede, which filling up his mouth, you could not for blood perceive any tongue at all, because he had turned it upwards, and with his sticke thrust it into his throat. But I caused him to be held fast by the strength of men, until such time that opening his teeth with the end of a small cudgel, I pluckt forth his tongue and made him speake⁸⁴

⁸³ Christof Wirsung, *The general practise of physicke conteyning all inward and outward parts of the body, with all the accidents and infirmities that are incident vnto them* (London, 1605) p166; Cowper, *The Anatomy of Humane Bodies*, p407

⁸⁴ Dekker, *O per se O* (p101)

A mouth full of blood made it difficult for anyone to see the manipulated tongue, and so was likely taken by many as proof, especially if they did not wish to investigate the bloody mouth of a beggar. Yet in this case, the blood did not stop the men investigating. The men who attacked the beggar were not described, and neither is it clearly explained why they initially believed the Dommerar to be false in his silent claims. Perhaps they were accustomed to the presence of fraudulent Dommerars or the man had performed his role imperfectly. As mentioned previously, Dekker took many of his stories from other authors, so it is unclear where this tale originated. Regardless of its origin and validity, it shows the lengths fraudsters were imagined going to. Consistently forcing the tongue back with a sharp stick made the individual susceptible to injury, infection or even long-term damage of their mouth and throat. The lack of first-hand accounts means that it is difficult to establish the extent to which this behaviour was real rather than imagined by authors. It is possible that this form of self-injury could have not only manipulated the appearance of dumbness but may have led to the injury's legitimate development. Dekker's reiteration of the beggar named 'W' is a clear example of the methods thought to have been used by deceitful beggars and demonstrates how those from the community could take an active and physical role in their exposure. Similarly, to Palliards and Clapperdungeons, Dommerars were sometimes suspected to have mutilated and damaged their body to assist their deceptive performance. Rather than relying solely on their falsified sensory deprivations, some chose to hurt themselves to support their claims. Linking back to the idea of public politeness and etiquette, early modern people were advised to neither stare nor look too closely at another's afflictions, and it is possible that the blood created by the beggar meant that observers did not want to look, and that the view of the tongue was restricted.⁸⁵

By 1702 the topic of Dommerars was still a subject of interest, the posthumous edition of writer John Shirley's text described them as individuals who 'make a horrible noise' and pretend their tongues had been cut out in the Turkish slavery. To hide their tongue, they kept it pressed up against the roof of their mouth.⁸⁶ Not only was Shirley aware of how they deceived the public, but he remarked on the

⁸⁵ Turner and Withey, 'Technologies of the Body,' pp775-796; Hitchcock, 'Begging on the streets,' p478

⁸⁶ John Shirley, *The triumph of wit; or, ingenuity display'd in its perfection: being the newest and most useful academy* (London, 1702) p194

tragic backstory which had become synonymous with the ailment. Whether this was an assumed tale or one which had been written down is unclear, but as the Dommerar was unable to speak there must have been a way their tale was told. Each of the three depictions of Dommerars show how they evolved over time. The first was stereotyped by nationality and behaviour, the second provided graphic methods and self-mutilation, whilst the last was simplistic in physicality with more emphasis and significance placed on the narrative. Each author tells a different account, yet the only aspect that they all have in common is the basis of the fraudulent behaviour, the beggar's claim for alms. What this shows is that there was no single universal method used by Dommerars to mimic an inability to talk, and that they remained constant in popular culture but were perhaps shaped by contemporary interests and authorship idiosyncrasies.

Blindness

Another form of sensory deprivation, one which yet again came under the definition of 'naturally disabled,' and was falsified by fraudsters, was blindness.⁸⁷ Randle Holme, writer and deputy herald for Chester, Lancashire and North Wales, defined blindness in 1688 as 'is not to have eyes or not to see.'⁸⁸ A definition which leaves little to be speculated. Emily Cockayne has claimed that sight was regarded as the superior sense by early modern writers, and that its loss or limitation could be restrictive of work opportunities or independence.⁸⁹ The loss of one's sight had life altering effects as it limited one's choice of occupations and may have meant constant dependency on another to assist them with day-to-day life. The 1745 English translation of Lorenz Heister's surgical text discussed how cataracts or hypopyon (inflamed cells around the eye) led to blindness.⁹⁰ Whilst it appears that cataracts were expected to occur naturally and usually due to age, hypopyon developed for a variety of reasons. This could 'happen after a violent inflammation, the small pox, couching a cataract; or from other external injuries of the eyes from violence, as contusion, from a blow or fall, a burn,' and

⁸⁷ Sheppard, *The offices of constables*, p171; Meriton, *A guide for constables*, p161; Anon, *A new guide for constables*, p109; Anon, *The laws concerning the poor*, p3

⁸⁸ Holme, *The academy of armory*, p168

⁸⁹ Cockayne, 'Experiences of the Deaf,' p494

⁹⁰ Heister, *A general system of surgery*. pp408-424

shows how both disease and injury were perceived to lead to blindness in some cases.⁹¹ The different causes of blindness meant that there was a variety of narratives available to beggars who pretended to be blind. Heister however, did not mention whether there would be any signs of injury or damage around the eyes, such as redness or irritation, and instead appeared to only discuss the condition of the eye itself and its subsequent methods of treatment. Therefore, there is nothing found in the research so far to imply that early modern people expected to see damage around the eyes on those who claimed to be blind. The performance executed by those pretending to be blind differed from other forms of deceptive behaviour as they had to ignore physical responses and indicators from their audience and rely on their other senses, such as sound and speech.

A blind man had to be portrayed differently to one who was suffering from skin conditions or a limp and arguably required less medical knowledge or access to ingredients. However, if the beggar falsified an ailment such as hypopyon then they may have needed an understanding of the condition they were counterfeiting. Those who pretended to be blind were usually portrayed as being led around the local streets by a young boy or dog, because they were performing the role of a vulnerable person who lacked the ability to see and thus guide themselves safely around their community. The depiction of a blind beggar supported by a secondary character is supported in a ballad from the seventeenth century which stated, 'Then as if my sight I wanted,/A Boy doth walke beside me,/Or else I doe/ Grope as I goe,/Or have a Dog to guide me.'⁹² The ballad refers to the beggar having to 'grope' around, meaning that he was feeling his way around as he was pretending to be unable to see and guide himself. Others played an instrument, such as harps or fiddles (often referred to as blind-harpers).⁹³ The inclusion of a second figure, or talent, used in a fraudster's ploy suggests that blindness itself was not worthy of charity, but that other elements were required to emphasise the sympathetic character of a blind beggar. This can be argued because the other personas described in this chapter did not refer to other characters or skills used alongside the altered body. Rather than the performance of a blind beggar focussing solely on their body, something else was needed to invoke

⁹¹ Ibid, p424

⁹² Anon, *The cunning Northerne Begger*

⁹³ Anon, *A new canting dictionary*, p23; B.E, *A new dictionary of the canting crew*, p21

charity, whether it be an honourable backstory if they claimed to lose their sight in a war, or a skill such as music which allowed them to employ more theatrical elements to their performance. A blind beggar was also able to use language to facilitate his deception, unlike the Dommerars mentioned before, and were able to respond to other vocal cues and questions about their narrative.

Those found to be assuming the false persona of a blind beggar may have been targets of public anger and ridicule as their presence was indicative of duplicity and fraud. One joke included in the eighteenth-century text *Coffee House Jest*s refers to locals who disbelieved a blind beggar. A bastard (illegitimate) noble pinched his nose and the blind man's response of 'you bastard rogue' was taken as evidence of him seeing, whereas the author believed it to be a common phrase so it proved nothing.⁹⁴ Although blind beggars were widely acknowledged and sometimes disbelieved, they were not always discussed with suspicion. The tale *The history of the blind beggar of Bednal-Green* 1686 represented a respectable man who was blinded in a war and had to beg as a means of living due to his predicament and lack of state support.⁹⁵ Rather than damning the beggar and his trade, the ballad seemed to mock the legal, economic and social systems which encouraged a wounded soldier to beg rather than supplying him with an honest pension. The story described the beggar's daughter who left home and found work in an ale-house, after meeting numerous suitors the tale ends with the blind beggar's daughter marrying a respectable man. Whilst the daughter is cautious about how her intended will react to the news that her father is a blind beggar, the suitor cares more about how much he has earned from charitable donations, rather than his means of begging. Rather than being a target of social envy, for some, these beggars were the symbolic but satirical figures of a difficult economic community and climate. Regarding the blind beggar of Bednal-green, his government and society at large had let him down and refused to financially support him and his family, therefore he did what he could to financially survive. Whilst a fictitious literary source the tale still rung true for some readers, and can be used to support the argument by Audrey Eccles who claimed that the state failed to support ex-servicemen during the early modern period for if individuals received enough financial support

⁹⁴ William Hickes, *Coffee-house jests. Being a merry companion: containing witty jests, wise sayings, smart repartees, ... with several short delightful histories, novels, and other curious fancies* (London, 1733) p124

⁹⁵ Anonymous, *The history of the blind beggar of Bednal-Green* (London 1686)

then they would not have needed to resort to begging whether it was fraudulent or not.⁹⁶ The tale of the beggar of Bednal-green shows the varying portrayals of beggars in early modern culture, and indicates that they were not always presented in a deceptive and criminal context, but instead that they were figures of sympathy. The circulation of stories such as this perhaps allowed fraudsters to execute their fraud, as it showed that not all beggars were deceptive and instead used begging to support themselves and their families during difficult times. It may have allowed readers to feel sympathy for the characters presented and influenced their public responses to blind beggars in real life, however it is difficult to assume how everyone read and responded to works of fiction.

Overall this investigation shows that the fraudulent performance of blindness was different to those who mimicked visible signs of bodily defect, as many of them used a talent or a secondary character such as a boy or dog to exaggerate their vulnerability and make themselves appear worthier of charity rather than physically damaging the body. Though many ballads and texts attacked the presence of blind beggars, or more specifically their falsifying, others such as *the blind beggar of Bednal-Green* were used to inform readers of the failure of their government and economy and informed the readers why beggars existed. They were simultaneously advising fraudsters how they could use the narrative of an ex-soldier who lost his sight at war, again playing on the honourability of injured in service. The performance of falsified blindness was reliant on movement, speech, and behaviour rather than the shape and appearance of the body.

Mad Toms and Abram Men

The final bodily aspect which could be counterfeited, exaggerated or replicated, was mental illness. Commonly referred to in canting dictionaries as ‘Abram men’ or ‘Toms of Bedlam,’ these men were regarded and presented in a different way to the other types of fraudsters discussed. The typical backstory they claimed was to have previously been incarcerated at Bedlam, and they faked the symptoms of madness.⁹⁷ Michael McDonald has assessed mental illness in seventeenth-century

⁹⁶ Eccles, *Vagrancy in law and practice*, p1

⁹⁷ Dekker, *The belman of London*

England and has identified a range of differently defined forms of mental disorders.⁹⁸ These ranged from violent madness, to melancholy and suicidal tendencies, to lunacy. The diversity of these types of mental illness allowed beggars a choice of which they chose to impersonate. The performance of each of these categories was different and required a differing execution as each form of mental illness presented differently. Madness has however had a long history of association with gender, specifically women as it was used as a form of social control.⁹⁹ This chapter will assess the men who counterfeited forms of mental illness as a theatrical ploy within their quest for charity. McDonald claimed that ‘madness wore a masculine visage,’ as the stereotypical Mad Tom lacked much of his social constraints and was ‘hardly better than a beast.’¹⁰⁰ He also states that between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a majority of those being institutionalised for mental illness were men, and that Tudor and Stuart society was more concerned about men who fell insane than women.¹⁰¹ This section examines some of the ways which a male fraudulent beggar was able to portray the identity of a mad man and how they manipulated their body to assist with this performance.

During the early modern period there were believed to be a variety of causes of mental illness, and many contemporaries compared madness to a disease. French physician Daniel Le Clerc stated in 1699 that madness could be caused by hot humours or distempers of the brain. One ‘peculiar sign’ of madness was foaming at the mouth, which was also associated with seizures and the falling sickness.¹⁰² The mixture of white phlegm and black bile, penetrating the brain, was what was perceived to cause the falling sickness (otherwise known as epilepsy).¹⁰³ Epilepsy was viewed to be a physically strong disease, and those hoping to treat them were to have the strength of ‘Hercules’ if

⁹⁸ Michael McDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England*, (Cambridge University Press, 1981) pp111 - 115

⁹⁹ Many historians have assessed the link between women and madness, with many contemporaries linking the two due to early modern beliefs of the female body and the humours; Michael McDonald, ‘Women and Madness in Tudor and Stuart England,’ *Social Research*, vol 53, Issue 2 (Summer 1986) discusses how some women such as the Holy Maid of Kent were declared to be insane as it allowed society greater control; R.A Houston, ‘Madness and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century,’ *Social History*, vol 27, no 3 (Oct, 2002) pp309-326

¹⁰⁰ McDonald, ‘Women and Madness,’ pp261-263

¹⁰¹ Ibid, pp261-263

¹⁰² Le Clerc, *The history of physick*, p33

¹⁰³ Ibid, p33

they wanted to be able to restrain the patient.¹⁰⁴ Over forty years later English Physician and medical author Peter Shaw defined the different types of madness, differentiating between that caused by illness or imbalance and hereditary madness which he ‘deem’d incurable.’¹⁰⁵ The symptoms of madness that he listed were ‘unusual and unprovoked anger, boldness, fierceness, laughter, loquacity, taciturnity, thoughtfulness,’ the variety of behaviour associated with madness made it easier for fraudulent beggars, as they was no single expected performance.¹⁰⁶ Instead they could use this diversity to personalise their performance, and thus make it more individual and believable. Unlike medical opinions of scars and wounds, mental illness was a feature which was open to interpretation, and its variability allowed it to be counterfeited by fraudulent beggars. Some who sought to falsify mental illness damaged the exterior of their body like other fraudsters discussed in this chapter, but they could also use bodily movement, speech and sound, and facial expressions to portray their interpretation of madness.

Thomas Dekker’s *The Belman of London* describes an Abram man as being ‘the most fanstasticke’ and the ‘nobelest villain’ ‘of all the rascals.’¹⁰⁷ Dekker explained that some mutilated themselves using pins. He stated,

you see pinnes stuck in sundries places of his naked flesh, especially in his armes, which paine he gladly puts himself too (being indeed no torment at all, his skin is either so dead with some foule disease, as so hardned with weather: only to make you believe hee is out of his wits) he calls himself the name of Poore Tom, and coming near anybody cries out Poore Tom is colde.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, P33

¹⁰⁵ Peter Shaw, *A new practice of physic: wherein the various diseases incident to the human body are describ'd, their causes assign'd, their diagnostics and prognostics enumerated* (London, 1745) p27

¹⁰⁶ Shaw, *A new practice of physic*, p27

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Dekker, *The Belman of London*, D3, as well as being the subject of popular works, Mad Tom was used as a narrative tool within a variety of publications of the seventeenth century and eighteenth-centuries which discussed a variety of real life events and occasions using the voice of false mad man; Sir Francis Wortley, *Mad Tom a Bedlams desires of peace: or his Benedicities for distracted / Englands restauration to her wits again* (London, 1648); Anonymous, *News from Bedlam, or, Tom of Bedlams obervations, upon every month and festival time in this present year ...* (London, 1717); Luke Milbourne, *Tom of Bedlam's answer to his brother Ben Hoadly, St. Peter's poor parson, near the exchange of principals* (London, 1709)

Dekker's detailed depiction evoked the image of an eccentric man. Self-mutilation and use of pins left little doubt to observers that the man lacked rationale and the correct cognitive functions if he was willingly harming his own body. The description offered reflected those written about Palliards, the beggars who manipulated their skin and limbs, but also suggested that Tom was truly injured and immune to pain due to prior disease and harsh weather.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, the defective parts of his body were used to assist with his performance of being mentally ill and shows that bodily insufficiencies and ailments were used in other deceptive contexts. Dekker also suggested that not all Abraham men went to these physical lengths, instead some were 'exceeding merrie, and doe nothing but sing songs fashiond out of their owne braines, some will dance, others will doe nothing but either laugh or weepe.'¹⁰⁹ Some falsifying mental illness chose laughter, singing, dancing and portraying the image of a happy and cheerful beggar, one who was unable to comprehend his surroundings and may have induced sympathy in onlookers who realised his behaviour was symptomatic of his inability to understand. Others were described as,

dogged, and so sullen both in looke and speech that spying but a smal company in a house, they boldy and bluntly enter, compelling the servants through feare to give them what they demand, which is commonly bacon, or something that will yield ready money.¹¹⁰

The passage is reminiscent of the tale told by Thomas Cocks at the beginning of this chapter, as the beggar that he described approached residences and asked for money and bacon.¹¹¹ However, rather than preying on the good nature of Cocks' wife, the beggars noted by Dekker invoked fear in the servants and used that to achieve their goal. The similarities between the two show that perhaps this ploy was executed, and that it was usual to find fraudulent beggars approaching individual houses rather than staying on the public streets. This shows that performing falsified mental illness occurred in a variety of settings and was not constrained to the streets, as they may have approached private

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Dekker, *O per se O*; B.E, *A new dictionary of the canting crew*

¹⁰⁹ Dekker, *The Belman*, D3

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ Letter sent from Thomas Cocks to Sir Robert Berkeley Knight. (2nd September 1633)

residences and used their falsified aggression and illness to intimidate for charity rather than invoke charity.

Yet the description in *A new canting dictionary* from 1725 implies a theatrical element and discusses other things such as costumes. They were labelled as ‘shabby beggars, trick’d and patch’d up with ribbons, red tape, fox tales... pretending to be besides themselves, to palliate their thefts.’¹¹² No description is offered for how they pretended to be ‘beside themselves’ but it is likely that peculiar and odd behaviour, paired with their colourful costumes was enough to project the image of an unbalanced individual who was worthy of charity due to their incomprehensive mental state. Richard Head referred to them as eccentrics and offered little detail for this label.¹¹³ It is possible that varying descriptions meant that there were also different depictions of what a beggar thought to be an insane individual. Some beggars wanted to include the use of costumes and props, whilst others were either content with or unable to use anything other than their body and their language to portray the image of a mad man, illustrating that the performance was reliant on a variety of external factors.

This chapter has built upon the context established in Chapter One and provided a case study assessment of how the definitions of defective and deceptive bodies became intertwined. It shows how fraudulent beggars counterfeiting ailments, injuries and tragic backstories were indicative of the performative nature of bodily fraud in early modern England and how the body may have been manipulated for financial gain. It has demonstrated the range of factors which assisted or hindered the fraudulent beggar’s performance of a defective body worthy of charity. The beggar’s body, narrative and performance were all crucial elements of their ploy, and as shown in the assessment of different personas and methods, each had a varying level of importance to each character/defect the beggar assumed. Fraudsters were presented in popular works as conspiring criminals. The analysis here has also shown that concerns of public politeness and etiquette influenced public interactions with beggars on the streets. The choice of personas available to fraudulent beggars meant that they possessed

¹¹² Anon, *A new canting dictionary*, p12

¹¹³ Head, *The canting academy*, p54

agency over which narrative they chose to employ and how they executed and performed their fraud. Those who damaged the skin by creating sores or wounds, or limited the use of a limb, artificially created the deserving beggar's body; whereas those who redesigned the narrative of a wound or scar relied more on public perceptions of honour and duty, such as the Rufflers. The variety of weapons used in warfare meant that it was acknowledged that there was a diversity of wounds and scars produced in combat.¹¹⁴ The recommended distance to be kept between almsgiver and beggar meant that it was difficult for someone to accurately disprove the beggar's claims of service and honourable injury. However, as shown by Hudson and Parks, the injured soldier was not always treated respectfully, meaning that other personas were developed to assist counterfeit beggars in their deception.¹¹⁵ While many medical texts included recipes thought to be used to imitate the appearance of sores and open wounds, it is difficult to assume the extent to which they were employed by beggars. Dissemination of knowledge occurred in a variety of ways, either through printed works, ballads, or word of mouth, means that it is impossible to identify the origin of these methods as the information was consistently shared and evolving.

The appearance of Dommerars, counterfeit blind beggars and Toms of Bedlam demonstrated a diversity within the counterfeit beggar's repertoire as they focused on the fraudulent display of sensory impairments and mental illness rather than bodily injury. The performances of each differed and was reliant on a variety of factors. Whilst those who applied sores and wounds relied heavily on the appearance of their body and the explanation of its defect, those who impersonated mental illness and sensory deprivations relied more on their physical behaviour and redeveloped narrative. Those pretending to be dumb, blind and mentally ill had to also provoke the impression that their condition would never improve. The permanence or deterioration of their condition made them appear even more worthy of charity, as almsgivers would assume that they could never live unassisted. Their performance was consistent, and arguably required a considerable level of premeditation compared to those who wounded themselves and blamed it on honourable origins. While all types of fraudulent

¹¹⁴ Woosnam-Savage and DeVries, 'Battle Trauma,' p28

¹¹⁵ Hudson, 'Disabled Veterans,' p117; Parks, 'Wooden Legs,'

beggars required different performances, they were all created for the same reason, money. This chapter has shown how beggars were able to fraudulently assume the character of an individual deserving of charity and shows how they were presented in popular works and how this may in turn have influenced cultural mentalities. It has also shown how the performance and construction of bodily fraud was theatrical, and in some cases dramatic, in comparison to the themes discussed in Chapter Two which looked at the concealment and restoration of the body. This chapter leads on to the final theme which yet again will show a high level of premeditation and present a different way in which early modern bodily fraud was executed and performed to an audience for financial gain as it argues that women's virginity was susceptible to alteration in exchange for money.

Chapter Four: Cultural Fears and Desires of Counterfeit Virginity

Turning down the cloaths, and viewing the field of battle by the glimmer of a dying taper, he saw plainly my thighs, shift, and sheets, all stain'd with what he readily took for a virgin effusion, proceeding from his last half penetration: convinc'd, and transported at which, nothing could equal his joy and exultation. The illusion was compleat.¹

The fourth and final element of this dissertation is the examination of counterfeit virginity, the methods used, and the performance that was necessary to execute this type of deceptive behaviour. The quotation above is taken from John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1743), and takes place after the main character, Fanny, has produced counterfeit virginal blood to deceive her bedfellow into believing she was a virgin prior to sex. Fanny was paid for the sexual encounter by her client Mr Norbert, and she provided him with the falsified physiological evidence of her virginity. The novel was explicit in detailing how she committed her deception and demonstrates how falsified virginity was eroticised in early modern literature. This chapter argues that women were believed to possess the ability to falsify and replicate the loss of their virginity and that, like Fanny, they could do this to sexually appease men.

A virgin was and is defined as someone who has not engaged in vaginal intercourse, and the physical characteristics that usually accompanied it were/are blood (upon its initial loss) and vaginal tightness. Female virginity was consistently referred to in early modern medical doctrine when defining the female body, and virginal innocence (or lack of) was used as a way to define a woman's character within popular works such as Cleland's *Fanny Hill*.² As shown in this chapter, medical treatises offered explanations for how women might have 'lost' the physical representation of their virginity prior to engaging in sexual activity, and how authors supposed they could have recreated it. Many of these texts not only warned readers of women's deviant methods, but also informed potential perpetrators how they may enact this fraud themselves. This meant that all forms of published works

¹ John Cleland, *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, (London, 1743) p120

² *Ibid*, p120

were used as either warnings or instructional manuals, meaning readers were granted the knowledge needed to both uncover and commit this type of deceit depending on how they interpreted the information.³ The variation of types of dissemination meant that women were able to access many of the ideas written in popular works and medical doctrine but did not necessarily need to be able to read it for themselves, demonstrating the variation in ways that people accessed sexual and medical knowledge.

The theme of performance has spread throughout the entire dissertation so far and is portrayed differently in this chapter.⁴ Women were believed to have used their own first-hand sexual knowledge and experience, alongside ideas taken from medical doctrine and popular works, to efficiently and precisely perform the role of a virgin. Whilst the perpetrator may have fraudulently produced the physiological evidence of virginity's loss, the believability of their performance was reliant on more than blood (similarly to the beggars described in Chapter Three as their performance relied on more than just their altered bodies). A virgin was defined as someone with no sexual experience, and therefore their performance had to include the right balance of virtue and eroticism to sexually placate their customer or partner. This meant that sounds, movement, and facial expressions all had a role to play within this sexual façade. The performance of a counterfeit virgin was different to those examined who concealed deficiencies or falsified them for attention, as these women were premediating the physical restoration of a sexual quality, only to then enact its loss almost immediately in front of one person at a time.⁵ Falsifying virginity was a short-term ploy but was one which could be repeatedly committed with different partners, differing greatly to the other themes of deception examined which continued for varying periods of time, sometimes with a consistent audience.

³ Fissell, 'Readers, texts, and context,' p76

⁴ This is in relation to Erving Goffman's argument of the performing body; Goffman, *The presentation of self*, pp17-18

⁵ This refers to the concealment of bodily defects examined in chapter two, and fraudulent beggars discussed in chapter three.

Virtue and its loss have been argued by Randolph Trumbach to have been an important element of marriage and womanhood in the early modern period.⁶ The loss of virginity was not only symbolic for the woman as her entrance into an adult sexual environment, but also represented transference of power between father of the bride to the new husband.⁷ There was however a practical element to male desires of marrying a virgin, for if a woman had never engaged in sexual activity, then a new husband could be certain that months later his wife would not present him with a child that was not his.⁸ It was because women's bodies provided the space for conception and pregnancy, that their sexual behaviour was arguably monitored more closely than men's. Keith Thomas argued that women were more susceptible to sexual slander than men because society deemed their illicit behaviour more seriously, something he referred to as 'the double standard.'⁹ Yet Alan Macfarlane has claimed that there was little emphasis on the virginity of brides in traditional English society on a whole.¹⁰

In 1982 false virginity was first assessed by Paul-Gabriel Bouce who in his work on sexual myths in eighteenth century England assessed medical authors depictions of counterfeit maidenheads and offers the most detailed account of this to date.¹¹ He argues that the longevity of anatomical and physiological myths of the human body, and virginity, was partially due to the slow development of scientific advancement and knowledge in this period.¹² Therefore, lack of medical certainty of the female body allowed superstitions and concerns of false female virginity to arise, this is a theme considered in this chapter arguing that anxieties of counterfeit maidenheads existed and developed within cultural imagination and were based on little physical proof. Whilst Bouce discussed false

⁶ Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*, p23

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Richard Adair, *Courtship, Illegitimacy and Marriage in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996)

⁹ Keith Thomas, 'The Double Standard,' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol 20, (April 1959) p195; Men's sexual reputation has been investigated however by Bernard Capp, as he argues that men were also anxious about their reputation; Bernard Capp, 'The Double Standard Revisited: Plebian Women and Male Sexual Reputation in Early Modern England', *Past & Present*, no162 (February 1999) pp70-100

¹⁰ Alan Macfarlane, 'Illegitimacy and Illegitimates in English History,' In Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen, Richard Michael Smith (eds) *Bastardy and its comparative history: studies in the history of illegitimacy and marital nonconformism in Britain, France, Germany, Sweden, North America, Jamaica, and Japan*, (Harvard University Press, 1980) p75

¹¹ Paul-Gabriel Bouce, "Some Sexual Beliefs and Myths in Eighteenth-Century Britain," in Paul-Gabriel Bouce ed. *Sexuality in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, (Manchester University Press, 1982) pp33-35

¹² Ibid, pp33-35

virginity in a mythological context, Tassie Gwilliam has defined it as being evidence of female agency. She argued that it 'levelled the playing field between the sexes or even reverses completely the apparent balance of power,' and played upon the 'unknowableness of women.'¹³ Thus the ambiguity that surrounded the female form, previously discussed in chapter one, not only allowed fears of female fraud to develop, but also enabled women power over how they chose to present their virginity to a man. More recently, counterfeit virginity has been discussed by literary historian Sara Read in regard to Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* as she discusses how Fanny Hill's different types of blood were depicted and eroticised in the eighteenth-century novel.¹⁴ Read maps the events in the novel onto medical depictions of virginity's loss to show the ways that the theories and ideas presented in medical and pseudo medical texts 'transferred into erotic fiction.'¹⁵ This chapter builds upon each of their claims but argues that falsified virgins existed clearly within the mind of early modern culture as a focal point of eroticism and speculation, but that the lack of definitive evidence of their existence implied that their presence was widely imagined, invisible or accepted.

This chapter examines the depiction of counterfeit virginity in medical texts and popular works of early modern England. It argues that whilst sources claimed false virginity aroused suspicion, and was something to be feared, the lack of published accounts demonstrate that either false virgins were not accurately detected, that they did not exist, or that people actively chose to ignore their presence for a variety of personal motives and desires. This chapter also claims that many men were not only aware of the possibility of being tricked by false virginity but were willing participants in these scenarios and allowed this degree of deceitful behaviour to develop (if it did at all). Women were believed to have had the ability to falsify something desirable: their virginity. While it may have threatened social stability (due to fears surrounding paternity and inheritance) it was a sellable bodily feature.¹⁶ It may well have been used by women to rectify their sexual reputation or to sell to a customer and was a bodily characteristic which many men wanted (fake or real). The scenario of defloration was a mutual

¹³ Gwilliam, 'Female Fraud,' p519

¹⁴ Read, "Gushing Out Blood", pp165–177

¹⁵ Ibid, p165

¹⁶ Adair, *Courtship, Illegitimacy and Marriage*,

sexual performance, and therefore it can be argued that many men were aware of a less than truthful encounter but were sexually placated enough by the scenario to not have issue with its enactment. Furthermore, this chapter also claims that counterfeit virginity was used in a deceptive transaction for financial gain, whether it be by prostitutes demanding higher fees or women seeking financial security within their marriage. Whilst there is little to no published evidence of false virgins existing in early modern England, they did exist within cultural imagination and there was a male desire for female virginity as shown in their eroticising in literature. Far from being solely indicative of female sexual fraud, this chapter will show how women were believed to have adapted and manipulated their bodies to the desired typical virgin state, and how they may have performed this sexual role to not only manipulate men, but also to arouse and please them.

Virginity for sale

For some women living in early modern England it was possible that they could make money from their sexual qualities, whether it be their sexual experience as a prostitute or because they possessed the innocence required for a desirable bride. Women's bodies were their own to shape and present, and some were perceived by the early modern populace to have chosen to present theirs fraudulently for financial gain. The appearance of fictional characters such as Fanny Hill encouraged the perception of women as devious and cunning, Cleland's novel *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, discussed Fanny's deception of men for financial gain, and provided a step by step depiction of how Fanny replicated the loss of her virginal blood. The novel is written from Fanny's point of view, and we can assume that circulating medical and sexual knowledge influenced Cleland's writing and Fanny's behaviour. One account was as follows:

in each of the head bed-posts, just above where the bedsteads are inserted into them, there was a small drawer so artfully adapted to the mouldings of the timberworks, that it might have escap'd even the most curious search, which drawers were easily open'd or shut, by the touch of a spring, and were fitted each with a shallow glass tumbler, full of a prepar'd fluid

blood, in which lay soak'd for ready use, a sponge, that require'd no more than gently reaching the hand to it, taking it out, and properly squeezing between the thighs, when it yielded a great deal more of the red liquid than would save a girls honour; after which, replacing it, and touching the spring, all possibility of discovery, or even of suspicion was taken away, and this was not the work of the fourth part of a minute, and of whichever side one lay, the thing was equally easy and practicable, by the double care taken to have each bed-post provided alike. True it is, that he had wak'd and caught me in the fact, it would at least have cover'd me with shame and confusion; but then, that he did not was, with the precautions I took, a risqué of a thousand to one in my favour.¹⁷

What was described was the use of the adapted bedframe to partake in a premeditated deceitful act, yet it is unclear to what extent the customer may have been aware of the illegitimacy of the bloody effusion found later. Sara Read has argued that throughout the entirety of the novel, 'bloody intercourse was celebrated,' showing a cultural desire for its appearance regardless of the origin of the blood.¹⁸ It is possible that Mr Norbert was aware that Fanny was not a virgin, but his large payment of 'three hundred guineas' to Fanny and 'a hundred to Mrs Cole' suggests that he either believed he was paying for a true virgin, or that he was willingly paying for the façade due to the sizable amount of his payment.¹⁹ Prior to sex a 'treaty' was agreed between Mrs Cole and Mr Norbert, with the stipulations unknown, and Fanny's preparations began. Fanny appears to have been allowed a certain amount of artistic licence with which methods she could assume due to Mrs Cole initially offering no direction. The text showed Fanny's consideration of recipes and methods which might have been used to replicate her maidenhead but demonstrate that she (and Cleland) were also aware of how they could be easily discovered. The text stated:

¹⁷ Cleland, *Memoirs*, p118

¹⁸ Read, "Gushing out Blood," p168

¹⁹ Cleland, *Memoirs*, p105

I had no occasion to borrow those auxiliaries of art that create a momentary one, easily discover'd by the test of a warm bath: and as to the usual sanguinary symptoms of defloration, which, if not always, are generally attendants on it.²⁰

Fanny, and Cleland, demonstrated a sound degree of sexual knowledge. Medical texts which discussed the different methods and tactics that women could use to reshape their bodies and aid their deceit, may have been used by Cleland to inform his character of her choices. Instead of using anything which directly interfered with or damaged her genitalia, Fanny chose to use the 'invention' Mrs Cole had developed (the bed frame with hidden compartments), and her sexual performance, to appease Mr Norbert's desire.²¹ During the beginning of their sexual encounter, Fanny 'acted then all the niceties and apprehensions, and terrors, supposable for a girl perfectly innocent to feel at so great a novelty as a naked man in bed with her for the first time.'²² This included her act of 'shame and timidity' when he first instigated sex, followed by 'such silly infantine moods of repulse and complaint as I judg'd best adapted to express the characters of innocence and affright. Pretending however to yield at length to the vehemence of his insistence, in action and words' and 'sparingly disclos'd' her thighs.²³ Cleland's depiction of Fanny's necessary behaviour is perhaps indicative of how men expected women to act the first time they had sex, as whilst the story is told by a female narrator the text was constructed by Cleland. She continued on by falsifying the pain and uncomfortable sensations of losing her virginity and 'did not fail to accompany with proper gestures, sighs, and cries of complaint, of which, "that he had hurt me -- he killed me -- I should die—" were the most frequent interjections.'²⁴ Fanny's performance was precise, her 'sighs and moans' and cries of pain were used to create the soundscape of losing one's virginity, and were possibly based on her own earlier experiences (as well as Cleland's sexual knowledge).²⁵ Her behaviour evolved over the

²⁰ Ibid, p108

²¹ Ibid, p108

²² Ibid, p112

²³ Ibid, p113

²⁴ Ibid, p115

²⁵ The importance of language and sounds in regard to performance, was discussed by John Austin who claimed that words had a performative impact. The language used by Fanny were specifically chosen for her

night as she went from performing as terrified of the sight of the male body, to fearing the pain it encouraged in her, to her relief and, almost, sexual satisfaction when the act was over. She understood Mr Norbert's desires and adapted her sexual performance to suit each evolving stage of their copulation. Fanny's performance is indicative of bodily deceit, because whilst we may potentially argue that the client was aware of the true circumstances, she was still pretending. Bodily performance has been investigated before by Robert Henke and Tobias Hug regarding fraudulent begging, but Fanny is indicative of a fraudulent sexual performance as she used her body and her voice to deceive her client in a similar way to how Henke and Hug claimed beggars did.²⁶ By the end of the night she no longer pretended to fear his body or his virility, because she no longer had to pretend to be a pinnacle of virginal innocence due to her supposed deflowerment. Fanny's false defloration is used by Cleland as a literary tool to demonstrate the expected sexual performance of virgins. His portrayal would have been based on his own sexual experiences as well as sexual knowledge he may have achieved through reading medical texts or other popular works. Cleland's novel is useful to the analysis of counterfeit virginity because he provided the context, method and economic motivation behind why women may have falsified their virginity and its loss.

Prior to Fanny and Mr Norbert's sexual encounter, they were introduced in a slightly more public and formal setting, at Mrs Cole's residence. It was during this introduction that Fanny began her feigned virginal performance:

I had occasionally, but sparingly been introduc'd into his company, at proper times and hours; which it is incredible how little it seem'd necessary to strain my natural disposition to modesty higher, in order to pass it upon him for that of a very maid: all my looks and gestures ever breathing nothing but that innocence which the men so ardently require in us, for no

performance as a virgin and would have been important to adding validity to her act; Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*

²⁶ Henke; 'Sincerity, Fraud,'; Hug, *Impostures* both assess the relationship between performer and audience, Fanny's interaction with Mr Norbert is merely an extension of this theme.

other end than to feast themselves with the pleasure of destroying it, and which they are so grievously, with all their skill, subject to mistakes in.²⁷

The earlier commencement of her performance demonstrated that there was more to creating the image of virginal innocence than bloodshed and cries of discomfort, the quality and believability of a woman's virginity was also based on her behaviour outside of the bedroom during initial interaction with the opposite sex. Prostitutes creating the illusion of innocence and virtue were not only referred to within literature of the eighteenth century, but also in *Harris' List of Covent Garden Ladies*, an annual directory of prostitutes working in Georgian London starting in 1756. The text was primarily aimed at the middle class as the price was between two and three shillings per edition. Elizabeth Denlinger argues that *Harris' List* was assembled for men who the author assumed, wanted to read about whores, and that they wanted to read about themselves successfully visiting whores.²⁸ This chapter however, shows that men also desired virgins, and that their virginal qualities were recorded in *Harris' List* alongside the more experienced women. Their occasional occurrence demonstrated that perhaps some men who were reading these compilations were after a woman who did not appear nor behave as an experienced prostitute, but instead as someone less sexually practised. This is made evident in the 1773 edition where fourteen-year-old Polly Jenkinson was explained to have been debauched ten months previously by a man who later went to prison. The author continued to state how 'She has passed for a maidenhead since that period twenty times, and is paid accordingly; and being under the direction of a very good lady, who directs her to play her part to admiration, she is in a fair way of getting money.'²⁹ The author referred to the counterfeiting of virginity, but offered no explanation for how she enacted this type of fraud. He did vaguely refer to its economic value in passing though, as he suggested that she earned a higher fee than others due to this uncommon skill. She is the only woman found to have been depicted in this manner.

²⁷ Cleland, *Memoirs*, pp106-7

²⁸ Elizabeth Denlinger, 'The Garment and the Man: Masculine Desire in "Harris's List of Covent Garden Ladies,"' *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol 11, No 3 (July, 2002) pp357-394

²⁹ Anonymous, *Harris' List of Covent Garden Ladies*, (London, 1773 ed) p84

In the 1789 edition, Mrs Hillingburg was described as ‘This lady, tho an adept in the art, so nobly ever impudence, with false modesty, that her lover would be almost lead to think his chosen sight, an immaculate virgin.’³⁰ Regarding this lady, there is no reference to her ability to counterfeit her maidenhead, but that her sexual performance and behaviour meant that she could be assumed for a virgin, indicating that there was more to the illusion than the maidenhead. However, alongside offering descriptions of the women and their qualities, the author chose to note some of the women’s loss of virginity. Miss Corbet from Goodge Street in 1789 was noted to have had her ‘soil’ ‘broken open at an early age’ but that ‘who first stamped her virgin mould, we are at a loss to tell.’³¹ While there is no pretence of describing the woman as a virgin, nor did the author describe her as virginal, the loss of her initial innocence was deemed important to her advertising perhaps to demonstrate her sexual prowess and experience. Later in 1793, the author explained that regarding Miss Lewis from Oxford Street ‘twelve months have scarcely elapsed since her rose was plucked. An artist of some celebrity is said to be the fortunate seducer of her treasure.’³² The recentness of her first sexual encounter is used to imply her new career in prostitution and may have also helped to attract particular men who disregarded more experienced women. Therefore, whilst the ability of these prostitutes to replicate their virginity was not noted (except in Polly’s case), the recentness of its loss, the authority of the man who took it, and the woman’s ability to still appear and behave as virginal and virtuous, were all selling points for some prostitutes working in London during the eighteenth century. This variety demonstrates that the illusion of innocence may have been as important to men as the sexual act itself. There was however a more medically practical aspect to having sex with a virgin, which may have been employed by some prostitutes in their advertising to male patrons. Someone who had never had sex was not able to pass on sexually transmitted diseases. Noelle Gallagher argues that contrary to other historians’ arguments that women were blamed for the spread of venereal disease, she has instead identified many eighteenth century texts which presented the disease as male and

³⁰ Anonymous, *Harris’ List of Covent Garden Ladies*, (London, 1789 ed.) p73

³¹ Anon, *Harris’ List*, (1789 ed.) p122, four other women’s loss of virginity was also noted within this edition by the author.

³² Unknown, *Harris’ List of Covent Garden Ladies*, (London, 1793 ed.) p79

caused by male sexual indiscretion.³³ If a woman had never had sex, she was therefore unable to pass the disease on, only catch it. Furthermore, sex with a virgin was believed to be a cure for diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhoea, and this belief may have in part influenced prostitutes' claims of virginity and allowed them to charge higher fees due to their proposed treatment of venereal disease through sex.³⁴

As made apparent in John Cleland's novel, women who sold their forged virginity were apparent in early modern literature, however there is no actual proof that these women existed in real life. Harris' *List* promoted the virginal qualities of some women for sale but made no clear reference to their abilities to shape their bodies and appease men's desires for virginity. The selling of sex was referred to in canting dictionaries, texts which explained slang terms and the different types of fraudulent people that society should be aware of. Richard Head's canting dictionary from 1674 wrote that Doxies 'are neither wives, maids, nor widdows' and 'for a very small piece of money prostitute their bodies, and then protest they never did any such thing before, that it was pure necessity that now compell'd them to do what they have done.'³⁵ In N.H.'s *The ladies dictionary* 1694, and in B.E.'s *A new dictionary of the canting academy* 1699, both noted a doxie as 'will for good victuals, or a very small piece of money prostitute their bodies, protesting they never did so before.'³⁶ Whilst the definitions of Doxies did not necessarily refer to their ability to counterfeit their virginity, they do suggest that these women were pretending to be more innocent and vulnerable than common prostitutes. The similarities between these portrayals and the women noted within Harris' list are clear, for whilst their sexual reputation and occupation as a prostitute cannot be counteracted, the suggestion that they were purer and thus better than others was obvious. This supports the argument that there were different types of sexual innocence which appealed to men, whether it be forged

³³ Gallagher, *Itch, Clap, Pox*, p15

³⁴ John Marten, *A true and succinct account of the venereal disease; from the mildest clap ... to the most radicated pox that can be*, (London, 1706); Linda Merians, *The Secret Malady: Venereal Disease in Eighteenth-century Britain and France* (University Press of Kentucky, 1996); Read, "Gushing out blood," p169

³⁵ Head, *The canting academy*, p62

³⁶ N.H., *The ladies dictionary, being a general entertainment of the fair-sex a work never attempted before in English*. (London, 1694); B.E., *A new dictionary of the canting crew*, p57

virginity, a virginal appearance, or a sexually experienced woman who was an inexperienced prostitute.

Using both physical manipulation and performative measures, women could become virgins once again, like Fanny did, and women other than prostitutes could also employ various behaviours and methods to improve their prospects and their financial potential. In 1693's Anonymous *Petition of the Widows* it was argued regarding marriage that,

we see no reason why a young widow may not be as capable of obliging them as the best virgin in the world. 'Tis but using a few astringents before, and at the critical minute crying out, Fie, Sir, Pray, Sir, will you split me up?... And the sparks are satisfied they have made a real sacrifice, though in truth no more blood was shed in the encounter, than we see upon the stage when one actor kills another.³⁷

The pamphlet emphasised a distaste for male desires to marry a virgin, rather than a widow, for they (like prostitutes) possessed the ability to manipulate and reshape their bodies to appear as believable virgins. Rather than playing this role for various men, the widows described were prepared to do so in exchange for the financial security of a marriage. In comparing their actions to actors on a stage the authors of this pamphlet emphasised the performative nature of this type of bodily fraud. The woman's crying out paired with the small (or non-existent) production of fake blood, were perceived to be the core components for a believable performance. The depiction offered of the widow's potential sexual behaviour was like that performed by John Cleland's Fanny, demonstrating that the sexual performance was just as key to this manipulation as physical amendments were and was believed to be an important element of sex. Consummation of marriage was a performance, but a performance which experienced women could easily perpetrate to benefit themselves. While this source lacks definitive authorship, it does demonstrate another context in which women may have

³⁷ Anonymous, *Petition of the Widows*, (London, 1693)

recreated their virginity to appease male desires, except in the case of the widows it was marriage they wanted and the long-term stability it would encompass rather than a one off or semi-regular payment.

'The mystery word virginity has puzzled many to define it.'³⁸

Throughout the early modern period there remained a consistent debate between medical and popular opinions of what exactly virginity was, and what the signs were of its loss. Whilst Cleland's novel may have brought the topic of counterfeit virginity to a slightly wider audience, he was not the first to discuss its replication and the use of bodily performance. Fanny's sexual performance and fake blood developed from Cleland's social and cultural understandings of the female body and virginity, which were partially influenced by medical texts which were being circulated prior to his publication. Over the course of the early modern period multiple forms of medical texts competed for dominance in the field of disseminating sexual and medical knowledge to a wide audience, and some were continually republished for more than a century. Mary Fissell claims that we can assume that many of these texts, such as Nicholas Culpeper's *English Physician* and Anonymous *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, were successful due to the vast scale of their editions for over a century and a half.³⁹ Fissell argues that the significant number of surviving texts demonstrates that they deeply influenced people's understandings of their bodies and sex, and the information could either be read or spread by word of mouth showing the diversity of its dissemination.⁴⁰ Many of these texts discussed the human body, treatments for various illnesses, and recipes to promote conception, alongside what was usually a brief description of the woman's reproductive organs.

The confusion about the physical manifestation of virginity, was demonstrated during the second Civil War in 1651 when Nicholas Culpeper wrote in his *Directory for Midwives* that there was a high

³⁸ Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (London, 1684) p92

³⁹ Mary Fissell, 'Making a Masterpiece: The Aristotle Texts in Vernacular Medical Culture.' In Charles E. Rosenberg (ed) *Right Living: An Anglo-American Tradition of Self-Help Medicine and Hygiene*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003) pp59–87, Nicholas Culpeper's *English Physician*, (London 1652) originally published in 1652 and later became referred to as *The English Herbal*; Anonymous, *Aristotle's Masterpiece* (London, 1684) originally published in 1684 it continued to be printed in to the nineteenth century.

⁴⁰ Fissell, 'Making a Masterpiece,' p63

degree of ‘controversy’ about virginity, and more specifically the hymen.⁴¹ He stated that many denied the existence of the hymen, whilst others believed it to be a rare physical occurrence. Yet Culpeper himself refused to state what he believed to be true, and instead declared ‘I must suspend my own judgement till more yeers brings me more expertise.’⁴² The 1684 edition of pseudo-medical text *Aristotle’s Masterpiece* noted, ‘there is in maids, in the neck of the womb, a membranous production call’d the hymen, which is like the Bud of a Rose half blown, and this is broken in the first act of copulation,’ ‘when the Rose-bud is expanded, virginity is wholly lost.’⁴³ The text continued,

Certain is, there is in the first act of copulation something which causes pain and bleeding which is an evident sign of virginity, but what this is, authors agree not. Some say it is a nervous membrane, or thin skin with small veins, which bleed at the first penetration of the yard: others say it is four caruncles, knobs or little buds, like myrtle berries.⁴⁴

Although the importance of virginity was widely acknowledged in cultural and economic terms regarding marriage and sexual reputation, this text clearly shows that many physicians, surgeons and anatomists could not agree on what it was physically and physiologically. Highlighting the confusion over what virginity was, *Aristotle’s Masterpiece* sought to note all the varying interpretations and beliefs: ‘some have observ’d a fleshy circle about the nymphaea, or neck of the womb with little obscure veins,’ before stating ‘but setting aside conjectures, the hymen ... is a thin membrane interwoven with fleshy fibres.’⁴⁵ The final statement was ‘once it is broken it never closes again.’⁴⁶ While *Aristotle’s Masterpiece* was not an established and authoritative source of medical doctrine, it did offer a more popular view of the body and its features, possibly more titillating than informative, and was arguably able to reach a wider audience than others due to its more accessible format and variety of content.

⁴¹ Culpeper, *A directory for midwives*, (1651) p29

⁴² *Ibid*, p29

⁴³ Anon, *Aristotle’s Masterpiece*, (1684) p11

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p11

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p11

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p11

Fourteen years later in 1698 Scottish physician James Keill was definitive in what he believed the hymen and virginity to be, stating

The Hymen is a membranous Circle or Ring, at the Mouth of the Vagina; Hymen which being broke at the first Copulation, its Fibres contract in three or four places, and form what they call Glandulae Myrtiformes.⁴⁷

Keill not only defined the hymen but also discussed how after being broken its shape and structure changed in the vagina, showing an acknowledgement of how the loss of virginity reshaped a woman's genitalia.⁴⁸ In 1730 *Aristotle's Last Legacy*, similarly to Culpeper's seventeenth century publication, noted that many authors could not agree on what they thought virginity was.⁴⁹ It is possible that the anonymous text had various contributing authors who may not have agreed on a dominant theory within the text, or that the author decided to include all ideas rather than asserting only their own. The unnamed author discussed beliefs such as 'nervous membrane, thin skin with veins, 4 caruncles or pieces of flesh,' and a fleshy circle at the 'neck of the womb.'⁵⁰ Similarly to the 1684 edition of *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, these medical texts offered various interpretation of what virginity was believed to be medically, illustrating a lack of change over almost a hundred years. Outlining numerous ideas in one text implies that the author of *Aristotle's Legacy*, like Culpeper, was not definitive in their own answer or interpretation of what virginity was and demonstrates the continuity of its ambiguity even as certain authors such as Keill defined virginity in their texts.

Yet even though many contemporaries could not agree on what virginity was, or whether the hymen existed, the signs and symptoms which accompanied its loss or absence do appear to have been widely regarded and acknowledged across a spectrum of authors and genres of texts. In 1660 when philosopher Walter Charleton noted 'that what anatomists generally say of the signs of virginity, namely that the appearance of them is a certain evidence of the Brides chastity; but the non-

⁴⁷ James Keill, *The anatomy of the humane body abridged or, A short and full view of all the parts of the body together with their several uses drawn from their compositions and structures*. (London, 1698)

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Anon, *Aristotle's last legacy*, (1730) p6

⁵⁰ Ibid, p6

appearance, (is) no proof of her deflowerment before marriage.⁵¹ Thomas Bartholinus' text in 1668, *Bartholinus Anatomy*, stated that 'all virgins have pain and a flux of blood in their first copulation.'⁵² Yet Bartholinus contradicted himself in the question and answer segment of his text, as he stated that not all virgins would bleed upon loss of virginity, especially if she had previously used 'her fingers' or 'an instrument.'⁵³ His discussion of women's interference with their genitalia by using instruments or fingers, is perhaps indicative of ideas of female sexual desire and implies that women did not require a man's penis to eradicate her body of its signs of virginity as she was thought able to take them herself, thus perhaps implying some recognition of female masturbation.⁵⁴ Bartholinus also believed it possible that there may be a 'chink in the hymen' which meant that it dilated and expanded during copulation, but did not break and produce blood.⁵⁵ This showed that Bartholinus did not restrict himself to one medical theory regarding virginity and its loss, whilst he believed that all virgins would bleed he still explained why blood may be absent and provided women with an array of medically proven narratives. Therefore, this is indicative of the ambiguity of virginity and how medical writers could minimise their own subjective opinions to provide their readers with as much information as possible. Later in 1682 physician Thomas Gibson discussed how the hymen was broken 'in the first act of copulation, something which causeth pain and bleeding, which is, an evident sign of virginity.'⁵⁶ Yet he swiftly followed on by stating 'but though a bridegroom when he finds these signs of virginity may certainly conclude he has married a maid; yet it will not follow on the contrary, that where they are wanting, virginity is also wanting.'

Aristotle's Masterpiece 1684 similarly claimed,

⁵¹ Walter Charleton, *Two Discourses. A brief discourse concerning the different wits of men -- The mysterie of vintners, or, A brief discourse concerning the various sicknesses of wines, and their respective remedies, at this day commonly used.* (London, 1669) p14

⁵² Bartholinus, *Bartholinus anatomy*, p72

⁵³ *Ibid*, p74

⁵⁴ It can be argued that this was in reference to female masturbation, however, detail is lacking; Online blog post by Paige Donaghy, 'Rethinking Early Modern Women's Masturbation,' *Notches*, (September, 2017) last accessed 15/06/2019 <http://notchesblog.com/2017/09/05/rethinking-early-modern-womens-masturbation/>; Masturbation has also been investigated by Thomas Laqueur, providing one of the few secondary texts on this topic. He claimed that discussions of masturbation are largely absent from early modern texts, and that authors were largely occupied by discussing the sin of spilled male seed rather than women's behaviour; Thomas Laqueur, *Solitary Sex, A Cultural History of Masturbation* (Zone Books, 2003)

⁵⁵ Bartholinus, *Bartholinus anatomy*, p72

⁵⁶ Gibson. *The anatomy of humane bodies*, p155

It will not follow where this token is wanting virginity is deflowered and lost: for the hymen may be corroded by acrimonious humours flowing thro' it with the menses; or it may be violated by the inversion, or falling out of the uterus, or of the vagina or sheath, which sometimes happens even to virgins.⁵⁷

Again, this demonstrates a variety of medical opinions as the author introduced an assortment of factors which were thought to be able to damage or alter the hymen, allowing women access to a variety of medically based narratives to explain why the signs of virginity's loss may not be prevalent. John Pechey noted correspondingly to Gibson in 1696, that if the signs are wanting 'it does not necessary follow that virginity is wanting.'⁵⁸ This reinstates the belief that there were numerous reasons why consummation could produce no evidence of virginity, thus providing women with a legitimate medical basis for the lack of virginal secretions in the marriage bed.

Aristotle's Masterpiece 1697 edition and *Aristotle's Last Legacy* 1730 were quick to note all other expected reasons for an absence of bleeding during sex including an 'excess of lust' or 'desire for a man,' which was thought to be able to 'break the hymen.'⁵⁹ It is not clear why desire or lust was thought to result in disruption to the hymen, but it is possibly to do with notions surrounding the humours, bodily temperature and the force of these on the body. The hymen could also be broken accidentally by the woman 'using fingers when it itches' or, it was noted that 'sometimes midwives break it in the birth.'⁶⁰ Rather than this implying that midwives broke the hymen in the mother when delivering a child, it is more likely to refer to the hymen being accidentally broken in a female child when born. Other reasons could include internal bodily pressure such as 'stopping of urine,' 'coughing, violent straining or sneezing.'⁶¹ Therefore, lack of bleeding during consummation of the marriage did not necessarily mean the woman was not a virgin, but bleeding meant she definitively

⁵⁷ Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (1684) p12

⁵⁸ John Pechey, *A general treatise of the diseases of maids, bigbellied women, child-bed-women, and widows together with the best methods of preventing or curing the same*. (London, 1696) p63

⁵⁹ Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (1697ed) p69; Anon, *Aristotle's last legacy*, (1730) p8

⁶⁰ Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (1697ed) p69; Anon, *Aristotle's last legacy*, (1730) p8; Donaghy, 'Rethinking Early Modern Women's Masturbation' claims that, female 'itches' may have been indicative of an acknowledgement of female sexual desire,

⁶¹ Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (1697ed) p69; Anon, *Aristotle's last legacy*, (1730) p8

was. The discussions of virginity and blood offered by the various contemporaries of the period demonstrate that there was no universal theory of what the hymen was and shows that whilst little in theory changed over time, notions between different types of authors did vary. Therefore, it is possible that a lack of complete and definitive understanding of virginity and its symptom of blood, meant that it was open to fraudulent interpretation and cultural speculation.

Although it was not mentioned in these discussions of the loss of virginity, the tightness of the vagina was widely acknowledged to be a popular sign. Some texts and authors, including *Aristotle's Masterpiece* 1684, Bartholinus and Thomas Gibson, encouraged women to not marry during menstruation as this could make the vagina feel looser during consummation. It was stated,

All virgins beware, perhaps the indiscreet of unwary bride was her menses but a day or two before, in which case, both the hymen and the inner wrinkled membranes of the vagina, are flaggy and relaxed, so that no such effusion may happen. It were better therefore upon this account, that where virgins are about to marry, they would fix their wedding day at least six or seven days after their menses have done flowing.⁶²

In 1668 *Bartholinus Anatomy* declared that, 'but if her menses flow, or have flowed a little before, the yard is easily admitted, by reason of the relaxation of those parts, whence there is little or no pain, and little or no flux of blood. And therefore, maids ought not to be married at that season, least the bridegroom come to suspect the virginity of his bride.'⁶³ Twenty years later Gibson reiterated the belief that the vagina would feel 'flaggy and relaxed' whilst the woman was menstruating, which would falsely imply she was not a virgin upon marriage and lead to 'suspicion of unchastity.'⁶⁴ Whilst a lack of tightness of the vagina was thought to imply that a woman was not a virgin, all that would need to be said was that she had just finished her menses, which would supply a necessary excuse, demonstrating that women applied their own false narratives to explain their body.

⁶² Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (1684ed) p12

⁶³ Bartholinus, *Bartholinus anatomy*, p72

⁶⁴ Gibson, *The anatomy of humane bodies*, p155

It appears as if many of these ideas were controversial, as one author declared that there ‘is no absolute sign of dishonesty’ in regard to virginity.⁶⁵ It is evident therefore, that over the course of the seventeenth-century it was accepted that even if a woman showed no signs of virginity upon consummation of marriage, she was possibly still a virgin and that the physiological proof used to demonstrate its existence could not be used to provide the opposite argument. Moreover, throughout the seventeenth century the tightness of the vagina was taken as a popular proof of virginity, but that it could still be manipulated and altered due to menstruation. What these various texts imply is that there was a choice of narratives for women to explain away the absence of substantial proof. Whilst supplying readers with the most crucial pieces of evidence of virginity, blood and tightness, they also offered believable explanations for why they may not be prevalent. Some texts would even end the discussion of virginity by stating that there was ‘no absolute sign of dishonesty.’⁶⁶ The lack of definitive signs outlined by contemporaries of the time theoretically allowed women to shape their bodies and employ various methods to fake their virginity.

Recreating Virginity

In 1732 Dr Crawford published letters and transcripts between Catherine Weld and her allegedly impotent husband as she was petitioning for a divorce, the central focus of the case was whether she was still a virgin.⁶⁷ The text was authored by the medical practitioner who was involved in the case and does not hesitate to promote his views regarding the female body and condemns any form of supposed proof of existing virginity:

the visitation of the wife therefore can prove nothing as to the ability of the husband. There are a thousand ways of losing the marks of virginity, without having to do with a man; there

⁶⁵ Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (1697ed) p69

⁶⁶ Anon, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, (1697) p69

⁶⁷ Catherine Elizabeth Weld, *The cases of impotency and virginity fully discuss'd. Being, the genuine proceedings in the Arches-Court of Canterbury, between ... Catherine Elizabeth Weld, alias Aston, and her husband Edward Weld, ...* (London, 1732) p46; For more information on the social implications of impotence please refer to; Jennifer Evans, ‘They are called imperfect men:’ Male Infertility and Sexual Health in Early Modern England,’ *Social History of Medicine*, Vol 29, Issue 2, (May 2016) pp311-332; Stephanie Hoffman, ‘Behind Closed Doors: Impotence Trails and The Trans-Historical Right to Marital Privacy,’ *Boston University Law Review*, Vol 89 pp1725-1752

are in like manner, a thousand ways of recovering them again, when it has been really lost by having to do with a man, as shall be made appear; and consequently, virginity may not be admitted as proof of the husband's insufficiency.⁶⁸

This quote illustrates the beliefs about virginity and the hymen which were noted previously and suggests that the diversity of ways in which the hymen could be broken or altered caused men not to trust the female body even upon formal inspection. One letter from the published account stated that 'inspection cannot at all be depended on, it being in the power of a wife who hates her husband, to counterfeit virginity.'⁶⁹ It was implied that even evidence observed by a professional was to be disbelieved on occasion, 'it is the opinion of all the Doctors, that the hands and eyes are far from being certain, because women can easily imitate and counterfeit them, and so impose upon their husbands.'⁷⁰ Dr Crawford believed that women could alter their genitalia and recreate the signs and indicators of virginity, but offered no detail of how the deceit could be enacted. The publication of the Weld impotence trial provides evidence that women's bodies and the validity of their signs of virginity could be counteracted by medical professionals in certain social contexts. The medical and cultural speculation of whether women's bodies could be trusted was made evident by the inclusion of discussions surrounding the existence and construction of counterfeit virginity.

As discussed, medical texts attempted to define what virginity was, and outlined the signs which would signify its loss. Many of these authors also discussed how women deceptively created typical sexual qualities associated with virginity, blood and vaginal tightness, through a multitude of recipes and methods. This section investigates how medical and popular texts depicted the means by which women counterfeited the two signs of virginity. These texts and poems fuelled societal anxieties of counterfeit maidenheads and is supported by Tassie Gwilliam's argument that their appearance devalued virginity much in the same way as the debasement of coinage.⁷¹ Speculation and concerns

⁶⁸ Weld, *The cases of impotency*, p46

⁶⁹ Ibid, p54

⁷⁰ Ibid. p49

⁷¹ Gwilliam, 'Female Fraud,' p518

about proving the validity of virginity may in turn have encouraged deceitful women to become more imaginative and diverse with the methods they used to commit their deceit, if they did at all.

In 1684 *Miscellany Poems* by Jacob Thomson was published in England. One of his poems discussed false virginity, stating

Dypsas, who first taught love-sick maids the way
to cheat the bridegroom on the wedding day.
and then a hundred subtile tricks devis'd,
wherewith the amorous theft might be disguis'd
of pigeons-blood, squeez'd from the panting heart,
with surfeit-water, to contract the part,
she knows the use: whilst the good man betray'd,
with eager arms hugs the false bleeding maid.⁷²

Dypsas was a woman who urged and encouraged other women to commit sexual fraud in order to hide their promiscuity and is described as a 'sworn foe to all degrees of chastity.'⁷³ The poem discussed the use of animal blood being applied to the genitals to mimic virginity on the wedding night, explicitly stating how it should be 'squeez'd from the panting heart.' It is not definitively stated how the blood was applied to the genitals, but it is possible that it was squeezed directly into the vaginal passage or, after being squeezed into a bowl, was applied to the vagina using another method. After sex the blood would have been apparent, either upon the removal of the penis or if the woman applied the blood post coitus like Fanny did.⁷⁴ The poem detailed how the aim of this deceit was to 'cheat the husband' and that he was a 'good man betray'd' defining this as a gendered deception which targeted honest men and depicted women as sexually experienced deviants.

⁷² Jacob Thomson, *Miscellany poems*, (London, 1684) p116

⁷³ *Ibid*, p116

⁷⁴ Cleland, *Memoirs of a woman of pleasure*, p120

A year later in 1685, Italian scholar Giambattista della Porta's posthumous text *Natural Magick* was published in English and discussed issues which seemed to also be relevant to English societal fears.⁷⁵ Originally written in the mid-sixteenth century, the publication of his work in the following century shows a consistency of his ideas and beliefs of counterfeit maidenheads. It commented on the ability of women to fake their virginity:

A woman deflowered made a virgin again, make little pills thus: of burnt allome, mastic, with a little vittiol and orpiment: make them into very fine powder, that you can scarce feel them: when you have made them pills with rainwater, press them close with your fingers, and let them dry being pressed thin, and lay them on the mouth of the matrix, where it was first broken open: change it every six hours, always fomenting the place with rain or cistern water, and that for twenty four hours, and that it will here and there make little bladders: which being touched, will bleed much blood, that she can hardly be known from a maid.⁷⁶

Porta described the application of an irritant that created genital blisters or sores, which would bleed when touched and thus mimic the appearance of virginal blood. His depiction was explicit, and he also mentioned the time frames which occurred throughout the entire process.⁷⁷ The creation of these blisters was likely to have been painful and they may have taken a while to heal. Alongside discussing the personal use of these methods, used primarily by the women seeking to enact their own bodily fraud, Porta also noted how midwives could be involved in the deceit and thus encouraged the fear of a widescale female duplicity.

Midwives that take care of this, do it another way. They contract the place with the decoction of the aforementioned things, then they set a leech fast on upon the place, and so they make a crusty matter or scab; which being rub'd will bleed. Others when they have straightened the

⁷⁵ Giambattista della Porta. *Natural Magick*, (London, 1685) p253

⁷⁶ Porta, *Natural Magick*, p253

⁷⁷ Porta, *Natural Magick*, p253

part, inject the dried blood of a hare or pigeon: which being moistened by the moisture of the matrix, shews like live fresh blood.⁷⁸

Rather than solely applying a mixture to the genitals, midwives used live leeches or the blood from dead animals to imitate the effects of the hymen breaking. This suggests that some women were imagined going to considerable lengths to enact this type of fraudulent behaviour. The inclusion of midwives assisting with these methods, is perhaps in relation to women who sought the assistance before consummating a marriage, rather than prostitutes attempting to earn more money.

John Gillis claims that it was rare to find a bride who was a true virgin in early modern England, because the rate of premarital sex increased after 1600 meaning that for those who perceived virginity to be important to marriage, they may have attempted to recreate it.⁷⁹ This might have meant that diverse methods were used by different women and were dependant on the motivation behind their use. The main difference between Porta's and Thomson's depictions of counterfeiting virginity, was the freshness of the blood used. Although they were only written a year apart Thomson discussed the use of fresh blood squeezed directly from the heart, and Porta noted the use of dried blood which would react with the moisture of the vagina.⁸⁰ It is possible however that Thomson included the use of fresh blood as it was more theatrical and would enhance the satirical nature of his poem. The application of the animal blood, whether fresh or not, would have likely needed to have been done immediately before sex, or after as in Cleland's depiction, otherwise the blood would spill from the vagina too soon to be of use.⁸¹ Therefore, the timing of these measures would have been crucial to the performance of virginity in the marriage bed. Both Thomson and Porta described fraudulent methods which may have been used to mimic the loss of virginity during sex, showing how this portrayal of female bodily fraud was not constrained to one genre of text in the seventeenth century. While there is no indication of long-term issues being created from these applications, it is likely that they may have

⁷⁸ Ibid, p253

⁷⁹ John R Gillis, *For better, For worse. British marriages, 1600 to the present*, (Oxford University Press, 1985) p110

⁸⁰ Thomson, *Miscellany Poems*, p116; Porta, *Natural Magick*, p253

⁸¹ Cleland, *The memoirs of a woman of pleasure*, p120

caused irritation or damage and links back to the fraudulent beggars discussed in Chapter Three who damaged their body to be redefined as deserving of charity.

The second sign which was feared to have been counterfeited was the shape, and tightness of the vagina. Ambrose Paré noted in 1665 that in a non-virgin the ‘womb’ would be wider and larger, whilst in virgins ‘it is moore contract, strait and narrow,’ ‘but how deceitful and untrue these signs and tokens are.’⁸² Paré had discussed a physical indicator of virginity or its loss, but it was a sign that would only be known by the woman herself, premarital lovers, or a husband upon consummation. Yet Paré also acknowledged that it was no definitive sign. Twenty years later in 1683 Italian author Ferrante Pallavicino’s controversial and satirical text *The Whores Rhetorick* was published posthumously in England. He discussed what women should consider when falsifying the shape and tightness of the vagina. Whilst medical authors noted how counterfeiting virginity could be done, Pallavicino used his satirical text to mock its use,

In this act care must be taken, to avoid a troublesome improportion: neither leaving the gate of love so wide as the passenger may enter without a touch of either side; nor yet on the other vitious extream, embarrassing him too much with a forced and artificial straitness. Art may serve sometimes to mortifie nature a little, but should not be permitted to confound her, by any piece of unnatural extravagance.⁸³

Pallavicino used his text to mockingly inform women that using astringents or other methods, may create a vaginal shape which unnatural, implying there was regarded to be a natural shape. He attempted to encourage women to rethink their deceit, as it may have created an unsatisfactory sexual encounter for the man, by either her vagina being too wide or too tight. The *Whores Rhetorick* however, shows more concern for the embarrassment of man than the discomfort and long-term health implications of the woman. Whilst Pallavicino’s text was fictional, and used for titillation and entertainment rather than information, his discussion of altered female genitalia, alongside medical

⁸² Paré, *The works of that famous chirurgion*, p747

⁸³ Ferrante Pallavicino, *The Whores Rhetorick*, (London, 1683ed) p122

texts and ballads mentioned prior, demonstrates that there was a cultural belief that women could and did execute this deception.

The manipulation of the size and shape of the vagina was something which appeared in medical texts as well as forms of popular culture, including ballads, and was prevalent over the entirety of the seventeenth century. For example, Thomas Middleton's verse from 1607 declared,

First, rare to have a bride commence a maid,
But do's beguile joy of the puritie:
And is made strickt by power of drugs and art,
An artificial maid a doctor'd virgin,
And so deceives the glory of his bed.⁸⁴

As this extract implies, the mysterious nature of the body, and the lack of clarity about the signs of virginity encouraged a fear that women could falsify virginity by concealing its loss. In the early seventeenth-century ballad *The Pedler opening of his Packe*, a fayre was discussed which sold all sorts of items, especially for women. Amongst these was a concoction that could be used to commit sexual fraud:

A water can restore
a mayden head that's vanisht
you'le say she is no whoore,
although that it were banisht
long before.⁸⁵

Although the ballad gives no indication of what the water contained, or how it aided in restoring virginity, the author listed it alongside frivolous items such as bracelets, 'sope' and 'spunges,'

⁸⁴ Thomas Middleton, *The phoenix as it hath beene sundry times acted by the Children of Paules, and presented before his Maiestie*. (London, 1607)

⁸⁵ Anonymous, *A Pedler opening of his packe*, (London, 1620)

suggesting it was an accessible product. It is also plausible that the peddler is selling the idea that women could restore their virginity and the ballad is mocking its creation and buyers. The aim of such a concoction would have been to restore the woman's reputation. Contrary to many of the sources examined in this section, this ballad downplayed the social concern about sexual fraud, and instead implied the humorous presentation of these women and their desperate attempts.

In 1651 Nicholas Culpeper discussed the vagina and how it could be manipulated and reshaped, stating that,

But I deny that straitness is a certain argument of virginity. For after many acts of venery, it may be made so strait by astringent medicines, that whores may be taken for virgins, as we shewed concerning a wench that was married, she used a bath of comfry roots to appear a virgin again.⁸⁶

Culpeper is the earliest source found to mention the use of comfrey in relation to falsifying virginity. Comfrey was a component which emerged continually in different medical texts between the seventeenth and eighteenth-century regarding recreated virginity. Herbal texts such as Anonymous *An English Herbal* and John Pechey's *The compleat herbal of physical plants* both discussed the healing qualities of comfrey on different wounds and ailments.⁸⁷ Pechey noted where to find comfrey and its physical appearance to make it easier to identify for readers. He also stated 'tis an excellent wound herb' which 'qualifies the acrimony of the humours' and 'tis used in all fluxes, especially the belly.'⁸⁸ It was otherwise known as aiding internal wounds, hurts, bruises and ulcers.⁸⁹ Perhaps not surprisingly, neither of the herbal texts noted comfrees' qualities regarding falsifying virginity and changing the shape of the vaginal passage. In 1664 the posthumous vernacular copy of Swiss

⁸⁶ Culpeper, *A directory for midwives*, p128

⁸⁷ Anonymous, *An English herbal, or, A discovery of the physical vertues of all herbs in this kingdom what planet governs each herb, and how to gather them in their planetary hours...* (London, 1690) p22; John Pechey, *The compleat herbal of physical plants containing all such English and foreign herbs, shrubs and trees as are used in physick and surgery...* (London, 1694) p51

⁸⁸ Pechey, *The compleat herbal of physical plants*, p51

⁸⁹ Anon, *An English Herbal*, p22

physician Felix Platter's text noted his views. It is difficult, however, to ascertain how truthful the translation was to the original. Platter stated that,

Women have some medicines for the externall orifice of the womb, to make them conceive the better, and to conceal the loss of virginitie, by often applying astringents which make the parts straighter. A fomentation or incension is used for this purpose made of the decoction of Galls, pomegranate peels, with red wine...vinegar, and Allum... Sometimes they add comfrey roots, leaves of sumach, plantane, oak, cypress nuts, pine barks.⁹⁰

Whilst Platter discussed the use of the recipe in relation to falsifying virginitie, he also referred to its use for promoting fertility as it made the womb straighter thus showing how many of these concoctions had multiple purposes.⁹¹

In 1707 the English translated version of French physician and writer Nicholas Venette's text *Conjugal Love Reveal'd* dedicated an entire chapter to whether there were 'medicines able to restore a lost maidenhead' and ultimately stated that;

no medicines invented by our physicians, nor inventions practis'd by courtizans could ever produce a new one. 'Tis a vertue, which once in one's life eclipsed, ne'er appears any more. A union of parts, which being once separated, ne'er reunites as they were before.⁹²

Venette clearly stated that a counterfeit maidenhead would never be like a real one, in its physiology nor in its value.⁹³ Its counterfeiting was merely an artificial creation, not a restoration for true virginitie which could never be re-established. While Venette provided recipes for tightening vaginal looseness, he also included directions for deciphering whether any methods had been used by women to achieve this result. Hence, he provided men with the means to identify false virgins and also informed women how they could evade detection.

⁹⁰ Felix Platter, *Platerus golden practice of physick fully and plainly discovering* (London, 1664) p509

⁹¹ For more information on fertility treatments please refer to; Evans, *Aphrodisiacs, Fertility and Medicine*

⁹² Nicholas Venette, *The mysteries of conjugal love reveal'd written in French by Nicholas de Venette, ... The 8th. edition. Done into English by a gentleman.* (London, 1707) p70

⁹³ Gwilliam, 'Female Fraud,' p518

Because we have said above, that Art may discover those Tricks which are made use of to counterfeit a Maidenhead, I think we ought to examine the means, by which a counterfeited Maiden-head may be discover'd, that nothing may escape the curious Reader. For sometimes Women make show of a Vertue they have not and are even perswaded that 'tis impossible to know what they have lost in secret. To undeceive them on this occasion; make a Bath of a Decoction of Leaves of Mallows, Groundsel, with some handfuls of Line Seed and Fleabane Seed, Orach, Brank Ursin or Bearfoot. Let them sit in this Bath an hour, after which, let them be wiped, and examin'd 2 or 3 hours after Bathing, observing them narrowly in the mean while. If a Woman is a Maid, all her amorous Parts are compress'd, and joyn'd close to one another; but if not, they are flaggy, loose and flouting, instead of being wrinkled and close, as they were before when she had a mind to chouse us.⁹⁴

From the recipe offered by Venette, a combination of plants would be used in a bath to allow the inner parts of a woman's genitalia to relax into its true form and shape.⁹⁵ It is also possible that this bath was the one mentioned by Fanny in Cleland's novel, as she argued that certain fraudulent methods could be discovered by the use of a bath, yet she lacked detail of its ingredients.⁹⁶ This would indicate a continuity of this method, as even though Venette's text was not published in England until the beginning of the eighteenth-century it was written during the latter end of the seventeenth-century, over fifty years before Cleland's novel.

Many texts offered nothing more than a generalised discussion of recreating virginity and the proposed methods, but one exception is German physician Michael Ettmüller.⁹⁷ The 1712 posthumous English translation of Ettmüller's text noted that,

Tho virginity once lost can never be properly restored, yet an artificial one, aping the truth, may be obtained by straitning the genitals, and retrieving their natural tone; which is affected by baths and fomentations...such as the root of the greater comfrey...plantain, ladies

⁹⁴ Venette, *Conjugal Love*, p71

⁹⁵ Pechey, *The compleat herbal of physical plants*, notes where many of the herbs could be found.

⁹⁶ Cleland, *Memoirs*, p108

⁹⁷ Michael Ettmüller, *Etmullerus abridg'd*, p443

mantle...take of oak and plantain leaves...root...of comfrey, 3 ounces, Galls an ounce, Allum half an ounce; boil them in water. This decoction may be injected by a syringe, or apply'd with sponge.⁹⁸

The main difference between his description of the use of comfrey, and other contemporaries from the early modern period, is that he described how it was applied to the genitals. Whilst others such as Sharpe and Culpeper only discussed the use of bathing in comfrey, Etmüller was one step further along in his discussion of the herb and its use. Using a syringe or sponge to apply comfrey and other ingredients to the vaginal area would have been an intimate process, and much more invasive than a bath. The description also included the measurements of ingredients for the concoction, and Etmüller appears to have been an anomaly in medical treatises due to this. It is possible that women who could access this text may have found themselves provided with a precise recipe and method to falsify and recreate their own virginity. Whether this is what Etmüller meant to do is uncertain, but he offered a more detailed account of comfrey, other ingredients, and their uses than other contemporary authors from the period demonstrating that there was indeed access to this information.

Alum-water was another concoction which was mentioned in contemporary sources. John Wilmott's *Sodom: Or, The Quintessence of Debauchery* from 1678 said 'Th' already cuckold gets a maidenhead which is a toy, done by the powerful aid, cunt wash't with allom makes a whore a maid.'⁹⁹ In 1685 Henri-Francois Le Dran's text *Consultations on most of the disorders that require the assistance of surgery* was published in England and noted its legitimate medicinal purposes. He stated that 'to remove all the little clots of blood which may flick to the divided flesh and, if the wound ill bleeds, it should be washed with alum-water, to contract the mouths of all the small opened vesels.'¹⁰⁰ Gordon Williams 1994 *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature*, listed alum water as 'used for contracting the vaginal entrance,' and noted the different

⁹⁸ Ibid, p443

⁹⁹ John Wilmott, Earl of Rochester, *Sodom: Or, The Quintessence of Debauchery*, (London, 1678) prologue

¹⁰⁰ Henri-François Le Dran, *Consultations on most of the disorders that require the assistance of surgery*. (1685) p103

types of sources which mentioned it.¹⁰¹ It appears that the water had qualities which would help contract and bridge together veins, vessels or skin, therefore it is easy to see why it may have been a useful tool for those committing sexual fraud.

By 1725 the ambiguity surrounding the shape of the vagina was still being discussed as a supposed indicator of virginity and methods which could be used for its alteration were speculated. In both the 1671 and the 1725 editions of Sharp's text it was noted that,

amongst these signs of maidenheads, is the straitness of the privy passage; which differs according to the several ages, habit of body, and such like circumstances; but it can be no infallible sign because unchaste women will (by Astringent medicaments) so contract the parts, that they will seem to be maids again; as she did, who being married used a bath of comfry roots.¹⁰²

Sharp clearly noted that the shape of the vagina was changeable over time and circumstances, but that its form could be manipulated using compounds which would shrink and constrict the vaginal bodily tissue. *Aristotle's Legacy* stated in 1730 that the 'straitness of the privities' was indicative of virginity, but 'the privities may be made so strait by the use of astringent medicines, that a whore may be sometimes taken for a virgin.'¹⁰³ Although replicating these signs of virginity was perceived to be crucial for committing bodily deceit, it was the performance of the body after using these astringents which was arguably the most effective. Referring to Fanny Hill's sexual performance, the believability of the façade was due to a variety of factors including sound, movement and gesture. The creation of blood and vaginal tightness was important to creating the illusion of sex with a virgin, whether the behaviour was executed by prostitutes or new wives there were a range of factors which were premeditated. The evolution of fraudulent methods discussed, animal's blood, concoctions, leeches and herbs, appear to have differed more between authors than decades and demonstrate that

¹⁰¹ Gordon Williams, *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature*, (Athlone, 1994)

¹⁰² Jane Sharp, *The compleat midwife's companion: or, the art of midwifry improv'd. Directing child-bearing women how to order themselves in their conception, breeding, bearing, and nursing of children. In six books, ... The fourth edition. By Mrs. Jane Sharp*, (London, 1671) p266, (1725 ed.) p165

¹⁰³ Anon, *Aristotle's last legacy*, (1730) p8

knowledge was influenced by opinion. Whilst fake blood was discussed as a tool of female agency throughout the entire period researched, others such as the application of astringents, such as comfrey and alum water, do not appear to have been noted until the seventeenth-century, yet the detail and importance placed onto these methods did differ between publications.

This chapter has demonstrated how a lack of definitive and universal sexual knowledge within early modern England allowed cultural anxieties of false virginity to exist. As indicated in this chapter, women were believed to financially profit from their skills at falsifying their virginity, whether it be to attract a new husband or to incite more money from fellow patrons. While the previous chapter demonstrated how beggars could publicly use their bodies to appeal for charity, this section has shown that women perpetuated their fraud for an individual audience member that they could financially benefit from. This chapter has also discussed themes such as the ‘controversy’ between medical opinions on what exactly virginity consisted of, authors proposing oppositional ideas of how to prove or disprove virginity, and the notion that women’s bodies could not be believed, even upon internal observation. The inclusion of narratives describing these practices in popular works such as Cleland’s novel demonstrated to readers how the enactment of false virginity was performed and are representative of some of the ways that counterfeit virgins were thought able to alter their bodies and play their part. It is arguable that due to the differentiation between beliefs and authorship, that virginity was susceptible to speculation of manipulation and female agency because it was not fully understood. There was a consistent concern about women falsifying the physiological features, but the methods described changed over time. Rather than solely informing the masses, these texts instructed women how to commit bodily fraud and whilst allowing anxieties to flourish, they also allowed sexual desires to evolve and develop. It is clear from the themes discussed that virginity had a social impact as proving its existence or nonexistence was crucial to marital suitability or to restoring men’s sexual reputation. Furthermore, when a physical element of the female body had significant impact and a socio-economic value, it is not surprising to deduce that some women were thought to have

falsified the physiological symptoms of virginity to benefit themselves financially, socially and sexually.

Conclusion

This dissertation has shown that the body was susceptible to manipulation in early modern England and has demonstrated that performances of defective and deceptive bodies differed between social contexts. The analysis of printed sources such as sermons, ballads, novels and medical texts has shown what people were being told about different bodies, and although the dissemination of knowledge in early modern England is difficult to define, we can establish an understanding of what was being written about early modern bodies and what the implications of these might have been to cultural perceptions of the typical and atypical body. This dissertation claims that all types of bodies were acknowledged in early modern England as all forms and causes of deformity were explained and visible in society, but that cultural responses to different bodies was influenced by its context along with contemporary understandings of God and honour.

Some performances relied on the natural behaviours of the body and social interaction, whilst other individuals overly dramatized theirs to appear as believable and visible as possible when enacting their deceit. The possessors of deformed bodies presented themselves in one of two ways, either they embraced their form and limitations, or they chose to alter and conceal these whenever possible. Those with typical bodies possessed the ability to manipulate, damage and redefine their bodies as they sought to either create or restore elements that would allow them to profit socially or financially. Regardless of how they chose to present themselves it was their own choice and demonstrates a degree of agency. In regards to types of performance Goffman's claims of 'cynical' performers has been carried through this dissertation as each chapter has shown how the body was presented and responded to, and the combination of performance and deception was most clearly shown in chapters three and four in their discussions of fraudulent begging and counterfeit virginity.¹ Both required a theatrical performance and were roles that were enacted for financial profit, however their methods and audiences did differ demonstrating the diversity within the broad theme of bodily deceit.

¹ Goffman, *The presentation of self*, pp17-18

This dissertation has also shown some authors chose to discuss how observers should have responded to these bodies, rather than focusing on the behaviour of the performer. People were instructed to not stare at deformed bodies but instead treat them with politeness and respect.² It was the variation of typicality and the numerous causes of bodily defect such as injury, accident, warfare and God, that allowed different types of bodies to co-exist alongside one another. Even though this dissertation has demonstrated how different bodies were explained to the early modern populace, some still chose to respond to them with humour, mockery and possibly even abuse, indicating why some may have chosen to alter and conceal parts of their body when possible. Not everybody reacted to illness, amputation, concealment or mutilation in the same way, and therefore it widens our understanding of determining typicality in bodily function and cultural responses to this broad definition, deeming it harder to define.

This project has combined different strands of historiography, such as the histories of medicine, the body, gender, economic, social, cultural and disability studies to demonstrate that both deformed and altered bodies had an impact on early modern society and cultural mentalities. By using an empirical approach and assessing published sources, this dissertation has demonstrated a variety of ways that the defective and deceptive body was performed in early modern England. It has focused on their performances and the stories that they told about themselves to their audience, ultimately demonstrating that everyone who engaged in dishonest behaviour using their bodies had economic motivations, however some were clearer than others. Those concealing deformities did so to increase their chances of work (or marriage), fraudulent beggars replicated injuries and sensory impairments to appear as unable to support themselves financially, and recreated virginity was supposedly used by women to secure marriage or to earn higher fees from male patrons. All of their performances varied, and their audiences differed, but their motivation did not. As shown in the introduction, the economic landscape and uncertainty of the early modern period perhaps encouraged individuals to find other ways of increasing their finances. All individuals were encouraged to marry and work (according to

² Turner and Withey, 'Technologies of the Body' pp775-796; Hitchcock, 'Begging on the streets of eighteenth-century London,' p478

their gender and age) therefore providing one key reason why many chose to conceal parts of their body so that they fit they status quo. Others decided that their bodies could be manipulated for financial profit and used their knowledge derived from texts along with their observations and experience to incite money from passers-by or male patrons.

Examining deformity revealed the context in which concerns of fraud of existed as it demonstrated the variety of origins of bodily defects and established why some of these provided fraudsters with more profitable narratives than others. Those whose bodies were damaged outside of the home and the community, such as at sea or in war, were more likely to have had their narratives adapted and employed by fraudsters who wished to invoke sympathy and charity because the context and origin of deformity was not at first visible to the populace. The scenario of a wounded ex-soldier returning from war injured provided fraudsters with a better story than one where they claimed to be injured locally, perhaps because many members of society were more sympathetic when they were physically distanced from the origin of a deformity. These stories were thus susceptible to exploitation as fraudsters used the honour of injured ex-servicemen to appeal to charitable almsgivers. The research conducted during this dissertation has shown that if there was a sound and normative context for the origin of a defect such as illness or accident at home, then there was nothing to indicate why someone chose to either fake or hide their body. Common diseases and injuries were not necessarily recorded or deemed as noteworthy by early modern society and therefore their day-to-day occurrences did not provide fraudsters with the required theatricality nor would they have required concealment.

Investigating concealment has illustrated the ways in which some bodies legitimately used methods that could have been considered dishonest or deceitful but was not indicative of fraudulent behaviour. The individuals who applied cosmetics to their faces or attached prosthetics to their bodies did so to avoid ridicule and promote the image of an independent person. These aids were used to allow the wearer to appear as typical and help their body to mimic the appearance of a normative body, one which was not restricted by its parts and appearance. By concealing bodily defects some individuals were able to engage in normative social behaviour such as work, marriage and family life. Certain bodies were found to be humorous and were mocked because of their affliction, whilst others were

satirised for seeking to conceal their bodily defects, thus responses to the presentation of bodily defect varied as much as the bodies themselves. It can be implied from the number of authors who chose to discuss the use of cosmetics and prosthetics, that it was acceptable for someone to employ their use if it meant that they were helping themselves rather than trying to deceive those around them. Regarding the theme of concealment, it appears as if it was the motivation rather than the tools and performance which framed social and cultural responses to altered bodies. Though it was understood that cosmetics were employed in a variety of contexts, such as within the theatre, many contemporaries directed their discourses at women's suspected use of cosmetics to deceive men, and it was the fear of duplicity that motivated these authors. The topic of cosmetics and prosthetics can be broadly categorized under the theme of deceptive bodies; however, research has shown that their use was visible and therefore too obvious to be indicative of bodily fraud, and instead could be indicative of misrepresentation. The visibility of the falseness of bodily prosthetics due to their material, placement or attachment meant that they were used to facilitate the wearer in their day-to-day life, rather than to deceive or mislead others.

The theme of creation has been closely assessed through the discussion of fraudulent beggars in early modern England as it was through their bodily manipulation and reshaped narratives that they were able to deceive those around them for unlawful gain. More clearly reflective of attitudes towards bodily fraud, Chapter Three's assessment of the presentation of fraudulent beggars has shown that published works presented them as criminals who preyed on the sympathies of early modern observers. Research has shown that fraudsters were believed to use their bodies, narratives and performance to invoke sympathy and charity and is the chapter which most clearly shows how the defective and deceptive body was employed for financial gain and deceitful purposes. More so than the prior chapters, it demonstrated how different types of people portrayed their artificially created bodies and narratives and showed that the variety of personas available allowed beggars a wide choice of performances and characters to include in their repertoire. Their performances varied greatly as some chose to damage their bodies by creating sores, whilst others created an honourable backstory which explained their injuries as being caused by warfare. Others such as Dommerars, and those who

counterfeited blindness and falsified madness demonstrated a diversity of bodily fraud, as many of these facades allowed the fraudster artistic licence with how they presented their body and altered characteristics.

The final theme of defective and deceptive bodies included in this dissertation was restoration. Chapter Two showed that certain cosmetic recipes were used to restore natural beauty and typicality, and prostheses were used to re-establish mobility and function to the body. The final chapter's discussion of counterfeit virginity however linked the themes of fraud and restoration as it investigated how women were suspected to have altered their genitalia so that they could re-enact the loss of their virginity, sometimes repeatedly. It has shown that women were believed to have the power and desire to falsify their virginity, but no authors are found to have referred to real life incidents of this occurring in their texts. It appears that anxieties (and perhaps desires) of counterfeit maidenheads, were used to condemn women in some social contexts. As shown, the existence of virginity had a bearing on impotence trials and was even discussed in rape cases, however it was because women's bodies were declared to have been untrustworthy that the evidence their bodies provided was able to be void and excluded from investigations.³ John Cleland's *Fanny Hill* was used to portray false virginity in an erotic context however, and perhaps informed a wider audience that it was possible for women to artificially restore their maidenhead so that men could partake in the eroticism of deflowerment repeatedly.⁴ The behaviour of Fanny Hill was designed by Cleland's sexual knowledge, he depicted her as having the power to replicate her virginity and dupe men, and his ideas had to have been informed from a combination of his readings, observations and first-hand experience. This would mean that Cleland's novel was reflective of the ideas circulating in other genres of text and popular beliefs. Though other chapters discussed themes of bodily fraud which may continue for considerable amounts of time or on a daily occurrence, recreated virginity was something which appears to have been used occasionally or only if it was required. Prostitutes did not have to pretend to be a virgin to attract customers, but it may have increased their fee, and women who had

³ Walker, *Crime, Gender and the Social Order*, p59: Weld, *The cases of impotency*, p46

⁴ Cleland, *Memoirs of a woman of pleasure*

engaged in premarital sex may have recreated its existence for their wedding night if they were trying to hide their sexual past or placate their new husband.

All four of these themes have been connected by their use of bodily performance and agency and have demonstrated that bodies were deceptive in a large variety of social contexts. Each type was presented differently in published texts and evoked different emotions in their audiences. Therefore, this project has demonstrated the broad scope of defective and deceptive bodies co-existing in early modern England and shown that they were not presented nor reacted to in the same way and can be further researched more broadly in the future. Other themes of bodily fraud could be considered in the future such as female beggars, false pregnancy and male sexual performance, all would add further detail to the picture established so far by this research. Overall this dissertation has shown that different types of defective and deceptive bodies were performed, portrayed and responded to in different ways. This dissertation's select case studies of fraudulent male beggars and female virginity, alongside the determining of deformity and discussions of concealment, have demonstrated that there was no single definition of bodily deceit in early modern England and that not all types of bodily deceit were fraudulent. Everyone in early modern society was able to mispresent their bodies in some way, and as shown in this dissertation some of these methods and performances were more extreme and theatrical than others.

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