

Bodily Surfaces and Coverings in Shakespeare

Sachini Seneviratne

*Department of English Language and Literature, University College London, Gower Street,
London WC1E 6BT, UK, Email: sachini.seneviratne.11@alumni.ucl.ac.uk*



Abstract

Although the early modern body in Shakespeare has received a lot of critical attention, the significance of the skin envelope has not been the subject of much study. This research attempts to contribute to the larger discourse on early modern skin by exploring the role of bodily surfaces and coverings in *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth* in the textualisation of early modern bodies. It theorises a relationship between the legibility and the vulnerability of the skin envelope, arguing that both factors mutually reinforce each other. Being pierced and 'read' are both symptomatic of defencelessness, so characters attempt to protect their skin from both by using coverings.

The early modern theory of the closed body posited that the skin was a definitive and defensive barrier between the body and its environment. The interior of the body thus became a place of mystery, so early modern anatomy theorised that this was the location of 'truth'. However, in the three plays, the notion of 'truth' is completely destabilised due to the volatile surfaces of the body. Truths are not discovered, but are constructed, dissolved and reconstructed on the outermost layer of the body, instead of the bodily interior. Further, bodily surfaces and coverings are often conflated, creating complex 'layered bodies' that tell multiple, often paradoxical narratives, none of which are the objective truth. Disguises tell the narratives of inviolability that the character would have others believe. The inherent vulnerability of the skin also feeds into these narratives, creating the desire for a body that is armoured to protect the character from being pierced and/or read. However, the superficial nature of the skin envelope encourages engagement and interpretation, thus exposing the desired dermal inviolability and illegibility as a fantasy.

Keywords

Shakespeare, early modern, body, bodily surfaces, *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*



Introduction

Skin is 'the vulnerable, unreliable boundary between inner and outer conditions and proof of their frightening, fascinating intimate contiguity' (Connor 2004: 65). Early modern conceptualisations of skin were complicated by the intellectual shifts in the understanding of anatomy, which resulted in contemporary society questioning the properties and

capacities of their own bodies (Berns 2010: 105). This suggests that skin was the nexus of early modern anxiety about bodily integrity. This study will examine how the representation of bodily surfaces and coverings in Shakespeare responds to these anxieties about the vulnerable bodily surface. It will focus on *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth*. Each play explores the ambiguous, multivalent, and often paradoxical relationships between the characters and their vulnerable, layered bodily surfaces, raising questions about the concept of early modern bodily integrity. Skin is a significant, complex factor in all three plays, so it will be the main focus of the study. However, the study's definition of 'bodily surfaces' will not be restricted to skin alone, since in these three plays, it is more productive to explore skin in terms of its relationship with its coverings. The all-inclusive word 'coverings' is used since it takes into account clothing, armour, and bloody integuments, to name a few.

Much incisive critical work has already been done on the body in Shakespeare's plays, with many critics focusing on his Roman plays in particular. Coppélia Kahn (1997) and Janet Adelman (1992) have lent feminist perspectives to the topic, while volumes of essays such as *Questioning Bodies in Shakespeare's Rome* (2010) have amassed a wealth of critical viewpoints from commentators such as Claudia Corti and Ute Berns, discussing various concerns about the early modern body. Further, critical work on early modern anatomy, such as Jonathan Sawday's *The Body Emblazoned* (1996), have shed light on the intellectual culture that influenced early modern dramatic explorations of the body. However, apart from discussions of race, Shakespeare's representation of skin has often been overlooked in favour of an exploration of the body *per se*. Although in recent times Steven Connor (2004), Claudia Benthien (2002) and Nina Jablonski (2013) have contributed valuable critical insight into the cultural history of skin, most Shakespearean commentators delve deeper, so to speak, into the interior of the body. This suggests that the elusive 'truth' is concealed inside, a viewpoint shared by Renaissance medical epistemology.

This study will argue that in *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Macbeth*, the location of bodily 'truth' is completely destabilised due to the body's volatile surfaces. It will explore how in these plays, bodily surfaces and their coverings alter and/or obscure the legibility of characters' bodies, thus confusing the literal and figurative processes of anatomisation. It will also examine how this legibility is developed by the anxieties engendered by the vulnerability of bodily surfaces, which were current in early modern medical thought and intellectual culture. Critics such as Andrea Stevens (2013) and Lisa Starks-Estes (2013) have devoted chapters to the theatrical representations of bodily surfaces in Shakespeare, and the study will draw on their research to explore these representations in the plays. The focus, however, will be primarily thematic.

The study will also explore how the plays construct an organic unity between skin and its coverings, which complicates 'skin's ontological destabilization of the body's "inside" and "out"' (Shirilan 2008: 59). There was bidirectional verbal cross-pollination between early modern conceptions of bodily surfaces and coverings; witness the implications of 'a garment all of blood' (*Henry IV Part I*, III.ii.135) and the idea that skin is 'an vnseamed garment' for the body (Crooke 1615: 72). These conflated discourses allow bodily coverings to adopt the anxieties pertaining to organic bodily surfaces. Conceptualising skin as clothes and vice versa blurs the precise demarcative boundaries of the body. This creates 'layered bodies', which confuses the idea of bodily interiority as the

character is made of multiple 'skins'. Hence, numerous, complex narratives can be read on a character's body.

The study will also pay some attention to bodily simulacra in Renaissance drama in the discussion of statues in *Julius Caesar*. Such simulacra complicate the idea of the organic body, since they possess physical interiority while remaining inanimate, lending a sense of uncanny liminality. In the case of Caesar's statue, the sense of the protagonist's organic dermal vulnerability is developed and complicated by the oneiric statue bleeding through an apparently impermeable surface. Exploring the relationship between organic and inorganic bodily surfaces will inform the study's examination of the skin as 'the vulnerable, unreliable boundary' (Connor 2004: 65).

The next section will explore the conceptualisation of skin in the early modern period to establish an idea of the medical, cultural and literary contexts that influenced the three plays that the study will focus on. Subsequently, the two sections on *Coriolanus* will explore the nature of Martius' bodily surfaces as a legible canvas, and the 'textualisation' of these surfaces. The first section on this play will examine how the bloody integument that Martius sports in Act I acts as his defence against the textualisation of his skin, while the second will explore how his naked skin is turned into a canvas on which narratives can be inscribed. Following this, the discussion of *Julius Caesar* will centre on how the legibility of such bodily surfaces can be manipulated. It will also be divided into two sections, the first exploring the negation of Caesar's 'mythologized skin' (Garbero 2010: 42) as represented by his statues, and the second examining how Mark Antony advances this demythologisation by anatomising Caesar's organic skin. In the final section, the discussion of *Macbeth* will explore how the protagonist finally fosters dermal illegibility. The relationship between the bodily interior and the surface will be very important in the discussions of all three plays, and the study will examine the relationship between dermal defence and legibility.

The perception of skin in the early modern period

Early modern skin is noticeable due to its absence. There are few references to skin *per se* in comparison to the rest of the body (Shirilan 2008: 60), so it is challenging to explore its ontological status. However, as this study will argue, the bodily surface is integral to Renaissance drama. Didier Anzieu's theory that the 'human center' is located at the 'periphery' (1989: 9) of the subject can be applied to early modern dramatic conceptualisations of skin. Interpreting the characters in Shakespearean plays as Anzieu's 'surface entities' (1989: 9) simultaneously privileges surface and core, as well as exemplifying the close, complex relationship between the two.

As the most peripheral organic layer of the body, skin was the nexus of early modern debate about the body's relationship with its environment. The early modern period witnessed the development of an idealised perception of the skin as 'a powerful symbol of the security of the body and self' (Pollard 2010: 112). Such a perception foregrounds the notion of embodiment, emphasising a sense of containment within definite, established boundaries. However, contradictory early modern modes of thought 'did not admit the possibility of thinking about the body as a discrete entity' (Sawday 1996: 16). This conflict between the two schools of thought meant that early modern skin was an unstable construct. The capacity of skin to separate and define a body clashed with its status as an unreliable, permeable boundary.

This was bolstered by anxieties about incursions and threatened boundaries from different discourses, which filtered into conceptualisations of the body. For example, the notion of bodily boundaries was fertilised and rewritten by the discourse of colonialism, and the human body was conceptualised as ‘a strange or unknown geography’ (Sawday 1996: 180). Contemporary colonialist endeavour simultaneously stressed the expansion and the reaffirmation of national boundaries (Sawday 1996: 180), invoking the same tensions that governed medical thought. The conflation of medical and colonial discourse is emphasised by Phineas Fletcher’s *The Purple Island*, an allegorical depiction of the human body. This poem metaphorises the skin alternately as ‘a fence from foreign enmity’ and as ‘a sea that girts th’Isle in every part’ (1971: II.xv-xvi). ‘Fence’ suggests that the skin is a protective wall against ‘foreign’ threats, but this is contradicted by ‘sea’, which hints at the skin’s inherent, almost fluid instability. Further, the cultural transfer enabled by nascent Renaissance colonialism may inform the word ‘sea’, mirroring the idea that the skin was a permeable interface that permitted exchange. This image is contradicted and complicated further by the fact that the ‘sea’ itself ‘girts’ the body, suggesting armour and protection. Fletcher’s contrasting terms capture the fluidity of early modern conceptions of the skin.

The preoccupation with bodily boundaries highlighted in this poem is exemplified by the tension between the two prevailing medical models of the period. During Shakespeare’s time, medical conceptualisations of the body were gradually undergoing a fundamental shift from the ‘open’, humoral body, proposed by Galen, to the newer conception of the ‘closed’ body (Hillman 2007: 7-8). These two models placed radically different emphases on the notion of embodiment: the open body prized permeability, while the closed body stressed the importance of a defensive, bounding skin that separated the individual from the immediate environment.

The theory of the open body was rooted in Galenic teachings, which stemmed from classical Alexandrian medicine in the third century BC (Sawday 1996: 39). Skin was posited as a site of exchange between the body and its immediate environment, but it appears to have had ‘little conceptual presence’ in Galenic physiology (Koslofsky 2014: 797). Helkiah Crooke quotes Galen as follows:

Galen speaketh very plainly, The skin (saith he) concocteth not, as the stomacke: it distributeth not as the Guts and the Veynes: it breedeth not bloud as the Liuer, it frameth not any pulsation as the Heart and the Arteries... (1615: 87)

In a spirit similar to that of the mutinous members of Menenius’ ideal body in *Coriolanus*, Galen discounts the abilities of the skin. Skin almost appears to be a bodily adjunct, not an organ that carries out vital processes like the heart or liver. Indeed, in early modern medical texts endorsing Galenic physiology, skin was regarded primarily as a site of exchange (Paster 1993: 8), not one of defence, which opposes Fletcher’s conceptualisation of skin as a ‘fence’. A translator of the work of the French surgeon Ambroise Paré, Walter Hamond highlights this, stating that humans ‘inspire’ air ‘through the pores of the skin’ (Paré 1617: 28), while Helkiah Crooke similarly discusses ‘the transpirable passages of the skin’ (1615: 66). Such a relationship with the environment was desirable, since skin that ‘denie[d] the transpiration of the excrements’ was ‘easily poluted and infected’¹ (Bradwell 1625: 46), which emphasises the idea that infection was ‘a matter of internal balance’ (Harris 1998, cited in Pollard 2010: 113). The stress on the internal suggests that there was

less focus on defence against 'external agents' (Harris 1998, cited in Pollard 2010: 113); indeed, a 'thick' skin (Sennert 1663: 2433) would cause the body to become congested. The theory of the 'open' body thus posited that porous skin that permitted exchange was conducive to good health.

This medical model of the porous humoral body was challenged and gradually replaced by the idea of the 'closed', fortified body (Hillman 2007: 7). It was bolstered in particular by William Harvey's theories of blood circulation, which emphasised that the body was a closed system (Paster 1993: 68). Early modern society began to regard the body as a *homo clausus*, which was 'a being severed from all other people and things "outside" by the "wall" of the body' (Elias 1978, cited in Hillman 2007: 7). This meant that unlike in Galenic physiology, threats were now externalised, so the skin became 'a barrier, self-protective and closed', establishing 'a firm distinction between "inner" and "outer"' (Hillman 2007: 6).

This radical change from dermal permeability to impermeability exacerbated new anxieties about bodily integrity. Initially, it may seem that the concept of bodily integrity would have been jeopardised by the Galenic model, since it was based on the idea that skin was porous and permitted active, constant exchange with its environment. However, the closed body depended on the exclusion of the outside world. Defining the body by negating its connection to the environment meant that medical theory was now constantly aware of the body's need for defence. The former ideals of dermal permeability were thus completely inverted. Early modern medical texts highlighted the resultant desire for a fortified body, evidenced by their militaristic rhetoric. W. Folkingham writes of 'troopes of Miscreants' battering the 'Bulwarkes of Health' (1628: 78) while Crooke metes out military responsibility for each layer of the skin, writing that the 'skin' is 'the wall of the Castle',² the fat is a 'Magazine of nourishment' and the 'fleshy membrane' is 'a secret defence to hold out a second assault, if the outward should bee won by the enemy' (1615: 61).

This focus on somatic closure meant that knowledge about the body was now hidden beneath the opaque skin. Hence, the insistence on closing the body resulted in the inability to 'read' the body. The early modern period 'was losing a sense of the transparency of the other' (Hillman 2007: 34). The fact that epistemological access was now denied fuelled the contradictory desire to open the closed body. 'The Knowledge of man' was 'determined by the View, or Sight' (Bacon 1627: 31), and the skin was now supposed to 'infolde | Secrets vnknowne' (Davies 1603: 231), so everting the body became popular in the early modern period (Harvey 2003: 82). Anatomy flourished, which bolstered the perception of the skin as a visual barrier that needed to be peeled away to expose the visceral secrets beneath it.

These concerns are powerfully emphasised by the prevalence of *écorchés* in contemporary medical texts. The most famous figures were those in Andreas Vesalius' seminal *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, illustrated by Jan van Calcar, a student of Titian, and published in 1543. The series of intricately detailed *écorchés*, which are gradually stripped of muscle, carry out a visual dissection into the body of man, affirming that 'this flesh which walls about [one's] life' is indeed not 'brass impregnable' (*Richard II* 2011: III.ii.167-8). This work was followed by texts such as Charles Estienne's *De dissectione partium corporis* (1545) and Juan Valverde de Amusco's *Anatomia Del Corpo Humano* (1560), both of which contained similar images of *écorchés* (indeed, Valverde plagiarised many of Vesalius' images).

The proliferation of *écorchés* had implications for epistemological procedures. 'The acquisition of knowledge' began to be regarded as 'a process of breaking through an outer shell to reach an inner core of meaning' (Anzieu 1989: 9). Correspondingly, the removal of an *écorché's* skin became 'emblematic [of the] act of [the] production of knowledge' (Herrlinger 1968, cited in Benthien 2002: 43). The theory of the closed body suggested that the bodily interior was the sole locus and producer of knowledge, so skin was posited as the epistemological barrier, while the interior became a kind of anatomical 'text'. This was emphasised by the surge in early modern empirical science and anatomy, which meant that practitioners valued heuristic modes of exploration, as opposed to the authority of extant texts (Berns 2010: 104-5). 'Reading' the body became important, and it was the anatomist who 'outlined a complete text' on the body (Sawday 1996: 131). This implicated the body in concerns of legibility and the construction of medical narrative and discourse.

Thus, this period of intellectual instability provoked complex anxieties about the legibility and vulnerability of the body. These anxieties inflect the depiction of the bodily surface in early modern plays. 'Drama is the fleshly genre, and the central dramaturgical fact is *embodiment*' (Baker 1987: 303-4, emphasis in original), where 'embodiment' emphasises the primacy of containment and bodily integrity in Renaissance drama. This suggests that plays would idealise the theory of the closed body, advancing the notion that the skin was 'a fence, and spie; a watchman, and a wall' (*The Purple Island* 1971: II.xv). However, as discussed above, the body could never be completely closed. Indeed, Thomas Dekker writes that 'the Stage, like time, will bring [one] to most perfect light, and lay [one] open' (1609: 29), suggesting that the theatre, like the surgical theatre, prized the processes of anatomisation and revelation. Hence the dramatic early modern body, like the medical body, is best described as a 'half-open being' (Bachelard 1969: 222), since it too identifies the tensions between the skin's seemingly opposite roles of 'containment and revelation' (Handcock 2012: 1).

The concept of bodily legibility holds particular importance for the depiction of bodily surfaces in Renaissance drama. The 'texts' that are created by bodily surfaces in early modern drama are implicitly subjective. Unlike the anatomist, who was the single, dominant source of authority on the body (Berns 2010: 104), Renaissance drama often involves multitudinous, unstable readings of the same body since dramatic semiotics 'are created through, with and upon the bodies of actors' (Marshall 1996: 114). Furthermore, the fundamental falsehood of theatre destabilises the idea of the 'truth' suggested by anatomisation. Theatrical anatomisation focuses as much on the creation of truths as on their interpretation. The narratives produced by the articulate bodily surface can be manipulated by the characters, the audience and the owner of the skin. Thus the 'truths' of the bodily surface in Renaissance drama are always in a constant state of fluctuation.

The legibility of the bodily interior in early modern anatomy is displaced on to the bodily surface in Renaissance drama. Skin is often articulate, and plays refer to human skin as 'parchment'. Parchment was made, as Hamlet and Horatio state, of 'sheep-skins' and 'calves' skins' (2007: V.i.111, 112), but referring to human skin as such suggests that it can be dramatically textualised. For example, Anthony Munday's *The true and honorable historie, of the life of Sir John Old-castle* has a character named Harpoole claiming to 'make parchment' (1600: C3r) out of the skin of another character, Clun. Shakespeare's *King John* and *The Comedy of Errors* extend this metaphor by introducing the act of writing on the skin. King John claims that he is 'a scribbled form, drawn with a pen |

Upon a parchment' (*KJ* 1996: V.vii.32-3), while likewise, Dromio of Ephesus in *The Comedy of Errors* states that the 'blows' that Antipholus of Ephesus gives him are 'ink' on the 'parchment' of his skin (*CE* 2005: III.i.14, 13). The results of Antipholus' blows are re-imagined as his 'handwriting' (*CE* 2005: III.i.14), suggesting that skin acts as a legible record. It is a kind of archive.

This discourse of dermal legibility is greatly developed by pierced skin, which is a pervasive trope in Renaissance drama (Goth 2012: 139). Both *King John* and *The Comedy of Errors* link skin with the metaphorical act of writing, but pierced skin in early modern drama is literally inscribed. Scarus in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* emphasises this when he states:

I had a wound here that was like a T,
But now 'tis made an H. (*AC* 2005: IV.vii.7-8)

Scarus 'character[ise]s' his wounds on his skin, thus extracting meaning out of them. In this case, 'H', pronounced 'aitch', suggests 'ache'. This hints that the physical pain caused by the wound has been 'written' on his skin. Further, his name itself recalls 'scar', which also suggests inscription. Scarus' wounds are thus literally textualised.

In a similar vein, wounds are also conceptualised as mouths in Renaissance literature. For example, Hotspur in *Henry IV Part I* refers to Mortimer's 'mouthèd wounds' which '[n]eed no more but one tongue' (2005: I.v.95-6), while in *Richard III*, '[d]ead Henry's wounds | Open their congealed mouths and bleed afresh' (2005: I.ii.55-6), suggesting cruentation since Richard is present. 'Mouths' and 'tongues' hint that wounds are turned into active sites of articulation. The image of locutory wounds is developed in a 1626 sermon by Barten Holyday, which invokes the Biblical tale of Thomas the Apostle or Doubting Thomas when it states that '[y]ou may behold the opening mouth of this wound, which with eloquent bloud inuites you to faith and loue' (1626: 37). Like the 'speaking' wounds in the Renaissance plays, Christ's wound becomes a 'mouth', while its externalised blood is given the power of speech. In this case, it symbolises 'faith and loue'.

The eloquence of pierced skin and the spilt interior suggests that dermal vulnerability is complexly linked with the legibility of the skin. Wounds become 'characters' and locutory mouths, suggesting that they are both textualised and articulate. This suggests that the medical ideals of dermal defence play an important role in Renaissance drama. However, as early medical texts acknowledge, skin cannot 'contain' the body, and likewise, it is vulnerable in early modern plays. In fact, if skin is protective in Renaissance drama, it is due to a charm or an integral inviolability that is not related to the strength of the skin. For example, in Elizabeth Cary's *The tragedie of Mariam*, Mariam's skin 'will euery Curtlax edge refell' (1613: G1v) because of her virtuous nature, while in Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, the Good Angel tells Faustus to 'repent, and [the devils] shall never raze thy skin' (2003, A, v.256). Similarly, in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great, Part One*, Tamburlaine declares that nobody can 'raze' his 'charmèd skin', because Jove will 'shield [him] from harm' (2003, 1, I.ii.179, 180, 181).

Most Renaissance characters, however, are physically vulnerable. The eponymous Bussy D'Ambois' question 'Is my body, then, | But penetrable flesh?' (*Bussy D'Ambois* 1999: V.iv.77-8) in George Chapman's play resonates throughout Renaissance drama as a whole. Indeed, this would have been the most worrying question to ask in a post-Harveian society.

Skin was not an adequate defender of the closed body; the very nature of anatomisation, both medical and theatrical, undercuts its defensive properties. As this study will highlight in the following discussions of *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth*, dermal incursion acquires a variety of different meanings dictated by rhetoric and context. The next section will discuss how *Coriolanus* explores the defence provided by Martius' bloody integument. It will argue that Martius exerts control over the creation of his identity by literally producing and manipulating the narratives of his bodily surface.

'A thing of blood': Martius' bloody armour

Gaston Bachelard writes of 'the being of man considered as the being of a *surface*, of the surface that separates the region of the same from the region of the other' (1969: 222, emphasis in original). *Coriolanus* presents an eponymous hero for whom the 'being of a surface' is an appropriate epithet. The play's pervasive concerns about bodily surfaces foreground Bachelard's emphasis on the 'same' and the 'other', since Martius Caius Coriolanus, the protagonist of Shakespeare's last tragedy, reveres isolation. However, the impossibility of absolute somatic closure in the Renaissance is very significant here. Martius' bodily surfaces are greatly 'troubled' (Marshall 1996: 94). In *Coriolanus*, the psychological interiority that pervades earlier Shakespearean tragedies such as *Hamlet* is replaced by physical interiority, which is dramatised by the prominence of bloodied skin in the first Act. The legibility of Martius' bodily surface is thus complexly and inextricably linked to the dermal function of defence. Martius' bloody 'armour' (Stevens 2013: 50) precludes the interpretation of his legible skin (which will be discussed in the next section), but the 'defence' that it provides (the inability to be read) is undercut by the fact that it physically arises out of his penetrated skin. The closed body required the skin to protect the body against 'externall dangers' (Paré 1634: 89), but Martius' skin, far from being 'the wall of the Castle' (Crooke 1615: 61), has been punctured in battle, undercutting his ideal of inviolability as an 'engine' (2013: V.iv.19). It is the fragility of his skin itself that gives rise to his 'armour'. Thus the anxiety about the inability of the skin to contain and defend is implicitly and deeply coded into Martius' very mode of defence. The paradox of his bodily surfaces both serves and undercuts the conceptualisation of Martius as the 'war-machine' (2013: V.iii.19n).

The early modern ideal of dermal fortification is brought up in Menenius' fable of the belly, the first of many invocations of the body in *Coriolanus*. Skin was 'not described as a concrete or stable object in the early modern period' (Shirilan 2008: 60), and likewise, Menenius' ideal body does not identify the skin *per se*. However, his discussion with the Second Citizen emphasises one of its key functions, bodily fortification, which underlies the dermal tensions built up in *Coriolanus*. References to 'the vigilant eye', 'the arm our soldier' and '[o]ur steed the leg' (2013: I.i.110, 111, 112) correspond with the martial themes of the play, and are reminiscent of the militaristic vocabulary of dermal defence. However, it is the Second Citizen's last two lines that are most pertinent to this study. '[O]ther muniments and petty helps | In this our fabric' (2013: I.i.113-14) can be read as a reference to the skin. Peter Holland glosses 'muniments' as 'fortifications' (2013: I.i.113n), which corresponds with the theory of the closed body. Likewise, Helkiah Crooke uses the word three times in relation to the skin's role in defence (1615: 61, 72, 73), while Thomas Johnson, another translator of the work of Ambroise Paré, similarly calls human skin 'a muniment' (Paré 1634: 88) with regards to protection.

Thus, the Second Citizen appears to be stressing the idea of a defensive body armoured against incursion. However, the ability of the skin to defend the body is also often questioned in early modern medical texts, undercutting the Second Citizen's emphasis on dermal fortification. The fact that medical literature simultaneously emphasises dermal defence and vulnerability highlights the anxieties manifested by the intellectual flux in the period and represented in this play. Crooke states that human skin is 'naked and vnarmed' so that a person can 'at his owne will and pleasure, both girt himselfe in all manner of armour, and againe presently lay it aside' (1615: 9). Likewise, Erasmus writes that 'Man' is 'naked... and without any armure, with moste softest fleshe and smothe skynne' (1534: A4r), while Michel de Montaigne claims that humans are 'produced in a defective and indigent estate... as can not be maintained without forraine help' (1603: 112). Nakedness signifies vulnerability in *Coriolanus*, which detracts from the conceptualisation of skin as a 'muniment'. Further, the OED cites this quote from *Coriolanus* as an example of 'muniments' to mean 'things with which a person or place is provided; furnishings' (2), which places skin in the position of an 'ornament' (Paré 1634: 88; Crooke 1615: 73).

Thus the early modern period questioned the precise role of skin: does it defend the body, or does it need to be defended? Using Martius' body, *Coriolanus* negotiates these anxieties. Martius' body is complexly layered; in addition to skin, he is also covered, at various points, with armour (indicated by his 'mailed hand'), blood, and the 'gown of humility' (2013: I.iii.37, II.iii.39). In Act I, blood holds the most significant position. In Thomas North's translation of Plutarch, Martius is simply described as 'all bloody, and in a swet' (Bullough 1975 V: 513), but in *Coriolanus*, Martius goes from being 'flayed' to 'mantled' to 'paint[ed]' (2013: I.vi.22, 29, 68), each epithet connoting a distinct, different relationship between bodily surface and covering. The factor that is common to all of them, however, is that each suggests either a total covering or a negation/absence of skin. Martius' skin is not just 'laced' with blood, like Duncan's 'silver skin' is in *Macbeth* (2013: II.ii.113), but completely covered. This has implications for the construction of Martius' identity, since 'more than any other part of the body, skin imbues us with humanity and individuality' (Jablonski 2013: 3). Nina Jablonski's statement recalls the dehumanisation evident in early modern écorchés. Martius' exteriorised interiority, however, denotes a more complex relationship between bodily surface and interior than a disjunction between recognisable skin and unrecognisable, alien interior. His bloody integument is a costume intended to dehumanise him. Blood in *Coriolanus* is a 'mask' (2013: I.viii.11) that seeks to negate Martius' organic, human vulnerability.

'Paintings' of blood are mentioned in other Shakespearean plays. In *Henry VI, Part III*, Edward, the son of Richard Plantagenet, has a 'purple falchion, painted to the hilt | In blood of those that had encountered him' (1996: I.iv.12-13), while in *Hamlet*, Pyrrhus is described as 'a painted tyrant' who is 'horridly | Tricked with blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons' (2007: II.ii.418, 396). The description of Pyrrhus recalls Martius, who is similarly covered in the blood of the enemy Volsces, as well as his own.³

Pyrrhus' coating of blood is also called 'heraldry more dismal' than his 'dread and black complexion' (2007: II.ii.394, 393), where 'heraldry' recalls pedigree, and thus a strange form of identification localised in the blood itself. Further, 'heraldry' hints at dense symbolism, suggesting that the blood is readable, almost textualised. Andrea Stevens, however, argues that the mixture of blood on Martius' skin contrastingly prevents rather than encourages reading, suggesting that his blood 'hides, rather than displays, his "core"'

(2013: 69). The interior is 're-made *as* exterior' (Hillman 2007: 32, emphasis in original). Whereas skin hides the bodily interior in early modern anatomy, blood 'hides' the hide (skin) in this play. However, in *Coriolanus*, Martius' exteriorised physical interiority assumes symbolic density. In addition to physically concealing it, the bloody integument symbolically hides the hide by creating its own false narrative of invulnerability. Martius is thus 'playing | The man' that he is not (2013: III.ii.16-17).

The creation of this narrative is highly complex and paradoxical. It centres in particular on Cominius' description of Martius as being 'flayed'. This image finds a parallel in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which describes how the satyr Marsyas is flayed by Phoebus after he loses to the god in a musical contest. Arthur Golding translates:

Nought else he was than one whole wounde. The griesly bloud did spin
From euery part, the sinewes lay discovered to the eye. (Ovid 1567: L2r)

The apparently 'flayed' Martius, likewise, would resemble 'one whole wounde'. This suggests that both the Roman general and the satyr resemble early modern *écorchés*, and correspondingly, 'discovered' suggests the prying eye of anatomy, as well as the revelation of knowledge. However, the incisive thrust of anatomisation suggested by the *écorché* is complicated by Martius. Stevens argues that blood lends Martius 'bodily privacy' from the searching anatomical gaze, so that 'the first act of *Coriolanus*... revises the Marsyas myth from a story of shameful exposure to a story of enclosure' (2013: 50, 69). 'Enclosure' suggests that blood acts as armour for Martius, but paradoxically, it stems from the failure of Martius' skin to act as an inviolable 'enclosure' for his body. Thus, blood is symptomatic of both enclosure and the failure to enclose. His bloody integument both sustains and undercuts the idea of the fortified body; the interior that should be protected defends the defender (the skin) instead.

Martius' flayed appearance also parallels an incident in Thomas Preston's *Cambyses*, when the eponymous character flays Sisamnes. The stage direction for Sisamnes' death reads: 'Flea him with a false skin' (1584: C2v). This pinpoints the theatrical illusion of flaying, because it is explicitly identified as 'false' in the play text itself. *Coriolanus* develops this falsehood above and beyond theatrical illusion, because Martius' 'flaying' is both thematically and theatrically false. Martius' skin is in fact intact (although perforated), while the skin of the early modern actor playing Martius is unharmed and 'painted' using stage blood made of vermilion or animal blood (Munro 2013: 79-80). Stevens argues that the artificiality of Martius' blood suggested by the words 'paint' and 'mask' helps him to 'sever blood from its relationship with vulnerability' (2013: 50), aligning the character with the unharmed actor. However, these verbal suggestions of artificiality do not completely negate the character's vulnerability, because in the play, Martius is indeed covered with wounds that later 'smart | To hear themselves remembered' (2013: I.ix.28-9). In *Coriolanus*, the character is playing the invulnerable human when he refers to 'paint' and 'mask', but he is genuinely wounded.

The complex ironies manifested by the bloody integument's false narrative of invulnerability augment the paradox of defence further. If the audience, in a momentary suspension of disbelief, believes that Martius is genuinely flayed, they then believe that the protective, defensive barrier of skin is absent. Martius is blatantly vulnerable as he is literally 'open on euery side' (Crooke 1615: 60). However, this impression is undercut by

the fact that Martius' dehumanisation negates his human vulnerability. He even apparently draws strength from the loss of blood, suggesting that he is purged: 'the blood I drop is rather physical | Than dangerous to me' (2013: I.v.18-19). There is apparently nothing that can hurt the 'thing of blood' (2013: II.ii.107), which is the false narrative that Martius wishes everyone to believe. Cominius' epithet for Martius, 'thing of blood', emphasises that this central narrative of dehumanisation depends on the tense dialectic between Martius' interior and exterior: 'thing of blood' registers both Martius' bloodied skin and the organic interior of his own body. He is 'both all surface and all inside' (Harvey 2003: 86). However, the connotation of bloodied skin is dominant, especially if the text is edited so that the lines read 'from face to foot | He was a thing of blood' (2013: II.ii.106-7).⁴ Martius is a 'thing' because of his externalised blood. He is thus uneasily poised between man and machine, and life and death, like an écorché. The bloody integument creates a narrative of dehumanisation centred on himself, so that he cannot be read on human terms.

Martius' consequent fantasy of inviolability reaches its zenith when he proclaims, 'O me alone! Make you a sword of me?' (2013: I.vi.76). This is his crowning moment: he is at his most impenetrable. Earlier in the play, Titus Lartius compares Martius' 'sensitive' body to his senseless sword' (2013: I.iv.57). 'Sensitive' denotes feeling, which feeds into the vulnerability and receptivity of the skin envelope as opposed to the unfeeling 'senselessness' of the sword. However, Martius is now metaphorised *as* the sword, so it is he who is 'senseless' now. As a 'sword', his skin is hard and inviolable. Further, he is now the phallic, piercing weapon, penetrating Corioles like an 'engine' (2013: V.iv.19) while remaining unharmed. Martius is literally 'creating' his own meaning in that he identifies himself as a 'sword', and that it is his own blood seeping out on to his skin. Hence, the blood allows him to be 'author of himself' (2013: V.iii.36).

Thus, in Act I, Martius revels in the narrative of inviolability that is fostered by the dehumanisation produced by his externalised blood. However, this narrative is very much a fantasy, because the blood is a paradoxical mode of defence. Undeniably, Martius' skin has been perforated; although he tells Tullus Aufidius tauntingly, 'Tis not my blood | Wherein thou seest me masked' (2013: I.viii.10-11), the scars on his skin are testament to the number of times he has actually been pierced. Thus, Martius may not be 'open on every side', but his skin has definitely been opened. The superficial bloody integument, as armour, allows multiple readings of invulnerability to be mapped onto his body, but when interpreted as exteriorised bodily interiority, it stands for the diametric opposite. Underneath the integument, the skin is weak. Martius' comment immediately following his metaphor of a sword undercuts the meanings manifested by his integument. His 'shows' are indeed 'outward' (2013: I.vi.77). The blood is a 'show' that can be divested when Martius desires. This leaves Martius' punctured skin completely exposed. Unlike his bloody integument, Martius cannot exercise control over his skin. This loss of control over the significations of his skin will be the focus of the next section, which will discuss the anxieties stemming from the multitudinous interpretations that can be made of Martius' inexpediently readable skin.

Martius' legible skin

David Hillman suggests that *Coriolanus* 'is in a sense a dramatised battle over the interior of the body – over who has access to, and who is to be identified with, the interior' (2007: 21). This section will complicate his argument by suggesting that *Coriolanus* stages a battle for

dominance over bodily *surfaces*, in addition to the bodily interior. To do so, it will examine three factors of Martius' naked skin: his scars, his blush and the gown of humility. Martius' skin is the battleground for different competing narratives. None of the narratives are necessarily the objective truth, as characters and audience alike 'create' Martius' psychological interiority (Marshall 1996: 94-5). His un-armoured skin is his weakest point, because it becomes 'the blank canvas' upon which characters and audience, like early modern dissectors, 'outline a complete text' (Sawday 1996: 131). Each has the authority to impose meaning, so that Martius is no longer 'author of himself'. His wounds, in particular, are highly legible, and are complicated by 'their sliding signification[s], for they serve contradictorily as symbols of valor and of vulnerability' (Marshall 1996: 110). Thus the narratives created by Martius' skin jeopardise his extreme investment in the discourses of martial honour. In fact, they alter his identity.

Intriguingly, during the time that Martius spends as 'Coriolanus', he is almost never covered in blood. Although he himself creates a martial relationship between this 'name of the war' (2013: II.i.132) and his blood (his 'drops of blood' are 'requited | But with that surname' (2013: IV.v.71-2)), his first comment after being named 'Martius Caius Coriolanus' is that he 'will go wash' (2013: I.ix.66) the blood off himself. Thus, he 'sheds' his blood (2013: I.vi.57) in a new way. The newly named Coriolanus discards the protective, paradoxical 'armure' of blood (Erasmus 1534: A4r), and spends the time hiding his exposed, scarred skin from the populace. Hence, paradoxically, he is most vulnerable once he has been garlanded with a name that supposedly indicates his invulnerability as a human 'sword' and 'engine'. Martius' status as an early modern wound-man is evident only when he is not 'one whole wounde' like Marsyas (Ovid 1567: L2r). His scars textualise his skin, allowing for interpretations that are out of his control. Further, 'the very condition of textuality' itself destabilises the significations of Martius' scars (Marshall 1996: 112), so dermal narratives fluctuate constantly and are often contradictory.

The frontispieces of certain early modern medical texts highlight the tendency to textualise the skin. Thomas Bartholin's *Anatomia Reformata* (1666, Figure 1) and Nathaniel Highmore's *Corporis humani disquisitio anatomica* (1651, Figure 2), for example, both display the work's title on a flayed human skin. Highmore's frontispiece is particularly interesting because the skin has been 'opened', like a book. The facial skin is split, revealing both sides of the face, and suggesting that the body's spine is the spine of a book. This recalls a contemporary method of dissection, in which the body would be opened down the middle (Sawday 1996: 132), highlighting the cross-pollination between the discourses of anatomy and reading. Further, the split facial skin in Highmore's frontispiece is reminiscent of Janus, who was the god identified with beginnings, doors and gateways in ancient Rome. This cultural echo is a telling representation of skin as the primary transitional point in the pursuit of knowledge.

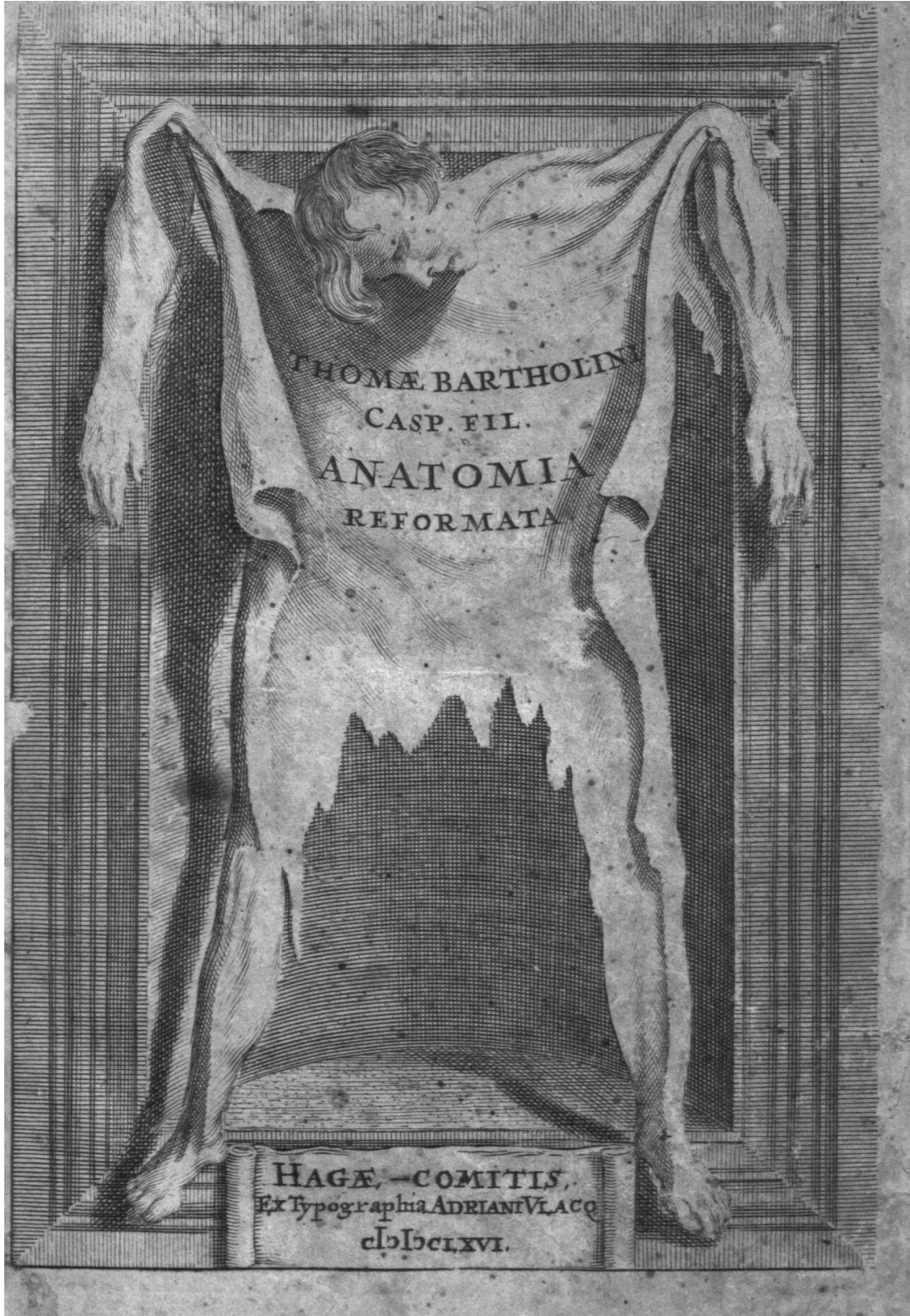


Figure 1: Frontispiece of Thomas Bartholin's *Anatomia Reformata*. The Hague, 1666. QM 21. B37 1666. Courtesy of Special Collections and Rare Books, University of Missouri Libraries.



Figure 2: Frontispiece of Nathaniel Highmore's *Corporis humani disquisitio anatomica*. The Hague, 1651. L0027823. Courtesy of Wellcome Library, London.

Coriolanus borrows from the trend of textualising skin in medical literature, but Martius' skin is doubly interesting, since it is heavily scarred. The narratives created by scarred skin in literary works differ from text to text. In Plutarch's *Life of Caius Martius Coriolanus*, Martius 'shewed many woundes and cuttes upon his bodie' to the commoners, which are indicative of his 'valliant' military achievements (Bullough 1975 V: 518). Similarly, the Duke of York in *Henry VI, Part II* suggests that scars are honourable, scorning the fact that the Duke of Somerset has not 'one scar character'd on [his] skin' (1996: III.i.300). 'Character'd' invokes ideas of writing, suggesting skin's power to articulate valiancy. Contrastingly, Buckingham in *Richard III* states that England is figuratively 'defaced with scars of infamy' (2005: III.vii.125), connoting the diametric opposite to the meanings that scars create in Plutarch and *2 Henry VI*.

Coriolanus complicates this by uniting significations of shame, vulnerability and valour in scars. Martius' anxieties about his revelatory scars are echoed in a 1587 play called *The Misfortunes of Arthur* by Thomas Hughes. In it, the Duke of Cornwall, Cador, comments:

I neuer yet sawe hurt so smoothly heald,
But that the skarre bewraid the former wound. (1587: 24-5)

Cador's comments correspond with early modern medical opinions on the inevitability of scars: it was 'impossible to heale a wound where any part of the skinne is taken away without a scarre or Cicatrice more or lesse' (Crooke 1615: 86). 'Bewraid' links well with Martius' own fear of exposition, while also phonetically invoking a sense of betrayal. Martius was intent on hiding his scarred skin in Act I, evidenced by the vocabulary that he and other characters use to describe his integument of blood – 'mantled', 'masked', 'painting'. As previously discussed, 'hiding' the body's interior was a function of the skin. *Coriolanus* inverts this, since it is Martius' interiority that shields his skin for the greater part of Act I, reversing the thrust of anatomical practice. Now, however, Martius' exposed, scarred skin articulates his vulnerability and the 'openness' of his body in a public forum. His skin is riddled, both with wounds and with enigma.

In Plutarch, Martius does not eschew the public display of his wounds, but Shakespeare's Martius is extremely reluctant to do so. This aversion stems from the intriguing ontological status of his scars: they are simultaneously open and closed. Martius has been wounded twenty-five times in combat before the Corioles battle, and references to 'scars' (2013: II.ii.147, III.iii.51) and 'cicatrices' (2013: II.i.244) suggest that most of his wounds are now healed. Early modern medical texts suggest that a scar indicates strong dermal closure, since 'it is harder than the true skin & more thight' (Crooke 1615: 86). This potential for closure suggests that scars endorse Martius' ideals of inviolability and impenetrability. However, the play's language 'allow[s] for no saving categorical distinctions between new and old wounds, between flowing blood and healed-over scars' (Paster 1993: 97). This is hinted at by the different descriptions of the scars given by Menenius and Martius:

MENENIUS

... Think

Upon the wounds his body bears, which show
Like graves i'th' holy churchyard.

MARTIUS

Scratches with briars,

Scars to move laughter only. (2013: III.iii.48-51)

Menenius directly reverses his own previous gleeful statement that on Martius, 'every gash was an enemy's grave' (2013: II.i.151-2). The new image of Martius' wounds as 'graves' shifts the image of death and burial on to Martius. Martius however attempts to combat and deny the depth suggested by 'graves' by highlighting the superficiality of his scars, claiming they are 'scratches with briars'. He corroborates this physical superficiality by suggesting that they should 'move laughter', suggesting that they are not serious or 'grave' wounds. Martius' focus on his bodily surface suggests that he does not wish to acknowledge the deep penetration and suggestions of death suggested by Menenius' 'graves'. He seeks to undercut the sense of physical interiority and corresponding vulnerability created by 'graves', attempting to keep himself a 'surface entity' (Anzieu 1989: 9).

However, in the play, there are twenty-one references to Martius' physical wounds, as opposed to two instances of 'scars' and one of 'cicatrice'. Scars are thus reconceptualised as wounds, so Martius' skin is not an enclosing, protective barrier against the outside world. Linguistically, scars are reopened, inverting the natural, healing progression of wounds into scars. These scars-turned-wounds are more vulnerable to interpretation than a smooth skin is, as wounds are 'a kind of transitional space' (Hillman 2007: 31). Their openness allows the plebeians to 'put [their] tongues into those wounds and speak for them' (2013: II.iii.6-7). The general who desires isolation and privacy is thus forcefully thrust into a social and political ritual which centres on the significations of his scarred skin.

This has implications for Martius' construction of his own identity. To let others read the 'text' of his skin is to surrender the process of self-fashioning to them. In the political arena, Martius' identity is at the mercy of the patricians, the plebeians and the Tribunes, Junius Brutus and Sicinius Velutus. Menenius and Volumnia commodify and even fetishise his numerous 'wounds', listing their respective positions 'i'th' shoulder and i'th' left arm', '[o]ne i'th' neck and two i'th' thigh' (2013: II.i.150, 143, 147). Scars are 'records of war-making' (Covington 2009: 112), so Martius' skin has been inscribed with signifiers of his valiancy. Such significations endorse his identity as an engine of war. However, these significations of military valour are undercut by Volumnia, who states that her son's 'large cicatrices' are to be shown to the people 'when he shall stand for his place' (2013: II.i.144-5). This political commodification suggests that Martius' wounds have been acquired solely in the pursuit of a political position. Martius himself does not wish to:

Show them th' unaching scars which I should hide,

As if I had received them for the hire

Of their breath only. (2013: II.ii.147-9)

Martius does not want to create a relationship between his scars and his political role since it overwrites his own self-fashioning. Indeed, he wishes to 'hide' them. However, in the political arena, he can no longer declare, 'O me alone!' (2013: I.vi.76). The politicised lens through which his wounds are now read ensures that the authority for interpretation lies with the plebeians. Further, this is a world in which 'wounds become [Martius]' (2013: II.i.120). Previously, Volumnia has commented that blood 'more becomes a man | Than gilt his trophy' (I.iii.41-2), where 'becomes' suggests ornamentation, due to the comparison with gilding. Similarly, Menenius' comment that wounds 'become' Martius suggests that they will be ornaments, and the vicariously ambitious Volumnia desires to exploit their political persuasiveness. However, as the political ritual develops and proceeds, the wounds 'become' Martius himself. His (perforated) skin goes from being the 'ornament' that Paré and Crooke discuss, to being his essence. His identity is reduced to the sum of his wounds. Thus, not only is Martius' skin unable to defend his bodily interior, it is also 'too thin to contain his preferred self-image' (Stevens 2013: 74). The scars, symbolically reopened as wounds, invite reinterpretation, thus negating Martius' own agency in self-fashioning.

The openness of Martius' wounds and his corresponding vulnerability is developed further by his blush. Like scars, blood underneath the skin in early modern England could be considered articulate. In *The First Anniversary*, written to commemorate the death of Elizabeth Drury, John Donne writes that 'her pure and eloquent blood | Spoke in her cheeks' (1612: 23). Likewise, in Thomas Nashes' *The Unfortunate Traveller*, Heraclide, the victim of a rape, looks at herself in a mirror 'to see if her sinne were not written on her forehead', but 'with looking shee blusht' (1594: L1v), which she takes as an indication of her 'sinne'.

Martius' blush is more complex, and this is where the problem lies. The act of blushing depends on the perception that there is something to be ashamed of (Hart 2005: n.p.), which implicates Martius in social exchange. His predicament about blushing is the diametric opposite of Prince Hal's in *Henry IV Part I*. Hal claims:

... I will wear a garment all of blood
And stain my favours in a bloody mask,

Which, wash'd away, shall scour my shame with it... (*Henry IV Part I* 2005: III.ii.135-7)

Like Martius, Prince Hal has his own bloody integument. However, the relationship between blood and skin is less complex than it is in *Coriolanus*; a 'garment' and 'mask' suggest that the blood is only present upon his skin (unlike Martius, whose appearance, described contradictorily as 'flayed' and 'painted', creates an unstable fluctuating relationship between bodily surface and interior). Further, Hal's 'garment' has sanitising properties. 'Scour' here means 'cleanse', so Hal's 'shame' is washed off by the blood.

Contrastingly, for Martius, bleeding is his mode of control. His 'painting' of blood is his armour *against* a display of 'shame':

I will go wash.
And when my face is fair you shall perceive

Whether I blush or no... (2013: I.ix.66-8)

As well as hiding the scars, his bloody integument 'hides' the openly demonstrative signifier of shame, the blush. Martius can only control what lies *on* his skin. He could manufacture the narratives of his externalised blood in Act I, but he cannot control his blush since it is a physiologically mediated, internalised process. Martius' naked, translucent skin, which evinces the blush, emphasises that blood that is evident *under* the surface acquires a different narrative from bloodied skin, which he is powerless to prevent or hide once his bloody integument has been discarded. The equivocality of his blush allows for diverging interpretations of shame, or perhaps even guilt, so the blush becomes an ambiguous "'ambassador" of [Martius'] psyche' (Prosser 2001: 58). Further, 'the red blush of shame... highlights the skin's role as a porous bodily boundary' (Hoffman 2014: 182), so his translucent skin creates an exchange with the outside world. Hence, there is a suggestion that the blush turns Martius into a Galenic open body, instead of the fortified closed body. Martius is responsive to the environment, instead of defending himself against it. The blush is thus an indication that Martius is participating in, and responding to, the political ritual of being looked at. He is not 'a lonely dragon' (2013: IV.i.30). The blush betrays his ideal of isolation, and he can no longer be the reflexive 'author of himself'.

Both Martius' scarred skin and his blush articulate what he himself would rather keep concealed. Each gives the role of interpretation to others, meaning that their significations can be exploited. Martius' political manoeuvring calls for the revelation of his skin, which is foregrounded by the ritual of the 'gown of humility'. This gown complicates the presentation of Martius' bodily surface. Plutarch's *Morals* states that 'those who stood for any office and magistracie' proceeded 'to the place of election, without inward coats in their plaine gownes' so that 'scarres might be better exposed' (1603: 867). This suggests that the entire purpose of the gown was display. The fact that scars could be 'exposed' when wearing a gown hints that it may have been, to some extent, translucent,⁵ which relates it to Martius' anxieties about his translucent skin. Unlike Martius' bloody integument, the gown does not 'mask' or 'mantle' the wearer.

During the scene in which Martius collects votes, he refers to the gown as a 'wolvish toge' (2013: II.iii.113). The Folio reads 'Wooluish', which some critics argue means 'woollen' (2013: II.iii.113n), suggesting that Martius is invoking the tale of the wolf in sheep's clothing.⁶ This Biblical tale emphasises the connection between deception and being double-skinned, since the wolf assumes a fleece to blend with the sheep. By invoking the tale, Martius highlights the theatricality and deception involved in politics, thus emphasising that he cannot 'play | The man [he is]'. The Biblical connotations of 'wolvish toge' suggest that he is literally 'duplicitous', where '*pli*' indicates the 'doubleness' of his skin (North, 'The Clothing-Ego' 2013: 70). Martius is 'wearing' two skins: his own, and an animal skin. This 'duplicity' corresponds with the fact that he is indeed playing a part. Martius' bodily surface is now layered with a deceptive covering.

However, Martius' reluctance to show his scars links the gown, and the notion of being 'covered', with the idea of being 'naked' (2013: II.ii.136). This contradictorily suggests that he is not wearing anything, which creates a tense dialectic between his actual skin and his gown. Martius is anxious when he is required to:

... stand naked, and entreat [the plebeians]
For my wounds' sake, to give their suffrage. (2013: II.ii.136-7)

The apparent contradiction between being 'naked' and being 'clothed' centres on the skin itself in medical texts, because a body is 'clothed' in skin (Lanfranco 1565: 29), yet the skin itself is 'naked' (Crooke 1615: 9, Erasmus 1534: A4r). In *Coriolanus*, the word 'naked', like 'flayed', is charged. Both Martius' skin and gown are implicated, since in the early modern period, 'naked' could mean 'wearing only an undergarment' (OED 1a) and 'exposed to view' (2013: II.ii.136n). Martius is thus simultaneously covered and uncovered by the 'gown of humility'. The distinction between his bodily surfaces is as precarious as it was when he was 'flayed'.

'Naked' could also mean 'vulnerable' (2013: II.ii.136n), which semantically links Martius' lack of dermal protection with his defencelessness against being read. This emphasises the exposure of the body's last defensive, yet vulnerable organic surface. The ritual of the gown of humility completely negates Martius' fantasy of being a human sword, since his naked skin is far from being the militaristic 'wall of the Castle' (Crooke 1615: 61). His defencelessness and exposure also correspond with the fact that 'naked' could mean 'unarmed', which is one of the senses that Aufidius employs when he refers to himself 'being naked' (2013: I.x.20, I.x.20n). Martius, who was previously metaphorised as a bloodied sword, is now deprived of his actual sword. Finally, if 'naked' means 'sword-less', there is a hint of castration and emasculation in presenting Martius' bare skin to the penetrative gaze of the plebeians, which invalidates his insistently masculine, militaristic outlook. In the political arena, dermal penetration is not physical but visual. Martius' bare skin lets him be feminised by the plebeians.

'Naked' thus semantically links Martius' vulnerability to physical attack and to interpretations that are outside his control. It encapsulates all of his anxieties. He is no longer hidden behind a bloody covering but exposed and vulnerable to all. Martius' scarred, blushing, naked skin is the nexus for the politically inclined narratives constructed by the plebeians, the patricians and the Tribunes. Hence, he does not have a skin that conceals, but a skin that reveals. Menenius states that '[Martius]' heart's his mouth' (2013: III.i.259), but his dermal legibility suggests that his skin is his mouth too. It is also a mouth that he cannot control. Unlike Martius' own 'tongue', his skin demands that viewers give it their 'voices' (2013: III.ii.51, II.i.1). 'Skin markings' are made to 'blurt out what the tongue might prefer to keep deceptively veiled' (Connor 2004: 96). The legibility of the textualised skin in *Coriolanus* thus jeopardises the self-fashioning of the owner of the skin, suggesting that Martius, reduced to the sum of his wounds, is made a product of the viewers' imagination. Hence, he cannot control the formation of his own identity.

Coriolanus emphasises that skin is the canvas on which personhood is inscribed. In the Acts following Act I, it is the skin, not the bodily interior, that is the producer and the locus of narratives. This capacity of the bodily surface to denote and fashion identity will be developed in the next section, which will focus on *Julius Caesar*. *Julius Caesar* deconstructs the mythological status of the protagonist, and reconstructs him as a human, by focusing on his bodily surfaces and coverings. The following section will explore how the existing narrative of Caesar's mythological skin is onerically deconstructed. It will argue that *Julius Caesar* rewrites the narrative by focusing on the protagonist's uncannily humanoid statue.

Demythologised skin: Caesar's bleeding statue

'Brutus will look for this skinne,' states Julius Caesar, metonymically referring to his body in Plutarch's *The Life of Julius Caesar*, one of Shakespeare's main sources for the play (Bullough 1975 V: 82). Plutarch glosses this: 'meaning thereby, that Brutus for his vertue, deserved to rule after him' (Bullough 1975 V: 82). The metonymy of 'skinne' hints at the powerful role of Caesar's bodily surface in the discourses of power and identity. Caesar literally and figuratively encapsulates his whole body by referring to his 'skinne'. Geoffrey Bullough's translation also suggests that Caesar's 'skinne' is passed from one ruler to the next, echoing *Macbeth's* preoccupation with 'borrowed robes' (*Macbeth* 2015: I.iii.109-10). The 'skinne' is inscribed as a symbol of Caesar's power. Caesar thus participates in the construction of his own mythology, inscribing it on his skin. He 'fuels his own legend' (Garbero 2010: 42).

This 'skinne', however, carries multiple, contradictory connotations in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. The play deconstructs and rewrites Caesar's mythologised 'skinne' as an organic and vulnerable human skin. This section of the study will suggest that this deconstruction is set in motion by Caesar's statues, and will focus on the bleeding statue in particular. It is true that the statue only bleeds oneirically, but in a play that places powerful emphasis on omens and prophecies, a bleeding statue becomes a complex and uncanny metaphor for Caesar's bodily surface(s). As this section and the next will argue, Shakespeare's exploration of Caesar's statues, and later, Caesar's 'dissection', create a complex dialectic between his organic skin and the 'skinne' that has had a mythology inscribed onto it.

Maria Del Sapio Garbero argues that it is Cassius who performs the first 'incision' into Caesar's body, suggesting that it is:

... an incision aimed at removing the mythologized layer of skin from Caesar's body, thus transforming the body of a king into the body of a convict. (2010: 42)

The royal identity connoted by Caesar's 'skinne' is erased, so that his body becomes indistinguishable from that of a convict. Garbero suggests that Cassius' emphasis on Caesar's inherent organic vulnerability and his reduction of Caesar's body into that of a powerless 'sick girl' (2004: I.ii.128) are symptomatic of his demythologisation of Caesar's skin. This section will complicate her argument by exploring how the deconstruction of Caesar's 'mythologized skin', achieved by Caesar's bleeding statue, helps to render him a 'bleeding piece of earth' (2004: III.i.254). The shared interiority between Caesar's organic body and his statue highlights the complex continuities between them, and the distinction between them is thus weakened.

Caesar's statue, as a bodily simulacrum, highlights the same anxieties about containment and incursion that were emphasised by the early modern closed body. 'Sculpture lent itself naturally to a sense that it *contains* something, an essence or *truth* trapped inside' (Barkan 1981: 650, emphasis added). Leonard Barkan's rhetoric echoes the early modern anatomical premise that skin was an opaque container, concealing 'truth' beneath itself. He emphasises that the stony humanoid surfaces of statues, like skin, are meant to 'contain' and 'hide'. However, Caesar's oneiric statue performs neither function. At the start of the play, Caesar's mythologised skin is almost literally concretised in the form of a 'colossus' (2004: I.ii.134-5) by Cassius. However, Calphurnia's dream suggests the

ultimate vulnerability of this god-like skin, since the bleeding oneiric statue hints that it too can be perforated. The bleeding is an omen of Caesar's death, but more importantly, it both foreshadows and complicates Mark Antony's rewriting of Caesar's 'mythologized layer of skin' as one belonging to a vulnerable, penetrable human. Thus, it participates in the rewriting itself. The fact that the impermeable marble surface of a bodily simulacrum is apparently rendered permeable in moments of powerful emotional intensity undercuts the deification of Caesar, so in contrast to *Coriolanus*, permeable, bleeding bodily surfaces in *Julius Caesar* humanise the protagonist.

Caesar's mythologised skin is a product of his deification by statuary. There were a number of statues of Caesar in ancient Rome, many of which presented him as a demi-god. For example, a statue with the inscription 'to the Invincible God' stood in the temple of Quirinus, while Appian details a deified statue of Caesar in the temple of Clementia (Toynbee 1957, cited in Limoges 2011: 127-8). Statues were instrumental in registering and developing Caesar's myth, and correspondingly, in Plutarch's *Life of Marcus Brutus*, Caesar's supporters 'put Diademes uppon the heades of his images, supposing thereby to allure the common people to call him kinge' (Bullough 1975 V: 95). *Julius Caesar* contains similar indications of the creation of Caesar's myth. At the beginning of the play, the statues are decked out with 'trophies' and 'scarves' (2004: I.i.69, I.ii.284) to celebrate Caesar's triumph over Pompey's sons, while Cassius cynically refers to the fact that the clearly human Caesar 'is now become a god' (2004: I.ii.116). Further, he bitterly states that Caesar 'doth bestride the narrow world | Like a colossus' (2004: I.ii.134-5). According to Cassius, Caesar is literally larger than life, supported by his following statement that 'we petty men | Walk under his huge legs' (2004: I.ii.135-6). At this point, Shakespeare may have been thinking of the legendary bronze statue of Caesar (Garbero 2010: 46) that the historian Dio Cassius writes of:

[the Senate] decreed that a chariot of [Caesar] should be placed on the Capitol facing the statue of Jupiter, that his statue in bronze should be mounted upon a likeness of the inhabited world, with an inscription to the effect that he was a demi-god'. (1961: 235)

This statue was erected after Caesar's victory over Pompey in 46 BC (Beacham 1999: 76), suggesting a direct positive correlation between sculpture and the enforcement of Caesar's myth. The fact that it is set in the Capitol heightens Caesar's deification further, since the edifice was the national temple of Rome dedicated to Jupiter (2004: I.i.64n). In Book XV of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a source for *Julius Caesar*, this statue is referenced after Caesar's death, when Jupiter tells Venus to make a 'burning cressed' (crest) of Caesar's soul so 'that from our heavenly pallace he may euermore looke downe | Uppon our royall Capitoll and Court' (1567: 199r).⁷ The sculpture thus cultivated and advanced the notion that Caesar was not an 'ordinary [man]' (2004: III.i.37).

Caesar's statues were thus significant creators and projectors of his myth. However, in *Julius Caesar*, the end of the first scene of the play has Flavius instructing Murellus to '[d]isrobe the images | If you do find them decked with ceremonies' (2004: I.i.65-6). The play thus begins with a negation of the myth of Caesar, centring on the statues. Caesar is figuratively dismantled of the signs of his triumph. Flavius opines that once Caesar's 'growing feathers' have been 'plucked' from his 'wing', he will 'fly an ordinary pitch' (2004:

I.i.73, 74), emphasising that the 'trophies' have been reinforcers of Caesar's political image. Further, there is even a hint that disrobing the statues is a foreshadowing of Cassius' (and later, Antony's) 'anatomizing stance or procedures' (Garbero 2010: 48), emphasising that Caesar, underneath his mythologised skin, is a human. This impression is supported by Cassius' later comments, which act as a counterpoint to Caesar's mythologising stance. Caesar, as he emphasises, possesses a human body that can become 'tired' and feverish (2004: I.ii.115, 119), paralleling *Coriolanus*' 'weary' Martius (2013: I.ix.90) after the battle of Corioles.

Cassius' initial negation of Caesar's myth is developed by the oneiric statue. Its bleeding performs a similar function, undermining the symbolism usually connoted by statuary. A statue's stony durability links it with the Stoic Roman constancy (Miles 2011: 2) that Caesar prizes moments before his death when he claims, 'I am constant as the northern star' (2004: III.i.60). The interplay of Roman constancy and the physical durability of the marble statues emphasise the immutability of Caesar's myth. It is, in essence, carved in stone.

The relationship between durability and Roman constancy is also emphasised by characters in other Renaissance plays; just before her death, Cleopatra claims that she is 'marble-constant' (*Antony and Cleopatra* 2005: V.ii.240), while Bussy D'Ambois states that 'like a Roman statue, I will stand | Till death hath made me marble' (*Bussy D'Ambois* 1999: V.iv.95-7). However, Caesar's statue differs from these figures in one way. D'Ambois states that:

... colossic statues
Which with heroic formes without o'erspread,
Within are nought but mortar, flint and lead. (*Bussy D'Ambois* 1999: I.i.15-17)

Caesar's statues are indeed 'o'erspread' with the 'heroic formes' of trophies and diadems. However, in Calphurnia's dream, the statue does contain more than 'mortar, flint and lead'. In Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, King Leontes comments that the statue-like Hermione's veins appear like they 'verily bear blood' (2010: V.iii.65). This parallels the myth of Pygmalion in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which the sculptor's statue blushes (1567: 127v). Both of these texts concern statues that go through a metamorphosis from inorganic, inanimate objects to organic bodies, highlighted by the hint of blood under their translucent skin. *Julius Caesar* pushes the concept of bodily interiority further because in Calphurnia's dream, Caesar's statue 'run[s] pure blood' (2004: II.ii.78). However, unlike Hermione and Pygmalion's sculpture, this visible interiority is not an indication of life. The statue occupies the liminal position between being animate and inanimate, so in this sense, it is akin to an *écorché*. A Vesalian *écorché* is simultaneously 'alive and a wrought inanimate object' (Sawday 1996: 102), which corresponds perfectly with the anxieties about bodily surfaces expressed by the statue. Caesar's statue is not 'alive', yet its bleeding suggests that in some uncanny way, it is. *Julius Caesar*'s statue thus stands for both the myth and the human body, but the bleeding suggests that in this play, the mythology is undercut. Caesar's inherent humanness overrides the constructed ideologies of the 'skinne'. The colossus is in fact a man of 'flesh and blood' (2004: III.i.67), with a permeable surface that, like Caesar's real skin, identifies the eponymous character's inherent vulnerability.

The mythologised, stony 'skin' of the statue is not strong enough to 'contain' the human. The power coded into Caesar's mythologised skin in Plutarch is thus revealed as an illusion.

In Plutarch's *The Life of Julius Caesar*, Calphurnia dreams that 'Caesar was slain, and that she had him in her arms', and she weeps that 'a certain pinnacle' set upon Caesar's house by the Senate 'was broken downe' (Bullough 1975 V: 83). Shakespeare, however, conflates Caesar's body and the pinnacle in the image of the statue, a 'symbol of political power' (Corso 2010: 183). Caesar relates Calphurnia's dream to Decius Brutus:

She dreamt tonight she saw my statue,
Which, like a fountain with an hundred spouts,
Did run pure blood... (2004: II.ii.76-8)

At the start of this scene, Caesar states that Calphurnia 'in her sleep cried out | "Help ho: they murder *Caesar*"' (2004: II.ii.2-3, emphasis added), but only details this statue when he relates the dream. He is thus allegorised as a bleeding statue, which Calphurnia rightly reads as a 'warning and portent' (2004: II.ii.80) of his murder. This unites Caesar's myth and his organic body. The surface of Caesar's uncannily humanoid statue has apparently been wounded, since he likens the statue to 'a fountain with an hundred spouts'. 'Spouts' evokes a sense of blood gushing out, paralleling Antony's later description of how Caesar's blood 'rush[ed] out of doors to be resolved | If Brutus so unkindly knocked or no' (2004: III.ii.177-8). This highlights the inability of both Caesar's organic skin and mythologised skin (the stony surface) to 'contain' human interiority, which has implications for Caesar's constructed mythological identity. The fountain is 'conventionally associated with the female sexual organs' (Tricomi 1976, cited in Paster 1993: 98), so the spouting surface of the bodily simulacrum undermines masculine *Romanitas*. Decius develops this image of femininity by suggesting that Caesar is a lactating figure from whom 'Rome shall suck | Reviving blood' (2004: II.II.87-8). The image of the nursing monarch was a Tudor commonplace (2004: II.ii.88n). In Decius' description, the statue 'spout[s] blood in many pipes' (2004: II.ii.85), which creates an image of conduits carrying nourishing blood. Caesar's wounds are normalised as nipples, natural female bodily sites of exchange, so his life-blood is metaphorised as life-giving milk. The 'wounded' statue is thus reinterpreted as the source of Rome's circulation and nourishment.

However, Caesar does not register that the scenarios that Calphurnia and Decius envision require his death. In the image that Decius develops, the fact that Rome 'sucks reviving blood' from the perforated stony surface suggests that the inversely proportional power relationship between Caesar and the conspirators centres on the weakness of his bodily surface. It capitalises on his humanness. Further, it also foreshadows Antony's vivid images of Romans 'kiss[ing] dead Caesar's wounds' and inserting 'tongues' into them (2004: III.ii.133, 221). This suggests that Caesar can no longer dictate the connotations of his own 'skinne'. He cannot 'fuel his own legend' (Garbero 2010: 42). The passage of blood through the 'punctured' stony surface is a metaphor for the depletion of Caesar's power and ultimately, the loss of his life.

The complications that cluster around the bleeding statue are complexly developed by Caesar's organic skin envelope in the Forum scene, in which Caesar is 'dissected'. The next section will explore how Caesar's layered bodily surfaces complicate the relationship between his bodily interior and exterior. The bleeding statue establishes the vulnerability

of the human beneath the mythologised skin, and Antony's re-inscription of Caesar's mantle as his skin complicates the notion of Caesar's vulnerability. Antony uses anatomical procedures to transform the narratives of myth on Caesar's bodily surfaces to narratives of organic vulnerability.

Caesar's 'dissection'

There is a clear affinity between early modern anatomical dissections and the Forum scene in *Julius Caesar*. Both Brutus and Mark Antony conduct 'exercises in anatomy... dissecting and producing a hidden truth about Caesar' (Berns 2010: 98). This section will shift the critical focus on to the role that Caesar's bodily surfaces play in this anatomisation. Caesar's corpse, like Martius' body, is intricately layered, since Shakespeare extends the anxieties about Caesar's bodily skin envelope to his mantle. David Daniell writes in a gloss in the Arden edition of the play that the phrase 'Caesar's vesture wounded' is 'perhaps more than a passing conceit... and now carries a sense of Caesar's skin' (2004: III.ii.194, III.ii.194n). This section will argue that it is indeed more than 'a passing conceit', since the complex anatomical tension between bodily interior and exterior reaches its symbolic zenith at the moment Antony discloses Caesar's body. The transition from mythologised deity to human that was begun by the statues is completed. Antony's manipulation of Caesar's bodily surfaces and coverings is crucial to Caesar's humanisation.

As discussed in the previous section, *Julius Caesar* is preoccupied with bodily interiority, which is finally concretised when Caesar is pierced by the conspirators' daggers. The bleeding statue foreshadows the assassination, while also hinting at the vulnerability of both Caesar's skin and the mythology inscribed upon it. This section will explore how Antony develops this demythologisation of Caesar's skin by 'dissecting' him. Although early modern anatomy dictated that 'truth' was located in the bodily interior, and although Antony rhetorically invokes the incisive thrust of anatomy when he wishes the populace to 'put a tongue | In every wound of Caesar' (2004: III.ii.221-2), he never physically probes into Caesar's body. This 'dissection' privileges the skin much more than contemporary anatomy does, suggesting that in this play, the pierced bodily surface, not the bodily interior, is the locus of Antony's anatomical 'text'. Caesar's 'mythologized skin' is thus transformed into a blank canvas of human skin upon which a new discourse of organic, human vulnerability can be inscribed.

The linkage between Caesar's skin and mantle is not emphasised in any of the accounts in Plutarch's *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, the main sources for the play. In *The Life of Marcus Brutus*, Antony displays the 'number of cuts and holes' upon Caesar's 'bloody' gown (Bullough 1975 V: 105). Similarly, *The Life of Marcus Antonius* has Antony exhibiting the 'bloody garments' (*Julius Caesar*, 'Appendix' 2004: 369) and *The Life of Marcus Tullius Cicero* details the 'gowne all bebloodied, cut and thrust through' (Bullough 1975 V: 137). Thus, the focus is always on the gown. Caesar's body is present in all three accounts, but there is no indication of the powerful dramatic moment when Antony uncovers the body. In fact, the gown is presented separately from the body in all three accounts. Conversely, in *The Life of Julius Caesar*, the citizens of Rome see only the body 'al bemangled with gashes of swordes' (Bullough 1975 V: 87).

Thus it is Shakespeare who creates the link between Caesar's skin and his mantle. This complicates the portrayal of anatomy in the play. When Antony claims that Caesar's revealed corpse is 'himself' (2004: III.ii.195), he simultaneously endorses and undercuts

the early modern anatomical premise that 'examining man's body reveals his true nature' (Davis 2003: 165). He symbolically 'flays' Caesar, suggesting that the body becomes a kind of *écorché*, but Caesar's layered bodily surfaces render the intrusiveness of anatomisation thematically and theatrically false. Antony's skilled rhetorical reduction of Caesar's body to a 'bleeding piece of earth' depends upon the erasure of the ideologies attached to Caesar's 'skinne', which has already begun with the image of the bleeding statue. However this is not necessarily Caesar's unequivocal 'true nature'. Like the early modern anatomist, Antony 'outlines a text' (Sawday 1996: 131) upon Caesar's skin(s). Thus, he symbolically re-skins Caesar.

The layering of Caesar's body draws on medical conceptualisations of the skin. Claudia Benthien writes that the skin was perceived as being 'something other than the self... foreign and external to it' or conversely, as the 'essence' of the person him-/herself (2002: 17). *Julius Caesar* unites and advances both the perceptions of the skin that Benthien mentions, which can be illuminated by reading Caesar's dissection in the light of an early modern textual dissection in Helkiah Crooke's *Mikrokosmographia*. Crooke begins his textual dissection with the skin, and his discussion agrees with the conception of skin as something 'foreign and external':

It shall be sufficient in this place, to draw the Curtaine and to shew you the case, rather the Coffin or winding sheete wherein nature hath wrapped this liuing body of death. (1615: 61)

Both the epithets 'Coffin' and 'winding sheete' suggest that the skin is separate from the body that it contains. This echoes Caesar's separation of himself and his 'skinne' in Plutarch, but in Crooke, skin is a mere container, not a complex signifier of identity and power. In fact, it contains a 'liuing body of death' (like Caesar's 'coffin' (2004: III.ii.108) does), so the skin appears to be some sort of bodily adjunct. Perhaps Crooke had an *écorché* in mind when writing of the 'liuing body of death', because the epithet highlights the tension between life and death created by an *écorché*'s action poses.

Crooke's epithets for the skin resonate powerfully with Antony's representation of Caesar's corpse. Caesar's mantle is literally a winding sheet for his body, so if we read his 'dissection' using Crooke's terms, his mantle is the 'Curtaine' that Antony draws aside to display the body. Maria Del Sapio Garbero thus argues that Caesar's body appears like 'an early modern "penetrable" or "transparent" body' that is 'dismantled' of his skin (2010: 44-5). However, the early modern period 'was losing a sense of the transparency of the other' (Hillman 2007: 34) due to the popularity of the theory of the closed body. Bodily 'transparency' in *Julius Caesar* is undercut further by Caesar's multiple, unstable bodily surfaces. Caesar is indeed 'dismantled' – of his actual mantle. However, when Antony asks the citizens why they 'weep' to see 'Caesar's vesture wounded' (2004: III.ii.193, 194), the mantle plays the part of the skin,⁸ so it is a 'winding sheete' in this sense too. This means that Caesar's actual skin becomes his bodily 'interior'. However, the real skin is also both the dermal 'winding sheete' (in Crooke's terms) and the 'liuing body of death' (since it is wrapped in the mantle-skin). Crooke's medical rhetoric identifies the tension between Caesar's skin and mantle: both are, and are not, Caesar's skin. Caesar's body is thus not 'transparent' but made of 'infinitely unfolding, profoundly complex surfaces' (MacKendrick 2004, cited in North, 'The Clothing-Ego' 2013: 65).

This is developed and complicated by the sartorial discourses that inform Caesar's mantle. Indeed, 'to speak of skin... is to speak of, on and through clothing' (Bell 1976, cited in North, 'The Clothing-Ego' 2013: 64), and likewise, early modern medical texts often conceptualised skin as clothing. Skin was an 'vnseamed garment' and a 'Vestment' (Crooke 1615: 72, 73) that 'clothe[d]' the body (Lanfranco 1565: 29), and was 'wouen of Thréedes, Nerues, Ueynes, and Arteirs' (Vicary 1586: 11). Clothing could also be conceptualised as the outermost bodily surface; Erasmus calls it 'the body of the body' (1534: n.p.), echoing the same ideal of containment that pertains to early modern skin. Likewise, the link between skin and clothes is emphasised in a 1619 text called *The vviddoves mite* by an author known only as 'A.G.'. In it, a prayer describes Christ's purple robe from Mark 15:17 in the Geneva Bible:

A purple garment did they cast with scorne
About thy backe: t'was single, but did grow
Soone after double; for thy skinne was torne
All off with it, and serud to line it so. (1619: 172)

In this prayer, the robe literally 'doubles' as Christ's skin, concretising the notion that 'dress is [one's] second skin, which often becomes as natural and as intimate as [one's] first skin' (Utriainen 2013: 157). As in Mark 15:20, the soldiers presumably take off the robe, but A.G. increases the affinity between Christ's skin and robe to the point that they almost become one and the same, tearing off together. There is also a hint that Christ's skin acquires a sartorial role after being flayed off, 'lining' the robe.

As in this prayer, *Julius Caesar* develops a sympathetic affinity between the eponymous character's skin and his mantle. Caesar's mantle similarly 'doubles' as his skin, and is 'flayed off'. However, unlike A.G.'s account, Caesar's real skin remains, while his mantle regains its status as 'Caesar's vesture'. This is one of the central cruxes in Antony's manipulation of Caesar's bodily surfaces: the mantle is not actually a skin. It is allegorised as one. Benthien's comment about the skin's role in creating one's 'self' and 'essence' (2002: 17) highlights its role in fashioning identity, and similarly, the complex ideological import of the mantle plays a significant part in Caesar's dissection. "The "truth" of an image is dependent upon its successful manipulation' (Geddes 2010: 46), and Antony's rewriting of the mantle-skin draws on, and later undercuts, the ideologies attached to it as a symbol of political power.

Caesar's mantle is mentioned at the fateful moment when he disregards Calphurnia's interpretation of her dream and decides to go to the Senate House: 'Give me my robe, for I will go' (2004: II.ii.107). This highlights its relationship with Caesar's political persona. This relationship suggests that there is a parallel between the mantle and the scarves and diadems used to decorate Caesar's statues: they are all symbols of political power and prestige. However, as discussed in the previous section, the fact that the 'ceremonies' (2004: I.i.66) are taken off the statues in the first scene of the play suggests that their political denotations are negated. This negation is complexly developed by the mantle because, in the dissection, the fact that the political symbol becomes Caesar's pierced skin completes the transmutation of the 'god' into the human.

This ideological transition is effected by Antony, who focuses specifically on the mantle before revealing the body. By linking it with the day Caesar 'overcame the Nervii'

(2004: III.ii.171), he creates an association between the mantle, military victory and Caesar's power, especially since, in Plutarch, the Nervii were 'the stoutest warriors of all the Belgae' (North, 1579, cited in *Julius Caesar* 2004: III.ii.171n). Antony was not present when Caesar achieved his victory against the Nervii in 57 BC, so this is a poetic lie highlighting the skill of his rhetoric. The link between the mantle and military victory mirrors the same ideals as Caesar's statues and their 'ceremonies', forwarding the ideals of masculine *Romanitas*. Thus, the mantle is Caesar's 'skinne' (Bullough 1975 V: 83), a creator of his myth. The citizens 'all do know this mantle' (2004: III.ii.168) indeed.

When Antony emphasises these significations, the mantle is still a garment that Caesar 'put... on' during 'a summer evening' (2004: III.ii.169). However, Antony immediately undermines these associations with violent descriptions about how the mantle was punctured:

Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:

See what a rent the envious Caska made:

Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd... (2004: III.ii.172-4)

This is the moment at which Antony begins to turn the mantle 'skinne' into Caesar's second skin. Again, he was not present during the murder, so he arbitrarily metes out responsibility for the 'rents'. 'Rent' may suggest that Antony refers to the fabric, but as discussed above, there was a close relationship between skin and clothes. Further, the blood 'rush[es] out of doors' (2004: III.ii.177) after Brutus' stab, physically closing the gap between the mantle and the bodily interior and erasing Caesar's actual skin. Presenting the mantle as Caesar's skin renders the horror of the murder very personal and solidifies the disintegration of Caesar's myth. The previously political symbol is pierced, and its status as a skin is cemented by its close physical relationship with blood. Antony turns the mantle into the contradictory human symbol of the skin that promises defence, yet proves vulnerable. His emphasis on Caesar's humanness is crucial to his purpose: the crowd is galvanised by the reduction of the previously colossus-like monarch into a defenceless human body.

Caesar's mantle now takes part in an apparent anatomisation. As the outermost layer on Caesar's body, it is peeled off to reveal the punctured skin beneath. Inverting *Coriolanus'* trope of blood-as-armour, where blood, the interior, assumes the role of the outermost bodily covering, Caesar's perforated skin, his organic exterior, is rewritten as his interior. Hence, bodily interiority, the alleged locutor of man's true nature, is placed on the skin in *Julius Caesar*. The echoes of anatomy are simultaneously upheld and countered: the skin is, and is not, Caesar's interior. It is, however, very much the primary anatomical text. In an anatomical sense, the narrative of vulnerability that Antony constructs is false, since it is literally inscribed on the surface and not the interior of the body. However, the act of revelation when the corpse is first displayed suggests that, theatrically, the skin is Caesar's interior. The ostensible truth that Antony reads is placed both on the bodily interior and exterior. The narrative of Caesar's humanness is thus poised between being anatomical truth and theatrical falsity. In this respect, Caesar's comment, moments before his death, that he does not 'bear such rebel blood | That will be thawed from the true quality' (2004: III.i.50) is ironic. There is no 'true quality' to be read in blood or wounds. Interpretations of

the surface depend on authority and rhetoric, so 'men may construe things after their fashion | Clean from the purpose of the things themselves' (2004: I.iii.34-5).

The Forum scene re-enacts the relationship between the early modern anatomist and the body. Antony focuses on and develops the body's locutory power. Whereas the openings in Caesar's statue were allegorised as nipples, Caesar's real wounds become 'mouths'. Hence the wounds undergo an ideological transition from being sources of nourishment to sources of articulation. Caesar's interior-and-exterior skin is thus apparently rendered a 'speaking skin'. However, the agency of the skin in articulation is complex in *Julius Caesar*. Like in *Coriolanus*, Caesar's punctured organic skin is *made* to speak, which suggests that the interpretation of the lector is paramount in shaping the interpretations of the viewers, like it was in early modern anatomy. The difference is that in this play, the text is on the skin, not the bodily interior.

Initially, Antony suggests that the wounds are 'like dumb mouths' begging 'the utterance of [his] tongue' (2004: III.i.260, 261, emphasis added), but when speaking to the citizens, they are metaphorised as 'poor poor dumb mouths' (2004: III.ii.218). The relationship between wounds and mouths develops from a simile into a metaphor, so their connotations converge more closely. Caesar's punctured skin becomes a complex locutor. 'Dumb mouths' is oxymoronic, highlighting that Caesar's wounds-turned-mouths are missing one essential component: a 'tongue' (2004: III.ii.221). According to Antony (although he is clearly ironic at this point), it is Brutus who can 'put a tongue | In every wound of Caesar', while he himself can only 'bid them speak for [him]' (2004: III.ii.222), contrasting with his earlier sentiment that they need 'the utterance of [his] tongue'. This final reference to Caesar's punctured skin in this scene thus denies his own agency in creating the text, displacing it on to Antony-as-Brutus. Antony is in charge of the text of Caesar's skin all the while, so he goes from being a 'limb' (2004: II.i.164) to a 'tongue'. He is still the anatomist, the lector and the reader, but he is hidden behind his own 'text'. Antony is hiding behind the hide.

The metaphorising of Caesar's mantle as his skin sets a complex dialectic between bodily interior and exterior in motion. His skin and mantle are turned into texts imparting complex meanings. The political narratives are overwritten by the apparently truthful 'dissection'. The 'dissection', however, produces only a verisimilitude. The relationship between his skin and mantle both emphasises and undercuts the Forum scene's link to early modern anatomical practice. The bodily interior is only accessed rhetorically, not anatomically, so 'truth', in an anatomical sense, is inaccessible. Indeed, Caesar is 'skin all the way in' (Miles, cited in Taylor 1997: 18), so Antony's text is literally superficial. Caesar's layered bodily surfaces preclude the possibility of delving deeply into his body. He is 'skinned' in both ways: he is freed from containment in the mantle-skin, but his actual skin remains (North 2013: 68-9). Thus he is, and is not, an *écorché*. His bodily interiority is constructed using rhetoric and props such as the mantle. Hence, there is no unequivocal 'true quality' revealed on his skin. Instead, Caesar's skin is used to construct a narrative of his humanness and vulnerability.

Coriolanus and *Julius Caesar* both base bodily narratives on the bodily surface, and explore how these narratives can be manipulated within a political context. Each reading depends upon the relative legibility of the skin, which are manipulated by the characters and audience. The final section will shift this critical focus. It will concentrate on *Macbeth* to examine how the nature of dermal legibility can be fundamentally altered. *Macbeth* traces

the protagonist's gradual transition from dermal legibility to unreadability, so that the very fact of dermal legibility itself is destabilised. The canvas of the skin, normally articulate, is turned into a closed book.

Macbeth's (il)legible skin

Macbeth is obsessed with 'hiding'. Dermal legibility is detrimental in a society that, as the play progresses, begins to thrive on equivocation. Macbeth's bodily surface, in particular, is troublingly decipherable, so he has to learn how to hide behind the hide and '[m]ask' himself from 'the common eye' (2015: III.i.127). Dermal vulnerability too is a significant concept. This play, like *Coriolanus*, draws on militaristic themes, so Macbeth's armoured body is a highly relevant concept. He, like Martius, idealises the concept of the closed body, protected by a defensive surface which denies reading. However, the physical vulnerability of the bodily surface counteracts this. *Macbeth's* physical bodies often cannot be contained within a skin. The bodily surface is regularly transgressed. The opened bodily surface, in both anatomy and Renaissance drama, is locutory, so the pierced body in *Macbeth* undermines the protagonist's focus on illegibility. This section will focus initially on the dermal vulnerability highlighted by Duncan's punctured skin, and then use it to explore Macbeth's own focus on containment and his consequent erasure of dermal narratives. Sibylle Baumbach writes that, at the end of the play, Macbeth does 'successfully extinguish his bodily legibility' (2008: 131), and this section will complicate her argument by exploring the relationship between this loss of legibility and Macbeth's focus on bodily 'containment'. The relationship between the bodily surface and the interior once again plays a very significant role: Macbeth barely has a bodily interior at the end of the play, which is symptomatic of his focus on illegibility.

Macbeth is preoccupied with containment. It 'interrogates almost obsessively the problem of... how to stop the [bodily] inside from becoming outside, and vice versa' (Hillman 2007: 47). The play's conceptualisation of bodily surfaces and coverings suggests that it endorses the medical model of the closed body. When we first hear of Macbeth, he is 'lapped in proof', echoing the military descriptions of dermal fortification in medical texts. This contrasts with the fact that he 'unseam[s]' Macdonald 'from the nave to th' chops' (2015: I.ii.55, 22), where 'unseam' links Macdonald's bodily surface with soft clothing, recalling the conceptualisation of skin as 'an vnseamed garment' (Crooke 1615: 72). The contrast places emphasis on Macbeth's own bodily fortification. Later, after listening to the witches, Macbeth is 'rapt withal' (2015: I.iii.57). This word 'rapt' is used two more times (2015: I.iii.145, I.v.5), cementing the idea of containment expressed by the homonymic 'wrapped'. Similarly, Macbeth comments later that he is 'cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, bound in' (2015: III.iv.22).

This focus on containment in *Macbeth* reflects anxieties similar to those in *Coriolanus*. Nakedness is equated with defencelessness: after Duncan's murder has been discovered, Banquo comments that they should hide their 'naked frailties' which 'suffer in exposure', to which Macbeth responds that the company should 'put on manly readiness' (2015: II.iii.127, 128, 134). The gendered 'readiness' suggests that Macbeth is referring to armour, so the naked skin itself is posited as a weak barrier. This is similarly hinted at when Macbeth tells Lady Macbeth that her 'undaunted mettle should compose | Nothing but males' (2015: II.i.74-5). The homonyms 'metal' and 'mails' suggest armour, while 'undaunted' may be a pun on 'undented' (2015: II.i.74n), furthering this impression. This is

emphasised by the fact that 'mettle' could also mean 'sperm' or 'virility' in the early modern period; in Nathan Field's *A Woman is Like a Weathercock*, a character named Kate states that it is a 'sin' to 'marry a man that wants the mettle of generation' (1612: C3v). Macbeth's idea of defensive armour is thus tied with ideals of military masculinity.

This insistent focus on armour emphasises the weakness of the organic skin in *Macbeth*, which is crucial to its themes. Like the two Roman plays, *Macbeth* draws heavily upon the anxieties that develop when the skin is unable to contain or defend. The sanguinary imagery that pervades the play is symptomatic of these anxieties. Indeed, the first line that is spoken by a human character (ironically, Duncan) references pierced skin: 'What bloody man is that?' (2015: I.ii.1). Macbeth and Banquo, meanwhile, 'bathe in reeking wounds' (2015: I.ii.39), which could refer both to wounds upon themselves and wounds that they have inflicted on others.

The vulnerability of the bodily surface is most significant in relation to the murdered Duncan. In one of the accounts in the main source for *Macbeth*, Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, King Duff is killed by his retainer Donwald's servants, who hide his body (Bullough 1975 VII: 482). Contrastingly, in *Macbeth*, Duncan's body remains in the bedroom, but it is not presented onstage.⁹ Thus Macbeth's description imaginatively reconstructs (or re-embodies) Duncan's corpse for the audience, claiming that 'his gashed stabs looked like a breach in nature | For ruin's wasteful entrance' (2015: II.iii.114-15). In the early modern period, the king's body was 'twin-born', consisting of the king's own mortal *body natural* and the *body politic* (Kallenbach 2012: 194). King James VI and I was a great proponent of this concept. He emphasised the link between the country and himself in a metaphor in a speech in 1603, stating, 'I am the Head, and [the whole Isle] is my body' (1616: 489). Correspondingly, the 'breach' in Duncan's 'silver skin' is magnified into the macrocosmic 'breach in nature'. This parallels Macduff's later emotive exclamation, 'Bleed, bleed, poor country!' (2015: IV.iii.31), suggesting that Duncan's skin had been the metaphorical 'container' and regulator of natural order. He is not a 'single state of man' (2015: I.iii.142); the idea of invasion, suggested by the militaristic 'breach', links the notion of externalised threats in the theory of the closed body with larger concerns of political incursion and threat. The inter-animation of these discourses emphasises that the bodily surface acts as a microcosmic representation of the macrocosm in *Macbeth*.

'Breach' also suggests that the King's body is like a fortified castle that has been invaded. Macduff has previously allegorised Duncan's body as a building, calling it 'the Lord's anointed temple' (2015: II.iii.68). Usually, when the early modern body was conceptualised as a building, the skin correspondingly became 'a stony wall, a static and impermeable boundary' (Benthien 2002: 28). However, in *Macbeth*, this focus on defence is completely negated when Duncan is murdered. It is not defence, but vulnerability that is highlighted when Duncan's body is envisioned as a building that has been 'breached'.

The bodily interior in Renaissance drama is dangerously eloquent and revealing. As the two Roman plays have indicated, scars and wounds are places into which 'tongues' can be inserted. The pierced body in both Renaissance anatomy and drama is turned into a body that speaks what its readers desire to extract from it, so that its meanings can be manipulated. This close relationship between the discourses of legibility and the closed body suggests that 'the frailty of the human body' in *Macbeth* (Kendall 1992: 39) permits the creation of multiple dermal texts. *Macbeth* takes these concerns even further. Bodily

legibility in this play does not stem from opened skin alone. Although Macbeth 'reads' Duncan's body, his own bodily surface is inconveniently readable too, if his wife is to be believed. He is aware of:

[his body's] uncontrolled translation of his thoughts and feelings onto the bodily surface, which necessitates and inaugurates [his] transformation from an open book into an inscrutable mask. (Baumbach 2008: 131)

Not only is Macbeth's skin 'too thin to contain his... self-image' (Stevens 2013: 74), it is too revealing to do so. His skin does not need to be punctured or to have 'tongues' inserted into it to become articulate. Thus, in a play in which a '[f]alse face must hide what the false heart doth know' (2015: II.i.83), Macbeth must suppress his own legibility.

Macbeth's legible skin is highlighted in the scene in which he and his wife appear together for the first time. Lady Macbeth comments to her husband:

Your face, my thane, is as a book, where men
May read strange matters... (2015: I.v.62-3)

This suggests that Lady Macbeth 'find[s] the mind's construction in the face' (2015: I.iv.12), but unlike Duncan, who reads the Thane of Cawdor's face erroneously, she is a skilled reader of the narratives of Macbeth's bodily surface. Macbeth's readability echoes the dermal legibility highlighted by the frontispieces of the medical texts that depicted the work's title on a human skin. His wife's reference to a book, however, complicates this, as it hints that Macbeth's face alone is a complex document. His readable face is not simply a legible, yet opaque, dermal cover. It is the 'book' itself, uncontrollably translating complex psychological concerns into physiological symptoms. Macbeth's face is thus inexpediently revelatory, so he needs a cover for his facial 'book'. This is reminiscent of Paris' face in *Romeo and Juliet*, which is a 'precious book of love' which 'only lacks a cover' (*RJ*, 1967: I.iii.88, 89). In *Romeo and Juliet*, however, the purpose of the 'cover', according to Lady Capulet, is beautification. The purpose of Macbeth's 'cover' is hiding, since his legible face, according to his wife, is a liability. The revelatory book of the skin must turn into a 'hide'. The suppression of Macbeth's articulate surface is fundamental to the couple's ulterior motives, so, like the traitorous Cawdor, upon whom Duncan 'built | An absolute trust', Macbeth must 'play false' (2015: I.iv.13-14, I.v.21).

Thus, from the start, Lady Macbeth wishes to galvanise Macbeth into transforming his bodily surface into a closed book. Equivocation, she insists, is paramount: Macbeth should 'look like the innocent flower, | But be the serpent under't' (2015: I.v.65-6). Macbeth is meant to create a false narrative on his bodily surface, rather like Martius. However, Macbeth is unable to prevent the translation of his feelings on to his bodily surface until the very end of the play when he 'strongly fortifies' (2015: V.ii.12) both Dunsinane and his body. For the greater part of the play, he has a 'feeling' body that is aware of, and responds to, external stimuli. Significantly, his bodily surface is particularly articulate when he is afraid. The narrative of fear, created by skin that has been drained of blood, is the diametric opposite of that called for by the military contexts of the play. Unlike Martius' blush, Macbeth's skin 'speaks' when it is devoid of blood. At the start of the play, Macbeth is 'nothing afeared of what [he did] make | Strange images of death' (2015: I.ii.97-8).

However, after Duncan's murder, he becomes 'afraid to think what [he has] done' (2015: II.ii.52). Paleness becomes a powerful locutor of Macbeth's fear. Lady Macbeth claims that although her bloodied hands are the same colour as Macbeth's, she 'shame[s] | To wear a heart so white' (2015: II.ii.65-6). She metaphorically reverses the colours, as blood which belongs to the bodily interior moves on to the skin. 'Wear' however complicates the idea of the physical and psychological interiority hinted at by 'heart', suggesting that Macbeth's white 'heart' translates itself on to the rest of his bodily surface. In effect, Macbeth is wearing his heart on his sleeve. His feelings are reflected far too clearly on his face, so he cannot 'contain' himself emotionally. Blood under the skin, the symbol of animation and health, is wholly absent. Indeed, Macbeth later suggests that 'health' itself is a garment when he states that they 'wear [their] health but sickly in [Banquo's] life' (2015: III.i.108), which corresponds with Lady Macbeth's 'wear'. Similarly, Macbeth's ironic mention of his wife's 'natural ruby' (2015, III.iv.113), which is probably the result of makeup, supports the idea of 'wearing health'. 'Wear' suggests a covering, so wearing health is a method of suppressing the articulate bodily surface. By contrast, pale skin, the result of internal, uncontrollable bodily emotions and processes, is a psychologically truthful document of fear.

Macbeth's skin is a naturally interactive, responsive interface until the end of the play, which suggests that his later suppression of his dermal narratives is as unnatural as his wife's invocation to the spirits to '[s]top up th' access and passage to remorse' (2015: I.v.44). As Macbeth begins to depend more heavily on the equivocal, supernatural Weird Sisters, the relationship between his bodily interior and exterior disintegrates. His illegibility thus plays into the macrocosmic upheaval of natural order. An illegible skin is an unnatural state of being. Macbeth acquires 'a frozen, unfeeling body, which thwarts the natural translation between inner and outer' (Baumbach 2008: 131). As he fortifies Dunsinane, he likewise 'closes' his body.

Unlike Lady Macbeth, though, who depends on spirits to 'unsex' her (2015: I.v.41) and thus create her gendered 'mettle', Macbeth focuses on physical armour. His armoured bodily surface is particularly important in relation to preventing the 'natural translation between inner and outer'. Unlike Martius' bloody integument, Macbeth's armour is physically defensive. Initially, the fact that 'none of woman born | Shall harm Macbeth' (2015: IV.i.79-80) suggests that he possesses dermal armour like Tamburlaine. Indeed, Macbeth's 'charmed life' (2015: V.viii.12) echoes Tamburlaine's 'charmèd skin' (2003: 1, I.ii.179). Thus, apparently, Macbeth is invulnerable. However, he is also told that he should be 'lion-mettled' (2015: IV.i.89), where 'mettled' echoes Lady Macbeth's 'mettle', reinforcing the idea of armour. Consequently, Macbeth focuses strongly on defending his bodily surface, suggesting that although he trusts the proclamations of the Weird Sisters, he is still anxious about his own vulnerability. This is implied by the fact that he wears armour even when "[t]is not needed yet' (2015: V.iii.33). As well as shielding his skin from harm, the armour protects him against being 'read'; Macduff's later command, 'Tyrant, show thy face' (2015: V.vii.15), suggests that Macbeth's armour covers his facial 'book'. He is indeed 'hiding' behind a 'false face'. Armour thus endorses Macbeth's ideals of illegibility and inviolability, because the anatomical transparency and legibility suggested by the pierced body is prevented. His skin is hidden and protected from inscription and wounds before even entering the arena in which it will be threatened. The skin turns from a site of social exchange to one of complete defence. Macbeth is turned into a closed body.

Macbeth's focus on armour, though, is complicated by the fact that he entertains the fantasy that he does not have a tangible body, which undercuts the need for defence. He boasts to Macduff:

As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air
With thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed. (2015: V.viii.9-10)

Although it was published much later than *Macbeth*, a 1657 text by Josua Poole called *The English Parnassus* describes the word 'Aire' as 'intrenchant' and 'unwounded' (1657: 47), which is echoed in *Hamlet*, in which Claudius refers to the 'woundless air' (2007: IV.i.44). The descriptions of air as 'unwounded' and 'woundless' link well with *Macbeth's* concerns at this point. Borrowing from the same ideas that *The English Parnassus* and *Hamlet* draw upon, Macbeth's skin, according to him, cannot be made to bleed or be 'written' upon since it is like 'air'. Thus, like the Weird Sisters, who 'seemed corporal' but '[m]elted, as breath into the wind' (2015: I.iii.81-2), Macbeth undercuts his own corporeality. This contrasts with a comment he makes a few lines before: 'Whiles I see lives, the gashes | Do better upon them' (2015: V.viii.2-3). Macbeth concretises 'lives' with his mention of gashes, which is set off against his ostensibly intangible skin. This mention of 'gashes' is reminiscent of the bleeding Captain in Act I, whose 'gashes cry for help' (2015: I.ii.42). This suggests that wounds are locutory in *Macbeth*, like they are in the Roman plays. Macbeth's own skin, however, is 'intrenchant'. It is no longer a book 'where men may read strange matters'. In fact, it is not 'matter' anymore; like his hallucinatory dagger, it is 'air-drawn' (2015: III.iv.59). Hence, it is unassailable and unspeaking.

Macbeth's figurative erasure of his own body suggests that Duncan's body has been a strange 'new Gorgon' (2015: II.iii.72) indeed. Macbeth is deprived of an interior and is turned into an armoured, yet intangible, surface. The lack of a bodily interior has previously been suggested by Lady Macbeth, who states that '[t]he sleeping and the dead | Are but as pictures' (2015: II.ii.54), where the superficiality of 'pictures' denies 'the sleeping and the dead' any bodily interiority. Macbeth is neither asleep nor dead (yet), but denying his interiority suggests that in an anatomical sense, he can never be rendered 'readable'. 'The traditional understanding of the body-interior – a region of fear which belongs to the Medusa' (Sawday 1996: 38) resonates with Macbeth's gradual illegibility. Sawday links the interior with fear, which links nicely with a play that can be termed an 'anatomy of fear' (Rutter, cited in *Macbeth* 2015: xxi). Macbeth is afraid of the legibility of his body, so he erases his body. Thus, this play reverses the process of legibility in *Coriolanus*; the readable hero is turned into an illegible (although physically vulnerable) surface.

Of course, Macbeth is mistaken in his assumption of his invulnerability. The word 'air' phonetically recalls Macbeth's obsession with 'heirs'. Banquo's son, Fleance, is indeed an intrenchant *heir*. Thus, an indirect suggestion of Macbeth's inherent vulnerability lies in his very claim to inviolability in 'air'. Macbeth is still very physical, and 'die[s] with harness on [his] back' (2015: V.v.51). Hence, the witches' prophecies of the inviolability of Macbeth's body are indeed a 'lie like truth' (2015: V.v.43). However, even though Macbeth's armoured skin is ultimately just as penetrable as Duncan's, he is successful at rendering himself unreadable. At the end, his decapitated head indeed 'signif[ies] nothing' (2015: V.v.27), other than being a 'dead butcher' (2015: V.ix.35). 'Butcher' recalls *Julius Caesar's*

conspirators, who are also called 'butchers' (*JC*, 2004: II.i.165, III.i.255), suggesting callous brutality. Macbeth was indeed a ruthless killer, but 'butcher' overwrites the psychological complexity that motivated all of his actions. The previous facial 'book' which communicated 'strange matters' is now closed. Thus, although Macbeth's skin is physically vulnerable, he is both an unreadable closed 'book' and a closed body, even after death.

Conclusion

In *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth*, bodily surfaces are the stage on which narratives are played out. Although early modern anatomy privileged the bodily interior as the site of 'truth', the emphasis that Renaissance drama places on layered bodily surfaces and coverings suggests that genuine, unequivocal 'truth', allegedly located in the bodily interior, can never be reached. Characters' skins become the location and the locutors of ostensible 'truths', which are mediated and manipulated by authority. Dermal narratives depend upon rhetoric and context. The three plays thus suggest that in Renaissance drama, the skin does not 'infold | Secrets vnknowne' (Davies 1603: 231), but *holds* 'secrets vnknowne'.

Bodily surfaces in Renaissance drama are 'superficial and profound, truthful and misleading' (Anzieu 1989: 17). In *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth*, the narratives of bodily surfaces and coverings emphasise and explore how 'truth' is constructed, suggesting that one cannot place absolute trust in either the bodily 'text' or its readers. These narratives can go through multiple processes of deconstruction and reconstruction, as they are created and then dissolved by their readers. Thus, the anatomical act of discovering 'truth' is fundamentally destabilised. Martius' skin is a very legible canvas which, when read by others, negates the identity that he wishes to stamp on himself with his bloody integument in Act I. Caesar's layered corpse likewise encourages reading, which Antony uses to create a new identity of human vulnerability. Macbeth's legibility is problematic because it reveals his psychological interior too clearly for the Macbeths' purposes, so the illegibility granted by his armour and the erasure of his body constitutes his dermal defence.

The close, complex relationship between dermal legibility and the physical vulnerability of the bodily surface highlights the common anxiety between the two: being pierced and 'read' are both symptomatic of defencelessness. Certainly, there are methods which can be used to hide the bodily surface, as *Coriolanus* and *Macbeth* demonstrate. However, the physical weakness of the skin always counters the protection provided by these coverings. In these three plays, skin signifies 'the vulnerability of the distinction between inner and outer' (Hillman 2007: 13), so it is not so much a boundary as a permeable interface. Legible skin, meanwhile, means that the owner of the skin either reveals his intentions too clearly or surrenders the construction of his own identity to others. The superficial nature of the bodily surface encourages rather than dissuades interaction. The dual ideal of complete dermal illegibility and invulnerability is thus a fantasy.



Competing Interests

The author declares that she has no competing interests.

Endnotes

- ¹ In *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth's injunction to 'stop up th'access and passage to remorse' (2015: I.v.44) suggests that she borrows from this discourse of dermal permeability. Indeed, her mind is later 'infected' (2015: V.i.72).
- ² This very metaphor is adopted by King Richard in *Richard II*, stating that the king's body, protected by a 'castle wall', can be pierced by a 'pin' (2011: III.ii.169-70).
- ³ This corresponds nicely with Montaigne's conceptualisation of dermal defence as 'forraine help' (1603: 112): some of the blood on Martius' skin is 'forraine' in that it never belonged to him, and in that it previously belonged to the Volsces, alien to the Romans.
- ⁴ The First Folio places a colon after 'face to foot', while G. R. Hibbard's Penguin edition places a full stop after the word 'foot', so in both cases, 'thing of blood' is separated from it (2005: II.ii.106, 107).
- ⁵ This was exploited in Josie Rourke's 2013 production of *Coriolanus*, in which Tom Hiddleston's Martius was dressed in a 'gown of humility' which became translucent when against a light source.
- ⁶ 'Woollen' also links Martius with the plebeians, since they are 'woollen vassals' (2013: III.ii.10), so it suggests that it is the diametric opposite of his own character.
- ⁷ In his translation of *Metamorphoses*, David Raeburn calls the statue 'deified Julius' image' (2004: XV.841), which emphasises that Jupiter apotheosises Caesar.
- ⁸ Crooke himself calls the human skin a 'Mantle' (1615: 73).
- ⁹ A film, however, may choose to show it. Roman Polanski's 1971 production included the actual murder, depicting Jon Finch's Macbeth savagely stabbing the helpless Duncan, played by Nicholas Selby.

References

- A.G** 1619 *The viddoves mite... made in contemplation of the passion of Christ our Saviour*. N.p. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 12 July 2015].
- Anzieu, Didier** 1989 *The Skin Ego*. Translated by Turner, C. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Bachelard, Gaston** 1969 *The Poetics of Space*. Translated by Jolas, M. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Bacon, Francis** 1627 *Sylua syluarum: or A naturall historie In ten centuries*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 2 July 2015].
- Baker, Susan** 1987 Hamlet's bloody thoughts and the illusion of inwardness. *Comparative Drama* 21: pp. 303-17.
- Barkan, Leonard** 1981 'Living Sculptures': Ovid, Michelangelo and *The Winter's Tale*. *ELH* 48 (4): pp. 639-67.
- Baumbach, Sibylle** 2008 *Shakespeare and the Art of Physiognomy*. Humanities-Ebooks, LLP. Tirril, Penrith.
- Beacham, Richard** 1999 *Spectacle Entertainments of Early Imperial Rome*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.
- Benthien, Claudia** 2002 *Skin: On the Cultural Border Between Self and the World*. Translated by Dunlop, T. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Berns, Ute** 2010 Performing Anatomy in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. In: Del Sapio Garbero, Maria et al (eds.) *Questioning Bodies*. Goettingen: V&R unipress, pp. 95-108.

- Bradwell, Stephen** 1625 *A vvatch-man for the pest. Teaching the true rules of preservation from the pestilent contagion...* by Steven Bradvvell of London, Physition. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 23 June 2015].
- Bullough, Geoffrey** 1975 *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (Vols. V and VII). London: Routledge.
- Cary, Elizabeth** 1613 *The tragedie of Mariam, the faire queene of Iewry*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 13 August 2015].
- Chapman, George** 1999 *Bussy D'Ambois*. Nicholas Brooke (ed.) Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Connor, Steven** 2004 *The Book of Skin*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd.
- Coriolanus* (Folio 1, 1623). *Internet Shakespeare Editions* (2016). Available at http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/Cor_F1/scene/2.2/#tln-1322 [Last accessed 8 January 2016].
- Corso, Simona** 2010 What Calphurnia knew. *Julius Caesar* and the Language of Dreams. In: Del Sapio Garbero, Maria et al (eds.) *Questioning Bodies*. Goettingen: V&R unipress, pp. 171-190.
- Covington, Sarah** 2009 *Wounds, Flesh and Metaphor in Seventeenth-Century England*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Crooke, Helkiah** 1615 *Mikrokosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 7 May 2015].
- Davies of Hereford, John** 1603 *Microcosmos. The Discovery of the Little World, with the government thereof*. Oxford. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 1 July 2015].
- Davis, Lloyd** 2003 Embodied Masculinity in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. *EnterText* 3 (1): pp. 161-82.
- Dekker, Thomas** 1609 *The guls horne-booke*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 1 August 2015].
- Dio Cassius** 1961 *Roman History* (vol. iv). Translated by Cary, E. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Donne, John** 1612 *The First Anniuersarie. An Anatomie of the VVorld*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 13 Aug 2015].
- Erasmus, Desiderius** 1534 *Bellvm Erasmi, translated into englyshe*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 17 June 2015].
- Field, Nathan** 1612 *A woman is like a weathercock*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 27 August 2015].
- Fletcher, Phineas** 1971 *The Purple Island*. Cambridge, 1633. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum Ltd.
- Folkingham, W** 1628 *Panala Medica...the fruitfull and frugall Nourse of sound Health and long Life*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 6 June 2015].
- Garbero, Maria Del Sapio** 2010 Anatomy, Knowledge, and Conspiracy: in Shakespeare's Arena with the Words of Cassius. In: Del Sapio Garbero, Maria et al (eds.) *Questioning Bodies*. Goettingen: V&R unipress, pp. 33-56.
- Geddes, Louise** 2010 Sacred Blood and the Body's Rich Legacy in *Julius Caesar*. *This Rough Magic* 1 (2): pp. 45-74. Available at <http://www.thisroughmagic.org/geddes%20article.html> [Last accessed 11 May 2015].

- The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* 1969. L. E. Berry (ed.) Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Goth, Maik** 2012 'Killing, Hewing, Stabbing, Dagger-drawing, Fighting, Butchery': Skin Penetration in Renaissance Tragedy and Its Bearing on Dramatic Theory. *Comparative Drama* 46 (2): pp. 139-62. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/cdr.2012.0016>
- Handcock, Tarryn** 2012 Transgressing Boundaries: Skin in the Construction of Bodily Interior. In: The 2012 IDEA Symposium, Perth, Australia in September 2012, pp.1-8.
- Hart, Patrick** 2005 The Badge of Shame: Blushing in Early Modern England. *Ecloga Online Journal* 4: n.p. Available at www.strath.ac.uk/media/faculties/hass/knowledgeexchange/ecloga/media_13506_2_en.pdf [Last accessed 26 June 2015].
- Harvey, Elizabeth D** 2003 The Touching Organ: Allegory, Anatomy, and the Renaissance Skin Envelope. In: Harvey, Elizabeth D (ed.) *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 81-102.
- Hillman, David Asaf** 2007 *Shakespeare's Entrails: Belief, Scepticism and the Interior of the Body*. Hampshire/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hoffman, Tiffany** 2014 Coriolanus's Blush. In: Johnson, Laurie et al (eds.) *Embodied Cognition and Shakespeare's Theatre: The Early Modern Body-Mind*. New York: Routledge, pp. 173-189.
- Holyday, Barten** 1626 *Three sermons vpon the Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of Our Sauior*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 13 Aug 2015].
- Hughes, Thomas** 1587 *The Misfortunes of Arthur, in Certaine deu[is]es and shewes presented to her Maiestie... in the thirtieth yeare of her Maiesties most happy raigne*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 8 July 2015].
- Jablonski, Nina G** 2013 *Skin: A Natural History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- James I, King of England** 1616 *The vvorkes of the most high and mightie prince, Iames by the grace of God, King of Great Britaine, France and Ireland, defender of the faith*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 10 August 2015].
- Kallenbach, Ulla** 2012 *Macbeth: The Catastrophe of Regicide and the Crisis of Imagination*. In: Meiner, Carsten and Kristin Veel (eds.) *The Cultural Life of Catastrophes and Crises*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, pp. 193-203.
- Kendall, Gillian Murray** 1992 Overkill in Shakespeare. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 43 (1): pp. 33-50. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2870902>
- Koslofsky, Craig** 2014 Knowing Skin in Early Modern Europe. *History Compass* 12 (10): pp. 794-806. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12195>
- Lanfranco of Milan** 1565 *A most excellent and learned vvoorke of chirurgerie, called Chirurgia parua Lanfranci Lanfranke of Mylayne his briefe*. Translated by Halle, J. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 1 June 2015].
- Limoges, Vincent** 2011 Caesar's Final Aims: The Development of the Dictatorship. *Hirundo: The McGill Journal of Classical Studies* 9. Classics Students Association of McGill.
- Marlowe, Christopher** 2003 *Dr Faustus*. Roma Gill (ed.) London: A&C Black.
- Marlowe, Christopher** 2003 *Tamburlaine the Great, Parts I and II*. Anthony B. Dawson (ed.) London: A&C Black.

- Marshall, Cynthia** 1996 Wound-man: *Coriolanus*, Gender, and the Theatrical Construction of Interiority. In: Traub, Valerie et al (eds.) *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 93-118.
- Miles, Geoffrey** 2011 *Shakespeare and the Constant Romans*. Oxford Scholarship Online. [Last accessed 18 July 2015].
- Montaigne, Michel de** 1603 On the vse of Apparell. *The essayes or morall, politike and millitarie discourses of Lo: Michaell de Montaigne*. Translated by Florio, J. London. *Early English Books Online*, pp. 111-13 [Last accessed 19 June 2015].
- Munday, Anthony** 1600 *The first part of the true and honorable historie, of the life of Sir John Old-castle*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 10 June 2015].
- Munro, Lucy** 2013 They eat each others' arms: Stage Blood and Body Parts. In: Karim-Cooper, Farah and Tiffany Stern (eds.) *Shakespeare's Theatres and the Effects of Performance*. Bloomsbury: London, pp. 73-93.
- Nashe, Thomas** 1594 *The vnfortunate traoueller. Or, The life of Iacke Wilton*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 2 Aug 2015].
- North, Stella** 2013 The Surfacing of the Self: The Clothing-Ego. In: Cavanagh, Sheila L. et al (eds.) *Skin, Culture and Psychoanalysis*. Hampshire/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 64-89.
- Ovid** 1567 *The. xv. bookes of P. Ouidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis*. Trans. Arthur Golding. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 31 May 2015].
- Ovid** 2004 *Metamorphoses*. Trans. by Raeburn, D. London: Penguin.
- Paré, Ambroise** 1617 *The method of curing vvounds made by gun-shot*. Trans. Walter Hamond. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 4 June 2015].
- Paré, Ambroise** 1634 *The workes of that famous chirurgion Ambrose Parey translated out of Latine and compared with the French*. Trans. Thomas Johnson. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 19 June 2015].
- Paster, Gail Kern** 1993 *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Plutarch** 1603 *The philosophie, commonlie called, the morals... VVherevnto are annexed the summaries necessary to be read before every treatise*. Translated by Holland, P. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 11 July 2015].
- Polanski, Roman** (dir.) 1971 *Macbeth* (film). USA: Columbia Pictures.
- Pollard, Tanya** 2010 Enclosing the Body: Tudor Conceptions of Skin. *A Companion to Tudor Literature*. Kent Cartwright (ed.) New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 111-122.
- Poole, Josua** 1657 *The English Parnassus, or, A helpe to English poesie... together with a short institution to English poesie, by way of a preface*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 18 Aug 2015].
- Preston, Thomas** 1584 *Cambyses*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 10 June 2015].
- Prosser, Jay** 2001 Skin Memories. In: Ahmed, Sarah and Jackie Stacey (eds.) *Thinking Through The Skin*. London/New York: Routledge, pp. 52-68.
- Rourke, Josie** (dir.) 2013 *Coriolanus* by William Shakespeare. Theatre performance. 06 December 2013 – 13 February 2014. National Theatre, Donmar Warehouse, viewed 11 December 2013.
- Sawday, Jonathan** 1996 *The Body Emblazoned*. London: Routledge.

- Sennert, Daniel** 1663 *The Art of Chirurgey explained in six parts... being the whole Fifth book of practical physick*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 4 June 2015].
- Shakespeare, William** 1967 *Romeo and Juliet*. T. J. B. Spencer (ed.) London: Penguin.
- Shakespeare, William** 2004 *Julius Caesar*. David Daniell (ed.) London: Thomson Learning.
- Shakespeare, William** 2005 *Antony and Cleopatra*. Emrys Jones (ed.) London: Penguin.
- Shakespeare, William** 2005 *Coriolanus*. G. R. Hibbard (ed.) London: Penguin.
- Shakespeare, William** 2005 *Henry IV Part I*. Peter Davison (ed.) London: Penguin.
- Shakespeare, William** 2005 *Richard III*. E. A. J. Honigmann (ed.) London: Penguin.
- Shakespeare, William** 2005 *The Comedy of Errors*. Stanley Wells (ed.) London: Penguin.
- Shakespeare, William** 2007 *Hamlet*. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (eds.) London: Thomson Learning.
- Shakespeare, William** 2010 *The Winter's Tale*. John Pitcher (ed.) London: Bloomsbury Arden.
- Shakespeare, William** 2011 *Richard II*. Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin (eds.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shakespeare, William** 2013 *Coriolanus*. Peter Holland (ed.) London: Bloomsbury.
- Shakespeare, William** 2015 *Macbeth*. Carol Chillington Rutter (ed.) London: Penguin.
- Shakespeare, William** 2015 *Macbeth*. Sandra Clark and Pamela Mason (eds.) London: Bloomsbury.
- Shakespeare, William** *King John*. In: Blakemore Evans, G., and J. J. M. Tobin (eds.) *The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, pp. 805-840.
- Shakespeare, William** *Henry VI Part II*. In: Blakemore Evans, G., and J. J. M. Tobin (eds.) *The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, pp. 668-710.
- Shakespeare, William** *Henry VI Part III*. In: Blakemore Evans, G., and J. J. M. Tobin (eds.) *The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, pp. 709-747.
- Shirilan, Stephanie** 2008 Francis Bacon, Robert Burton, and the Thick Skin of the World: Sympathy, Transmission and the Imaginary Early Modern Skin. *ESC* 34 (1): pp. 59-83. DOI: 10.1353/esc.0.0104
- Starks-Estes, L.S.** 2013 Virtus, vulnerability, and the emblazoned male body in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*. In: J. Feather & C.E. Thomas (eds.) *Violent Masculinities: Male Aggression in Early Modern Texts and Culture*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 85-108.
- Stevens, Andrea Ria** 2013 *Inventions of the Skin: The Painted Body in Early Modern English Drama, 1400-1642*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Taylor, Mark** 1997 *Hiding*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Utriainen, Terhi** 2013 Metaphors and images of dress and nakedness. In: Pathak, Shuba *Figuring Religions: Comparing Ideas, Images, and Activities*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, pp. 147-176.
- Vicary, Thomas** 1586 *The Englishmans treasure, or treasure for Englishmen vvith the true anatomye of mans body... phisicke and chirurgery*. London. *Early English Books Online* [Last accessed 17 June 2015].