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## Corporeal Returns: Theatrical Embodiment and Spectator Response in Early Modern Drama

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Graduate Program in English

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Doctor of Philosophy

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CORPOREAL RETURNS: THEATRICAL EMBODIMENT AND  
SPECTATOR RESPONSE IN EARLY MODERN DRAMA

(Spine title: Corporeal Returns)

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by

Caroline R. Lamb

Graduate Program in English

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
The University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada

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THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

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**Caroline Rhena Lamb**

entitled:

**Corporeal Returns: Theatrical Embodiment and Spectator Response  
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## Abstract

Taking its cue from the many Renaissance playwrights who emphasized their spectators' participation, this dissertation develops a model of audience response based on what texts from the period reveal about early modern spectators' active engagements with staged bodies and stage space. Discussing plays by Shakespeare, Peele, Beaumont, Marston, Ford, Middleton, and Tourneur, I establish an analytical arc that travels gradually deeper into the body, moving from performances that depict the superficial violation of the body to those that represent its violent penetration onstage, thereby encouraging spectators to contemplate the body's physiological recesses. Early modern anatomical science and its exploration of the body provide a historical backdrop for an analysis of the spectator's confrontation with the human body's ontology, while a phenomenological approach to the experience of playgoing respects the importance Renaissance plays placed on the audience's ability to bring stage phenomena to life. Chapter One argues that the representational strategies of early modern drama encourage a metatheatrical awareness on the part of audiences, by highlighting the conflation of presentation and representation that underlies the theatrical delivery of fictional bodies and places. The distinction between the actor's persona (which presents) and the character's persona (which is represented) fundamentally influences the spectator's engagement with what the body performs—that is, how this dually invested body exists in space and time (the subject of Chapter Two) and what breaches of bodily integrity it can physically withstand within the performance arena (Chapters Three and Four). The drama of the time intimated that by imaginatively participating in the theatrical exploration of the body's capabilities and limits, early modern spectators

could attain the knowledge and power Renaissance culture so often invested in the physical human form.

## Keywords

Renaissance drama; early modern; body; violence; phenomenology; spectator response;  
audience; metatheatre; anatomy; dissection; vivisection; brain; Beaumont; Ford;  
Middleton; Peele; Shakespeare; Tourneur

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## Primary Texts

All citations of Shakespearean texts are taken from the *The Norton Shakespeare*.

References to *King Lear* are from the conflated text in the Norton edition. Anatomical images are reproduced according to the terms and conditions of the collection holders, and are credited in-text.

## Introduction: Engaging (With) Early Modern Audiences

“My rhymes are so potent that in this small segment  
I made all of the ladies in the area pregnant.”  
—Flight of the Conchords (2007)

In their song “Hiphopotamus vs. Rhymenoceros,” contemporary musical duo Flight of the Conchords boast hyperbolically about the physically infectious nature of their performance, echoing in a much less serious way what antitheatricalist William Prynne claimed about Renaissance plays: that they wielded the power to devirginate maidens in the audience (Prynne 339-340, 392, 555, 796). Whether satirical or serious, claims such as these are intriguing because they point to an abiding awareness on the part of spectators and performers of a powerful bodily dimension within performance and its reception. That a performance can bring about influential psychic and kinetic responses from spectators is one of the overarching ideas that inspires this dissertation. Moreover, it is an idea that also inspired and captured the attention of early modern English dramatists, whose plays came to life in a cultural milieu that in some ways both celebrated and condemned what might transpire in the bodies and minds of spectators when they visited the theatre<sup>1</sup>. Taking its cue from the many playwrights who emphasized their spectators’ participation, this dissertation develops a model of audience response based on what texts from the period reveal about early modern spectators’ active engagements with staged bodies and stage space. The drama of the

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<sup>1</sup> For more on early modern antitheatricalism see Laura Levine’s *Men in Women’s Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642* (Cambridge UP, 1994), and Jean Howard’s *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (Routledge, 1994).

time intimated that by imaginatively participating in the theatrical exploration of the body's capabilities and limits—an exploration that was often violently articulated—early modern spectators could attain the knowledge and power Renaissance culture so often invested in the physical human form.

Reading plays by Shakespeare, Peele, Beaumont, Marston, Ford, Middleton, and Tourneur, I establish an analytical arc that travels gradually deeper into the body, moving from performances that depict the superficial violation of the body to those that represent its violent penetration onstage, thereby encouraging spectators to contemplate the body's physiological recesses. However, keeping in mind the importance Renaissance plays placed on the audience's ability to bring stage phenomena to life all chapters also implicitly or explicitly stress the phenomenological interdependence of stage and spectator; therefore Chapter One first devotes attention to the actor-audience relations established or called for by Renaissance playtexts. Indeed, a range of texts from the period characterize the role of the audience as indispensable to the play's performance in terms of how playgoers help to bring staged representations to meaningful fruition. Whether the audience's reaction was to "like or find fault" (*Troilus and Cressida*, Prologue 30), theatrical fictions and effects required both the simulations of the stage and the engagement of spectators. Therefore, any consideration of the way stage violence resonates in performance must take into account the audience's contribution to the creation of meaning in the theatre, which is what I seek to do in the early portions of this study. Although dramatists anticipated that in some cases the "audience" for their plays would comprise readers and not spectators since plays were made available as print documents, the existence of an audience for the play

is projected by most drama of the time (excluding closet drama). When it comes to performance, without at least one present auditor, a performance's invocation of a fictional register would constitute a gesture towards something not fully realized without an/other to uphold its status *as* representation. As W.J.T. Mitchell explains, representation is “always *of* something or someone, *by* something or someone, *to* someone” (12, emphasis in original), and as Jerzy Grotowski affirms, “At least one spectator is needed to make [theatre] a performance” (qtd. in Bennett 1). Like the “theatre and performance theorists [who] need little convincing that the reception of performance art [...] requires the immediate and interactive presence—the embodiment—of its performers and receivers” (McConachie and Hart 15), Shakespeare and his contemporaries keenly recognized, and often explicitly commented upon in their plays, these structuring dynamics of performance and representation.

The textual traces of the imaginative partnership that early modern audience members, performers, and dramatists shared helps, I hope, to ultimately shed light on the “notoriously difficult to index or explain” (Marshall 7) phenomenon of audience response with respect to the Renaissance audiences that have similarly proven “remarkably resistant to examination” (Low and Myhill 2). Although Low and Myhill claim that “throughout the many studies of early modern drama, one interaction has gone relatively unexamined: that of performance and audience” (2), the number of scholars who focus either primarily or tangentially on early modern audiences is large enough to make the topic of “audience response”—even if limited to the early modern period—quite expansive indeed. With this in mind, I have narrowed my lens of inquiry to what spectators might have responded to in early modern performances of the

traumatized or violated body, with the aim of contributing to both the study of Renaissance audiences and early modern body studies. These I draw upon to address the underexplored issue of how the intrinsic duality of theatrical performance (as comprised of actor/characters and actual/imagined spaces) might have structured for early modern spectators a particular experience of the body in peril. Critics working in various areas of Renaissance drama studies have long recognized that early modern dramatists are fond of reminding their spectators of the process of theatrical illusion-making. However, sustained analyses of metatheatre in Renaissance drama have neglected violent plays, or violent moments in plays, in favour of instances where the reminders to spectators that they are watching a play are more insistent or overt, as in, for example, *theatrum mundi* metaphors, or disguise and cross-dressing motifs which call attention to the distinction between the actor and the character he embodies<sup>2</sup>. This actor/character distinction, I show, is seminal to audience engagements with all genres of plays. Although scenes of corporeal violation do not tend towards the same kind of obvious metatheatrical commentaries upon the drama which is unfolding—and perhaps this is why violent moments are passed over more often than not in discussions of metatheatre—the spectator’s recognition of theatricality itself is crucial to how the performing body signifies under duress. The awareness of the theatre as a performance venue, and of the actors as representational vehicles structures spectators’ responses to corporeal trauma in such a way as to make violence and its consumption appealing, desirable, and even empowering. As assessments like those cited at the outset of this

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<sup>2</sup> Recently, however, renewed critical interest in *Titus Andronicus* has occasioned some notable studies dealing with the play’s violence in terms of issues related to metatheatre; see Kim Solga’s “Rape’s Metatheatrical Return: Rehearsing Sexual Violence among the Early Moderns” in *Theatre Journal* 58.1 (2006): 53-72, and Lisa Dickson’s “‘High’ Art and ‘Low’ Blows: *Titus Andronicus* and the Critical Language of Pain” in *Shakespeare Bulletin* 26.1 (2008): 1-22.

paragraph indicate, however, in investigating how and why early modern audiences responded to the various iterations of bodily performance enacted upon the Renaissance stage, critics have voiced reservations about our access to the performances and audiences of the past. These reservations have prompted me to include here a strong methodological edifice based on theories of audience response, approaches to reconstructing theatre performance of the past, and internal evidence from a selection of non-violent plays, in order to tease out the stage-spectator dynamics that are at play in more subtle ways in the violent plays which appear in Chapters Two, Three, and Four. Building such an edifice is the goal of the next two sections of the introduction, and of Chapter One.

### Modern Interpreters, Early Modern Performances

As interpreters who are temporally removed from the subject of investigation we confront a series of troubling epistemological stumbling blocks: in what respect and to what degree do current modes of thought contribute to or veil our understanding of dramatic performance and reception? And, more specific to my aims, how can we propose to “know” what Renaissance audiences felt, thought, and experienced in response to corporeal violations on the stage? As Alan Dessen proposes, do we really “have no way of knowing how much we do not know” (“The Arrow in Nessus” 49) when we seek to reconstruct performances of the past? These broad methodological questions are relevant to this study because although I firmly historicize my subject matter by examining how the body was constructed in early modern culture with reference to the discourses of anatomy and dissection, my primary goal is to use a

modern theoretical orientation—the phenomenological approach—to explore spectator response to the performance of the violated or traumatized body in early modern theatre. Accordingly, there are two related methodological issues here that I would like to deal with in turn before I resume discussion of the body itself: the analysis of early modern audiences through a critical lens like phenomenology, and the methods by which spectator response—especially of the early modern period—can be accounted for with historical and scholarly sensitivity.

The conjunction of theory and early modern drama seems to be on surer footing when the plays are read as texts in and of themselves rather than as scripts for performances, despite the ascendancy of performance-based criticism in the field. How then, does one make use of current theoretical paradigms while at the same time reading early modern playtexts from a rigorously historicist, performance-centered angle? Under what conditions can one still engage with the plays' original performances while enlisting the insights of theoretical texts produced hundreds of years later? Surely, circumventing unjustifiable assumptions about performances of the past does not—or should not—mean shelving theory altogether. Undeniably, there are countless examples of the way in which theory has enabled readings of dramatic performance; for instance, Laura Mulvey's psychoanalytic treatment of the gaze, as well as feminist and queer theorists' analysis of the performative nature of gender (most notably by Judith Butler) have informed analyses of cross-dressing, gender, and desire on the Renaissance stage. Yet an uncertainty surrounding the methodological parameters within which modern theoretical discourse and early modern dramatic performance are able to meet seems still to persist in scholarship. In her nuanced and psychoanalytically-inflected

study of violence, subjectivity, and viewer or reader responses to early modern texts, Cynthia Marshall states that her use of “modern terminology and the insights of its discourse” is not meant to “pathologize the desires of the Renaissance but to bring them into focus and demonstrate their historical contingency” (7), echoing a familiar refrain voiced by scholars who negotiate between historically-grounded and theoretically-influenced critical positions. Since I am interested in the possibilities for “conceiving of the plays as staged events and consequently viewing the surviving documents as theatrical scripts rather than literary texts” (Dessen, “The Arrow in Nessus” 48) while also using phenomenology to study the spectator’s experience of staged events, I feel compelled to provide my own version of this “refrain.” Before this section moves on to establish precisely how a phenomenological approach works in the service of ascertaining audience response in the Renaissance, it also briefly develops my own methodological negotiation within the field of performance studies by considering what it means to be a “modern interpreter” (Dessen’s term) engaging with early modern performances.

First, I would propose that the intellectual climate(s) and models of the present, whether deliberately invoked or not, inevitably shape our reconstructions of early modern drama, its performances, and its audiences—and this need not necessarily be seen as a drawback. The use of modern frameworks in conjunction with historical study seems often to be haunted by the peril of superimposition—that is, the forced or irresponsible application of anachronistic concepts to the past. For example, Dessen’s valuable historicist work in reconstructing and cataloguing Elizabethan stage conventions is accompanied by the proviso that the modern interpreter should aim to



curtail the impact of present day habits of thought upon the analysis of early modern stage practice and performance (Dessen 48). A leading figure in recovering information about the early modern performances of Renaissance plays, Dessen has repeatedly stressed the need to expunge anachronistic or biased assumptions in academic criticism. In practice, this feat proves to be difficult. As W.B. Worthen suggests in “Staging ‘Shakespeare’: Acting, Authority, and the Rhetoric of Performance” (1996), there exists no ideally disembodied, disinterested, Arnoldian critic of early modern performance. In reflecting upon the trajectory of performance-centered studies and J.L. Styan’s foundational contribution to its history, Worthen argues that Styan regards modern theatre performances as fortuitous opportunities for recapturing and restaging “authentic” Shakespeare. In other words, the eponymous “revolution” of Styan’s *The Shakespeare Revolution* (1977), a work which itself contributed to the legitimacy and popularity of performance criticism, is driven by the sense that the modern stage is secondary to the early modern stage, and that contemporary performances can “find” or “restore” what is thought to be genuine Shakespearean meaning<sup>3</sup>. As the “detective” rhetoric in Dessen’s “The Arrow in Nessus: Elizabethan Clues and Modern Detectives” suggests, certain strains of early modern performance studies construct their subject in terms of concealment and revealment; in this view, whether we can lift it or not, the obfuscating veil of historical distance conceals an authentic performance as it would have been staged and received by Renaissance playgoing culture. Worthen argues that critics and theatre companies who adhere to such a belief are in fact discursively

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<sup>3</sup> Worthen makes a similar point in “Drama, Performativity, Performance” (1998) when he points out that “as Michael Bristol and others have observed, this view of text and performance places performance in a ‘ministerial’ or ‘derivative’ relation to the dramatic text, which is regarded as the authentic ground or source of theatrical meaning” (1094).

producing a notion of authenticity, rather than recovering some predetermined authorial essence or essential meaning embedded in the play: “In actors’ descriptions of their work, as in the wider scope of performance criticism, the Author works to legitimate ‘meanings’ that are in fact constructed as the effect of our own ways of reading, thinking, acting, producing texts as plays” (25). Worthen’s aim here is to critique the assumptions of performance critics and practitioners who presume modern performances have the ability to retrieve the essence of early modern drama, and to demonstrate that contemporary productions of Renaissance plays produce new meanings rather than recover old ones. While Worthen’s specific focus is upon new performances of Shakespeare’s work, his suggestion that we recognize our own complicity in cultural (re)productions is, I argue, meaningful to scholars whose analysis of Shakespeare and his peers also constitutes a site of (re)productive meaning. The contributions of performance critics like Styan, or historicist critics like Dessen, are, as is my own project, less total restorations of meaning than they are productive and constructive, new collaborations with meanings given to us by the past, producing new avenues of interpretation and investigation *into* that past.

As the previous example suggests, historical “excavations” of the past are by default shaped by the modern interpreter—this difficulty (if one chooses to term it as such) is built into the definition of the past *as* past and into the ineluctable position of being a historically and contextually situated scholar. Granted, it is important to remain aware of the ideological and intellectual preconceptions we bring to the study of audiences and drama of the past, but this awareness also necessarily leads to the recognition that the ways in which violently staged corporeality engaged Renaissance

audiences “cannot be apprehended except in mediated form” (Kastan 41). While I agree with Dessen’s caution when it comes to empirical assertions about Renaissance stagecraft, I also believe that we risk losing out if we restrict our methods of analysis too stringently. Rather than attempt the near-impossible task of doing away with the assumptions and biases that underpin existing critical modes, it makes more sense, I argue, to ask in what ways the insights of contemporary scholarship and interpretation can enliven and enrich the study of Shakespeare, of early modern drama, of Renaissance staging practices, and of audience responses to the performance of the victimized body, my specific topic here.

In this regard, I am indebted to and inspired by the number of critics who have amply shown that engaging with past audiences by employing texts of both the past and present remains a productive avenue of inquiry for Renaissance scholars. Although Dessen does not take issue with contemporary theory specifically, his caveat seems intrinsically incompatible with the proliferation of theoretically-inflected approaches which have come to populate the field of Renaissance studies. Some of the most innovative and (to my mind) interesting methodologies recently emerging in Shakespeare and early modern studies involve pairings between modern critical modes and the early modern period—especially “Shakespeare and Phenomenology,” and “Shakespeare and Cognitive Science.” The impact of theory upon the study of early modern drama has been profound, as evidenced by David Kastan’s *Shakespeare After Theory* (1999), John Drakakis’s *Alternative Shakespeares* (first published in 1985 and reprinted in 2002), Catherine Belsey’s *Shakespeare in Theory and Practice* (2008), Paul Cefalu and Bryan Reynolds’ *The Return of Theory in Early Modern English Studies:*

*Tarrying with the Subjunctive* (2011), and many other articles, edited collections, and monographs. Jonathan Gil Harris's *Shakespeare and Literary Theory* (2010) even suggests that we need not see contemporary theory as external to the modes of thought found in Shakespeare's time, since a number of prominent twentieth-century thinkers explicitly derived inspiration for their theories from the analysis of Shakespearean works.

With this in mind, I proceed with an eye to the "history of a work's origins in the past and the story of its effects in the present" (Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition* xiii). As I use evidence from the plays and from original performance conditions to reconstruct what being a spectatorial witness to staged violence and bodily trauma in the Renaissance might have entailed, I take Robert Weimann's claim seriously that if a critic ignores either the dimensions of the past, or the current ideologies and cultural models of the present, he or she "is forced to be either uncritically historical or ahistorically critical" (xiii). Rather than universalizing or rendering transcendental Renaissance audiences and their engagements with, and by, violated bodies onstage, I explore and map the productive ways in which the theoretical orientation suggested by phenomenology can contribute to the extant historical picture we have of Renaissance theatrical experience. Phenomenology provides a useful mode of inquiry particularly suited to the study of Renaissance audiences because it describes human perception of the world in ways that coincide with early modern playwrights' constructions of spectatorial perception in the theatre. As is elaborated in Chapter One with reference to internal evidence from *King Lear*, *Henry V*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Old Wives Tale*, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, and *The Malcontent*,

dramatists of the time both recognized and depended upon the idea that theatrical objects, people, and places come to life both onstage and in the audience. Time and again, plays openly profess that at the limit of stagecraft's illusory potential is to be found the spectator's imaginative intervention, supplementing raw theatrical materials in such a way as to produce the *apprehension* of what the dramatists envisioned and the players sought to represent. For example, the Chorus in *Henry V* famously asks its audience to "piece out our imperfections with your thoughts" (Prologue 23), and in Fletcher and Massinger's *The Prophetess*, a Chorus similarly requests that "Your apprehensive judgments will conceive / Out of the shadow we can only shew" (38), acknowledging that those present can create their own virtual fictional world(s) different from the mere "shadows" the stage projects.

This process of "imaginative amendment" (a term I borrow and adapt from Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) that many plays activate and/or comment upon characterizes the interface between human beings and their surrounding environments in a way that resonates with how phenomenologists conceive of conscious experiences. Like Shakespeare and his contemporaries, founding phenomenologist Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and his successors were interested in "describing the subjective experience of a mind engaged in contemplating the world" (Stephenson, "Uplifted to the View" 41). Under this method, worldly phenomena (*i.e.* people, places, and things) acquire or embody precisely the properties the perceiving mind attributes to them. While objects of perception are not denied an objective existence, the reality which is customarily thought to exist beyond first-hand impressions of the world is "bracketed" for the sake of inquiry into perceiving

consciousness. The setting aside of phenomena in their non-subjective state is called for precisely because the perceiving subject can apprehend phenomena only subjectively. This, I argue, is very close to the model of consciousness and perception that is implied when in *Henry V* Shakespeare petitions his audiences to transform the “wooden O” (Prologue 13) into the battlegrounds where the play partly takes place, or when other dramatists similarly affirm the power of the mind to make and shape its own world. In such instances, plays acknowledge and seek to further augment a cognitive process which is already taking place: whether knowingly or not, the spectator in the theatre is engaged in the process of bracketing off or setting aside the actual qualities of the “unworthy scaffold” (as *Henry V* terms it) and its contents in their raw physical state. Guided by the players’ representation of the story, an audience member instead experiences stage phenomena according to the properties he or she attributes to them as the theatrical experience unfolds. A wounded or traumatized body onstage, therefore, signifies not just in terms of its brute material facticity but in terms of what qualities spectators assign to the actor’s embodied persona in accordance with how they perceive the character and the fantasy world to which he or she belongs. While the intricate, intimate details of these spectatorial experiences are typically beyond reach for us, and while they are likely to a certain degree quite varied among individual members of the crowd, the elements which structure the spectator’s responses are made available by internal evidence from the playtexts—namely, addresses or references to the audience, and other metatheatrical devices which are analyzed in detail in Chapter One. Although the subjective responses of early modern spectators contemplating the stage world before them are not recorded as often as we might wish them to be in surviving

documents from the period, the early phenomenological approach to spectatorship that emerges in the metatheatricity of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century playtexts, in combination with the tools provided by twentieth century phenomenology, allows for serious contemplation of the experiential register of playgoing at the time.

### From Stage to Spectator: Theorizing Early Modern Spectator Response

Empirical investigation of audience experience and response in the Renaissance and its qualitative evaluation—for example, consideration of the psychological or subjective dimensions of theatre spectatorship—have both informed this study, the latter to a greater degree than the former. Although the social composition, attitudes, and behaviours of playgoers do not explicitly find their way very often into my discussion, works documenting such evidence were a necessary starting point for my research, and so I would like to briefly acknowledge that without the contributions of many theatre historians and critics, the “properly detailed historical perspective” which “is a necessary component in any analysis of the original audiences and their contribution to performance” (Gurr, *Playgoing* 5) would not have been possible here. Gurr’s foundational monograph *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London* (first published in 1987, with second and third editions in 1996 and 2004) is matched by a number of other influential works which enable us to better understand the material environments of theatres, the composition of the people that filled them, and the dramatic dynamics that shaped how fictional worlds became manifest on the London stages. Although there are too many to exhaustively catalogue here, other studies that have been particularly indispensable to my research are Jean Howard’s *Shakespeare’s Art of Orchestration:*

*Stage Technique and Audience Response* (1984), Alexander Leggatt's *Jacobean Public Theatre* (1992), Jeremy Lopez's *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (2003), Charles Whitney's *Early Responses to Renaissance Drama* (2006), Jennifer Low and Nova Myhill's *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558-1642* (2011), as well as much of Robert Weimann's work, his collaborations with Douglas Bruster, and Dessen's work on stage conventions.

While those working in the field of Shakespeare studies and early modern drama continue to refine the picture we have of the material realities that shaped a playgoer's experience at any one of the theatres in early modern London, there nevertheless remains at minimum a critical hesitancy in exploring the less tangible aspects of a spectator's experience, in shifting from the physical, empirically verifiable theatrical environments and their contents into the kinds of subjective experiences which may have been occasioned by such locales. Gurr, for example, asserts the importance of "the complex interactive communication between stage and audience," and states that "the hermeneutics of the theatre [...] depends as much on the audience's state of mind as it does on the author's and the players' expectations of what, mentally, their audience will be prepared for" (*Playgoing* 6). However, the relevant evidence with respect to the "mental composition" (Gurr's chapter subheading) of audiences Gurr admits is inconclusive and fragmentary "because almost nobody bothers to put down in writing what they feel about a play while they experience it" (95). Analysis of these documents must therefore be approached with caution, Gurr asserts, in order to avoid assimilating individual experiences to those of the entire audience.



Gurr's point that limited evidence should not be taken as representative of the larger "mental composition" speaks to only one of the potential problems in historically reconstructing Renaissance spectators. Whitney, for instance, claims that the proportion of written early modern responses to in-theatre experience does not accord with the emphasis we place on such experience, and that the early moderns were "not generally interested in performance history" (4). As a result, eyewitness accounts could be motivated by interests that exceeded or were irrelevant to the goal of recording the theatrical experience. Whitney also raises the issue that some accounts of performance may have been influenced by, or wholly reconstructed from reading rather than attending the plays, and finally, that an individual's responses evolve and change over time. Such claims are compelling, and a cautionary approach to historical evidence is worth keeping in mind. As Jenn Stephenson explains, as she details yet another difficulty in reconstructing early modern audience response, the "frustratingly scant and fragmentary" nature of "evidence pertaining to audiences and their playgoing experiences in London of the Renaissance period" has allowed for "critical bias and so interpretations of the same data have over the last century arrived at a diverse collection of audience portraits" ("Uplifted to the View" 56). Alfred Harbage, Ann Jennalie Cook, and Andrew Gurr have all produced different characterizations of "the demographic character of the audience in terms of their social class" (Stephenson 56), and therefore caution must be exercised if one is to use the social demography of audiences to infer anything about audience members' possible reactions to the plays. With these considerations in mind, it seems the further removed one is from the scene of performance, the more difficult it becomes to account for audience response or

reception, and the number of methodological considerations appear to multiply once one moves outside of the empirically verifiable domain of audience demography to discover how theatre attendees processed what they saw. Perhaps, too, the difficulty in reconstructing the subjective dimension of playgoing may account for the necessity of foregrounding one's own methodology, as I have set out to do here, in order to avoid blithely importing notions of the subject, subjectivity, interiority, and the psyche, into an era in which these semantic categories were non-existent, nascent, or understood quite differently.

However, if the fragmentary or potentially unreliable nature of historical documentation is problematic when it comes to the topic of audience response, it nevertheless seems appropriate to ask to what extent we ought to allow the gaps in evidentiary records from the time to delimit critical engagement with the experiences of Renaissance playgoers. There exists a significant body of scholarship that indirectly or directly contributes to the discussion of audience subjectivity with respect to early modern play attendees. One particularly persuasive argument for the existence of the concept of subjective interiority itself in the Renaissance is Katherine Eisaman Maus' *Inwardness and Theatre in the English Renaissance* (1995). Maus treats her topic historically, responding to the concerns of Catherine Belsey, Jean Howard, and Francis Barker, who claim that the concept of inwardness is anachronistic because it is an imposition of the modern reader upon pre-modern texts, and to Peter Sallybrass's and Jonathan Goldberg's sense that the discursive construction of inwardness in the Renaissance in fact relies on the public, the outward, and the political. Maus is able to show that "the sense of discrepancy between 'inward disposition' and 'outward

appearance' seems unusually urgent and consequential for a very large number of people, who occupy virtually every position on the ideological spectrum" (13). In doing so, she not only provides a model for how concepts attendant upon psychic interiority may be theorized with historical sensitivity, but also makes a case for the importance of such concepts to both the drama of the Renaissance and its spectators.

Consequently, while Maus' discussion of inwardness is specifically relevant to my establishing the terms of a pervasive interest in penetrating the body and charting its interior(s) in the Renaissance, I am also indebted more generally to the idea that concepts like inwardness or interiority are applicable to Renaissance culture. In proposing to theorize audience response to bodies in distress I am in some senses relying on the foundational work of scholars like Maus, since to explore experience is undoubtedly to assume that there is an internal, personal, and psychic dimension to spectatorship, even if all of these terms require the requisite contextualization and historicization if they are to be used in the context of discussions regarding Renaissance spectatorship. Having acknowledged that some critics (like those to whom Maus responds) are uncomfortable with the use of such terms in the context of early modern experience, I also wholeheartedly agree with Maus that "when one looks at a wide variety of printed materials produced in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, it becomes difficult to claim that Hamlet's boast of 'that within' is anachronistic—that Shakespeare has mysteriously managed to jump forward in time and expropriate the conceptual equipment of a later era" (3). In particular, the function of the following chapter will be to suggest with reference to plays by Shakespeare, Peele, Beaumont, and Marston, that Renaissance discourses related to playgoing and spectatorship contain a sophisticated

conceptualization of “that within” the mind—namely, the mind’s cognitive abilities and also its potential contributions to the way theatrical performance signifies.

While Chapter One establishes the phenomenology of early modern spectatorship that informs this project as a whole, subsequent chapters deal specifically with the body and its performed violations as they resonate with original spectators. Therefore, some introductory remarks here upon the methodology that supports such an analysis are appropriate. In “The Body of Stage Directions” (2001), an examination and summary of bodily theatrical vocabulary drawn from early modern playtexts, Dessen asserts that “ideally, discussion of how the body was presented on the English stage should be grounded firmly in evidence from both contemporary records (e.g. eyewitness accounts, Henslowe’s records) and playscripts” (27). Dessen’s focus is on reconstructing from the available texts what Renaissance playgoers would have seen, for example, in a play like *Edmund Ironside*, which instructs a character to take “a dead man’s head upon his sword’s point holding it up to Edmond’s soldiers” (qtd. in Dessen 31) or in *The Bloody Banquet*, where a servant enters with “Tymethes’s limbs” (qtd. in Dessen 32), presenting to the adulterous queen a “banquet” made from the body parts of her dead lover, whom she must eat as punishment. What is interesting about Dessen’s statement is that one of the primary sources from which he suggests evidence about staging should be culled is “eyewitness accounts.” While his aim is to focus attention upon a fruitful source of hard evidence, Dessen’s suggestion also alerts us to the importance of the viewer’s role in how the staged body signifies. While eyewitness accounts can provide a general sense of what was onstage at a given point during a performance—as for example, Simon Forman’s diary entry on *Macbeth* at the Globe in

1610 does—they also attest to what the viewer saw or *perceived*, which need not be identical to what was called for by stage directions or implied by playtexts. “How the body was presented on the English stage” seems to account for only half of the equation. If, as proposed in the previous section, and argued in Chapter One, spectators were asked and expected to translate the raw materials of theatre into something more than a somewhat bare stage and a costumed actor’s body, certainly the body’s signification in performed violence depended not only upon what was actually onstage, but also upon what the audience absorbed and created on its end.

Indeed, the phenomenology of spectatorship that emerges in many dramatists’ thematizations of their historical audiences and “the audience” as a concept indicates that we need to shift the scholarly locus of inquiry from the stage to the audience (and perhaps back again), if we want to fully account for the performance of the body in early modern theatres. As argued earlier, drama distinguishes itself from other forms of representational art by virtue of the fact that it requires an audience to come to fruition. It is with this in mind that I argue if we are “to read [dramatic texts] not as literary documents but as scripts for performance...concentrating on what would strike an audience, immediately, in the heat of performance, and on the script as a series of opportunities for performers and stage technicians” (Leggatt 2), as many performance-centered approaches do, incorporating the experiential register of spectatorship into such a reading is essential. To theorize “what would strike an audience” in the Renaissance requires first, but not only, the forms of empirical knowledge that scholars like Gurr and Dessen have established. In other words, the “ideal” picture Dessen would capture of the bodies on the Renaissance stage implicates the bodies in the

audience as well; the body language present in these original performances is not wholly reducible to the concrete, material aspects of performance, such as staging, costuming, mise-en-scène, stage space, acting aesthetic, and theatrical architecture. Rather, it is what the audience *does*, perceptually speaking, with these components of theatrical performance that completes the picture. In the interest of a fully fleshed out understanding of violently stage(d) corporealities in early modern performances, it therefore makes sense to inquire about how the performing body was experienced, as I have set out to do throughout this study. While Dessen's inclusion of eyewitness accounts within his reliable and sound sources forms part of his call for contemporary scholarship to remain firmly and historically grounded within the textual artifacts of the period, it also suggests the need to consider the audience as crucially implicated in the body's theatrical dynamic. The phenomenological approach to the stage-spectator relationship introduced in the previous section and elaborated in Chapter One is ideal for this necessary focus upon the spectator's productive role in transposing the actor's body into a virtual realm within which the body takes on those properties attributed to it by the perceiver.

Up to this point the terms "audience" "spectator" and "viewer" have been used interchangeably, but elsewhere different nuances have been teased out of these (relatively) synonymous terms, both by early moderns and modern critics. In *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, Gurr makes a distinction between the meaning of "audience" and that of "spectator," arguing that the first denotes a collective experience (which Gurr also equates with seeing the stage from multiple angles rather than head-on) and the latter a solitary, visually dominated experience (which Gurr associates with two-

dimensional viewing of many modern theatres). In general, I see the sensory dimensions of spectatorship as distinguishable but mutually constitutive elements comprising the total theatre experience, and so do not use the term spectator in the same way Gurr does, although I later place more stress on the idea of performance as visual spectacle when I specifically turn to staged bodily violence. As Gurr's analysis suggests, while the related terms for "audience" have been distinguished from one another on the basis of what aspects of human sense perception are primarily engaged by performance, it has also been noted that there are key distinctions to be made between individual and collective theatrical experiences. In "Audience and Audiences," Low and Myhill argue that an "audience" is a collective entity that dramatists address, whereas "audiences" are individuals with varying identities and relationships to the drama. Such distinctions are important, Helen Freshwater argues, because one of the barriers that prevents a "better understanding of the relationship between theatre and its audiences" is "the tendency to confuse individual and group response" (5), especially when "there is so much to suggest that the responses of theatre audiences are rarely unified or stable" (3). Freshwater goes on to note that the association of "audience" with "an assembled group" and the assessment of this group as a collective ("it") "risks obscuring the multiple contingencies of subjective response, context, and environment which condition an individual's interpretation of a particular performance event" (5). Critics and reviewers run the risk of perpetuating what Elin Diamond refers to as "the violence of 'we'" (in her article of the same name), when they adopt the collective first person to describe their own experiences of performances (Freshwater 5). Although I never invoke the collective "we" to describe the way performance engages its

spectators, the kinds of distinctions Gurr and others make at length are not always possible or necessary within the scope of this discussion. Ultimately, I have chosen to be flexible with regard to audience nomenclature because even within the early modern period, the terminology used to denote those who attend the theatre was varied, suggesting that dramatists conceived of their audiences in a number of ways (as a collective, as individuals, as viewers, as auditors). As Gurr explains, the term “audience” was not nearly as prevalent in the early modern period as it is today, and Shakespeare, for example, uses the term auditor exclusively in the 1590s, but from 1600 onwards refers to playgoers as spectators. Having considered the problems inherent in applying terminology without regard for its discursive implications, I have ultimately decided to take my lead from the variation in historical nomenclature and use a variety of terms interchangeably: spectator, viewer, audience, auditor, witness, playgoer. This choice, I hope, will speak to concerns like those voiced by Freshwater and Diamond about the homogenization of “the audience,” by implicitly recognizing the variety of ways in which theatre attendees engage in play performances.

### Corporeal (Re)turns

Since this dissertation develops a model of audience responses within the context of the body’s theatrical violation, this final section is devoted to introducing the methodology and hypotheses I employ in reconstructing the body’s significance (and signification) for early modern theatre spectators. In the wake of the proliferation of studies involving the body which has now come to define a heterogeneous area of inquiry loosely termed “body studies” (comprising a range of theoretical approaches



drawn from psychoanalysis, phenomenology, linguistics, feminism, gender/queer theory, and cultural studies), many scholars have contributed to what Keir Elam terms the “corporeal turn” in the field of Renaissance studies (Calbi xiv). The many differing critical approaches to the body, or bodies, in the early modern period need not necessarily be seen as competing interests, or even as a sign that the body’s significance for early modern culture has been exhausted in criticism, but as indicators of the body’s scholarly importance. The centrality of the actor’s presence on the early modern stage has been, and continues to be, a salient part of this turn in the field, but as I have noted, the dual energies of the actor/character’s embodiment have not yet been thoroughly examined with respect to audiences’ engagements with corporeal trauma. My contribution to the fields of audience response and body studies lies in revisiting the place the human body occupies in the Renaissance cultural imaginary, with reference to stage violence and its potential for double images in the spectator’s phenomenological experience of theatre.

My discussion of the signifying potential of early modern theatrical bodies is aided by the analysis of Jonathan Sawday and the many other scholars who deal with early modern bodies and bodiliness. The body’s appearance in a wide range of topics dealing with the early modern period means that I cannot exhaustively list my debts to scholars here. However, one useful catalogue of works that focus in a variety of ways on the body in Renaissance culture is to be found in Maurizio Calbi’s *Approximate Bodies: Gender and Power in Early Modern Drama and Anatomy* (2005). In a footnote (p. 101), Calbi provides an excellent bibliography of foundational studies on this topic. Of particular importance to my focus, Sawday’s *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and*

*the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (1995) extensively maps out the shifts in bodily discourse throughout the period. As Sawday's wide-ranging selection of texts shows (from poets such as Donne, Crashaw, Spenser, and Shakespeare, to natural philosophers and scientists such as Bacon and Descartes), contemplation of the body reached far and wide in the English Renaissance. Sawday moves beyond the dissection slab to show how early modern culture was infused with a desire to contemplate what he terms the "body-interior" (12)—a desire which manifests itself in literary, religious, and philosophical discourses. Sawday's detailed exploration of bodily inquiry in the period has become an indispensable source for scholars of early modern body studies, as has Gail Kern Paster's *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (1993). Another thoroughgoing account of Renaissance bodiliness is Carla Mazzio and David Hillman's *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early-Modern Europe* (1997), which methodologically picks up on the process of "blazon" embedded in Sawday's title by dividing itself into fourteen essays each focusing on a body part. The scholarly value of *The Body in Parts* in terms of its wide-ranging scope is matched by its suggestive approach to the topic: in Renaissance discourses of the body, the relationship between the parts and the whole figures prominently. Mazzio and Hillman suggest that to some degree, "the early modern period could be conceptualized as an age of synecdoche" (xiv), a suggestion that I show to be eminently true when I examine the discursive construction of the body as an object of knowledge in the Renaissance, whose parts are thought to make up a unified paradigm that exemplifies, in miniature, larger forms of knowledge. As I return to

some of the ideas already established by the corporeal turn in Renaissance studies, I use them to propose new means of looking at the role of violated bodies onstage.

Corporeal “violence” or “violation” can encompass a wide range of acts and effects, and so further explanation of how I conceive of these terms and their significance for audiences of the early modern period seems appropriate. It has been my goal to focus on instances of corporeal undoing that have the potential to be quite unsettling for audiences in order to examine why that which carries the potential to disturb spectators is also that which recurs time and again in drama of the early modern era. To this end, I have adopted a liberal definition of violence that includes a range of actions perpetrated upon victims’ bodies, from those that threaten to destroy an individual’s sense of corporeal integrity (as the Tyrant does to the Lady in *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy*), to those that have completely dismantled the physical body (as does another tyrant’s actions in *The Bloody Banquet*). The depictions of the body in peril in the plays I have chosen seem to me to be particularly powerful, but the driving question behind my selection of plays could easily be asked of many other violent texts from the period: why should the corporeal injury and abuse that appear prominently in early modern drama be a seductive force for audiences, as the popularity of the revenge tragedy genre and of violent play motifs suggests? The answer I propose—which I recognize to be only one facet of the appeal of violent entertainment—is that Renaissance audiences were encouraged to derive pleasure from the recognition that the theatrical body in pain was wholly different than those that were victims of non-theatrical violence. More specifically, I argue that the metatheatrical awareness dramatists entrusted their spectators to adopt allowed for an empowering spectatorial

experience in the face of damage to the body's integrity. Whether the embodied performing self is on the verge of destruction, has already suffered physical damage, or is struggling to maintain its composure, recognition of the actor's theatrical doubleness (as actor and character) allows spectators to occupy a position of authority in relation to how bodies and their relationship to worldly phenomena are transformed inside the performance arena. Where non-theatrical bodies might suffer, disintegrate, and expire, theatrical bodies retain their underlying corporeal integrity (that of the actor's own body), and acknowledgement of this fact, whether at the conscious or unconscious level, is part of what enables spectators to enjoy violent entertainment. When these same spectators take note of the process of illusion-making, as the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries ensured they did, they are invited to contemplate the phenomenal creation of the actor's doubly significant body occurring coincidentally with the destruction of the character's represented body. Such contemplation, I argue, can render the experience of seemingly destructive theatrical violence both enjoyable and empowering.

Another keystone in my reconstruction of early modern audiences and their desire for violent entertainment is the potent cultural desire in the Renaissance to access the interior of the human body, which I establish by recourse to a variety of early modern texts that take the body as their object of study or fascination. The violent undoing of the body on London's early modern stages could, in addition to furnishing spectators with an authoritative stance on the creation of theatrical illusion, present spectators with an empowering view of corporeal interiority. I show how early modern English culture, inspired by the popularized work of anatomists both at home and

abroad, constructs the body as a vessel of knowledge, both in the sense that it is a physical vessel, home to important revelations about the nature of human existence, and a vehicle for knowledge that reaches beyond the boundaries of the human frame. The status of the body in Renaissance culture as a body of knowledge in turn enables me to reconceptualize dramatized violence in a way that moves against the grain of critical tradition. In her seminal analysis of violence in the early modern period, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts* (2002), Cynthia Marshall suggests that performed acts of bodily trauma offer the spectator a “shattering” of the self—the cathartic experience of “psychic fracture or undoing” (1). Yet what if witnessing that same corporeal violence also presented audiences a related, but different, possibility? Richard Sugg notes that “from the earliest years of their appearance in nonmedical English literature, through to the visceral excesses of Webster and William Davenant, the words ‘anatomy’ and ‘dissection’ are frequently [...] found either amid, or as a final attempt to outdo, particularly horrific, imaginative, and bizarre forms of physical torment and death” (13). While the rhetoric of anatomization was put to aggressive, hostile uses in playtexts of the early modern period, the violent literary appropriations of medical practices did not cut their ties with anatomy’s “softer” side—its interest in the wondrous disclosures offered by the body’s internal systems and structures. If the staging of anatomically-inspired scenes, or threats, of violence promised to horrify audiences, it also furthered the myriad of (not necessarily violent) connections spectators might draw between what happened to the body onstage and what medical dissections sought to achieve (as defined by how the practitioners of dissection interpreted their findings to the larger public). Whether they

intended to or not, dramatists could not borrow terminology and procedures from anatomical science without importing its culturally constructed meanings into the theatre as well.

Taking this cross-fertilization into account, I propose that the same plays which could dismantle the composure of spectators could also offer them the potential for psychic recuperation. Marshall argues that theatrically performed violence belonged to “an aesthetic of shattering or self-negation” (2) identifiable in the literature and drama of early modern culture. Part of my aim is to explore the consequences of situating theatrical violence and audience response in an entirely different cultural context: that of Renaissance anatomy, dissection, and the wider forms of cultural knowledge attached to these scientific disciplines. In my view, even when they do not invoke a specifically anatomical context, staged violations can represent exploratory acts motivated by more than just the perverse or destructive desire to cruelly “hew” the body to “shreds,” to borrow a phrase from Ford’s *Love’s Sacrifice* (1633)<sup>4</sup>. Drawing upon the work of Renaissance anatomists and the popularity of their dissection theatres, I conceive of certain instances of staged bodily trauma as “theatricalized dissections,” a term unique to this project. While all public dissections of the Renaissance certainly possessed a

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<sup>4</sup> Ford in fact also relies upon the same language in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (see 4.3.58) and Ferdinand in Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi* (1623) uses a strikingly similar expression in his fantasized violation of the Duchess: he speaks of bequeathing to her bastard child a handkerchief in order “to make soft lint for his mother’s wounds / When I have hewed her to pieces” (see 2.5.28-31). Some plays I cite make explicit their use of anatomy’s procedures and its concepts (the dissection of a body in order to gain knowledge and information), whereas others (like *Love’s Sacrifice*) more subtly reflect the anatomist’s methods and ideas in the way violence is characterized. I avoid making claims about whether such anatomical echoes are deliberate on the dramatist’s part; my aim is to explore their potential resonance for spectators. However, the way anatomy in the early modern period becomes a popular cultural phenomenon in which many writers participate leads me to agree with Sugg’s argument that “frequently, anatomy uses writers, as well as vice versa” (2). Referring to early modern literature in general, Sugg argues, “Often, indeed, uses of dissective rhetoric appear not merely fashionable but highly compulsive, sometimes lacking an integral semantic motivation to the extent that the body must be seen as actively invading the English literary imagination” (2).

degree of theatricality, I use the term “theatricalized dissection” to refer specifically to instances of penetrative violence performed upon actors’ bodies in London’s drama theatres. The connection between this kind of dramatic violence and dissection arises from the fact that Renaissance dramatists often construct invasive penetrations of the performing body as violent enterprises which are mobilized by the desire for knowledge, much like the increasingly popular explorations of the body-interior (Sawday’s term) in both published anatomical texts and public dissections of the time.

The relationship between early modern literature and anatomical study has been taken up in various ways by the recent scholarship of Richard Sugg (*Murder After Death: Literature and Anatomy in Early Modern England*, 2007) and Hilary Nunn (*Staging Anatomies: Dissection and Spectacle in Early Stuart Tragedy*, 2005), yet in this dissertation I respond to what I see as the need to map more extensively the differences, as well as the similarities, between the drama and the science of the early modern period. Because “the early literature of anatomy and dissection in the Renaissance provides an entry to both figurative and literal dissection and dismemberment on the Jacobean stage” (Caldwell 149), it is tempting to see the two cultural domains, each so focused on the body, primarily in terms of their conceptual commonalities. Ultimately, however, I will also argue that the dramatic theatre differs significantly from the anatomical theatre in the way it can offer bodily knowledge to those present and wishing to absorb such knowledge. The stylistic disparities of these two theatres—one home to a self-consciously dramatic medium, and the other a didactic, empirically-oriented forum—turn out to be a critical blindspot in many studies on the topic to date. It is my contention that while both anatomists and dramatists were

informed by overlapping and adjacent ideas about the body, because they were home to a self-reflexively metatheatrical aesthetic the professional theatres of Shakespeare's day showcased these ideas in a representational mode unique to the dramatic stage, and foreign to the anatomy theatres. The performance of the body's violation in a dramatic context provided spectators the opportunity to glimpse corporeal interiority while at the same time remaining cognizant of the theatrical elements upholding the illusion of corporeal revelation, and of their own participation in the creation of illusion. As key figures in the creation of theatrical corporealities, early modern spectators could ascend to a position of authority not offered to non-theatrical witnesses of the body's violation.

I began this introduction with a performance-related analogy spanning four hundred years in order to highlight in my approach what I hope will be a productive methodological conjunction between the past and the present, between historical investigation and contemporary theoretical insight—binaries that I invoke also with the sense that they must be left open to qualification and interrogation. Drawing upon the contemporary theoretical apparatus of phenomenology and upon evidence supplied by early modern texts and playtexts, I explore how dramatists both recognized and depended upon the imaginative contributions of their audiences, and I investigate the implications of the notion that theatrical violence comes to life as much in the audience as it does onstage. Chapter One, intended in large part to solidify the interpretive parameters for subsequent chapters, inquires into what Renaissance dramatists and playgoers might have understood as the spectator's subjective experience in the theatre. I show that early modern theatre culture valued highly the psychic and imaginative dimensions of spectatorship. As *King Lear*, *Henry V*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,



*The Old Wives Tale*, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, and *The Malcontent* suggest, the way in which spectators mentally process the bodies and spaces set forth before them is seen to be an integral and powerful component of dramatic performance. Using plays within plays, or metatheatrical reflections upon the stage, works like those listed above sketch out a phenomenological portrait of theatrical dynamics that locates live performance in a virtual space produced by the audience in response to what is rendered by the actors onstage. Maintaining that the subjective experience of the spectator significantly contributes to the ultimate effect of staged bodies, Chapter Two narrows the lens of inquiry to how spectators perceive and respond to the represented violation of the body in play performances of the period, a focus that sustains Chapters Three and Four as well. Chapter Two engages the argument that the actor/character distinction profoundly influences the way audience members absorb and perceive theatrical embodiments, while using *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* to concretize this argument with relation to the play's onstage depiction of an exhumed corpse and its troubled ghost. Specifically, the fissures in time-body-space relationships represented in the play microcosmically echo—and also further incite—the spectator's perception of onstage bodies and space as being (at least) two things at once, a fractured perception that is a direct result of the presentation/representation divide. I read the play's treatment of its heroine's body, a treatment which bends conventional laws of physics (namely, the idea that one body can only occupy one spatial position at any given point in time), as an analogue for the way in which the experience of playgoing can similarly “bend” the spectator's traditional understanding of the body and its spatial and temporal capabilities and restrictions. The violation of the body, which in *The Second Maiden's*

*Tragedy* stems from grave-robbing and necrophilia (although not to the point of sexual intimacy), becomes a more prominent focus in the remaining two chapters, which zero in more closely on penetrative theatrical violence that draws blood and exposes the body's physical interiority. In Chapters Three and Four, early modern anatomical science and its exploration of the body provide a historical backdrop for an analysis of the spectator's confrontation with the body's viscera in *The Bloody Banquet* (Ch.3) and *The Atheist's Tragedy* (Ch. 4). Chapter Three charts the early modern construction of the body as repository of knowledge both earthly and divine, to argue that potentially disturbing or repulsive enactments of corporeal violence can also be seen as opportunities for epistemological empowerment on the part of spectators. Because a variety of texts (both dramatic and non-dramatic) in the period invest so much in the body's external and internal physical structure, anyone who is witness to the body's physical unveiling is also offered a chance to attain expansive knowledge of body, self, and world—all of which were thought to be paradigmatically represented by the physical human form. Through its instructive display of a torn apart body, *The Bloody Banquet* dramatizes these epistemological investments and the knowledge offered to those who are present to observe the violent opening of the body or its aftermath. London's dramatic theatres, however, offered a different experience of the body's internal physiology than the popular anatomy theatres of the day. As plays continually reminded their spectators in significant metatheatrical moments, the actor's body possessed a dual ontological status as both the representer and the represented, the actor himself and the character himself or herself. As Chapter Four argues, this corporeal duality, which was not possessed by the lifeless corpses dissected in public anatomies,

meant that dramatic theatre audiences could enjoy the visceral undoing of the body with the attendant understanding that the sanctity of the actor's body is almost never at stake in fictionally represented violence. The dead-alive or violated-but-intact performing bodies could therefore fulfill what I show is a fantasy circulating widely among early modern anatomists, their followers, and Renaissance culture at large: the unmediated access to an uncorrupted live human body and all of its contents. Unrealizable in anatomy circles because of the ethical prohibition against human vivisection, this desire could be approximated in theatrical performances like those of *The Atheist's Tragedy*, which encouraged its spectators to perceive the internality of a penetrated body (in this case, the exposed brain of the character's body) which was at the same time undamaged in the sense that it was also the actor's body. Providing exclusive access to a performing entity that seemed, perceptually speaking, to triumph over the moral and mortal constraints that limited anatomical exploration to corpses which could not reveal live human corporeality, the theatrical performance of the violated body in the early modern period facilitated powerful and empowering experiences for its spectators.

# 1 “If Imagination Amend Them”: The Phenomenology of Early Modern Spectatorship

The prologues, epilogues, and bodies of early modern plays often suggest and reveal information concerning the early modern performances about which so little documentary evidence survives. Focusing on the prologue itself, Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann, for example, assert that “in the absence of extensive records of contemporary responses to specific plays, prologues offer cultural historicism some of the most significant characterizations of the early modern theatre” (2) including “some of our best evidence regarding performance spaces and practice,” and “who the audience was presumed to be” (159). Choosing a slightly different point of entry into the internal evidence found in playtexts, this chapter argues that metatheatrical moments in general—regardless of where they occur in the play—also provide valuable information about early modern audiences, in that they give us at least a partial sense of the general terms under which audiences and performers met, in both the literal (material) and imaginative senses. Specifically, my argument is that early modern playtexts explicitly characterize spectators of the period as active participants in performance; they are aware, dynamically engaged, and recognized as such by playwrights. This argument sets up the more body-oriented chapters that follow, by establishing the spectator’s lived experience of the stage as a primary means of assessing how human physicality and embodied selfhood signify in the theatre. The plays I analyze or refer to in this chapter—*King Lear*, *Henry V*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *The Old Wives Tale*, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, and *The Malcontent*—

were selected because they all allude to or call for a performance “contract,” wherein theatregoers are portrayed as cognizant auditors who understand theatrical convention and contribute to shaping a performance’s meanings. Although I intend the present chapter to develop—as its title suggests—a phenomenology of spectatorship, I resort first and foremost to primary evidence (Renaissance playtexts themselves) and defer extended use of phenomenological theories to Chapter Two, where I spend more time surveying a variety of theoretical approaches to theatrical corporeality and spatiality. Through metatheatricality, dramatists both recognize and encourage the spectator’s mental (re)construction of stage phenomena as elements belonging to a fictional world, suggesting that this transaction is fundamental to spectating, whether the represented subject matter is violent or not. Admittedly, early modern drama is replete with instances of metatheatre; even if one were to narrow the scope of inquiry to metatheatrical references to spectators specifically, there exist innumerable permutations of plays that could be linked together to make the argument I do here. The plays in this chapter are intended to serve as exemplars of the way drama of the time attuned playgoers to the process of illusion-making, and prioritized within this process the spectator’s mental transformations of the stage and the bodies that fill it. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *The Old Wives Tale*, and (especially) *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* were selected because of their lengthy metatheatrical nods towards spectatorial contributions to theatre; *King Lear*, *Henry V* and *The Malcontent* provide shorter but equally instructive examples of the same. All six plays are representative of the idea that theatre materializes as much in the audience’s imagination as it does onstage, enabling powerful and personal experiences for spectators, and (in)forming

responses that carried over into the more serious, violent, or tragic terrain that I turn to in the following chapters.

Of course, the model of engaged spectatorship requires qualification in several ways. The boisterous energies of theatre crowds could offer an equally powerful pull in the direction of disengagement with the stage<sup>5</sup>. For one, the social permissibility of activity within the audience (the sale of food and drink, for example) seems to strongly suggest fluctuations of attention between onstage and offstage activity (perhaps both on the part of actors as well as spectators). The structure of early modern theatrical environments and their conventions also meant that for spectators “the physical features, the awareness of where you are and what you are doing [...] was an invariable feature of every Shakespearean performance” (Gurr, *Playgoing* 13), implying that the idea of audience engagement needs to be extended to include objects of attention beyond the boundaries of the actors’ performance itself. The multiple ways in which spectators could participate in theatrical experience suggest that being mentally present as a Renaissance playgoer meant mediating between various perceptual loci that could strengthen and/or weaken one’s absorption into the fictional world of the play. As my reading of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in this chapter suggests, the degree to which the addressees of a dramatized representation are able to embrace the fictions of the stage is understood to be variable, their suspension of disbelief understood to be part of a continuum that allowed for fluctuations between identification with the story and with the stage as stage. However, these two poles of attention need not be seen as mutually

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<sup>5</sup> In *Jacobean Public Theatre* Alexander Leggatt argues that the “the general picture of a rough, vulgar theatre public needs to be complicated in two ways” (43), noting that rowdy behaviour was not particular to the playhouse alone, and that some accounts describe attendees treating the theatre experience as an opportunity to showcase themselves. Nevertheless, as they are in Leggatt’s description, early modern audiences are frequently described as being large, energetic, and anything but passive.

exclusive. Rather than wholly privileging one over the other, early modern plays ensure that both the space of stage-as-stage and the represented space, superimposed upon one another, become equally likely loci of spectatorial perception. Recently, advances in the intersection of cognitive science, theatre studies, and phenomenology have supported this idea with analysis of empirical evidence concerning how the brain makes sense of the inherent duality of theatrical performance. A leading figure in this hybrid field, Bruce McConachie asserts that “blending” of the presentational and representational elements of performance is “the cognitive basis of spectating” (18). When spectators take in a performance, they “merge together two different mental constructs” and thus usually “experience ‘actor/characters’ as a blend, not as separate entities” (18), while perceiving that blended entity to be “simultaneously existing in both real and simulated time-space” (7). Cognitive blending, McConachie boldly argues, is not a “socially constructed” phenomenon; it occurs “at the species level” (18)—that is to say, it is a faculty all human beings exercise.

With respect to stage space, the “Dover Cliff” scene from *King Lear* vividly illustrates how the recognition of stage signifiers can occur alongside something akin to what has typically been called suspension of disbelief. As Gloucester stands on the edge of the imaginary “cliff” that Edgar has falsified, Edgar describes to him a series of scenic images that trick Gloucester into “seeing” (in his mind’s eye) what is not truly there, either in the fictive world of the play, or in the performance space of the early modern English stage. Not only do Edgar’s representational strategies analogize the dramatist’s use of convention to conjure up a fictive scene, but as Steven Turner notes, the scene “draws our attention *as much to the devices used to represent the space as to*

*the final effect of that space itself*" (166, emphasis in original). When Edgar asserts "how fearful / And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low" (4.6.11-12) from such a height, audiences are reminded that, given the difficulty of physically producing a steep cliff with the stage's resources, this would be the same descriptive language Edgar might use to project to Shakespeare's audience the impression of a cliff were the narrative truly taking place at Dover. Shakespeare encourages spectators to take note of Edgar's linguistic trickery, and therefore to straddle (perceptually) the fictional world of *King Lear* and the stage standing in for that world. In performance, once the disjunction between the "extreme verge" (4.6.26) Edgar represents through speech and the flat performance space becomes clear, Edgar's ruse can sustain involvement in the narrative at the very same time it metatheatrically highlights how Shakespeare's dramaturgy produces the impression of that which is not actually seen. This is because Edgar's ruse is also Shakespeare's; in this moment, spectators are alerted to how Shakespeare transforms space with language by virtue of the fact that they recognize that Edgar's character is performing a similar transformation. Since the stage has its representational limits, in many descriptive evocations of fictional locales, "language would tell us to see [the space] otherwise" than it appears (Goldberg 539), a convention dramatists rely upon for performance effects. If spectators recognize the dramatist's strategy here it is only because they have invested themselves in how Edgar's character uses a similar strategy in the fictional world of the play. The similarity between Edgar's and Shakespeare's "storytelling" demonstrates how dramaturgical choices can direct a spectator's focus to both the "story" and the process of dramatically "telling" it, without spectators having to lose sight of or abandon allegiance to either. Spectatorial



engagement, then, was far more complex than a consistently maintained suspension of disbelief; as I elaborate below, to engage with a performance could also mean to simultaneously participate in the deconstruction of theatrical illusion frequently encouraged by the plays themselves.

Additionally, as noted earlier, although the social composition of early modern theatre crowds and their degree of heterogeneity has been the subject of debate, critics have nevertheless warned against homogenizing the behaviours and experiences of theatre attendees. In response to these concerns I would argue that the portrait of active spectatorship the plays in this chapter delineate can reasonably be seen as a structuring matrix within which an array of theatrical experiences is manifest. Therefore, despite the diversity in playhouses and playgoers, it can be argued that there were “deep continuities in not only theatrical fashion and generic preferences, but also the overall experience of playgoing” (Bruster and Weimann 43). Bruster and Weimann cite the commonalities among prologues they analyze (including trends in costuming, rhetoric, and stage practice) as one kind of evidence for such continuity, asserting, “if not a uniform set of experiences, then at least an open unity of shared assumptions and feelings relating to attendance at plays must have underwritten the average playgoer’s relationship to and understanding of playgoing” (43). Anne Ubersfeld and Keir Elam have both proposed that spectators are unlikely to isolate themselves from the audience en masse in the way they evaluate a given performance, and Susan Bennett describes Elam’s argument as follows: “There is a tendency towards integration, the surrendering of the individual to the group for the duration of the performance” (76). Drawing upon cognitive theory in her analysis of the prologue to *Henry V*, F. Elizabeth Hart

convincingly argues that Shakespeare uses a “cognitively fundamental” concept of “things that encircle” (42) to “achieve the goal of unifying his audience’s vision” (43). While acknowledging that “no two audience members’ embodied experiences will ever be exactly alike [...] even in circumstances such as watching the same performance in which individuals respond cognitively to the same stimulation,” Hart argues that the spectator responses generated by invocations of fundamental concepts “may in fact be sufficiently *alike* to promote an isomorphism or structural similarity between different individuals’ imaginative constructs” (43, emphasis in original). The plays in this chapter provide internal evidence to corroborate what Bruster and Weimann, Ubersfeld, Elam, and Hart claim, in that the playtexts themselves suggest the existence of a flexible but traceable set of shared spectatorial experiences which both dramatists and playgoers acknowledged. In characterizing audiences as participatory collaborators in a performance’s meaning, the drama of the period did not seem to be proposing anything radical or even out of the ordinary. Rather, depictions of playgoing, and other metatheatrical references to theatre audiences acknowledged the cultural availability and circulation of an extant model of spectatorship based on the premise of an informed, participatory audience, and also further encouraged the continuation and proliferation of the kinds of audience engagements these plays modeled.

In returning to a topic that has already received considerable attention from scholars of early modern drama, the goal of this chapter is not to retread familiar terrain, but rather to build the foundation for my assessment of audience responses to corporeal violation, which I argue are structured by the way plays train their spectators to adopt a metatheatrical awareness of the stage. This last point about early modern spectators’

self-conscious understanding of drama as a representational medium has become somewhat commonplace, but I have proposed that the relationship between metatheatre and violence is as yet underexamined, possibly because metatheatricality emerges more forcefully in scenes that fall outside the context of dramatized violence. Indeed, “given that there is something undeniably playful when the theatre takes itself as its chief subject” (Puchner 104), the seriousness of violence and the playfulness of what is conventionally thought of as metatheatre might seem a strange pairing. However, definitions of metatheatre need not necessarily be restricted to overt self-reflexivity on the part of the stage; whenever stage action guides spectators towards recognition of the presentational and representational dimensions of performance, which as I show in subsequent chapters also occurs in and through the body’s violation onstage, a meta awareness of theatre is invoked. One might even assert, as Jenn Stephenson does, that there is something inherently metatheatrical about theatre itself—that it is “prone to self-reflexivity, more so than any other art form” (“Meta-enunciative Properties” 118) because spectators are always engaged in a process of mediating between phenomena belonging to their own world (including, for example, their own bodies, actors’ bodies, and the bodies that surround them in the audience) and to the fantasy playworld they participate in constructing. This mediation between the poles of the actual and the fantastical is an inalienable part of the spectatorial experience, persisting long after a play concludes its metatheatrical winking at the audience and resumes a deeper fidelity to the fictional world. The examples in this chapter attest to early modern culture’s endorsement of what might literally be termed a bi-polar model of spectatorship, but the most compelling (because explicit) proof for this view of audience response is not

typically to be found in scenes that depict tragic violence. In order to substantiate my forthcoming claims concerning the dually-inflected nature of spectator responses to corporeal violation, it has therefore been necessary to cull evidence from early modern plays outside the ultra violent revenge genre, and to turn to examples where I find the most convincing support for the way early moderns conceived of the phenomenology of spectatorship. For this reason, the primary texts I closely analyze to substantiate my reconstruction of audience response are not specifically focused upon the body's violation, but they provide the necessary methodological foundation for the subsequent chapters that move deeper into the body.

The “unworthy scaffold” which is proffered by the Chorus as the stage upon which the play *Henry V* is to take place has received considerable critical attention, and like many scholars, I find *Henry V*'s appeal to its audience to be a good example with which to begin a discussion of Renaissance audiences. One standard critical interpretation is that the Chorus's apology for raising “so great an object” (Prologue 11) upon so meager a stage is an indicator of the inadequacy of theatrical *mise-en-scène*, which would necessitate a great leap of faith into the fictive world of the play in order to overcome the discrepancy between actual and imagined events and locales. Bruster and Weimann point out that early modern dramatic prologues are frequently “supplicatory” in this way, featuring expressions such as “only we entreat you think,” “our begging tongues,” and “we shall desire you of patience” (2). While it is certainly true that the Chorus adopts a traditional topos of humility, calling upon the audience's “humble patience” and requesting the audience “kindly to judge” the play (Prologue 34), I would like to suggest that such an entreaty be read in an affirmative light, in the

sense that I believe the Chorus's appeals to the audience constitute a vote of confidence for the imaginative capabilities of spectators. Rather than simply establishing the "inadequacy of [Shakespeare's] medium" (Taylor 55), as, according to Gary Taylor, some critics have argued, the Chorus constructs the members of its audience as integral collaborators in "piece[ing] out [its] imperfections" with their "thoughts" (Prologue 23). If Taylor is right that the topos of modesty veils the Chorus's "considerable confidence" (Taylor 56), then a great deal of this assuredness is derived from the expressed belief in the audience's ability and willingness to invoke its own "imaginary puissance" (Prologue 25). The argument that the Chorus seeks to supplement the story by activating the power of imagination is one that Robert Weimann also makes in *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre* (2000); he notes that to ask the audience to supply the remainder of representation is to "express considerable confidence in, even to bestow authority on, the signifying capacities of ordinary people" (77). Although crediting the "energies" of both audiences and actors, Taylor's argument that the Chorus uses such energies to "express the magnitude of an historical achievement" (56) also inadvertently acknowledges the play's dependence upon its spectators to bring to life the "vast fields of France" (Prologue 12) or spaces and places that exceed the physical environment of the stage. In this sense, to borrow Edward Casey's words, in the early modern theatre "space is no longer situated in the physical world but in the subjectivity of the human mind that formally shapes this world" (qtd. in Weimann, *Author's Pen* 252). This conceptual revision of the meaning of space has consequences for the bodies that occupy it too, as I show in Chapter Two; theatrical embodiment is similarly constructed in and through the mental efforts of

spectators who use their thoughts to flesh out the stage's projected representations.

While Taylor and Weimann do not specifically focus on the audience as an imaginative resource upon which a play may rely to “piece out [its] imperfections” (Prologue 23) in the *mise-en-scène*, their readings suggest at least one of the ways in which Shakespeare conceived of his audience members: as creators in their own right, bringing to the theater their capability to flesh out in an undefined, subjective, and imaginative realm, the bodies and spaces that were only partially suggested and realized by the players and the stage itself.

Indeed, in other key dramatic moments, Shakespeare's characters address and invoke the help of the audience, or participate in metafictional frames (a play within a play, for example) and self-reflexive commentaries on performance, all of which provide us with a sense of how early modern dramatists conceived of the spectator's involvement with what was transpiring onstage. One such moment is the performance of the mechanicals' production of *Pyramus and Thisbe* in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, although admittedly serving to comically highlight the naïveté of the “rude” mechanicals who botch the play within a play. Despite its status as satirical comedy, the performance of *Pyramus and Thisbe* in front of the Duke and his company also provides a model of audience-actor relationships that I argue situates the play's representations in a collaborative space between those watching and those performing. Quince's prologue offers the first delineation of this space in its comical and heavy-handed recitation of the play's *dramatis personae*, which directly addresses, and thus implicates, the play's audience in the mechanicals' attempt at character representation. Quince explains that

This man is Pyramus, if you would know;  
 This beauteous Lady, Thisbe is certain.  
 This man, with lime and roughcast doth present  
 Wall, that vile wall which did these lovers sunder;  
 And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content  
 To whisper; at the which let no man wonder.  
 This man, with lantern, dog, and bush of thorn,  
 Presenteth Moonshine. (5.1.128-35)

Quince's explanation is followed by Snout's additional statement that "in this same interlude, it doth befall, / That I, one Snout by name present a wall [...] This loam, this roughcast and this stone doth show / That I am that same wall; the truth is so" (5.1.154-61). Rather than assuming their audience's intelligent involvement with the process of dramatic characterization—the fact that Theseus, Hippolyta, and the lovers do not need to be led through who presents whom and how—the mechanicals hyperbolically bring into focus the means by which representation occurs. In a sense, their well-meaning but misguided "tour" through the representational strategies by which the cast of the play embody their performed identities/entities amounts to an overly literal algorithm for the process of dramatic representation itself. The interjections of "if you would know" and "let no man wonder," when taken together with their direct address to the Duke and his fellow audience members, overemphasize the fact that theatrical representation and embodiment depend upon the intellection and engagement of those watching.

Moreover, because the mechanicals' preamble registers as comedic, in that it explicitly sets out what every playgoer would take as axiomatic—"this man is

Pyramus, . . . this beauteous lady, Thisbe” —it implies that to discount the audience’s involvement in the scene of representation would be naïve, to such a degree that this misapprehension becomes comically ludicrous. To explain to spectators one of the fundamental aspects of theatre, the idea that persons and things stand for characters and objects which they are not, is as humorously ridiculous as Quince’s mispunctuated prologue (discussed below). The comedic effects of *Pyramus and Thisbe* suggest that unlike the mechanicals, Shakespeare at least expected his audience to understand and participate in such basic operations of dramatic representation as mentally transforming actors into the characters they embody. Along with Andrew Gurr, Bernard Beckerman and Robert Weimann have discussed the wide range of theatrical techniques for producing fictional illusions (notably, the use of unlocalized and localized space, simultaneous staging, and cueing of locale with props) with which Renaissance dramatists expected their audiences to be familiar. The mechanics’ hyper-literal mise-en-scène elicits critical jibes from the audience within a *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, because it breaks radically with these early modern theatrical conventions, and misestimates its spectators’ comprehension of, and resulting contribution to, such conventions.

Accordingly, the audience within Shakespeare’s play takes the mechanicals to task not only because the actors employ crude representational strategies, but because they insist on providing belabored explanations of such strategies. When Moonshine explains, “This lantern doth the hornèd moon present. / Myself the man i’t’h’ moon do seem to be” (5.1.235-6), Theseus and Demetrius criticize his logic, objecting that in order for this literally-interpreted prop to succeed as representation, the man, his thorn



bush, and his dog should all be inside the lantern/moon. The grounds of their objection arise not from a refusal to imagine Starveling as moonshine, for Theseus has already delineated and argued forcefully for the power of the imagination in his prior speech about lovers, poets, and lunatics. If, as Theseus asserts, a bush can easily be “supposed a bear” (5.1.22) with the aid of “strong imagination,” then a human body bearing a lantern can equally be “supposed” a moon by willing viewers. Rather, Theseus, Demetrius, and their peers are overly literal in their critique of the play’s *mise-en-scène* because the actors have encouraged them to be; the mechanicals have created a hyperbolically literal staging of *Pyramus and Thisbe* that refuses to recognize its audience as intelligent collaborators who need less instruction than has been provided—if any at all—to participate in the act of bringing a fictive world to life. In dramatizing a fictional audience’s critical response to a representational aesthetic that denies or wildly misconstrues the role of spectatorial imagination, Shakespeare works by negative example to establish the terms by which the offstage spectators (those of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*) are encouraged, indeed expected, to interact with onstage representations. The play within a play thus produces a fictional performance environment which serves as a foil by which Shakespeare highlights the established and desired audience-actor relations of his own theatre. In contrast to those of the mechanicals’ performance, these relations work within a set of theatrical conventions understood and shared by spectators and actors alike, wherein an audience’s imaginative engagement with the stage is seen as definitionally built into the process of dramatic representation itself.

While the mechanicals' bumbling attempts may be the "silliest stuff" Hippolyta "has ever heard" (5.1.207), Bruster and Weimann are right to note that production of the play within a play is one of "staggering complexity" (50) with respect to issues of representation, performance, and fictional layering. Even as it implies the engaged role of the audience to be axiomatic in the process of dramatic representation, the performance and reception of *Pyramus and Thisbe* within *A Midsummer Night's Dream* also paints a complex portrait of just how such engagement might take place, endowing the spectator's imaginative capabilities with the power to mold the meaning and effect of the mechanicals' staging choices. Prior to the performance of the play within a play, Theseus muses upon the "seething brains" and "shaping fantasies" (5.1.4-5) of lovers, madmen, and poets, highlighting the human mind's capacity for producing and shaping: "As imagination bodies forth / The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen / Turns them to shapes...Such tricks hath strong imagination" (5.1.14-18). Although Theseus's description is tinged with playful denigration, the inclusion of the "poet" within the ranks of the other "frantic" figures serves to anchor the fancies of the imagination to a respectable personage (for example, Shakespeare, or any other playwright who simultaneously identified as a poet) and activity (authorship). Moreover, in this speech the mind is seen to interact with and extrapolate from the material world: the poet looks from heaven to earth and back again for inspiration, while the lover sees "Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt" (5.1.11), imputing to the imagination the same kind of transformative power that Theseus will shortly suggest is possessed by spectators of the play, or auditors of any performance.

Following Theseus's speech, the Duke and his company are first introduced to *Pyramus and Thisbe* by Philostrate's report, which acts as a prologue in its own right, and foreshadows in Philostrate's harsh denunciation of the mechanicals' efforts the forthcoming centrality of personal, subjective responses to the play. In reference to the play, Philostrate comments to Theseus, "it is nothing, nothing in the world / Unless you can find sport in their intents" (5.1.78-79). The term "sport," by which perhaps the critical Philostrate means only a mocking enjoyment of the "hard-handed men," appears again, but slightly modulated, when Theseus urges Hippolyta to receive the performance with kindness. Theseus proclaims that the spectators' "sport shall be to take what they [the mechanicals] mistake" (5.1.90), suggesting that to him, the "sport" involves a serious and respectful effort on the part of those watching, an endeavour which promises to rectify the "mistakes" of the performance by judging it upon its efforts rather than its execution. To illustrate his theory of reception, Theseus offers a personal example. He recalls a fearful clerk whose well-intentioned and rehearsed greeting to Theseus falls flat, but whose failure to perform his speech successfully Theseus does not denounce because it demonstrates "the modesty of fearful duty" (5.1.101). Out of this botched attempt at expression, Theseus is able to "pick" out a welcome from the clerk in the same way that he now urges his wife to utilize her own faculties to supplement the anticipated "wretchedness" (her word) of the forthcoming play. What Theseus advises is no less than an intangible, yet profoundly important, transformation of the play at the level of imagination. When he promises Hippolyta that she will not witness in the performance what she calls "wretchedness o'ercharg'd, / And duty in his service perishing" (5.1.85-86) he proposes she change the way she sees, and

thus *what* she sees; his assurance that she “shall see no such thing” repositions the play’s representations within an interpretive space that he argues can be significantly manipulated by the spectator’s “shaping fantasies.”

In response to Hippolyta’s dissatisfaction with the mechanicals’ performance, Theseus asserts that “the best in this kind are but shadows, and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them” (5.1.208-9). Hippolyta’s retort, while denigrating the ability of the performers, inadvertently argues even more powerfully for the significance of audience engagement: “it must be your imagination then, and not theirs” (5.1.210), she says to Theseus, to which he responds, “if we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men” (5.1.211-12). The imaginative supplement Theseus proposes surfaces intermittently in verbal interjections of his that affirm the events and characters intended by the players, aspects of the performance which are represented in a manner that the other spectators find risible. Theseus verbally reiterates Wall’s exit (“now is the wall down between the two neighbours”) and the lion’s and Pyramus’ entrance (“here come two noble beasts in: a man and a lion”) (5.1.204, 212-13), supplying the remainder of what is left to be desired by staging and costuming, and performatively affirming his own engagement in the fictive world of Pyramus and Thisbe. The ostensible inadequacies of the mechanicals’ dramaturgy offer Shakespeare, through the character of Theseus, the opportunity to develop a model of spectatorship wherein the creative faculties of the human mind may be seen to supplement the shortcomings of any performance, as is similarly urged by the Chorus in *Henry V*.

In essence, Theseus proposes that spectators meet the actors halfway, so that the play become a collaboration of materiality (the performance's mise-en-scène) and immaterial imagination (the spectators' ability to subjectively augment what the mechanicals present). The actor-audience relationship Theseus models suggests that the play—or, by extension, any dramatic performance—assumes its meaning and effect not simply onstage, but in a phenomenologically designated space where what one “sees” or hears is subject to one's own desires and imaginings. When spectators attend a play they do not simply watch; they create, perceive and experience the onstage personas that actors body forth, and they do so in part according to their own judgment. Quince's malapropistic prologue, which offers the Duke and the lovers their first chance to participate in the play's representations in this active manner, adds further weight to the idea that spectators contribute to the creation of theatre in a variety of situations. His well-intentioned yet flawed address only serves its self-satirical effect if recognized *as* faulty, that is, as incorrectly delivered, and this recognition belongs not to the actors of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, but to its audience members, those both within and outside the fictional frame of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As the responses of Theseus, Lysander, and Hippolyta indicate, Quince's oratorical errors are recognized for what they are, and his speech is not taken at face value; although they deride Quince's delivery, the listeners show they know that the players do not truly “come but in despite” and “offend” with their “good will” (5.1.108-12) as Quince unintentionally suggests. In the verbal articulation of this recognition, these spectators demonstrate their active involvement in the play's signification, as they mentally “copy-edit” (the term is Bruster and Weimann's) and reconstruct in their minds what should have been

the correctly executed speech. Their unoffended (although critical) reactions to Quince's statements demonstrate that Theseus and the others see through Quince's superficial errors and glimpse his orthographically obfuscated but earnest intentions. Only by virtue of creatively working back through Quince's mistakes to a materially non-existent (because not tangibly present in the play) correct version of the prologue are they thereby able to recognize that Quince's "speech was like a tangled chain—nothing impaired, but all disordered" (5.1.124-25). In effect, Theseus and the other spectators produce an imagined, but not presented, originary prologue that depends upon their own faculties and subjective interventions for its existence.

Admittedly, some of Theseus's peers are not as charitable as he is; as is the case with *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, the attitudes of fictional audience members also suggest how spectators might interfere with or ruin a play, and so it may be that in comparison to some members of the Quince's audience, Shakespeare's own audience is expected to respond "*with a difference*" (Bruster and Weimann 48, emphasis in original). However, what I would like to stress is that Theseus and his peers at least encourage their offstage counterparts (Shakespeare's audience at large) to likewise recognize what elements of the mechanicals' performance have become disordered and how. In recognizing unintentional disorder—both in Quince's prologue and in the mechanicals' bumbling execution of their play—these two audiences also demonstrate some understanding of an underlying, ordered meaning which may be "impaired" but not inaccessible. With their own good will, spectators like Theseus are capable of re-ordering in their minds the material representations of the stage, actively contributing to what these representations come to mean, and how.

The mispunctuated prologue echoes, albeit on a smaller, linguistic scale, what I have argued is the “negative example” strategy Shakespeare uses to suggest how his own spectators can reasonably be expected to engage with theatrical conventions of the time. The prologue provides the “wrong” model (the “tangled chain” of Quince’s delivery) in order to suggest what might be the right one (the copy-edited speech to which the spectators in the play allude). While Quince misreads his prologue, his fellow actors also misread their audience on a larger scale, and yet both misreadings are accompanied by an implied or imagined “correct” mode of address. If Shakespeare presents his audience with a tangled chain, he also suggests how this chain may be re-ordered, both in gesturing towards an imaginatively corrected (but not realized) version of Quince’s speech, and in promoting a model of actor-audience relations based on a mutual understanding of spectatorial engagement, rather than the actor-audience dynamic the mechanicals clumsily create. While also establishing a microcosm/macrocosm relationship between the performance of the play within a play, and the larger performance of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, both deployments of the “photo-negative” approach achieve the same effect of suggesting the centrality of audience engagement in dramatic significations. Quince’s prologue “demands attentiveness” (Bruster and Weimann 47) from the audience, who Shakespeare expects will repunctuate the speech correctly in their heads in order to get the joke, and the mechanicals’ play as a whole reaches beyond its fictional frame to propose a collaboration between early modern spectators and players, one which the performance of *Pyramus and Thisbe* falls short of for the most part. In “amending” (as Theseus puts it) or editorially emending the materiality of stage signification with their imaginations,

Shakespeare's fictional and theatrical audience members become integral collaborators in dramatic performances and their meanings.

As suggested by both *Henry V* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, early modern drama expects that its spectators are capable of engaging their creative mental faculties, and supplementing the players' efforts to create meanings that are only partially bodied forth by the material representations of the stage. If Shakespeare stresses the supplementary abilities of the human imagination in his projected, or desired, audience members, other dramatists similarly characterize their audiences in terms of mental participation and imaginative engagement. This understanding of the supplementary ability of spectator perception, and the emphasis on how performance *seems* in the minds of those present will be crucial to the way I analyze audience response to stage bodies and stage space in the forthcoming chapters. Although not specifically dealing with the body, a contemporaneous play, George Peele's *The Old Wives Tale* (printed 1595), provides further evidence of the idea that spectators participate in theatrical meaning-making, and thus possess authority when it comes to how staged corporealities signify. Peele's play employs a metatheatrical device reminiscent of *A Midsummer Night's Dream's* play within a play, using a fictional audience and performance within the frame of the play to take up issues of audience response and involvement which extend to and implicate Peele's playgoers.

The eponymous wife of Peele's play is Madge, who, in the presence of wayward guests her husband has rescued from the forest, narrates a fantastical story during the course of which her characters materialize and enter her cottage to perform her narrative. The tale with a life of its own creates an unintentional play within a play,



whose content and performance context provide the viewers of Peele's own tale with the opportunity to metatheatrically muse upon their own engagements with fictional representations. That Madge's listeners are named Franticke, meaning "having a lively imagination" (Viguers 220) and Frolicke, connoting fun and merriment (*OED* adj. 1.a), seems appropriate to a play that characterizes spectators of drama as active, and integral to the creation of illusion. Early on, Franticke and Frolicke self-identify as members of Madge's audience, situating her narrative within the realm of performance rather than textuality, and establishing a link between the play's fictional audience and the larger audience outside the fictional frame. In addition to Franticke and Frolicke's active identification as spectators of Madge's story, they agree to "say hum and ha" (B1v) intermittently throughout Madge's narration (her stipulation), to demonstrate and continuously confirm their conscious participation in her oral performance. When Madge recedes into the background as narrator, letting her own tale go around "without a fiddling stick" (B4r), her audience members, who have now become spectators of a fully dramatized performance, continue to interject and comment upon the action, displaying their adherence to the original "hum and ha" agreement. Peele's fictional audience members thereby model a mode of participatory spectatorship that abides by a mutually agreed upon creator-spectator contract, one whose largely sympathetic portrayal in the play encourages Peele's own audience to positively consider a similarly congenial and collaborative relationship to the drama they are witnessing.

In general, Peele affirms the centrality of spectator participation in drama through the characters of Franticke and Frolicke, but, like Shakespeare, he also affirms the audience's role in perceptually responding to the representations aimed at by

theatre's material phenomena. Peele does so by creating resonances between the outer frame of the play and the interior realm of Madge's tale. In "The Hearth and the Cell: Art in *The Old Wives Tale*" (1981), Susan Viguers explores the parallels between Madge (also a magician or conjurer, etymologically suggested by "mage") and Madge's character Sacrapant, noting each creator's lack of total control over his or her creations. Part and parcel of this lack of creative sovereignty is both characters' dependence upon the active presence and perception of others, meaning that the creation itself, whether Madge's tale or Sacrapant's magic, does not function autonomously, but rather proceeds successfully only by means of striking up an interdependent relationship with (an)other. Madge's characters materialize in her presence and influence or determine the details of her narrative, and the power she relinquishes to their interventions is matched by her expressed dependence upon her audience. Of course, Madge retains a modicum of control over her tale and its reception, at one point warning Frolicke and Franticke, "either heare my tale, or kisse my taile" (B1v) in response to their overzealous and interruptive commentary. However, her reliance on the presence of an attentive auditor is suggested by her ultimatum that the tale cannot proceed without a "hearer"; Frolicke and Franticke must listen, or the act of storytelling is rendered moot. Similarly, Sacrapant's magical art loses its potency once Eumenides is rendered blind and deaf by Jack, and is thus no longer a participant in or spectator of Sacrapant's illusions. Jack defeats Sacrapant and shatters his spell by robbing him of a seeing, hearing audience, suggesting his creative power ultimately hinges upon the perceptual engagement of others. Viguers asserts that "as creators of illusion, both Sacrapant and Madge demand or even depend on audience perception and response [...] Sacrapant's

art is, in fact, so completely dependent on his audience that a lack of response can destroy him [...] Madge's art similarly requires her audience" (213). Illuminating further parallels between the "inner" and "outer" plays, Viguers persuasively connects the illusions of sorcery (Sacrapant's) with those of dramatic representation (Madge's), demonstrating the play's double stress on the centrality of audience in the success or failure of fictional or illusive creations.

Since Sacrapant's illusions are expressly characterized as evil, however, Peele must also importantly guard against a total assimilation of Sacrapant's art to Madge's, for the reason that Madge also doubles as a figure for the playwright, and her tale as a kind of playtext. To unreservedly ally Sacrapant's evil conjurings with Madge's dramatized representations would be to invoke the terms of anti-theatrical discourse whereby performed plays are seen as "sinful, heathenish, lewd, ungodly spectacles and most pernicious corruption," possessing, like Sacrapant, the ability to "empoison, endanger, and deprave the Auditors" (Prynne 70). While anti-theatrical attacks upon the early modern theatre were fueled by many concerns, key among these was a discomfort regarding the nature of reality versus illusion, and the potential dangers of representation. Appropriately, these issues are those by which Peele chooses to differentiate Sacrapant's art from Madge's. As Viguers notes, despite their similarities, there also exists a significant difference between the two creators: Sacrapant's art depends on deception, the utter conflation of illusion with reality, whereas Madge's tale is self-reflexively illusionistic, aware of its own status as a fictive creation, despite the reification of its characters in Madge's own dimension. In fact, the manifest appearance of Madge's characters explicitly plays with the way in which text (Madge's narration)

becomes performance, suggesting we might think of Madge's tale as a kind of playtext providing a blueprint for performance. The immediate transformation of her story into performance, and the conflation of Madge's story world with her own, does not so much suggest that in Peele's play fiction *is* reality, as it highlights the means by which fiction can come to be perceived *as* an alternate reality for a period of time.

This idea will have significant ramifications for the kind of audience response I theorize in the following chapters, where I argue that spectators' understanding of the body's capabilities and limits can be temporarily revolutionized by the alternate versions of reality theatre instantiates. Acknowledging the way actual realms translate themselves into virtual realities as theatre comes to life, Madge's tale dramatizes drama itself, in the sense that her "play" comments upon exactly what Sacrapant's art seeks to conceal: the creation of illusion itself. It is my own contention that in this willingness to allow the *process* of representation a place within the representation itself, Madge's creative aesthetic aligns itself with that of the Renaissance stage in several ways. As many dramatists of the time do, Madge openly acknowledges, bargains with, and depends upon her audience because she does not seek to produce an unfractured veneer of illusion, as Sacrapant does. Sacrapant "pretends his art is not a fiction" (Viguers 221) whereas, like Madge, Renaissance dramaturgy and performance consistently reminds its spectators of its own status as a creative representation. As Shakespeare and Peele demonstrate, this dramatic aesthetic enjoins the imaginative engagement of audience members who offer to bring to life the illusions of a stage that nevertheless refuses to forget its status as unworthy scaffold, or as the vehicle of fictional tales.

Madge's and Sacrapant's two different approaches to creative artifice, which are contradistinctively defined by whether each creator attempts to recognize or disguise fictions and illusions, encourage Peele's audience members to identify more closely with Madge's audience. Like Madge's audience, who witness the process by which a narrative becomes a performance, early modern spectators are put in a deliberately knowing position with relation to theatrical illusion. Capitalizing upon this aspect of early modern theatrical aesthetic, Peele constructs a further affinity between his own audience members and Madge's by affording both a privileged relation to Sacrapant's art: they are not within his illusory world and totally subject to it like Eumenides, but are rather objectively distanced from it through various layers of fictional framing. Consequently, Peele's playgoers can acutely perceive their own role as auditors, because they see themselves modeled in Franticke and Frolicke, with whom they share similarities, and because like their fictional counterparts, they have the ability to see Sacrapant's art for the deception it is. This identification with Madge's listeners is made possible both because Madge is portrayed sympathetically in opposition to Sacrapant, and because the non-illusionistic aesthetic of her tale is closer to that of Peele's stage.

Even if the early modern spectators of *The Old Wives Tale* did not wholeheartedly embrace the roles the play imagined and projected for them, they were encouraged at least to become aware of the different modes of fictional creation and performance that Peele's play models. The framing device thus first of all allows Peele to characterize his own audience as responsive contributors who are indispensable to performance, by suggesting an affinity between Madge's performance aesthetic and his

own culture's, and thus between the two audiences. Furthermore, the negotiation between Sacrapant's and Madge's differing relationships to their creations, particularly in terms of how their craft depends upon the active presence and perception of others, also affords Peele the opportunity to immediately encourage his spectators to *be* responsive in determining their own relationship to the (performed) art and fictional illusions of the play as a whole. Finally, the stylistic diversity of the play, drawing upon folktale, romance, folk ritual, and farce (Marx 118), calls for an additional level of intellectual engagement with the multiple modes of representation Peele moves through. The homologies between the two fictional worlds, and the mixing of genres within the play, mobilize metatheatrical reflection upon the nature of illusion, artistic creation (if we follow Viguers in seeing Sacrapant's magic as art), and the participatory role of those implicated in such conjurings. The play's resulting complexity encourages early modern spectators' participation in, if not allegiance to, Peele's exploration of audience response.

While Peele indirectly addresses his audience via a removed setting infused with magical elements, other dramatists directly engage with the specific theatre audiences of their time by bringing contemporaneous people and places into the compass of their dramatic worlds. Such is the case with Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1613) and John Marston's *The Malcontent* (1604). Both plays portray fictionalized or historically recognizable audience members who suggestively represent the playgoers of their time, more directly enfolding early modern spectators within the performance world of the play than in Shakespeare and Peele. I conclude my analysis with these two plays because they suggest not only that dramatists keenly recognized

their spectators' contributions to performance, but that many spectators did the same. The plays give us good warrant to believe early modern spectators responded to or internalized as part of their playgoing identities and experiences the kind of interpretive agency Shakespeare and Peele attribute to their audiences—even to a degree that could present itself as problematically intrusive. And yet it is precisely this portrayal of the contestatory side of stage-spectator relationships which also provides a counterbalance to the Shakespearean model of congenial audiences willing to imaginatively amend a play's performance, thus rendering in fuller detail the spectrum of potential audience responses to the drama. These plays balance out the idealism of Theseus's approach to spectator-actor relations, by demonstrating the potential for disruptive intervention on the part of playgoers. Peele's play partly gestures towards such potential, in making the verbal interjections of fictional spectators desirable only to a point, after which the performance's authorizing figure (the playwright-like Madge) retaliates to recalibrate the power dynamic between spectator and performance/performer. In Beaumont and Marston, the spectators presume to know more about a performance than the actors themselves, and physically impinge upon the stage space, while also laying claim to a confident, self-authorized knowledge concerning the play's aesthetic and artistic value. By highlighting spectators' manipulation of stage business, Marston and Beaumont indicate the degree to which spectators' contributions to the fictional world and its contents matter. The outspoken spectatorial intervention in these two plays acts as a hyperbolized metaphor for the less obtrusive kind of imaginative amendment Shakespeare attributed to his audiences, further substantiating my claim that playgoers' manipulations of the fictional world (whether voiced or not) help to define the objects

and bodies that plays offer up for interpretation. The kind of spectators depicted in these two plays are insistent upon forging a place for themselves in the drama, both literally and creatively, and although unsolicited, their interventions result in what I argue is a productive dissonance between players and playgoers—one which endows the spectator with an inalienable power to shape the playtext’s performance and meaning.

In Beaumont’s play, written for the Blackfriars theatre (see Hattaway ix), historically inspired spectators, tellingly named Citizen, and Citizen’s Wife, hijack a play about a London merchant by demanding the players present something “notably in honour of the commons of the city” (Induction 26). The Citizens forcefully insist that their man Rafe—a putative spectator turned player—depict a grocer who “shall do admirable things” (Induction 34-35), and for the remainder of Beaumont’s text, Rafe’s attempts at lofty exploits are forcibly spliced into the fabric of the play that was originally to be presented. The Induction to *The Malcontent*, a play intended for Blackfriars but later transferred to the Globe (see Cathcart 43-44), casts two members of the King’s Men company (William Sly and John Sinklo) as spectators who sit on the stage, and three others (Richard Burbage, John Lowin, and Henry Condell, playing themselves) as actors about to perform the play<sup>6</sup>. The interactions between Sly and the players draw upon the custom of stage seating in indoor theatres like the Blackfriars to suggest how such a theatrical environment granted authority to its patrons. Not only does Sly occupy the players’ stage space without invitation, he claims to possess an

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<sup>6</sup> Q3 (1604) of *The Malcontent* is the only version which features the Induction, and it attributes authorship of newly added material (comprising the Induction and eleven new sections of dialogue) to both Marston and John Webster. Charles Cathcart argues that “a certain consensus has been reached” which posits Webster as the author of the Induction (43). Because the issue of authorship is not directly relevant to my claims here, I continue to refer solely to Marston for simplicity’s sake.



authoritative familiarity with the play that gives him the right to advise the players on its execution: “I am one that hath seene this play often, & can give them [the players] intellegence for their action” (Induction 9). More than using their imaginations to amend the performances they witness, the spectators in Beaumont’s and Marston’s plays use their voices and bodies to materially intrude upon stage traffic, claiming for themselves the authority to contribute to and shape the nature of the plays they attend. As I intend to show, however, the tensions between spectators and players commented upon in these fictional frames continue to affirm the seminal contributions of playgoers, and the validity of their subjective experiences in bringing dramatic texts to life, establishing a model of spectatorship that I will argue holds true for the experience of bodies in pain as well.

As ostensible intruders into the plays they have come to see, the fictionalized spectators in Beaumont and Marston seem to transgress the limits of desired spectatorial participation of the kind depicted in *Henry V*. It is clearly suggested that both Sly and the Citizens have taken their influence as spectators too far. Yet I would argue that this transgression does not totally condemn participatory spectatorship, but rather acknowledges its centrality to playhouse environments, and its contribution to the plays of the time, even if this contribution is constituted by dissonance or by a redistribution of power between players and audiences. Admittedly, there are other factors that influence the depiction of playgoers in these two plays. The critique of overzealous or unwanted audience involvement is informed by larger satirical aims which target the very audiences and circumstances of production that form a salient part of early modern playgoing (although *The Malcontent* does not extend its framing device beyond the

play's Induction, and is less satirical than it is jocular in its allusions to playhouse practices). *The Malcontent* facetiously references the commercial rivalry between adult and boy companies and between different theatrical venues (Rasmussen 546), while *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* alludes critically to the repertory of the Blackfriars theatre, which Beaumont's Citizen seems to find displeasing for its continued "girds at citizens" (Induction 8). Nevertheless, I argue that the metatheatrical elements in both plays provide important information concerning historical theatre practices, and especially relevant to the present discussion is how the dramatic representation of early modern actor-audience relations suggests an interdependence between the drama and its early modern spectators, one wherein collaboration is produced through conflict or difference. Although satirical, the depiction of audience behaviour and its relation to playhouse dynamics demonstrates the tangible way in which early modern spectators could have an effect upon the contents of the plays they attended, and could occupy a position of empowering authority, however fleeting or tenuous.

According to Michael Hattaway, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* draws in part on the tradition of "revels"—a "hybrid category" of performance associated with seasonal or carnival festivities where spectators took part in festive games, and where drama was also imbued with the celebratory atmosphere associated with folk revelry, seasonal entertainments, and the figure of the Lord of Misrule (xvii). Hattaway notes that in the revels context, spectators are almost on equal footing with the players themselves, and are expected to "take pleasure in and share the theatrical sports" (xiii), a role that George and Nell take to the extreme. In light of such traditions, it would be reductive to interpret George and Nell simply as ill-mannered, self-entitled spectators

whose tastes and behaviour are the target of wholesale censure and satire on the part of Beaumont. Rather, the revels traditions upon which they draw in their directions to Rafe validate the model of the active spectator, and suggest that there may be a cooperative pleasure to be derived from audience participation. Although the fictional players object to George and Nell's interruptions, the Prologue demonstrates a sustained patience with the Citizens' requests to change the play, continuing to address the unruly spectators in a tone not far from that adopted by the Chorus in *Henry V*. Calling upon George's "sweet favour" and "understanding" nature (Induction 15, 24), the Prologue in effect enters into negotiations with George and his wife as to the content and nature of their desired play, providing both objections and suggestions in response to the Citizens' belligerent requests. In one instance, this relationship is markedly collaborative: when the Prologue asks George to name his newly inspired play, his proposed title, *The Grocer's Honour*, is passed over with everyone's agreement in favour of the Prologue's suggestion, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (Induction 91-95). That this is also the title Beaumont adopts for the larger play speaks to the collaborative aesthetic that informs the whole drama; *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is not just George and Nell's play; it is Beaumont's play as well. In this larger sense, Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is a marriage of two plays whose cross-purposes form a dialectic between differing theatrical aesthetics, and whose contestatory union is the structural and semantic heart of the play early modern audiences experienced as a totality. Read in light of Shakespeare's more congenial portrayal of actor-audience relationships, Beaumont's hybrid play brings into sharp focus the range of negotiations which could occur between early modern players and

spectators. Despite its satirical edge, however, and despite the fact that George and Nell effectively ruin the play they had come to see, Beaumont's representation of engaged spectatorship affirms the mutual dependency of stage and spectator in the production of dramatic performances and their significations, regardless of whether or not the players solicit audience involvement. Like Madge's magically reified tale, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* literalizes a process of representation which is suggestively linked to the representational parameters of the early modern stage. In Beaumont's play, that process is the reciprocal negotiations between a particular audience's subjectivity—its desires, motivations, and interpretive tendencies—and the dramatic offerings of a particular stage, neither of which possesses complete authority over the effects of a theatrical event.

In an important sense, however, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* tempers its portrayal of dissonant but collaborative audience-stage relations by attributing to Nell and George spectator responses that the text clearly indicates are fallible and misguided. The play indicates that the Citizens' distasteful and indecorous interventions and their responses to characterization and plot are to be seen as foolish. In passing, Hattaway notes that the play "recreates us as an audience" and "makes us aware of our roles" (xix), an effect I would argue Beaumont generates by encouraging audience members to define themselves in contradistinction to the satirized Citizens. While I agree with Bevington and Hattaway that Beaumont's satire extends beyond the citizen class (see Bevington 1072-73 and Hattaway, x, xix), so that the tastes and tendencies of "high" culture are also the subject of "girds," in several key ways the Citizens' reactions stand out as a focal point against which audience members are encouraged to identify.

Beaumont is able to suggest what *should* be his audience's reaction to the play George and Nell watch, by making the Citizens into what Bevington calls the "antichorus" (1070). In other words, many of George and Nell's reactions to the play they witness are depicted as the inverse of expected, conventional audience responses. For example, Beaumont draws upon tradition in casting Venturewell as a "blocking figure" (the controlling father) and Humphrey as the undesirable arranged suitor—both identifiable types whose generic function should render them largely unsympathetic characters for early modern audiences, especially in comparison to the young, thwarted lovers, Jasper and Luce. The Citizen and his wife, however, side with Humphrey (see 1.200-205, and 2.8-15) and condemn Jasper and Luce as "infidels," directing their sympathies against the grain of convention. By drawing upon recognizable character types in *The London Merchant*, and showing the Citizens' unconventional sympathies to be misdirected, Beaumont implicitly endorses a particular kind of audience response—one which is defined in contrast to that of George and Nell.

It would seem, then, that in encouraging his spectators to reject the mode of response exemplified by the citizens, Beaumont makes it less likely that these same spectators would feel encouraged to adopt any aspects of George and Nell's behaviour, which is in general predicated upon an all too forceful engagement with performance. Yet in his satirical critique of such engagement, Beaumont nevertheless persuasively appeals to his audience members to involve themselves in the tangled authorities and episodes of the two conflated plays. If Beaumont conditions his audience to distance themselves from the active mode of spectatorship represented by the Citizens, in doing so he nonetheless invites another kind of active response from his spectators: the

resolution not to be hyperbolically involved like the Citizens. In addition to their ill-mannered interruptions and inverted sympathies, on occasion Nell and George engage with the play in a nonsensical way—*i.e.* they mistake plot events for real happenings—encouraging Beaumont’s audience to be attentive and aware of their own engagements: to be involved, but also to judiciously delimit that involvement. Oddly enough for audience members who tamper with the fictional boundaries of drama, George and Nell at times evince a hyperbolic suspension of disbelief in that they forget that the action unfolding onstage is scripted, or feigned. Out of genuine concern for Rafe’s well-being they pay his tavern bill and seem elsewhere to want to jump into the action to break up potential tussles, which they fail to perceive as performed acts with a representational valence. It might therefore be argued that the Citizens are *Henry V*’s desired audience gone wrong; they “work” their imaginations so forcefully that they lose sight of the difference between Rafe the character and Rafe the actor, between what is story and what is not. On the other hand, perhaps this means they do not imagine *enough*, since they seem to take the stage action (and those it involves) literally. In either case, the Citizens’ ill-advised use of their imaginations forms part of a model of injudicious spectatorship which serves as a negative example for Beaumont’s spectators, whose resulting assessment of their own responses is thereby central to the total effect of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. In critiquing transgressive audience involvement through his fictional audience members, Beaumont nevertheless ironically asks for a certain degree of involvement from his own audience members. The intellectual and self-reflexive responses of Beaumont’s spectators, as encouraged by the spectators they in turn watch, help to realize the play’s ultimate commentary upon audience-stage

relations, and locate the significance of this commentary not only in the satire which transpires onstage, but also in the subjectivities of those responding to this satire.

As critics have noted, dramatized spectatorial interventions in Beaumont's play expand the theatrical "playing space beyond the on-stage stools for the gallants out to the auditorium and the audience themselves" (Hattaway xii), an effect generated by *The Malcontent's* Induction as well. However, as George and Nell pry open the fictional boundaries of the intended play about a London merchant to splice in a narrative of their own desire, they do more than simply become performers in kind with the players onstage. In their occupation of the enlarged playing space, Beaumont's Citizens claim authoritative status for the early modern spectators they shadow, becoming part authors and creators of dramatic performance, like Peele's Madge. Although brief, Marston's Induction similarly features a spectator with the ability to amend and participate in stage representation, using the historical persona of actor William Sly to impersonate an audience member who confidently inserts himself into the onstage performance space. Both plays challenge the notion that theatrical space and dramatic performance are the sole purview of the early modern acting companies. Instead, onstage and offstage spaces are shown to be fields of shared authority, where negotiations occur between players and spectators, an identity distinction which in itself becomes unstable as actors portray audience members and vice versa. The elasticity of the fictional frame and the performance apparatus in both plays enacts on a material level within the world of the play what Shakespeare's Theseus proposes might occur in the spectator's mind: a dialogic and collaborative relationship between actor and spectator, between stage and audience. The fictionalized negotiations Beaumont and Marston depict in turn

anticipate and depend upon spectators whose awareness of themselves and the performance form a constituent part of the play's meaningful enactment. More than simply acknowledging the specific experiences of their audiences, Shakespeare, Peele, Beaumont, and Marston reproduce the subjective, experiential register of playgoing within the confines of the drama itself, simultaneously playing upon and taking seriously the desires, interpretations, and imaginations of their early modern spectators. I have closely explored these dramatists' engagements with, and *of* their audiences to demonstrate the importance of audience participation to early modern drama in general, and have argued for the indispensable contributions of spectators who engage their imaginations and intellects in multiple ways to bring significance to performed acts and performing bodies.

The most forceful and analytically-rich examples of the engaged role early modern dramatists ascribed to their audiences are not to be found in enactments of the body's destruction or desecration, but on the other hand the internal evidence from plays suggests that regardless of the represented subject matter, spectators are continually immersed in a mental (re)construction of what is transpiring onstage. Metatheatrical examples from plays of the early modern era support the notion that spectators are easily capable of "executing the slip in perception from the fictional world to the actual world" (Stephenson, "Meta-enunciative Properties" 118), and in both non-violent and violent dramatic contexts, early modern spectators are encouraged to move between immersion in the drama's fictions and cognizance of the theatrical, performative nature of physically enacted fiction. The dual spectatorial stance is more subtly acknowledged and activated by events surrounding the body's violation than it is



in those scenes and moments that have featured more prominently in criticism, and so I have returned to some of those pivotal audience engagements in this chapter (and to some that have received less attention) to provide a segue into the corporeal territory that has not yet been covered in studies of early modern metatheatre and audience response. Whether wholly immersing themselves in the stage-as-world or casting a critical eye upon how the stage becomes such a world, early modern spectators are seen as vital participants in dramatic representation, and their first-hand perceptual experiences of the stage are no less important in helping to bring forth violent representations than they are to the more explicitly audience-centered examples I have covered in this chapter. In arguing that early modern dramatists and spectators mutually recognized and validated the subjective experience of spectatorship, I have sought to preface a question about dramatized violence which the remainder of my study seeks to address: if performances mobilized important, sometimes powerful psychic engagements with represented acts, what was the nature of responses when spectators were confronted by horrific or visceral bodily violence? If Shakespeare and his peers enjoined his audiences to imaginatively amend the performances they watched, what would be the nature of their participation in a performance of *Titus Andronicus*, for example? In Peele's *The Battle of Alcazar*, or in Beaumont's *The Maid's Tragedy*? In what way did violent plays such as these call upon spectators to collaborate in their corporeal significations, and in what ways might early modern audiences have responded to this call?

## 2 Double Images: Phenomenological Duality in the Early Modern Theatre

“Even when attention is directly called to the stage-as-stage, stage-as-fictional world still remains. In such moments the audience experiences a double image.”

—Bernard Beckerman (1962)

How early modern spectators were encouraged by the plays of their time to see the “double-faceted” (Beckerman, *Theatrical Presentation* 101) nature of the theatrical body’s capabilities is the focus of this chapter. As has been suggested by the previous chapter, a defining characteristic of early modern theatrical technique was its willingness to deal openly with aspects of the theatre experience that cannot be strictly confined within the ambit of the drama’s fictional world: spectators, stages, actors, other plays. These metatheatrical reminders of the non-fictional aspects of performance ask audience members to recognize that their experiences in the theatre are structured by two co-existent realms (the presentational and the representational) that are blended by perception, imagination, and the psyche. As I will show, this phenomenology of spectatorship comes to bear upon spectators’ experiences of the body, especially when the actor/character’s body is pushed to—and past—its conventional limits by way of corporeal violation. Having established that the audience’s mental constructs are crucial contributions to the production of the performance’s meaning, I move this argument forward in the present chapter by defining the double awareness activated by plays as one which offered spectators a potentially empowering vantage point with

respect to theatrical embodiment. Plays like Middleton's *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* (1611), the core play-text I analyze in this chapter, solicit the involvement of the playgoer's perceptive capabilities by underscoring the distinction between the ordinary ontology of the actor's body and the extraordinary qualities of his character's body. Middleton's play exemplifies the means by which early modern dramatists offered their audiences the chance to act not only as collaborative participants in performance, but also as confidant(e)s that could be made privy to the process of theatrical embodiment itself. By calling upon spectators to engage their imaginative and perceptual faculties, these dramatists authorize playgoers to assume a privileged position in relation to the construction of theatrical illusion and its transformations of the body. In short, playgoers are summoned to participate in defining the capabilities—and limits—of theatre itself. This position of privilege is enabled by plays that foster in spectators an awareness of the performing body, and by extension, the performance space, as double(d)—at once *purveyors* of represented fictions and embodiments of fiction itself.

I begin this chapter with a short discussion of stage space and then move into a close reading of *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, which I see as a striking example of the way in which plays of the early modern period seek to attune their spectators to the phenomenology of theatre. Specifically, I argue that through the violation of the body—in this particular case, a corpse—the play dramatizes for its audiences the way theatre can play with body-space relations. The way fictional bodies and the doubly constituted bodies that represent them relate to space and time in the theatre oftentimes promises to provide spectators with an entirely novel experience of embodied spatiality. The decision to analyze space and the body alongside one another stems from my sense

that it seems difficult to develop an argument about violated bodies in the theatre without also attending to the space that surrounds, or, as I argue, brings into being those bodies. While it is certainly true that, as Albert Cook claims, “the body orients space” and “space is perceived from the body outward” (554), space is not merely the *product*, or, as it is in Cook’s phrasing, the (grammatical) object of the body<sup>7</sup>. Indeed, the dialectical partnership between space and the body, a central tenet of important phenomenological works such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962), is one that *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* highlights, as I argue below. Because in the following chapter I focus more exclusively on the relationship between onstage bodies and audience response, I have found it helpful in this chapter to first account for the spaces in which the performing bodies of actors, and the performed bodies of characters, come to signify for the audience.

While in this respect, the present chapter looks forward to Chapter Three, it also draws upon my argument in Chapter One: that early modern dramatists often construct their audiences as collaborators in an imaginative partnership with actors, wherein spectator subjectivity joins together with stage business to produce meanings that are not entirely determined by what is taking place on the stage itself. This partnership involves “the audience’s agency in creating an affective imaginative space through which dramatic performance is realized” (Whitney 7), but it also involves the creation of an imaginative geographical or environmental space. A salient part of the interpretive “space” dramatists enjoin their spectators to establish with actors is the locale in which action occurs. In imagining the “unworthy scaffold” posing as “the

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<sup>7</sup> This reference to Cook’s argument is taken from Weimann’s *Author’s Pen and Actor’s Voice* (see p. 214), but Weimann cites Cook without the same disagreement I voice here.

vasty fields of France,” (*Henry V* Prologue 10, 12) or “fair Verona, where we lay our scene” (*Romeo and Juliet* Prologue 2), spectators help to establish the way theatre space signifies, which is almost always connected to the way performing bodies occupy and move within that space. With this in mind, my discussion of *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* brings into sharp focus the spaces the actor-character’s body inhabits, and the dialectical relationship between these spaces and spectator subjectivity.

The work of Beckerman and others I briefly survey below provides an important conceptual framework to my reading of the play; however, the trajectory of my argument moves beyond simply identifying the presence of, or possibility for, a double image effect in the play’s performance. Building on the concept of the spectator’s double perceptual commitment to both the presentational and representational dimensions of theatrical performance, I argue that *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* does more than merely activate in its audience members a dual vision of the stage. The unusual body-space relations depicted in the play suggest a further consequence of the unique theatrical dynamic Beckerman identifies. They reproduce *within* the fictional world of the play the very same dislocative effects generated by the tension *between* the “stage-as-stage” and the “stage-as-fictional world” (Beckerman, *Shakespeare at the Globe* 66). As I will show, these effects throw into question normative assumptions about embodied subjectivity and the human body’s relationship to space, and they mimic theatre’s inherent potential to do the same. *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* dramatizes in miniature the larger capabilities of the theatrical medium and its bodily transpositions, suggesting “what it is possible to do, theatrically, with what exists” (States 37).

## Laying the Scene: Space and the Presentation/Representation Distinction

When theorizing theatrical space, theatre historians, performance scholars, and drama critics have referred to the presentation/representation distinction in varied ways; however, they have nonetheless agreed that theatre spaces operate on at least two different, but interlaced, levels. Notable among theories of space and theatre are those provided by Patrice Pavis, Anne Ubersfeld, Gay McAuley, and Jean Alter. Although not necessarily isolating theatre's treatment of the body, many of the multiple designations these scholars provide for onstage and offstage space are informed by the sense that theatre space can do two things: it can *present* (e.g. an actor's body, a stage) and *represent* (e.g. a character, a place). Furthermore, scholars have agreed that the essential duality of theatrical performances is a structuring force for spectators, implying that the duality of the actor/character's body is similarly important. In his pioneering semiotic study of theatre, *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts and Analysis* (translated from French in 1998), Patrice Pavis sums up the properties of stage space in a way that closely echoes Beckerman's interpretation of Shakespeare's stage almost twenty years prior. Pavis writes, "because it acts like a sign, space oscillates constantly between tangibly perceptible *signifying* space and the external *signified* space to which the spectator must refer in the abstract in order to enter the fiction (*dramatic* space). This essential ambiguity of the *theatre* space [...] gives the spectator a dual view" (360, emphasis in original). Whether responsible for a "dual view" or a "double vision," the presentation/representation distinction has persisted in scholarship in diverse fields, and has recurred in many approaches to early modern drama. In addition

to Bernard Beckerman, whose “double image” continues to remain a foundational touchstone for my discussion, S.L. Bethell, Anthony Dawson, Henk Gras, Michael Shapiro, and Robert Weimann have influenced my treatment of the way actors’ bodies signify under the presentation/representation duality characterizing Renaissance stage dynamics. Like Beckerman, these scholars have all identified ways in which the drama of the early modern period might generate in spectators a dual consciousness<sup>8</sup>. These wide ranging studies of space and the theatre (from the historical to the semiotic) either explicitly or implicitly characterize onstage space as dynamically doubled, and as therefore offering the spectator a chance to perceive actors as both themselves and/or as a product of the playwright’s imagination.

Weimann’s locus/platea argument has been, and continues to be particularly influential<sup>9</sup>. He argues that stage action can either buttress the fictional world of the play (producing a “locus effect”), or emphasize the authority of performance and the actor (producing a “platea effect”). Rather than methodologically compartmentalizing these theatrical dynamics as Weimann does, I focus on how both the performed picture and the process of performance are layered on top of one another for the audience. This

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<sup>8</sup> Dawson credits William Archer with the first usage of the term “dual consciousness” (Dawson and Yachnin 20), but to my knowledge, Bethell is the first to use the term in a way that substantially informs the subsequent works of Shapiro, Dawson, and Gras. (See Bethell’s *Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition* (1944) and “Shakespeare’s Actors” (1950), and Shapiro’s acknowledgment of his debt to Bethell in *Children of the Revels: The Boy Companies of Shakespeare’s Time and Their Plays*.) Although she doesn’t trace the phrase back to Archer, Erika Lin provides a more extensive, and somewhat different, genealogy of the evolution of “dual consciousness” in writings on theatre (see “Performance Practice and Theatrical Privilege: Rethinking Weimann’s Concepts of *Locus* and *Platea*,” p. 296, footnote 30)

<sup>9</sup> Weimann borrows his terminology from medieval dramaturgy, wherein the locus referred to a scaffold in a circular theatre, or a throne or hut on the pageant stage, and the platea referred to the “place,” a platform-like acting area. When he adapts these terms to the Renaissance stage, Weimann proposes we (more loosely) interpret the acting area closest to the audience (the “downstage”) as a platea-like space, and the space which is at a remove from the audience (the “upstage”) as a locus-like space.

is not to say that Weimann's work in any way denies that presentational and representational aspects of performance overlap; in fact, throughout his writing he intermittently stresses that Shakespearean drama instigates a perpetual "coming to terms with what (dis)continuity there was between the imaginary world-in-the-play and the playing-in-the-world of early modern London" (*Author's Pen* 12). However, his analytical interests lead him away from exploring this dis/continuous layering of presentation and representation as a *simultaneous* juxtaposition, whereas I make this idea of superimposition one of my core focuses. While acknowledging the importance of Weimann's scholarship, and approaches inspired by his, I structure my analysis around a different set of issues that can further illuminate the actor-audience dynamic. Where Weimann engages with ideological issues—whose authority is foregrounded in any given moment or scene, that of the actor or the character? the performer or the text?—I pose a phenomenological question: what perceptual effect is activated by the convergence of actor and character in one body? Of the stage and fictional locale in one space at once? In the next section, I build upon the notion of dynamic engagement between the stage and the spectator established in Chapter One by using an extended close reading of one play to complement the range of playtexts I have already used to better understand "the lived theatrical experience" (Marshall 95) of early modern audiences and their engagements with performatively doubled bodies. Having asserted that a salient component of this experience is the activation of an empowering double vision on the part of spectators, I now turn to Middleton's *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* to corroborate my claims.



“I Am Not Here”: Seeing and Being Double in Middleton’s *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy*

Among the critics who use the drama of the period to flesh out the limited picture of audiences given to us by first hand spectator accounts, a good deal focus primarily or exclusively on Shakespeare’s plays<sup>10</sup>. The remainder of this chapter probes internal evidence from a less often studied play with the aim of complementing the excellent work of scholars who focus first and foremost upon Shakespeare’s plays and their audiences. *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy*, usually now attributed to Thomas Middleton, provides a concrete instantiation of what I have identified is the insistent phenomenological duality of the early modern stage. Although the text features moments of self-reflexivity where actors are given the opportunity to remind audiences they are watching a play, Middleton also moves beyond the usual world-as-a-stage/stage-as-the-world brand of early modern metatheatricity. As is characteristic of contemporaneous plays, through the mouths of secondary characters Bellarius and Leonela, *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* uses the language of performance (“actor,” “play”) to call attention to the fact that “every show of illusion is a double-faceted presentation. The actor is himself and simultaneously ‘another’” (Beckerman, *Theatrical Presentation* 101). Bellarius and Leonela begin to see themselves as actors and spectators in a “play” of their own making (in a plan designed to test the Wife’s fidelity to Anselmus). Their use of performance rhetoric—as in Bellarius’s comment, “I am an Actor too, and neuer thought on’t” (2125)—metatheatrically acknowledges

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<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Jean Howard, *Shakespeare’s Art of Orchestration: Stage Technique and Audience Response* (1984); Ralph Berry, *Shakespeare and the Awareness of the Audience* (1985); Michael Mooney, *Shakespeare’s Dramatic Transactions* (1990), Thomas Cartelli, *Marlowe, Shakespeare, and the Theatrical Experience* (1991); and Michael Shurgot, *Stages of Play: Shakespeare’s Theatrical Energies in Elizabethan Performance* (1998).

that the actors and the stage space they move within are representational vehicles, encouraging spectators to remain aware of the actor/character's dual embodiment. As I have suggested, this bifold awareness on the part of the audience members contributes not to a stable privileging of either the act of performance or the product of representation, but produces a privilege nonetheless: spectators are encouraged, indeed authorized by the playwright and the players, to see double, and to thereby occupy a position of authority with respect to stage phenomena. With audience focus being directed to elements within *and* outside the dramatist's fiction, the spectator is enabled, empowered even, by his or her double vision.

However, the play is self-reflexive about its own status as theatrical performance in typical as well as markedly unusual ways, expanding the repertoire of metatheatrical devices commonly shared among plays of its time. In exploring these margins of metatheatricality, I read Middleton's depiction of his heroine's ghost, on which I center my analysis, as a significant departure from depictions of ghosts in other plays (famously, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Richard III*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *The Changeling*). While ghostly apparitions are common in both the Shakespearean canon and in the work of Shakespeare's contemporaries, it is rare for a ghost to occupy the same stage space as its corpse. In the later chapters of *Hamlet in Purgatory* (2001), Stephen Greenblatt provides an incisive analysis of when, where, and how "ghosts turn up onstage" (Greenblatt 151) in Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre, focusing largely on Shakespeare's plays, but establishing the wide variety of ways ghosts or ghost-like entities can make their presence felt in drama. On the Renaissance stage, "ghosts make frequent appearances" (152) Greenblatt writes, and yet none of the

examples Greenblatt cites from either Shakespeare or other dramatists feature the temporally simultaneous depiction of a ghost and its former bodily form. This rare pairing occurs in Philip Massinger's *The Duke of Milan* (1623), where a female corpse is rejuvenated with cosmetics so as to appear lifelike (as is the case with Middleton's play); however, the simultaneity in Massinger's play is not spatial, as it is in Middleton's. While both Middleton and Massinger keep their female heroines' corpses artificially "alive" and present in the narrative, only Middleton's play requires the ghost to accompany its body. By appearing onstage alongside her corporeal remainders, the ghost of the Lady in *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* does what most other ghosts on the early modern stage do not. In addition, even when her ghost appears alone onstage, the Lady-as-ghost maintains an intense, remarkably perplexing bond with her corpse, a connection which arises in part from the post-mortem violation of her body. These two aspects of the play, I will argue, form the nexus of Middleton's invocation of the presentation/representation distinction evoked by more conventional forms of metatheatre.

Although Middleton revitalizes the potential for ghosts to participate in self-conscious theatre by unconventionally depicting the ghost/corpse coupling, ghosts in drama—and not just early modern ones—harbour the intrinsic capability to speak to/about elements of theatricality in a number of ways. In his analysis of Old Hamlet's ghost, Samuel Weber associates ghosts with theatre by way of a dynamic which resembles that between actor and audience: "if a ghost is compelled to appear and to return to the same place, that is also because it requires a particular audience [...] the haunts of ghosts inevitably have a theatrical quality" (182). Although in *The Spanish*

*Tragedy*, the ghost of Andrea does not explicitly rely upon an audience, Kyd endows Andrea's ghost with a theatrical quality nonetheless. In an interesting reversal of the requirement Weber identifies, the ghost of Andrea remains onstage as an auditor throughout the duration of the play, becoming a metatheatrical synecdoche for Kyd's offstage audience. Itself connected to the concept of illusion, a ghost can also invite reflection upon how drama's illusions are produced from the theatre's material resources, a reflection I argue involves registering the difference between presented and represented orders of the theatrical experience. A ghost's presence may spark interest in the same constellation of ideas or problems that characterize the relationship between actor and character, or between stage space and imagined place—namely, the likeness between the material and the immaterial, the tangibly present(ed) and the illusory. When Horatio, for example, apprehends the ghost of Hamlet's dead father, he struggles to understand the relationship between the form he sees before him, and the dead body it resembles but cannot be: "What art thou that usurp'st this time of night, / Together with that fair and warlike form / In which the majesty of buried Denmark / Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak!" (1.1.46-49)<sup>11</sup>. Horatio charges the ghost to explain itself, because it looks like what it is not, or does not look like that which it is, producing a troubling indistinction not unlike the instability characterizing both the actor playing the ghost and the playing space standing in for Denmark<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> As Greenblatt argues, witnesses of Hamlet's father's apparition know that what they see is not the actual dead body of the King reanimated by supernatural energy. Greenblatt hypothesizes that they perceive what early modern demonographer Pierre le Loyer (1550-1634) calls a "phantasmal body." Loyer insists that souls cannot re-occupy and bring to life the body, but they can appear in a phantasmal body to the viewer; men who believe the body is truly (re)materializing are deceived (see Greenblatt 212).

<sup>12</sup> There is a linguistically similar moment in *Julius Caesar* (4.2.329), which I discuss below. As if to pre-emptively answer the question of identity, the ghost of Andrea in *The Spanish Tragedy* provides at

If it is the case that a ghost on the page engages these slippery indeterminacies for the reader, who is prompted by the way in which characters observing ghosts interrogate the ontological status of what they see, then a ghost in performance injects the same interrogation with even more force. If a ghost forces the question “what art thou?” for *characters* who are witness to its visual presence (and by extension, for the reader who encounters this presence in reported, textual form) then so too does the actor playing the ghost invite serious contemplation of the very same problem. Stanton Garner writes that “theater ‘stages,’ ‘puts into play’ variables and issues that have comprised the special province of phenomenological inquiry from its inception: perception and the constitution of meaning, objects and their appearances, subjectivity and otherness, presence and absence, body and world” (*Bodied Spaces* 3). It is precisely these phenomenological concerns that are highlighted in the way ghosts take shape both in the fictional world of plays and in their stage incarnations. Or, put differently, adopting the phenomenological line of inquiry allows us to illuminate the way ghost characters can function metatheatrically, and can invite reflection upon the presentational and representational registers of performance. The structuring concepts of phenomenology enable us to explore how in performance, “what art thou?” is likely to propose itself not just as a question to be asked of the ghost, but of the actor/character too.

This is a question intimately linked to human perception, and the way objects present themselves to the human sensorium as it makes sense of the phenomenal world.

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the beginning of the play an eighty-five line narrative of his past life, his journey through the underworld, and his return to the court of Spain (1.1.1-85). The issue of a ghost’s relationship to the material world, which has the potential to provoke metatheatrical reflection upon the ontology of the actor/character’s body, may have provided a precedent for similar explorations in subsequent revenge tragedies (like *Hamlet*) that take Kyd’s play as a foundational model.

When Horatio relegates Old Hamlet's ghost to the realm of "fantasy" (1.1.21), he reminds us of the role of human imagination in "shaping fantasies" (the language used by Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), whether these fantasies are apparitions, or actors who present themselves as such onstage. Shakespeare's use of the same word in these different contexts suggests that the mental processes Theseus argues can transform a bush into a bear, or a poor player into the character he attempts to embody, are also those that can produce the impression of a fantastical spectre in Horatio's world<sup>13</sup>. Moreover, as Theseus implies, these are transformative powers belonging not just to Shakespearean characters but to their audiences (the claim I make in Chapter One). Although the mind's capability to perceptually shape objects and their environments is celebrated to a certain degree by Theseus, and as I have argued, by Shakespeare, it is also seen to be potentially dangerous and misleading, the province of madmen and frenzied poets. The darker side of "shaping fantasies" is what early modern drama's ghosts unearth when they present themselves to characters, and to spectators. When the boundary between that which is fantasized and that which is not becomes blurry, as it does with the spectral encounter and as it does in the theatre, "what are thou?" is posed with immediate and complex urgency: "Ha! Who comes here? / I think it is the weakness of mine eyes / That shapes this monstrous apparition [...] Art thou any thing? [...] Speak to me what thou art," implores Brutus to the "evil

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<sup>13</sup> Although Horatio's initial assessment of the ghost as only a "fantasy" of the other guards is replaced by his true belief (based on the "sensible and true avouch" of his eyes), Shakespeare has already made clear that the possibility of ghosts as mere fantasy is one available viewpoint on the matter. With regard to my point here, it matters little whether the ghost is found to be a genuine apparition; Shakespeare establishes through Horatio's initial disbelief the capacity for ghosts to be psychological projections of the mind. Lady Macbeth also professes the view that ghostly apparitions can be "a false creation / Proceeding from the heat oppressèd brain" (2.1.38-39) when she compares the dagger Macbeth hallucinates to Banquo's ghost.

spirit” that refuses to identify itself as Caesar’s ghost (*Julius Caesar* 4.2.326-32). In these moments, a fictional character’s confrontation with the ontological indeterminacy of Old Hamlet’s ghost, Caesar’s ghost, and others of their kind, is also the spectator’s opportunity for reflection upon the phenomenology of theatre and the double status of performing bodies and their stage environments. Theatrical representations ask the human imagination to participate in defining theatre’s objects and events by translating what is presented into what is represented. By probing the relationship between how and what we see, the ghost encounter in drama persuades audiences to take note of how theatrical translations involve the spectator’s perception and interpretation—a process which finds its ghostly analogue within the play itself.

Even if the ghost does not inspire its fictional witnesses (characters) to grapple with its ontological identity, it may still inspire in performance reflection upon some of the phenomenological questions Garner cites—namely, the relationship between objects and their appearances, between the actor and the actor-as-ghost. Stage directions in *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy*, for example, tell us at the first appearance of the Lady’s ghost that “Rich Robinson” (as he is named in the text) enters as the Lady (1928-29), meaning that in performance a young male actor presents himself onstage and represents a ghost resembling a female body<sup>14</sup>. In this moment, and in the other scenes where Robinson presumably also acted the part of the living Lady, spectators are brought face to face with the presence of a physical body that introduces itself as

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<sup>14</sup> In the introduction to the Malone Society reprint of the play (the edition I cite throughout), Greg attributes the stage direction at line 1928, and other stage directions similarly inserted in a different hand than the author’s, to a “prompter or playhouse corrector” (Greg x) who “added notes necessarily originating in the playhouse” (viii). From these we can reasonably infer, as Greg does, that it was Richard Robinson, a young actor in Shakespeare’s company who played the role of the Lady. Robinson’s talent at playing female parts was remarkable in his day, according at least to Jonson, whose *The Devil is an Ass* (1616) praises “Dick Robinson” for his ingenious ability to impersonate women.

radically other than what it is. If the transvestite convention calls attention to the friction between the form the actor's biological body presents and the form it assumes, so too does the performance of the ghost, in which the material actorly body butts up against the ostensibly immaterial ghostly form. Ghosts "raise problems of definition" (S. Wells 50) in their indeterminate ontological status, and so do actors in their actor/character blend, especially when there exist perceivable differences between the actor's and the character's physicalities. When actors haunt the stage as ghosts, in the contrast between the physicality of the body and the (represented) ephemerality of the ghost, the performance signals, in a self-conscious way, its reliance on the spectator's perceptual shaping of the theatrical event. Ghosts, spectators are reminded, can be sculpted from the same mental resources that give shape to actorly impersonations. By virtue of its intense link to the theatre's negotiations between the actual and the virtual, a staged ghost harbours the intrinsic potential to serve as a metatheatrical device, one which affords spectators the opportunity to ruminate upon their own involvement in shaping theatre's fantasies.

In *Ghosts: Death's Double and the Phenomena of Theatre* (2006), Alice Rayner notes the ghost's close connection to "theatre and the issue of the double," writing,

In theatre since the time of Plato and Aristotle, the double has been connected to discussions of mimesis and imitation: What is original or authentic, what is real, what is false? What is the image, what is the real 'thing'? Theatre has fostered that model of the double through its skill in creating illusions. Indeed the skill in conjuring the illusions of ghosts has long served to equate ghosts with illusion and illusion with the stage. (x)



Greenblatt implies something similar in his reflection upon Shakespeare's use of ghosts: "what there is again and again in Shakespeare, far more than in any of his contemporaries, is a sense that ghosts, real or imagined, are good theater—indeed that they are good for thinking about theater's capacity to fashion realities, to call realities into question" (200). Yet if "Shakespeare seems to have staged ghosts...in a spirit of self-conscious theatricality" (195), he is not alone in doing so. Having established what I take to be the metatheatrical energy of conventional hauntings in Renaissance plays, I now wish to turn to Middleton's expansion of the boundaries of that convention. In *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, Middleton capitalizes upon the ghost's intrinsic metatheatrical energies and amplifies them by pairing a ghost with her corpse, extending the metatheatrical resonances of this unusual relationship to the Lady's interactions with other characters in the play as well.

Because Middleton unconventionally depicts the Lady's ghost with her corpse he is able to simulate and explore in the play the phenomenon of being a divided persona (two entities instead of one) or being in two places at once, tapping into what Rayner identifies as a historically persistent triangulation between theatre/theatricality, ghosts, and doubles. Before explaining the metatheatrical significance of Middleton's choice, I need to differentiate between the kind of "doubling" that I will refer to in *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* and the kind that occurs when one actor plays two parts, for these two scenarios necessitate almost opposite theatrical practices. Until the final scenes of the play the Lady's ghost is absent when her corpse is in view onstage, and vice versa, but their culminating reunion makes it impossible for the same actor to play both corpse and ghost throughout the play's performance. Greg surmises that "the point

of the note at ll.1928-9 (“*Enter Ladye Rich Robinson*”) seems to be that the spirit of the Lady was to be played by the same actor as the lady herself, the corpse being presumably represented by a lay figure” (x). The particulars of staging raised by Greg’s hypothesis is an issue to be discussed in more detail further on, but the point I would like to stress at present is that *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* in a sense reverses the traditional meaning of doubling as typically used in discussions of theatrical practice. If it is the case that the corpse is acted by a human being and not a dummy, which is a possibility that cannot be ruled out, despite Greg’s supposition, then here two actors must play what is essentially only one character, the Lady. When I refer to “doubling” in my analysis I am referring to the splitting of the Lady’s character into ghost and corpse, or to aspects of the play that relate more generally to the themes of doubleness and duality. Despite the potential for confusion, I retain this concept of doubling because it emerges so powerfully within the play, and because it metatheatrically gestures towards the doubleness of stage representation (as comprised of elements that both present themselves and represent others) and the duality of possible responses to such representations.

My reading of *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* uses the concepts of spatial duality and the distinction between performance and representation to argue that the play both activates and analogizes a spectatorial double vision. When I invoke the concept of “analogy” I refer to the way in which this double vision—which I have proposed is fundamental to the early modern spectator’s theatrical experience—is modeled *within* the confines of the text itself. The simultaneous presence in the narrative of a ghost and its corpse (the remainders of the unnamed “Lady”) allows for a range of effects within

the play that simulate, or fictionally reproduce, the audience's perceptually divided attention. For example, the way the Lady perceives and refers to herself (both her spirit and her body) after she is dead, and the way others respond to her spirit generate the impression that she is at once one entity and yet two, both alive and dead; this impression that she is singular and yet doubled analogizes the paradoxical status of the actor playing her ghost (and, if Greg is wrong, the actor who perhaps plays her corpse), and the possible audience responses to this alive-but-dead actor/character dichotomy. The Lady's perplexing doubleness calls attention to the presentation/representation aspect of theatricality, and what the text portrays as her perceptual fracture within the fictional world operates as a metatheatrical device in performance.

As I will show, *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* sets itself apart from other plays that engage the metatheatricality of ghosts not just by keeping its ghost's corpse in the picture, but by problematizing the connection between the ghost and its corporeal remains. The dramaturgical norm, it seems, is to clearly segregate the ghostly figure from the body it resembles and *once* was; Richmond, for example, says of his ghostly dreams "methought their *souls* whose *bodies* Richard murder'd / Came to my tent" (*Richard III* 5.5.184, emphasis added). To a degree, Middleton's play adheres to this convention in its division of the Lady into a soul and a body that seem to exist autonomously from each other in certain moments in the text, as in the Tyrant's reaction to the Lady's corpse: "Since thy life has left me / ile claspe the bodie for the spirrit that dwelt in't" (1851-52). An early interaction between Govianus and the living Lady articulates a similar viewpoint. Imprisoned with Govianus, the Lady contemplates death in order to avoid being "ceazd vpon / and borne w<sup>th</sup> violence to the tyrants bedd,"

her body “there forc’st vnto the lust of all his daies” (1279-81). Both she and Govianus—who responds to her request with, “hast thow no waye to scape em, but in sowle?” (1266)—plan her suicide under the impression that the soul definitively leaves the body behind when the body expires. Even the Tyrant, who desperately attempts to reinvigorate the Lady’s corpse with cosmetic artistry realizes the futility of his pursuits; in trying to artificially “force” the “lyving fire” back into her pale, cold, deathlike body (2335, 2325) he can only momentarily convince himself that the corpse has regained something like an animating spirit (2342). In this respect, although the play’s choice to have the Lady’s “bodie” appear alongside its “spirrit” in the final scene is unusual in terms of staging, the text chooses in places to participate in a more conventional body/soul separation in the way living characters view dead bodies and the afterlives of their spirits.

However, the play also pushes the boundaries of the convention it partially heeds by connecting the Lady’s consciousness in its spirit form to that which the spirit ought to have ostensibly left behind. Middleton attaches his Lady’s ghost to its corpse via a psychic umbilical cord which causes the Lady at times to refer in the first person to herself the ghost *and* herself the body. This residual attachment—the refusal to let the body go—seems to illustrate the spiritual ramifications of the Tyrant’s bodysnatching and necrophilia, in and of itself a violation of the body’s right to “sleep in the graue” after its funeral (2361). While the play seems to partially participate in the conventional body/spirit division, it does so in order to explore the consequences of transgressing the ethical and religious practices associated with that norm. Indeed, Govianus puts a name to the postmortem violation of the body upon which the play

focuses when early on he threatens Helvetius (the Lady's father) with a pistol for siding with the Tyrant: "o hadst thou bin any thing beside her father / I'de made a *fearfull separation* on thee, / I would haue sent thy sowle to a darker prison / then any made of claye, and thy dead bodie / as a token to the lustfull kinge thy master" (754-58, emphasis added)<sup>15</sup>. Beyond simply the fear of death and hell (the "darker prison"), Govianus's statement draws its power from the loathsome possibility that the sanctity of one's corpse might be disrespected, resulting in a body/spirit division that is to be feared, not only because the spirit has gone to hell but because the body has been denied a proper resting place. His hypothetical threat chillingly anticipates the Lady's forthcoming "fearfull separation," which is catalyzed by the fact that the Tyrant exhumes her dead body and retains it as a fetishized love object, leaving her "sowle" deeply unsettled. In order to stress the egregiousness of the Tyrant's transgression, Middleton makes the Lady's fearful separation quite literal; her spirit does not entirely part with its "claye" prison (its bodily container) but remains half-tethered to her body, and she expresses herself as though she suffers from a disturbed split consciousness. In performance, the Lady's split sense of self has the potential to register the violation of religious and ethical mores even more powerfully than does her split persona in the play's text. Onstage, the Lady's internalization of her violation becomes powerfully evidenced in visual, embodied form by the two aspects of her fractured identity (ghost and corpse) that physically appear before the audience—a palpably present reminder of

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<sup>15</sup> The Malone Society edition (the text cited here and throughout) indicates that this passage has been marked for omission in the original manuscript. Anne Lancashire's edition of the play (1978) includes Govianus's speech, and Julia Briggs prints both the uncut and cut versions alongside each other (in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, 2007).

the subjective divisiveness the Lady is experiencing and expressing through her dialogue.

By having the Lady's character self-identify as both spirit and corpse, both of which coexist simultaneously in the drama, Middleton is able to play with the relationship between self, body, and space, with particular metatheatrical resonance. This theatrically self-conscious process of playing mimetically aligns itself with the disjunctive aspects of a spectator's perceptual experience of the theatre. More specifically, Middleton's fictional experimentation with the corporeal and spatial components of perception is able to suggest an affinity between what the divided Lady experiences in relation to her two incarnations and what the spectator is enjoined to experience: a frame of mind that perceives a double image instead of a singular one. Where the Lady's doubled image is her *self*-image, which flickers between self-identifying as her spirit and/or as her corpse, the spectator's is his or her bisected view of the stage, oscillating between the dual registers of presentation and representation. This is not to say that those present in Middleton's audience are necessarily made to be consciously aware of themselves *as* spectators mediating between the two poles of fiction and actuality (although this is certainly a possibility), but rather that through the character of the Lady the drama performs a kind of double awareness centered upon two bodies that are conceptually also one, enacting a process of perceived corporeal conflation that echoes the way spectators cognitively blend the actor/character's body<sup>16</sup>. This process does not depend upon whether spectators are cognizant of their mental

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<sup>16</sup> For more on cognitive blending as a constituent part of the theatrical experience, see Chapter Two of Bruce McConachie's *Engaging Audiences: A Cognitive Approach to Spectating in the Theatre* (2008). I am indebted to McConachie's work for introducing me to the term "cognitive blending," which is a core concept in cognitive studies.

activity or not at any given point in the play; the presentation/representation component of theatrical performance guarantees that spectators will engage on some level (consciously or unconsciously) in the process of fusing and unfusing the actor's presented body with the character's represented body. The tension between the Lady's one, live human form, and her two dead forms, and between the actor's one underlying physical form and his two embodied personas (actor and character) initiates a conflict between the concepts of *twoness* and *oneness* as they relate to embodiment. This fundamental conceptual tension links what is occurring onstage in the drama with what is transpiring offstage in the audience's cognitive engagement with the stage, regardless of where spectators fall on the spectrum of what has traditionally been termed suspension of disbelief—that is, regardless of how much they are invested in the story and its characters, or, conversely, in the process of theatre bringing to life such fictions.

In what follows, I employ a phenomenological approach to argue several linked claims. I isolate moments in the text that indicate how Middleton's treatment of the Lady's relationship to space and to her own body produces within the drama an effect of split subjectivity. I continue to argue that this fictional fracture mimics, and further encourages, the bifold spectator subjectivity encapsulated by Beckerman's "double image" statement. I do so by way of analyzing how the Lady's self-reflexivity, which is voiced by her ghost and thus seems to emanate from the location in which that ghost appears, is also intensively mediated by and expressed in relationship to her body, when it is elsewhere. It is my contention that the play asks us to be attentive to the way subjectivity is attached to the body, and it does so by insisting upon the strangeness of the Lady's partially detached subjectivity; she still perceives herself as a subject with a

body after that body is long deceased. For this reason, it matters little that the Lady is dead and thus not exactly the analogue of those who watch the play; without simply being the spectator's double, the Lady exhibits a twofold perception of body and space that runs parallel to the perceptions her audience members are encouraged to adopt.

As if to indicate how the living might internalize and manifest the Lady's mentality, the play portrays Govianus as being in sync, if only temporarily, with her radical view of body-space relations. Reflecting the Lady's unconventional state of mind, Govianus greets the Lady's adorned corpse in the Tyrant's chambers by noting, "tis straunge to me / to see *thee* here at Courte, and gon from hence" (2274-75, emphasis added). What is so compelling about Govianus's choice of words is not so much that he divides the Lady's body (at court) from her spirit (which he encountered away from court, emerging from her tomb), but that he directly addresses both the body in front of him and the spirit which should be absent in one breath. The word "thee" acts zeugmatically, uttered only once by its speaker but governing both parts of the sentence ("here at Courte" and "gon from hence"), and thus suggesting the addressee referred to in "thee" is differently manifest in two places but yet wholly present to Govianus. He speaks to her body in a manner that implies he sees in this very moment not just the Lady's corpse in front of him, but her spirit as well, and the grammatical logic of his speech paradoxically positions the Lady as simultaneously here and gone. This strangely doubled but singular presence is characteristic of the way the Lady perceives her ghostly and bodily selves. When we take note of this strangeness, the metatheatrical effect comes into full view: bodies in the theatre—that is actors onstage impersonating other selves, signifying both as one and two—present themselves to their



witnesses in a way that is strange indeed, providing opportunities for spectators to experience the perceptual divide dramatized in the Lady's own situation.

In arguing for this particular metatheatrical effect, I am primarily using *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* as a detailed complement to what I have already argued in more general terms: that early modern plays tend to promote spectatorial double vision. I have set up the play as offering internal evidence for my characterization of the Renaissance stage and its audiences as participants in double-sided theatrical experiences, but I also see the need to push the argument further. In retrieving the more nuanced aspects of the Lady's dramatization—how Middleton bends the ghost figure's metatheatrical potential to see it from a new angle—I am proposing some further consequences of what has already been said about spectatorial double vision. I devote the remainder of this chapter to exploring how Middleton's play itself “ghosts” the theatre's potential to overturn the way phenomena—specifically, bodies in space—customarily take shape for the perceiving human subject. Through this action of “ghosting,” the play reveals what is made possible by a performance medium that attunes spectators to the partnership between presentation and representation. Offering a metatheatrical awareness of the stage's bodily manipulations, the play enables a theatrically privileged subject position for its spectators to occupy. Although sometimes departing from typical metatheatrical devices, *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* is an exemplar of the way in which plays both expect and encourage audiences to become epistemologically empowered. This dynamic process of epistemological empowerment, I argue, involves bringing spectators closer to “the activity of theatre *making itself* out of its essential ingredients: speech, sound, movement, scenery, text”

(States 1, emphasis in original). What I ultimately propose is more than just the activation of the spectator's dual consciousness of the actual playing space juxtaposed against the fictional, represented locale. As States emphasizes in his phenomenological approach to analyzing theatre and its effects, being aware of the difference, or gap, between "pretense and pretender" (States 20) is not quite the same as possessing an awareness of how the pretense (of characters and fictional spaces) *is made* in the theatre. Contained within the dual consciousness *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* both simulates and activates is a suggestion regarding the process of rendering empirical phenomena into dramatic representations. What can happen inside the theatrical arena, the play suggests, is a marked change in the relationship between bodies and space. This change occurs not just in the fictional realm of alternate orders of reality—that is, in a Denmark where an apparition can appear "in the same figure like the king that's dead" (*Hamlet* 1.1.39), or in a Scotland where buried men can "rise again / With twenty mortal murders on their crowns" (*Macbeth* 3.4.79-80). These represented realities do not merely swallow the performance space whole; they compete with that space, the materiality of which demands also at times to be recognized in its own right, as a stage, as an actor. The friction produced by these competing significations is what Middleton's ghost illuminates for its viewers.

Although Shakespeare's plays often appear in the work of critics like Alice Rayner, Simon Shepherd, Bert O. States, and Samuel Weber, who have drawn upon phenomenology in analyzing theatre space and the body, the body-space relations in Middleton's play also lend themselves particularly well to the issues at stake in these types of critical discussions. Particularly important to my focus is spatial embodiment

in the theatre, and the (not necessarily theatrical) interconnectedness of space and “being” as we perceive it, the latter of which I establish in terms similar to those Merleau-Ponty uses in his theory of perception. The driving logic behind phenomenological methodologies affirms what Middleton’s play had already suggested centuries prior: that one way to understand human existence is in terms of a structural matrix comprised of space, the body, and perception. Merleau-Ponty, for example, proposes that the human subject’s consciousness of his or her body is defined by a corporeal schema, within which the individual’s systematic, bodily relationship to space is key<sup>17</sup>. In discussing the concept of a corporeal schema, Merleau-Ponty emphasizes how space produces the body, and vice versa, creating a chiasmatic and interdynamic relationship which influences how the subject perceives and exists in the world. His work, therefore, is important to my argument that the properties of theatrical space can influence the spectator’s perception of the bodies that occupy that space.

As Alphonso Lingis (Merleau-Ponty’s translator) explains, a corporeal schema “gives the body to itself as an ‘I can,’ as a system of powers organized according to transposable schemes for movement” (*The Visible and the Invisible* liv). In short, the subject understands its body in terms of a collection of possible movements in space that link the body to the world around it. Merleau-Ponty himself states the matter more forcefully: “To be a body, is to be tied to a certain world...our body is not primarily in space: it is of it” (*Phenomenology of Perception* 148). In Merleau-Ponty’s view, the

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<sup>17</sup> The concept of a body schema or body image is not unique to Merleau-Ponty. Henry Head (1861-1940) and Paul Schilder (1886-1940) are among the early pioneers of the term, and scholars in the fields of psychoanalysis and phenomenology have continued since the early twentieth century to develop the concept in significant ways. In *Volatile Bodies: Toward A Corporeal Feminism* (1994), Elizabeth Grosz provides a useful chapter-length discussion of the genealogy of the corporeal schema in the work of Head, Schilder, Freud, and others. (See Chapter Three, “Body Images: Neurophysiology and Corporeal Mappings.”)

body is structured, indeed created in a sense, by a spatial matrix that defines our capabilities for action in any given environment. Simon Shepherd similarly asserts that “a sense of where and how we are in space plays a part in shaping our identity. As space is reshaped, the relationship to it changes—there are new points of focus, different hierarchies between spatial axes and domains, a newly positioned centre” (63). What Shepherd alludes to, and Merleau-Ponty makes explicit, is the fact that these ever-shifting spatial domains exist in relation to a body. There can be no human understanding of space without a body to anchor that understanding, and, conversely, without space, there can be no body, and no body image. In short, human subjectivity owes something of its sense of being to its spatio-corporeal location at any given time. It therefore seems appropriate to ask what might happen to a spectator’s impression of body-space relations when he or she is confronted by a spatial domain—the theatrical stage—that performs double duty as site where the presentational and the representational merge. While this dual quality of theatre space might not necessarily affect the personal corporeal schemas of spectators (the way they perceive their own bodies), it most certainly affects the audience’s understanding of how other bodies (as represented by the actors onstage) can move and exist in space for the duration of the play. I propose that, just as Middleton’s *Lady* enacts the seeming paradoxes of seeing and being in two places at once, the performance of her play harbours the potential to make the paradoxical possible: to radically reorganize, through the body’s relationship to space, what the audience may take for granted as the body’s “I can.”

How, then, can we first define what corporeal-spatial relationships might constitute the “I can” of everyday life? Despite the fact that an individual’s body-space

positioning is constantly in flux (as Shepherd points out), I would argue that it is possible to define a set of spatial-corporeal relationships which are thought to be axiomatic—that is, what might be called the ground rules for human ontology “as we know it” from everyday, lived experience. These rules comprise what I will call an ontological “schema,” which I define as a collection of body-space permutations that are thought to be physically possible or impossible according to the governing logic of the schema. I do not wish, however, to universalize or transhistoricize “*the human subject*” and his or her ontological schema. A historically and contextually specific starting point, then, might be to consider what kind of ontological schema governs the use of early modern stage space and the performing bodies that occupy this space. I would like to suggest that early modern theatrical conventions produce, or adhere to, a spatial logic which defines itself in opposition to the schema(s) that prevail outside fictional worlds and performance spaces. How else could Romeo and company “*march about the stage*” (1.4. s.d.)<sup>18</sup> and bring the Capulet ball to them, instead of marching to it?

Alan Dessen uses this example (along with many others) to illustrate the flexibility of Elizabethan stage space; he notes that “rather than exiting (thereby signaling a change in locale),” Romeo and the masque attendees stay onstage while “‘*Servingsmen come forth with napkins*’ (thereby establishing the new locale as the Capulet house)” (*Elizabethan Stage Conventions* 86). One of Dessen’s claims earlier in the book is that Elizabethan dramatic conventions like these require the participation of audience members who “agree” to meet under certain terms (10-11, 18); as the fluid staging of the Capulet ball suggests, part of this audience contract includes the

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<sup>18</sup> As Dessen explains, the original text does not provide a scene division here.

acceptance of a specifically theatrical use of space. To be visibly present on the Renaissance stage entailed occupying a space which may not have been sharply delimited, explicitly designated, or singular at every point in time: spaces bleed into one another, places are vaguely designated, and two different locales can be simultaneously staged, as in Kent's and Edgar's concurrent occupation of two disparate fictional spaces on one stage in *King Lear*. (2.2.-2.4). As Kent sleeps onstage, Edgar enters, makes a speech, and then exits. The two men are clearly not in the same fictional place even though they share the stage for the duration of the scene. As this scene exemplifies, the flexibility of space and locale characteristic of early modern stage conventions generates a spatial schema which departs from the non-theatrical sense of what it means—that is, the conditions that are necessary—to be somewhere. This different, more flexible body-space matrix is one that *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* explicitly highlights, as the Lady's seeming ability to be simultaneously present but partly absent distinctly echoes the theatrical spatial conventions the stage requires, or at least asks, its audience members to accept. Like so many other plays of its time, *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* establishes a fictional world whose representation in the theatre depends upon a treatment of space and bodies unlike the possibilities of non-dramatic life in at least one significant way. What early moderns understood as the ontological possibilities of the world as defined by the dramatist's imagination and those belonging to the spectator's life are different, because the concept of convention *itself* implies a difference between the two. Convention, by definition, involves an agreement between spectators and actors about a specific mode of representation, a set of standards that belong primarily to the theatre. The mere need for such an agreement indicates that the

theatrical spatial schema, and the possibilities for bodily movement within it, differs in a significant way from the non-theatrical schema that Renaissance audience members must abandon when they “agree to meet” as participants in the play’s performance. The representational conventions that define the spatial logic of the theatre in and of themselves indicate the existence of a norm involving the movement and capabilities of bodies in space—whatever its specific qualities may be—from which the theatre departs.

“Current debates about the historicity of space” have stressed that pre-modern senses of space and place are “subtly different from our own” (Giles 107), suggesting the need to consider how early moderns might have differently understood the relationship between body and space that prevailed in everyday life outside the theatre. Yet research in this area has also suggested that “during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the idea that an individual occupied a fixed point in the cosmos was replaced by an understanding that the individual’s centre of perception was wherever he, or she, stood” (Giles 107), and studies on human spatiality today have continued to affirm “that self and place are interrelated [and] that the living-lived body is the central mediating phenomenon between them” (Schatzki 698). Despite the many subtle—and perhaps not so subtle—ways that early modern bodily sensibilities differ from those of subsequent eras, one commonality seems to hold: subjectivity (or what Giles calls “the individual’s centre of perception”) is typically experienced as being tethered to the body, which itself occupies one concrete place or space in time<sup>19</sup>. Both the medieval and the

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<sup>19</sup> Further reading on the way corporeality was experienced in the early modern period could encompass a vast array of scholarly works depending on how one defines the parameters of such an inquiry. Aside from the studies revolving around early modern anatomy cited at the end of this dissertation, other entrypoints into the topic might be the work of Gail Kern Paster on the humoral body, Elizabeth Harvey’s

Renaissance senses of embodied spatiality seem to imply that under normal circumstances an individual's body—and therefore his or her perception of the world—must be rooted in a singular location. In his influential *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (1997), Edward Casey writes, “whatever is true for space and time, this much is true for place: we are immersed in it and could not do without it. To be at all—to exist in any way—is to be somewhere, and to be somewhere is to be in some kind of place” (ix). Of particular note in Casey's assertion is the singularity of “somewhere” and “some kind of place”; unlike what Middleton renders possible within *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, non-theatrical understandings of being-in-the-world, whether early modern or modern, do not allow for the self to simultaneously occupy more than one “somewhere.”

Before continuing to explore how the body's corporeal schema might change when spectators enter the distinctive spatiality of the theatre, it seems appropriate to briefly deal with some potential critiques of the phenomenological angle I am pursuing in the present discussion. In identifying a contrast between theatrical and non-theatrical experiences of space and the body in the early modern period, I am attending to “the world as it appears or discloses itself to the perceiving subject (the phenomenal world)” (Garner *Bodied Spaces* 2). By placing the self-as-perceiver at the core of its concerns, phenomenology has risked or promoted, at least in the eyes of its detractors, an essentialist view of its topic. As Garner notes, Elin Diamond and Bertold Brecht are among notable critics who see the specific, discursive or material constitution(s) of the historical subject becoming marginalized by phenomenology's focus on the perceiving

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anthology, *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture* (2003), and the special issue of *Renaissance Drama* on “Embodiment and Environment in Early Modern Drama and Performance” (2006).



subject. Concerns that phenomenologists have sought to “dispense with history” (Garner 8) have forced some phenomenologists to address the question, “How can phenomenological approaches be historically grounded?” Yet as the recent development of historical phenomenology (a mode of inquiry first proposed by Bruce Smith in 2000) has demonstrated, phenomenological and historicist approaches can be productively combined. The “study of sense experience during a specific historical past” has been particularly influential for “scholars of Shakespeare and his world” in reconstructing the “tactile, aural, olfactory, and emotional dimensions of early modern culture which might otherwise resist critical engagement” (Curran para. 3). To Curran’s point I would add that the corporeal-spatial dimensions of Renaissance culture are also opened up by the historical-phenomenological approach, which allows me to propose the existence of an ontological schema shared by spectators of Middleton’s play, without suggesting that embodied being has a transhistorical or undifferentiable essence. What I propose is already intimated by Middleton’s treatment of the body’s relation to space: that the possibilities for an early modern spectator’s experience and perception of embodied being have a spatial dimension—one which could be profoundly altered in the theatre, by the way in which early modern plays like *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* play with space. The body-space relations prevailing over theatrical and non-theatrical early modern experiences constitute “fields of variability” (Garner 12), a term I borrow from Garner’s excellent defense of phenomenology. Indeed, I am indebted to his claim that “to speak of the structures of embodiment [...] is not to posit a body (male, female, or indeterminate in terms of gender, race, or other categories) whose experience subsumes difference, but to posit a set of terms in which

experiential difference is manifested” (Garner 12). For my purposes, to assert that early modern theatre can alter or influence a spectator’s ontological schema is to “posit a set of terms” that provide a historically situated context within which more than one spectatorial experience could become manifest.

One such “term” I have already posited is the insistent doubleness of early modern stage space and bodies, which, in *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy*, becomes woven into the thematic, fictional fabric of the play. Like the conventions of the stage that brings her to life, Middleton’s heroine seemingly possesses the ability to defy the laws of physics, to show no predictable “respect of persons, place, or time” (*Twelfth Night* 2.3.79) in her doubled persona. Middleton characterizes the Lady’s subjectivity so as to produce the impression that she is split in two and yet in some ways still unified, present to herself as both a ghostly entity *and* a fleshly corpse that are in two different places at once. In essence, the character of the Lady pushes further the inadvertently metatheatrical significance of Malvolio’s comment from *Twelfth Night* (above); just as the stage uses convention to form its own theatrical definition of what it means to be a person in a place in time, the Lady “disrespects” the non-theatrical logic that would ontologically prohibit a subject being in two places at one time. When, in the tomb scene she utters, “I am not here” (1923), she instantiates in the extreme what Malvolio unintentionally reminds spectators is the stage’s dismissal of the customary logic governing the relationship of persons, place, and time. The dynamic splitting of the Lady’s presence and subjectivity both reflects and produces the splitting of stage space, staged bodies, and spectators’ perceptions that I maintain would have been part of the early modern theatrical experience. Remarkably, the Lady is able to create a

seeming ontological paradox, and her ability to do so stems from the material presence of the actor who plays her. “I am not here” is spoken by a palpable body (the actor’s) that facilitates the fantastical state of “not being here” by giving a shape and presence to a ghostly apparition which clearly appears “here” before the audience’s eyes, even as it claims to be “not here.” Spectators who recognize the enabling body behind the paradox are given yet another opportunity to contemplate the materiality of theatrical representations, and how represented space-body relations are manufactured from the actor’s given, inevitably *human* body, but obey a different logic<sup>20</sup>.

As I have suggested, a specific valence of this notable difference is the body’s relationship to being in any given place at a particular time, and here Casey’s conceptualization of being and space is again useful. Casey notes that, under everyday circumstances, “my here depends on my body: if I am sitting at my desk, then my here is the desk, if I go to the fridge [...] then the fridge, or perhaps the kitchen, is my here” (qtd. in McAuley 85). As Casey’s description suggests, our prevailing ontological schema (the one that governs non-theatrical, quotidian life) is predicated upon clear, transposable relationships between the body and spatial referents like “here” and “there.” The body, and its position within a singularly defined environment, helps to define what it means to be “here” or “there.” On the stage, however, the correspondence between a body and the referential space it produces, or is produced by, is destabilized, in part because “the not-here [the fictional world] is here” (McAuley

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<sup>20</sup> The possibility exists, of course, that in denying her own presence, the Lady might have provoked a less than serious response from viewers who clearly see a body before them. While the playtext does not aim for comedy at this moment, might audience members have found the proclamation “I am not here” absurd enough to respond with laughter? If this were the case, the impetus might have been even stronger for spectators to self-consciously reflect upon the stage and actors as such, since the absurdity of the situation derives from the extreme contradiction between what the fictional character claims, and the actor’s presence asserts.

86), or “here” (the non-fictional world) is not the only “here,” a phenomenon *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* recognizes acutely. If “here” were a stable term of reference for the characters within the play, it would be impossible for a subject to state “I am not here.” Alan Dessen’s chapter “The Logic of ‘This’ on the Open Stage” (in *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters*) describes the indeterminacy that confronts a reader in cases where “gestic terms like this, there, here, yon, and thus” (53) require an accompanying theatrical gesture to clarify what is being referred to. While Dessen’s point is about the ambiguity that attends a readerly experience of the text, I would argue that such an ambiguity also persists in performance. Clarity as to what is meant by “this,” “there,” or “here” is not always available onstage. In a non-performance context, these kinds of demonstrative pronouns create an indefinite space by gesturing towards “a referential point that refuses to materialize, and seems suddenly not to capture a location but to resist any correspondence,” as Turner argues in his discussion of how Lear’s line “Give me the map there” (1.1.35) signifies for a reader (Turner 171). Yet in these instances, both Turner and Dessen focus on an uncertainty which is readerly, assuming that performance makes “obvious” (Dessen, *Elizabethan Stage Conventions* 54) what the printed text leaves undecided. I would argue, however, that Turner’s comment equally applies to the space-body relations of the stage, since the “referential point” (or in fact any object of representation onstage) can resist materialization (does Macbeth’s dagger actually appear before the audience?), and need not be easily “captured.” Furthermore, the logic that underpins both Dessen’s and Turner’s treatment of gestic terms is that a body on stage referring to an object or space can and will clarify what a text cannot. The implication of this logic is the assumption

that embodied theatrical spatial relations divide space neatly into categories that can distinguish “here” from “there” and “this” from “that.” However, *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* demonstrates just the opposite: unfixed referentiality is not just a characteristic of disembodied texts; spatial indeterminacy occurs in performance as well. Indeed it is a phenomenon made possible by the very properties of theatrical space, and one which the early modern stage and its playwrights exploited to the fullest degree.

Consider the scene in *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* where Govianus encounters the Lady’s ghost at a tomb. Before the ghost appears to Govianus, he hears its voice speak the line “I am not here” (1923), which he locates vaguely as “idle soundes the beaten vaults sende forth” (1925). Setting aside for the moment the added complexity of being “not-here,” although it is clear the voice emanates from somewhere within the “vaults,” the demonstrative pronoun “here” is likely not anchored to a specific onstage site visible to the audience. Admittedly, we cannot say for certain to what degree a vault or tomb-like structure was or was not visible to the audience. Alan Dessen considers the possibility that the King’s Men might have possessed and employed a tomb set piece; however he also provides strong evidence for the possibility that tombs such as the one in Middleton’s play can be “a product more of the playgoer’s imagination than the property master” (*Recovering* 259). As Dessen notes, the evidence concerning the “category of tomb monument scenes” in early modern plays is “highly problematic” (176) because “clear indications about staging are rare” (177). With reference to *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy*, Dessen suggests that, despite the “unusually elaborate” stage directions regarding the tomb (see especially lines 1926-31, which describe the tomb doors spontaneously opening with a gust of wind to reveal a

strong light radiating from within the tomb), the “designated effects” could be achieved with a stage door, a coffin, and a stone (182). I would like to entertain the possibility that both Govianus’ lines and the speech prefix “from within” (accompanying the line “I am not here”) indicate a tomb-like space that need not be fully present or represented onstage with verisimilitude. Moreover, regardless of whether the stage was decorated with a realistic tomb or not, the playtext suggests that for the moment, at least, the *interior* of the tomb-like set is not visually accessible to the audience. Therefore, whatever space or place is the specific referential object of “here” is not fully visible for the audience since the stage directions clearly indicate that the voice emanates “from within,” and belongs to a body that is hidden to some degree by whatever structure may have represented the exterior of the tomb. Importantly, attached to the gestic pronoun “here,” is a speaking entity—that is, an actor’s body, which in a moment will be revealed as the Lady’s ghost—and yet this performing body still does not definitively clarify what is meant by “here,” because when this statement is uttered, its speaker is hidden from sight. The text suggests that whatever space is occupied by the actor speaking this line is most likely inaccessible visually to the audience. By consequence, the audience is forced to contend with an indicated “here” which is not truly present—that is to say, somewhere precise and wholly material. In Turner’s terms, the “referential point refuses to materialize”; moreover, the audience cannot make it materialize because wherever *here* is, it belongs to a visually imperceptible space in the tomb which can only be imagined, but not perceived. In this subtle but suggestive instantiation of unfixed spatial referentiality, *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* mimics on a small scale the re-organization of typical (non-dramatic) spatial-corporeal relations

that becomes constitutive of the theatrical experience. The indeterminacy of “here” both belongs to and creates the logic of an environment in which spectators can experience, quite literally, the extraordinary.

The play further stretches the limits of the ordinary by presenting its audience with an ontological paradox: “I am *not* here.” The Lady’s insistence that she is “not here” throws into question the very meaning of the concept “here” and how it functions in relation to being, a destabilization that is enabled by the spatial conventions and possibilities of the stage. Linguistically speaking, “here” belongs to a class of words that are deictic; these words convey meaning by recourse to referents which are immediately perceptible in the context of their utterance. More importantly, deictic words depend on a referred-to context that is almost always spatial and/or temporal (the exception being words that refer laterally to other words in a linguistic context), and which is situated in relation to the person who utters the word. The spatial concept designated by the deictic “here” is wholly dependent upon a subject being in a specific place that corresponds with the signified of “here.” Casey’s phenomenological definition of “being-here” (in relation to a fridge, a kitchen), along with the logic that deictic words disclose, explains why the line “I am not here” is so haunting, since the idea of being itself—*I am*—is seemingly inextricable from place—*I am here*. How can the Lady assert “I am” if she is not present to Govianus (and the audience) *here*, in the place from which she asserts her being? The question persists without resolution unless the presentational level of the drama is factored in, for it is the actor’s body that renders the impossible possible. Indeed, how can the Lady even speak to tell her witnesses she is not here? This speech act is not simply facilitated by the fact that her spirit appears in

order to report the violation of its body; if this were only the case, the Lady might say without disturbing her viewers' sense of normative body-space relations, "*my body* is not here." Instead, she refers to this absent body as herself—as "I"—and in order to do so she must present herself somehow to her interlocutor(s) even as she insists she is absent. To represent a condition of being which seems to deconstruct itself once verbalized, the actor's body must make itself present and body forth her speech, all the while attempting through this speech to deny the physical actorly presence which verbally attests to, but physically contradicts, the character's professed absence. Such is the complex verbal and corporeal logic disclosed by the Lady's speech, "I am now at Courte / in his owne priuat chamber, ther he woes me / and plies his suite to me [...] foldes me w<sup>th</sup> in his armes and often sets / a sinfull kisse upon my scenceles lip" (1958-64). Delivering these lines, the actor's body makes itself known to the spectator's eyes, at the same time as it describes itself in detail (as the character's body) existing elsewhere. In this deeply metatheatrical move, Middleton engineers a fictional ontology so striking it urges spectators to take note of what renders the paradox representable: the actor's authority to stand (in) for an entity it does not fully embody.

Important to the Lady's metatheatricity is the idea that "being here" definitionally allows for the possibility of a "there." Casey calls this conceptual pairing of "here" and "there" the "primal placial dyad" (*Getting Back Into Place* 50). The "placial dyad" clearly structures relations and categories of space via the subjectivity of a body which occupies or does not occupy a certain space. Granted, *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* conforms to Casey's dyad to a certain degree; witness, for example, the page singing "*ther* she sleepes and *here* he weepes" (1903-04) at the Lady's tomb,



which places Govianus in a visible place “here,” in contrast to a “there.” However, this line only serves to accentuate the subsequent dissolution of the here/there dichotomy. It is as if this citation of the dyad “here versus there” sets up a norm that closely echoes non-theatrical conditions for embodied being, in order to contrast the Lady’s remarkable departure from that norm. To be “not-here” or to be “here” in a place which is also “there” constitutes a state of being that is seemingly impossible, but is ontologically possible within the theatre, as the Lady demonstrates. In violation of the primary placial dyad, the Lady’s ghost reports her location to Govianus, and the audience, in a way that suggests she is not just here *or* there, but both here (in front of Govianus) and there (at court) *at once*. The Lady’s dual occupation of two disparate spaces at once is of course made possible by the severance of her spirit and body; her spirit has left her body, and her corpse is with the Tyrant. Yet Middleton uses this plot point to create a striking relationship between body, subjectivity and space—one which has the effect of calling the spectator’s attention to the possibilities of the non-realist aesthetic governing the early modern stage. By referring to an absent space (the court) in a way that suggests it should be present (for if the Lady is at court and she is present to the audience, should not the court be present as well?), the Lady reminds audience members of the set of flexible spatial conventions they have agreed to accept. The Lady’s use of the first person to refer to her body—“behold I’me gon” (1950) and “I am now at Courte” (1958)—purposefully confounds everyday bodily-spatial referents, and demonstrates the theatre’s potential to significantly, if only temporarily, change how spectators conceive of, and even experience, being in relation to space.

Furthermore, the Lady's sustained reference to an offstage space, the court where she claims she also "is," invites the audience to oscillate between the perceivable (the scene in front of them) and the momentarily intangible (the scene the Lady describes but the play does not depict). The invocation of these disparate locales carries the effect of potentially intensifying a divided spectatorial engagement with the stage that I have argued is already embedded into the early modern playgoer's experience. If in general these spectators are confronted by a space that claims to be what it fundamentally is not, in that the stage stands for a fictional locale, they are also further challenged to relate to an absent space they cannot visually or tangibly confront. In effect, Middleton is building into the play an opportunity for his audience members to experience a split relationship to space(s) that arguably mimics the Lady's own experience of being in two places at once. If the Lady herself is peculiarly "not here," so too are those who choose to commit themselves to imagining where she is (simultaneously here and not here). In addition to calling the audience's attention to the dialectic partnership between presentation and representation in visible stage space(s), Middleton's play fosters a dialectic between absent and present spaces. In doing so, he begins to inculcate the engaged spectator into the ontological schema of the play, extending the bodily and spatial possibilities of the stage to the spectator herself. Just as spectators are encouraged to oscillate perceptually between the play's presentational and representational registers, so too is the audience invited to redefine absence and presence in terms of their relationship to each other and to spatiality. In fact, this spectatorial experience might be more aptly described not as one of oscillation, but one of double commitment to two (or more) spaces that can only just be held in the

spectator's consciousness at once. No longer is being restricted to "being-here" or to a rigid dichotomy between here and there, absence and presence; rather, spectators are offered the chance to pursue a metamorphic relationship to space and being inspired by the stage events in which they imaginatively participate.

Finally, however, the Lady's two halves meet in a singular locale, and Middleton closes the play with her spirit accompanying her body offstage. This convergence of the Lady's split persona seemingly promises to unify the divided energies of the play, the reunion between the Lady's spirit and her body ostensibly allowing for the "weary, much abusde and toilde" (2321) spirit of the Lady to achieve the rest it has sought. While the Lady's "fearful separation" seems to be resolved, the performance of this scene complicates this potential sense of closure and unification, and continues to fuel the division and doubleness that has characterized both the narrative and its performance possibilities. When the Lady and her corpse appear onstage at the same time they cannot possibly be represented by only one actor. The final scene thus calls for a staging choice that also deliberately engages the viewer's perceptual fluctuation, and his or her metatheatrical awareness of the acting body's material capabilities and limits. The spatially simultaneous appearance of ghost and corpse creates an unavoidable lack of continuity between these two manifestations of the Lady's body, which clearly cannot be both played by Rich Robinson. As Susan Zimmerman describes, an analogous situation in Philip Massinger's *The Duke of Milan* was orchestrated differently so that it "allowed for the same actor who played the living woman to represent her corpse, thereby providing continuity of image" (122). This crucial difference, I would argue, situates the performing body in *The Duke of Milan*—

even if necessitating that a dead body be played by a living actor—more firmly in its fictional register. In the case of Massinger’s play, the illusion of playing dead (which is not without its complexities, as Zimmerman and others have pointed out) is not ruptured by having two different entities or bodies represent what should appear as differing manifestations of the *same* fictional person.

However, by necessitating the use of Rich Robinson and another person or dummy in the dual appearance of the Lady’s corpse and her ghost, *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* creates a visual and perceptual relay in which Robinson’s status as actor *and* character remains at the forefront of the spectator’s consciousness. If Robinson’s body shares with another body, or a dummy, the singular fictional persona of the Lady, when the audience sees Robinson as the ghost, since the ghost also belongs to the corpse, Robinson’s body is metonymically aligned with whichever body (artificial or human) plays the corpse. In this final scene, then, the corpse becomes a problematic locus of attention. In terms of the fictional world, the corpse seems to be or *should* be played by Robinson—the stage directions read “*Enter the Ghost in the shame [sic] form as the lady is drest in the Chayre*” (2386)—and yet must be represented by an entirely different body or a non-human entity (a prop). The continuity of image explicitly necessitated by the text is shattered by virtue of Middleton’s instructions for staging; Robinson needs to be two—representing the Lady’s substantial and insubstantial forms—when he can clearly only be one. Here, the human body’s representational capabilities are brought face to face with their presentational limits; in her world, the Lady can be what Rich Robinson himself cannot represent in this moment. In engineering the necessity for what can in the end only be an imperfect,

unidentical “body double,” Middleton directs his spectators to recognize a salient aspect of theatrical embodiment:

there are limits to the extent of the embodiment of which the actor is capable.

As a perceptual phenomenon, the character is granted abilities which are beyond the representational power of the actor [...] the confining body of the actor cannot be fully shed. On the other hand, the character is noema only [...] and so there are objects and actions which when portrayed on the stage, it is not possible (or extraordinarily unlikely) or desirable that they be identical to the equivalent real-world actions or objects. (Stephenson “Uplifted to the View”148)

Stephenson goes on to argue that “death is the ultimate example of failed embodiment” because “when a character dies, the audience can be within a hair’s breadth of absolute certainty that the actor portraying that character is not truly dead, that in fact she is only feigning” (148-49). I would argue that the performance of Middleton’s ghost/corpse pairing, while likely to trigger the metatheatrical consequences of simulated stage death in general—namely, that spectators are likely to take notice of the actor/character distinction—also takes an extra step beyond mere death to accomplish just that.

Admittedly, the possibility exists that any given audience member may be so intensely invested in the fictional register of the performance and captivated by the story and its spectacle that the opportunity for critical reflection upon the ontology of theatre is diminished. However, as I have just noted, in *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* what is performed is not just the death of the character while the actor lives on; together, the lady and her ghost exacerbate and thus highlight the failure of embodiment Stephenson

remarks upon, by presenting the audience with an additional fictional entity (a ghost) which is a separate manifestation of a dead character. Spectators are thereby confronted with two distinct entities that, as designated by the stage directions, should assume the “same form” and should be portrayed by the same actor in order to uphold the fictional illusion that the corpse and its ghost are both the Lady. Yet this cannot possibly be achieved by the actor’s singular body, which, unlike its character, is capable only of being in a singular place at any given point in time. By orchestrating a visual conflict between the represented and the representing, Middleton prepares spectators to experience and take note of an illusion which is designed to fail in some degree. As I have argued, this is a consummately metatheatrical decision. Without speech, the actor-character’s body bespeaks its own participation in theatricality in and through this failure, offering spectators a glimpse of how far theatre can push the body’s everyday limits.

The performance of *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* promises to direct its audience to identify with a variety of fictional and non-fictional spaces that at once differentiate between and conflate the stage (including its actors) and the fictional realm these material phenomena represent. Middleton taps into the possibility of spectatorial double vision by incorporating into the play’s plot an extended metatheatrical nod to the representational strategies of the early modern stage, wherein bodies and spaces are inherently doubled or even multiplied by virtue of their ability to present themselves, and represent others. In the Lady’s embodiment of fracture and doubleness, the play embraces themes and effects that, in performance, can steer the spectator towards self-reflexivity about the stage as representational apparatus, and about his or her own role

as a participant in the process of representation. Moreover, this self-awareness is centered upon the splitting of perception both inside and outside the fictional world; the appearance and actions of the Lady's ghost are accompanied by dialogue that calls attention to the fact that she is strangely localizable as two-but-one inside the fictional world, as she self-identifies both as ghost and corpse, perceiving herself/herselves doubly. In this sense, the Lady reproduces in miniature the way the early modern stage calls upon audience members to recognize their own doubled perception of what is theatrically presented and represented. Her addresses to Govianus, which urge him to recognize her duality, also act as a call to the play's audience to do the same, and to imagine her absence as well as perceiving her presence, a seeming paradox that is rendered possible by the decidedly unordinary spatial logic of the theatre. The perceptual component of the Lady's extraordinary relationship to being-in-space is extended as a possibility to her spectators, who participate in a performance within which no singular space or body aims to claim exclusive hold over the audience's perceptual focus for any length of time. Rather, the spectators who have "agreed" to the theatre's conventions and thereby engaged their imaginations are offered the opportunity to themselves become analogues of the Lady, and experience a similarly fantastical relationship to space and being.

Much as the Lady in *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* is partly present and partly absent, "in theatre the spectator is regularly in a state of being only partly here" (McAuley 86). Tangible stage space and actors' bodies put "into motion a vibration between actual presence and the supposed (imagined) action" (Beckerman, *Theatrical Presentation* 22), a vibration that depends upon the mobile perceptions of spectators

attuning themselves to what is both present and absent, presented and represented. In *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, the potential for spectatorial double vision is wrapped into the play's aesthetic, which depends not only upon a tension and interplay between being here/there, being one/two, seeing/not seeing, but also upon the early modern theatre's destabilization of these dichotomies. Just as the Lady's subjectivity is shared between her body and her spirit, enabling her to paradoxically utter "behold I'me gon," her beholders are paradoxically divided (in their perceptions of the stage) and yet one. *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* exemplifies how the individual in the theatre might be "no longer simply here, but here *and* there at once" (Weber 41, emphasis in original), participating in an experience which is markedly altered from that of life outside the theatre.

The duality of the theatre—as a site of presentation and representation—means that to immerse oneself in the theatrical experience is to expose oneself to a space wherein the everyday constraints that govern bodies and spaces are dramatically re-circuited. *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* attests to the potential for theatre to radically change, even if only temporarily, the way embodied human subjectivity functions. Anthony Dawson writes that in the theatre "the actor's body is obviously present, but the 'presence' of the character's body is more ambiguous because it depends on representation in the person of the actor" (38). Middleton's play takes this ambiguity as its starting point, and demonstrates how the stage can become a place where fictional possibilities are grafted onto ontological impossibilities—being in two or more places at once, being here *and* there— which are in turn revealed to be possible within the set of conventions that spectators and actors jointly uphold. That the early modern theatre



encourages its audience's dual participation in the representational and presentational layers of the play suggests that dramatists like Middleton and his peers exploit the radicalizing potential of a stage that fosters a double image effect in the spectator's engagement with the stage, even if experiencing that splitting entails a certain degree of alienation from oneself and the space one's body occupies. Audience members of Middleton's play are thus not simply passive witnesses to a stage environment that remains at a remove from their sensorium. Rather, like the audiences of Shakespeare, Peele, Marston, Beaumont, and other dramatists, Middleton's spectators find themselves implicated in the various ways in which stage space can come to life and can rearrange the perceiving human body's relationship to the material—or fictionally immaterial—world.

The strange spatiality and otherworldly bodily experiences characteristic of *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* present us with a way of thinking about the mostly bare Renaissance stage that runs counter to Jonson's and Sidney's famous critiques of early modern theatrical illusion<sup>21</sup>. Instead of critiquing the incommensurability between "Asia...and Affrick" (Sidney, qtd. in Gurr 181) and the stage that would attempt their representation, Middleton's play suggests we embrace the opportunity theatre offers, the promise of straddling the gap between the actual and the virtual with a knowing eye as to how theatre does its job. The play that in a breath "wafts" its spectators over wide seas and presents radical alternatives to the "deeds, and language, such as men do use" (Jonson, Prologue 15, 21) is also one that affords those willing the chance to access the space *between* presentation and representation—the place where theatre is at its most

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<sup>21</sup> See Sidney's *An Apologie for Poetrie* (1595), and Jonson's Prologue to *Every Man in His Humour* (1616)—two oft-cited examples in discussions of early modern staging.

transformative. Far from being “th’ill customs of the age” (Jonson, Prologue 4), the fictionally ambitious conventions of the early modern stage, and the plays that bring these conventions into plain sight, attest to the phenomenal possibilities of the theatrical medium itself. In negotiating the distance between what is “straunge” (Middleton 2274) and what is familiar—between the presented image and its representational double—spectators affirm the potential of drama to transmute the ordinary, at the same time as they take up their own important role in this transformation.

### 3 Exploring the Interior: Corporeal Knowledge and Epistemological Empowerment

“Man is a little world, and contains in himself the seeds of all those things which are contained in the most spacious and ample bosom of this whole Universe.”

—Helkiah Crooke (1615)

“Anatomization takes place so that, in lieu of a formerly complete ‘body’, a new ‘body’ of knowledge and understanding can be created.”

—Jonathan Sawday (1995)

In the previous chapter I argued that the theatre constitutes an arena within which actors and audiences can mutually participate in remoulding the parameters that structure everyday, embodied being. Most importantly, I have tried to show that spectators are integral agents in this process; they power the process of representation just as it empowers them. I have also claimed that, for Renaissance spectators, central to this experience is the early modern theatre’s deliberate foregrounding of the stage as stage and “the physical act of histrionic delivery,” in conjunction with “the imaginary product and effect” (Weimann, *Author’s Pen* 11) of such delivery. Middleton’s *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* offers us just one instantiation of the complex ways in which the double vision of the early modern theatre informs the experiences of its spectators. By doubling or splitting a spectator’s focus between presentation and representation, and concomitantly collapsing the absolute distinction between embodied spatial

presence and absence, plays like *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* demonstrate the theatre's potential to quite literally change, if only temporarily, some of the structuring concepts that inform human perception of bodies in the world. Samuel Weber goes so far as to assert that in the theatre the "scope of life and death is altered" (41), and if one takes into account the notorious violence of many Renaissance plays, it would indeed seem as though exploring the scope of life and death within the theatre was a fascination shared by dramatists and playgoers alike. In citing Weber's reference to life and death, it is my intention here to preface the more visceral territory of this chapter. Shifting emphasis from space-body relations to the body itself, the present chapter further examines the relationship between staged violence and the presentation/representation distinction in terms of audience engagement. In the forthcoming analysis, I continue to argue that this distinction is central to how early modern plays prepare their spectators for unordinary, uniquely theatrical experiences of the body.

As is suggested by Merleau-Ponty's concept of the corporeal schema and Edward Casey's analysis of place (both discussed in the previous chapter), one way to define space is in terms of bodies, and vice versa. This chiasmatic relationship implies that if performance critics seek to "define theatre as a particular mode of spatial organization" (Ubersfeld, qtd. in McAuley 19), as I have done up to this point, we must also carefully attend to the body's specific role in rendering the performance space meaningful, or even possible. As Stanton Garner writes, "bodied spatiality is at the heart of dramatic presentation, for it is through the actor's corporeal presence under the spectator's gaze that the dramatic text actualizes itself in the field of performance"

(*Bodied Spaces* 1). Gail Kern Paster similarly asserts with respect to a specifically early modern context that, “as the material body’s fictional embodiment, what and how the actor’s body signifies is always at issue” (20). Of course, the ways in which the actor’s body can signify are manifold; Paster’s emphasis on humors and Renaissance humoral theory differs from the way in which I will conceive of the body as a site of knowledge, both in terms of its place in Renaissance discourse and as a performing body onstage. Central to my argument that penetrative theatrical violence tantalizes spectators with an empowering look into human interiority is the way in which anatomical science of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries influenced early modern culture at large. For this reason, interwoven into my analysis of plays are non-dramatic examples from texts that establish how the unprecedented popularity of anatomists’ discoveries promulgated the discursive construction of the body as a storehouse of knowledge and ultimate truth, as Helkiah Crooke’s *Mikrokosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man* (1615) and other lesser-known texts I discuss in this chapter exemplify.

Pursuing the implications of audience engagements with violent acts, the present chapter also moves towards the goal of distinguishing between the semiotic force of scientific dissections and fictional, staged violence. The difference between the corpses on the dissection slab and the lively bodies that projected representations of death and decay in the dramatic theatres prompts us to consider the vital issue of how theatre of any kind (including the anatomical) functions as a medium, relating meaning to spectators in a way that is determined not just by what is performed, but how. In anatomy theatres dissections are performed upon dead bodies, whereas in playhouses the violence that echoes and draws upon anatomical contexts is perpetrated upon live

bodies. Granted, in terms of subject matter, non-dramatic, scientifically-oriented texts that reflect upon the form and function of the human body demonstrate the same epistemological investments in anatomical structure as early modern plays do. Whether fantasized or realized, bodily explorations and penetrations in medical and dramatic texts dramatize a desire that I argue both early modern theatre audiences and Renaissance anatomists share: the attainment of empowering knowledge thought to be revealed by the body's interior anatomy. And it is indeed true that the bodily excavations early modern culture executed, hypothesized, fantasized, and wrote about found a particularly powerful outlet within Renaissance playhouses. However, regardless of how suggestive the links are between violent drama and early modern anatomical science—a fact that drives Hilary Nunn's *Staging Anatomies: Dissection and Spectacle in Early Stuart Tragedy* (2005), one of only a few monographs on early modern English theatre and anatomy—"it is important to recognize that what takes place in the anatomy theatre at the presentational level is re-enacted at the representational level in the theatre" (Hillman 43). I argue that the potential for the "double image" effect, generated by a theatrical dialectic between presentation and representation, provides excellent grounds for considering how and why "early modern drama and the practice of anatomy cannot be seen as simply analogous" (Hillman 43)<sup>22</sup>. In their ability to present and represent bodies, early modern plays make available to audiences a unique experience of the violently dissected body. Onstage, the actor's body submits itself to represented corporeal invasions, all the while sustaining its own

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<sup>22</sup> Along with Hillman, Sugg also stands out in his expressed reservations about the unqualified assimilation of dissective science and dramatic violence, Sugg warning against construing staged bloodshed and dismemberment as "anatomical" without sound reason. Hilary Nunn is cited in his critique (see p. 223, note 18, and p. 232, note 131).

physical integrity. Because the ostensible victims of these acts perform their own violations within a representational field, they are able to enact the body's perforation while still protecting it, "disabling" the body through a display of performative skill that in and through this display paradoxically affirms the body's liveliness and ability. These antipodal semiotic energies are able to offer spectators a means by which to satisfy the desire for transcendent knowledge without destroying the human subject that would reveal that knowledge. Such a feat, I argue, is effected exclusively by the early modern theatre's complex double vision.

The spectator's experience of the body, as well as the dramatist's treatment of it, is nevertheless informed on a conceptual and ideological level in the period by the advancement of scientific knowledge concerning the human body. Setting aside for the moment the question of representation versus presentation—that is, how the sometimes architecturally similar theatres of the anatomists and of the acting companies produced different performances of the penetrated body<sup>23</sup>—there remain significant similarities between the work of anatomists and dramatists. Nor are these similarities confined to non-performed output (anatomy textbooks and playtexts). While the anatomy halls and the playhouses treated the bodies that occupied their stages quite differently, both arenas shared the view that the body enclosed something of value in discovering. Thus despite the significant differences between dissections of corpses and dramatic renderings of fictional bodily violations, there also exist important conceptual overlaps between the fields of dissection and drama. Knowledge and discovery are driving

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<sup>23</sup> On the structural congruence between these two early modern venues, see especially Christian Billing's "Modelling the Anatomy Theatre and the Indoor Hall Theatre: Dissection on the Stages of Early Modern London," in *Early Modern Literary Studies* 13 (2004): 1-17.

forces behind anatomists' *and* dramatists' dealings with the body. This commonality does not give us the whole picture, as Hillman contends, but it is my argument that in order to understand how early modern drama and the discipline of anatomy are not wholly analogous, one must chart where and why this analogy breaks down. For this reason, the present chapter is structured around two related arguments. The first claim is devoted to tracing how anatomical modes of thought insinuate themselves into Renaissance playwrights' depictions of violent fantasies and acts, and the remainder of the chapter develops an argument which is also the subject of Chapter Four: how, and to what effect, the theatre's double vision sets its violated bodies apart from those on the dissection slab.

In addition to the critics I have cited above, Andrea Carlino, Andrew Cunningham, Roger French, Devon Hodges, Howard Marchitello, Charles O'Malley, Katherine Park, Grant Williams, and Luke Wilson have all contributed to shaping the field of inquiry within which this chapter situates itself. The work of these scholars has significantly enlarged our understanding of both the literary and scientific contours of the "anatomical Renaissance" (the title of Andrew Cunningham's monograph) of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is my intention only to briefly revisit select aspects of this body of criticism; rather than working principally from secondary sources, I seek out a range of primary sources (both dramatic and non-dramatic) from the period. The plays cited in this chapter range from the canonical, to the less frequently studied, to the marginal. These primary dramatic materials I place in dialogue with non-fictional, contemporaneous evidence that has received far less attention from literary critics than, for example, Crooke's *Mikrokosmographia*, which



Michael Neill calls “the most Vesalian of English anatomical textbooks” (176), or the visually seductive anatomical drawings of Andreas Vesalius, Andreanus Spigelius, Juan Valverde, Jacopo Berengario da Carpi, Charles Estienne, and other famous anatomists of the European Renaissance<sup>24</sup>. Because the more frequently referenced and reproduced texts are so influential to early modern English culture (and to current scholarship on the anatomical Renaissance), they are not entirely omitted from my analysis; however, as is the case with the playtexts I have chosen, I aim to move from works that are at the center of critical discussion to those that have been displaced to its margins. I isolate and bring together certain claims that have already been made within the purview of extant scholarship, in order to establish for my own purposes how the human body, inside and out, is thrust forth into the public eye as an entity that can and should be intimately explored. I will suggest that in turn, the radiating influence of this “will to discover” informs the theatre’s violent manipulations of the body, but that spectators’ confrontations with these corporeal penetrations are structured in an entirely different way inside the playhouse than they are inside the anatomy theatre. In the playhouse environment, the actor/character’s intact but representationally victimized body is able to offer spectators the seeming experience of an idealized mode of corporeal discovery that does not destroy its subject—an accomplishment that early modern culture deeply desired but could not achieve in and through scientific practice.

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<sup>24</sup> Besides Crooke’s work, some of the texts which have occupied a central position in criticism are Vesalius’s *Fabrica Corporis Humani* (1543), Juan Valverde’s *Historia de la Composicion del Cuerpo Humano* (first published in Spanish in 1556, translated into Latin in 1560 as *Anatomia del Corpo Humano*), Adriaan van de Spiegel’s *De Formato Foeto* (1626), William Harvey’s public lectures on anatomy (later transcribed and published as *Prelectiones Anatomiae Universalis* in 1886), and his *De Motu Cordis* (published in Leiden, 1628)

## Knowledge of Bodies, Bodies of Knowledge

In early modern constructions of the body, bodily knowledge metonymically becomes a more powerful form of epistemological mastery that can reach far beyond the self. Evidencing this desire for totalizing knowledge, characters like Lear, D'Amville (Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy*), and Cameleon (Shirley's *The Wedding*) fantasize about dissecting and anatomizing in order to understand other bodies and selves. Lear's wish to "anatomize" Regan to see what makes her heart so hard is one of the references to anatomy critics most often cite: "Let them anatomize Regan; see what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?" (3.6.70-72). Although *Lear* does not extend this reference to dissection beyond Lear's passing remark, the function of the dissective comment is clear: a father fantasizes about unmediated access to his daughter's interiority that would ground her "hard" (unsympathetic) nature in an empirically verifiable, naturally-given "hard heart". The slippage between emotional and physiological attributes is in keeping with the period's attitudes towards corporeality (as demonstrated, for example, in Paster's work on humoral physiology and more recently in Hillman's *Shakespeare's Entrails*) and suggests that Lear could demystify Regan's immaterial self (her disposition) if only he could see to the depths of her material composition. That the fantasy of anatomical knowledge arises during Lear's vulnerable, disturbed state is indicative of what the fulfillment of such a fantasy promises: the ability to wholly understand—and thus master, at least epistemologically—the other whose psychological and physiological interiority is either unavailable or incomprehensible.

A few images in John Ford's plays also link knowledge of internal anatomy to knowledge of the whole person, embedding this linkage within a scenario of corporeal violation which would grant the possessor of such information a much-desired form of power. The several references to hearts in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* and *Love's Sacrifice* pick up on Shakespeare's treatment of the anatomized heart in *King Lear*. In *Love's Sacrifice*, Bianca and Fernando exchange verbal vows that enact the physiological literalization of emotion much as Lear does. First, Fernando swears that "if, when I am dead, you rip / This coffin of my heart, there shall you read, / With constant eyes, what now my tongue defines: / Bianca's name carved out in bloody lines" (2.3.98-101). Later (2.4.93-95), Bianca repeats the same phraseology back to him, substituting herself for Fernando, thereby encouraging spectators to take note of the dissective image. Ford also uses a closely related image in *'Tis Pity*, when Giovanni instructs Annabella to "rip up [his] bosom," promising, "there thou shalt behold / A heart in which is writ the truth I speak" (1.2.210-11). Just as Lear had hoped to find some index of Regan's character lodged in or "about" her heart, Fernando, Bianca, and Giovanni all imagine the evidence of their emotional bond in terms of what is ontologically verifiable via dissection. In the scene following Fernando's vow, Bianca confesses, "in my heart / You have been only king; if there can be / A violence in love, then I have felt / That tyranny" (2.4.18-21) subsequently promising to "write / This love within the tables of my heart" (2.4.83-84). Having already posited a violent physiology of affect in Fernando's speech—the idea that the heart registers love as a physical, bloody inscription—Ford attunes us to the possibility that the imagery in both of Bianca's references to her heart is not simply metaphorical. So too, does Giovanni's final

dissection of Annabella's heart suggest that these characters are not thinking and speaking figuratively; when he presents the skewered organ as evidence of his triumph in love (and triumph over Soranzo), he urges the men at the banquet to "look well upon't" in order to see that it is a "heart [...] in which is [his heart] entombed" (5.6.26-28). In a perverse echo of an anatomist addressing his spectators, Giovanni acts as though by close inspection the onlookers could detect something in the physical structure of the bloody heart that would verify what he verbally claims. In Ford's plays, love assumes an ontological life in the body's viscera, as the heart registers in flesh—an effect frequently figured as a form of writing or inscription—what is felt and verbally professed. It is no wonder, then, that another of Ford's characters quite literally dies of a broken heart (Calantha in *The Broken Heart*)<sup>25</sup>.

By having his lovers construct their anticipated and actualized dissections as a confirmation of what they already know and claim to feel, Ford makes the fleshly body itself—especially its internal structure—into a material repository for knowledge. One gets the sense that if Calantha's body had been autopsied, within the Fordian economy of physiological literalization the substance of her heart would have tangibly corroborated her emotional state at the time of her death. With its ability to testify physically, the body becomes the focal point of investigation for characters who find their access to information otherwise blocked. When Soranzo (whom Annabella is designated to marry) confronts Annabella about her illegitimate pregnancy, she refuses his violently articulated requests to tell him who the father of the baby is. In an almost perfect echo of Giovanni's pledge to Annabella (cited above), and of Bianca and

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<sup>25</sup> Calantha has at least one historical analogue: Elizabeth I's maid of honour Margaret Ratcliffe, "whose corpse was opened before the Queen to reveal the unmistakable proofs of her broken heart" (Neill 124).

Fernando's language in *Love's Sacrifice*, Soranzo threatens to "rip up [Annabella's] heart" (4.3.53-54) and find the name of her lover there. In keeping with the way these other characters have described the physiologically inscriptive effects of love, Soranzo refers to the body as if it could provide him with the concrete piece of knowledge he needs to target his revenge at the right man, and to thereby recover some modicum of power in a situation which has effectively cuckolded him.

Soranzo and Lear are not alone in their conceptualization of the interior body as a site of ostensibly empowering knowledge. The Duke in *Love's Sacrifice* exultantly confronts Fernando with what he believes is undeniable proof of Fernando's adultery with Bianca (the Duke's wife), claiming to have obtained by piercing Bianca's breast "the bloody evidence of [Fernando's] untruth," which is now "written" on the Duke's sword's point in blood (5.2.29-30). In *The Duchess of Malfi*, Cariola defends herself against the accusation that she is responsible for Ferdinand's entrance into the Duchess's bedchamber, by locating the proof of her innocence in the interior of her heart: "when / That you have cleft my heart, you shall read there / Mine innocence" (3.2.147-49). In *The Atheist's Tragedy*, D'Amville (the eponymous atheist) requests a dissection of Charlemont, who demonstrates a religious faith that D'Amville believes can be empirically pinpointed in the structure of Charlemont's interior anatomy. Charlemont has displayed a quality that D'Amville lacks—the "resolution [...] to die" with the assurance that a desirable afterlife awaits—and D'Amville assumes that the difference in their spiritual temperaments is localizable in the differing "parts" and "dimensions" of their bodies (5.2.144-152). D'Amville desires anatomical knowledge because it seems to him the most ready way to tap into, and eventually harness for

himself, those aspects of Charlemont's personality that he "admire[s]" (5.2.161). In *The Wedding*, Cameleon begs to anatomize Rawbone (the Machiavellian Jewish usurer), a request which indicates "a powerful desire for direct final knowledge of a figure so frustratingly unknowable just because of the contradictions Renaissance society has used to construct the Usurer" (Sugg 67). All of these theatricalized dissections and fantasies of anatomization offer spectators an alternative means by which to relate to the violent acts they see performed: as inquisitive forays into a material vessel—the human body—which seems to be a key site of access to a wealth of immaterial knowledge about individual and collective human nature.

Like these anatomically-inflected acts of dramatic violence, the work of anatomists produces a body of knowledge in and through the dissolution of the body's integrity, leading me to theorize bodily violation—on a stage of any kind—as an act whose effects can reconstitute something in place of that which is lost or destroyed in the process. In Cynthia Marshall's view, that "something" is release, catharsis, and self-shattering for the viewer (or reader). In my estimation, the viewer is equally offered an experience that, through the acquisition of epistemological power, can shore up rather than break apart subjectivity and sense of selfhood. I see scientific and theatricalized dissections as akin to the process of the proverbial phoenix rising from the ashes. What Glen Harcourt calls the "deadening" force (qtd. in Traub 52) of the body's partial or complete destruction is accompanied by the conceptual rebuilding of a body of knowledge. This production-from-destruction suggests that bearing witness to the violation of a body need not necessarily entail shattering the subjectivity of the viewer in the way that Marshall suggests. As dissections show, bodily violations can

also present opportunities for a viewer's self-*affirmation*, educating and empowering by literally and figuratively opening up forms of knowledge. The examples above demonstrate that these potentials also surface powerfully in the drama of the time. The plays of Shakespeare, Ford, Tourneur, and other early modern playwrights all exemplify how plays took part in dissective culture, by linking the seeming destruction of the body to the production of power and knowledge. These linkages suggest that a person who is made privy to the body's mysteries—namely, its interior—is also offered the chance to attain a sense of epistemological mastery over the body, and over the human subject who has been opened up. Such a privilege is proffered not only to the characters who fantasize about and perform violent penetrations of the body, but is also extended to audience members who take up their place within the model of engaged spectatorship I have developed in previous chapters.

Regarded as the repository of earthly and divine knowledge, the human body in the Renaissance bore the ideological weight of the culture's desire for knowledge, as well as the weight of the anatomist's scalpel. Even for those who could not "know" the body directly by observing it (attendance at public dissections was limited, as were the number of dissections per year), the body's physiology and internality emerges as a potent locus of imagination and desire, as the violent acts and fantasies surveyed above indicate. A look at non-dramatic texts on the body, written by theologically and scientifically minded early moderns, is able to offer additional evidence as to how the anatomists' pursuits injected themselves into a variety of knowledge-seeking and knowledge-producing fields of cultural production<sup>26</sup>. In order to provide a deeper, more

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<sup>26</sup> Sugg reports that approximately 120 literary anatomies (texts like Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* or Philip Stubbes's *The Anatomie of Abuses*) were written between 1576 and 1650; the word

comprehensive understanding of how literary and scientific texts of the time seek out new ways of understanding body, self, and world, I pair the insights offered by small anatomical instruction books and didactic studies of “the whole body of man” (Underwood 1) with what is already known about the major historical figures and works that helped define Renaissance anatomy. While only a few early moderns performed dissections, many wrote about them, and about anatomy, in a way that annexes the “whole body of man” to a deeper comprehension of more than just physiological matter(s). This connection surfaces in plays that range from the early to the late parts of the period, and in non-dramatic textual evidence that also bears witness to the multiple means by which the body and its parts come to be endowed with epistemological value. Whether intended for the theatre or for the reader’s consumption, these historical and dramatic texts all attest to my claim that the opportunity for discovery and empowerment attends many performances of the body’s violation. It is within this culture of bodily knowledge that spectators of early modern plays find themselves called upon to participate in theatrical violence that opens up the body in order to epistemologically empower the dissector and his audience.

Spurred on by Belgian-born anatomist Andreas Vesalius, the efforts of English and European Renaissance anatomists contributed to a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the human body than had ever been achieved in the

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“section” (which has an anatomical etymology) also comes to prominence as many books draw upon the discourse of anatomization in their formal structure. While literary anatomies certainly attest to the far-reaching effects of anatomy, its vocabulary, and its concepts, this is not an argument I put forth here, since the analysis of the literary anatomy has already been insightfully handled by a number of other scholars. See especially Devon Hodges’s *Renaissance Fictions of Anatomy* (1985) and Grant Williams’ “Disfiguring the Body of Knowledge: Anatomical Discourse and Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*” (2001). While some of the historical documents I include in my analysis self-identify as anatomies, I analyze these texts for their content, not for the way they link their *structure* to anatomical discourse. The authors I deal with focus on the body as their subject matter, whereas the literary anatomy is not necessarily as useful for my purposes since it need not in fact be about the body at all.



anatomical works of Galen, Aristotle, and Mondino, some of Vesalius's most notable ancient and medieval predecessors. Although the older models of these anatomists were still popular in the Renaissance—so much so that Andrea Carlino refers to a “blind adherence to classical authorities” and a “monopoly of the Galenists” (*Books of the Body* 2) in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—eventually, Vesalius effectively overturned the Galenic paradigm in what is often referred to as the “Vesalian revolution” of anatomy. His efforts were reflected, albeit belatedly, in English anatomical praxis and theory. What I would like to emphasize here is the way in which Vesalius's approach to the discipline of anatomy positioned the body, and its visceral exploration, at the heart of all anatomical learning. This change is noteworthy because it catalyzes a discursive construction of the body that is reflected in, and refracted by, early modern plays that inflect corporeal violence with anatomical or dissective nuances. Never before had the tangible body and all of its parts occupied such a central position within anatomical study. As Jonathan Sawday writes,

Vesalius and his contemporaries...in their urge to overturn Galenic authority, stressed the primacy of ‘ocular evidence’ in their explorations of the body. The important difference between their undertakings and those of classical authority, they continually claimed, was that, unlike Galen and those who followed Galen, they had *seen* the body with their own eyes. (26, emphasis in original)

Sawday's choice to use and italicize a tautological expression—seeing the body with one's own eyes—is significant, I believe. His phrasing suggests the degree to which the penetrative visual encounter (and further, the tactile, visceral encounter) with the body would become a defining feature of the newly revitalized discipline of anatomy. The

Vesalian approach emphasized “*autopsia*, seeing-for-oneself,” as Cunningham puts it (“The End of the Sacred Ritual of Anatomy” 190). A German student of anatomy, Baldasar Heseler (whom Sawday mentions only once in his book, in a different context than I do here), records his experience of Vesalius’s teachings in terms remarkably close to those Sawday uses: during dissection “[Vesalius] showed us pictures which he has published in his little book and in his *Tabulae* and he compared them with the present subject, and to be sure, they corresponded completely. For *I saw this with my own eyes*, as I stood quite near” (237, emphasis added)<sup>27</sup>. If Vesalius’s precursors had “seen” the body through the eyes of others, in reported textual form, anatomists, or would-be anatomists, of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are encouraged to “see” in an entirely different way, in an unmediated, perceptually immediate way.

As is evident in Heseler’s commentary on Vesalius’s anatomy lesson, ocular observation not only enters into dialogue with textual authority, but becomes the means by which prior information is validated or rejected, and thus new knowledge gained. Opened up before the anatomist’s eyes, the body has the final word. It is this shift in the theory and praxis of dissective science that makes the anatomical investigation resonate so powerfully with the body-centered dynamics of the theatre. Characters like Lear, Soranzo, and D’Amville, who wish to acquire knowledge of others, are (sometimes compulsively) drawn to the possibility of fulfilling their wishes by seeing the body opened up, and their fantasies (whether unrealized or not) encouraged early modern spectators to perceive enactments of the body’s violation as occasions for

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<sup>27</sup> Heseler’s eyewitness account of the 1540 dissections at Bologna is a valuable piece of historical evidence. Heseler’s notes form the earliest first-hand spectator account of Vesalius’s lectures. See Charles O’ Malley’s article, “The Anatomical Sketches of Vitus Tritonius Athesinus and Their Relationship to Vesalius’s *Tabulae Anatomicae*” for how Athesinus’s notes (reportedly documenting a public anatomy of Vesalius’s in 1537, and thus earlier than Heseler’s account) are in fact revised after the fact and supplemented with material from Galen and other textual sources.

epistemological empowerment. The body-as-proof engendered a means of responding to instances of penetrative violence based on the promise of discovery and revelation, rather than upon the destruction of the human frame.

As both Sawday and Carlino note, and as is evident even from the quodlibetarian model of dissection (see Fig. 1 below), prior to Vesalius the transmission and cultivation of anatomical learning was, counterintuitively, text-centered<sup>28</sup>. What Sawday calls the patrilineal model of the body's history helped to promulgate the work of the ancients by favouring textual information rather than practical advancements in knowledge that could have literally rewritten history<sup>29</sup>. Mondino's approach, for example, holds up the textual authority of prior authors of anatomy over and above first-hand discoveries he might have made in his own dissections. Of key significance to my analysis of bodily dynamics in the playhouses is the transfer from the Mondino-like model of textual authority to corporeal authority, which would install the body as the primary referent of knowledge in the Renaissance anatomist's quest to know human anatomy better. Although it would seem as though the practical demonstration Heseler relates is still reminiscent of pre-early modern anatomy, where "the purpose of dissection is the verification or demonstration of the text" (Wilson 64), the Heseler example is in fact subtly, but importantly different. Heseler seems to suggest that the dissected subject is, in relation to Vesalius's drawings, at least in a position of equal

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<sup>28</sup> The quodlibetarian model was the one prevailing prior to the Vesalian revolution. In keeping with this model, those participating in the process of dissection assumed compartmentalized roles. During the dissection, the demonstrator (ostensor) and the reader (lector) were at a remove from the cadaver because the surgeon (sector) physically performed the dissection, while the learned anatomy lector (lecturer) read from a canonical anatomy text; one often used in Renaissance dissections was Mondino de Luzzi's *Anathomia* (1316).

<sup>29</sup> Sawday offers a useful genealogy of how knowledge of the human body was textually transmitted throughout the ages, from the Alexandrians and onwards (see p. 39).



Fig. 1. An example of a dissection performed in accordance with the quodlibetarian model. From Johannes de Ketham, *Fasciculo di Medicina* (1493). As many critics of this image have noted, the textually-based learning represented by the professor triumphs over the manual manipulation of the body, and what it might reveal in the moment of dissection. Credit: Wellcome Library.

authority, for he notes that *they* correspond. The ambiguity of the pronoun “they” in Heseler’s writing is instructive; if “they” refers to both the body and the text, the implied meaning of “they correspond” is that neither the cadaver nor Vesalius’s book holds out ultimate authority: both are equalized in relation to one another. If “they” is taken to refer back to Vesalius’s published pictures, then the transfer of authority from text to body is even stronger: the latter is being checked against the former, in a radical reversal of the Mondino hierarchy. Heseler’s engagement with Vesalius’s methodology gives us some indication of the body’s newly acquired agency in the empirically oriented dissective science of the mid- to late Renaissance. As I will show, Heseler is one of many writers in the period who understand the body and its entrails as something more than simply that which can be read to be learned or known. It is this very understanding of the body which is conveyed to the spectators of plays that “would find out by [...] anatomy” (*The Atheist’s Tragedy* 5.2.144) something more about the particular individual under scrutiny and also about the human subject he or she is taken to represent. Under this logic, when in early modern drama the human body is cut into, or when its entrails are exposed, even if the circumstances surrounding this exposure victimize the character, the audience is still left with the opportunity to view violence in a revelatory light. Plays in this vein affix their attention not to reading *about* bodily interiority—for what could Lear glean from an anatomy textbook about his daughter’s “hard heart”?—but to seeing and performing anatomization in a way that tempers its necessary corporeal violence with the promise of visceral knowledge.

Working to challenge the flawed information that resulted from his predecessors’ reluctance to confront the body’s viscera, Vesalius’s approach sought to

synthesize the multiple roles within the quodlibetarian model into one. The anatomist now *became* the dissector. A painting (c. 1580) depicting English anatomist, physician, and surgeon John Banister (1533-1610) delivering a lecture on anatomy at the Barber-Surgeons' Hall illustrates the consolidation of these two identities within the newly reformed practice of dissection (Fig. 2).

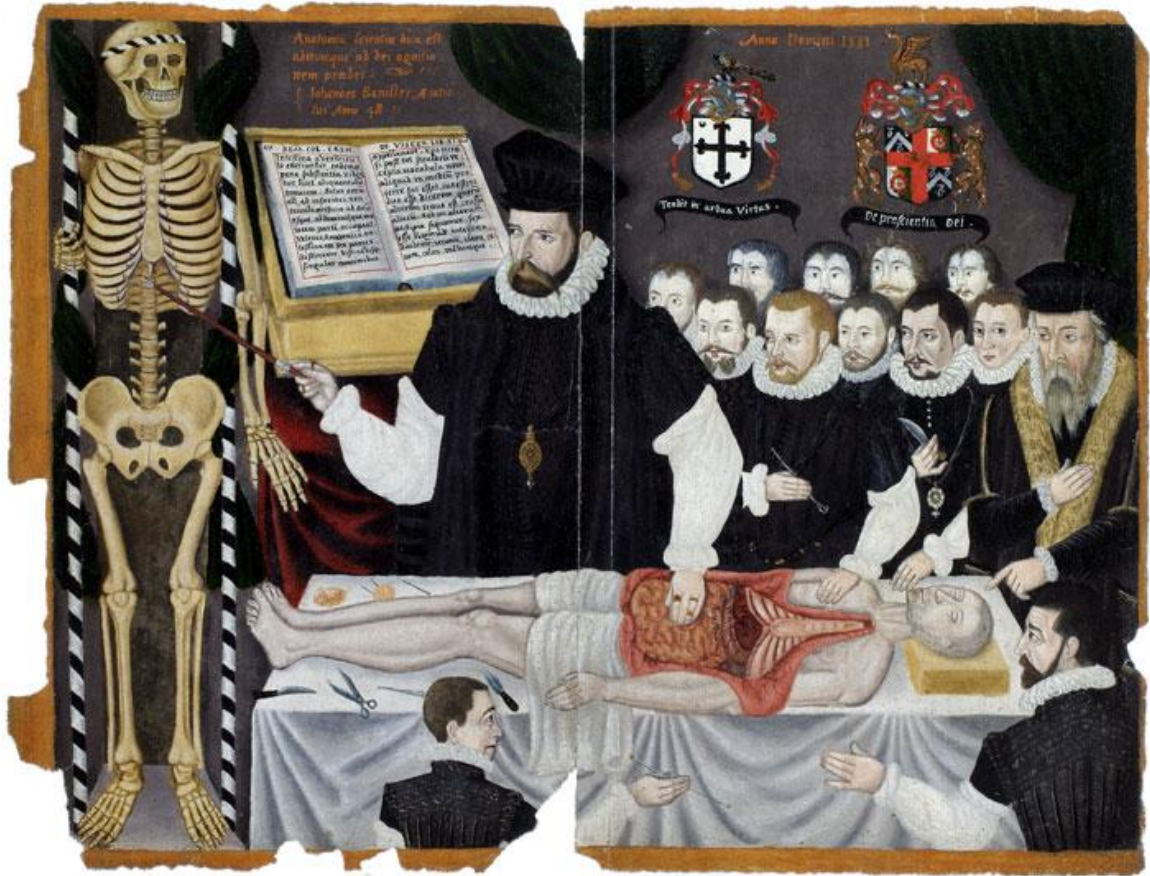


Fig. 2. A depiction of a dissection later in the period (c. 1580) in which the anatomist-lecturer (here, John Banister) no longer distances himself from the corpse. From John Banister's *Anatomical Tables*. Credit: Anatomy Acts Exhibition Website.

In his emphasis on praxis, Vesalius made direct contact with the physical body of paramount importance for members of the medical profession like Banister, and for the student of medicine. The new corporeally-centered science of the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries would in turn play a formative role in intensifying interest in the

body, and in shaping the direction of that interest not only for members of the medical community but for the early modern public at large. Because “anatomy is as it were a most certaine and sure guide to the admirable and most excellent knowledge of ourselues, that is of our owne proper nature” and of the nature of “all those things which are contained in the most spacious and ample bosom of this whole Vniuerse” (Crooke 13-14, 12), the early modern body became welded to epistememes not merely confined to scientific disciplines. Unsurprisingly, then, the far-reaching, almost cosmic application of the revelations promised by anatomization extends to dramatic depictions of bodies whose interiors are seemingly irresistible to those seeking the kind of knowledge Crooke describes.

Of course, the acquisition of bodily knowledge is not a pursuit exclusive to the Renaissance; it is at stake for both ancient and early modern anatomists. In many ways, the human body has always been a body of knowledge. However, what leads me to emphasize the epistemological drive of Renaissance anatomical inquiry in what is primarily a project on drama is the way in which that drive is literally and figuratively solidified in the body to body encounter. I would respond to the reservations voiced by Hillman and Sugg regarding modern criticism’s reductive assimilation of staged violence and public dissection by asserting that, in terms of its heavy focus on learning about the body by using the body itself, the early modern practice of anatomy resonates closely with the intercorporeal dynamics produced by plays that adopt dissective discourse. Although pre-early modern anatomists certainly depended upon the practice of dissection to further their knowledge of the body, an even higher value was placed upon textual learning; by contrast, post-Vesalian anatomy prioritized the experience of

being in the physical presence of the opened body. In terms of their mutual endorsement of the body-as-proof, the intimacy that developed between the two arenas of dissective science and dramatic performance during the early modern period might not have been possible without the shift to a less text-heavy economy of anatomical learning. This shift certainly has valuable methodological implications. It enables me to consider the anatomical discourse of the Renaissance as participating in a cultural awareness that also informed the theatre and spectator responses to violent entertainment, and to look beyond the fact that characters like Lear or D'Amville or Webster's Ferdinand (*The Duchess of Malfi*) explicitly import the vocabulary and practices of English Renaissance anatomists into the playhouses via references to anatomies and the processes of dissection<sup>30</sup>. These kinds of allusions in plays, while providing valuable examples for analysis, give us only part of the picture if we lose sight of the three-dimensional bodies that perpetrate (and withstand) corporeal violation in performance.

It is for this reason that I have also maintained that the presentation/representation divide is instrumental in structuring a particular kind of response to the body's violation, one which is guided by the spectator's knowledge that the actor's living body is able to withstand the death and decay typically accompanying non-representational wounding and cutting of the body. Allusions to anatomical science in playtexts are not simply (inter)textual, but also draw upon the physical dynamics of events that are performed on, or between, two or more bodies. To study

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<sup>30</sup> Ferdinand makes a topical reference to the Barber-Surgeons of London, who gave anatomy lessons, and sometimes performed dissections (see *The Duchess of Malfi* 5.2.77-80). References such as these abound in plays of the time (see especially Neill, Nunn, and Sugg for further examples). For more information on the Barber-Surgeons see Dobson and Walker's *Barbers and Barber-Surgeons of London: A History of the Barbers' and Barber-Surgeons Companies* (1979).



theatricalized dissections only as textual representations would be to “flatten” the body in the same way Galen and his followers did, by studying a “human organism [...] composed not of bone, muscle, and tissue, but of books” (Sugg 1). It would be to ignore the magnetism of the physically present, material body which so evidently captivated the early modern public’s attention, and the attention of theatre audiences. As I imply below in my analysis of *The Bloody Banquet*, in both playwrights’ and anatomists’ excavations of the body, spectators are imbricated in a process of visual and verbal unveiling that deserves to be carefully differentiated from readers’ textual encounters with anatomized bodies. When the play directs the banquet attendees to “wonder” at “what’s seene” it instructs witnesses inside and outside the fictional frame to partake in an embodied and sensory learning experience that revolves around a three dimensional, visibly present body. What is to be known—the body and its story—cannot truly be known unless it is seen, as the Tyrant in *The Bloody Banquet* expresses, and as anatomists of the time intimate. In this respect, the Tyrant’s lines fall short of their meaning if they are read only as text and not interpreted with regard to the performance they call for. In anticipation of the presence of a sensorily engaged audience (both onstage and off), the visceral dynamics of the banquet scene draw their significance from the potential performance of the body as cannibalized flesh and as optical object of “wonder” (s.d. 1922). While the many writers of literary anatomies in the period textualized the body, or corporealized the text, anatomical epistemology disseminated the idea that the body, and its knowledge, could not simply be reduced to text, or confined to books. The visceral experience of other human bodies was better, the anatomists claimed, for the advancement of learning, and many fictional characters

seem to have taken this instruction to heart in their violent fantasies of corporeal access. By referencing anatomy and dissection, dramatists invoke not just literary contexts, and not just the content of anatomical textbooks, but also *live*, fleshly contexts like actual dissections, the allure of which was transferrable to theatrical performance precisely because it, too, was live.

As the sixteenth century progresses, what the authors of anatomical treatises look for, discover, and describe is likely to be governed by a connection (or a desired connection) to the material human body. John Caius (1510-1573), for example, adhered to the classic teachings of Galen and Hippocrates in his lectures for the Barber-Surgeons of London, but in 1552 he published an account of disease (sweating sickness) based on his own direct observations of those suffering from illness—a first in England’s medical publication history (Buckland-Wright 807). Eventually, once Vesalius’s influence reached England, this kind of primary contact with the body would become first and foremost the ground of knowledge, rather than the (often out-of-date) texts which offered second-hand knowledge about the body<sup>31</sup>. It is in this new spirit of direct observation, experimentation, and treatment, that John Banister annexed to his *Needefull, New, and Necessary Treatise of Chyrurgerie* (first published in 1575) the experiments he claims on his title page are “mine ovvne inuention, truely tried, and daily of me practised.” In 1594, *The Pearle of Practise, or Practisers Pearle, For Phisicke and Chirurgerie* (authored by John Hester, but “found out” by James

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<sup>31</sup> J.C. Buckland-Wright identifies the work of John Banister, who lectured for the Barber-Surgeons, as the turning point in England’s transition from antiquated to “modern” anatomical practices. Although the Barber-Surgeons were licensed by Henry VIII to perform four dissections per year beginning in 1540, Banister was the first lecturer to use and publish (in 1578) the new discoveries derived from the groundbreaking work of Vesalius and Columbus on the continent (see Buckland-Wright 810-811). The reforms in the medical community are also coincident with the popularization of anatomy, which in the 1570’s “swept England” with “new intellectual and dramatic possibilities” (Sugg 2).

Fourestier after his death) reflects a similar emphasis, promising on its title page “the learned observations and proved practises of many expert men in both faculties.” Virtually the entire text (pages 1-72) intersperses a collection of anecdotes regarding the healing of various illnesses and injuries with the appropriate treatments for each case. These anecdotes anchor the text firmly in the realm of empirical bodily knowledge, recording the experiences of several practitioners (listed in the text by their initials) with a diverse population of men, women, and children. Even though the tangible immediacy of this kind of intercorporeal connection is sustained and recorded textually (in anatomy textbooks, surgical manuals, instructional medical treatises, philosophical and theological tracts on the body, and other historical records like the Barber-Surgeons annals), and even though the fantasy of intracorporeal knowledge may have substituted for first-hand experience, these texts disclose the preeminence of the intimate body to body encounters that the new anatomical science and discourse popularized in its practice and theory. I propose, then, that the way early moderns outside the theatres document their conceptual and hands-on engagements with anatomy and dissection can help to fill in some of the gaps left by evidence regarding audience engagement with violated bodies in the theatre. In their non-dramatic writings on the body, these authors attest to the association between knowledge and the palpable human body that would resurface both in the texts of plays, and in the available frames of reference that shadowed theatrical performances of violently articulated bodily discoveries.

A macabre scene from *The Bloody Banquet* (1639) provides an excellent example, in that it offers spectators the opportunity to perceive the play’s “bloodiness”

through the lens of anatomy<sup>32</sup>. These anatomical outlines ultimately allow the violated body to produce knowledge and power for the characters who look upon it. Instead of merely embodying destruction, the eponymous bloody banquet takes on the qualities of an anatomy lesson or lecture in its preoccupation with intensively viewing and thereby learning from the body on display. Near the play's conclusion, stage directions indicate that flesh and a "*skull all bloody*" (1920) are brought in for an adulterous Queen to eat (and presumably drink blood from) as her punishment. The scene is reminiscent of a perverse anatomy lecture, for the skull and limbs of the Queen's lover, Tymethes, provide a focal point around which the Tyrant (the victim of the Queen's infidelity) explains at length the precipitating events behind the bloody banquet. Although the Tyrant's narrative relates the Queen's punishment—to "taste no other sustenance [...] / Till her loves body be consum'd in hers" (1949-50), the scene is not punitive in nature; rather, much like a dissection it is structured around a process of verbal exegesis that relates to a present audience (the banqueters) the meaning of the sight they see before them. What might have been only a gruesome sight to behold, both for viewers inside and outside the fictional world, is reconfigured as an occasion for epistemological empowerment. Eventually, the information the banqueters glean extends beyond the purpose of the banquet to the identity of the corpse itself, bringing the attention back around full circle to the fleshly matter from whence it originated. As in the Vesalian anatomy lesson, those present participate in centralizing the body within a process of disclosure that relies heavily upon bearing witness by "seeing with one's own eyes."

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<sup>32</sup> There is no universal critical consensus on the play's author. In *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, the play is included as a Middleton-Dekker collaboration. The text I cite here is the Malone Society reprint (1962), in which Samuel Schoenbaum gives a brief summary of potential authorship theories (see v-vi). See also Gary Taylor's article "Thomas Middleton, Thomas Dekker, and *The Bloody Banquet*" in *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 94.2 (2000):197-233 for further discussion of authorship of the play.

As it was with Sawday's use of the phrase, here the tautological nature of the expression is appropriate, for the scene itself seems to overemphasize how much these characters use their ocular faculties: the Tyrant's own emphasis on the banqueters' eyes and their insistent desire to see is equally matched by the way his guests self-identify as onlookers. Indeed, prior to the Tyrant's elucidation the guests have already noticed "three quarters of a man hung up" (Tymethes's remains) and asked, "What horrid and inhumane spectacle / Is yonder that presents it selfe to sight?" (1883, 1881-82). These are inquisitive guests who describe their engagement with Tymethes's body in terms of what they can see; one guest (the King displaced by the usurping Tyrant) even complains, "Where ere I looke these limbes are in mine eye" (1915).

All of these pointed references to seeing suggest the climactic scene of the play is not just intended to convey the horror of forced cannibalism. As much as this is a scene about violence done to Tymethes's body and to the Queen's humanity, it is also about what the violated body can reveal, and how those on the receiving end of that revelation can access the body's information. If the repeated mentions of the bloody spectacle might encourage spectators to "grossly gape" (*Othello* 3.3.400) at what they see onstage, the scene's self-reflexivity about the connection between seeing the body and extracting its knowledge suggests that spectators turn their attention back upon themselves as well, and reflect upon what can be gained when one's eyes become "serious suitors" (*The Bloody Banquet* 1925) to the meaning of what is laid out before them. When the deposed King discovers his son is the victim whose flesh is on gruesome display, he utters "my sonne *Tymethes*" (1956, italics in original), verbally and symbolically closing the "anatomy lesson" and reiterating one of its major findings:

the identity of the corpse. The King seems to gain not just information, but power as well from the “lesson” his eyes have sought—indeed, the play suggests that one follows upon the other, for immediately following the disclosure of Tymethes’s name and his body’s “narrative,” the King is able to execute his plan to defeat the Tyrant. The King is also able to effectively transfer his power, since in the play’s denouement Tymethes’s death is redefined as a sacrifice that is divinely compensated for by the reappearance of the King’s younger son, who will be the kingdom’s new ruler. The plot’s conclusion, although moving away from what I have argued are the echoes of anatomical demonstration in the banquet scene, is the culmination of the play’s reworking of the consequences of corporeal violence. Invoking and reflecting its liaisons with the pursuit of knowledge via dissection, in the end *The Bloody Banquet* self-consciously reframes its violence in terms of achievement, rather than loss, and models for spectators the potential epistemological empowerment that may await witnesses of bloody spectacles.

*The Bloody Banquet* places vision and empowerment at the heart of its characters’ encounter with the body’s entrails, and in doing so, it strikes up a dialogue with the practice and pedagogy of English anatomists who, following the Vesalian revolution, valorized direct observation and contact with the body. In the work of William Harvey (1578-1657), the English physician recognized as the first to accurately detail the blood’s circulation, we find a clear emphasis on seeing as a prelude and partner to knowing. In 1616, Harvey’s assessment of anatomy was forcefully ocular-centric: “Anatomy is that branch of learning which teaches...by ocular inspection and dissection” (qtd. in Wilson 76). In Harvey’s estimation, seeing enables anatomical

knowledge, empowering the beholder, the dissector, or the surgeon to learn and to engage with the body which is at the receiving end of the anatomical cut. Three aspects of Harvey's statement reroute us back to the drama of his time: dissection, visuality, and the promise of learning. Instructing his auditors much like an anatomist in a dissection would, the Tyrant in *The Bloody Banquet* mitigates the horror of the dismembered body on display by associating the act of seeing with the acquisition of knowledge: "I will discourse; what's seene shall now be knowne" (1926), he states. The insistent epistemological visuality of this scene—the idea that seeing prepares one for knowing—is coupled with the fact that a body lies at the center of visual attention, directing the revelation of information. Once more, *Othello* provides an apt phrase: this is a version of "ocular proof" (3.3.365) but without its attendant anxieties. Such empirical "proof" requires a number of elements that are clearly also the structuring properties of the anatomy lesson: lecturer and audience, demonstration and witnessing. What should be the horrific aftermath of the body's destruction becomes at the same time the catalyst for the production of knowledge, allowing spectators to engage with corporeal violation in a way that can prove to be pleasurable rather than disconcerting.

What I have been suggesting is the importance of examining what perhaps might be termed the "interfaces" by which the body came to be associated with knowledge and learning in early modern anatomical culture. The promise of corporeal knowledge, which the science of anatomy encouraged early moderns to view as a window onto the nature of human beings and their divine creator, was most present in the body to body encounter, and thus was most ardently promised by both the dramatic and the anatomical theatres. Spectators in both arenas were persuaded to overlook the body's

destruction, which could be quite “horrid and inhumaine” as *The Bloody Banquet* asserts, by the popular notion that opened bodies were gateways themselves—to the acquisition of higher knowledge epitomized or evidenced by the human body’s structure and contents. Violent entertainment, then, appealed not to a twisted or dark facet of audiences’ desires, but to the very real promise that bearing witness to the body’s sometimes bloody undoing could be instructive, edifying, and empowering.

I have also remarked upon the value in remaining attentive to how theatre functions as a medium, especially in terms of how spectators are invited to process the bodies onstage and all that befalls them<sup>33</sup>. Implied, but not directly stated, in Paster’s and Garner’s comments about the centrality of the actor’s body in dramatic performance is the idea that theatre is not just about one body (the actor’s body) but at least two. The “spectator’s gaze” (Garner’s phrase, as cited at the beginning of this chapter) involves an intercorporeal relationship between a physically present witness and the body that is witnessed, as does the way the actor’s body signifies (Paster’s focal interest). While the dynamic between anatomist and corpse is not dialogic in the same way it is for spectator and actor, Renaissance anatomy comes to be defined by a praxis that nevertheless occurs between simultaneously present bodies, replacing the formerly cherished interface between reader and the absent bodies represented in text. As Vesalius expresses in his writing and teachings, immediate contact with the cadaver, and apprehension of all its parts, is not to be avoided, but rather to be welcomed. Whether between anatomist and corpse, or between the fictional dissector and the dissected, “from this point on, the opening of the body will serve as the basis of new knowledge”

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<sup>33</sup> See Samuel Weber’s *Theatricality as Medium* (2004) for a philosophically and theoretically informed analysis of why theatre deserves consideration as a medium whose properties affect and effect meaning.



(J. Martin 224). Following Vesalius, English anatomists endeavored to use the body in front of them, rather than the textual body of anatomical work that lay behind them. “*Demonstrare propria illius Cadaveris Nova vel Noviter inventa,*” vows Harvey in the second of his “*Canones Anatomiae Generalis,*” the numbered pedagogical self-reminders that he lays down at the beginning of his *Prelectiones*. In his determination to “demonstrate the particular features of the body on the table” (the translation of this second rule, given by the Royal College of Physicians of London in their 1882 reproduction of his notes), Harvey offers to his anatomy students the opportunity to value the sensory information the sensible flesh has to offer. Harvey’s pedagogy, like the other medical methodologies discussed in this chapter, encapsulates an intensively body-oriented epistemology that in the early modern period migrated from its scientific context into the playwright’s imagination, and into the playgoer’s frame of reference. Preparing the spectator of dramatic theatre to engage with, rather than just visually consume, the spectacular violence exacted upon performing bodies, the cultural (en)trails that left their mark upon staged images of brutality offered spectators an alternative to the “shattering” experience of horror. If dissections, both of the anatomy and of the dramatic theatres, could not avoid the body’s destruction, they nevertheless offered something else in return—a body *of* knowledge that duplicated within the boundaries of its frame the structure of everything outside itself. They offered each audience member the opportunity to extract this paradigmatic knowledge, and to become “an emp’ror of a world, / This little world of man” (*The Atheist’s Tragedy* 3.3.44-45).

## Actors Dead and Alive

While anatomical constructions of the body's inherent epistemological value insinuated their way into enactments of violence on the Renaissance stage, the embodiment of "dissectees" in the playhouses was also crucially different than in the anatomy theatres, despite the fact that both venues shared many definitive features of performance. If the body and its recesses could facilitate a larger understanding of the relationship between body, self, and world, what were the implications for this knowledge (and access to it) when the body in question was not simply a corpse? Where dramatized violence borrowed from anatomical discourse and practice, it also departed from live anatomies in the way subjects of dissection were embodied, since actors in their actor/character blend were capable of withstanding the body's (seeming) physical disintegration without actually sustaining permanent damage in the way that corpses did. Dramatists' reminders to audiences of this fact are not as overtly metatheatrical as the examples discussed in Chapter One, but they exist nonetheless. In what follows, I offer examples from Shakespeare and Ford that exemplify how, and to what end, dissectively-imbued dramatic violence provides a unique experience of the body's unveiling, a focus I sustain and develop throughout the following chapter as well.

In a scene from *As You Like It*, Silvius, a shepherd, calls upon Petrarchan convention to convince his beloved shepherdess, Phebe, of the intensity of his love. He does so by imploring her to show more compassion than "the common executioner...that dies and lives by bloody drops" (3.5.3-7). In an extended metaphor

to which both Silvius and Phebe contribute, love's potential to physically wound a lover is (very briefly) considered, then debated, and rejected:

PHOEBE: Thou tell'st me there is murder in mine eye.

[...]

And if mine eyes can wound, now let them kill thee.

Now counterfeit to swoon, why now fall down;

Or if thou canst not, O, for shame, for shame,

Lie not, to say mine eyes are murderers.

Now show the wound mine eye hath made in thee.

Scratch thee but with a pin, and there remains

Some scar of it. Lean upon a rush,

The cicatrice and capable impessure

Thy palm some moment keeps. But now mine eyes,

Which I have darted at thee, hurt thee not;

Nor I am sure there is no force in eyes

That can do hurt.

SILVIUS: O dear Phoebe,

If ever—as that ever may be near—

You meet in some fresh cheek the power of fancy,

Then shall you know the wounds invisible

That love's keen arrows make. (3.5.10-32)

Phebe's response is intended to deflate the rhetorical logic that would endow that which is immaterial (love) with the power to bring about physiological effects. However, the

scene's complex treatment of the body's relationship to material and immaterial violence is worthy of further consideration. A similar exchange is to be found in Ford's

*'Tis Pity She's a Whore:*

SORANZO: Did you but see my heart, then you would swear—

ANNABELLA: That you were dead.

[...]

SORANZO: I'm sick, and sick to th'heart.

ANNABELLA [*calling*]: Help, aqua vitae!

SORANZO: What mean you?

ANNABELLA: Why, I thought you had been sick. (3.2.23-24; 35-36)

In both instances two different understandings of the body seem to be at play. Before the addressees of their amorous petitions respond, both Soranzo and Silvius are able to conflate emotional and physical wounding or illness by drawing upon the conventions of Petrarchan cliché. Phoebe, however, demands that her suitor recognize that love's "wounds" are different than the discernible imprint recorded by the body as a result of its vulnerability to the material world. Annabella similarly insists upon the difference between Soranzo's vulnerable emotional state and his true physiological state, by following through on the literal implications of his bodily discourse. Onstage, these two scenes have the power to remind audiences that the body in performance has real presence for them as a fleshly entity. And yet it is not quite the case that the literalizing, material focus of Annabella's and Phoebe's approach to the body triumphs, and that spectators are invited to see the actor's signifying body in relation to its external

influences in a way that neatly divides “wounds invisible” and that which can truly leave the body hurt, scarred, or dead. The very idea of invisible wounds—and indeed, the whole trajectory of these two conversations about the body—encapsulates the paradox lurking within the actor’s doubly defined body as both self and character. The actor/character’s body participates in producing an effect of physical trauma that carries the force and semiotic weight of material violence, but which is also immaterial in the sense that it leaves only a fictional corporeal mark in its wake. In an important sense, Silvius’s comparison of Phoebe to one who “dies and lives by bloody drops,” is not just a lover’s hyperbole, but an analogy for the performing body’s ability to sustain fictional injury or death and, of course, live on past the performance’s bloody drops.

In the same way, Annabella metatheatrically points towards the body’s paradoxical capacity to die and live through theatrical violence. At the level of fiction, Annabella is right to imply that “one can literally see the heart only when its owner is dead and cut open” (Bevington 1937)<sup>34</sup>; the body of Soranzo as character would have to die in order for her to accomplish what he implores. However, the actor’s body can survive what its character’s cannot. As the play will shortly imply with spectacular force, in performance Annabella’s statement rings partly true and partly false. When Giovanni enters with Annabella’s eviscerated and bloody heart upon his dagger (5.6.10) spectators see the evidence of a violent act that has killed the character (thus affirming Annabella’s observation that the body must die when its heart is to be seen) but not the actor. The death of the character but not the actor thereby complicates the applicability of Annabella’s observation to theatrical events, suggesting spectators think further about how the body participates in staged violence. The heart materializes as a

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<sup>34</sup> See David Bevington’s footnote in *English Renaissance Drama*.

legitimate theatrical object only under the condition that it belongs to the acted persona and not the actor's own person. Where the Barber-Surgeons could produce an eviscerated human heart for their audiences, Ford's theatre produced a prop, however grisly and convincing that prop may or may not have been<sup>35</sup>. Yet in some sense the heart in the performance of *'Tis Pity* does belong to both character and actor, for their bodies may be perceptually distinguishable—as male actor adopting a female role, for example—but are anchored in only one indivisible human body. As such, this particular body, the paradoxically doubled but singular body, can “show” spectators its heart and avoid the fate Annabella attributes to the dissected body. As a result of Annabella's allusion to dissection and her own subjection to it, the phenomenology of the theatrical body comes into full view; this body gives itself to spectators as a suffering or violated entity, and yet also as a body whose material physiology is protected by virtue of the necessarily fictional quality of dramatically staged dissection.

Where violence is aligned with dissection, as it is in Ford's play, the difference between the capabilities of the performing body and the anatomist's corpse is acutely delivered to the audience. Annabella's statement and Phoebe and Silvius's debate remind spectators why staged violence—even if as seemingly influential upon the body as “love's keen arrows”—can only finally aim to inflict invisible wounds upon its victims. The actor's body in character, like the figure of the afflicted lover represented in Soranzo and Silvius, sustains damage that can seem to be physiologically destructive, but which falls just short of exacting the physical consequences it purports to bring

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<sup>35</sup> Famously, the plot of Peele's *The Battle of Alcazar* calls for stage properties that include three vials of blood, a sheep's gaster, raw flesh, and decapitated heads; see Greg's mention of these stage directions in *Two Elizabethan Stage Abridgements* (pp. 30, 32, 36, 62). Although no stage directions exist in *'Tis Pity* to clarify what exactly would have been used to represent Annabella's heart in the early modern theatre, Cynthia Marshall's assertion that “an animal's heart would be on the dagger” (140) seems likely in light of what we do know about how plays staged the body's viscera.

about. Where the violence falls short of its mark is where the actor's body in and of itself materializes for spectators. In both the anatomical and dramatic theatres, what Garner calls the violated body's "insistent facticity" matters, but, as Garner expresses, when that facticity is inscribed within the symbolic field of theatre, it can cut through "the representational structures erected to maintain it" (qtd. in Dickson 7), offering the actor's bodily presence, rather than what it represents, as a site of attention for the audience. The mediation between the body's own material existence and its existence *as* and *in* narrative representation is one that occurs not in the anatomy theatre but in the dramatic theatre, which can offer its spectators a presented *and* a represented, fictional, image. The process of returning the body to itself *as* matter, the same process Phoebe enacts when she insists upon the "cicatrice and capable impressure" of materially real pain as something quite different than metaphorical wounding, places a demand upon the spectator to recognize, from a vantage point at least partly outside the fiction, how the theatrical stage uses the material bodies of its actors. Unlike the lifeless corpses of anatomical study, actors who representationally absorb the violence inflicted upon their characters are capable of signifying to audiences as both violated and intact, alive and dead.

As Lisa Dickson notes in her analysis of *Titus Andronicus* and contemporary audience response to its violence, "the conventions of the theatre demand that we remain in our seats instead of rushing to call an ambulance or onto the stage itself to administer aid" (17). While the analogous scenario for early modern audiences would sound (and look) somewhat different, the principle behind Dickson's observation still applies to an early modern context. When ten thousand early modern Londoners shed

tears in response to a performance of “brave Talbot,” as Thomas Nashe famously claims in *Pierce Penniless* (1592), they “*imagine* they behold him [Talbot] fresh bleeding” (qtd. in Gurr, *Playgoing* 140, emphasis added). Rather than rushing to the stage to tend to the freshly bleeding Talbot, spectators, according to Nashe, understand that the powerful spectacle they witness is effected by “the tragedian that represents his [Talbot’s] person” (qtd. in Gurr 140). Annabella herself, in her response to Soranzo’s claim to sickness, provides a caution for audience members who would interpret too literally the body’s professed or ostensible suffering onstage; she does call for help (albeit disingenuously), and Soranzo’s subsequent confusion over her response makes it clear that she has erred (however deliberately) in taking his representations of corporeal pain too seriously. Beaumont’s George and Nell (from *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*) provide a similar example (also discussed further in Chapter One): instead of engaging with represented stage violence as do the bleeding Talbot’s spectators, they place too much credence in the fighting they witness onstage and interpret the action as if Rafe’s acting body were about to meet the same fate as his character’s (see 3.339-350). Both Beaumont and Ford dramatize what their playtexts suggest is an inappropriate or misguided response to the body under fictional threat, or the body that performs, as opposed to genuinely presenting, its own physical pain. While the power of the represented image certainly commands the attention of those who are witness to performed bodily violations, the presented image—the actor and his physical integrity—does not merely disappear altogether under the weight of representation, these playwrights suggest. If players are “but shadows” (*Midsummer Night’s Dream*



5.1.208), a common trope in early modern drama, their lively corporeal shadows nevertheless inform the way spectators perceive the sum total of staged acts of violence.

I am aware that my argument raises the issue of what Jody Enders calls “death by drama”—the title of her 2002 monograph exploring the medieval urban legends about theatre that are “situated at the fuzzy boundary between theatre and real life” (xxvi). Enders analyzes historical stories that reveal, in her estimation, “what spectators hoped and feared *could* happen in the theatre” (xxii, emphasis in original), one such fear being the possibility that dramatic depictions of violence could lead to death or something like it. This possibility seems to be what Beaumont hints at through the lens of comedy when he puts George and Nell in the anxious position of fearing for Rafe’s safety as he participates in an onstage fistfight. Enders does not extend her analysis to English Renaissance drama, but one of the most famous events of early modern drama’s history—the accidental burning of the Globe Theatre in 1613—suggests that the fear of theatre becoming all too real would not have been irrelevant to playgoing at the time. Certainly, the slippage between the world of drama and the world of its spectators was one of the fears expressed by antitheatricalists, and dramatized by the plays within plays or masques within plays wherein dramatically planned events turn deadly, or deadly events occur under the guise of drama (*Women Beware Women, The Spanish Tragedy, Love’s Sacrifice, The Revenger’s Tragedy*). Perhaps some of the thrill of spectatorship derived, to borrow Herbert Blau’s oft-quoted comment about theatre’s mortality, from the fact that “he who is performing can die there in front of your eyes” (Blau 83). Whether early modern spectators would have experienced a sense that the actor’s body was not entirely protected from staged

violence is an important question which deserves more space than the present discussion allows. It is my contention, however, that the spectator's perception of a threat to the actor's body contributes to the same metatheatrical awareness of the actor's duality as does the perception of the actor's body as inviolable. Both call attention to the "liveness" of the actor's body. This live body, and the way it influences the spectator's assessment of the phenomenology of stage violence, is important to my purposes because it distinguishes dissective violence in playhouses from the medical dissections they so often echo.

By positing the actor's "liveness" I am making use of a word that has circulated prominently in modern performance criticism; the word appears most recognizably in Philip Auslander's work on contemporary film and television and mediatized culture, and is used in a context there that I do not wish to import into the present discussion. The meaning I intend is closer to Blau's assessment of live performance as undeniably mortal, in the sense that it depends upon an actor whose presence as flesh and blood alerts us to the fact that his or her body is alive. Insofar as the acting body *can* die or "is in fact doing so" (Blau 83) across a span of time which includes the time elapsed in the theatre, it is thereby also a live body. It is live in a way that is distinct from the body it impersonates, because regardless of the ontological status of the character's body—whether it is dead, alive, dying, wounded, or even ghostly—the actor's own particular physicality is communicated to audiences, permeating both the representational and the presentational levels of the performance. An eyewitness account from a 1610 performance of *Othello* at Oxford provides an example much like the Nashe anecdote, attesting to the way in which spectators can remain aware of the actor's liveness even

in—or perhaps especially in—scenes that depict or register after the fact the character’s bodily violation. In a letter, Henry Jackson, recording the response Desdemona’s death elicited from spectators, writes about an audience that, like the spectators Nashe describes, are moved to tears by what one would presume is their engagement with the represented fiction. The Riverside Shakespeare translation of Jackson’s Latin writing is as follows: “the celebrated Desdemona, slain in our presence by her husband, although she pleaded her case very effectively throughout, yet moved [us] more after she was dead, when lying on the bed, entreated the pity of her spectators by her very countenance” (qtd. in Kolin 3). The true locus of this audience’s engagement is complex, however, lying neither wholly with the actor nor with the character he represents (in this case, Desdemona). Jackson’s account documents Anthony Dawson’s contention that “as audience members, we shed real tears on account of what we recognize as unreal feelings; that is, we separate out the actor’s body from what it represents” (37). Despite the fact that spectators of this performance of *Othello* shed tears for the murder they witness unfolding in the drama, thereby demonstrating their willingness to engage with what the actor’s body represents, they do so, Jackson’s report suggests, while simultaneously recognizing that there is actorly skill imbuing the dead Desdemona’s face and persona with life. The translation given in Gāmini Salgādo’s *Eyewitnesses of Shakespeare: First Hand Accounts of Performances 1590-1890* (1975) is slightly more direct about Desdemona’s capability to affect audiences after her death: “when she was killed she was even more moving” (30). In both translations, Jackson’s assessment of the actor-audience dynamic is both puzzling and revealing; how could Desdemona still garner a powerful response from the audience

after she dies, thus losing the ability to speak or move? How can one *move* another without movement or life?

What Jackson's peculiar logic suggests is a continued recognition of the actor's live body on the part of spectators. Once again, the "insistent facticity" of the body returns, and, as Dickson claims is the case with staged violence in general, spectators "know that the character is wounded but that the actor is not" (Dickson 17). To possess a "countenance" that can affect an audience with its expressive nature is to remind those watching of an animating force that exists in and beyond the moment of represented violation and death. Jackson's description provides a telling instance of the actor's ability to seem both dead and alive to spectators. Even as the spectators' tears imply their response to Desdemona's murder, in sympathetically mourning her death, the audience evidences its persisting and heightened reaction to her persona, a reaction which happens in relation to an emotionally moving sight that draws upon the actor's own live(li)ness. Desdemona's staged death and its after-effects are both made possible only by the fact that the actor's body has lived on past his character's death. In response to violence, these spectators seem to experience the performing body as a doubled image, affirming Desdemona's death by also affirming the animate vitality of the body delivering the image of her deadness.

Liveness, then, makes its mark upon the spectatorial experience of sick, wounded, traumatized, bleeding, and dead bodies, delivering these vitiated bodies to the spectator's consciousness in a way that crucially separates what is enacted in the anatomical theatre from what is re-enacted upon the dramatist's stage. I have suggested that plays which draw upon anatomical practice and discourse to inspire fictional acts of

violence offer spectators the opportunity to relate to the body as a site of knowledge. In this regard, I have aligned the corporeal dynamics of dissections that are medically didactic with those that are for the purposes of theatrical entertainment, positing an intersection between the experiences of playgoers and those of spectators at public or semi-public (as were the anatomy lectures attended by Baldasar Heselers) dissections. This alignment encourages spectators of drama—some of whom may also have been attendees at the dissections performed by the Barber-Surgeons or the Royal College of Physicians<sup>36</sup>—to see and move past the experience of violence as nihilistically destructive in its aims and effects, and to think of the physically mutilated body in terms of its contribution to larger, immaterial bodies of knowledge. Offering spectators access to corporeal information, the theatrically-articulated dissections of early modern drama also extend to playgoers an accompanying promise of epistemological empowerment.

By cultivating in their spectators a habit of viewing that links the theatrical opening of the body with the expansion of knowledge, dissectively-imbued performances complicate the idea that a viscerally shocking event like Gloucester's blinding "promote[s] a sense of undoing or loss of control" (Marshall 3). Besides associating corporeal unveiling with the acquisition of power, these same performances involve the spectator in a process of reflection upon the presentational level of the drama, where the actorly body's physicality matters substantially. As both plays and

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<sup>36</sup> Dissections became a form of popular social entertainment in Europe as well as in England, attended not just by members of the medical community but by the lay populace as well (see Nunn pp. 5- 6 and 9). Early modern Londoners were eager to be present at the limited number of dissections occurring in both the Barber-Surgeons' Hall (rebuilt in the mid 1630s as a theatre designed by Inigo Jones) and in the Royal College of Physicians' anatomy theatre. So desirable were these events to witness that "records show that whilst the needs of scholastic anatomy in England during the 1620s and 1630s were increasingly catered for by secular law, the supply of cadavers was not adequate to provide for the rise in public dissection as fashionable entertainment" (Billing 4).

eyewitness accounts show, those who gaze upon and engage with the corpse of a Desdemona or the remains of an Annabella do not completely see through or past the materiality of the actor's body, but rather recognize its capacity to (re)vivify the dead or dying body of the character. The persistence, rather than the erasure, of the actor's vivid liveness in the way characters under physical duress signify in performance means that "the dynamics of such feigned theatrical destruction of the body" may not "mirror those of the Barber-Surgeons anatomical dissections" (Nunn 2) or other dissective contexts as closely as some critics have suggested<sup>37</sup>.

This last qualification of the anatomy/dramatic theatre analogy is significant because of what the following chapter describes as a fantasy of vivisection circulating within the field of early modern medicine, and traceable also in select moments and images in early modern playtexts. This is a fantasy which goes largely unacknowledged by anatomists themselves (attesting to the status of vivisection as a cultural taboo) but which is evidenced by the form that anatomical drawings take, and by textually recorded commentaries on the process of dissecting corpses. In both their writings and their artistic reproductions of anatomized bodies, Renaissance anatomists acknowledged, if sometimes inadvertently, the self-defeating paradox of dissection best described by Luke Wilson:

In order for the body to function properly, and thus to be what we believe it really to be, it must deny us access to it—to our selves in other words—either literally or analogically. Any glimpse of the inside of the body is felt to

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<sup>37</sup> See also Neill's discussion of Renaissance anatomy theatres and their "double function" (117). Of the anatomy theatres, Neill asserts that "on the occasion of the grand public lectures, they became, in the full sense, 'theatres', show-places of the body and stages of improving spectacle, where the anatomist acted a drama of the human encounter with death" (117).

invalidate it: a body whose interior is exposed to the eye is felt always to be impaired or damaged. Knowledge of the inside, ‘true’ body has always been a logical and emotional inference from the sight of the impaired body. (62)

The writings of Aulus Cornelius Celsus (a pre-Galenic encyclopedist who documented the important work of Alexandrian anatomists Herophilus and Erasistratus) forward a claim about vivisection that was to persist into the early modern period: that the best way to observe anatomy was to cut open men who were alive. (In the case of Herophilus and Erasistratus, the subjects of vivisection were criminals<sup>38</sup>.) Following Aristotle, who claimed that “no part of a cadaver, for example an eye, a hand, is any longer truly such” since it does not retain its original function (qtd. in Carlino, *Books of the Body* 137, note 56), Celsus adheres to the idea that “the best way by far” to ascertain the body’s true interior structure is through vivisection (qtd. in Carlino 137).

Confirmations of this ethically troubling idea abound in Renaissance medicine, as dissectors struggle with corpses that decay too quickly for the anatomist’s liking, or that provide an inferior opportunity for observing the body’s true inner state than would a live subject. Reportedly, Vesalius “constantly importuned the magistrates to allow him to take the heads of executed criminals so that he might dissect the brain while still warm” (qtd. in Sawday 155). What anatomists—and those who would learn from them—needed was a body that could conquer the self-defeating paradox of dissection. They needed a body that could submit to dissection while maintaining its own vitality

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<sup>38</sup> Condemned criminals were the subjects of Renaissance dissections as well. Carlino, like Sawday, explains how the choice of cadaver was bound up with the judicial system, and that the executed body was specifically chosen to further punish the soul in the afterlife. Carlino cites regulations that forbid the dissection of doctors, students, and people of upright/honorable status and encourages the dissection of foreigners (few were Romans in the sixteenth century period that Carlino surveys) to show that “the anatomist’s scalpel was to be used on the bodies of marginalized, ignoble, and despised people” (95).

and true physical integrity. They desired what could only be achieved by the actor's performing body.



## 4 The Fantasy of Vivisection and Its Theatrical Double

“What shall I do now I behold thy lively body so?”

—*Titus Andronicus* (3.1.104-5).

Retaining its liveness at the metatheatrical level, the actor’s doubled body could offer up its physical interiority without succumbing to the processes of decay and surgical interference that diminished the validity of the results of medical dissection. Like the Desdemona of Henry Jackson’s spectator account (described in the previous chapter), the actor’s body was capable of being paradoxically moving in stillness, alive in death. This body could be “hot ice and wondrous strange black snow” (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream* 5.1.59), and “sick health, / Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!” (*Romeo and Juliet* 1.1.173-74). By being “not what it is,” the theatrical body could do—or *appear* to do—that which the non-representational body could not: reveal its internal or physiological mysteries while also remaining, in a sense, immune to the fundamental physical changes initiated by death and dissection. In this way, the performing body represented a temporary, but important defeat of human mortality in terms of the limitations such mortality placed upon discovery of the human anatomy. Where corpses failed to live up to the ideals of anatomization, their theatrical body doubles presented spectators with a seductive alternative to the self-defeating paradox of dissection: the live body anatomized.

The vitality and liveness persisting in the actor’s body during moments or scenes of physical destruction is of particular importance because key aspects of early modern

anatomical doctrine define study of the dead body as necessary, but not ultimately ideal for the development of knowledge. It is rather the live body, with its processes and structural composition in an uncorrupted and uncompromised state, which can most fully contribute to a complete and accurate anatomical mapping of the human being. Without endeavouring to create an irresolvable contradiction in terms, many anatomical texts nevertheless foster the contradictory idea that the less a subject has met the conditions for or suffered the consequences of the dissective procedure, the more pedagogically ideal this subject is. That is, at times, anatomists seem to desire the impossible: a live body that has been both fully dissected (in the sense of being physically opened and laid bare) and yet has not undergone dissection at all. This fantasy of unobtrusive vivisection is vividly articulated in the anatomical texts and illustrations that I survey in the first half of this chapter, where my aim is to not only provide evidence of a desire for living anatomies, but to show how this desire was also shared by the many early moderns outside the scientific community who eagerly absorbed or were exposed to the published work of anatomists. As was the case in Chapter Three, I ultimately aim to argue that knowledge of the body is seductive to spectators in a way that helps to account for the popularity of (sometimes extreme) corporeal violation, wherein the opening of the body could also tantalize audiences with the promise of epistemological empowerment. However, the present chapter advances this argument by analyzing early modern anatomical illustrations and commentaries for the way they convey to a wide readership of potential theatre spectators the value in accessing the human body's interiors in a live, uncorrupted subject.

Early modern fantasies of vivisection found their way into the theatre, as my reading of Cyril Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy* suggests. When I turn to an extended close reading of Tourneur's play in the second half of the chapter, I will make the link between the idealized mode of corporeal access anatomists and their followers craved, and the way theatrical embodiment in plays like *The Atheist's Tragedy* could seem to satisfy that craving. By offering spectators a paradoxical body that seemed, in the spectator's perceptual cognizance of the character's but not the actor's wounding, immune to impairment, dramatic performances of penetrative violence could approximate for their audiences the experience of human vivisection and its accompanying ideal corporeal knowledge. Tourneur's play is itself ideal in illustrating this particular aspect of spectator experience because it amplifies a widely circulating fantasy of vivisection by honing spectators' desires towards the revelation of a live human brain, which occurs at the play's climax, where the vivisectee temporarily retains full control of his body and indeed of his exposed brain(s). The representation of cranial vivisection in the fictional world exemplifies (up until the victim's death) how actors project to audiences the impression of physical invulnerability even as they (in their actor/character blend) appear to sustain deep, traumatic wounds that can cut to the very core of what sustains human life. As I will argue, *The Atheist's Tragedy* underscores the importance of the relationship between the paradoxically constituted stage bodies that early modern theatre drew to its audiences' attention and the violent acts in which these bodies participated. Responding to the yearning for a dissective practice that did not mar its object of study, the violable/inviolable theatrical body

promised to satisfy a desire for ultimate knowledge of bodily interiority that was otherwise unavailable to spectators.

### Why Vivisection?

At least three issues (which I deal with in turn) are contributing factors to the desire for a vivisection-like access to the body that was as uninvasive as possible: the corpse, as opposed to the live human body, was static rather than active, it was subject to rapid putrefaction, and, once dissected, it had been structurally altered by the scalpel's invasive path. To investigate the action of organs and internal systems (the heart, the circulatory system, respiration, the embryo), some anatomists sought out animal vivisection rather than human dissection, since the former enabled them to view internal physiology in motion. Most notable among those who promoted animal vivisection was Colombo, who thought that "only systematic vivisection" was capable of "lead[ing] us to the truth" (Cunningham 158). Colombo's view arose from his belief that a view of "the body in action" (Cunningham 160) was pedagogically illuminating and necessary for a complete and accurate understanding of the human body. Of course, many of the advancements made in medical science during the early modern period were achieved without the use of vivisection—notably, Harvey's theory of the circulatory system. And yet Harvey, and others, shared Colombo's view on the body in action, a viewpoint which implicitly denigrated the motionless, inactive corpse as an object of study, whether or not vivisection was explicitly cited as a reasonable alternative to dissecting the corpse. To the anatomist, the medical student, or the surgeon, the body in motion offered more—was more epistemologically desirable—

than just the dissected cadaver. Although not an advocate of vivisection *per se*, the anonymous London surgeon whose 1392 manuscript formed the basis of Vicary's popular *A Profitable Treatise of the Anatomie of Mans Body* (1577) anticipates the sentiments of other medical practitioners of the early modern period (both in England and abroad) when he declares the knowledge of the human body's function to be essential to surgery. He writes, "And as Galen saith, he that would know the soothfastness of a thing, busy him not to know only the name of the thing: but the working and the effect of the same thing" (qtd. in Duncan 237). Vicary clearly agreed, reproducing the original comment in only slightly different words in the 1577 edition of his *Anatomie*: "as Galen sayth, he that wyl knowe the certentie of a thing, let him not busy him selfe to knowe only the name of that thing, but also the working and the effect of the same thing" (qtd. in Duncan 238). Echoing these sentiments, Harvey asserts that "the end of Anatomy is knowledge of the part, why it exists, for what purpose it is necessary and what is its use" (qtd. in Persaud, *The Post-Vesalian Era* 58). Even where vivisection is absent from the conversation, the sentiments of anatomists such as Harvey and Vicary help to arouse interest in the human physiology at work, and to place a high value upon its discovery—an achievement which was not possible with the human corpses that were supplied for dissections.

In the experiments carried out on dogs by Vesalius, and by Colombo, to whose works Harvey "often referred" (Persaud, *The Post-Vesalian Era* 56), an understanding of the "working and the effect" of body parts under investigation is made possible by the use of a live animal subject, and documentation of these animal vivisections textually reconstruct what was, during the course of the vivisection, a body in motion,

alive and pulsing under the anatomist's knife. Columbo, like Harvey, was motivated by “an awareness that true knowledge of a part included knowledge of its function” (French 207), and chose to demonstrate the workings of a living body in his vivisections on dogs. The last demonstration in the series of Vesalian lectures student Baldasar Heseler attended features the vivisection of a dog, where one by one Vesalius cuts the recurrent laryngeal nerves to demonstrate how the voice disappears, in order to “see [...] the function of the *nervi reversivi*” in relationship to the dog's bark (Heseler 292)<sup>39</sup>. Such features of the living body could not be detected in human subjects with the medical techniques available to Renaissance anatomists, even though the desire to witness and learn about living anatomy was strong. Despite rumours that some human vivisections were conducted in the Renaissance, the live “pulsation of the brain, the motion of the arteries and the contents of the blood vessels that connected the heart to the lungs” (French 208) accessible via animal vivisection were functions of the body only seen first-hand in animal but not human anatomy<sup>40</sup>.

Importantly, the contrast between the state of the live animal subject designated for vivisection and the human corpse at the time of dissection testifies to the desirability of a living object of study in more ways than one. Aside from the fact that the *active* processes of the human body had been arrested by the time of dissection, the human corpse was already in the process of decaying as the dissection took place; Heseler's notes refer to a cadaver that “is already stinking” (107) during Vesalius's

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<sup>39</sup> See Chapter Three for a fuller analysis of Heseler's eyewitness account of Vesalius's lectures.

<sup>40</sup> Explaining that dogs became the prime objects of vivisection in the Renaissance (replacing the pigs and apes that were used in previous practice), French writes that while most early moderns seemed in agreement about the offensiveness and cruelty of human vivisection, “rumour, however, had it that at least two Renaissance anatomists succumbed to temptation and ventured into human vivisection” (2). Such rumours have not been given very much credence by scholars today.

demonstrations at Bologna, requiring a fresh replacement in order to complete the series of planned dissective procedures. Putrefaction of the corpse to the point that it became unusable for study was an inevitability that often arrived all too quickly. In his tenth demonstration, for example, Vesalius is forced to defer his lesson until the following day, promising his students that “tomorrow we shall have another body—I believe they will hang another man upon which I shall demonstrate to you the anatomy of all the veins, arteries, and nerves. For this subject is now too dried and wrinkled” (Heseler 177). The body, rather than the anatomist, dictated the anatomist’s own course of action. As Jacopo Berengario da Carpi (c.1465-1530) describes in his instructions for dissecting the lower abdomen, “the Work-man must begin his incision from the lower belly, wherein there are many members first to be Anatomised and cast away, lest if they bee left behind, they should hinder the rest of the body by their putrefaction and evil savour” (qtd. in Larkey and Suden 66). Remarking upon the material limitations of dissection, Ludwig Choulant writes that “in the absence of preservatives, the anatomical operations of Mundinus [Mondino] and of his followers were necessarily hurried.” He goes on to say that unfortunately, “this haste has left many marks on the *Anathomia*,” Mondino’s canonical anatomy textbook, in which Choulant sees “ample internal evidence of limitation of material” with regard to what Mondino and other anatomists could properly do with the corpses they acquired (21-f).

As well, Heseler’s comments indicate that the occasions upon which Vesalius needed to make use of an additional human corpse or dog resulted not only from overly decayed subjects, but also from the anatomist’s inability to use what was already at hand. A body might be deemed inadequate for demonstration because it had been

damaged either by the cause of death (with human subjects, often hanging) or by a dissective procedure that had impinged upon another part or parts of the body. In plate fifty-five of the fifth book of the *Fabrica*, the accompanying text (here translated by J.B. Saunders and Charles O'Malley) explains that certain parts of the abdominal cavity depicted in the illustration have been surgically altered for ease of study: "The omentum [...] has been entirely resected, for had it been left it would perhaps cover over the position of some other organ. Furthermore, that the individual organs might be exposed to view more conveniently, we have fractured the ends of some of the ribs" (Saunders and O'Malley 160). In one instance, Heseler records Vesalius explaining that because the cadaver had been hanged it was partially impaired for study; Vesalius instead "used a dog to demonstrate the muscles that move the neck and head [...] because these had been damaged when the human subject was hanged" (Cunningham 110). Perhaps this is why Vesalius stresses in one dissection—the female subject featured prominently on the cover page of the *Fabrica*—that the bladder and uterus of the corpse have preserved their original integrity and have remained in exactly the position they were in: "Everything is seen intact just as it appears to the dissector immediately upon moving the intestines to one side in a moderately fat woman" (qtd. in O'Malley 143).

The human form seems to seduce its explorers with the promise of a revelation that one human corpse often cannot make good upon—what, then, would be adequate to fulfill the needs of the dissector? Part of the answer, I argue, lies in the pictorial convention of the self-revealing body that appears in the anatomical textbooks published by Vesalius and his contemporaries in Europe, and in the texts published in England that plagiarized or were inspired by Vesalius and the European tradition. In



these images, the artistically rendered body does what the actual human body cannot: pulls back or discards its own flesh to reveal its internal structure. In doing so, the fictional rendering belies what should be its status as dead, dissected corpse—*should* be, because anatomical illustrations were intended to convey the information anatomists gleaned from performing dissections upon dead bodies. Although her focus is the literary anatomy, Devon Hodges asks a question of the Vesalian drawings which captures what I argue is one of the most notable features of many medical illustrations of the time. As Hodges sees it, in Vesalius, the skeletons retain some index of human life, and so she asks, “has an anatomy or a vivisection been performed?” (6). Though he does not discuss the idea in detail, Sawday, too, refers to the “common Vesalian practice of suggesting that the body is still, in some measure, alive” (101) and notes that “until well into the eighteenth century, the conventions of anatomical illustration demanded that the figure, even at the very deepest stages of dissection, should be represented as still alive” (112).

Hodges is right to note that the boundary between life and death is “significantly obscured” (6) in the Vesalian drawings, an indicator of what I suggest is a submerged—that is, textually inexplicit but present nonetheless—fantasy of vivisection on the part of the authors of sixteenth and seventeenth century anatomical textbooks. While designed to depict the structure, location, and function of everything from the skeleton to what lay just beneath the skin as discovered in the anatomist’s dealings with the human corpse, the self-revealing body was in fact something quite different than a facsimile of the supine, lifeless cadaver on the dissection slab. Instead, the figures giving life to the anatomist’s text are strangely life-like themselves, and free from putrefaction, attesting

to a desire for a body that retains its essential vitality and structure throughout the dissector's interventions. The full-body drawings intended to demonstrate anatomy *in situ* even tend to elide what has rendered this anatomy available for observation: the dissection itself. Excepting the illustrations that depict a public dissection taking place (as do the Ketham and Banister examples I have included in Chapter Three), the dissector and his knife rarely make an appearance in the frame, producing the impression of a body that has miraculously shown itself to the viewer or reader in its original state without any external tampering.

A number of scholars have discussed the images from Vesalius's *Fabrica* and other similar texts, and a few have pointed to the compensatory strategies embodied within the images. How, and to what effect anatomists choose to represent the didactic figure and his or her surroundings is intriguing, and far from a strictly technical, medical, and demonstrative endeavour. Valerie Traub argues that the animation of Vesalius' cadavers in the *Fabrica* serves to offset the destructive, vitiating procedures underlying the acquisition of anatomical knowledge. She also notes that Vesalius's use of classical statuary counteracts the disorderliness of the internal organs with its coherent and ideal shape, while the pastoral background draws attention away from the gruesomeness of the living dead figures. This ordering "attempts to manage the uncomfortable suspicion that the internal structure and workings of the body do not always express a beautiful, or what's worse, fully knowable, design" (Traub 52). Of French anatomist Charles Estienne's drawings, Sawday writes, "the images are striving to offer a context for the dissection which is, above all, an assertion of the naturalness of the fate which has overtaken the body" (116). Anatomization thereby becomes "a

demonstration of the eventual shared fate of all bodies” (116) and not a transgressive desecration of the body.

Despite the invaluable contributions of these and other scholars I continue to draw inspiration from, I believe there is still more to be said concerning the complex nature of early modern anatomical illustration, and its tendency to compensate for a variety of cultural anxieties generated by the act of dissection itself (indeed, the very thing which has ostensibly enabled the drawings in the first instance). The visual representation of the human body in anatomical texts speaks to a longing that could not be fulfilled in anatomical practice: the vivisection of live human beings in order to bear witness to internal, living human anatomy. Such a desire is perpetuated by the pressure anatomists and those working with/in the body place upon themselves to do justice to the body’s activities and motions. “Physicians,” writes Berengario (as translated by Henry Jackson), “do differ from Builders, for they [builders] doe only know the parts and composition of Houses, whereof none hath operation, because it is not a living creature” (*Mikrokosmographia* 2-3). Berengario goes on to stress that a “real Anatomy” should take into account the “Operations, Complexions, and Passions” that are present “in a living man, and not in a dead” (3). The inescapable difficulty towards which Berengario gestures, but for which he does not offer a direct solution, is how to access the integral components of a “living man’s” bodily constitution. Anatomists were to find a partial resolution to this conundrum in the fantasized anatomies they created through their woodcut and copperplate prints. In this chapter I propose to see the iconography of the anatomical figure as a symptom of, and inspiration for, a cultural fantasy of human vivisection that produced a wide radius of influence in the early

modern period. Unlike Hodges, Sawday, or Traub, I will posit a relationship between these fantasies of vivisection and the live body that participated in invasive theatrical violence.

### Imag(in)ing Vivisection

In Chapter Three I characterize early modern anatomical science as “a field whose development was shaped primarily through the sense of sight” (Carlino, *Paper Bodies* 11) and through direct interaction with the body. Aside from this direct contact, the next best method for the dissemination of information on anatomy and dissection was via the pictorial reproduction of what could be seen first-hand, and so anatomists provided illustrations to serve as a visual aid outside the classroom or lecture theatre. When partnered with discursive description in a medical textbook, anatomical images elucidated what could not be articulated solely by linguistic description<sup>41</sup>. Thus “in the age of printing and dissection, illustration was regarded as necessary by all authors and editors of anatomical texts, who were aware of the ability of illustrations to explain and communicate facts in a discipline that advertised its own reliance on the visual sense” (Carlino, *Paper Bodies* 19). However, the iconography of early modern anatomical images reveals much more than simply that which was observed and practiced by those privileged enough to attend or undertake dissections. While they ostensibly fulfill a didactic purpose, the printed woodcuts and copperplate engravings accompanying Vesalius’s *Fabrica* and the work of other early modern anatomists also belong to the realm of fantasy and imagination. The illustrations featuring the human body document

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<sup>41</sup> For more on this partnership between “words and images” see Carlino’s section of the same name in *Paper Bodies*, pp. 12-29.

not only its fabric, but its fabrication as well. In the way they depict the subject's relationship to his or her own anatomization, they speak to a constructed—indeed, fantasized—version of the parameters by which dissection is performed. Although cross-sections and individually isolated structures (whether they be particular limbs, muscle groupings, organs, or systems) are often depicted in a technical manner without imaginative amendment, depictions of the whole human body seem motivated by interests that exceed the demonstrative or the didactic. In these imagined dissective contexts, the body's liveliness is almost always preserved, even under the most extreme physical duress, yielding semiotic results that deliver just as much information about the dissector's desires as about the anatomical lesson itself.

One of the ways in which the illustrated subject exhibits his or her vivacity is by participating, or seeming to have participated, in the act of dissection. Whether what is depicted captures the moment during which the subject pulls back his or her flesh, or the moment seemingly just after, the implication is the same: in order to self-reveal, the "self" must be physically capable, functional, even mentally present—and thus alive in a way the cadaver never could be. One of several scholars who comment upon "the apparent complicity of the corpse in dissection," Katherine Rowe sees in these artistic renderings of anatomy "a body inviting its own dissection and actively engaged in the *demonstratio*" (301). To Rowe's argument I would add that the apparent active engagement of the figure suggests the desirability of a body which is able to resist or triumph over the mortal constraints attendant upon actual dissections. For this reason, "corpse," with its attendant suggestion of deadness, is a word that does not quite do the bodies in these images justice; even when those bodies are pared down to the bone, as is

the case with the skeletons which are missing most or all of the corporeal matter that enables the body to live, they radiate a vital life force. Although many of Vesalius's plates—which found their way into a number of plagiarisms across Europe and England—feature skeletons, the skeletal figure is by no means the dominant mode of representation in early modern anatomical illustration, and even so, these skeletons distinguish themselves from corpses in their ability to stand and pose, holding shovels or meditating upon other objects such as hourglasses and skulls. An arresting exemplar of the illustrated skeleton's imagined capacity for activity, a copperplate from Felix Platter's *De Corporis Humani Structura et Usu* (Basel, 1583) features two young skeleton figures holding hands, the larger of which holds a bow and arrow in his left hand, as if to indicate they are about to participate in archery (See Fig. 3)<sup>42</sup>.

When considering the conventions of skeletal illustration, then, we might distinguish two terms which are often used interchangeably in criticism: “self-revealing” and “self-demonstrating.” Although they do not self-reveal by means of pulling back outer bodily tissue and musculature, the skeletons actively self-demonstrate by posing from the front, side, and back, to show the position and interrelation between bones as the body assumes different postures. Through these kinds of lively images, the self-demonstrating and the self-revealing body introduces its viewer to an implied dissective method that I argue possesses key commonalities with the virtual dissections enacted upon live actors (and those imagined but not executed) in anatomically-inflected stage violence. As is the case with the dissective violence that

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<sup>42</sup> Platter's is not the only anatomical textbook to use the archery motif; subsequent depictions of skeletons holding a bow and arrow appear, for example, in Helkiah Crooke's *Somatographia Anthropine* (London, 1616) and in Caspar Bauhin's *Vivæ Imagines Partium Corporis Humani* (Frankfurt am Main, 1620).

permeated London's dramatic theatres, the methods hinted at by the pictorial studies of anatomy, in fact, trouble the distinction between dissection and vivisection, by seeming to make use of an animated human body. A quick look at some examples of anatomical illustration (from both the English and the European Renaissance) suggests the way in which this vivisection-like fantasy of anatomical discovery is manifest within a range of early and late texts in the period.

Early examples of the illustrated self-revealing body are to be found in the work of Berengario da Carpi. In his *Carpi Commentaria Cum Amplissimis Additionibus Super Anatomia Mundini* (1521), Berengario sets out to improve upon Mondino's classic anatomy text by making corrections and adding illustrations "which were based on actual human dissections" (Persaud, *Early History* 116-17) (see Figs. 4 and 5 below), but which clearly evidence the desire to see the anatomized body as lively and intact. Like Berengario, French anatomist Charles Estienne published illustrations that were based upon dissections he personally undertook with surgeon Etienne Riviere, but which represent a fantasized version of the human body tidily revealing itself layer by layer (see Fig. 6). Illustrations from later in the period continue to use the motif of self-display, rendering the figures in greater detail (see Figs. 7-8), yet almost always perpetuating the convention of representing the dissected figure in an upright, lifelike posture. The visually impressive drawings of Giulio Casserio (see Fig. 7, for example)—a good deal of which are self-revealing—all depict a variety of live, erect subjects, whose vital human energy is conveyed by a fleshy robustness and fully detailed facial expressions. As was conventional, the processes of decay and the vulnerability of the body to the invasive procedures of dissection—aspects of corpse

dissections that so troubled anatomists in their practice—are remarkably absent from the frame. What is equally striking in Casserio’s case is his seeming attempt to imbue each of the figures with his or her own individuality, to render each with a specificity that enhances its lively quality; on the whole, these are clearly energetic characters, not corpses. Indeed, depicting the dissected *as* corpse was an unusual exception to the rule. In his survey of anatomical fugitive sheets (discussed further below) Carlino records only one of this type, a sheet drawn by Hans Wechtlin (included with another German publication by Johann Schott in Strasbourg, published in 1517). In this instance, the subject, a hanged criminal, is reportedly drawn from life, producing “the only anatomical sheet in which the subject is actually represented as a cadaver” (Carlino, *Paper Bodies* 82). The singularity of the Wechtlin sheet, and the rarity of dissection scenes themselves in anatomical books, testifies to what can only be described as the deliberate exclusion of dissection (the body’s methodical deconstruction) from a pictorial tradition of anatomization (the body’s epistemological reconstruction during and after the process of dissection). Anatomists are willing to display in illustrated form the surgical tools used to cut open and explore the body, and they are eager to write about how to proceed with dissection, but they are not willing to showcase their procedure(s) in graphic, realistic form. Once the body’s destruction has been elided or displaced in these illustrative contexts, anatomists and their followers are free to conceive of the opened body as inherently alive and structurally unmarred, having created an ideal candidate for displaying the human body’s structure and function.

A few other anatomical works are notable for the way they betray a desire for a vivisection-like experience with the human body. Juan Valverde, a Spanish anatomist



who was a well-known plagiarist of Vesalius's, pushes further the conventions of anatomical illustration in one of the few images from his plagiarism of the *Fabrica* that does not borrow from Vesalius. Included in his *Historia de la Composicion del Cuerpo Humano* (first published in 1556, and then subsequently translated into several languages across a dozen editions), Valverde's now famous "flayed man" depicts the subject of the drawing holding the entirety of his body's skin in one hand, and a knife in the other (see Fig. 9). If the self-revealing figure seems in other images to be both the vivisector and the vivisected, here Valverde leaves little doubt as to who is responsible for the act of flaying, and yet the body of the vivisector/vivisectee still remains alive and structurally sound. The fantasy suggested here forcefully insists upon the figure's ability to transcend the limitations which would render this procedure impossible in practice. So too do the plates in Bartholomeo Eustachi's *Tabulae Anatomicae* (most of which were published posthumously in 1783) evidence the pursuit of a mode of internal revealing of which the human body is incapable. While eschewing the convention of leaving the flesh attached as a displaced flap (as seen in Figs. 4, 7, and 8), Eustachi's examples in the *Tabulae* are dominated by an x-ray effect that seems to endow the viewer-reader with a literally penetrative gaze (see Fig. 10). Of variously penetrated bodies in the *Tabulae*, the figure shown below is the most deeply infiltrated, showcasing muscles, nerves, organs, and bones—and yet in all instances including this one Eustachi's x-ray vision allows the bodies on his pages to survive multiple levels of unveiling without ever seeming compromised. Whether cause or effect of the desire to experience the live human body exposed as is, Eustachi's and Valverde's images participate in a diffuse but consistent trend in anatomical illustration. They, like their

counterparts in a range of European and English Renaissance texts, skirt the imagistic portrayal of the process of dissection itself in order to delve into the representationally live body by alternative means, in what become, in effect, virtually realized vivisections.

One final trend in early modern anatomical illustration is crucial to the dissemination of early modern fantasies of vivisection: the flap anatomy. This technique of superimposition, “which proliferated from 1538 and onwards and continued to appear all through the sixteenth and well on into the seventeenth century” (L. Wells 403), uses illustrated layered paper flaps that successively reveal the deeper structures of the body as the flaps are lifted. Such a pictorial strategy seems to respond to the practical difficulty sometimes inherent in isolating for observation certain structures of the human body without disturbing others. Whereas in practice, several cadavers may have been required to properly isolate more than one internal organ or structure, in these images access to the body’s depths becomes a simple matter of lifting pieces of paper in succession. The flaps can be returned to their original placement, allowing the object of study to appear undisturbed, and rendering the dissected body whole and intact once more. The destructive consequences of surgically entering the body’s depths are replaced—indeed, literally papered over—by a minimally invasive, bloodless fantasy of access. Further, the progressive unveiling of the body that artists strove to represent across a series of linked plates—as, for example, in Vesalius’s musculen images featuring a progressive dissection across a number of drawings—is accomplished in one singular multilayered image. Here, an ideal and yet unrealizable mode of vivisection is simulated in the transaction between the reader-viewer and the

body on the page; the lifelike three-dimensional figure invites the “lifter” of the flaps to assume the role of virtual vivisector, just as it implies its audience will already desire the kind of unreal bodily penetration it offers. In such transactions the unattainable is attained by proxy, in a substitutive encounter that both responds to and furthers the desire for an experience of physical internality unrestricted by the limits of dissective science and its human subjects.

Although flap anatomies appear in both books and broadsheets, they are much more commonly found in the latter form (although not all broadsheets of anatomy feature the superimposed paper flaps). Such broadsheets have been termed “anatomical fugitive sheets” in critical discourse. *The Anathomye of the Inward Parts of Man* (Fig. 11) provides an early English example (published in London circa 1545) of both the flap technique and the genre of the fugitive sheet. These “paper bodies” (the term Andrea Carlino uses in the title of his recent monograph on anatomical fugitive sheets) found “immediate and tremendous commercial success” (Carlino, *Paper Bodies* 1) across Europe and in England. As Carlino explains, “the woodcuts, drawings or even woodblocks were circulating not only between Germany and Flanders but also between Flanders, France and England” (98). The widespread popularity of anatomical fugitive sheets—a fact that Carlino repeatedly emphasizes and charts throughout his book—suggests they struck a chord with a significant number of early moderns, many of whom may have been unable to acquire or read the hefty, often Latin-based anatomical textbooks. Carlino stresses that “crucially, the public for this market was of limited and modest culture, its members certainly had no Latin and its education was based primarily on images” (3). The inclusive scope of the target audience for fugitive sheets

meant that “this kind of anatomy was no longer confined to the university lecture-room: it was a matter of concern to larger segments of society” (Carlino 90). Because a typical moral-religious message of the sheets was the exhortation to “know oneself” (*nosce teipsum*) and, correlatively, to comprehend God’s grandeur in the works of nature, their relevance and appeal was wide. The 1559 sheets attributed to Gilles Godet and/or Thomas Geminus (published in London) accompany their two illustrated figures (one male, one female, as was often conventional) with the expectation that the anatomy depicted is “very necessarie for Phisytyans and Surgians and all other that desvre to lznowe them selues” (qtd. in Carlino, *Paper Bodies* 216). Characteristic of the fugitive sheet genre, this promise of a global and at the same time highly personal application made the teachings of anatomy available to many outside the medical elite. Additionally, like the drawings in anatomical textbooks, the fugitive sheet also implicitly advertised its own kind of anatomical encounter, one which created an imagined human body immune to the obstacles that were present in actual dissections and which threatened to limit the advancement of knowledge in the field.

The “paper bodies” of the fugitive sheets and anatomical textbook traditions may seem far removed from the human bodies that underwent their own kind of dissective penetration in the early modern theatre. And indeed, the difference between the fleshly and the textual is partially my point—that the virtual experience of the body provided by the fantastical illustrations surveyed in this chapter fills a gap left by the fully fleshed out human subject of anatomical study. Yet the actorly body also differs crucially from the bodies of the anatomy theatres and lecture halls, as I argued in Chapter Three, and it does so in a way that aligns bodies in the dramatic theatre and

those in anatomy texts in terms of what both can offer their viewers. Both theatrical and textual-visual engagements with the field of early modern anatomy were able to (re)present a “lively body” (*Titus Andronicus* 3.1.105) capable of sustaining its own physical integrity even as it submitted itself to varying degrees of penetration—a capability the corpses of the anatomy theatres did not possess. These lively bodies participated in and provided inspiration for a fantasy of vivisectioning the human body, in which the vivisected individual’s physical interiority could be seen to be breached without becoming essentially broken. The work of anatomists—and the public who eagerly consumed it—established, although in complex ways, the perceived invulnerability of the body as a desirable attribute of the body as vehicle of knowledge. Consequently, anatomical science helped to implant within early modern culture a fascination with a fictional brand of vivisection upon which the theatre and its doubly envisioned bodies would capitalize.



Fig. 3. Young skeletons with bow and arrow, from Felix Platter's *De Corporis Humani Structura et Usu* (1583). Credit: Alfred Taubman Medical Library, University of Michigan.

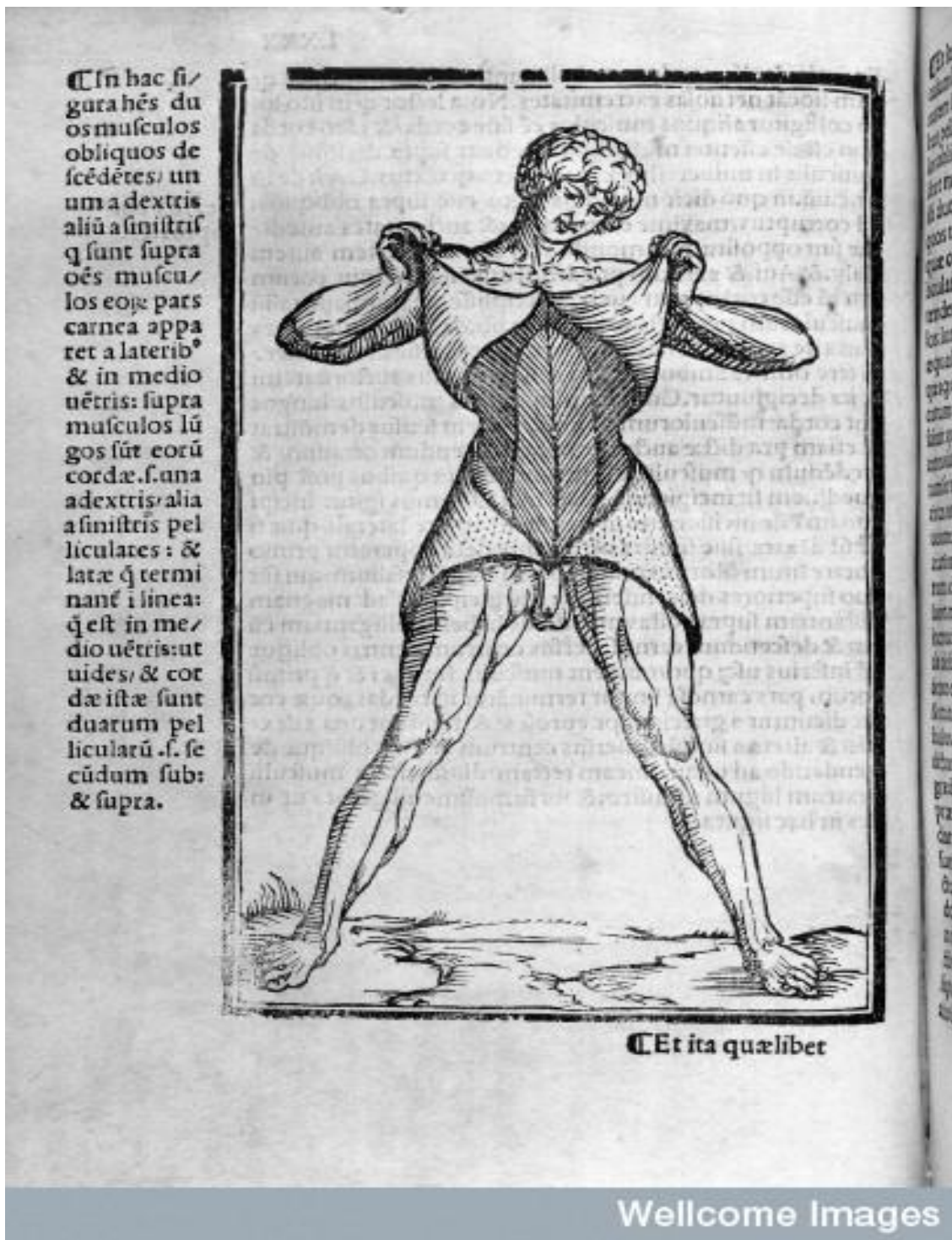


Fig. 4. From Berengario's *Carpi Commentaria Cum Amplissimis Additionibus Super Anatomia Mundini* (1521), the condensed companion to his longer commentary on Mondino. The illustrated, seemingly live figure reveals his abdomen. Over a century later, Berengario's work was translated into English by surgeon Henry Jackson, as *Mikrokosmographia, or, A Description of the Body of Man* (London, 1660, and 1664), a work which includes several reinterpretations of this particular image. Credit: Wellcome Library.

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Wellcome Images

Fig. 5. Another image from Berengario's *Commentaria*, depicting a woman whose uterus and abdominal cavity are made visible by the self-removal of the flesh she holds away from her body in her left hand. The garment she holds in the other hand serves to further animate the picture, lending the viewer the impression of movement and liveliness rather than stasis and deadness. Credit: Wellcome Library.





Fig. 6. From French anatomist Charles Estienne's *De Dissectione Partium Corporis Humani* (1545). Credit: Wellcome Library.



Fig. 7. Self-revealing man rendered in lifelike detail, from Giulio Casserio's *Tabulae Anatomicae* (1627). (Alternately attributed to Adriaan van der Spiegel, who wrote the accompanying text, but who is unattributed in the *Tabulae* itself). Credit: The National Library of Medicine (Historical Anatomies on the Web).



Fig. 8. From John Browne's *A Compleat Treatise of the Muscles as they Appear in the Humane Body, and Arise in Dissection* (1681). Published in London, Browne's treatise demonstrates the influence of the self-revealing body upon 17<sup>th</sup> century English anatomical culture. All of the drawings in Browne's text are of figures caught in motion or dynamically posing, and all are depicted with peeled-back skin revealing the body's internal structures. Credit: The National Library of Medicine (Historical Anatomies on the Web).



Fig. 9. A famous and striking image from Juan Valverde de Amusco's *Historia de la Composicion del Cuerpo Humano* (1560). Although many of the illustrations in the *Anatomia* were derived from Vesalius's woodcuts, this one is unique to Valverde. Though Valverde's work was not translated into English, Helkiah Crooke made this image available to an English readership when he published a copy of it in his English-language *Somatographia Anthropine. Or, A Description of the Body of Man* (cited above). Credit: The National Library of Medicine (Historical Anatomies on the Web).

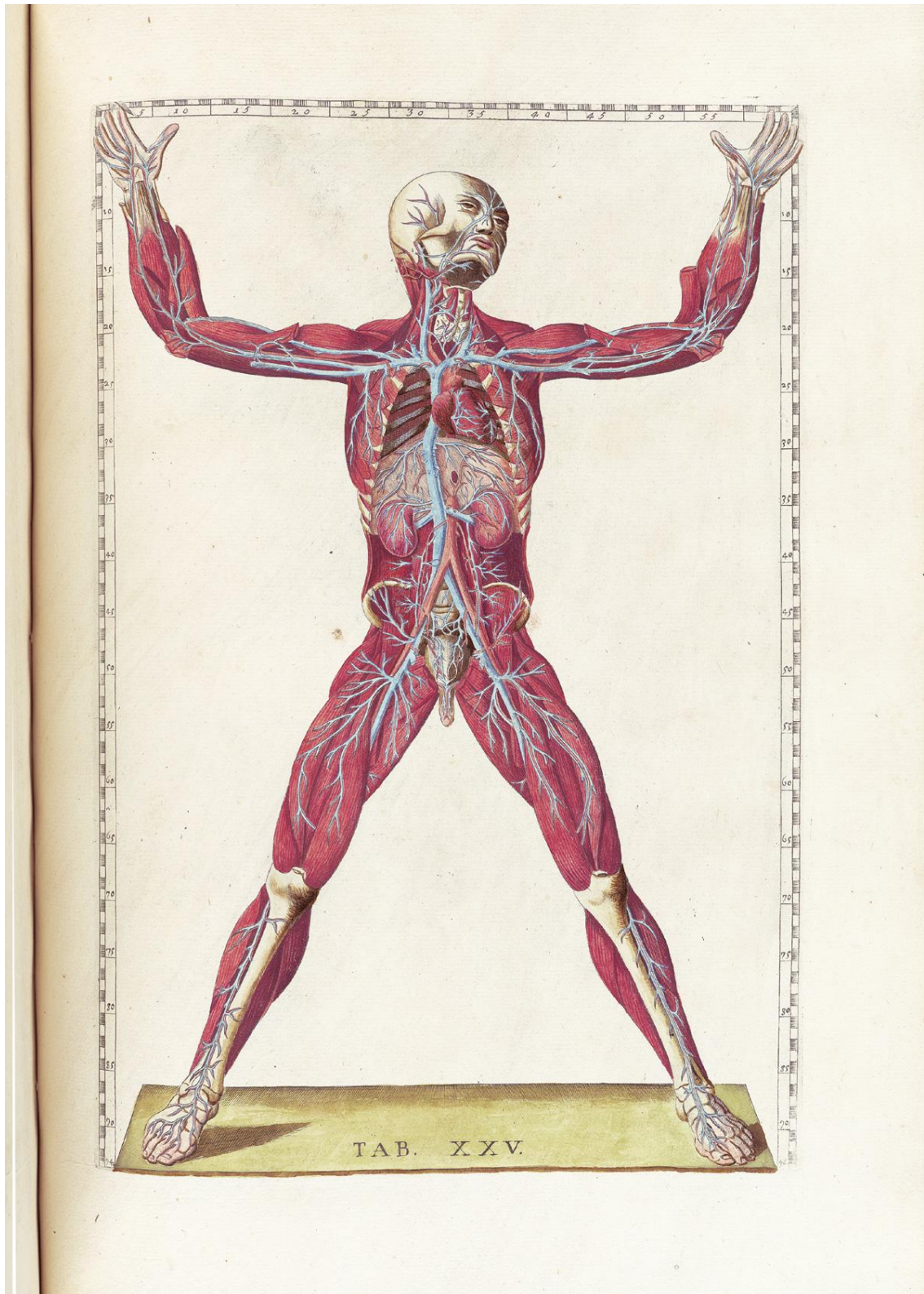


Fig. 10. From Bartholomeo Eustachi's *Tabulae Anatomicae* (1783). The viewer is able to see to the deepest recesses of the body with no perceptible sign of the dissector's intervention. Credit: The National Library of Medicine (Historical Anatomies on the Web).



Fig. 11. An English fugitive sheet titled *The Anathomie of the Inward Parts of Man* (c. 1545), recently restored. For the most detailed scholarly account to date on this topic, see Andrea Carlino's *Paper Bodies: A Catalogue of Anatomical Fugitive Sheets* (1999). For further images of this kind, see also the Wellcome Library's online catalogue of anatomical fugitive sheets (dating from the mid-1500s to the late 1600s). Credit: Wellcome Library.

“Thou Shalt See My Braine”: Living Anatomy in *The Atheist’s Tragedy*

“The time has been / That, when the brains were out, the man would die, / And there an  
end. But now they rise again.”

—*Macbeth* (3.4.77-79)

In Cyril Tourneur’s *The Atheist’s Tragedy* (first published in 1611), an unintentional self-execution takes place. Near the play’s conclusion, D’Amville, Tourneur’s atheist, impatiently seizes an executioner’s axe and knocks out his own brains on the upswing of a weapon intended for his rivals, Charlemont and Castabella. Following this surprising turn of events D’Amville makes a final speech before he succumbs to his injury. Critical reception of this scene has been mixed at best. R.J. Kaufmann argues that D’Amville’s self-execution “has been, and possibly will remain, an embarrassment to Tourneur’s admirers” (259), noting the scene’s potential for comedy. Since moments prior to the accident D’Amville had expressed the desire to anatomize Charlemont following his impending death, Christian Billing reads the text as a failed opportunity for a realistically depicted dissection, claiming that instead, “the audience gets a ‘slapstick’ execution for our would-be anatomist” (2). Huston Diehl asserts that modern readers “have dismissed the scene as ridiculous and crude, even explained it as literary parody” (53). Reviewing a contemporary production of the play (Birmingham Repertory Theatre, 1994), Paul Taylor expresses a similar sentiment—that “the moment can’t escape bordering on farce.” Finally, referring to other aspects of the play (a handkerchief reminiscent of *The Spanish Tragedy*, the appearance of several

ghosts), Katherine Eisaman Maus comments on the play's tendency to "ventriloquize the conventions of revenge tragedy" (vxiii), an effect that in itself perhaps contributes to what Kaufman and Diehl imply is a reluctance on the part of critics to take D'Amville's accidental suicide seriously. The precise nature of D'Amville's accident, however, is crucial to an important *leitmotif* in the play, and thus is deserving of further consideration beyond its perceived potential for self-parody or slapstick humour. The revealing of D'Amville's grey matter is, in fact, the culmination of what I will show is the play's specific fixation upon brains. By threading this preoccupation with brains throughout his narrative, Tourneur fetishizes the organ in such a way that makes this final act of violence—which, I will argue, in fact takes on the qualities of the anatomist's desired but unattainable human vivisection—seem to be the consummation of a carefully cultivated desire to see the functioning human brain exposed. In effect, Tourneur gives his audience what he has encouraged them to want all along: the live human brain on display.

Despite its fascinating treatment of the human body, Tourneur's play has not received much critical attention; as Alan Dessen notes in reviewing Jeremy Lopez's *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern England* (2003), the play has "achieved occasional attention in specialized studies" (254), and, as far as I am aware, has not yet been analyzed for its remarkable focus upon the human brain. The text of *The Atheist's Tragedy* contains eleven references to a brain or brains, including the stage direction for D'Amville's self-execution: "As he raises vp the Axe, strikes out his owne braines" (L3r). The play's notable thematization of this particular organ functions in several different ways, although Tourneur never uses the word "brain" in



its then popular verb form, as in “to brain,” meaning to strike on or across the head, typically causing death. Tourneur’s use of the word always takes the noun form, as he variously employs “braine” or “braines” to indicate intellect, cognition, an idea or plan, *and* the cerebral matter of the organ itself. This oscillation between what I will refer to as the figurative and literal uses of the noun helps to establish an interest in both the insubstantial (cognitive) operations and substantial (physical) qualities of the brain. Spectators are thereby encouraged to be attentive not only to the physical organ they will eventually see for themselves at the end of the play, but also to what the brain does—specifically, how it functions to produce cognition—when it resides inside a sentient, healthy individual. In this sense, Tourneur’s play taps into a desire that anatomists both harboured and promulgated (although perhaps not deliberately): to behold an aspect of the *live* body normally concealed from sight.

Therefore, when the doubly-inflected concept of brains appears in dialogue, it always appears in a context that denotes an activity or process. Tourneur demonstrates little interest in the dead organ; rather, like Vesalius, the play itself craves contact with the warm brain. (Vesalius’s desire for recently deceased subjects is discussed at the end of Chapter Three). Crucially, when it comes to the brain, the play will persist in clouding the distinction between the categories of the literal and the figurative, the substantial and the insubstantial, making the final exposure of D’Amville’s own brain even more alluring, because it comes to signify as an anatomical gateway to cognition, which is the property of live human subjects. D’Amville and his “instrument” Borachio are most closely associated with the conceptual synthesis of the brain as physical organ and immaterial consciousness, a synthesis Tourneur is able to engineer only because

references in the play are never to a dissected, lifeless brain that cannot take part in active human thought. By inciting an interest in the unseen workings of the mind, and inviting audience members to view human cognition as materially grounded in the physiology of the active brain, D'Amville intensifies the desirability of the live brain as object of knowledge. He brings spectators into the epistemic fold of anatomy, where access to the body's internal activity is both an epistemological fixation and fascination. Finally, falling victim to his own self-guided scalpel-like weapon, D'Amville becomes, at the level of fiction as well as metadrama, the ideal object of dissection—the living dead figure of anatomists' fantasies.

This conceptual synthesis begins at the outset of the play. As D'Amville apprises Borachio of the plot to marry D'Amville's son into a wealthy family, his choice of words conflates intellectual effort with the source that produces it: "if it [the plot] prosper, thou shalt see my braine / Make this but an induction to a point / So full of profitable policie; / That it would make the soule of honestie / Ambitious to turn villaine" (C2r). Presumably, D'Amville is not implying that Borachio will visually apprehend his brain performing the promised machinations, and so in this sense the meaning must be taken figuratively: Borachio does not actually see anything anatomical. However, the immediate connotation here becomes deeply complicated by the play's subsequent destabilization of the figurative/literal dichotomy, especially given D'Amville's cause of death. One of the claims I develop throughout this section is that for the spectator who bears witness to D'Amville's accidental self-dissection, the initial promise quoted above—"thou shalt see my braine"—proves spectacularly true in

performance. In other words, the literal sense of perceiving a physical structure with one's ocular faculties is brought into play.

It is worth noting briefly, too, that this is the case even for the reader. Textually, Tourneur's decision to divide the enjambed line after "braine" de-emphasizes what the brain will do (the remainder of the sentence informs us that D'Amville's "brain" or plan will maximize the hoped-for marriage for D'Amville's ultimate gain). Instead, the structure of the verse initially places the focus upon the part of the sentence in which the visceral scenario of visually apprehending the brain is conjured up by D'Amville's choice of words. While the meaning of the phrase continues on past the end of the line, the particular placement of the line break allows the first part of the sentence to stand on its own as well, creating an arresting visual image that can stop the reader in his or her tracks. For both spectator and reader, D'Amville's turn of phrase cannot rest comfortably in its figurative origins; especially once the remainder of the play is taken into account, "thou shalt see my braine" becomes an undeniable prefiguration of a literal, corporeal event: the unplanned excision of D'Amville's brain, described in a stage direction for readers, and, in performance, occurring onstage in full view of the audience. Although the potential readerly experience of this moment is not three-dimensional and visual as it is for spectators, at the level of fiction, the onlookers at D'Amville's accident do *see* his brain, if we are to take Tourneur's given stage direction at face value. When the text assumes a stage life, these fictional spectators are joined by their theatre-going analogues, the spectators of the play itself, who also see D'Amville's brain. Whether the scene is experienced in performance or not, D'Amville's particular choice of syntax here effects an unsettling collapse in the

distinction between a figure of speech (where “brain” is equivalent to idea or plan) and its non-figurative enactment. As a consequence, D’Amville injects the final display of his brain in Act five with the double force of both potential anatomical and cognitive information. When we see his “brain” we are apprehending more than just mute matter; as analysis of the play’s continuing treatment of brains reveals, the doubleness of D’Amville’s early comment is prescient, since it will be suggested throughout that the cerebral organ itself bears the imprint of cognition. The ocular encounter with D’Amville’s brains, therefore, is an encounter with not just what the brain *is*, but what it *does*, making the moment all the more alluring for audience members who have been seduced by the promise of an inside look into human interiority in motion.

As the play continues to muse upon brains, the insubstantial referent of the word “brain” (thought or intellection) begins to merge with its substantial referent (the organ), and vice versa. In a few key places, Tourneur’s use of the word “brain” straddles the conceptual gap between the brain as anatomical structure and as seat of intellectual function. That these two ways of viewing the brain should even be linked at all is made possible by the historical context in which Tourneur and his audience found themselves, as recipients of a long-established discourse about the corporeal foundations of the body’s many abilities. More specifically, Tourneur’s allocation of human thought to the cerebral anatomy, and not other parts of the body, situates his text in a historically-specific matrix of competing models of the body. Whereas the Aristotelian bodily paradigm, only just being “put to rest” during the Renaissance (Frampton 108), was cardiocentric, Tourneur’s model—at least as he expounds it in *The Atheist’s Tragedy*—appears to be cerebrocentric when it comes to pinpointing the

physiological source of cognition. Theories of the body's structure and function had, as far back as Plato, assigned different organs the ability to control sensorimotor and cognitive components of human (and animal) behaviour. Galen, still a towering figure in some Renaissance medical circles, had hypothesized "that the seat of intellect had to be the brain itself" (Finger 17). Mondino, a powerful medieval authority whose influence persisted into the Renaissance, describes the head by dividing the brain into three ventricles: one ventricle houses the *sensus communis* (a medieval anatomical term for common sense), another the imagination, and the third memory, all contributing factors to an individual's cognitive abilities. This "doctrine of psycho-physical parallelism," itself a "medieval common-place," represented a kind of "brain physiology [that] survived till the seventeenth century and beyond" (Choulant 21-I). A complex issue for early moderns and their intellectual predecessors, the debate concerning the localization of cognitive function had by no means been resolved by Tourneur's time. Scott Stevens stresses the "myriad of competing theories of the mind" among early modern medical authorities (265) and notes that "seventeenth-century physiology was only beginning to question the function of the heart as a muscle and not as an organ of thought" (267). On the side of Tourneur's cognitive cerebrocentricism we find English medical authority Helkiah Crooke, who posits the "Superiority of the Brain" in *Mikrokosmographia*, for the reason that "all sense and voluntary motion proceed from it, habitation of wisdom, shrine of memory, judgment and Discernment" (qtd. in Martensen 16). Another English writer of the time, Robert Burton, traces the "sense and motion" of the body back to the brain, and names the brain as the heart's "Privy Counsellor" (qtd. in Stevens 270). Whether of Crooke and Burton's frame of

mind or not, early moderns had inherited from past medical models a means of thinking *about* thinking in terms of anatomy. That cerebrocentric theories were still a matter of uncertainty during Tourneur's lifetime could only have served to intensify the spectator's interest in the dissection D'Amville requests and the one he clumsily performs upon himself: would the visible interiority of the human body and its brains confirm, complicate, or deny the cerebrocentric model of thought?

Yet Tourneur does even more than seize upon some of the conflicting and unresolved anatomical questions of his day in order to hook his audience. He pushes further the mind-body connection explicit in discussions like Crooke's by conflating the anatomical source of cognition (in this play, the brain) and its product to such a degree as to make one a ready substitute for the other, and vice versa. After D'Amville's initial promise that his brain will execute an admirably devious plan, Tourneur goes on to develop further the fungibility of the brain's signifieds. The very next citation of the word "brain" occurs in a dialogue D'Amville and Borachio overhear taking place between Levidulchia's three drunken servants and Fresco, Cataplasma's servant. Servant 1 complains to Fresco, "My body is as weake as water, Fresco," to which Fresco responds, "Good reason sir, the beere has sent all the malt vp into your braine, and left nothing but the water in your body" (D4r). During the exchange, the corporeal discourse Fresco introduces into the conversation characterizes the "drunkenness that seems ridiculous" (D4r) as a behavioural effect arising from the brain's physical susceptibility to alcohol. D'Amville notes the men's compromised mental state and seizes the opportunity to manipulate them into unwittingly acting as accomplices in the murder of Montferrers. As this plan begins to take shape, Borachio picks up on

Fresco's imagery when he states, referring to the drunk men, "Let them drinke healthes, & drowne their braines i'the floud; Ile promise them they shall be pledg'd in bloud" (D4r). Both Fresco and Borachio seem to be in agreement about the provenance of the servants' mentally debilitating drunkenness, perceiving it as a simple matter of the brain's saturation with "malt" or alcohol in general. Although more subtle than the reference to D'Amville's brain in the opening scene, the interchangeability of brain as mental capacity and as body part is being hinted at here as well. In this short scene, the brain is referenced twice, and is used as a touchstone to provide the primary explanation for a behavioural phenomenon (inebriation) that the characters conceive of in primarily physiological, empirical terms. As if to draw attention to the servants' "flooded" brains and their resulting idiocy, Tourneur has D'Amville instruct each man to strike the other "ouer the pate" (D4r)—an action that is both directed towards and enabled by the same body part: the alcohol-soaked brain.

By exploring an altered state of consciousness (drunkenness) in terms of how and where such a state resides in and arises from the body, Tourneur prepares spectators to accept the more forceful conflation of cognition and corporeality that he continues to develop in the play. Witnessing an overt mental degradation in the servants which is coupled with other characters' speculation upon the anatomical source of this physiologically induced stupidity, spectators are provided a means of imagining the occluded inner body at work producing the behaviour they *are* able to see. Such a use of the imagination was not uncommon, either, for even (or especially) outside the context of dissection, hypotheses and theories concerning the body's internal structures and functions abound. For example, other writers of the period also provide similar

commentary concerning the cerebral physicality of drunkenness: drinking “depryue[s] man of vnderstanding,” “spoyle[s] [man] of his brayne” (Beroaldo 26v), and “intoxicateth the brain” (Younge 16). Indeed, while not specifically focused on inebriation, many of Tourneur’s contemporaries envisioned and wrote about physical interiority along these lines (further examples follow at the end of this chapter). One might, then, think of dissection and the work of anatomists not as the final, exemplary achievement of access to the body’s contents, but as part of a wider set of cultural practices which engaged with corporeal interiority through a variety of concrete and speculative means. While anatomists dealt with the body more closely than some, a wide spectrum of early modern individuals shared the medical community’s fascination with the body’s internal architecture and especially sought to understand what percolated beneath its visible surface. Tapping into this fascination, Tourneur’s play also performs an imaginary or virtual anatomical mapping of the way the body’s organs and systems function, with a specific focus on the brain. The result is twofold: the brain-as-organ draws ever closer to its accompanying cognitive signified—thought itself—and as a corollary, attention is drawn to an aspect of the live body’s internal processes, one which is displayed in all of its visceral, vivisected glory by the play’s conclusion.

The conceptual marriage of the brain as matter and as mind means the climactic unveiling of cerebral anatomy offers viewers much more than just a frisson of physical spectacle or, as some scholars have surmised, the impression of farce. Admittedly, it is impossible—and not at all necessary for my purposes—to rule out responses to D’Amville’s blunder that find humour in the scene. What I am proposing is one among



a range of possible audience responses, but it should be noted that there are few opportunities in the text itself *besides* the unusual nature of D'Amville's accident for spectators to find the stage action comical. Although the soberness of the execution scene is somewhat derailed by D'Amville's intervention, the tone of the dialogue and action surrounding the unintentional self-execution remains serious, and in keeping with the tragic genre. Furthermore, by the time D'Amville accidentally substitutes himself for Charlemont as the subject of dissection, D'Amville's offstage viewers have been conditioned to link the (heretofore) imperceptible workings of the brain with its existence as a physical phenomenon, its identity as an organ belonging to the human body. What spectators of *The Atheist's Tragedy* can hope to find in this theatricalized dissection, therefore, is the tantalizing conjunction of cerebral anatomy and its cognitive product—a revelation of the at-once physiological and intangible life of the lively mind. The impossible rendered possible through fiction, a (represented) human vivisection takes place, exposing an element of living anatomy in a way that human dissections in the anatomy theatre or the lecture hall could not.

A brief overview of the play's remaining citations of "brain" will suggest how Tourneur further confers upon the word its double conceptual status, amplifying what was likely an already-present interest in the "inward parts of man" (see Fig. 11) on the part of spectators. As D'Amville accompanies Montferrers across a darkened field following a banquet at the house of Castabella's father, he makes some passing remarks, presumably in the form of an aside, about the impending murder he is about to facilitate. D'Amville comments, "who can but strike, wants wisdom to maintaine: / Hee that strikes safe and sure, has heart and braine" (D4v). The "want" or lack

expressed in the first part of D'Amville's sentence (wisdom) finds its correlative (heart and brain) in the second half, and an interesting correspondence is established.

Wisdom, a definitively incorporeal attribute, is identified with the corporeal by means of an absence/presence dichotomy. When wisdom is present, D'amville implies, it can be adequately accounted for by the presence of "heart and braine." While he does not single out the brain as solely responsible for the sound judgment D'Amville identifies, Tourneur does, once again, destabilize the distinction between its literal and figurative connotations. If the intended meaning of brain is strictly anatomical, what can it mean to say that "hee that strikes safe and sure" has a brain, given that having a brain in the literal sense is a *sine qua non* of living? Yet by the same token, if a truly figurative meaning is intended, why not employ a synonym for wisdom, rather than a physically localizable stand-in?

The dialogic relationship between the two halves of D'Amville's sentence positions the meaning of the word "brain" midway between two poles, where neither meaning of the now-hybrid word asserts full authority. Indeed, as I have been suggesting, Tourneur begins to ascribe a bifold significance to "the braine of man" (E3r). On the one hand, the literal sense of the physical brain does not disappear from the conversation—brains are still vulnerable to the material world, as in Borachio's comment about murdering Montferrers with a stone: "Oo; I knock'd out's braines with this faire Rubie" (E3r). On the other hand, Tourneur's usage seems also to skew the denotation of the word towards the realm of seemingly intangible qualities such as mental aptitude and intelligence. In a short exchange with Languebeau Snuffe, the morally dubious Puritan of the play, D'Amville indicates his comprehension of one of

Snuffe's comments on the existence of ghosts by saying, "My braines begin to put themselues in order. I apprehend thee now" (I3r). Once again, anatomy is the logical point of reference for a mental process; D'Amville conveys an abstract concept (understanding) in terms of a shuffling around of internal parts, somewhat akin to gears shifting or wheels turning—expressions in our contemporary usage that metaphorically denote something similar to what D'Amville expresses. Although not directly citing *The Atheist's Tragedy*, David Hillman's comments on early modern corporeality and phrases like these are useful to keep in mind here, and worth quoting at length:

It may be precisely the fact that our language is so suffused with the body's inner activity that has made it difficult to register the significance of such language in the Shakespearean text. The reality of the body has become for us practically impalpable in these words and phrases, which have been gradually diluted and attenuated until they have been transfigured into mere figures of speech [...] To early modern ears, however, such language had not yet mutated beyond its corporeal referents [...] In turning to read the body in a Renaissance text in particular, it is necessary to try to balance out the figurative with the physical (rather than, as happened for many years, simply to gloss the latter as the former). (2)

I agree with Hillman that self-reflexive expressions of bodily internality like D'Amville's are not necessarily more metaphorical than they are literal. If, as a 1619 religious tract puts it, a brain could become tangibly troubled by a certain kind of knowledge that affected it "like vndigested meate in the stomach" (Adams, *The Happines of the Church* 73), could Tourneur mean to suggest that D'Amville's cranial

circuitry is in fact physically responding as it digests Snuffe's comment? Could spectators construe such a meaning? If the answers to these questions are elusive from our contemporary standpoint, so too might they have been for Tourneur's audience. The meaning of brains putting themselves in order is not entirely clear, and this, I believe, is Tourneur's point. In his playworld, both the tangible and intangible meanings of "brain" fuse somewhere along the continuum between the corporeal and the incorporeal, between the material and the metaphorical. Thus it is possible for Borachio to tell D'Amville, "T'has crown'd the most iudicious murder, that / The braine of man was e'er deliuer'd of" (E3r) just a few lines after Borachio has reported Montferrers's brains knocked out. Is the brain that bleeds in response to physical trauma the very same that dreams up elaborate plans for murder? Or is the brain that thinks—the one that belongs to the world of ideas—conceptually distinct from the one that can be "knocked out" by a blow to the head? The play raises these questions only to answer them equivocally.

Further evidence of this conceptual indistinguishability is to be found in the externalization of the internal: thought seems to reside inside the body, being attached to the cerebral organ itself (in a way that is never made clear in specific detail), and yet spectators are given multiple opportunities to observe the outward manifestations of brainpower. In this scene, for example, they witness the idea engendered in the brain—the "most judicious murder"—become flesh, as it "delivers" itself from an internal point of origin inside D'Amville's head into the material world existing outside the body. Indeed, the entire trajectory of the main plot is built upon the progressive actualization of the abstract plan D'Amville's brain formulates at the outset of the play, a process of

concretization that unravels and incrementally reveals his thoughts by means of bodies acting upon other bodies. Once we are drawn into Tourneur's vision of deeply corporeal consciousness, it is no longer possible to distinguish categorically between the organic matter residing inside the skull and the thought processes it generates. When D'Amville boasts about Montferrers's murder that "not any circumstance / That stood within the reach of the designe, / Of persons, dispositions, matter, time or place, / But by this braine of mine, was made / An Instrumentall help" (E3r), the signifier "brain" (or "braine of mine") seems to have become ambivalent, offering no immediate context within D'Amville's utterance for interpreting the concept definitively one way or the other. Finally, in the play's antepenultimate citation, D'Amville's "brain has made [Charlemont] the happy instrument / To free Suspition" (K2v), and we cannot be certain whether D'Amville is referring to what the brain as organ has itself effected, or whether he is using the word as a metonym for the scheme that has been produced by the brain's work.

This hybridity has significant consequences for the interpretive options Tourneur presents his audience. Because the mind at work is also at once the anatomical brain at work, to "see" a brain, in D'Amville's universe, can mean not only to apprehend the ideas, feelings, and habits of thought produced by cognition, but also to see the organ itself in the flesh. Tourneur's fundamentally embodied model of cognition prompts spectators to imagine access to the inward psyche in terms of access to the interior body. Where this is made abundantly clear is in D'Amville's final assumptions about the anatomical structure of the body of his nephew Charlemont, whose piety is directly antithetical to D'Amville's atheism. Although D'Amville does

not specify whether the post-mortem he desires will encompass all or merely part(s) of Charlemont's body, he assigns an (as yet undetermined) interior, anatomical locus to his nephew's stoic attitude towards death—one which he hopes will become manifest through dissection. D'Amville's fascination with and attraction to Charlemont's elusive character trait is in keeping with his own demonstrated interest in philosophical matters of life and death, human existence, and its relationship to perceived godly intervention in human affairs. At the outset of the play, a Socratic dialogue between D'Amville and Borachio reveals D'Amville's rejection of the possibility of life after death; D'Amville concludes that "Death casts vp / Our totall summe of ioy and happinesse" (B1r), a crucial tenet of his belief system. However, D'Amville's certainty about the finality of death, coupled with his proclivity for contemplation on the topic, leaves him acutely vulnerable, especially when death (either his own or others') is on the horizon. Understandably, for the atheistic D'Amville, "the thought of death is a most fearefull torment" (L2r), and so he struggles to comprehend his nephew's "peace of conscience" (L1v) with regard to the matter. Charlemont's confidence in God supplies him with something that D'Amville comes to see as a deficit in himself—one which he will eventually construe in terms of anatomical difference. Just as Charlemont's physical presence haunts the opening dialogue of the play—D'Amville has just seen him "part from his Father" (B1r) and awaits Charlemont's summoned return throughout the duration of his philosophical debate with Borachio—Charlemont's ability to remain unruffled by his impending execution, and by the concept of death itself, eats away at the margins of D'Amville's self-assured world view. When Charlemont and Castabella are found sleeping in a graveyard with "Death's head for a pillow" (s.d. I2r), D'Amville

wonders at their serenity: “A sleepe? so soundly? and so sweetly vpon Deathes Heads? and in a place so full of feare and horrour? Sure there is some other happinesse within the freedome of the conscience, then my knowledge e’er attain’d too” (I3r). In a space saturated with what D’Amville perceives as the horror of human mortality, Castabella and Charlemont demonstrate a (presently) unaccountable composure that D’Amville will soon come to hypothesize as physiologically explicable.

D’Amville’s fascination with Charlemont’s attitude towards death leads him to posit an anatomical explanation for their different mindsets, bringing to a climax the play’s suggestive coupling of mental and physical interiority. Seeking to ascribe a material existence to Charlemont’s faith—an endeavour which in and of itself indicates D’Amville’s inability to accept a concept which does not necessarily manifest itself concretely and quantitatively—D’Amville requests a post-mortem investigation of Charlemont’s body:

I would finde out by his Anatomie;  
 What thing there is in Nature more exact,  
 Then in the constitution of my selfe.  
 Me thinks, my parts, and my dimentions, are  
 As many, as large, as well compos’d as his;  
 And yet in me the resolution wants,  
 To die with that assurance as he does.  
 The cause of that, in his Anatomie  
 I would finde out. (L1v)

In this speech, two bodily “constitutions” are pitted against one another upon the basis of concrete and insubstantial attributes, and one (D’Amville’s) is found to be lacking in both regards. D’Amville’s axiomatic materialism is made clear by his use of contrast; the two men seem to be physically comparable “and yet” they somehow evince different worldviews. The answer to this puzzling disparity, therefore, must lie beneath the exterior “parts” and “dimentions” D’Amville can account for empirically—it must lie in the anatomical recesses of Charlemont’s body. The concept of finding out by anatomy leads us both into and out of the conversation, forming two halves of a chiasmus (“I would finde out by his Anatomie” and “in his Anatomie I would finde out”) that encloses D’Amville’s reflections upon the body’s mysteries in the interior of a linguistically bounded structure. Just as D’Amville’s thoughts are contained within this microcosmic linguistic body, Charlemont’s habits of thought are, ostensibly, entombed somewhere within his physical body. Not only is D’Amville’s assumption about Charlemont’s corporeality in keeping with “the period’s resolutely materialist habits of thought,” wherein “what we now call inwardness or interiority was inseparable from the interior of the body” (Hillman 2), but it also serves to intensify interest in the promised dissection of Charlemont’s corpse and the unplanned vivisection of D’Amville’s brain. *The Atheist’s Tragedy* has propelled its audience towards this summative moment of revelation by repeatedly embedding within its dialogue conspicuous references to the brain which, taken on the whole, effect a union between internal anatomy and character traits, doubling the potential epistemological value of the dissective procedure D’Amville desires. This will not simply be a medical anatomy, designed to elucidate the body’s parts and their interrelationship; this will be an investigation of the somatic



foundations of consciousness. By means of anatomization not only will spectators acquire precise knowledge of Charlemont's internal anatomy, as Tourneur suggests through D'Amville, but they will also discover where and how the flesh makes this man fundamentally who he is.

The idea that the body (especially its interior) can both elucidate and confirm identity is one that Renaissance dramatists experiment with more often than they unequivocally confirm; of the many plays in which dissective language surfaces, only some actually carry out dissective acts of violence (other examples besides *The Atheist's Tragedy* include *The Bloody Banquet*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *The Battle of Alcazar*, and *The Tragedy of Hoffman*), and even fewer present the results of visceral anatomization in a way that demonstratively proves what is so often implied about the body's capability to disclose information and knowledge. When Feste in *Twelfth Night* avers, "Nay, I'll ne'er believe a madman till I see his brains" (4.2.107) he draws upon the rarity of becoming a witness to physical interiority that can serve as evidence of character—a situation applying even to most Londoners living in proximity of two anatomy theatres—as he speaks of an event that Shakespeare implies will never transpire. "Till I see his brains" functions in Feste's comment much like the figure of speech *adyneton*, which uses hyperbole to comparatively suggest the impossibility of a particular outcome or happening. (Modern-day colloquial examples include the sayings "when pigs fly" or "when hell freezes over"). What Feste implies is quite simply, "I'll ne'er believe a madman," because he never *will* see his brains. Taking into account the infrequency of genuine anatomical disclosures on the early modern stage, one must consider that it is the *promise* of corporeal knowledge and all it could signify that holds

the attention of characters and audiences alike. Theatre's failure to satisfy the fantasy of vivisection is, in fact, what sustains the spectator's desire indefinitely. As Judith Butler writes, "desire is never fulfilled [...] the fulfillment of desire would be its radical self-cancellation" (381). In early modern plays anatomical enlightenment is sought but proves often to be elusive, and it is rather the hope that the Lear-like fantasy of understanding the other inside and out will finally materialize that keeps spectators engaged despite the few number of performances that depict any success at such an endeavour.

Perhaps, too, playwrights and their audiences were urged on by the medical anatomies executed in their day which claimed to offer conclusive evidence of the way identity was thought to assume a corporeal form. In his chapter "The Body as Proof" (from *Murder After Death*), Richard Sugg describes four autopsies (three from the early modern period), the results of which provide an interesting context for the way D'Amville assumes anatomy is indicative of personality. An Augustinian nun named Sister Chiara (dissected 1308), a Frenchwoman of "Moorish" extraction (dissected 1605), King James I (dissected 1625), and a young man named John Pennant (dissected 1637) were all found, posthumously, to have distinguishing anatomical features that were thought to reflect something about who they were as people. Of particular relevance to Tourneur's play is James I's autopsy, during which physicians were surprised by an abundance of cerebral matter that spilled out from the monarch's opened head, taken by one witness to be "a great mark of his infinite judgement" (qtd. in Sugg 90). Such findings—however inaccurate or inventive they might seem from the perspective of contemporary medical knowledge—form part of a cultural tendency to

somaticize human nature, and provided for many writers of the time “an authoritative, quasi-scientific basis upon which to evoke anatomically grounded, verifiable images of character” (Sugg 93). Authors did so in both non-fictional and fictional contexts. Thus when Oliver (*As You Like It*, written c. 1600) seeks a means of describing what he (unfairly) claims is the deeply villainous nature of his brother Orlando, he declares to Charles, “should I anatomize him to thee as he is, I must blush and weep, and thou must look pale and wonder” (1.2.132-33). While it is probably not the case that this hypothetical anatomization is as literal as the one Lear envisions performed on his daughter, Oliver’s language suggests a penetrative unearthing of Orlando’s character that carries corporeal overtones, as if his brother’s body would, if physically anatomized, attest in full to his personality traits. When D’Amville speaks of “finding out by anatomy” what he desires to know about Charlemont, he is not the first, nor the last to think in such terms, but rather articulates a mode of thought that, by the 1611 publication of *The Atheist’s Tragedy*, was buttressed by an established and evolving cultural legacy.

As I have indicated, however, like many analogous examples in drama of the early modern period, the desired bodily excavation in *The Atheist’s Tragedy* never takes place. And it must be acknowledged, too, that some of the same constraints which prohibited anatomists from cutting into live human bodies are also implicitly in place here, as D’Amville does not think to (or perhaps cannot) obtain a vivisection of Charlemont. Yet it is perhaps precisely for this reason that Tourneur circumvents the projected dissection in favour of representing a vivisection in the form of D’Amville’s accident. In place of the post-mortem, the audience is offered what is arguably a more

extraordinary feat—or one that at the least provides a comparable substitute for the anticipated disclosure of information regarding the corporeal foundations of mental activity. As not only the stage direction indicates, but as the executioner verbally confirms, D’Amville, “In lifting vp the Axe [...] has knock’d his braines out” (L3r). Remarkably, however, he continues to converse with those present at the intended execution for another seventeen lines. The peculiar characteristics of this live dissection allow it to mimic and in fact exceed to a certain degree the very goal D’Amville had in mind when he proleptically assumed what the dissective investigation of Charlemont would yield. The represented vivisection symbolically echoes the association in D’Amville’s original description of Charlemont’s “anatomie” between the onlooker’s visual apprehension of corporeal matter and his or her conceptual grasp of the consciousness belonging to the body under scrutiny. The former is afforded to spectators by the unearthing of D’Amville’s grey matter and the latter by D’Amville’s very personal, revelatory disclosure of his murderous plot. By having D’Amville confess his “brain”—the term he has used all along for his master plan—while holding his brains, Tourneur unveils the functional internal anatomy that a dissection of Charlemont could never reveal and that anatomists could only conceive of in illustrated, fantasized form. Becoming that idealized figure of literal and figurative self-revelation, D’Amville caters to a fantasy of vivisection. Tourneur’s work, like the anatomical drawings surveyed at the beginning of this chapter, tempts his viewers to partake in this fantasy, a temptation which in Tourneur’s case is accomplished by means of inculcating spectators into the anatomically-based model of cognition I have argued for above. Finding a loophole of sorts in the ethical prohibition against human vivisection,

Tourneur stages a *self*-vivisection, an event that is epistemologically more radical than conventional dissection in its ability to provide the ideal bodily knowledge anatomists and their peers sought. Depicting a miraculous (because live) corporeal self-revealing, Tourneur invites his audience to experience the rare satisfaction of witnessing the functional internal body and of absorbing the valuable information it had to offer.

Although the text provides no indication for staging in between D'Amville's self-delivered blow to the head and his death, it is possible to infer that early modern spectators did in fact see D'Amville's brain represented onstage. Because he has, as the executioner points out, struck out his own brains, the performance must make good upon the stage direction in some palpable way. Surviving evidence regarding early modern staging practices suggests that D'Amville's cranial dissection could have been performed in a realistic manner. Beheadings, for example, seem to have been graphically simulated onstage in some plays. Famously, Reginald Scot describes the "Decollation of John Baptist" in his *Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584), an illusionistic trick for the performance of a beheading onstage in full view of the audience (which Scot claims was carried out in London in 1582). In addition to the table used in this particular illusion (and perhaps more relevant to D'Amville's particular situation), other props were available to amplify the realism of "copious bloodshed and the display of severed limbs" (F. Martin 7) in plays that gravitated towards a violent aesthetic. Animal viscera and blood could be strategically employed in a variety of ways to produce the appearance of human innards; with reference to beheadings, English physician Thomas Ady describes the clever means by which "the very bone and marrow" of the human neck could be represented onstage (qtd. in Martin 10). While

these examples from Scot and Ady do not specifically refer to performances in the dramatic theatres (their focus is more generally upon witchcraft and representational illusion in the period), they provide us with a sense of the available performance options in the period. Early modern stage practitioners were capable of realizing, in all of its bloody fleshiness, the textually scripted unveiling of physical interiority<sup>43</sup>. Sugg implies as much when he argues for the use of a human skeleton (or a convincing facsimile) as a prop in *The Tragedy of Hoffman*, and he goes so far as to suggest that the use of animal skeletons instead “might well have provoked howls of derision” (24) from spectators conditioned to expect verisimilar representations—and especially from those familiar with anatomy. He writes, “a botched-up compromise, in the way of a picture or some other half veiled impression, would certainly not have been acceptable to the hardened theater- and execution-goers of early seventeenth-century London” (24). Similarly, spectators might also have expected the staging of *The Atheist’s Tragedy* to produce a near-realistic simulacrum of D’Amville’s extruding brain. That early modern playgoers were intimately familiar with the aspects of human interiority revealed by executions and similar juridical punishments is a point Marissa Greenberg also makes by calling attention to “the pillories, gallows, and offenders’ bodies that early modern audiences encountered on route to London’s playhouses” (2). Because “historians uniformly agree on the immediacy and frequency with which early modern Europeans encountered punishment as a public spectacle” (Greenberg 3), even spectators who had never set foot in an anatomy theatre would have had significant exposure to the appearance of mutilated and opened bodies. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that when it came time to witness D’Amville’s own cerebral unveiling, spectators may

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<sup>43</sup> See also my discussion of *The Battle of Alcazar* and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* in Chapter Three.

have anticipated—and been treated to—a visual spectacle which rivaled those of the anatomy theatre and of Londoners’ own encounters with dead or dying bodies.

Although a non-fictional dissection of human parts would have been unthinkable in a performance of *The Atheist’s Tragedy*, something quite like it was not out of the question.

With no record of the early modern performance of *The Atheist’s Tragedy* beyond its claim to having often been acted in “diuers places” (on the title page of its 1611 quarto), modern productions of the play can also provide us with a sense of the performance possibilities suggested by the text. One in particular stands out: in the Birmingham Repertory Theatre production, actor “Gerard Murphy embarks on a leisurely death speech while rummaging in his skull for a handful of cerebral cortex” (Wardle). Director Anthony Clark takes the playtext’s instructions for self-dissection quite literally by having “the dying D’Amville dissect himself, wrenching out a chunk of bleeding brain and displaying it to the audience” making the moment into “a graphic admission that it was his [D’Amville’s] own grey matter that needed testing” (P. Taylor). Clark’s macabre mise-en-scène attests to the possibility that performances of the play can feature D’Amville performing his lines with his own brain in hand, an image reminiscent of Hamlet discoursing while holding Yorick’s skull. In such a staging, the eviscerated grey matter can serve as the corporeal correlative to the personal information D’Amville is making truly public for the first time. As D’Amville’s onstage and offstage spectators are able to see his physical brain, they are also made privy to the sum total of D’Amville’s identity as he confesses his plot against Charlemont and Castabella and indirectly labels himself a murderer. The revelation of

the anatomical organ accompanies the exposure of the insubstantial product of cognition: here, intellection, subjectivity, moral belief, even identity. Even if the “diuers” and many performances of *The Atheist’s Tragedy* during its period did not push Tourneur’s vision to the extremes of Clark’s production, the association remains; D’Amville’s brain is exposed to some degree by the axe’s blow, and so too are his psychological innards.

For the significant number of writers in the early modern period who held the brain to be the primary or singular agent of the intellect—the “Privy Counsellor” as Burton puts it (qtd. in Stevens 270)—a cranial vivisection would have seemed to provide a window into an important facet of bodily interiority. Textual evidence from a diachronic search of printed matter in the period reveals that many early moderns thought of the brain as both a physical repository of knowledge and a site of intellectual invention. On the topic of faith, writers of religious tracts often contrast God’s knowledge (divinely conveyed to human understanding) with ideas that are of human provenance, and the brain is often targeted as the site of such intellectual production: “This then is no newefangled fayth no straunge fayth, no fayth inuented by mannes brayne” (Bullinger A4r); “we brought this interpretation out of our owne brayne” (Bucer L2r); faith “is not of mans braine inuented” (Werdmüller C6r); “mans brayne is neuer content too bee ruled by Gods wisdom, but pleases him selfe in his owne inuentions better then in y<sup>e</sup> whiche God teaches hym” (Pilkington J7r). Examples in this category persist throughout the period and are far too numerous to cite comprehensively. Not all references to the brain’s capacity for invention are religious in nature, however. David Chytraeus exhorts “that no man haue a stately opinion of



himself, nor rashly & proudly misdéem other men, nor deuyse new interpretations & opinions of his own brayne” (55). Other writers conceive of the brain as a site of reception, absorbing and storing secular or religious knowledge: “as out of the head and brayne, which is the seate of the senses whereof ryseth all knowledge (as the Philosophers and Phisitians write)” (Carlile D2r); “it [an illusion] sinketh not yet into my brain” (Walker C2r); “the brayne, [is that within] which wit and wisdom made their chest” (Baldwin A3r); “[men] may heape up knowledge upon knowledge, bee ever powring into their brains” (Younge 606). In at least one writer’s opinion, the brain can be thought of in architectural terms; Thomas Adams refers to thoughts residing in the brain like a guest in a house (*Diseases* 11), and asserts that “we must conceiue in the brayne three ventricles; as houses assigned by Physitians for three dwellers, *Imagination, Reason, and Memorie*” (*Mystical Bedlam* 35), clearly drawing upon the tripartite medieval model of cognition (discussed earlier with reference to Mondino). Whether productive and/or receptive, the early modern brain played a central role in the corporealization of knowledge, providing a focal point of interest for those who imagined—and encountered, in real or feigned form—the body’s internal constitution. That in Tourneur’s play the brain is the excised (or partially excised) object made available to perception seems to testify to—and perhaps dramatically exaggerate—the idea that theatricalized dissections produce knowledge (an argument I make in Chapter Three); what better organ with which to educate spectators than the one thought to be responsible for knowledge itself?

Carefully engineered by Tourneur, D’Amville’s blunder provides for an epistemological experience like no other public, medical dissection. It in fact fulfills

two conditions anatomists longed to be able to realize in their practice upon human bodies; it is performed upon a live human subject, and it occurs with a minimum of surgical interference, as the axe swiftly “de-brains” D’Amville without apparently damaging any of his bodily functions, including, remarkably, the function of speech. Indeed this is a fantasy much like those graphically portrayed in the anatomy texts and drawings surveyed at the beginning of this chapter, where the body easily or voluntarily yields to invasive exploration without destroying either the life or physical integrity of the vivisectee. What makes Tourneur’s play remarkable, I have argued, is the fact that it caters to a fantasy of human vivisection on the representational level, working into the narrative an opportunity for audiences to glimpse the brain of a walking, talking, fictional subject. Yet what I have also proposed in this thesis is that this need not necessarily be the case in order for plays to deliver an experience of the live body anatomized, for through the doubleness of the actor-character’s embodiment, the theatrical medium itself makes possible the perceptual encounter with violated bodies that can seem dead and alive, damaged and intact.

Thus it is worth noting briefly that Tourneur’s play also draws attention to this possibility, by metatheatrically commenting upon the lively body beneath the fiction. There exist at least two signal moments in the play where we are reminded of the actor’s ability to generate a doubled image of life and death. When Montferrers’s dead body is discovered, D’Amville embarks upon a lengthy (and disingenuous) speech in which he pretends to experience deep grief for his brother (whom he has in fact just murdered). Gesturing towards Montferrers, D’Amville encourages the servants and

Belforest and thus, by extension, the audience, to look upon the body which D'Amville claims retains its lively vitality:

Indeede had hee beene taken from mee like a piece o' dead flesh, I should neither ha' felt it, nor griued for't. But come hether, 'pray looke heere. Behold the liuely tincture of his blood! Neither the Dropsie nor the Iaundies in't. But the true freshnesse of a sanguine red; for all the fogge of this blacke murdrous night has mix'd with it. For any thing I know, hee might ha' liu'd till doomesday.

(E2v)

Reminiscent of the final scene of *The Bloody Banquet*, where a dead body is at the centre of attention and one man (the Tyrant) interprets for a rapt audience the sight they see, this scene places D'Amville in the position of lecturer-anatomist, calling his onlookers' attention to specific aspects of the body on display. Unlike in *The Bloody Banquet*, however, the information to be gleaned from this particular inspection of the body is of benefit to the audience only, as it operates primarily on a metatheatrical level. (The characters present during D'Amville's lament are focused upon the process of grieving and little else). D'Amville's insistence upon the "lively," healthy, and "fresh" appearance of the character's corpse encourages spectators to attune themselves to the presence of the equally lively body (the actor's body) that enables this fictional image of corpsehood. Spectators who maintain their metatheatrical awareness of the perceptually doubled theatrical body will find D'Amville's self-vivisection even more compelling in terms of its ability to offer up a living anatomy, since as the character dies from his injury, the actor playing D'Amville continues to subliminally radiate the "true freshnesse" inherent in the living body he presents to the audience's perception.

The second instance in which Tourneur calls attention to the theatrical corporeality of the actor's body is in Charlemont's highly suggestive explanation of the visit from his father's ghost. Here, Tourneur also provides for a metatheatrical vantage point on the part of spectators, reminding us of the way perception can manipulate the impressions bodies make upon us. Charlemont states,

My actions daily conuersant with warre;  
 (The argument of bloud and death) had left  
 (Perhaps) th'imaginary presence of  
 Some bloody accident vpon my minde:  
 Which mix'd confusedly with other thoughts,  
 (Whereof th'remembrance of my Father, might  
 Be one) presented all together, seeme  
 Incorporate; as if his body were  
 The owner of that bloud, the subiect of  
 That death. (F3r)

Charlemont muses about the phenomenal nature of what he sees, and yet his complex speech also resonates with the way spectators are invited to relate to the violation of bodies in the play. Although he turns out to be mistaken (in the play's supernatural economy, he really has seen a ghost), his hypothesis about what he perceives is significant for the way it attributes to the mind the capability of making thoughts seem "incorporate"—literally, into an apparently corporeal or substantial form. He hypothesizes that his father has appeared to him as a spectral apparition because his brain has conflated the impression of visceral deaths he has witnessed with other

memories (specifically, the memory of his father) that are housed in the same place in his mind. Charlemont's theory of incorporation does similar work to Theseus's idea of the imaginative supplement (discussed in Chapter One), in that it attributes to the human psyche a particularly powerful form of imagination—one that can seem to influence the material world. Although Charlemont stresses (or tries to convince himself) that his experience is only one of seeming, this “seeming” is, in Charlemont's expressed opinion here, strong enough to render the imagined and the “incorporate” perceptually blurry for the perceiver—much like Theseus's extended argument concerning the mind's ability to bend materiality to its own will (discussed in Chapter One; see *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1). Furthermore, in the same breath, with reference to his father's body taking on the qualities of those he had witnessed on the bloody battlefield, Charlemont speaks of a double or displaced “ownership” one body can wield over another, providing a subtle metadramatic commentary on the phenomenology of the actor's body. In Charlemont's estimation, the Montferrers he sees before him has hijacked the injury and death attached to other wartime bodies, and this occurs much in the same way that any actor would annex himself to the character's “imaginary presence” which becomes, through this act of incorporation, seemingly material onstage. Almost uncannily, Charlemont perfectly crystallizes in his choice of words the way in which actors achieve the perceptually realistic impression of an embodied individual who simultaneously does and does not possess the exact physical state of the actor. He unintentionally provides a means of describing how the actor portraying D'Amville or Montferrers, for example, takes on ownership of the

character's dead or dying body, becoming the executor (and in D'Amville's case, the executioner), the "subject of that death."

That the axe D'Amville holds falls afield from its original purpose, as D'Amville the character also becomes the subject of a death rather than being solely its enforcer, suggests the degree to which the violence enacted onstage is unstable, capable of attaching itself to more than one body. In having D'Amville unintentionally stand in as the recipient of the axe's blow Tourneur represents the transmissibility of stage violence and death, both at the level of fiction and performance. Within the fictional world of *The Atheist's Tragedy*, as is the case with many revenge tragedies, a planned or intended act of violence takes an unexpected victim or victims (one is reminded especially of the masque in *Women Beware Women* and the final scene of *Hamlet*), and "the argument of blood and death" becomes contagious between bodies as it is in Charlemont's speech above. Indeed, Tourneur had already hinted at the forthcoming substitution of D'Amville's life for Charlemont's moments prior when he had D'Amville exclaim, "at the reflexion of thy [Charlemont's] courage my cold fearefull blood takes fire, and I begin to emulate thy death" (L2v). Not only does D'Amville absorb and emulate Charlemont's intended death, but as a result of D'Amville's accident, Castabella's death sentence is also lifted. This unexpected and almost instantaneous exchange of victims encourages us to think about how theatrical bloodshed might possess a transferable quality in terms of the actor's performance as well. As *The Atheist's Tragedy* sublimates the death of one character into another, it echoes the means by which actors take on the bodily violation of the characters they

embody, making themselves seem owners of any “bloody accident” that may transpire within the playwright’s fictional world.

In both Charlemont’s confrontation with Montferrers’s ghost and D’Amville’s assumption of a deadly fate that should have been another’s, Tourneur’s play comments metatheatrically upon the corporeal dynamics underpinning the actor’s own assumption of fictional physical trauma. Admittedly, however, the analogy between the transmissibility of fictional violence and the way actors’ bodies absorb and project the corporeal destruction belonging to another individual (the fictional character they portray) breaks down when one considers that for the actor, this absorption is not final; D’Amville dies, but the body portraying his death does not. Yet the argument stands that theatrical violence in the storyworld of the plays is, in terms of its ability to move between and amongst bodies, mobile in a way that is suggestive of how performance achieves its representation of bodily harm. As I argue in Chapter Three in slightly different terms, mobility is key to the way audiences perceptually relate to the staging of graphic violence, as the actorly body is known to remain fundamentally invulnerable to the damage it adopts temporarily as its own. In the case of *The Atheist’s Tragedy*, the resilience of the performing body, coupled with the enactment of D’Amville’s live dissection, provides ample opportunity for spectators to come as close as possible to the experience of witnessing human vivisection—an encounter with the body in action that enticed and yet eluded anatomists and their audiences.

The lively figures that graced both the stages of early modern London and the pages of early modern anatomical textbooks allowed anatomists and readers a significant freedom: the freedom to imagine the subjects of dissection triumphing over

the mortal (and moral) constraints that hindered the investigation of corporeal interiority. Circumventing the vulnerability of the human body, these extraordinary figures revealed themselves, by means of their physical viscera, in a way that could seem to divulge something about the internal action of the body without marring or destroying it. Wanting the resources and technology to access the body's contents without compromising its structural integrity and vitality, early modern medical practitioners invented their own fantasies of corporeal access, as did a significant number of authors and playwrights. Written in 1612, just one year after the first publication of *The Atheist's Tragedy*, Robert Underwood's *The Little World. Or, A Liuely Description of all the Partes and Properties of Man* perhaps best encapsulates a cultural moment that fixated intensely upon aspects of the body that resisted epistemological mastery. The extended conceit of Underwood's tract is a dream narrative that compares the human body to a house—a structure that in this author's vision will permit the kind of exploration the living fleshly body will not. First, the author is uplifted into a large “city” (an analogue of the world itself) containing thousands upon thousands of “houses,” (analogues for the bodies of human beings) the workmanship of which “did excell” (2) because each had been moulded by God. The reference to God's handiwork is important for the way it elevates the body/house and imbues it with a grand significance which is wondrous to behold—a common convention of anatomists' writings as well. Upon this basis, the author constructs a compelling justification for the value in penetrating beyond the exterior of the body/house: “These *Houses*, be so wonderful and glorious; then no doubt, Those things, the which we cannot see, which in these *Houses* are, Must nedes exceed these outward



things and go beyonde them farre” (4). In other words, the exquisite exterior of God’s creation conceals an even more wondrous architecture, one which Underwood implies is supremely desirable to behold. Then, in the most telling passage of all, the dream of access is fulfilled: the author is alerted by an anonymous stander-by to look again, and miraculously he is able to behold that “The *Houses* all were open, and each did it selfe vnfold, That I might see all thinges in them, which was a thing most rare, To marke how thinges within the same, in order placed were” (4-5). Like the self-revealing Vesalian figures, these body-houses open themselves up to inspection, enabling the beholder to see “all thinges in them” without disrupting the intrinsic order and essential character of the object under investigation. As a result of this privileged form of access to the body, the author, who has now taken on the role of vivisector, is able to provide a detailed metaphorical catalogue of the body’s various internal organs, systems and functions, and he is able to do so without seeming to disturb all that he documents.

In exploring the represented “unfolding” of the live human body, Underwood’s text joins the ranks of plays like *The Atheist’s Tragedy* and scientific texts like Vesalius’s *Fabrica*, all of which testify to a fantasy of vivisection that promised a superlative knowledge of anatomy, and all it was thought to disclose about the properties of the individual and the universe. In pursuing and sometimes catching sight of a corporealized knowledge that “must nedes exceed these outward things and go beyonde them farre,” the dissective violence of early modern theatre placed its spectators in range of a bodily experience—the apprehension of an idealized form of human vivisection—that anatomy theatres could not offer. Although anatomists desired and intrinsically promoted unmediated access to all parts and functions of the body, in

their practice they fell short of this goal, unable to excise the body's depths without intruding upon the intricate structure thought to mirror and reveal all other aspects of human life. Drawing upon the unique doubleness of the actor's body, and the audience's willing imagination, the dramatic theatre, however, could without damage "cut to th'brains" (*King Lear* 4.6.187) and to the core of the ultimate living object of study: the elusive and yet potentially empowering human body.

## Conclusion

Bert O. States asserts that “the inevitable starting point of any discussion of the actor’s presence on the stage is the fact that we see him as both character and performer” (119). In slightly different terms, Stanton Garner writes that in performance all “theatrical objects” (including but not restricted to actors) “oscillate between the illusionistic (fictional, virtual) and the actual” (“Sensing Realism” 117). “This perceptual instability [that] characterizes all forms of theatre” (Garner 117) is a fundamental aspect of dramatic performances in the early modern period, as demonstrated (and activated) by playwrights’ metatheatrical acknowledgements of their own fictional creations. Early modern theatre’s characteristic self-reflexivity concerning theatrical illusion encouraged spectators to perceive the perceptual “double image” generated by the superimposition of fictional and non-fictional worlds on the theatrical stage, and to take note of the audience’s own central role in bringing performances to fruition. Further, the phenomenology of Renaissance spectatorship I have traced here encompasses spectatorial experiences of the blood, guts, and gore violent plays of the time sought out, and reinforces the contributions of auditors who bring meaning to bloody spectacles—and, by extension, the spectacle of theatre—by participating with their senses. What I have suggested is that although critically neglected, the intersection of violence and metatheatricity on the Renaissance stage deserves to be analyzed for the nuanced ways in which it informed spectators’ perceptual experiences of the body, especially in terms of the way theatre allows performing bodies to break free from their everyday ontological moorings, and directs audience attention towards that process of escape. Although atypical of the theatrical

techniques generally thought of as “metatheatrical devices,” the dramatic performance of violence itself might be thought of as inherently metatheatrical to the degree that it encourages spectators to recognize the dehiscence of the presentation/representation double image—that is, violent play performances are fuelled in part by the spectator’s knowledge that bodily wounding only permanently affects one half of the actor/character’s embodied persona. When, for example, in Thomas Preston’s *Cambises* (c. 1560), Cambises instructs an executioner to make a man’s “death more vile” by “pul[ling] his skin over his eares” (C2v), this flaying occurs (as far as the stage directions indicate) in full view of an audience that would have been cognizant of the fact that represented violence takes the character’s body, but not the actor’s, as its victim. Steeped in the Renaissance dramatic tradition of simultaneous illusion-breaking and illusion-making, early modern audiences were trained by plays of their time to acknowledge stage phenomena as mentally blended constructions of signifying and signified elements. The core questions that have buttressed my argument throughout this project—What motivates a viewer to become a witness to fictionally enacted violence? What desires are satisfied or perpetuated by this participatory event?—are at least partly answered by the notion that spectators can enjoy violent corporeal unveiling by virtue of their awareness of theatre’s dually signifying bodies and their unique capabilities.

Violent plays like *Cambises* would become more sought after as the early modern period progressed, and the increasing popularity of public dissections and anatomical explorations would confer upon the body’s interior an epistemological quality that early moderns longed to discover for themselves. Yet despite the

commercial viability of violent revenge drama in the early modern period, the spectacle of the body in pain likely had the potential to elicit indeterminate or mixed reactions from audiences. Not only is it to be expected that no audience member will duplicate another's intellectual and affective response to staged violence, it is probable that individual viewers may find themselves responding in varied, unstable, and perhaps contradictory ways. On the topic of violence in *Titus Andronicus*, Marshall writes that its "brilliance" is to be found in "the way it allows viewers to be scandalized and morally outraged by events portrayed on stage but also and at the same time to identify with characters who suffer and commit acts of horrific violence" (107). I would also argue that the gravitation towards bodily wounding early modern playgoers exhibited through their theatrical predilections was haunted by an opposing force: the sense of epistemological destruction accompanying the tearing apart of the body's fabric. Certainly, early modern anatomists attempted to elide those aspects of dissection that had the potential to spoil their object of study, in order to satisfy a fascination with the body's inherent capabilities and limits, its external and internal composition. It is this fascination that inspired early moderns to cut open, anatomize, and graphically textualize the body, while imagining a means of fully cataloguing the physical human form in its undisturbed, God-given state. The dramatic theatres of early modern London were able to most closely approximate the fulfillment of what I have described as a self-defeating fantasy of corporeal access, by providing audiences with an endoscopic gaze that perceived itself as able to enter the actor-character's body without ultimately leaving any physical traces of that penetration. In the events prefacing and following the body's represented desecration, early modern performances offered their

spectators the opportunity to experience the fantasy of empowering knowledge that *The Bloody Banquet* articulates so precisely: “the huske falls from him now, / And you shall know his inside” (1338-39).

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 Western Graduate Research Scholarship, University of Western Ontario. 2006-2008.  
 Best Emerging Scholar Award, Association of Quebec and Canadian Literatures (ACQL). 2007.  
 Senator Frank Carrell Fellowship, Queen's University. 2004-2005.  
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