

UCLA

UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

In the Likeness Of: Christology, Gender, and the Self-Emptying Subject in Early Modern Literature

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/51h0w9dz>

Author

Smith, Megan Kathleen

Publication Date

2018

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

In the Likeness Of: Christology, Gender, and the Self-Emptying Subject in Early Modern
English Literature

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor
of Philosophy in English

by

Megan Kathleen Smith

2018

© Copyright by
Megan Kathleen Smith
2018

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

In the Likeness Of: Christology, Gender, and the Self-Emptying Subject in Early Modern English
Literature

by

Megan Kathleen Smith

Doctor of Philosophy in English

University of California, Los Angeles, 2018

Professor Lowell Gallagher, Chair

My dissertation examines the way that certain early modern literary texts explore their characters' subjectivity in light of ideas about Christ—particularly where these texts draw or trouble gender lines, either affirming or disturbing the masculinity of the ideal subject. I discover two major trends in works by Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Spenser. On one hand, I expose the crystallization of Christological dualisms—God-man and man-woman—along early modern lines, distinctions framed by emerging gender roles and formulations of the state and family as corporations in Christ's image. Where the literature combines these corporations with Christianity's sacrificial mythology, it subsumes women—and the queer or womanly in men—as secondary subjects and necessary sacrifices. It uses their containment and even trauma to stabilize a closely related early modern household and nation. However, I argue the coexistence of a Christological model of subjectivity predicated upon Christ's "kenosis," a word that refers to his self-emptying in both the incarnation and the Passion. Certain ideas about kenosis provide a self-consciously literary framework for the theatrical and poetic explorations of selfhood we find on the Renaissance stage and in Spenser's

sprawling allegory. The subject that emerges is intensely relational and continually evolving, a being that challenges both gender hierarchy and gender essentialism. Where the constructions of the first model enable caste, the constant deconstructions of the second enable a more holistic community.

My project provides a Christological framework within which to study subjectivity. I draw on both early modern theology and more recent work directed toward specifically literary and gendered conceptualizations of Christ. Focusing on genres that are themselves considered to be gendered, the masculine history/epic and the feminine romance, the dissertation moves into intensely detailed readings that highlight the complexity and interrelationship of these themes. My first two chapters each pair one text (*Edward II*, *Cymbeline*) that reestablishes and bounds the subject through an appeal to Christological dualisms and sacrifice with one (*Richard II*, *Twelfth Night*) more invested in the kenotic expansion of the individual. My final chapter turns to *The Faerie Queene* and Spenser's attempt to fashion a composite ideal, honing in on the twins Belphoebe and Amoret, characters related to the era's female monarch, Elizabeth.

Unlike the heavily populated field of early modern "sacramental poetics," Christology has gone relatively unstudied as a paradigm relevant to this branch of literary criticism. Yet, the concerns of kenotic theology resonate with the ethical and metaphysical investments of both the English Renaissance and our current ideological climate. As befits a humanities for whom "the human" remains deeply suspect, kenosis formulates the ideal subject in his negation. My work both teases out a problematic history in which a sexist Christology influences our understanding of subjectivity and complicates that history in ways that indicate our own ability to revise and move forward.

This dissertation of Megan Kathleen Smith is approved.

Ra'anan Boustan

Christine Chism

Robert Watson

Lowell Gallagher, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2018

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
I. “This teeming womb of royal kings”: Sacred and Sacramental Kingship in <i>Edward II</i> and <i>Richard II</i>	62
II. “Marks of wonder”: Divine Birthmarks and <i>Imitatio Christi</i> in <i>Twelfth Night</i> and <i>Cymbeline</i>	140
III. “Perfect hole”: Erasure and Perfection in <i>The Faerie Queene</i>	232
Conclusion	287
Afterward. “Nothing will come of nothing”: Canceled Romance, Deleted History in <i>King Lear</i>	291
Bibliography	299

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I thank the chair of my committee and my mentor through this graduate experience, Lowell Gallagher. Eternally generous with his time and knowledge, he has challenged me to take my ideas to the next level. He further gave me *The Faerie Queene*, a text whose difficulties demanded that I evolve in response to them. The opportunity to explore Spenser across a full quarter, as first a student and then a teacher, was a rare gift for a graduate student.

The other members of my committee have also been extraordinary. Robert Watson's seminars and guidance thereafter have helped me to push into early modern literature—particularly Shakespeare and seventeenth-century poetry. (It was with great reluctance that I sacrificed John Donne in the early stages of this dissertation). Moreover, his undergraduate lectures are exemplary and helped me to shape my own goals as a teacher. Christine Chism helped me to fall in love with medieval drama. She is also, perhaps, the single greatest demystifier of academia: the writing, the professionalization, and the trajectory of graduate school. And Ra'anán Bouston has provided practical advice and a valuable point of view anchored in a different discipline. My most sincere thanks to you all.

In addition to my committee, I must thank the extended UCLA community. The staff and faculty of the English department are truly amazing. I am quite sure that I would not have survived without Mike Lambert's shepherding, Jeanette Gilkison's practical aid, or Chris Mott's training and guidance of new teachers. I have also enjoyed my course work, particularly seminars given by Albert Braunmuller, Christine Chism, Barbara Fuchs, Lowell Gallagher, Claire McEachern, and Robert Watson on medieval and early modern literature. In these classes

and beyond, I have been blessed with a cohort of intellectually curious fellows who enjoy a good beer and better conversation. Among these, special recognition goes to Alex Zobel, there with me at the beginning of our graduate education in Renaissance literature. Beyond my own year, the members of the Medieval and Early Modern Student Association provided reading groups, companionship, and cultural outings (though I am not sure we can include our trip to the Renaissance Fair under that heading). The group also put together a terrific conference on the pedagogy surrounding pre-1700 literature, in which I was fortunate enough to take part. Along that theme, I am also grateful for the amazing teaching opportunities UCLA has provided—and for the amazing students.

Several outside conferences proved particularly helpful as I developed the ideas and readings in this dissertation. I am particularly indebted to the International Spenser Society, to J.K. Barrett and Colleen Rosenfeld, and to my fellow panelists for a wonderful RSA (Boston, 2016) session on “Spenserian Emergencies.” The Shakespeare Society of America seminars also helped me put together the bulk of my second chapter, providing a forum in which I could explore first *Twelfth Night* and then *Cymbeline*. “Literary Romance” (Vancouver, 2015) with Lori Humphrey Newcomb contributed to the way in which I think about one of the two main genres of my dissertation. “Sleeping Through the Renaissance” (New Orleans, 2016) with Margaret Simon and Nancy Simpson-Younger enabled me to consider a new dimension of romantic digression in *Cymbeline*. In each of these, I benefitted from a number of provocative papers written by my fellow participants. As I began to develop my ideas about kenosis and the role it might play in early modern literature, the John Donne Society, the UC w/ Shakespeare group, and the editorial staff at *Philological Quarterly* also provided opportunities and encouragement that were vital to the development of this project.

Dissertation-writing is a marathon, and I had a great writing group to give me both suggestions and checkpoints. My thanks to Lindsey Grubbs, Jessica Horvath, and Kim Hedlin. Kim, our mutual interest in things theological and early modern has been a source of wonderful conversation between criticism theoretical and historically focused. Jessica, your friendship may have been the most essential component of my journey towards this degree. I could not have done it without you there in the trenches with me. In addition to academic peers, Laura Palmen and our morning sessions have been vital to the final slog.

When it comes to my family and friends, my love and gratitude overflow my ability to put them in words. The inexpressibility topos feels lazy here, but how does one distill years of love and support into a few succinct phrases? I have been blessed with parents who have encouraged me in my (never-ending) education, abc's to Shakespeare. I give you full license to take credit for any and all of my successes. My little sister has been a wonderful source of comfort. Particularly in this final year, she has kindly understood when dissertation woes interfered with the attention a maid of honor owes the bride. My circle of friends in Minneapolis/St. Paul has been vital to my wellbeing and sanity as well. In the years I have spent studying grace and charity, I have been blessed with practical examples aplenty from both the family I was born into and the family I've found along the way. I love and thank you all.

VITA

- 2007 B.A. English
 University of Virginia
- 2012 M.A. English
 University of California, Los Angeles
- 2014 Ph. C. English
 University of California, Los Angeles

AWARDS

- Graduate Division Dissertation Year Fellowship, 2016-2017
Department Dissertation Year Fellowship, 2015-2016
Mellon Foundation Graduate Fellowship for the Teaching of Literatures in English, 2012-2013
Chancellor's Prize, UCLA, 2009-2010
Wagenheim Memorial Scholarship in English, University of Virginia, 2006

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- “Reading It Wrong to Get It Right: Sacramental and Excremental Encounters in Early Modern Poems about Hair Jewelry.” *Philological Quarterly* 94.4 (2015). 353-375.
- “‘Perfect Holes’: The Cases of the Missing Scar and of the Vanishing Stanzas.” Renaissance Society of America. April 2016.
- “‘A good voyage of nothing’: The Kenotic Subject in *Twelfth Night*.” Shakespeare Association of America Meeting. April 2015.
- Respondent. “Early Modern and Medieval Research Groups Roundtable.” UCLA Southland Graduate Student Conference. June 2014.
- “John Donne’s Poetic Kenosis: Putting the Scat back in Eschatology.” John Donne Society Conference. February 2014.
- Participant. “Graduate Student Roundtable.” w/Shakespeare at UCI: Shakespeare by Design. February 2014.
- “Drama, Early Modern.” UCLA MEMSA Pedagogy Conference. June 2013.
- “Sacrament, Symbol, Synecdoche, and Shit: Hair Jewelry in the Poetry of John Donne.” UMCP Medieval and Early Modern Studies Conference. April 2013.

TEACHING POSITIONS

- 2010-2012 Teaching Assistant. English Department, UCLA.
- 2012-2015 Teaching Associate. English Department, UCLA.
- 2014 Teaching Associate. Writing Programs, UCLA.

INTRODUCTION

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man,...to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. (Chalcedonian Creed)¹

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head unconvered dishonoureth her head...For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man...Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:3-11 King James Version)

My dissertation revolves around these two dualisms: God-man in the body of Christ and man-woman in his image. I look at the way in which these constructions shape human subjects—and ideas about subjectivity—in several early modern texts: Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*; William Shakespeare's *Richard II*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Cymbeline*; and Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. As expected, these dualisms often overlap in patriarchal and essentialist models that reserve a certain level of spirituality to men and identify them as the divinely sanctioned masters of the world. However, two related themes—similarly Christological—disrupt any simplistic vision. One concerns a dynamic subject who variously emerges within his or her relationships. The other is a still more insistent hallmark of both the theology and the literature of the time: the portrayal of Christ and the self as intertwined mysteries that defy the limitations on temporal

¹*Theopedia.com*, s.v. "Chalcedonian Creed," accessed May 21, 2018, <https://www.theopedia.com/chalcedonian-creed>.

understanding. These ideas complicate both the gender hierarchy and the image of men as predetermined, static beings (despite the increased prominence of the concept of predestination in Anglicanism). My readings continually tease out the construction of early modern subjects as they are formulated with respect to Christ; they further pair this construction with the *deconstruction* of related idealizations that are intolerable according to feminist or communitarian values, a deconstruction that is already present within early modern literature.

My chosen texts explore their characters' subjectivity in light of Christ, an ideal subject who serves as their foil, mirror, and window. Christianity sets forth Christ as an inimitable exemplar while calling for precisely this imitation, and ideas about his nature shape those about more ordinary Christians. Rather than any singular Christology, I appeal to a constellation of perspectives, some of which are very contemporary to their historical moment and some of which are better articulated through other vocabularies. This network serves to complicate the distinction between "religious" and "secular" within the literature I study, thereby troubling the secularization thesis. More importantly, I aim to use the complexity of early modern literature as a chance to open up and deconstruct potentially harmful models that frequently use Christianity—and its Christology—for their justification. These texts couple teleology and gender essentialization with investments in mutuality, flexibility, and evolution, often exposing or undermining overly rigid ideals—including constructions of gender—as unchristian. I distinguish between sacrifices and corporations in Christ's male image, insidious to men and disastrous to women, and a looser poetic, framed around Christ's self-emptying—or kenosis—that enables community and self-discovery.

The theological backbone of my dissertation lies in Christology, a branch that theorizes Christ's dual nature—human and divine—both separately and together. One of my keywords is

“kenosis,” a Christological term that derives from the Philippians hymn (2:6-11) and names Christ’s action in the incarnation as (in the Greek) a kind of emptying. Across the ages, non-exclusive ideas of Christ’s self-emptying engage both Christ’s humility and the ongoing relationship between the divine and the temporal world, a dynamic that exists within Christ as well as between God and his Creation. In kenotic Christology focused on ethics, Christ serves as a model of obedience and self-sacrifice. Those who approach kenosis as metaphysical negotiation consider the transactions between God and man, the foremost among these being Christ’s nature as (and choice to be) man and God’s formation of man in his own image. They further identify Christ’s incarnation with the material of revelation, the eternal *logos* entering into human history and speech. These exchanges, both the cosmic framing and man’s conscious imitation of Christ, enable or analogize the eventual perfection of the Christian, i.e., the translation of his “vile body” “unto [Christ’s] glorious body” at the end of time (Philippians 3:21 KJV).

Here on earth, the individual can participate in Christ’s body (or bodies) through sacraments, dialogue with scripture, and mimesis (by which I mean certain forms of both art and behavior). These actions foster their integration into a Christian community that is itself figured as a corpus with a transcendent head. For the purposes of this dissertation, I break this greater community down into the microcosms of family and nation. I examine characters that inhabit doubled or dual bodies: twins, transvestites, the one flesh of husband and wife, and the two bodies of a king (personal and the enduring incarnation of a nation such that one can say, “The king is dead. Long live the king”). Within such, certain interactions reveal gracious aspects of a person or show individuals’ mutual articulation (both with one another and with the corporate bodies they inhabit) as part of one’s realization as a Christian subject. The kenotic relationship

between Christ's own two natures helps to frame these more ordinary relationships and internally multiple bodies. However, I also look at places where this intercourse breaks down: points of inelasticity, i.e., mediations or idealizations that forestall dynamic communication with both God and a worldly community; and bad copies of Christ, i.e., religious images of abjection used to stunt the self-image of women—and the queer Edward II. These imitations render characters in Christ's image but only to deny them full participation in his complex subjectivity.

As is, I believe, thematically appropriate, my work continually negotiates between early modern contemporary context and theoretical questions whose answers always overflow their historical moment. In comparison to the wealth of early modern literary criticism informed by sacramental theology, criticism that looks towards contemporary Christology is scarce.² This is not to deny the considerable overlap between sacramental theology and Christology. The activities of imitation, meditation, and communion generally float between the historical body of Christ and the Eucharistic or ecclesiastical body. Yet, my point of entrance is Christological: the dual-natured, historical Christ as the reference point for Christian subjectivity. While Reformation distinctions in the field of Christology were neither so dramatic nor so wrapped up in the rituals of daily life as to prove a true English battleground, shifting ideas and emphases regarding Christ's humanity and divinity demand more attention. I never assert doctrinal positions for these writers, but I do trace relevant, available currents of ideology, putting them into conversation with those of my own time and within a humanities that has grown suspicious of "the human" even as it has "turned to" religion and ethics. I put the latter at the heart of the

² This is not to say that such criticism does not exist. The work of Debora Shuger and Adrian Streete has been particularly helpful. Moreover, there is a decent amount of criticism focused on English political theology, in which Christological concepts are used to develop a theory of kingship, is an exception. This dissertation, too, will engage this politico-religious paradigm.

former and explore selfhood with continual reference to its own (self-)emptying. My emphasis on the Christological term “kenosis” allows me to make use of a theological background that is as much postmodern as early modern. The conversation I stage is sometimes anachronistic. After all, ideas come to cultures in repeating waves; they come to individuals in scatter plots as interesting for their anomalies as their trends. Despite their different media and vocabulary, I identify potential dialogue between, for example, Augustine, Shakespeare, and recent feminist theologians on the difference between male and female participation in the image of Christ.

In postmodern thought, kenosis has become a theological hashtag of sorts, crossing disciplines and even religions.³ It connects a complex network of ideas involving language, nature, and art as well as the metaphysics and morals of Christian selfhood. Shadows of this network (sometimes subliminal) appear in this literature, anticipating the unorthodox ways in which the term has been used by philosophers and theologians of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Yet, where kenosis has appeared in early modern studies (usually in scholarship on Milton), scholars have rarely taken full advantage of post-/modern developments and concerns. Instead, the term often has been deployed in ways that are unthinkingly—rather than critically— anachronistic, rooted in the specific tradition of nineteenth-century kenoticism.⁴ Most of the

³ Its flexibility opens kenosis up as a particularly productive site for dialogue between major religions. Divine self-emptying and humility find many reference points in many places. For example, see the essays, a dialogue between the Buddhist Masao Abe and various theologians, in John B. Cobb and Christopher Ives, eds., *The Emptying God: A Buddhist-Jewish-Christian Conversation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005).

⁴ Nineteenth-century kenoticism is most associated with German Lutherans (whose work was, in turn picked up by several, influential British theologians) and refers to a radical restriction of Christ’s powers—including his access to divine knowledge—in the incarnation and related examination of his (almost exclusively human) historical life as Jesus. For a representative, albeit early, version of the application of this kenoticism to seventeenth century

criticism that engages literature through the lens of a more nuanced and flexible kenotic theology has come from scholars, such as Larry Bouchard or Graham Ward, based in religious studies and rarely specializing in any given era. My own training as a literary scholar positions me to enter from the other end, with an eye developed through particular attention to literary detail and particular exposure to the (historically specific) field of Renaissance literature.

As I explore these texts, I hope to trouble the history of an increasingly secular subjectivity. The secularization narrative, which relates the transference of religious material to secular literature, often makes a too absolute distinction between these realms and unfolds a too linear tale. In this story—as it is told about Renaissance drama—empowered rituals and objects become tropes of the stage, leaving writers the options of evacuating or appropriating these religious topoi.⁵ However, this story frequently neglects Christianity as it is (always already) intensely and self-consciously literary. I certainly do not deny the difference between the overtly Christian drama of the medieval stage (or church, even) and the work of early modern playwrights who were forbidden Christian topics. Instead, I point out characters drawn with reference to a self-dramatizing deity identified as the Word, i.e., a Christ identified with both the language (scripture) and the theater (incarnation) of revelation. This religious meta-narrative offers literary texts an already literary frame, and a millennia-long negotiation between religion and literature makes tropological exchanges harder to determine as absolutely in one direction or

literature, see Michael Lieb, "Milton and the Kenotic Christology: Its Literary Bearing," *ELH* 37, no. 3 (1970), JSTOR. For an objection based in its anachronism, see David M. Whitford, "Mistaking the Tree for the Forest: Why Kenotic Theory in Milton Is Anachronistic," *Milton Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (2007), Wiley Online Library.

⁵ This was the dominant trend for new historicists of the nineties and early twenty-first century engaging the topic. The paradigmatic example is Stephen Greenblatt's *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

the other. For example, a writer (such as Shakespeare) might undermine the theory of Christomimetic kingship—in which a king is empowered as he corresponds to Christ, the king—only to confirm a different kind of Christomimesis (one that is, in *Richard II*, based in a dialogue with scripture).

My main objective, however, is twofold: (1) to relate negotiations of identity along Christological and gender lines in early modern literature and (2) to use that literature's complexity to open up potential narratives and deconstruct harmful idealizations. While the dominant gender prejudices of their time mark these texts, their characters are complicated. They include cross-dressed heroines, effeminate kings, and allegories that gesture towards the queen with the "heart and stomach of a king," Elizabeth I.⁶ I look at the interplay between metaphysical assumptions about the dual nature of Christ (human and divine) and assumptions about the nature of gender. As is historically common, Christology often becomes tool and justification for patriarchy, making Christ's masculinity intrinsic and essential to his divinity. However, Christ's human sex is only one way of conceptualizing his gender, and early modern writers sometimes approach the divine in ways that resonate with more recent, feminist theories or echo on the other side of history, touching the practices of medieval Catholicism. Certain, more recent theologians have used Christ's status as outsider as a way of moving beyond the traditional binary, work that has been accompanied by historical reevaluations of *imago Christi* in both art and theology. Others have located Christ's essence in his movement (his kenosis), finding a radically relational subject, one continually in passage rather than nailed still in a transcendent

⁶ "Elizabeth's Tilbury Speech" (1588), British Library, accessed February 2, 2018,

<http://www.bl.uk/learning/timeline/item102878.html>.

elsewhere.⁷ With this relational ideal, they set themselves against both a masculine ideal and the autonomy central to a Western, modern subject (the idea of which is, itself, informed by the Reformation, which moved traditionally communal exchanges with God inside the individual). Collectively, these theologians have also interrogated the places of man and woman within the household and the nation in so far as these greater bodies, which analogically and/or sacramentally invoke Christic incorporation, can constrain individuals (most often women). These limitations can prevent a person from full and direct relationships with God and even with oneself.

Gender further plays into the genres covered by this dissertation as the chosen texts position themselves with respect to the romance and/or the epic. My project is not to develop ideas about romance and epic themselves but rather to examine their tropes in the service of insights about gender and about Christian subjectivity in these texts. I cover romance-comedies, history plays, and the generic hybrid of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. In accordance with recent criticism, I treat these genres as non-exclusive and gendered modes that may even work together or alternate in a given text.⁸ Both epic and romance direct their narratives towards quests and destinies. The "masculine" epic emphasizes fulfillment at both the individual level—men's heroic quests—and the political level—national/imperial projects whose future is secured through patrilineal descent. Epic often presents itself as an origin story and/or historical chronicle. As for the romance, the "feminine" genre emphasizes the journey rather than its end; its characters wander on their way to destiny. Female characters play pivotal roles. On the one

⁷ It is important to note from the outset that Christology dedicated towards a more relational ideal subject is not solely a feminist concern or product. It appears in many postmodern constructions of Christ.

⁸ The critical treatment of romance as a mode rather than (or as well as) a genre is fairly widespread and dates at least from Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957).

hand, they serve as obstacles, the seductresses and schemers that interrupt the male hero's quest. On the other, romances also tell of heroines, women that overcome obstacles and whose own sexual agency can be vital to genealogical projects.⁹

Their focus on destiny directs these stories towards the production of the individual in the world and beyond it, within a greater eschatological narrative.¹⁰ My readings participate in a long tradition in which literary critics use early modern English literature both to tell a story of nascent modern subjectivity and to complicate that story. They have defined the individual along a continuum that runs from ultimately essentialist to radically constructionist (with only straw men at either end), variously approaching the subject from the inside and moving outwards and vice versa.¹¹ Histories and romances show us individuals becoming themselves as they step into

⁹ This duality can be seen in the different focuses (though not necessarily disagreement) that Patricia Parker and Helen Cooper bring to the topic. Parker frequently engages the dilation of romance, looking to women as they defer endings and open up space and time within the text. See *Inescapable Romance: The Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979) and *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, and Property* (London: Methuen, 1987). Helen Cooper focuses more on female agency and even quests within the genre, looking to women as they create endings. See Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹⁰ I should note that I often use the word "individual" as convenient rather than precise nomenclature. Many of my readings actually address the breakdown of individuation.

¹¹ On the one hand, Catherine Belsey traces the "unified, knowing and autonomous" and *male* subject of "liberal humanism [which] proposes that the subject is the free, unconstrained author of meaning and action"; on the other, she also discovers the instability of a system in which "woman has meaning in relation to man" as "the ground of protest, resistance, feminism," ground that destabilizes the system itself rather than merely its exclusivity. *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London: Methuen, 1985), 8, ix.

Jonathan Dollimore's *Radical Tragedy* assumes the Christian humanism to which he depicts a counter-current. He examines Jacobean plays that reject the belief both in a fundamental human nature and in the providentialism

their assigned roles in the stories of the past—recorded or mythic.¹² They move towards fated ends through the contingencies that make them interesting. The characters’ identities are essential, their fulfillment, inevitable, but they are still demonstrably subject (I use the word advisedly) to the outside pressures that bring them to themselves. In addition, their stories frequently, self-consciously participate in a story of the world told as creation, salvation, and apocalypse.¹³ The landscape of history keeps it earth-bound; it frames emphatically mortal characters within a timeline punctuated by the deaths of kings. The romance, on the other hand, charts mystical and moral territory; by Spenser and Shakespeare’s day, it has a long tradition associating it with spiritual matters. Magic and providential intervention make the “meta” physical, mapping a world in which good characters are pitted against bad ones.¹⁴ Throughout

that puts man at the center “of the cosmic plan” and thus integrates “the unitary subject...internally as a consequence of being integrated into the cosmic design....[Instead,] Jacobean tragedy inscribes social process in—or rather as—subjective identity.” *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology, and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 19.

Stephen Greenblatt’s self-fashioning, a now-commonplace term, places man squarely on the line between inside and outside. He affords early modern man the autonomy of the artist while situating that artistry at “the point of encounter between an authority and an alien” perceived to threaten that authority. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 9.

¹² *Twelfth Night* provides a partial exception to such a generalization. It takes place in a strange place and time that is both present and not. It gestures towards destiny more as something beyond time than as something already completed.

¹³ I would note that Christopher Marlowe’s universe is decidedly less self-consciously theistic than that of Edmund Spenser or even William Shakespeare. Eschatological echoes in *Edward II* feel decidedly more bitter and ironic as a result.

¹⁴ Fredric Jameson defines the genre through this opposition of good and evil within a framework in which the “transcendental horizon of my experience... [takes] on the shape of *world* in the popular sense of nature, landscape,

these chapters, I continually move between the individual framed through national and historical exigency and through the wondrous possibilities of romance, each of which help to define and contribute to characters' participation in various images of Christ.

The Christological Mystery at the Heart of the Subject

In this dissertation, I pursue two main, intertwined lines of Christological inquiry: corporate and kenotic. By "corporate Christology," I mean multiple bodies united in Christ's image, a greater figuration within which the individual may locate himself. Both the nation and the "one flesh" of husband and wife have clearly identified and gendered Christic heads and subordinate bodies. As for kenotic Christology—Christology focused on sacrifice, exchange, and evacuation—it enters into this literature through sacrificial symbols, the dialogical extension of characters, and the use of catastrophe to induce radical change. While sacrifice tends to stabilize corporations at the expense of the individual, catastrophe opens up characters, evolving them and/or newly enabling self-reflection. Kenosis further can name the artistic decisions of characters as well as writers, appearing as either a set of tropes or a kind of ethical engine that influences the stories characters tell and the roles they consciously adopt.

Threading throughout these two more defined veins, I draw on Christology as a mystery in which an elusive, core self responds to an elusive deity. The resulting discoveries—as well as the sense of something yet unapprehended—can qualify essentialist constructions of both gender and character. On the one hand, these shifts and evasions can participate in an image of the universe in which male microcosms, complex inner realms, are orbited by female satellites, lesser mysteries primarily defined through the gravitational pull of the men around them. On the

and so forth." "Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre," *New Literary History*, Critical Challenges: The Bellagio Symposium, 7, no. 1 (1975): 142, JSTOR.

other, they can trouble simplistic binaries and archetypes, underscoring a character's immediate performance as both partial and theatrical, in uncertain relationship to some essential being. The most prominent example of such performance in my dissertation is Viola's gender-crossing disguise as Cesario, a costume that enables certain confessions even as it forbids others.

Before I summarize my chapters, the following pages flesh out the theological background that informs them. I sketch the history and landscape of early modern Christology and then outline two major trends in twentieth and twenty-first Christology that intersect with early modern ideals and concerns. These pages form the theoretical backdrop against which all of my readings are situated. They ground my argument that the Christian emphasis on self-exploration through performance and dialogue—along inherently literary, Christological lines—continually troubles both the subjects' gender and their individuation—even within orthodox corporations.

Christology: God and Man

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. (Philippians 2:4-12 KJV)

Paul frames the Philippians hymn with instructions for its use. As he prepares the story of Christ's kenosis, the self-emptying that the King James's translators have here translated as "[making] himself of no reputation," Paul asks his audience to open themselves to it, to make themselves available to and emulate the "mind" that drives Christ's incarnation. He sings a story of the Word emptying himself into flesh and returning as a name "above every name." As the

hymn concludes, he praises the Christians of Philippi who have looked to him for spiritual guidance, referring them to this hymn, sometimes referred to as the kenosis (or kenotic) hymn, in his absence. Christ's bodily absence becomes his own, an abiding condition in which the auditors must "work out [their] own salvation with fear and trembling." While the early church emphasized the lesson of the hymn, humility, theologians have traditionally regarded the text also as an occasion to theorize divine nature. It has led them to meditate on Christ's pre-existence as Word and to explore various aspects of the *communicatio idiomatum*, i.e., the relationship between Christ's two natures: human and divine. Kenosis names Christ's activity in the incarnation and its imitation, moving between metaphysical and moral registers, and the Christian subject emerges within this dynamic. As I outline historical currents in Christology in the following pages, I find a subject anchored in an identification with Christ—both as internal sacrament and as external example—but shrouded in mystery. I explore identity continually in crisis and just barely perceived in the midst of extreme eschatological vertigo and dysmetria. This fundamental obscurity is the necessary backdrop for the active determinations that take place in these texts, determinations often underscored as fragmentary or incomplete.

In the millennia and a half between the writing of Philippians and the publication of *The Faerie Queene* (the earliest of my texts at 1590), two essential Christological doctrines emerge, coming in quick succession. In the fifth century, the Church Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon set forth, first, the doctrine of the hypostatic union (Ephesus) and, second, the Chalcedonian Definition. The hypostatic union refers to Christ's integrity as a subject; it is an insistence that Christ, human and divine, is not two persons but one with two natures. The Chalcedonian Definition underscores the independence of these two natures, separating Christ's humanity from

his divinity within the greater, unified whole.¹⁵ When medieval theologians direct themselves towards political matters, they import this accounting as they articulate the idea of the king as *christomimetes*, a shadow of the two-natured God. The king is both himself, i.e., a private, mortal individual, and the anointed king. The analogy extends to the separation as well as the duality of the two aspects, but while the monarch holds his identity as the anointed king only by the grace of God, Christ is the eternal king by nature.¹⁶ Ernst Kantorowicz traces the evolution of this political theology into the early modern era (and Shakespeare's *Richard II*), in the landmark study *The King's Two Bodies*, which I will engage at length in my chapter on the history plays.¹⁷

In the wake of the Reformation, orthodox interpretations of the *communicatio idiomatum* multiply, branching into three main theological strands. Sarah Coakley gives a lucid summary of the three ways in which theologians frame the interaction between Christ's two natures. John

¹⁵ From a historical standpoint, it is important not to collapse either these councils or these doctrines. Ephesus served to denounce Nestorianism—the idea that there are two Christs, divine and human, and that only the human suffered in the Crucifixion and not the indwelling Logos—in favor of the Christology of Cyril. However, this move was felt to threaten the distinction between the two natures, a charge to which Chalcedon responded. The Chalcedonian Definition arose as a compromise, an attempt to ameliorate more radical implications of the hypostatic union. See Jaroslav Pelikan, "The Person of the God-Man," in *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, vol. 1, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 260-64.

¹⁶ By the time of the texts I study, the king's second aspect has become more specifically anchored in the nation's sovereignty—the eternal embodiment of England that passes from one king to the next: "The king is dead. Long live the king."

¹⁷ Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz's *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1997). Kantorowicz opens his history with a single excursus into literary criticism, a related reading of *Richard II* that has fairly dominated the critical landscape of that play in the twenty years since.

Calvin retains the central Christological thesis outlined in the Chalcedonian Creed: “a communication of the two attributes to the ‘person,’ but without mutual infection of the natures.”¹⁸ While the Anglican church officially follows this line, the theologies of Heinrich Zwingli and Martin Luther serve as important alternatives. Zwingli instead endorses “a merely linguistic (rather than ontological) attribution of characteristics of the two natures to each other, in a mere ‘manner of speaking.’”¹⁹ He reduces the relationship to metaphor, participating in the generally increased perception of divine distance in Reformed thought. As early modern writers employ their own Christological metaphors (in allusion, royal symbology, allegory, and family dynamics), they frequently question the degree to which Christ can meaningfully inhabit any temporal body, a question that leads into the third possibility: Luther’s Christology. Luther suggests “a real communication of divine attributes to the human person (but not vice versa),” thereby “open[ing] the Pandora’s box of direct mutual communication of the natures.”²⁰ In challenging the Chalcedonian Definition, he articulates a more radical Christology than Calvin—albeit in the service of a more conservative Eucharistic theology, one that retains the notion of Christ’s material presence in the objects of the Lord’s Supper.

For Luther, the sacramental union depends upon the hypostatic union. One of the primary charges brought against his doctrine of “real presence” was the assertion that the physical body of Christ cannot exist in multiple locations. Luther argued for the deification of the human Christ

¹⁸ Sarah Coakley, “Kenosis: Theological Meanings and Gender Connotations,” in *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, ed. John Polkinghorne (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2001), Location 2475.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.* In doing so, he paves the way for nineteenth-century kenotic theology, which reverses the process and suggests that, in the incarnation, God becomes only human, accepting all the limitations of his creatures. It is this version of kenotic theology that several critics have suggested that Milton anticipates.

in the *communicatio idiomatum* such that the material body could assume the omnipresence of the divine. This debate over divine ubiquity makes its way into Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Reunited with his sister (who is dressed as a man), Sebastian demands, "Do I stand there? I never had a brother; / Nor can there be that deity in my nature, / Of here and every where" (5.1.220-22).²¹ Rather than express a theological position, these lines appropriate a known theological crux concerning the temporal nature of Christ to express a crisis of identity. As the scene continues, the twins mirror one another but are also reflected in the greater mirror of Christ's body, which simultaneously reflects, contrasts and subsumes them.

Indeed, both Calvin and Luther approach Christology as an epistemological two-for-one in which knowledge of the self is inseparable from knowledge of God.²² As Calvin proclaims in the opening to *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, "Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid Wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves."²³ This knowledge is not particularly sanguine. Luther's tract on the Meditation of Christ's Passion declares, "The main benefit of Christ's passion is that man see into his own true

²¹ For *Twelfth Night*, I use the edition: William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, ed. Roger Warren and Stanley Wells, The Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

²² This interdependence sets up the main thesis of Adrian Streete's *Protestantism and Drama*: "I want to argue that the impulse towards self-knowledge is always a double impulse: selfhood is mediated in the Reformation through the relationship with the divine, and as the one mediator between man and God Christ plays a critical role in determining that relationship." Adrian Streete, *Protestantism and Drama in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 51-52.

²³ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536), trans. Henry Beveridge (1845), [https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes, 1.1.1](https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes,1.1.1).

self and that he be terrified and crushed by this.”²⁴ Meditating on the self produces much the same effect. Per Calvin, “No man can descend into himself and seriously consider what he is without feeling God’s wrath and hostility towards him.”²⁵ The reflections reinforce the ordinary Christian subject’s distance from the ideal Christ, but they also serve to bring him closer, opening man up to God and encouraging him in his humility, the kenotic ethic. Moreover, both theologians intend that this meditation also should bring an awareness of God’s love, as one remembers Christ’s sacrifice on his behalf.²⁶ Both Luther and Calvin objected to the Catholic mass in part for (what they characterized as) its claim to repeat Christ’s sacrifice in the ceremony. They emphasized the sufficiency of the Crucifixion, something only achieved through Christ’s full participation in humanity. Man’s salvation depends on God’s assumption of both man’s sin and God’s vengeance. Luther writes, “Christ was to become the greatest thief, murder, adulterer, / robber, desecrator, blasphemer, etc., there has ever been anywhere in the world...He is a sinner.”²⁷ As a subject, Christ thus brackets and threads through the ordinary subject. As an idea, he exceeds man’s logic, and both Luther and Calvin ultimately refer their followers to emotion—terror and comfort.

²⁴ Martin Luther, "A Meditation on Christs Passion, 1519," trans. Martin H. Bertram, in *Luther's Works*, ed. Martin O. Dietrich and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 42 (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1969), Section 8.

²⁵ Calvin, *Institutions*, 2.16.1

²⁶ In a more reassuring vein, Calvin insists, “We must, above all, remember this substitution, lest we tremble and remain anxious throughout life—as if God’s righteous vengeance, which the Son has taken upon himself, still hung over us” (*Institutions*, 2.16.5).

²⁷ Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians* (1531) in Jack Kilcrease, "The Bridal-Mystical Motif in Bernard of Clairvaux and Martin Luther," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 65 (2014): 275-76, Cambridge Journals Online.

Understanding must wait. The eschatological framework of these literary texts is essential to stories that present themselves as incomplete (literally in the case of Spenser’s unfinished *Faerie Queene*.) One of the bible’s most famous metaphors, invoked across sects, comes from Corinthians: “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12 KJV). The verse affirms, not only the limitations on temporal understanding, but also the relationship between knowing and being known by God; it connects personal identity to divine identity as one anticipates seeing “face to face” in heaven. In the first book of the *Faerie Queene*, Spenser provides his knight of holiness with a proleptic glimpse of himself, of the end of his story.²⁸ The Redcrosse Knight only receives this vision after he has reached his lowest point of near-death and despair. This dark place is a common way station of the romance, providing its own Philippians echo. As Bruce Fiske reminds us, the Philippians hymn is contemporary to early Greek romance novels, and there are several thematic and structural parallels—ones then amplified in romances written in an explicitly Christian tradition but with an eye towards their antique forebears. The most important similarity is the v-shaped plot in which the hero moves through humiliation, even to the extent of death or apparent death, to exaltation.²⁹ Thus positioned, the Redcrosse Knight is

²⁸ For *The Faerie Queene*, I use the edition: Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton, Hiroshi Yamashita, and Toshiyuki Suzuki, 2nd ed., Longman Annotated English Poets (New York: Routledge, 2007).

²⁹ While the hymn is not narrated in “progressive stages,” Fiske (using the NRSV version) shows the way in which the series of clauses mirror the greater narrative complexity of the romance novels, visually representing the romantic trajectory of the hymn (and the eschatology it presents):

6 Though he was in the form of God,
 he did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,
7 but emptied himself,

granted a sight of the “New Jerusalem” in the sky and introduced to himself; he is informed of his past (as a changeling) and his future (as Saint George).

But this is promise, not fulfillment, and Spenser allows his knight neither complacency nor too extended a vacation. Understanding is impossible to maintain in the real (or even fairy) world. Fleeting and startling, it brings about its own eclipse. When the knight turns to continue on his journey, his eyes are dazed “Through passing brightnesse, which did quite confound / His feeble sence and too exceeding shyne. / So darke are earthly things compar'd to things divine” (1.10.67). In Christology as in Redcrosse’s self-contemplation, concealment and revelation do not make a linear, two-step process. Instead they form the two poles of an ongoing dialogue, and when dialectically synthesized—as in the incarnation—mystery and revelation are one. Calvin’s Christology particularly revolves around this dialectic, and it proves vital to an understanding of

taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
8 he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.
9 Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name that is above every name,
10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Bruce N. Fiske, "The Odyssey of Christ: A Novel Context for Philippians 2:6-11," in *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God*, by C. Stephen Evans (Vancouver: Regent College Pub., 2010), 49.

early modern identity so informed.³⁰ I look at stories of disguise as well as allegory, texts in which these themes are most overt, but the problem extends into much English Renaissance literature, which is preoccupied with the problem of a hidden interiority. These writers and their characters contend with the difficulties of truly knowing others or even themselves.

In their quests to do so, Christ's dazzling brightness is both the ultimate object for which the Protestant subject searches and the light by which he sees anything. Calvin's own Eucharistic theology shifts the mode and location of Christ's presence in the sacrament. He shifts the burden of mediation to Christ as he exists as a spiritual sign of grace *within* the individual (and for all Luther's insistence on real presence in the eucharist, it is this latter mediation that makes the sacrament efficacious; man is justified by faith alone). For Calvin, this internal sign determines

³⁰ Calvin primarily understood kenosis in its Philippians context as self-concealment. Kirk Essary looks at Calvin's unusually lengthy response to Erasmus's commentary on the Philippians hymn. He draws a distinction between Erasmus's assertion that Christ (rarely) showed himself as God while on earth and Calvin's declaration that Christ could but did not. Kirk Essary, "The Radical Humility of Christ in the Sixteenth Century: Erasmus and Calvin on Philippians 2:6-7," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 68, no. 4 (November 2015): 409-11, Cambridge Core.

The more radical nature of Lutheran Christology can be seen in the *krypsis-kenosis* controversy of the early seventeenth century, which debates the historical Christ with respect to the use of divine power and not merely the appearance thereof. German theologians from Tübingen and Giessen argued whether Christ suspended the use of certain aspects of divinity during his time on earth, ultimately deemed the orthodox view, or merely concealed them. The Tübingen camp (Haffner, Osiander, Nicolai, and Thummius) maintained that Christ underwent a *krypsis* or crypto-kenosis, continually making use of concealed divine powers. The Giessen theologians (Mentzer, Feuerborn) instead argued for the suspended operation (though continued possession) of certain divine powers. Anxious over the division this controversy produced at a time when the Protestant cause was seen as vulnerable, the Elector John George convened a commission at Dresden in 1623, headed by Hoe von Hoenegg. The published *Solida Decisio* ordained that public teaching accord with the Giessen view, but the dispute continued until the "Thirty-Years War" rather distracted its participants.

true Christian subjectivity on the basis of predestination. The Anglican tradition follows Calvin in the weight it gives this internal sign, reserving salvation to the elect. However, the English are less certain about certainty—about whether or not the saved must know of their salvation. Calvin’s official position is that the true Christian can identify himself, but both Richard Hooker and Lancelot Andrewes provide for greater doubt in the matter. God’s distance means that even the elect will wrestle with the feeling of being forsaken; even those God loves may fail to feel that love.³¹ And so they search for security—for signs that externalize an internal salvation. (Even Calvin never entirely discards external signs, only their self-evidence.)

One of these signs is behavior. In everyday life, the actions of the elect will be virtuous. This good conduct may result from Christ’s mediation inside the subject, but Christ is also the ideal subject after whom one should pattern their actions. However, as soon as we engage the possibility of imitation, soteriological questions arise—ones that become difficult in any Reformed theology, all of which problematize (if not reject) the relationship between external works (most importantly rituals) and salvation. In his meditation on the Passion, Luther emphasizes the need to start with Christ as sacrament but ends by presenting Christ as example:

After your heart has thus become firm in Christ, and love, not fear of pain, has made you a foe of sin, then Christ’s passion must from that day on become a pattern for your entire life. Henceforth, you will have to see his passion differently. Until now we regarded it as a sacrament which is active in us while we are passive, but now we find that we too must be active, namely in the following.³²

³¹ See Debora Kuller Shuger, "The Hungering Dark: Spiritual Psychology and the Failure of Participation," in *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance: Religion, Politics, and the Dominant Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 69-90.

³² Luther, "A Meditation on Christ's Passion," Section 15.

Even the meditation itself seems to be “active” if not athletic. Where and how does the work begin, and with what agency? According to Paul Cefalu, the “broad English Protestant agreement regarding regeneration” is “defined negatively: a belief that unassisted moral progress cannot be achieved during sanctification. This should be seen more as a default position than well-thought out doctrinal or methodological platform.”³³ Protestant leaders posited Christ as a moral “pattern” but were vague and often self-contradicting about the use thereof. In the words of Adrian Streete, Protestant subjectivity is thus “conceived through mimetic discourse, through an uneasy process of mediation and imitation that is not supposed to be rationally explicable for the subject.”³⁴

The possibility of imitation leads us into matters of art as well as ethics. Imitation is, in fact, the guiding principle behind the humanist education afforded to these writers. Christian typology and humanist program come together most clearly in *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser outlines his methodology in a letter to his friend, Sir Walter Raleigh: “The generall end therefore of all the booke, is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline.”³⁵ His paragon is King Arthur, though other knights will present more particular virtues. He has adopted the form of allegory and fiction rather than precept and treatise: “So much more profitable is doctrine by ensample than by rule.” In writing his characters, Spenser hopes to also write his readers, “fashion[ing both].” His project participates in what Nandra Perry has labeled a Reformed English *imitatio Christi*, the imitation of Christ as a type of humanist literary *imitatio*

³³ Paul Cefalu, *Moral Identity in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 78.

³⁴ Streete, 78-79.

³⁵ Spenser, “A Letter of the Authors expounding his whole intention in the course of this worke: which for that it giueth great light to the Reader, for the better vnderstanding is hereunto annexed” in *Faerie Queene*, 714.

that structures a relationship with the Word as Christ's literary body. Perry claims, "The central pursuit of the Christian life is...to artfully (if imperfectly) bridge the gap between *sermo's* 'fallen,' historically contingent surface and its liberating, 'literary' essence."³⁶ For Spenser, this is work to be done both in his writing and in the incredibly active reading that his difficult poetry demands. He continually asks us to move through the immediate narrative to something greater that cannot be represented directly.

Yet while Perry's intimation of a particularly dialogic *imitatio Christi* accords with the trends in Christology I have outlined above, her focus on poetry keeps her away from a drama that depends on literal as well as literary bodies. I study plays. Even my work on Spenser looks at the most explicitly theatrical episode of *The Faerie Queene* (the Masque of Cupid) among others. In drama, bodies that recollect the body of Christ open up a more direct, physical mimesis and present their own mysteries in incarnational *imitatio Christi*.

Christology: Word and Flesh

One of the central premises of this study is the natural overlap between Christology (interrogations into the nature of Christ) and literary/performance theory (interrogations into the nature of stories, texts, and performances). As I explore early modern texts, I draw on the work of theologians of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries who have helped to translate between these two discourses. In the words of Graham Ward,

Christology, like narration and mimesis, concerns representation in two interrelated forms. First, it is about constitutional representation -- the standing-in of an official substitute for the actual presence of another. In this case, Jesus acts a double constitutional role...Jesus...is the outward and mediating sign of a God and an author who cannot be represented...But he also represents us -- humankind -- before the Father....Secondly, Christology is about literary representation -- the

³⁶ Nandra Perry, *Imitatio Christi: The Poetics of Piety in Early Modern England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014), 6.

employment of language to represent the nature of that constitutional representation, to inquire into its character. Jesus's life is the performance within which the salvation promised by God is made effective for all; just as the narration of Jesus's life, work and teaching is the performance (re-enacted by each reader/listener) by which the salvation effected by God in Christ is made available to all.³⁷

Many of the stories told about Christianity and literature—particularly theater—in the wake of the Reformation set their central fields as antagonists or substitutes for one another, but this is at least an exaggerated opposition. Art is inextricably intertwined with metaphysics; it takes place in reality's yard sale, wherein plays haggle most loudly as they bargain for the real objects they set onstage. These authors write against a backdrop of tradition surrounding the visual and dramatic representation of Christ, but they also work in a medium that resonates with Christianity's central narrative, "Jesus's life [as] performance." The stage's machinery combines with lingering conventions and the era's famously rich, unstable poetry to enable the exploration of early modern subjectivity. In drawing characters with Christological reference points, these writers invoke the ability of art to resonate with—or even access—a higher plane (an idea with a place in Neoplatonic philosophy as well as icon theology), though this connection is always heavily qualified. They explore the lingering power of sacred images as well as the possibility of portraying the subject through contingent performances and facets, appealing to a deity who is complex, protean, and self-performing.

The Reformation changed the way in which Englishmen approached the material and visual aspects of religion, but these writers inherited a legacy surrounding the imitation of Christ (*imitatio Christi*) as a principle of interrelated worship and art. Indeed, the term *imitatio Christi* belongs to the discourse of art history as well as theology. In the centuries succeeding the

³⁷ Graham Ward, *Barth, Derrida, and the Language of Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 44-45.

Council of Chalcedon, artists as well theologians appealed to the hypostatic union as a promise of the believer's ultimate theosis in heaven. Through their image-making, they sought to artistically bridge Christ's two natures, thereby bringing the viewer closer to God and participating in God's kenosis as he offers himself in a physical form that can be apprehended and followed.³⁸ The preachers of the Reformation turned away from these "graven images," inspiring a sometimes violent denuding of the material landscape of religion in England, both its public altars and private icons.³⁹ However, the enduring popularity of religious emblems and engravings at least qualifies any fantasy of a relentlessly iconoclastic country. Moreover, *imitatio Christi* as a meditative practice also demanded a highly visual engagement, albeit imaginative rather than imaged, with the body of Christ. Both Thomas à Kempis's *De Imitatione Christi* and Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* were early modern bestsellers that crossed sectarian divides. Early modern writers approach the image of the ideal with a peculiar blend of

³⁸ In the west, increasing theological focus on Christ's humanity accompanied an artistic movement towards naturalism and empathetic engagement between the viewer and the represented subject. See Alison Milbank, "Seeing Double: The Crucified Christ in Western Art," in *The Oxford Handbook of Christology*, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). Milbank nuances an often reductive overview of western image-making. She seeks "to complicate this narrative [of increasing naturalism] by arguing that in every period of Western mediaeval art there is some attempt to realize a Cyrilline union of the two natures... Moreover, the moves towards increasing realism of representation can be the catalyst for a truly dynamic communication of idioms, in which the two natures are paradoxically juxtaposed" (Loc. 5754).

³⁹ It would be more exact to say that Reformed preachers advertised their rejection of a particular (one of many) medieval heritage. By no means does the history of Christian iconoclasm begin in the sixteenth century.

iconophilia and iconophobia, a tension that marks their treatment of characters ceremonially or aesthetically idealized: kings and beauties.⁴⁰

Changes also mark embodied performances of Christ after the Reformation. If one trend was the shift of the signs of Christ's body inside the individual, it was accompanied by a movement away from the bodily marking of the individual in the image of Christ. Along with saints and monastic orders, Reformation thinkers largely abandoned a related code of *imitatio Christi* through self-denial, mortification, and spontaneous stigmata. As for drama, the professional playwrights of the English Renaissance move away from the explicitly religious—often in terms of its function as well as its topic—medieval theater, in which Christ and his biblical types were literal roles to be played (and often by members of the community). The sixteenth century saw the control and ultimate suppression of religious drama, but its conventions—allegorical pageants, stock characters, and various strategies for representing the unseen—linger to be found in the secular plays of Shakespeare and Marlowe.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Huston Diehl reads Renaissance drama as an attempt to subvert a lingering, Catholic iconophilia, replacing discredited modes of theater with ones in line with a Protestant agenda. One chapter deals with the misogyny of such plays as *Othello* and other Stuart tragedies as it relates to “the religious dimension of erotic love and the erotic dimension of religion in the seventeenth century. The violence against beautiful and beloved women that is repeatedly enacted in these tragedies may in fact be informed by the iconoclastic violence against beautiful and beloved images that was such a significant, and disruptive, dimension of the English Reformation.” Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Popular Theater in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 158.

⁴¹ Helen Cooper touches on Shakespeare's debt to medieval theater throughout *Shakespeare and the Medieval World*, but I find her most insightful in discussing the interplay between imagination and play as Shakespeare's plays gesture beyond themselves (spatially, temporally, cosmically, mystically) in ways reminiscent of cycle and

Religious drama was outlawed more due to its political volatility in uncertain times than to any associated danger of idolatry, but incarnation is dangerously close to theater. We can point to related unease in a tract associated with the Lollards, a pre-Protestant religious movement, many of whose ideals were adopted in the Reformation. The fourteenth-century *Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge* warns against Passion plays on the grounds that they appropriate true miracle for merely dramatic spectacle.⁴² This concern appears in medieval theater as well as in its detractors. The Chester mystery cycle contains a play of the Antichrist in which the lead impersonates Christ and burlesques his miracles, exposing an anxiety over the actor's presumption even as it is played for laughs.⁴³ While I maintain the enduring ability of Renaissance drama to touch on something sacred, it is true that playwrights could and did seize upon this similarity in order to stage ritual and magic in ways that undermine (Catholic) belief as the credulity afforded good theater. However, in these texts, I find determined iconoclasm more rarely than Bruno Latour's "iconoclash" in which we are left unsure about an ostensibly iconoclastic act: the breaking or exposure of something left unclearly between idol and icon.⁴⁴ We are unsure whether this new mediation is "destructive or constructive": whether it desecrates the icon, shatters the idol, or helps fulfill the human participation necessary to the icon's

morality drama. Helen Cooper, *Shakespeare and the Medieval World* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2010), 72-102.

⁴² "The Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge," in *Medieval Drama: An Anthology*, ed. Greg Walker (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009), 196-200.

⁴³ "Antichrist," in *Chester Cycle*, accessed October 18, 2017, <http://pages.vassar.edu/chestercycle/files/2010/05/Chester-Cycle-Antichrist.pdf>.

⁴⁴ By "exposure," I mean the exposure of ceremony or artifact as a product of human—rather than divine—labor. The idea of "iconoclash" also helps debunk any illusion of perfect authorial control. The writer invokes certain ideas or images at his own risk, and readers/audiences will always bring their own baggage on artistic holiday.

transcendent function.⁴⁵ This uncertainty appears in history plays that dethrone their kings, for example. Do characters damage a transcendent, national connection to God; tear down ineffective and spiritually bankrupt figureheads; or refresh—or revise—the construct of sacred kingship for a new generation?

Theater—itself—is a vexed symbol and medium in early modern English literature. In identifying an out-of-control theater, the antitheatrical tracts of the day have a point. Puritans often employed rhetoric that depicted the theater as a source of moral contagion (as, indeed, it was a source of physical contagion). Later in the period (past the dates of the texts I study here), Reformers might follow William Prynne in denouncing all theater as inherently “Popish,” but earlier attacks focused on the theater’s seductive materiality.⁴⁶ They cautioned against private sin as well as public licentiousness. The theater not only stood as a public model of interiority—both in the conventions of the Renaissance stage and in the evident duality of actors—it might promote hypocrisy in its audience, nourishing their secret passions or even attracting them back towards sensuous and familiar superstitions.⁴⁷ Yet even as the Reformers might fear the lure of acting, there is no escaping the drama inherent to the biblical imperative to “put on Christ” or any number of similarly theatrical instructions (Romans 13:14 KJV). If incarnation is dangerously close to theater, so is daily Christian life. While his meditation on the Passion

⁴⁵ Bruno Latour, "What Is Iconoclasm? Or Is There a World Beyond the Image Wars?" in *Iconoclasm: Beyond the Image Wars in Science, Religion, and Art*, ed. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), 16.

⁴⁶ Leah S. Marcus marks out this trajectory with reference to William Prynne’s *Historiomastix* (1632).

"Antitheatricality: The Theater as Scourge," in *A New Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney and Thomas Warren Hopper (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 188.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 184-87.

largely concerns itself with the performance of humility, Luther dwells elsewhere on charity as the natural performance of God's love as it exceeds and overflows the Christian.⁴⁸ Men and women thus become Christ's representatives, even his impersonations, to one another.

In actual plays (as opposed to the *theatrum mundi*), God's play serves as a model of "true" performance that alternately exposes or endorses stage action. In framing the incarnation as a type of divine theater, the modern theologian Hans von Balthasar distinguishes Christ's theater from man's in that the distance between role and actor is collapsed in "theo-drama."⁴⁹ Revelation and incarnation are sometimes invoked to provide a contrast to false or inadequate performances. This counterpoint highlights failure as well as deceit; characters may be sincere but inept either in their own self-representation or their interpretation of others'. Both *Twelfth Night* and *Cymbeline* gesture towards Christ's appearance as it can (and will) resolve the tangles their casts suffer more perfectly than can be done within the parameters of the world, let alone the Globe. However, while Christ provides an eternal reference point beyond the world's mistakes, his kenosis is his entrance *into* the world that makes such reference possible at all. "Theo-drama" also enters this literature as a model for smaller scale revelation. In what I would characterize as kenotic theater, the play takes our limited perception for granted and demands that we find partial truths—and even parts of ourselves—in performance and relationship. In these texts, role-playing is as often self-discovery as self-disguise. I have already mentioned the reunion of Sebastian and Viola in *Twelfth Night*. When they find one another at the end of the play, both are "disguised" as Cesario (a role created by Viola at the beginning of the play), but

⁴⁸ See Kilcrease on Luther's *Freedom of a Christian*.

⁴⁹ Larry D. Bouchard, *Theater and Integrity: Emptying Selves in Drama, Ethics, and Religion* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011), 141-44.

their performances in this role lead them back to one another and create a new space for them to develop and expand into new families. As Cesario, each finds their eventual mate.

As my use of *Twelfth Night* on both sides of the division implies, these modes— theater as it obscures truth and as it uses its own limitations to reveal something new—can alternate or coexist within the same work. At times, Christological tropes mark a frustrating ambiguity or ambivalence. In *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser gives the twins Amoret and Belphoebe an origin story with clear parallels to the nativity. This is rarely the path to a light comedy, and Amoret suffers accordingly. When the enchanter Busirane kidnaps the bride from the masque performed at her wedding, he tricks the audience into believing this seizure a fictional piece of the performance rather than a real crime that is partly enacted onstage. He brings his victim home but never allows her to leave the theater. Chained and stabbed backstage, her blood helps empower the magical Masque of Cupid. The illusory Amoret is wounded in much the same manner as her backstage counterpart. She appears onstage “like a dreary Spright” and is “Yet freshly bleeding forth her fainting spright” (3.12.19, 20). The relationship of the two tortured Amorets is unclear. They are caught between “Spright” and “spright” and between the homonyms feints and “faint[s].” We are unsure whether we watch an independent spirit, a “Spright,” that responds to the mage’s commands and assumes Amoret’s appearance—as does the spirit that assumes Una’s form at the command of Archimago in the first book—or a second manifestation (or even incarnation) of Amoret’s own spirit, her “spright.” Are we, like the wedding attendees, tempted to discredit a true performance or, like so many of Faerieland’s denizens, seduced into believing an illusion? As the magician pens Amoret’s torture “with [her] liuing blood,” the text of Busirane’s masque further complicates the issue, making it difficult to

differentiate between her body and his play (3.12.31). Her body is the material of Busirane's poetry, and poetry (Spenser's) is the material of her body.

Amoret is only one of the characters whose experience shares concerns with a cosmic narrative about the exchange between Word and Flesh.⁵⁰ The works I have chosen are all highly self-conscious about the way that language can create or obscure identity, can slander or name. They wrestle with the often promiscuous nature of language, and they encounter some of the same problems as do theologians whose Christologies lead them into structuralist and poststructuralist territory. Graham Ward conscripts the vocabulary of Derrida as well as the bible, matching the kenosis hymn's idea of a "name beyond every other name" with Derrida's "transcendental signified."⁵¹ The gracious self-evacuation of the incarnation thus instantiates linguistic *différance*, the mark of the dissemination of Christ/Logos into ordinary, temporal language.⁵² For Ward, kenosis becomes a model for the diachronic operation of language, but—overdetermined as is the phenomena it describes—kenosis has also been used as the ultimate figure of language as a synchronic system. In weakening "the Absolute," it provides for a symbolic polysemy along the lines of Christian friendship.⁵³ The wordplay of the Renaissance is

⁵⁰ A concern about the exchanges between word and flesh could be claimed on behalf of all literature. These texts are both particularly self-conscious and have Christological reference points.

⁵¹ See, for example, Graham Ward, *Barth, Derrida, and the Language of Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁵² While I return to this characteristic of language as I discuss several of the texts in this dissertation, I deal with kenosis more specifically as a paradigm for self-evacuation along Christian deconstructionist lines as I look at the poetry of John Donne. See Megan Kathleen Smith, "Reading It Wrong to Get It Right: Sacramental and Excremental Encounters in Early Modern Poems about Hair Jewelry," *Philological Quarterly* 94, no. 4 (Fall 2015), 353-76.

⁵³ See Gianni Vattimo, *Belief*, trans. Luca D'Isanto and David Webb (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).

sometimes exuberant, sometimes anxious, sometimes both. These texts investigate multivalent truth as well as the limits on communication and possibilities for misdirection. This slippery language is intimately related to the slippery identities of the characters who use it. Characters investigating themselves (and their acquaintances) run into the question of what their names *mean* as they pass through the mouths of others. They also question how their own language use marks them. For example, in *Richard II*, being English is inextricable from speaking English.

As for being King Richard, the protagonist's identity leads us more forcefully into Christological territory as Shakespeare explores the body of the king and its claim to represent a country—both literarily and constitutionally.⁵⁴ However, as dethroned kings discover, the power of this identity depends on the endorsement of those represented. Larry Bouchard reads the breakdown of a different Shakespearean king, Lear, in a way that resurrects the Christological vocabulary but as part of a more general paradigm that uses theater to imagine a new kind of integrity. He looks at certain members of the ensemble surrounding Lear as they take up the burden of performing the king's royal identity by performing themselves in ways that buttress the monarch in his descent. Drawing heavily on Balthasar's theology, Bouchard assigns a "kenotic integrity" to these characters.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ In addition to sacramentally representing the abstract body politic and politically representing his countrymen on the international stage, the king was often thought to act as a sort of "foster father" to his people, standing in for Christ the king. This was a role Calvin increasingly allotted to the temporal king across his career. Randall C. Zachman, "The Christology of John Calvin," in *The Oxford Handbook of Christology*, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), Loc 7498.

⁵⁵ Balthasar explores the activity of kenosis as the central drama of trinitarian theology (from which Christology is, to Balthasar, inextricable), the continual self-emptying and exchange between the aspects of the triune god. This is

The theatrical motif of playing a part with and for others and the scriptural/philosophical motif of kenosis, or of selves emptying into the forms of others, for others, suggest a new conceptual metaphor for reenvisioning integrity. *The gap between what is aligned or juxtaposed can become space into which selves empty and receive the emptying of others.* [sic]⁵⁶

For Bouchard, kenotic integrity marks characters who participate in a model of ethical intersubjectivity that shadows (purposefully or not) the intra-subjectivity of the triune god. The self-conscious operations of Renaissance theater, therefore, can provide for characters not to be viewed as dishonest but rather as relational and dynamic. Against the charge of theatrical hypocrisy, we can pose a generous fluidity. This new integrity can be seen in moments of self-discovery or expansion (such as those I posited for Viola or Sebastian), but we should also find it in a character's willingness to serve as entertainment or support outside of personal considerations. At these moments, the self-negation of kenosis is the ideal of a total friendship, in which selfhood is re-produced in every interaction.⁵⁷

one of the major concepts in his five-volume opus, initially published in the seventies. Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 1-5 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988).

⁵⁶ Bouchard, 21.

⁵⁷ This theme—the production of subjectivity through friendship—is also prevalent in post-/modern Christology that does not have a specifically literary stake. For Slavoj Žižek, the Crucifixion's evacuation is an event that defines the ideal subject as one in whom “the very structure of sacrifice...sublates itself, giving birth to a new subject no longer rooted in a particular substance, redeemed of all particular links (the ‘Holy Spirit’).” Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute* (London: Verso, 2001), 158.

Laurence ten Kate's “econokenosis” depicts a more ordinary subjectivity. He uses Derrida to navigate between trends in recent Christology, which emphasize either an infinite divine distance or the proximity instantiated by Christ's incarnation. He underscores a continual movement between these poles as the everyday subject interacts with both the triune god and other subjects: “The ‘self’ is produced, time and again, by the economy, the interplay with the other, and can no longer be thought of as primordial substance.” Laurens Ten Kate,

Christology: Him and Her

The other major intersection of this dissertation is between Christology and gender as related spaces of identity negotiation. The Christian bible sets up woman as a less perfect reflection and subject of God:

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God....For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man (1 Corinthians 11:3-8 KJV).

The particularities of Jesus's body help identify him as truly, fully human, but those particularities also serve to align him with certain bodies and to distinguish him from others.⁵⁸ In the words of Elizabeth Johnson, Christ's maleness, therefore, has been "lifted up and made essential for his Christic function and identity, thus blocking women precisely because of the female sex from participating in the fullness of their Christian identity as images of Christ."⁵⁹

"Econokenosis: Three Meanings of Kenosis in Modern Thought," in *Letting Go: Rethinking Kenosis*, ed. Onno Zijlstra (Bern: Peter Lang, 2002), 292.

⁵⁸ Michele Schumacher makes the useful distinction between theologians who treat Christ's maleness as a fundamental, ontological problem and those who look at it as a practical problem, critiquing the way in which that maleness has been used. The history of the church shows a very partial fidelity to Christ's human specifics—indeed, sexism and racism have often combined to fetishize his masculinity while whitewashing his Semitism. See "Feminist Christologies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Christology*, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), Loc 10587.

⁵⁹ Elizabeth Johnson, "Redeeming the Name of Christ-Christology," in Catherine LaCugna (ed.), *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993), 119. A male image of Christ has also strengthened the patristic identification of women with sin and buttressed the institutional exclusion of women from the clergy—an exclusion only recently tackled and only by certain sects. Rosemary Ruether

However, conceptualizations of the divine cannot be reduced to images—particularly in an iconoclastic religious climate—nor is there a singular, hyper-masculine image of Christ to which all others refer. More ordinary Christian subjects are defined by (or at least related to) an ideal subject that is both expressly masculine and ultimately dynamic and mysterious, sometimes in ways that supersede or complicate gender. Feminist theologians of the last half century have consciously confronted this tangle. They have alternately found the central male figure of Christianity as obstacle to or opportunity for a revised Christology that better accommodates the women of the ecclesiastical body, arguing whether to make a room of one’s own in the father’s house, to leave altogether, or to tear down all non-load-bearing walls. This debate is built into the Christological questions it addresses, overarching questions about divine nature that inform both the male and the female characters that appear in this dissertation as much as do the specific answers at which the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries arrive. The foundational paradoxes of Christianity lead to symbolic and ethical economies that shape this literature such that, even where texts buttress the patriarchal status quo, they trouble it with irony and complexity. For example, the most emphatically sexist of the works I study, *Cymbeline*, is also the strangest; its tone is impossible to pin down, making any ideological endorsements equally obscure.

While the relationship between women and the *imago Dei* is the site of a complex set of negotiations in medieval art and practice, in official (ecclesiastical) theology, it is not. Augustine of Hippo had resolved the matter to general satisfaction: women both were and were not created

provides an overview of the connection between Christology and the denigration of women as sinful in *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993): 165-72.

in the image of God.⁶⁰ With reference to the above passage from Corinthians, he explains, “Woman does not possess the image of God in herself, but only when taken together with the man who is her head, so that the whole substance is one image...But as far as the man is concerned, he is by himself alone the image of God.”⁶¹ This basic assumption draws on the double creation story of Genesis (in which God creates humanity in Genesis 1 and then does it again, forming Eve as a helpmate out of Adam’s rib, in Genesis 2) as well as the image of Christ as the male head of the church. The Reformation only reinforces this idea of woman’s value, anchoring it still more strongly in sexual complementarity. On the one hand, woman is spiritually

⁶⁰ See E. Ann Matter, "The Undebated Debate: Gender and the Image of God in Medieval Theology," in *Gender in Debate from the Early Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, ed. Thelma S. Fenster and Clare A. Lees, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 41-55.

⁶¹ Augustine of Hippo, *On the Trinity* c.417. in CHURCH FATHERS: On the Trinity, Book XII (St. Augustine), Section 10. Accessed October 06, 2017. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/130112.htm>.

Augustine’s gender theory in *On the Trinity* is more complex than this one, often quoted excerpt suggests. His distinction between male and female participation in the image of god contributes to a problematic and hierarchical gender dualism, but his is not the dualism of many church fathers, which symbolically align woman with mankind’s animal nature and man with his rational nature. For Augustine, beast is represented in Genesis’s account of Eden by the serpent. Woman instead represents a kind of lower-order rationality. He further insists that baptism reforms all in the image of Christ, presenting female head-covering as a continuation of symbolic logic rather than a judgment passed on the Christian woman: “Why, then, is the man on that account not bound to cover his head, because he is the image and glory of God, while the woman is bound to do so, because she is the glory of the man; as though the woman were not renewed in the spirit of her mind, which spirit is renewed to the knowledge of God after the image of Him who created him? But because she differs from the man in bodily sex, it was possible rightly to represent under her bodily covering that part of the reason which is diverted to the government of temporal things; so that the image of God may remain on that side of the mind of man on which it cleaves to the beholding or the consulting of the eternal reasons of things; and this, it is clear, not men only, but also women have” (Section 12).

equal within a companionate marriage; on the other, she is subservient to the male head, the spiritual and temporal authority in analogy with God and king. As what Susan Amussen calls this “double message” makes its way into conduct books, they betray their tension in “vague formulations [that] were troubling in a society that valued clear lines of authority.”⁶² Within the household, man should make his wife “joint governor,” his treatment leaving her “no just cause to complain of her subjection.”⁶³ Woman moves from equal authority to properly subjugated dependent within a matter of lines.

Protestant emphasis on complementarity contributed to a broader trend of increasingly demarcated, separate spheres. Jean Howard and Phyllis Rackin have looked at the representation of women in Shakespeare’s histories, which shifts from the beginning of the first tetralogy to the end of the second. They note “the constriction of women’s roles [that] represents a movement into modernity, the division of labor and the cultural restrictions that accompanied the production of the household as a private place, separated from the public arenas of economic and political endeavor.”⁶⁴ My work on the histories focuses on male kings, but it is worth here highlighting the political disempowerment of the female characters in *Richard II*, women reduced to emotional appeals and who enter into national affairs only as the household does. In counterpoint, in Marlowe’s *Edward II*, Isabella attempts to reclaim her role as royal consort. She helps to overthrow her husband and set up Mortimer as regent only after Edward has functionally

⁶² Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 42.

⁶³ William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622) qtd. in Amussen, 44-45.

⁶⁴ Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (London: Routledge, 1997), 139.

replaced her with Gaveston, but the play demonizes her and ends with her son, Edward III, rejecting and disciplining his mother as he comes into power.

The queen who served as king, i.e., as the high governor and sacramental totem of the nation, plays a larger role in this dissertation. We cannot forget that the era's dominant figure was exception rather than rule. Elizabeth I is a historical figure marked by contradictions, and those contradictions inform the ways in which her subjects conceptualize themselves politically and spiritually. She was woman and king, yet her very status as the highest temporal power helped to secure her as an exception, doing nothing—officially—to elevate the status of more ordinary women. Even with regard to her own position, there is some tension between theory and practice. The theory of the king's two bodies, personal and eternal/kingly, draws on well-established political theology; however, it was first articulated as a legal distinction under Elizabeth's reign, codifying her Christomimetic status. But Edmund Plowden (and other contemporary jurists) drew on this principle in order to thwart Elizabeth's personal will (primarily her desire to redistribute lands already bestowed by her predecessors) while affirming their loyalty to the crown.⁶⁵ The queen's sacramentality was endorsed as official, legal fact but only so that her opponents could conceptually divorce the woman from the Christ-like king.

Elizabeth's construction as the Virgin Queen was also fraught as a form of idealization that could help legitimate her as a religious figure but posed practical problems. The literary critic Philippa Berry looks at this figuration's Neoplatonic and Petrarchan underpinnings as the ideological framework within which male writers might conceive themselves. As "an object of sublimated desire," Elizabeth might help writers "to elaborate a new concept of masculine

⁶⁵ Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), 16-20.

wholeness and self-sufficiency through or across her idealized figure,” but her very real authority over these men as the head of government and church posed an obstacle to this process.⁶⁶ Elizabeth’s chastity, instead of an “empty space” upon which men could project themselves, could instead become “the sign of her own mysterious powerfulness.”⁶⁷ Berry most often appeals to representations of Elizabeth as a Diana or a Cynthia, but Elizabeth’s court employed specifically Christian imagery as well. Scholars have debated the degree to which she appropriated the cult of the Virgin, i.e., the Catholic focus on Mary as a mediating figure, and Elizabeth and her courtiers would sometimes lean into a natural association between the two. However, the dangerously Catholic overtones of Marian imagery must be handled with care. At least in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, it is embraced only in so far as it helps legitimize Elizabeth’s assumption of the king’s Christic mantle (where it serves to counter the issues posed by her own maternal lineage).⁶⁸ Elizabeth’s announced virginity also introduces the potential for national recusancy on more practical grounds. On the one hand, Elizabeth’s chastity is also her sovereignty; her solitary occupation of the English throne affirms the independence of England and its Church. On the other, her personal independence threatens as well as secures her nation, breeding anxiety over the succession and the future of an officially Anglican England. In Spenser’s *Books of Chastity and Friendship*, the interplay between chastity and personal sovereignty is officially endorsed, but the picture of Belphoebe (a proxy for Elizabeth) opens the character to charges of tyranny and reckless disregard for her country’s future. Spenser portrays a

⁶⁶ Philippa Berry, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen* (London: Routledge, 1989), 1, 2.

⁶⁷ Berry, 7.

⁶⁸ It would be more correct to say that, in the sections of *The Faerie Queene* I cover, Marian imagery is only embraced as it confers political/religious legitimacy. Spenser’s work as a whole tends to defeat categorical claims.

damaging form of idealization that interferes with true friendship and Christliness. Belpheobe's investment in her own allegory (i.e., her own identification with virginial chastity) both comes into tension with a particular, direct allusion to Christ and leads the character into failures of charity and forgiveness.

If chastity is related to self-government, I am also interested in the self-sacrifice of lovers. After all, Christ is martyr as well as king. Both men and women can be fools for love in early modern literature (and life, always), and these texts are as ambivalent towards sexual desire as towards Elizabeth's chastity. The neoplatonic/Petrarchan literary culture influencing the figuration of Elizabeth also conferred a sacred aura on other objects of desire; love directed towards a virtuous beloved could lead a man towards the ultimate good informing the temporal object. Yet, even when properly directed, desire in these texts frequently becomes erotic abjection and stasis, a state that is determinedly less sanguine. In the late medieval turn towards Christ's humanity, and the forms of *imitatio Christi* it inspired, the encouraged engagement with the human god was, itself, passionate; a person sought a devotional rapture through which one could be assimilated into *the* ideal. This kind of mystic, devotional kenosis was available to both women and men, and it drew on a gender-complicated deity. Jesus could be, at once, the virile husband of the nun and a maternal, feminine presence.⁶⁹ This *imago Dei* focused a medieval Christian model of subjectivity defined through an eroticized self-abandonment to God, and kenosis as an ethic/erotic of self-negation lingers in early modern English culture, complicating a more autonomous ideal.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Caroline Walker Bynum traces late medieval female practices of worship and a feminized *imago dei* in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

⁷⁰ For example, Cynthia Marshall makes use of the Christian ethic of humility—as well as humoralism, poetic convention, and cultural practices aimed at a collective, emotional experience—as she outlines an “aesthetic of

However, this model was increasingly distrusted in a Reformed England. Religious erotic discourse both provides a material focus in tension with the increasingly internalized drama of Protestantism and threatens the boundaries of an emerging liberal subject.⁷¹ These dangers are more easily seen when the love is improperly directed (by the era's norms). In plays whose kings submit to evil queens or sodomitical consorts, erotic abjection is an irresponsible abdication, compromising the government of both self and nation. Yet the representation of heteronormative desire through tropes of sacrifice is also troubling, generally indicating a subject whose very identity has been compromised. *Twelfth Night's* Orsino determines to kill his eventual wife Viola (thinking her Cesario and a male rival for Olivia's affections). He identifies her as a sacrificial lamb, and she embraces her martyrdom, but the episode jars the audience and clashes with previous speeches. Her sacrifice comes across as a misbegotten bit of servility and a betrayal of integrity. The biblical allusion that casts Viola's meekness as Christ-like may even cause us to question—as still other feminist theologians have—the value of religiously prescribed humility for the already disenfranchised.⁷²

As I have briefly noted, the genre of romance is particularly indebted to passion and, more particularly, to passionate women. According to Helen Cooper, “Spontaneous and active female desire, rightly directed, becomes a driving force in the larger providential scheme, the

shattering or self-negation” that “constituted a counterforce to the nascent ethos of individualism.” Cynthia Marshall, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 2.

⁷¹ See Debora Kuller Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice, and Subjectivity*, *The New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 167-91.

⁷² This is the central question investigated by the theologians in the anthology: Daphne Hampson, ed. *Swallowing a Fishbone?: Feminist Theologians Debate Christianity*. London: SPCK, 1996.

secular scripture, that most strikingly differentiates the romance from contiguous genres such as epic or history.”⁷³ The genealogical destiny to which the right couple contributes may be fundamentally patrilineal, but these romances make that destiny contingent on female will. The genre tends to brood over its empowerment of women, leading to many stories that put female fidelity on trial and/or victimize even chaste heroines. The tested women’s vulnerability to misrepresentation sometimes puts their very lives at stake.⁷⁴ In *Cymbeline*, Innogen’s husband tries her fidelity, believes the subsequent slander, and orders her (ultimately thwarted) execution. Even before the slander, Innogen’s desire must be contained. Woman and heir apparent, her love destabilizes her country, and the end of the play sees her safely relegated to a feminine, domestic sphere. While female desire moves narratives and their societies forward, when wrongly directed and/or excessive, it can stall a narrative, stranding its characters in a Bower of Bliss. Romances demand women with a strong sense of self, demonstrated through their freely chosen romantic attachments, and yet also fear women whose love leads them to be overly willful, derailing proper progress.

Both Innogen and Viola spend large portions of their time onstage in drag. (Viola spends nearly the entire play in men’s clothing.) The texts I study are populated by women in drag and “effeminate” kings, characters that undermine an easy gender binary. Even *The Faerie Queene*’s middle two books are largely dominated by the transvestite figure of Britomart, the female knight of chastity (though I focus on the episodes surrounding the self-evidently female twins). The in-between state of these characters is socially unsustainable, and the texts eventually discard (or promise to discard) the costume. (In tragedy, it is the queerly gendered character who

⁷³ Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*, Loc 3301.

⁷⁴ The trope is common enough that Helen Cooper devotes an entire chapter to “Women on Trial,” investigating attacks on female chastity/fidelity.

is discarded). However, particularly as the characters' gender-crossing intersects with Christian typology, these characters also potentially appeal to an ideal subject that is more gender-neutral (or, perhaps, gender-complicated) and fluid. This is particularly true of Viola, whose liminality belongs to the in-between state of a determined process but also serves to mark her in the image of Christ as he occupies the thresholds of humanity. This alternate ideal is more in line with the deity embraced by some feminist theologians.⁷⁵ Eleanor McLaughlin actually invokes the image of the transvestite to characterize the incarnate God as being outside the traditional binary: "Jesus who was and is both 'historical fact' and symbol, a man, is like a 'cross-dresser,' one not 'caught' by the categories."⁷⁶

In addition, early modern plays often tease the possibility of same-sex desire as they play with gender. For example, the transvestite heroine frequently disrupts (temporarily) the marriage market by attracting other women. This possibility opens these plays to a productive conversation with theologians such as Pamela Young who work to liberate non-heteronormative

⁷⁵ Radical feminist theologians—which is to say feminists engaged in re-conceiving the *radix*, or root, of gender as the precondition for gender hierarchy—attack the presumptions of sexual determinism and of a gender binary as part of their critique of the Chalcedonian doctrine. Elisabeth Fiorenza aims to deconstruct this formula that "attributes [Christ's] divinity to the 'eternal begetting of the Father' and his humanity to the temporal birth by the Virgin mother of G*d [sic]...[This set of associations] introduces not only gender dualism but also the dualism between church and world, religion and nature, heaven and earth." *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology* (New York: Continuum, 1995), 22. Moving beyond "patriarchy," she invents the word "kyriarchy," a term that connects patriarchy to other oppressive hierarchies (such as those based in race or class), and claims that the Chalcedonian doctrine "inscribes into Christian orthodox self-understanding and identity the 'mysterious economy' of kyriarchal relations and imperial domination" (Ibid.).

⁷⁶ Eleanor McLaughlin, "Feminist Christologies: Re-Dressing the Tradition," in *Reconstructing the Christ Symbol: Essays in Feminist Christology*, ed. Maryanne Stevens (Mawah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1993), 141.

desire within a Christian framework. Young sees the deconstruction of Christ's gender as crucial to the deconstruction of a social order that "[insists] on sexual complementarity, which disadvantages women, who must be joined to men in order to gain the privileges of maleness, and which disallows all sexual relationships that are not part of the patriarchal, heterosexual, potentially procreative marriage."⁷⁷ The Renaissance stage may move through queer relationships as the material of comedy or tragedy, but it does not dismiss them or the role they play in characters' development. Like they do gender and patriarchy, these texts may naturalize heteronormativity and even tie it to divine will, but that will does not create characters who are static and simple. Essentialization as eschatology is problematic, but its deferral can also liberate the immediate, social moment. In other words, the assurance of a preordained and normative end leaves writers and characters freer to wander on their way there.

These texts reveal a Christological construction of gender in which woman is continually asked to occupy a double position with respect to the image of Christ. She is and is not included in a dual-natured divine governor, but woman's liminality also influences the image of man. The instability of an Innogen infects a Posthumus. Christ-related gendering also can queer easy categories. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Marlowe and Shakespeare's martyred kings; their position is typed masculine while their vulnerability is typed feminine—both along Christological lines. Characters can move between as well as straddle categories, weakening these boundaries. Against the backdrop of a predetermined future, a more relational immediate identity can emerge. In Illyria, for example, gender-crossing moments serve as an opportunity for

⁷⁷ Pamela Young, "Neither Male nor Female: Christology beyond Dimorphism," in *From Logos to Christos: Essays on Christology in Honour of Joanne McWilliam*, ed. Ellen M. Leonard and Kate Merriman, vol. 34, Editions SR (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2010), 185. Young goes so far as to deny Christ's "maleness," insisting on it as a mere "instrument of control" in a Christian patriarchy (Ibid.).

performance and participation in an ideal that is dynamic and communal.⁷⁸ Above all, gender identity never exists apart from a fundamentally mysterious subjectivity. A sometimes carnivalesque energy informs early modern subjectivity as a process, as the discovery of a faceted self. This exploration helps break down idealizing codes where they interfere with the practice of community, deconstructing overly rigid dualisms and allegories where they threaten the integrity of the Christ-like corpses—nation, marriage, church—that they were designed to support.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ This dissertation occasionally brushes up against an ecofeminist version of kenotic selfhood that it doesn't have time to treat completely. This (de)construction of the self extends the kenotic ethic beyond humanity. Catherine Keller claims, "The ecology of the suckling infant as well as that of the nurturant environment, which begins for us with our own bodies, suggest that an adequate social analysis cannot restrict its understanding of self-construction to human cultural relations. Or perhaps it must expand the notion of "culture" beyond its mind-numbing opposition to "nature," to include all nonhuman cultures on which human ones depend. Such an expansion stretches the implicit social analysis into social ontology." Catherine Keller, "Seeking and Sucking: On Relation and Essence in Feminist Theology," in *Horizons in Feminist Theology: Identity, Tradition, and Norms*, ed. Rebecca S. Chopp and Sheila Greeve Davaney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 59-60.

As for the literature covered by this dissertation, these post-humanist concerns are most relevant to studies of Spenser's Faerie Queene. A post-humanist construction of the individual—though not in specifically Christological or ecofeminist terms—is the subject of many of the essays in a recent special issue of *Spenser Studies*: Ayesha Ramachandran and Melissa E. Sanchez, eds, "Spenser and 'the Human,'" Special Issue, *Spenser Studies* 30 (2015). See particularly the articles by Steven Swarbrick and Tiffany Jo Werth.

⁷⁹ The centrality of process and community to selfhood engages these texts with the ideals of Mary Fulkerson. Fulkerson takes a very literary approach to feminist Christology and its implications for personal subjectivity. She supports the poststructuralist deconstruction of "explanatory grids" but argues that this necessary "destabilization is insufficient for communicative and social-change capacities" (113). She looks to storytelling as a way to narrate ourselves beyond these distinctions at the level of collective as well as personal history. She calls for the

Chapter Summaries

My chapters each engage with the ways that these works characterize their casts and the ways that the characters identify—and gender—themselves. To this end, they examine sacrificial topoi, Christological super-bodies (composites in which characters participate), and kenotic processes of revelation, relationship, and change. Certain questions guide me:

- How predetermined is the subject? How known? How essentialist is the text's construction of gender? To what extent do ultimate determinations influence immediate performance?
- What Christic corporations—nation, marriage, family, local community—determine the subject and how? Where do relationships of power pervert the subject's relationship with self/God/other people?
- What constitutes appropriate, ethical kenosis in these texts? What are holistic evacuations, or sacrifices, that serve to enrich the participants? How might this ethic generate a poetic, i.e., a philosophy regarding the reading/writing/dramatizing of either the self or other people?

These questions lead me to identify a range of possibilities as works variously locate and define their characters with respect to different images of Christ. I look at the male kings of Shakespeare's *Richard II* and Marlowe's *Edward II*, the families of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and *Cymbeline*, and the twins (a composite allegory of chastity) in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.

replacement of classification with narrative, letting stories of the self create more complex relationships with “the Other” (Ibid.). Mary McClintock Fulkerson, "Contesting the Gendered Subject: A Feminist Account of the Imago Dei," in *Horizons in Feminist Theology: Identity, Tradition, and Norms*, ed. Rebecca S. Chopp and Sheila Greeve Davaney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997).

Throughout, I identify the Christian expansion of some characters and contraction or sacrifice of others.

I begin with the histories because they reconsider the sacred king and the nation he represents in ways that reappear in subsequent chapters. The gender roles and political theology therein set up the problems posed by *Cymbeline's* female heir and *The Faerie Queene's* monarch(s). As for the personal subjectivities of Edward II and Richard II, we will again encounter their characteristics; Edward's hunger shares qualities with that of Orsino, and Richard's interior microcosm sets up Shakespeare's later explorations of his characters through meditative soliloquys. I then move into the romances of *Twelfth Night* and *Cymbeline*. The more fantastic terrain of the romance produces different Christological possibilities. In *Twelfth Night*, the accompanying wonder contributes to a version of community that is radically different from any we find in the histories, and Viola comes closest to its relational ideal. In *Cymbeline*, it instead serves to reanimate constructs discarded in *Richard II*. Each of these chapters pairs one text (*Richard II*, *Twelfth Night*) more focused on the expansion or complication of the individual with one (*Edward II*, *Cymbeline*) invested in the reestablishment of clear boundaries and lines of authority through an appeal to Christological dualisms: God(king)-man and man-woman.

My final chapter makes two related turns; it adds allegorical to Christological encoding and moves into poetry. The expansion enables me to consider the kenotic diffusion of the subject, to look at the way in which a more supple system (Spenser's allegory) sprawls through contingencies. Spenser touches on established Christomimetic bodies but always moves, asymptotically, towards a composite of the ideal subject; he demands that we think in terms of mosaics rather than simple pairs. The shift into poetry also allows me to take a step back, to look at the narrated deployment of theater (in the House of Busirane), particularly where Spenser's

characters stage idealization and abstraction. My focus on the twins, Belphoebe and Amoret—the allegories of, respectively, virginal and marital chastity—further allows me to see the tension between the Christological corporations of nation and marriage that occurs as Belphoebe’s (and Elizabeth’s) gender breaks down the analogy between the two.

Through intensely local readings, two claims emerge: (1) kenosis—or rather the self-evacuations of a flexible subject who positions themselves within various relationships—redeems the classifications of Christology, enabling community rather than caste; (2) in English Renaissance literature, this principle is as much a literary one as a theological one, the subject being (re)formulated along poetic and theatrical lines.

“This teeming womb of royal kings”: *Sacred and Sacramental Kingship in Edward II and Richard II*

My first chapter examines two history plays, Marlowe’s *Edward II* and Shakespeare’s *Richard II*. I look at the two bodies of the king as this construct imagines an ideal governor and his country. These bodies—the mortal individual and the present incarnation of an eternal political body—help cast the king as a Christic figure, an association drawn on by both eponymous monarchs. Characters in each play suggest that the human king has betrayed his role and the patrilineal structure that supports it. They portray this failure, in part, as a failure of masculinity. The perception of disjunction superficially endorses the picture of a (failed) hyper-masculine, warrior ideal. However, Marlowe and Shakespeare complicate this simplistic picture. The kings’ unstable gender identities confirm their reflection in the Christic mirror even as they challenge it. The characters’ weakness is human as well as feminine, and their depositions move

them closer to a recognizable image of Christ.⁸⁰ Edward's love for Gaveston (his passion)—as well as their joint investment in aesthetics—sets him against the martial masculinity of his peers. But when this love is iconized as part of a Passion, his murder-as-sodomy creates a tableau that at once invokes traditional sacred imagery and establishes a shocking sense of desecration. His very emasculation becomes an icon effectively wielded by his son within the patriarchal structure. *Richard II*, on the other hand, fleshes out this structure. The York family drama highlights the insufficiency of father-son bonds outside of a supporting family that gives them purpose and emotional meaning and reminds us that a king must possess maternal as well as paternal qualities. In addition, after Richard's de-coronation, which is packed with direct comparisons between Richard and the betrayed Christ (many but not all made by Richard himself), a newly self-aware Richard reminds the audience overhearing his soliloquy that people contain multitudes. The character overwhelms easy binaries; in his last scene, his humanity becomes representative, allowing different classes as well as genders to find themselves in him.

These playwrights write their kings as inseparable from their Englands, characterizing them as subjects through and within the countries they (ostensibly) rule. The depositions they dramatize reflect a collective—though incomplete—disenchantment with the sacramental trappings of kingship. This is not to say that these trappings are stripped of all their power. Instead, the imagination of the king as a presence that materially touches the ideal Kings behind him—both the eternal body of the state and the immortal body of Christ—becomes a more self-

⁸⁰ We should note that the connection between femininity and humanity still contributes to the Christological dualism that opposes divinity/masculinity to humanity/femininity. The concept of the gendered individual may be complicated without disturbing this more theoretical opposition. Moreover the complication of the king's masculinity does not license direct female participation in political matters in either play—except in so far as those matters are inseparable from the domestic relationships of royal families.

conscious figuration. It is a powerful idea but one which does not necessarily structure real experience, and its emotional power is more available to the politician than to the saint. These plays explore the ideology of kingship in its ongoing power, its internal contradictions, and its ability to support national communities. It is in the last of these that their representations most diverge. *Edward II* exposes the brutality of the foundational sacrifices that lay behind the politico-religious symbolic economy and questions the intrinsic value of any ideal outside its utility. The play unlinks the sacred king from his sacramental function; only the former survives as the king defines a country without spiritually or emotionally uniting its members. *Richard II* instead re-characterizes and relocates the king's sacramental power in a way that resonates with certain early modern Christological trends. Shakespeare anchors an English community in its individual and collective identification with the all-too-human king.

In *Edward II*, the iconic power of the king draws solely on the king's status as a sacred outsider, one outside ordinary experience; his extreme violation inspires a pity born of horror but never establishes an empathy rooted in a shared, human capacity for suffering. For his final jailers, the icon of humbled power inspires only the imitation of power, torture rather than charity. When any of the characters employ Christian language of friendship and self-sacrifice, they do so to cloak either self-service or impotence. In his violation, Edward becomes a sacred reference point that helps his son, his chroniclers, and his playwright to articulate a coherent country and nationality. The common iconography behind this definition is inseparable from a common history of violence. If it helps to animate any communal feeling, it is only a sense of shared complicity therein—without an accompanying, productive sense of responsibility. In addition, while a thread of xenophobia runs throughout the play, it never finds a matching national pride. Instead, it, too, reinforces our understanding of England as an internally riven

country defined only against/through outsiders, foreign threats and sacred kings, and populated by quotidian antichrists.

Shakespeare, on the other hand, provides for a national community as well as a national body. Our final vision of Richard plays upon our perception of a common humanity rather than an extraordinary violation; his plight compels empathy rather than pure horror. We connect to him as similarly weak mortals but more importantly as similarly complex individuals. The king must move beyond his flawed identification of his two bodies, in which he attributes to his personal body a mystical control over the body of the nation. By the final act, he has become aware of the contradictions inherent to kingship. Rather than claiming magical power over external circumstance, he experiences an interiority that may be at odds with the outside world. Beyond this, he discovers a new multiplicity, personal rather than kingly, expressing this faceted subjectivity in his only soliloquy (among many long monologues) of the play. Our ability to connect to this insistently human king establishes common feeling, helping to animate a national community that endures even in times of conflict. This community shares a national *home*, anchored in its land, its history, and its language. Even as the play's violence establishes common trauma—one rehearsed with every performance of the history play—this trauma is contained within nostalgia that connects Englishmen through the collective loss of a golden past.

Both Marlowe's play and Shakespeare's tetralogy (of which *Richard II* is part) return their kingdoms to expressly masculine kings, Edward III and Henry V. In addition, *Henry V's* imperialism begs similar questions to those demanded by the brutality in *Edward II*, and I end this chapter with a brief look at this later play. Henry comes closest to some early modern ideal; he emphasizes his humanity, manliness, dependence on God, and hard work. As a king, he relies more on rhetoric than on emblems of power, and his implicit Christology seizes upon the model

of the human Christ, who bears much for the sake of others. Instead of sacrificial topoi, we get speeches about duty, glory, and brotherly love. In *Edward II*, Christ's image casts the king as ethically, spiritually, and legally alien; the imposition of this image is torture and serves to justify the regime and social status quo. In Shakespeare's tetralogy, Christ facilitates both inner dialogue and outer empathy, but these negotiations ultimately enable a language employed to whitewash conquest. Both playwrights highlight the performativity of gender, yet in doing so they also underscore the importance of appropriate gender performance—outside of the sacrificed Christ—to the spiritual health of individuals and nations.

"Marks of wonder": Divine Birthmarks and Imitatio Christi in Twelfth Night and Cymbeline

My second chapter turns to *Twelfth Night* and *Cymbeline*. The machinery of the romance drives both of these comedies. Romance separates and reunites characters through mischance and mistake; it tortures them with the perceived deaths of loved ones only to reward them with the apparent miracle of resurrection. The plays' denouements even invoke the same trope as each brings disguised siblings together, establishing their identities through a remembered birthmark. Instead of (or, in *Cymbeline*, in addition to) the corporate body of the nation, these romance/comedies explore the family, and within these families, the Christic mantle is distributed more broadly, beyond a singular protagonist. This mantle touches the two crossdressing heroines, Viola and Innogen, and—where it intersects with erotic abjection—each play expresses its discomfort with a false (idolatrous even) imitation of Christ. However, the ideal subjects in which each play ultimately invests are different. *Twelfth Night* and *Cymbeline* allow their respective heroines different types of participation in the divine image and use it to draw different communities. *Twelfth Night* incorporates much (though not all) of its cast into a fellowship united in a gender-neutral kindness, a word I use in its sense of charity as well as

familial likeness. *Cymbeline*, on the other hand, is history as well as romance. It finally appeals to a recovered masculine authority that provides hierarchy as well as authentication for the members of a national family.

In *Twelfth Night*, the final act's revelations resolve the problems caused by a symbolic economy grown promiscuous in its doubled bodies and meanings. The play's omnipresent twinning provides for the play's miscommunications as well as its final communion. After four-and-a-half acts that tangle the characters together through misunderstanding and deception, the cast finally gathers to unravel their mistakes. When they do, Viola is twice framed through allusion to Christ—at the height of error and again at the moment of discovery. First, Orsino, thinking that Cesario (Viola's disguise) has wed Olivia, vows to kill this "lamb" as a sacrifice to spite Olivia for her rejection. The play immediately contrasts this mistake and victimization with truth and surplus; one Cesario becomes two. Viola's twin Sebastian, also in the guise of Cesario and Olivia's actual husband, appears. The twins' mutual resurrection to one another inspires several characters to employ Christological vocabulary distributing the divine body across the twins. When Viola then defers her embrace of Sebastian—awaiting her restoration to her own garments and appearance before she will hug her brother—this *Noli me tangere* moment recalls Christ's first self-revelation after his death (John 20:17). Viola's enduring disguise and enthusiastic role-playing connect her to Christ as a kind of divine actor. However, she is not set up as a perfect Christic analog so much as a participant in a gender-neutral and community-focused ideal. The play celebrates empathetic role-playing in which the self continually evolves through its relationships with others without losing its moral or emotional center. In this celebration, the Illyrian community's failures are also important, and the ending refuses to

integrate either Malvolio or Feste, differentiating gracious mimesis from imitations that are either self-serving or reflexive.

Cymbeline is less comfortable with multiple personas and multiple truths; indeed, the play approaches its own theatrical medium with a combination of awe and suspicion common to the late romances, making it one of Shakespeare's more self-conscious, baroque plays. The world of *Cymbeline* is compromised by a weak king, and the characters search for authority—epistemic as well as political—as they stumble through plots driven by lies and subversion. Where *Twelfth Night* works to restore (or newly give) its characters to one another, *Cymbeline* also works to restore characters who have lost their names (in the sense of reputation as well as heritage) to their proper identities. There are two main plots in the play.⁸¹ One revolves around Innogen's marriage and the trial of her fidelity. The other concerns the future of Britain. Innogen's missing brothers. Both plots are resolved in the restoration of the properly headed corporate body named in Ephesians—"For the husband is the wife's head, even as Christ is the head of the Church" (Ephesians 5:23 GNV)—and analogically appropriated to the body of king and kingdom in early modern political theory. *Cymbeline* proves itself no more comfortable with an erotic kenosis—a lover's devotion to the extent of pseudo-martyrdom—than is *Twelfth Night*, and the couple's excesses must be curbed. As importantly, gender hierarchy must be restored. Innogen is contained by the bodies of her husband and brothers. The final act focuses on a newly enlightened husband and a "resurrected" male royal lineage, restoring each to Christic type.

The romantic trope of the birthmark plays a role in each of the two plays. In *Twelfth Night*, the birthmark belongs to the twins' remembered father and allows the two (visually

⁸¹ It is more than usually difficult to divide these plots into an A and a B plot. Innogen floats between the two, and while the marriage plot may occupy more stage time (at least in the first half of the play), the political plot gives the play its title (despite the scarcity of the eponymous character's appearances onstage).

identical) siblings to invoke a common past and heritage in order to confirm their relationship. Their father's birthmark helps to establish them as brethren whose communion straddles times and places. The body in which they participate is masculine but emphasized in its ability more to group members of both sexes than to rank them. The trope plays a much larger role in *Cymbeline*, as Innogen and her brother share a birthmark particular to their royal house. Iachimo cites his knowledge of Innogen's birthmark in order to prove (falsely) her calumny to Posthumus. Belarius cites Guiderius's in order to prove (truly) his identity as the lost heir. The same mark makes the sister vulnerable, testifying to her potential for transgression, and confirms the brother's authority. Posthumus does not have a physical birthmark, but his strange visionary encounter with Jupiter includes a parade of his noble lineage that functions as a sort of spiritual birthmark. It reassures Posthumus of his own paternity, both earthly (his status as Leonati) and divine (his status as elect). Posthumus's vision combines with the siblings' physical stamp to form a picture of an explicitly male ideal subject who emerges in his journey towards self-knowledge. There is room for the female subject—in fact, she is genealogically and socially necessary—but she must be properly subject *to* man. In *Cymbeline*, the cast's birthmarks mark characters as links in genealogical chains, chains in which the female body is a point of vulnerability that must be brought under the control of a male head.

The very titles of these plays set them up to explore Christic bodies. Each temporally invokes the incarnation: *Twelfth Night* through the festive calendar (Christmas and the Epiphany) and *Cymbeline* through the historical calendar (the king being best known for reigning at the time of Christ's birth). *Twelfth Night* continually hovers between celebration and lamentation, between brothers lost and found. Its carnivalesque gaiety serves as an almost desperate defense in a world frozen by winter, and its tonal ambivalence helps to draw us into the performance's

imagined occasion and to render its final community both precarious and essential. As *Cymbeline* ends, the play typologically promises both British and Christian dominion as a new day dawns. Poised at this intersection of Christian and English history, *Cymbeline* explores the possibilities within a magical patriarchy. The play uses the machinery of the romance to (re)enchant the body of the English king, repairing some of the fractures developed in Shakespeare's earlier histories (such as *Richard II*). Yet, whereas *Twelfth Night's* tonal ambivalence is bittersweet, *Cymbeline* tends towards the baroque. The play boldly exposes its own tensions. *Cymbeline* wears its seams on the outside, leaving us with an animated Franken-monarch and a questionably ideal male subject. If its sexism is more heavy-handed, so is its irony.

"Perfect hole": Erasure and Perfection in The Faerie Queene

My third chapter moves away from the Renaissance stage, though it finds its way back in one of the episodes I examine. In the Masque of Cupid, Spenser touches on the dramatic genre of the court; the framing narrative even nears known dramatizations. The scene underscores its own literariness while also appealing to one's sense of bodily presence within the theater. Spenser heightens our awareness of literary mediation while insisting on the literature's connection to real, physical bodies. This chapter directs itself to that literary mediation. I turn towards the conceptual problems that the female Elizabeth I poses to the imagination of the ruler as an ideal subject, but I also push into the dangers of idealizing literary modes more generally. Spenser's chivalric fantasy assumes a gender hierarchy we now reject as archaic, but his interrogation of the challenges posed by ("imagined") female autonomy and by ("real") female vulnerability provide an enduringly relevant and ethical model for the way in which we read/write others and ourselves. He directs his *Faerie Queene* towards the establishment of the ideal subject, both as a collective portrait and as guidelines or inspiration for its readers. In this project, his allegorical

mode poses dangers as well as opportunities, often failing to respect the interiority of others within a fantasy of wholeness.

This chapter draws on the dual bodies of rulers, twins, and spouses. I focus my discussion on the episodes surrounding the sisters, Belphoebe and Amoret, in the Books of Chastity and Friendship. These two virtues shape the ideal subject (and the ideal ruler) as Spenser explores identities established at the borders of the individual, both as those borders should be chastely policed and overcome in friendship. Amoret and Belphoebe represent the two kinds of female chastity, marital and virginal. As Spenser relates their development under the auspices of, respectively, Venus and Diana, he provides them with a sacred origin story (a virgin birth) that draws a Christic mantle about their shoulders. While both characters shadow Elizabeth, who is prismatically refracted throughout the text, Spenser casts the virginal Belphoebe as his monarch's most explicit proxy. There is no earthly path beyond a gender hierarchy that is posited as simple fact in sixteenth-century England, and the text explores the construction of the ideal woman as a poetic and social problem that becomes political when overlaid upon the body of an actual ruler. Spenser's paean to Elizabeth reveals problems within the queen's self-construction as the Virgin Queen, the uneasy conjunction of Petrarchan and Christological discourses.

Belphoebe's idealization holds only so long as it is relegated to a mythic past; it falters as the narrative makes her relevant to its present, pulling her from the life of an unseen recluse to interact with other characters. Instead of erotic abjection, the Christomimetic queen performs autonomous chastity, but this idealized Virgin Queen slips towards tyranny as the third book gives way to the fourth and the characters encounter the more social world of the second half of the text. Belphoebe's behavior exposes her defining chastity as problematically extreme in the aftermath of her defeat of Lust, in which she rescues Amoret and Timias. Spenser reminds his

readers of the price Elizabeth's kingdom pays for her virginity, i.e., the lack of a clear line of succession, and casts Belphoebe's rejection of Timias—and Elizabeth's of Sir Walter Raleigh after the courtiers secret marriage—as both cruel and misdirected, an inappropriate extension of Elizabeth's self-allegoresis as the Virgin Queen that thwarts true Christomimesis.

The eponymous Faerie Queene is left safely abstract. The ideal woman/ruler remains in the distance, the never-achieved object of Arthur's quest. The nearest the reader gets to her is in Arthur's recounted dream, from which he awakes to discover a queen-shaped impression in the ground beside him. Indeed, as a character, she serves mainly to mark Arthur with his exalted destiny as the once and future king, and it is in this male character that Spenser comes closest to a full exemplar, a truly ideal man and nearly divine monarch.⁸² Arthur's interactions with the twins help to underscore their weaknesses. If Belphoebe's allegorical baggage helps lead her astray, Arthur is positioned to redress the consequences not only as a man but also as a more flexible ideal. Spenser frequently introduces Arthur into the narrative in order to solve problems unanswerable within the limits of a single virtue or an overly static code. In treating Amoret and Timias, Arthur addresses their physical and psychic wounds. It is not only leadership that he models but also proper hermeneutics in a Protestant culture that prizes responsive reading.

Amoret, on the other hand, serves to expose the queen's defining autonomy as fictitious. Even the power of a female ruler fails to obviate her vulnerability at the hands—and pens—of men, but the implications of Amoret's misadventures extend beyond queens or even women

⁸² While the poem endlessly awaits the union between Gloriana (the Faerie Queene and supreme ruler of Faerieland) and Arthur (the true king), it plays out a version of this grand romance through the internal proxies of the knights of chastity and justice. We should note that Britomart and Artegall's story ends with Britomart becoming queen only to redress a gender-inverted hierarchy and cede power to her husband (at which point, she quietly disappears from the poem).

(though women are marked as particularly vulnerable). *The Faerie Queene* warns of the potential violence of its own allegorical mode when applied to other people. If her sister is problematically intransigent, Amoret is all too available to multiple aggressors. Repeatedly wounded even by her would-be rescuers, Amoret is hurt by the phallic object of the pen as well that of the sword. As the figure of marital chastity, she is dedicated to this role from birth, and her adventures increasingly cast this dedication as a brutal sacrifice. She is repeatedly seized and made to serve Petrarchan fantasy and (Reformed) Christian allegory. This process requires elision as well as exposure, neglect as well as violence. The text occasionally approaches the possibility of Amoret as a more rounded character, a not-always-ideal subject, but immediately returns her to the status of an allegorical prop. In addition, the imaginative act of idealization can interfere with real engagement and healing. Other characters—even the narrator—want to erase Amoret’s needs and experiences. Their intentions are often good; they simply wish to cure her of past ordeals. Before leaving the House of Busirane—the site of her forced participation in the Masque of Cupid—she is made “perfect hole” (3.12.38). The pun indicates both the closure of her wound and the restoration of her allegorical status. However, the story doubts both the perfection it establishes and the value of that kind of uncomplicated, static perfection. When Arthur comes upon a newly injured Amoret (after her encounter with Lust), his treatment of the character is distinct as treatment that addresses her trauma rather than claims to undo it. Yet even he ultimately forgets Amoret who drifts away while he—and we—are busy with other things.

Amoret’s evacuation is not the dynamic kenosis of a realized subject. A more holistic model of kenosis is to be found in Spenser’s poetry, itself, which changes and evolves. The text continually hits poetic impasses, catastrophes that cause it to dart in a new direction, sans apology. Spenser underlines the importance of active care with respect to both people and

words/the Word. Ideals are important but dangerous in *The Faerie Queene*; they occasion abuse as well as respect, idolatry as well as contemplation. The basic structure of the poet's project supposes the necessity of approaching an ideal subject through aspects that are themselves fragmented; the reader finds himself in the position of one of Spenser's knights: afforded brief glimpses of and moments of satisfaction before getting back to work. The difference between the text's greatest ideals, the Faerie Queene and Arthur, is not only a matter of gender. The woman's abstraction and distance remove her as a potential threat, but they also represent an important ultimate destination whose reflection on the present moment is not always clear. And so Spenser turns to Arthur as a local best subject: one who is intellectually thoughtful, attentive to the needs of others, and always a work in process. In terms of Christological engagement, meditation on God and self is important labor but labor that should never get in the way of one's engagement with the world. In striving towards an ideal, we must not forget the *imitatio* to be found in immediate, ethical action—mundane though it may be.

To recapitulate, I argue the coexistence of two major modes of Christology in these texts: one that uses related idealizations to constrain subjects within authorized, fundamentally dualist models and one that uses its mysteries to open subjects to new possibilities and relationships. In the chapters that follow, my theological investments are evenly divided between then and now—a distinction that does *not* perfectly align with that between the aforementioned modes—as I use Christology to frame these texts, both where there is explicit engagement with Christ and where the vocabulary of Christology helps articulate ideas in, or movements of, the text. Early modern Christology enters into this dissertation as it relates to (1) Reformation investment in Christ as human and as *logos*, and the related encouragement to use Christology as a tool for self-

reflection, (2) sacramental conceptions of the state and of marriage, which are predicated upon Christological distinctions, and (3) lingering or challenged notions, patristic conceptualizations of Christ's gender and medieval ideas about an artistic *imitatio Christi*. Post-/modern Christology comes into play partly as it introduces objections to outdated modes of Christology, drawing attention to their insistence on Christ's maleness and their connection to sometimes solipsistic reflexivity. More recent theologians have also introduced self-consciously feminist and literary alternatives: queered, multivalent genders and relational subjectivities that are less in Christ's image than in Christ's refusal of the image's potential limitations: delineation and stasis.

These modes of Christology influence different models of subjectivity. The first is predicated upon an ideal patriarch, an image that stands behind the figures of king and husband and requires the support of martyr and wife. The patriarch becomes the totem for a system in which oppression masquerades as humility and generosity. Under this disguise, people sacrifice others to support their self-images, reducing them to props and types. At its most pernicious, this system of value is internalized by the props, compromising the relationship of martyrs with themselves and with God. The other model—or, perhaps better, poetic—of subjectivity is more truly kenotic. Humility and generosity continually reshape a subject who locates Christian mystery in others as well as in the self. This approach to subjectivity can best be seen at moments of catastrophe rather than martyrdom. Where martyrdom in these texts ultimately serves status quo politico-social orders, catastrophe, in its etymological root, comes as a sudden turn. These turns enable new expression and relationship, bringing characters together as they share in one another's play and in one another's trauma. The chosen texts negotiate between these two models, each arriving at its own compromise.

CHAPTER ONE

“THIS TEEMING WOMB OF ROYAL KINGS”: SACRED AND SACRAMENTAL KINGSHIP IN *EDWARD II* AND *RICHARD II*

For [the king] has, or takes, the land in his natural Body, yet to this natural Body is conjoined his Body politic, which contains his royal Estate and Dignity; and the Body politic includes the Body natural, but the Body natural is the lesser, and with this the Body politic is consolidated. So that he has a Body natural, adorned and invested with the Estate and Dignity royal; and he has not a body natural distinct and divided by itself from the Office and Dignity royal, but a Body natural and a Body politic together indivisible; and these two Bodies are incorporated in one Person, and make one Body and not divers, that is the Body corporate in the Body natural, *et e contra* the Body natural in the Body corporate. So that the Body natural, by this conjunction of the Body politic to it, (which Body politic contains the Office, Government, and Majesty royal) is magnified, and by the said Consolidation hath in it the Body politic.⁸³

In addition to the broader theme of subjectivity framed through Christology, this chapter focuses in on the role that Christology, particularly the political theology of the Christomimetic king, plays in forming a national identity. Both Christopher Marlowe’s *Edward II* and William Shakespeare’s *Richard II*, plays that first appeared within a couple years of one another, dramatize the deposition of a king and interrogate the very identity of a king in the upheaval. They draw on a Christocentric philosophy of kingship in which the king presumes to shadow the divine monarch on earth as a dual-natured being as well as a surrogate governor. The idea of the king’s two bodies was first formalized as a legal precedent in Edmund Plowden’s *Reports*, quoted above, but this new articulation emerged from a longstanding tradition—one which Ernst Kantorowicz traces in *The King’s Two Bodies*, the study to which this chapter is most indebted. Regardless of their particular knowledge of Plowden’s legal opinions, Marlowe and Shakespeare would have been familiar with the larger idea of the king’s dual incarnation as, one, the private

⁸³ Edmund Plowden, *Commentaries or Reports* (London, 1816), 213. Qtd on Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 9.

individual and, two, the body politic and divine representative. As their royal protagonists try to move between or fuse the two bodies of the king, their failures not only reinforce the bodies' separateness—orthodox in the political theology—but also expose that philosophy's disenchantment. Marlowe and Shakespeare void the metaphysical force that validates and empowers the Christomimetic king, revealing the contradictions within this philosophy, and reframe the construct's power within the internal (psychological) and external (political) theaters of the world.

In *Edward II*, the Christomimetic king and his state are the objects of iconoclastic self-consciousness; these ideal bodies are merely ideas, ones caught up in morally bankrupt political machinery at that. *Richard II* is the site of more ambivalent “iconoclash,” to borrow Bruno Latour's word. “King” and “state” are self-consciously deployed, but in a way that does not cancel their potential transcendence, i.e., their status as sacramental bodies that can shape and unite the nation's subjects. Instead, *Richard II* (and the rest of its tetralogy) refocuses on active, imaginative participation in ideals that are themselves developing in humanist directions. The English subject—for whom the king is prototypical—understands himself through his human connections and achievements as an Englishman (or Englishwoman) and through personal, dialogic engagement with God, which is endorsed within a national church.

This chapter further explores the threats to patrilineage and gender essentialism that Edward and Richard present and the way that these threats shape our understanding of these characters as people. Both Edward and Richard fail as national patriarchs. Neither conscientiously governs his realm, but they are most immediately punished for their crimes against the hereditary order that justifies their position. For all their interest in the theater, they also fail as royal thespians in the kind of drama outlined by Kantorowicz; they compromise

conventional scripts and betray the masculinity attached to their roles.⁸⁴ The plays oppose their self-conscious dramatics to effective, martial action, particularly as those performances are deviant or histrionic. Richard's determination to "sit upon the ground / And tell sad stories of the death of kings" is not the masterful self-staging of his young relative, the eventual Henry V (3.2.156). Yet Richard's—and Edward's—struggles touch upon a frustration that extends beyond kings. The plays present all identities as performative and partial. If the protagonists are insufficient in the role of king, that role is also insufficient to encompass them as subjects—as is any given subject position. These subject positions, which reframe the men through different contexts and relationships, are never enough for some essential but elusive being, leaving the individual with a hunger for resolution that only ends with their death.

In *Edward II*, Marlowe places absence at the heart of both the subject and the universe. This emptiness is not the ethical or spiritual openness of kenosis; it is self-focused need. In a play shaped by a bleak assessment of human nature, insatiable characters continually gravitate towards power over others and totalizing relationships in the hope of some, elusive fulfillment. Its king lusts for an all-encompassing identity as well as for Gaveston. However, it is not Edward's lover but his torture and death that finally integrates and completes him. After deposing the king, the cast increasingly scripts their king according to the mythology of the Christomimetic king, investing in Edward's body as sacred while stripping him of practical power. Edward disappears. The king remains. The play finally sacrifices him, fully evacuating his body and staging his corpse. Marlowe draws a stronger parallel between Edward and Christ as martyrs than he ever did as rulers. It mutes the complications that attend living people and

⁸⁴ In this chapter, constraints of time and space force me to characterize performances only according to their self-consciousness and aptness. As such, I neglect much potential nuance that the study of internally invoked modes of classical drama—particularly in *Edward II*—might provide.

subsumes even Edward's sexual deviance into an image of the Passion, an image of violation that sets up Edward III's recovery of his father's country. This icon draws its affective power from the degradation of the more-than-human and denies its characters any empathetic connection through the suffering of the merely human. *Edward II* attaches its characters' pity for Edward to a sense of desecration; to the extent that they emotionally invest in the king, they do so by designating him as fundamentally other. Marlowe exposes the brutality of the sacrifices that enable religious ideology and social order, making the king's body serve only a political purpose—not a spiritual or moral one. In Edward's violated body, the play figures a Christian country without Christian community. The martyred king serves the anthropological function of the sacred but fails to achieve sacramental status, never asserting divine presence or inspiring fellowship.

Richard II is less unsettling than *Edward II*; it does not force the audience to contend with graphic horrors that alienate the human body even as they depend on its fragility. The play, instead, demands that we empathize with the human person of the king, showing—and, perhaps, contributing towards—the preservation of a national community as well as a national body even in times of strife. The play explores the fractures of its world and of its eponymous subject, but the resulting distance never occasions the extreme interpretive violence that it does in *Edward II*. Richard's death puts a period on certain conflicts without claiming to finally resolve them. (For one thing, Shakespeare has three more plays to write.) The disjunctions between and within people are sources of pain but also opportunities to build imaginative and empathetic bridges.

When Richard loses (or discovers long lost) a material/sacramental identity as Christic representative, he struggles to locate himself within an unfixed symbolic economy, i.e., to secure his identity when both he and the constructs through which identity is created—such as regime,

gender, and language—are fluid and available to multiple (sometimes incompatible) interpretations. However, in his fall, he becomes representative of his people in a more mundane sense of the word, as paradigmatic member rather than totem of the collective. In demystifying the ideal king, Shakespeare refocuses us on the real, human one. In the final act, Richard's relationship to Christ displays a more ordinary (and more Protestant) form of Christomimesis, a dynamic engagement with the Word as a mirror that enables self-reflection. Moreover, our final portrait of Richard shows us a man who—even though he may no longer encompass his subjects in a sacramental unity—contains Whitman-esque multitudes. His faceted subjectivity partly enables through complexity what he has lost in singularity; to some extent he contains and is contained by other people. As he shuffles perspectives in his final scene, we are offered opportunities to relate to the man in his many states, and, failing that, in the simple fact of his turbulence.

To this human connection, Shakespeare adds a collective sense of loss, a longing for England/Eden that invests Englishmen in the national myth. However, Shakespeare links this national sensibility to an imperialist drive to expand and integrate the English community. At the end of the second tetralogy, Henry V determines to carve a new “Eden” with his sword. *Richard II* sets up the world of *Henry V*, and the end of this chapter will touch on this later play's re-scripting of England as an eagerly expanding family. These family dynamics serve as the tetralogy's final word on gender. Richard as a man is gender-complicated, combining characteristics typed both male and female. However, while gender roles are thus more self-conscious, they are no less important. They may not fully express a more complex inner world, they are integral to the stability of the English nation as a patrilineal aristocracy and as a nuclear family, writ large.

The protagonists of *Richard II* and *Edward II* lose their purchase as objects of faith, no longer accepted—even by themselves—as god-like authorities and quasi-ideal subjects in the image of Christ the King. Marlowe re-consecrates his king, leaving him a sacred but hollow artifact; Shakespeare instead marks the man as the center of a specifically English communion. *Edward II* plays on established conventions of Christian art to depict a mimetic drive in which we model ourselves on Christ's tormentors rather than Christ, sacrificing others in order to satisfy ourselves and re-settle our societies. Shakespeare's characters display more complex relationships: to God, to one another, and to themselves. While that complexity allows for Christian virtue and community, these victories are frequently ambiguous and inextricable from other failures.

Ernst Kantorowicz and *The King's Two Bodies*

Before moving into my extended analyses of the plays, I need to better establish the concept of the king's two bodies that they invoke. *Richard II*, particularly, is a text whose critical history is largely defined by the influence of a single piece. In the 1950s, Ernst Kantorowicz wrote *The King's Two Bodies*, a book that has become a touchstone in scholarship concerning medieval and early modern political theology.⁸⁵ Kantorowicz devotes his second chapter to

⁸⁵ Ernst Kantorowicz was born to a German-Jewish family in 1895. His first book was a biography of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, which reviewers criticized for its panegyric tone. He remained in Germany until shortly after Kristallnacht. *The King's Two Bodies* grew out of Kantorowicz's lifelong interest in political mysticism, which he romanticized in his youth but saw grow toxic in the years leading up to World War Two. With this history, the book has generated a fair amount of its own secondary criticism, having its own ideological investments critiqued or mined for contemporary relevance. Victoria Kahn, "Political Theology and Fiction in *The King's Two Bodies*," *Representations* 106, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 77-101, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/rep.2009.106.1.77?origin=JSTOR-pdf>; David Norbrook, "The Emperor's New

Richard II, calling it “the tragedy of the King’s Two Bodies” and crediting Shakespeare’s canon with the endurance of the political metaphor past its disappearance from modern constitutional thought.⁸⁶ I should make clear that I appeal to Kantorowicz as he traces a political imagination that is relevant to the plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare and has shaped a particular critical conversation—not as the final word on either (various) medieval constructions of kingship or even Christomimesis within these texts. While these plays explore Christomimetic kingship, they relate it to other conceptions of Christ’s word and image. Moreover, Kantorowicz’s ultimate investment is in the state, which is shaped by a logical, juridical understanding of Christomimetic duality; mine is in the king as a subject among subjects and the types of collectivity that are achieved either through their idiosyncratic human characters or at their expense.

First, however, let me use Kantorowicz as he helps us gain purchase on the distinction between the “body politic, which contains his royal Estate and Dignity” and the “Body natural.” He looks to a medieval theologian, dubbed the Norman Anonymous in order to detail the construction of the king as a twinned being fully in the image of Christ, which is an admittedly extreme formulation of Christ-centered kingship but one that helps to elucidate a more generally presumed duality. Unlike the kings of the Old Testament,

the kings of the New Covenant no longer would appear as the ‘foreshadowers’ of Christ, but rather as the ‘shadows,’ the imitators of Christ. The Christian ruler became the *christomimetes*—literally the ‘actor’ or ‘impersonator’ of Christ—who on the terrestrial stage presented the living image of the two-natured God, even with regard to the two unconfused natures....[However,] Christ was King and *Christus* by his very nature, whereas his deputy on earth was king and *christus* by grace only....In other words, the king *becomes* ‘deified’ for a brief

Body? *Richard II*, Ernst Kantorowicz, and the Politics of Shakespeare Criticism," *Textual Practice* 10, no. 2 (1996): 329-57, doi:10.1080/09502369608582250.

⁸⁶ Kantorowicz, 26

span by virtue of grace, whereas the celestial King is God by nature eternally.⁸⁷

As Kantorowicz moves forward in time, he explores the expansion of this idea of the king as personally two-fold in the image—and by the grace—of god into the larger theory of the king’s two bodies. The “body politic” is not simply a function or even mantle assumed by the king. Again finding its base in Christological terms, it extends beyond the individual to encompass the corporation he represents as head, an idea that migrates from the religious to the secular realm. Kantorowicz’s words, perhaps unconsciously, reflect the “paradise lost” tone of his exemplary text, *Richard II*:

The noble concept of the *corpus mysticum*, after having lost much of its transcendental meaning and having been politicized and, in many respects, secularized by the Church itself, easily fell prey to the world of thought of statesmen, jurists, and scholars who were developing new ideologies for the nascent territorial and secular states.⁸⁸

The *corpus mysticum*, Christ’s body as the body of the church, becomes a model for the state’s amalgam of people, territory, and institutions. As such, the crown comes to represent more than (but certainly includes) the office of the king; it becomes identified with the perpetual sovereignty of the realm.

Terms such as “body politic” and “crown” were not employed with replicable, legal precision in medieval theology—and are not in this chapter. While Plowden’s reports are representative of a desire to develop citable distinctions, even early modern legal theory still attests to a tangled web of associations.⁸⁹ Indeed, separately defining the two bodies is

⁸⁷ Ibid., 47

⁸⁸ Ibid., 207

⁸⁹ The legal case giving rise to this passage concerned the Duchy of Lancaster, bestowed by Edward VI. Elizabeth I wished to reallocate the Duchy, and her lawyers argued that Edward was still a minor at the time of the grant.

impossible when the “Body corporate” both includes and invests the “Body natural.” The “royal Estate and Dignity” belonging to the body politic remain equally elusive. When the legal historian Gaines Post goes to define a theory of the royal “estate,” he casually sticks the latter inside the former: “the concept...connot[es] the public authority, crown, power, *dignity*, majesty and glory of the king, an estate supported by ‘manors, rents, revenues’” (my emphasis).⁹⁰ For Post, the heart of the estate is “power” supported by “wealth,” but his compilation of abstracts leaves us with a historically faithful, still vague apprehension of the body’s dominion.⁹¹ The royal Dignity, on the other hand, helps ground the *christomimetes* in a practical, moral dimension. In elucidating the term, Kantorowicz draws on the historical—rather than literary—Richard II as well as Edward II. Both were charged with having “blemished and prejudiced the Crown and the royal Dignity and the heirs Kings of England.”⁹² The Dignity “referred chiefly to the singularity of the royal office, to the sovereignty vested in the king by the people, and resting individually in the king alone.”⁹³ While “sovereignty” situates us in symbolic territory, the legal precedent surrounding the two central kings of this chapter (among others) underscores the Dignity’s inseparability from personal conduct. Royal “Dignity” extends beyond our ordinary use of the word “dignity,” but it incorporates both personal affect and moral conduct.

Plowden and others argued that such limitations applied only to Edward in his body natural and not in his body politic, making the grant valid.

⁹⁰ Gaines Post, “*Status Regis: Lestat Du Roi* in the Statute of York,” in *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought: Public Law and the State 1100-1322* (Clark, NJ: Lawbook Exchange, 2006), 371. The phrase “manors, rents, revenues” comes from *Richard II* (4.1.212).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Kantorowicz, 383.

⁹³ *Ibid.* Lest this is too neat a line between the two, Kantorowicz continues to note that “the Dignity too was of a public, and not merely private, nature.”

Dignity as royal singularity is at the heart of my reading of *Edward II*. When his opponents subject the king to pain and various *indignities*, they work to alienate him from the body of the king; however, their treatment actually reaffirms his singularity, layering the exceptional body of the king with other exceptional bodies. Edward's torture signals his tormentors' mental separation from his humanity. His oppressors straddle antithetical senses of their work as desecration and as casual violence against the subhuman.⁹⁴ An investigation of Christomimesis within *Edward II* allows us to properly direct Marlowe's iconoclasm to the idols of state and man as well as to the religion whose images they borrow. Instead of the authoritative Christomimetic king, Marlowe shows the production of authority, the national symbology that is enabled by Edward's torture and death. He makes us consider the cost of the body's politic's unity. In doing so, his play resonates with the concern that motivated *The King's Two Bodies's* etiology of romantic nationalism more than with its politically conservative tone. (Kantorowicz began his seminal work as a Jewish German expatriate in the years after the Holocaust.) Nor

⁹⁴ I here draw on the work of Giorgio Agamben who uses Kantorowicz's connection between sovereignty and the king's two bodies but turns his focus away from the perpetuity of the body politic and towards the surplus life encoded in the king's figure and converted into power. Agamben relates the body of the king to *homo sacer* (a figure in Roman law who is banned and may be killed by anyone), investigating the "status of the living body that seems no longer to belong to the world of the living." Edward floats between the two, his body both the embodiment of sovereignty and the corpus against which the body politic defines itself and upon whom any member can exert his will. The *homo sacer* expressly cannot be sacrificed in religious ceremony, which would otherwise distinguish Edward—in his Passion—from this figure, but Agamben relates the figure's special status to that of a consecrated but still living devotee. Both are defined through their double exclusion from the world of the deceased and "the profane and the religious forms of life." Giorgio Agamben, "Sovereign Body and Sacred Body," in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 97, 99.

does “man” or “human ingenuity” arise as a new totem in *Edward II* (claims sometimes made for other of Marlowe’s plays). Marlowe imagines a story that looks like it will be the kenotic narrative but is then cancelled, voided of any salvific content that might redeem its violence. In this bleak play, the actions of men are both derivative and cruel.

While my interest in *Edward II* revolves around the character’s singularity—both his desire for a fully coherent, singular identity, mentioned earlier, and his outsider status—my examination of *Richard II* instead focuses on multiplicity and humanity. After looking at preexisting fractures within the construct of sacred kingship, I aim to revise Kantorowicz’s argument about the play through greater attention to the final act. Kantorowicz follows Richard’s changing self-understanding and the ultimate collapse of Richard’s identification with the two bodies of the king. Expanding our understanding of the role that Christology plays in Shakespeare’s second tetralogy helps establish *Richard II* as a site of “iconoclasm” in which the idea of the Christomimetic king is reformulated for a triumphal, Protestant England. The central story is not, as Kantorowicz claims, about the transference of the eternal body that moves between kings. Shakespeare, instead, turns toward the humanity of kings: their frailty, complexity, and own religious experience. Shakespeare opens them to our empathy and develops fellow feeling between Englishmen—a fellowship altogether absent in the bleaker *Edward II*.

Edward II

The world, even the cosmos, of *Edward II* is the bleakest of those that my chapters explore. Marlowe’s own religious beliefs have been the subject of much speculation. Charged with atheism a year before his death and monitored thereafter, he was clearly a subversive figure, but it is difficult to reconcile the atheism of the 1590s with that of today and to convict or praise him accordingly. On the basis of his work, I am less comfortable evaluating his stance on the

Christian God (at best, distant) than on the Christian man. Marlowe's approach to the practice of religious virtue is cynical; his protagonists slaughter cities, murder nuns, and make literal bargains with the devil. John Parker consequently looks at the playwright's canon with an eye to characters modeled with an eye to "scriptural personages that medieval exegetes had always taken as types of Antichrist":

In medieval drama demonic antics such as those of Marlowe's heroes always promised at some future point their eschatological reversal...and were consequently, for an audience, a source of enormous pleasure...Marlowe's drama capitalizes on this ancient impulse, but with a new result, such that his carnage gives rise less to any hope of its ending in apocalypse, or its eternalization in hell, than to open admiration of its sinister and semiautonomous beauty.⁹⁵

But what of Edward II, a character who lacks both the grandeur of a Marlovian Antichrist and the virtue of a Christian hero but who is tortured into Marlowe's most recognizably biblical image?

As I look at models of subjectivity and of kingship in *Edward II* (and the relationship of both/either to a Christ-like ideal), I begin with the first half of the play, before Gaveston's execution and Edward's capture. As Edward invests everything in his relationship with Gaveston, we see hints of a subject whose frustrations resemble those identified in more modern psychoanalytic models. Edward appears dissatisfied with eternally partial identities and looks to Gaveston in the fantasy that his lover can finally unify him. In doing so, he exposes the theatricality and insufficiency of the labels applied to him—even those of king and man. I then look at the back half of the play, joining others' experience of Edward as king to Edward's

⁹⁵ John Parker, *The Aesthetics of Antichrist: From Christian Drama to Christopher Marlowe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), xi. Parker focuses on the Antichrist types to be found in "Barabbas for Barabas, of course, and Simon Magus for Faustus. Tamburlaine presents a special case, connected as he is to Paul, a former persecutor, who according to tradition began as an Antichrist but ended a Christian."

experience of himself. I note the endurance of both the ideology and the designated identity of the king even after his deposition. In fact, Mortimer's attempts to sever the king's two bodies backfire. The torture of the king alienates him from his humanity, not his crown, and the surrounding Passion imagery re-inscribes his body as an analog of Christ's. His execution finally turns his corpse into a more effective totem than was his living body, representing the English sovereignty threatened in Mortimer's regency but ultimately reclaimed by Edward's son.

Yet Edward's body, the body of the king, is finally presented as anthropologically sacred without being religiously sacramental. He is designated as fundamentally *other*, but the play's investment in this ideology is self-conscious and disenchanted, representing Edward as an object of nebulous superstition that serves as a politically useful symbol but fails to inspire either fellowship or ethical action. The relationship of *Edward II's* subjects to Christ's ideal subjectivity is, at best, ironic. There is no moral exemplar amid Marlowe's inherently selfish humanity, and the members of his cast are always ready to sacrifice others for their own gain. Indeed, the active imitation the play shows is not of Christ but of his torturers.

Edward's romantic passion

The central characters of *Edward II* are hungry. When we encounter a "self" in the play, when we discover a person's inner workings, we do so through the compounds of "self-abandon" and "self-interest." Edward's hot passion crashes against the cold ambition of his court. This self-abandon is not kenotic, not self-sacrifice or spiritual availability. It rarely looks like abandon at all and seems no less motivated by a type of self-interest than do the Machiavellian tactics of the lead rebel, Mortimer. Characters continually define themselves through their roles and relationships—Edward no less than Mortimer—but these definitions are never enough. Even Edward, who holds the highest position in the land, is dissatisfied.

Inhabiting the king's two bodies, he is both more and less than king, and when he looks to his relationship with Gaveston to provide an elusive unity, it only opens up further fractures. As he pursues a kind of negative theology of selfhood, questing for an all-encompassing identity to which all else is asymptotic, Edward exposes kingship and its constituent masculinity as mere roles uncertainly attached to their actors.⁹⁶ He fails to unite the ideal of kingship with its practice and reveals the inadequacy of king to Edward and of King Edward II to his nation.

Edward's relationship with Gaveston alienates him from his court. Stephen Orgel has identified Edward and Gaveston as "the only dramatic instance of a homosexual relationship presented in the terms in which the culture formally conceived it – as antisocial, seditious, ultimately disastrous."⁹⁷ The play begins with Gaveston's return to England, where he has been recalled by Edward in a move that sets the king against his brother, his aristocratic peers, his wife, and his father's decree (Edward I having originally banished Gaveston). As the king loads him with positions, Edward's favorite happily usurps the traditional responsibilities and privileges of the rest of the cast, and it is the sociopolitical nature of their relationship that ultimately classifies it as subversive more than the insinuation of certain sexual acts. During a brief rapprochement between Edward and his lords, Mortimer Senior, the father of the rebel

⁹⁶ William B. Kelly characterizes contrasting models of subjectivity in *Edward II*, aligning Edward with the complex and mobile "mapping" of the subject set forth by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and his barons with arboreal "tracings" that figure the subject according to essentialist, hierarchical coordinates. I take Kelly's point that conflicting ideas of the subject are at play, but Edward—more than any other character—longs for a singular overarching identity to which all characteristics can be subordinated. William B. Kelly, "Mapping Subjects in Marlowe's *Edward II*," *South Atlantic Review* 63, no. 1 (Winter 1998).

⁹⁷ Stephen Orgel, "Nobody's Perfect: Or Why Did the English Stage Take Boys for Women?" in *Displacing Homophobia: Gay Male Perspectives in Literature and Culture*, ed. Ronald R. Butters, John M. Clum, and Michael Moon (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 25.

leader, urges his son to let the king and Gaveston be (so long as they remain generous), for “The mightiest kings have had their minions” (4.392).⁹⁸ He lists as examples: “Alexander,” “Hercules,” “Achilles” as well as the wise men “Tully” and “Socrates” (4.393-98).

The king suffers not when he takes a male lover but when he too thoroughly becomes one, compromising his power and identity as king. The play hedges in its judgment of Edward’s sexuality. As David Stymeist notes, this permissive attitude, which neither sensationalizes the Tudor crime nor necessarily attaches it to effeminacy, “is agonistically counterbalanced” by antisodomitical language and the problems that accompany a submissive king.⁹⁹ Earlier in this same scene, Gaveston takes Isabella’s seat beside the king’s throne. To the nobles’ resulting indignation, Edward responds, “It is our pleasure; we will have it so” (4.9). Edward abdicates his responsibility to others but not his power over them. While the king’s frequent submissiveness compromises his power, so does this expression of dominance. He undermines himself by tangling the royal “we” with the intensely personal “I” and royal “pleasure,” or decree, with sexual “pleasure.” After the nobles force Edward to banish Gaveston, the rivals complain to one another:

ISABELLA. Villain, ‘tis thou that robb’st me of my lord.
GAVESTON. Madam, ‘tis you that rob me of my lord. (4.160-61)

Isabella’s “lord,” her husband and king, should not be mutually exclusive with Gaveston’s liege and lover. These aspects only become incompatible when Edward seeks to merge them and replace Isabella, treating Gaveston as his royal consort.

⁹⁸ For *Edward II*, I use the edition: Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II*, ed. Martin Wiggins and Robert Lindsey, New Mermaids (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2014).

⁹⁹ David Stymeist, "Status, Sodomy, and the Theater in Marlowe's *Edward II*," *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 44, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 240, Project MUSE [Johns Hopkins UP].

If Edward confuses his identities as king and as lover, he also refuses to distinguish between the stages of the world. Theater may sometimes request our suspension of disbelief, but the very act of putting something onstage can instead undermine belief, framing performance as such. Edward's involvement in the theater has the effect of hollowing out both his role as king and an associated masculinity. Edward and Gaveston bankrupt the realm in hedonistic and aesthetic pursuits.¹⁰⁰ Mortimer labels Gaveston a "plague," an association that invokes contemporary morality discourse and attacks on sexual deviancy and/in the theater (4.270). Gaveston certainly exploits the king's weakness for the stage (for which it is hard to imagine Marlowe fully condemning the monarch); he strives to both delight and control his friend. In the first scene, we overhear him plan a never-ending program of entertainment in which his artists "May draw the pliant King which way I please" (1.52). He envisions a scene from the myth of Actaeon with "a lovely boy in Dian's shape" to entice his friend (1.60). Gaveston hopes to titillate Edward, covering Diana with nothing but "an olive tree / To hide those parts which men delight to see" (1.63-64). His tableau seduces through the intimation of a hidden sex as well as hidden genitalia; its self-advertisement as fiction is crucial to the illusion's success. Not so Edward's performances as king and warrior.

¹⁰⁰ Along with "prodigal gifts bestowed on Gaveston," Mortimer blames "the idle triumphs, masques, lascivious shows," which "have drawn thy treasure dry and made thee weak" and "overstretched" the "murmuring commons" (6.154-57). Robert Logan characterizes both Edward II and Richard II's priorities through Stephen Greenblatt's term, the "will to play" common to Marlowe's characters, moving it towards a sense of play as "an activity defined solely by what a character finds pleasurable and thoroughly engaging....Consequently, the phrase overall suggests a compulsive, unrelenting pursuit of pleasure, an eagerness to disregard the constraints of passing time and to live for the moment, and a refusal to take any moral responsibility for the consequences of playing." Robert Logan, *Shakespeare's Marlowe: The Influence of Christopher Marlowe on Shakespeare's Artistry* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007), 87.

While this classical conceit aligns Gaveston—through the mediation of a third, male actor—with the cross-dressed Diana, Mortimer accuses Edward of his own transvestitism. He claims that Edward has only taken the field as commander once:

... And then thy soldiers marched like players,
With garish robes, not armour; and thyself,
Bedaubed with gold, rode laughing at the rest,
Nodding and shaking of thy spangled crest
Where women's favours hung like labels down. (6.180-84)

If the military parade is designed to display a country's strength and capacity for defense, Edward has perverted the ceremony, stripping his soldiers of their armor and turning the spectacle into mere, self-conscious theater. He, himself, wears the tournament garb of "women's favours," appropriate to a man who would rather play king than exercise his power in truth. The play continually associates masculinity with martial prowess, and Edward's manliness rests on him as lightly as Diana's costume on the boy actor. His costume also hints that, as a monarch, he is gilded, "bedaubed with gold," rather than truly golden.

As Edward tangles contexts and identities, he looks to his friend to resolve his frustration and heal his fractures. His ultimate fantasy is of himself as absolute, beloved monarch—a position that uses the erotic desire of the other to harmonize the two bodies of the king and resolve all challenges to his absolutism. In both Gaveston and his later favorites, Edward seeks men who endow his personal body with the sacred meaning vested in his body as the divinely appointed representative of the land. Mortimer poses the play's central question: "Why should you love him whom the world hates so?" (4.76). Edward responds, "Because he loves me more than all the world" (4.77). Edward attempts to find, through the mediation of another, a unified

self—and an all-encompassing one.¹⁰¹ The king would rather passively replace his world than actively rule it; his fantasy of kingship requires nothing so tedious as the labor of government. Moreover, even as Edward uses Gaveston to imagine his own integrity, he insists on exceeding this vessel, on always being “more.” There is no external objectification that he can accept, and he demands a love that, like his own sense of self, can only be described in its excess.

Edward’s fantasies continually falter as they come up against the fact of other people, other subjects with their own perspectives. One of these subjects is Gaveston, himself, whose banishment leads the king to cry, “Thou from this land, I from my self am banished” (4.118). Marlowe immediately emblemizes the sentiment, having the characters exchange miniatures, but the subsequent action punctures this inflated rhetoric. The king exclaims of the portrait, “O might I keep thee here, as I do this, / Happy were I, but now most miserable,” and determines, “Thou shalt not hence; I’ll hide thee, Gaveston” (4.128, 132). His minion replies, “I shall be found, and then ’twill grieve me more” (4.133). The man may love Edward—but not more than all the world. He is a three-dimensional character with his own self-interest (including a basic sense of self-preservation) that refuses to become the king’s dead portrait. In the first speech of the play, Gaveston may boldly invoke Edward thus: “The King, upon whose bosom let me die, / And with the world be still at enmity” (1.14-15). Yet when presented with precisely this option, he proves a little more reticent.

For all its expressions of affection, Gaveston’s play-opening soliloquy is darkly

¹⁰¹ Catherine Belsey comments on the way that Edward’s quest for self-completion leads to his failure as king: “the lover finds an imagined wholeness of the self, an illusory unity, in the presence of the other. But the self of a subject identified (named) as a monarch is properly invested in monarchy, not in desire.” Catherine Belsey, “Desire’s Excess and the English Renaissance Theatre: *Edward II*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Othello*,” in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. Susan Zimmerman (New York: Routledge, 1992), 87.

prophetic, envisioning the destruction of both him and his lover. *Edward II* has a cast of characters that extends beyond these two, and the more that Edward invests in Gaveston, the less his court sees him as king. Gaveston's projected staging of the myth of Diana and Actaeon allegorizes the action to come as their transgressive relationship leads to rebellion, Edward's barons "the yelping hounds" that take down the king (1.69). Edward's story—while alive—becomes one not of personal integration but of its antithesis, dismemberment, as his deposition cleaves the king's bodies and his barons rip the body of his country apart.

Edward's religious Passion

Yet in this destruction, something endures. Edward cannot devour his world, but his enemies equally fail to digest the king. When his tormenters attempt to sever the king's two bodies, their labor makes the fracture between Edward's identities as king and as an individual more visible (and more painful) but at the cost of underscoring his lingering royal aura and inviting the pity of his subjects, consequences that threaten their political control. At its most extreme, their treatment of Edward actually alienates the king from his personal body, re-inscribing his body as sacred. The play emphasizes the singularity of the king, but he is singular in the sense of being outside common law and experience rather than being all-encompassing. In death, his corpse is rewritten as a politically viable icon. Mortimer's lackeys translate Edward's non-normative sexuality into martyrdom, appealing to the gender-complicated imagery of Christ's Passion. Their attempt to erase the monarch hallows him instead and reaffirms his Christomimetic status. The end of the play sees the survival of both this ideology and this royal line. Edward's son wields his father's death, appealing to it as an extraordinary violation that licenses him to reclaim power and restore his country. But the sacramental body of the king has been hollowed as well as hallowed; it can inscribe the self-conscious, political community of the

nation but cannot foster true fellowship—ethical, spiritual, emotional—therein.

In captivity, Edward has lost the throne and all practical power, but he retains the name, the crown, and the body of the king. These symbols endure; in fact, their previous disenchantment, the exposed theatricality of monarchy, helps to make them more mobile constructs. Both Marlowe and history ultimately preserve the monarchy, if not Edward II, as well. The scene of Edward's deposition opens with his jailer/host, the Earl of Leicester, inviting Edward to "Imagine Kenilworth were your court. / And that you lay for pleasure here a space, / Not of compulsion or necessity" (20.2-4). Edward is in exile from his own court, but as the definitive figure of that court, the concept of the court moves with him.¹⁰² In response to Leicester, Edward initially insists that his very identity as king prevents him from taking comfort in the nobleman's "gentle words" (20.5). His "outrageous passions" are quite unlike "the griefs of private men," and his wrongs demand redress (20.19, 8):

But when I call to mind I am a king,
Methinks I should revenge me of the wrongs
That Mortimer and Isabel have done.
But what are kings, when regiment is gone,
But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?
My nobles rule; I bear the name of King. (20.23-28)

Halfway through the above excerpt, his monologue switches direction. He moves from insisting on his exceptional status as "I am king" to questioning the ontology of kingship. He concludes that kings who are not also governors are merely image, "perfect shadows" who properly reside in Leicester's imaginary court.

When Edward resigns, his dis-investiture actually helps preserve the fantasy of an unbroken line of kings. The other characters insist that he literally uncrown himself and, thereby, assent to his deposition and legitimize the regency. However, this moment sees Edward most

¹⁰² See also *Edward II* 22.59

actively wielding the greatest symbolic power of the play, becoming most kinglike as he performs the ceremony most exclusive to the king.¹⁰³ As the scene builds to this moment, Edward vacillates, but the argument that his resignation will protect the reign of his son proves at least momentarily compelling. The Bishop of Winchester and the representative of Parliament turn to leave, and Leicester urges, “Call them again, my lord, and speak them fair, / For if they go, the Prince shall lose his right.” Edward replies, “Call thou them back; I have no power to speak” (20.91-93). Edward’s perception that he has lost his voice fits with his general lack of self-insight. It is to this issue that he has the most “power to speak.” Edward still dreams of an impossible, magical power of the crown, envisioning a scene in which Mortimer seizes it for himself and the “heavens” turn it against the usurper and transform it into a weapon upon his head (20.44).¹⁰⁴ The king dreams that this horror would keep his son safe and declares, “So shall not England’s vines be perished, / But Edward’s name survives, though Edward dies” (20.47-48). In fact, by resigning and thus dramatizing continuity instead of rupture, he contributes to this very end in a more prosaic way.

Even uncrowned, Edward’s name and body still hold symbolic, royal power and present an ongoing threat to Mortimer’s government. The imprisoned Edward passively works on the emotions of his countrymen. His first two wardens, the Earl of Leicester and Lord Berkeley respectively, prove too lenient for Mortimer’s tastes, and the king must be removed from each in

¹⁰³ Thomas Anderson makes this point with respect to Richard II’s deposition in Shakespeare’s play. Thomas Page Anderson, *Performing Early Modern Trauma from Shakespeare to Milton* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2006), 82.

¹⁰⁴ Edward’s dream of inanimate metonyms for the king violently turning against those who threaten the monarch has much in common with Richard’s plea for the physical land of England to repel his attackers (*Richard II*, 3.2.12-26).

turn. In Edward's own words upon being taken from Leicester, "Mine enemy hath pitied my estate, / And that's the cause that I am now removed" (20.149-50). The Bishop of Winchester later charges Berkeley with the same crime: "The lord of Berkeley is so pitiful / As Leicester that had charge of him before" (21.34-35). Mortimer fears the pity of more than the nobles. He has Edward executed after determining, "The King must die, or Mortimer goes down; / The commons now begin to pity him" (23.1-2). The unseen, imprisoned king, available to his countrymen only as a name, has enough of an affective hold on them that Mortimer fears revolt.

Mortimer and his henchmen labor to alienate the king from his kingly body.¹⁰⁵ They deny the king's image to potentially rebellious subjects and deny the king the mirror of these subjects' gaze. Edward's very location is concealed as Maltravers and Gourney move him from place to place. Mortimer instructs,

Seek all the means thou canst to make him droop,
...
And this above the rest, because we hear
That Edmund casts to work his liberty,
Remove him still from place to place by night. (21.53-58)

He aims to frustrate any attempts at rescue, but he also hopes to increase Edward's torment, leading him to despair rather than to resist. Gourney and Maltravers prove fully capable of their charge; they contrive "means" that blend torture and concealment in a gruesome shaving scene.

MALTRAVERS. Here's channel water, as our charge is given;
Sit down, for we'll be barbers to your grace.
EDWARD. Traitors away! What will you murder me,
Or choke your sovereign with puddle water?
GOURNEY. No, but wash your face and shave away your beard,
Lest you be known and so be rescued. (22.27-32)

¹⁰⁵ One aspect of the Passion found in the chronicle histories of Edward II but not in Marlowe's play is the crown of thorns. Marlowe's refusal to re-crown Edward is consistent with the understanding of political theater of both Mortimer and the play as a whole. Onstage a Burger King crown belongs to the same code as the royal jewels.

As disguises go, their turn as barbers does little; Kent shows up moments later and easily recognizes his own brother. Their real objective is closer to desecration than to disguise as they attack the royal body—and the royal Dignity—making Edward appear less like himself and so less royal. Even after defeating Kent and ceasing their travels across the countryside, the two keep Edward in the sewer. Edward informs the assassin Lightborne, “This dungeon where they keep me is the sink / Wherein the filth of all the castle falls” (24.55-56). In forcing the king to stew in waste (both bodily and otherwise), the henchmen attack the sacramental body with its opposite, excrement.

Mortimer has these men deny Edward charity between men as well as the reciprocal gaze of subject and king; not only do they refuse Edward any consideration based in a common humanity, they actively dehumanize him. Mortimer demands of his lackeys, “Let no man comfort him if he chance to weep, / But amplify his grief with bitter words” (21.63-64). Maltravers and Gourney’s handling of their prisoner provides a strong contrast to Edward’s dignified confinement under Leicester’s chaperonage; rather than imaginatively supplement Edward’s kingdom, they challenge even Edward’s self-government. They barber him in response to his request: “O water, gentle friends, to cool my thirst / And clear my body from foul excrements” (22.25-26). The two wrest Edward’s words as well as his appearance from him. Instead of clean water to “clear [his] body from excrements,” i.e., filth, they present him with water from the sewer and shave him, playing on a different meaning of “excrements” as hair (or nails or any other such outgrowths). The line they twist is a plea, not a command, and they thwart Edward’s simple, human power of verbal communication. Their treatment also plays into a common motif of the play. Throughout, characters on both sides of the conflict link the other

side to predatory animals.¹⁰⁶ By refusing Edward control over and separation from his own waste matter, they reduce him to creaturely status—or less since even animals follow an instinctual drive regarding rudimentary waste management.

Their torture further fractures Edward within himself as well as separates him from his human peers. This is not the disjunction common to subjects—even kings—with multiple aspects. This is the alienation of Edward from his own personal, human body as well as from his Dignity. He lists his woes to Lightborne:

And there in mire and puddle have I stood
This ten days' space; and lest that I should sleep,
One plays continually upon a drum.
They give me bread and water, being a king,
So that for want of sleep and sustenance
My mind's distempered and my body's numbed,
And whether I have limbs or no, I know not.
O, would my blood dropped out from every vein,
As doth this water from my tattered robes. (24.59-66)

Edward's sojourn does not exactly constitute royal treatment, and his identity "being a king" is in ironic tension with his current state. He also points to a more alarming disjunction—a separation within the private individual as well between the king's two bodies. His treatment challenges his self-perception at the immediate, physical level as well as at the political. He has gone beyond pain to a feverish sense of disconnection from his own body: "my body's numbed, / And whether I have limbs or no, I know not." He imaginatively exsanguinates himself, literalizing his evacuation and identifying totally with his immediate environment: the "water" that drips "from [his] tattered robes." Physical torture separates bodily experience from bodily ownership; it assaults the integrity at the heart of any sentient creature, not just monarchs. Thomas Cartelli

¹⁰⁶ For example, Edward depicts himself as a "lamb encompassed by wolves" in one scene, and in the next, Mortimer frames Edward—and the general situation—with the claim, "For now we hold an old wolf by the ears" (20.41, 21.7).

claims, “The subjection of King Edward’s body to...forms of violation thus serves to demystify the sovereign’s claim to exemption from a common humanity and *to make common* otherwise extraordinary acts of transgression” (his emphasis).¹⁰⁷ However, Edward’s torture is *torture*, which is itself an “extraordinary act of transgression.” Maltravers and Gourney remove their victim from the everyday world, steal his most basic forms of agency, and trap him inside the overwhelming reality of the world they create.

Edward has no power as a human victim, only as a martyr denoted as something outside ordinary men. Elaine Scarry’s seminal work on torture identifies both “the distance [it creates] between the torturer and tortured’s] physical realities” and the way in which “the objectified [i.e., made visible] pain is denied as pain and read as power, a translation made possible by the obsessive mediation of agency.”¹⁰⁸ Torture sets the victim apart, and enables the torturer to perceive himself and/or the institution to which he is attached as being more, gaining the power of the other’s pain. However, Edward’s torture winds up being dangerous for the very reason it works; it separates him from others. His extraordinary degradation interacts with the lingering presence of his extraordinary elevation, re-marking his body as sacred.¹⁰⁹ His torturers

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Cartelli, *Marlowe, Shakespeare, and the Economy of Theatrical Experience* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 132. Cartelli connects Edward’s sodomy with his torture, the former of which I believe better suits his claim that Edward’s revealed humanity makes the extraordinary transgression common: “Licensed by Mortimer to ‘amplify’ Edward’s grief by whatever means they can devise, Matrevis, Gurney, and, later, Lightborne operate on Edward’s presumably sovereign body with the same freedom from constraint that Galveston enjoys as he ‘frolics’ with Edward’s private body and preys on the body-politic of England” (Ibid.)

¹⁰⁸ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 36, 28.

¹⁰⁹ Tom Pettitt characterizes Edward’s combined degradation and elevation as a “carnavalesque martyrdom,” investigating “vernacular topoi,” drawn from both folk literature and popular practice. He asserts that they combine

experience no charity, but they are unnerved by Edward. The two marvel at the king's endurance:

MALTRAVERS. Gourney, I wonder the King dies not.

Being in a vault up to the knees in water,
To which the channels of the castle run,
From whence a damp continually ariseth
That were enough to poison any man,
Much more a king, brought up so tenderly.

GOURNEY. And so do I, Maltravers. Yesternight

I opened but the door to throw him meat.
And I was almost stifled with the savour.

MALTRAVERS. He hath a body able to endure

More than we can inflict; and therefore now
Let us assail his mind another while.

GOURNEY. Send for him out thence, and I will anger him. (24.1-13)

In a production of the play, the actors and director will determine much of the tone of this scene, but these lines potentially set up the aftermath of the king's murder (in which Gourney flees and Maltravers expresses fear and regret). In his capacity for degradation, Edward has somehow exceeded natural, human limitations, haunting the play before he even dies. Thomas Anderson draws on Giorgio Agamben's concept of "*homo sacer*," a figure in Roman law who is banned and can be killed by anyone: "the king's resistance to death is a condition central to sacred man... That is, the killing of the king cannot be classified as murder; instead it is a special crime, both more and less than murder."¹¹⁰ Just as the king must be king to depose himself, the king's body can only be desecrated if it is sacred.

The execution of Edward II completes him as an icon, invoking the Christomimetic tradition of kingship and drawing on the icon's claim to specially mediate the viewer's

to emphasize the king's liminality, the way that he defies traditional categories of identity. Tom Pettitt, "'Screaming like a Pigge Halfe Stickt': Vernacular Topoi in the Carnavalesque Martyrdom of Edward II," *Orbis Litterarum* 60 (2005): 92, Wiley Online Library.

¹¹⁰ Anderson, 113.

relationship with its subject. Marlowe does not invent the connection between Edward and Christ. Stow's *General Chronicle*, presumed to be one of the playwright's major sources, portrays Edward's suffering so that his trials resonate with those found in popular accounts of Christ's Passion.¹¹¹ Patrick Ryan argues that Marlowe heightens the connection between Edward's death and Christ's "secret Passion," "a series of bizarre torments not recorded in the Gospels but which Jesus suffered after his arrest, according to medieval and Tudor exegesis of Hebrew prophecy."¹¹² These narratives frequently influenced artistic representations of Christ, including those in medieval drama. Edward is pressed (as are grapes for wine), sheared, and spit; all three of these actions draw on Christ's status as the Eucharistic feast, and the latter two connect it to the ritual preparation of the Pascal lamb. In fact, the most famous of Edward's tortures, his sodomy with a red-hot poker, was probably left as suggestion rather than representation in the original performance. Lightborne demands that Matrevis and Gurney prepare the instrument, but there is no scripted indication of its use thereafter, and Edward is simply pressed to death. Marlowe affords the audience the opportunity to look through the immediate image to a larger tradition of representation surrounding the dead king, a tradition that, itself, demands that one perceive the history of Christ that shapes it. Edward even experiences his own death in a peculiarly mediated fashion. His impending death leads him to his single moment of piety as he begs Lightborne,

¹¹¹ Cartelli, 132.

¹¹² Patrick Ryan, "Marlowe's *Edward II* and the Medieval Passion Play," *Comparative Drama* 32, no. 4 (Winter 1998-99): 466, JSTOR. The tradition of the "secret Passion" builds on Christ's insistence that "all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:44 KJV). This line led "Christian theologians to search those scriptures for messianic prophecies fulfilled by Jesus' Passion but not recorded in the New Testament" (474).

I see my tragedy written in thy brows
Yet stay a while; forbear thy bloody hand,
And let me see the stroke before it comes,
That even then when I shall lose my life,
My mind may be more steadfast on my God. (24.73-77)

The abject Edward identifies more ably with the role of the martyr than he did with that of the king. He comes to a literary appreciation of his situation, an already “written” “tragedy.” When dead, he will no longer wrestle with the sense of disconnection experienced by subjects. His “mind” “on my God,” he prepares to enter fully into the objects of corpse and story.

Edward’s death offers his son the opportunity to finish the script, taking the story from national rupture to restoration and staging the perpetuity of the king’s body. As he enters the stage, his mother cries, “Now, Mortimer, begins our tragedy” (25.23). Edward III unites decisive action with political theater, setting Mortimer’s head upon Edward II’s hearse and crafting the play’s final tableau. Both Kantorowicz and Agamben look at the rituals surrounding the deaths of sovereigns—particularly the creation of effigies—as they produce visual manifestations of the king’s two bodies.¹¹³ The play ends with the new king giving these final lines:

Sweet father, here unto thy murdered ghost
I offer up the wicked traitor’s head,
And let these tears, distilling from mine eyes,
Be witness of my grief and innocency. (25.99-102)

As Edward III responds to his father’s death, he underlines the image their two bodies create as an image, visual testimony that can “witness.” His tears become a new sacrificial offering, part of a performance that ritualistically responds to the death of the king as much as a spontaneous outpouring of “grief” for his “sweet father.” This king-king/father-son dynamic focuses the play’s conclusion, as one king takes the place of the last: “The king is dead. Long live the

¹¹³ Agamben, 93-94. Kantorowicz, 415-31.

king.”¹¹⁴ Edward III’s loyalty is entirely to his dead father. Despite expressing grief at the prospect, he vows to have his mother executed if she proves complicit in her husband’s murder. Whereas the first scene revolves around the male-male relationship of lovers (whose reunion directly contradicts the orders of the dead Edward I), the last returns us to the “proper” focus of a patrilineal aristocracy. The image of sodomy has been repurposed, from passion to Passion, in the appearance of the spit. The play’s upheavals have been contained as history and martyrdom, and the king’s transgression is reformulated as an icon that enables our return to the status quo.

Edward III reaffirms the traditional, hereditary bonds at the heart of his country’s government. From Edward to Edward, the nation endures, passing through a crisis of sovereignty to a victory portrayed as national preservation. The foreign enemy is within in *Edward II*. The rival consorts, Gaveston and Isabella, are both French natives. Lightborne “learned in Naples” many subtle methods of assassination (23.30). Martin Wiggins and Robert Lindsey suggest that the ahistorical character embodies a well-known contemporary saying, “An Englishman Italianate is the Devil incarnate,” and may even “recall a panic of late 1591 about a trained Italian assassin being sent to England to assassinate the queen.”¹¹⁵ This xenophobia is part of an English identity to which England’s self-possession is essential; however, this English identity is a source of anxiety rather than comfort. Stephen Greenblatt looks at the hunger of Marlowe’s subjects, translating it into imperialism as characters seek to fill internal voids with external spaces, guided by “the voice of conquest [that] is also the voice of wants never finished and of

¹¹⁴ Anderson uses this phrase to frame his examination of “the contradiction at the source of royal power and its continuity” (93).

¹¹⁵ Martin Wiggins and Robert Lindsey, 23.21n and 23.30-36n.

transcendental homelessness.”¹¹⁶ In *Edward II*, that pain is brought to Englishmen in their own country. Greenblatt notes that while Edward II “is, by his role, the embodiment of the land and its people...without Gaveston he lives in his own country like an exile.”¹¹⁷ Edward’s death enables his son to reclaim control of his country, delivering England from foreign interlopers as well as greedy regents.

Imitatio Daemonorum

As the son cries over his father’s hearse, he figures national continuity rather than community. His father’s fatal entrance into the image of Christ is a superficial, artistic *imitatio Christi* that helps his son to seize power by force; it has no power to unite England sacramentally. Nor does Marlowe champion an alternative in Edward’s enemies. The baldly Machiavellian Mortimer is even less appealing than the incompetent Edward.¹¹⁸ The theoretical

¹¹⁶ Stephen Jay Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 196.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ The poetry of *Edward II* is peculiarly plain for Marlowe. Gaveston and Edward get its best lines and most delightful conceits, and the barons are left with the blunter material of plot advancement. If true manliness is martial and practical, the play takes these qualities to the extremes of violently quarrelsome and coarse. Moreover, as Stephen Guy-Bray points out, “the behavior of Isabella and Mortimer demonstrates that the threat to the social order that is called sodomy is not restricted to male-male sexual relations....Marlowe demonstrates that heterosexual attachments can also be sodomitical.” Stephen Guy-Bray, Introduction, in *Edward II*, by Christopher Marlowe, ed. Martin Wiggins and Robert Lindsey, *New Mermaids* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2014), xviii. Replaced in her husband’s affections and counsel, Isabella aids her own favorite to gain ultimate power in the realm. At the height of his regency, Mortimer delivers a soliloquy that echoes Gaveston’s thoughts at the beginning of the play, celebrating his power over members of the royal family and over rival lords:

The Prince I rule, the Queen do I command,
And with a lowly conge to the ground

faith and charity of a Christian community is entirely absent in the world Marlowe leaves us. The pity of his characters is inextricable from horror, i.e., the sense of extraordinary (rather than ordinary) violation. We see moments of erotic, familial, and even friendly love; we never see the human-to-human connection of Christian *agape* (or any analog thereof). Marlowe may engage the form of the icon in the play's final scenes, but it functions in a limited—sometimes even twisted—way. Its cosmic framing is overdetermined, leading us to hell as well as to heaven. Marlowe also robs the image of any ethical power. He appeals to the central Christian story, but the mimetic urge he depicts pursues the demons rather than Christ and power rather than virtue.

God is always infinitely far away in Marlowe's work, but hell is local and quotidian. Shakespeare may have written the line, "Hell is empty, / And all the devils are here!" but, for Marlowe, this sentiment seems to shape the worlds of his drama (*The Tempest*, 1.2.214-15).¹¹⁹ In fact, he goes further; when Doctor Faustus questions Mephistophilis about hell's location, the demon responds,

Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed
In one self place, for where we are is hell,
And where hell is must we ever be.
And, to conclude, when all the world dissolves,
And every creature shall be purified,

The proudest lords salute me as I pass;
I seal, I cancel, I do what I will.
Feared am I more than loved; let me be feared,
And when I frown, make all the court look pale. (23.46-51)

Where Gaveston speaks of delighting as well as manipulating the king, the baldly Machiavellian Mortimer seems entirely focused on his own position. His cold focus gives him a practical advantage over Edward and Gaveston, but his skill benefits only him and comes at the expense of lyrical beauty.

¹¹⁹ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. David Lindley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

All places shall be hell that is not Heaven. (*Doctor Faustus*, 5.128-33)¹²⁰

Hell is inside Mephistophilis, a private torment, but Marlowe's devils also reveal themselves as longtime residents of the world rather than guests. Hell is everywhere; in fact, the very word "hell" was promiscuous in Marlowe's England.¹²¹ Among other valences, "hell" served as slang for both the sewer and the dungeon. Edward II is no saintly character, and he finds himself in "hells" that collapse the distinction between this world and a posited afterlife. Indeed, when captured, he declares, "Lay me in a hearse, / And to the gates of hell convey me hence" (19.86-87). After being shuffled between strongholds, Edward winds up in a dungeon that also seems to be a sewer. One of his jailers later muses, "I wonder the King dies not. / Being in a vault up to the knees in water, / To which the channels of the castle run" (24.1-3). In this hell, Edward's murder-by-anal-violation does not only gesture towards the spit Pascal lamb as a figure that redeems sin; it also recalls contemporary accounts of that sin's cosmic punishment, the eternal torments suffered by the sexually profligate.¹²²

In addition, only Edward's situation recalls Christ's, not his behavior. In the deposition scene, Edward rips up the written order that demands his removal to Berkley's care. He tears the paper in order to "rend" "Mortimer, whose name is written here," and then declares, "This poor

¹²⁰ Christopher Marlowe, "Doctor Faustus," in *Renaissance Drama: An Anthology of Plays and Entertainments*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Malden, MA.: Blackwell Publishers, 2003).

¹²¹ "Hell" is also the name for the trapdoor on a Renaissance stage, a connection re-forged in *Faustus*. As that play self-consciously participates in the conventions of medieval drama, the audience greets the demons as old friends and familiar (pun intended) characters. If *Faustus* returns us to the theater of hell, *The Jew of Malta* burlesques this theater, evacuating it of its metaphysical content. Barabas, the eponymous Jew who shares the name of the unrepentant thief crucified with Jesus, repeatedly finds himself in entirely mundane hells: first in the sewer and finally in a literal pit of fire.

¹²² Pettitt, 92.

revenge hath something eased my mind, / So may his limbs be torn, as is this paper, / Hear me immortal Jove, and grant it too” (20.139-43). Edward’s deity is strictly Old Testament, a Yahweh (named Jove for reasons of censorship) that might punish those who have transgressed against him. He even perverts New Testament constructs in his fantasy, imagining the incarnate word as a means of revenge rather than forgiveness. In looking back on his kingly career, he accuses himself of “too much clemency” (20.123). He judges himself as he has failed to represent the justice of an angry god rather than Christ’s mercy. When Edward does appeal to a kinder god, the play reveals it as an attempt to replace the power he has lost. He at last hands over his crown and turns away from it: “Now, sweet God of heaven, / Make me despise this transitory pomp / And sit for aye enthronized in heaven” (20.107-9). He only looks heavenward in order to replace lost majesty, not so much disdaining “transitory pomp” as projecting it as the model for eternal bliss. Edward fails to provide a correlate for Christ’s friendship as well as Christ’s governance. At one point, he characterizes his friendship as self-sacrifice, but his humility fails as any kind of Christian kenosis—and not only because his relationships are personal and self-interested (22.41-45). Edward’s sacrifice is not active, reducing his claim to a post-facto justification of his torment; when his brother appears on the scene immediately hereafter, Edward eagerly anticipates his rescue, a natural response that somewhat undermines his stated readiness to suffer and die on behalf of his friends.

To borrow the terminology of René Girard, Edward is the scapegoat rather than the “God of victims.” The scapegoat is a figure upon whom society projects its tensions and then sacrifices, thereby reestablishing order, but the sacrifice of the scapegoat never suffices—not even when the figure has undergone the apotheosis into the community’s savor, honored in the ritual commemoration of his death (perhaps in theatrical performance if not in religious

ceremony).¹²³ Rivalries inevitably resurface. For Girard, Christ is distinguishable as a case in which the victim rather than the violence claims the triumph; Christ's self-sacrifice disrupts the pattern of the scapegoat.¹²⁴ The "God of victims" exposes the mimetic rivalries that give rise to cycles of violence and vengeance, enjoining men to "imitate him and seek the glory that comes from God, instead of that which comes from men."¹²⁵ Edward's murder instead allows his son to retrieve the country and execute Mortimer, perpetuating the cycle. Rather than elevate the king or signify an internal change in paradigm, the effect is to reduce Christianity to a political ideology, employed to legitimize traditional, hereditary rule.

When it comes to the Christian narrative, the active imitation Marlowe presents is not the imitation of Christ; his characters model themselves on his worldly tormentors and on hell's demons. Both Marlowe's artistry and Edward's torturers take cues from ceremonial and artistic renditions of the Passion. Even the playful tone with which they approach their work has a notable artistic lineage, "the ludic portrayal of violence in the mystery plays"—particularly in the Crucifixion plays—whose influence Beatrice Groves traces in Renaissance drama.¹²⁶ The primary assassin draws from a different pageant. He assumes the name of Lightborne, which is not only an Anglicization of Lucifer but also the name of one of the devils in the Chester cycle. The readiness of Edward's tormentors to imitate Christ's in no way means either that they

¹²³ René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Hopkins Univ. Press, 1979).

¹²⁴ René Girard, *Job, the Victim of His People* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987).

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹²⁶ Groves connects this attitude to vernacular representation of the Passion more generally as well, making reference to the "Secret Passion" texts that Ryan does. Beatrice Groves, "'Now Wole I a New Game Begynne': Staging Suffering in *King Lear*, the Mystery Plays, and Grotius's *Christus Patiens*," *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 20 (2007): 137.

require the example or that the episode reflects divine providence. Nor do Marlowe's improvisational departures from prior scripts reflect an orthodox investment in the "inscrutable providence of an angry God."¹²⁷ It is true that Marlowe's conception of human nature often marches lockstep with a Reformed position on total depravity (in which man is unable to prefer God before himself); his characters strive towards godlike power rather than emulate Christ's humility. However, nothing in *Edward II* implies the existence of either a preserved elect or divine retribution. "Hell is empty," but so is Heaven. Or, perhaps, one might better borrow the words of still another playwright, and say, "Hell is other people." What need we with demons?

In his torture, Edward is reshaped into a different Christological image than that of Christ the king. Marlowe honors the kenotic tradition, the peculiar dignity found in narratives of abasement, but not the doctrinal legacy. He does not leave us with an apocalypse; that would be kinder. Sans eschatology, it is not the world that ends but rather any justification for the horror.

Richard II

Near the end of the tetralogy that begins with *Richard II*, Henry V disguises himself as a commoner and walks among his outnumbered soldiers on the eve of the Battle of Agincourt. To several unwitting subjects, "Harry le Roy" declares, "For, though I speak it to you, I think the king is but a man, as I am" (4.1.99).¹²⁸ The king is not safe from his subject's troubles and anxiety; indeed, according to Henry, his lot is worse for he must remain stalwart for their sake and has not the luxury of showing his emotions. When confronted with their doubts, Henry

¹²⁷ Ryan, 489.

¹²⁸ For *Henry V*, I use the edition: William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, ed. Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Throughout the tetralogy, French is characterized as the language of duplicity, serving as a counterpoint to the "honest" English. I will touch on this distinction towards the end of this chapter, but Henry's pseudonym, which familiarizes his personal name and translates his status as king into French, fits the general trend.

grows indignant. Alone again, he protests that his subjects “lay” the ultimate responsibility for their fortunes, families, health, and virtue “upon the king”: “We must bear all. O hard condition, / Twin-born with greatness” (4.1.221-22). And for all their burdens, kings gain only “idol ceremony” (4.1.228). Henry’s qualifier deflates the potential idolatry that surrounds the “twin-born” figure. If there is any identification with Christ in these lines, it is more in what is borne than in who is born.

I take *Henry V* as an implicit destination for *Richard II* (returning to the later play at the very end of this chapter). *Richard II* explores the disenchantment of the “twin-born,” Christomimetic king and a corresponding investment in the king’s humanity. Unlike in *Edward II*, this disenchantment is potentially kenotic, a redirection towards human choices and empathetic connections. The king is not ideal; the play distances Richard from Christ morally, spiritually, and (above all) practically. However, while characters may blame Richard for the loss of a paradisiacal England made incarnate in its king, Shakespeare casts the character as the rehearsal rather than the origin of bereavement. The result is a general, kenotic evacuation of kingship that reinforces the king’s access to a different kind of Christomimesis, one still available in a world situated after the Reformation as well as after the fall. The end of the play sees Richard engage in the kind of reflection in/through Christ available to the ordinary subject though here made paradigmatic through the extraordinary circumstances and visibility of kings. This Richard is sentimentalized rather than revered. His humanity makes him a potential focus for empathy; his story makes him available for the proprietary glow that can surround even national failures. In contrast to Marlowe, Shakespeare gives us a doomed king who is sacramental without being particularly sacred, focusing and embodying a national community.

The first part of my argument looks at Richard from the beginning of the play through his deposition. As Richard sets himself against certain traditions, he weakens his claim to the throne and exposes the fragility of his divine mandate. Yet the play locates both his internal disjunctions and this “disturbance in the force” in a pervasive divine absence and traumatic national past as much as in the present king. The second section moves on to the final act and Richard’s relationship with himself and with others. In one of the play’s many self-consciously symbolic scenes, the deposition sees Richard shatter a mirror, fragmenting his reflection. This image prepares us for the deposed, imprisoned Richard. The fallen king discovers Richards, multiplicity based less in the king’s two bodies than in his participation in multiple perspectives. He relates to Christ the Word rather than Christ the king, reading his own facets (and his own fate) through the ambiguities and contradictions of scripture. His human complexity, which includes a blend of traits typed male and female, helps him to identify with others and us to identify with him. Finally, I look at the play’s presentation of England as a home and of Englishness as an important aspect of identity. This nationalism unites a specifically English community, is heartwarming sentiment unfortunately tied to an imperialistic impulse to extend that community. By *Henry V*, the national imagination has turned from nostalgic to triumphal, from a threatened motherland and mother tongue to an expanding *patria* under a king who routinely romanticizes both his humanity and his masculinity.

The sacred king

Richard’s failures draw attention to the many voices and components that combine in the king’s “singular” power. Unlike Edward III, Richard fails to understand the logic that bridges the two short sentences: “The king is dead. Long live the king.” The transference of immortal power relies on a naturalized mystical authority that blends heredity, law, and religion. Richard sets

himself against the very traditions that establish continuity. He appeals to none but himself and God, mistakenly locating his power in an immediate connection between the two such that the king has the divine power to articulate his kingdom, to shape and control England with a mere word. Eventually, Richard denies even this reflexive justification of his sacred authority (i.e., I am because I am). The characters require Richard to un-speak himself as king. In doing so, Richard breaks with his own, present incarnation of the king's second body, the body politic, as well as with past versions. His actions reveal and repeat a severed identity between the present king and an eternal power, leaving only a tenuous connection in its place.

Richard against heredity

The *corpus mysticum*, on which Kantorowicz argues the body politic is largely based, is a term whose meaning changed in the twelfth century. Until then, the phrase had designated not the social body of the church but the Eucharistic body of Christ.¹²⁹ *Edward II* frames the king as a (perverse) Eucharistic feast, treating his body as (first) a Pascal lamb to be sheared, spit, and roasted and (then) grapes to be pressed for wine; Marlowe appeals to the king's traditional Christomimetic guise in order to stage his torture as consecration. *Richard II*, instead, reflects on the idea that the king's blood is inherently sacred, naturally Eucharistic. After all, the idea of innate kingship requires a sense that the king is born substantially different. However, kings have relatives, as did Christ (whose genealogy was a frequent topic for biblical scholars both before and after the Reformation). The family trees of royalty complicate the kings' singular, biological participation in divinity—all the more so when these families turn against themselves. Shakespeare links both Richard and his successor to a self-repeating Cain and Abel narrative that their proxies bear out and that compromises the mystical, native empowerment of the king.

¹²⁹ Michel De Certeau, *The Mystic Fable* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 82.

The play opens with Richard set against (part of) his family. Shakespeare draws on Holinshed's implication of the king in the murder of his uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, by the king's henchman, Mowbray. Bolingbroke (Richard's cousin by a different uncle) accuses Mowbray of the crime, identifying the dead Gloucester with "sacrificing Abel" (1.1.104). Their aunt is less discreet in private conversation, blaming Richard directly. In the second scene, the widowed Duchess of Gloucester urges revenge upon John of Gaunt, Bolingbroke's father. She lays out her grievances:

Edward's seven sons, whereof thyself art one,
Were as seven vials of his sacred blood,
Or seven fair branches springing from one root.
...
But Thomas, my dear lord, my life, my Gloucester,
One vial full of Edward's sacred blood,
One flourishing branch of his most royal root,
Is cracked, and all the precious liquor spilt,
Is hacked down, and his summer leaves all faded
By Envy's hand and Murder's bloody axe. (1.2.9-21)¹³⁰

The duchess insists on the blood equality between the brothers as sons of a king, turning them into holy "vials" and "precious liquor," the material of a kind of national Eucharist. She pairs this figure with an arboreal one, part of the play's general garden motif, moving between the two. She imagines the hallowed royal body as both communion wine and the tree of life, a dual metaphor that uses the royal family to define a sacred realm, to link their subjects to an Edenic past and provide for their eternal future.

However, if Mowbray has violated this body on Richard's behalf, then Exton, acting on what he perceives as the new Henry IV's hints, also commits crimes against the royal blood before the curtain falls. In the last scene, Henry (Bolingbroke) condemns Richard's murderer, to

¹³⁰ For *Richard II*, I use the edition: William Shakespeare, *King Richard II*, ed. Charles R. Forker (London: Arden Shakespeare, Bloomsbury, 2016).

“With Cain go wander through shades of night” (5.6.43). Like Mowbray, Exton is exiled, and even Henry plans his own atonement in the form of a crusade (5.6.45-52). The royal body has alienated its own blood, thereby compromising its ties to the country it supposedly embodies. Henry’s participation in the guilt of fratricide reminds us that the original murder can be (has been) repeated ad nauseam. In the words of John Mackenzie, “Let us not think that the murder of the king is the cursed transgression that surrenders paradise.”¹³¹ Nor is the murder of a king’s uncle. Mackenzie continues, “It is not more than a symptom, as Cain’s transgression was, of an already fallen world.”¹³² Richard’s actions—and the broader events of his play—confirm its postlapsarian place in history. Haunted by the dream of a one-time English paradise and by their own bloody pasts, the characters of *Richard II* struggle with an increasing sense of disillusionment. The play ultimately frames the royal blood through its participation in cycles of violence rather than in Eucharistic redemption.

Richard against inheritance

Richard troubles the claims of inheritance (the transference of property between generations) as well as of heredity (the transference of genetic material between generations). In Gaunt’s conversation with the Duchess of Gloucester, he, too, invokes the sacred body of the king and protests his inability to judge “God’s substitute” (1.2.37). Characters return to this dilemma throughout the play, but Richard’s mantle lingers as an intellectual problem rather than a compelling belief. Gaunt, himself, eventually declares that Richard has betrayed the supernatural trappings of his role. Richard’s claim to the throne then rests in the conventions of a patrilineal monarchy, but he invests in the legal tradition of primogeniture as partially as in the

¹³¹ Clayton G. Mackenzie, "Paradise and Paradise Lost in *Richard II*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (Autumn 1986): 327, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2870102>.

¹³² *Ibid.*

idea of sacred blood. He compromises the crown's claim to its own land, farming out the royal prerogative of tax collection to court flatterers, and violates the traditional, hereditary claims of others. This last conflict provides the justification for Bolingbroke's early return to England, which leads to Richard's ultimate overthrow.

In the play's most famous monologue, Gaunt accuses Richard of selling his divine mandate, thereby compromising the sacred status of king and country and subjecting himself to ordinary economics and law. On his deathbed, he bemoans,

This royal throne of kings, this sceptered isle,
This earth of majesty...
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
...
Is now leased out – I die pronouncing it –
Like to a tenement or pelting farm. (2.1.40-60)

Gaunt's speech is both paean to the England of yore and denunciation of Richard's England, and he uses his own death to punctuate the rupture between the two. He opens the speech with a series of glowing appositions that identify ye olde England with its king, redistributing the modifiers of royalty to the land itself. But the present king, Richard, has debased the hallowed ground of this former Garden of Eden and complicated his ownership thereof. He has discredited the royal "estate" that appertains to the king's body—both his power and that power's connection to the material wealth of the crown. In giving power to court favorites—"A thousand flatterers sit within thy crown"—and leasing out royal land, the king has become "Landlord of England...not king" (2.1.100, 113). Because of Richard's actions, Gaunt declares, "Thy state of law is bondsman to the law" (2.1.114).¹³³ Richard fails to provide any external point of reference as "God's substitute." The law has become its own justification—and ratifies the king rather than

¹³³ Charles R. Forker, ed., *King Richard II*, 2.1.114n.

vice versa. Richard certainly displays no otherworldly gravitas in this scene; he responds to his uncle's complaints with the measured consideration and poise of a royal hissy fit.

Where one uncle protests that Richard has placed himself under the law, another protests Richard's refusal to accept this state, i.e., Richard's denial that he might be subject to—and king through—anything so mundane as property law. Later in the scene, the king is informed of Gaunt's death, upon which he seizes his uncle's estates in order to finance his Irish wars. The Duke of York decries one nephew's treatment of the other and declares, "Take Hereford's rights away, and take from Time / His charters and his customary rights; / Let not tomorrow then ensue today" (2.1.195-97). York's ruptured timeline lacks Gaunt's eschatology but maintains the sense that, as Hamlet might say, "the time is out of joint," the connection between generations broken. Bolingbroke (Hereford) is the legitimate, designated heir of a nobleman in good standing, and York warns Richard of the consequence of his cousin's dispossession: "Be not thyself, for how art thou a king / But by fair sequence and succession?" (2.1.198-99). Deaf to all counsel, Richard weakens his own claim to the crown and alienates his supporters. He risks the loyalty of his cousin as well as his uncle, who cautions "You lose a thousand well-disposed hearts / And prick my tender patience to those thoughts / Which honour and allegiance cannot think" (2.1.206-8). Bolingbroke's return finds York torn between the conflicting claims of his nephews and vulnerable to an apt politician who plays upon more than his sense of fair play. Bolingbroke insinuates York's own vulnerability to the same royal caprice and asserts that, situations reversed, Gaunt would champion York's disinherited son, Aumerle (2.3.125-29). York's ultimate defection is one sign of the shift in power.

Unlike Richard, Bolingbroke understands the importance of tradition and legal precedent. He conscripts the law and presents his rebellion as restoration, making the same connection

between the realm and the duchy that York does. When these two meet again, Bolingbroke excuses his return, “As I was banished, I was banished Hereford; / But as I come, I come for Lancaster,” and reasons, “If that my cousin king be King in England, / It must be granted I am Duke of Lancaster” (2.3.113-24, 123-24). In a later scene, he executes several of Richard’s favorites, reclaiming his land from them. Bolingbroke charges,

...you have fed upon my signories,
Disparked my parks, and felled my forest woods,
From my own windows torn my household coat,
Rased out my imprese, leaving me no sign
Save men’s opinions and my living blood
To show the world I am a gentleman. (3.1.22-27)

Bolingbroke’s lines miniaturize his father’s famous portrait of England as the Garden of Eden, ruined by and leased out to court flatterers. His lands have been wounded and emptied out, his very identity challenged in his detachment from hereditary estate and insignia. The associative link between Lancaster and England as lands in need of restoration is so strong that it seems to lead Bolingbroke from one claim to another.

The timeline—at least as Gaunt and York respectively imagine it—never recovers. In overthrowing Richard, the new Henry IV forces the line of kings into his own turn, taking it from Richard’s (hypothetical, future) sons. Yet Gaunt claims that Richard has already betrayed these sons:

O, had thy grandsire with a prophet’s eye
Seen how his son’s son should destroy his sons,
From forth thy reach he would have laid thy shame,
Deposing thee before thou wert possessed,
Which art possessed now to depose thyself. (2.1.104-8)

The announcement that Richard’s grandfather’s “son’s son should destroy his sons” can refer to Richard’s murder of Gloucester, but “another accepted meaning (taking the second ‘his’ to refer

to Richard) is that Richard is depriving his posterity of their patrimony by abusing the realm.”¹³⁴ Had Richard’s grandfather foreseen this future, he would have kept Richard from the crown, deposing him before he could depose (metaphorically) himself. Two acts before the deposition scene, Gaunt’s chiasmus places that event in both the present and the hypothetical past, contributing to our perception that the climactic break is not a singular event within a linear timeline. The play establishes a broken, traumatic relationship with a one-time English paradise that serves to frame rather than produce these issues of royal inheritance.

Richard against ritual

The test case of a divinely mandated, Christomimetic king intensifies the problem faced by all Christian subjects within a Protestant soteriology: how can one establish divine election—particularly outside of the ritual confirmations of an external ecclesiastical authority? After Henry VIII refused to subject himself to Rome and sparked the country’s official break with Catholicism, the English Reformation adopted many of the principles of its continental counterpart, relocating the evidence of salvation inside the individual; however, the church maintained a hierarchical structure under a singular head, replacing pope with king. *Richard II* anachronistically links its protagonist to concerns of political theology pressing to a contemporary audience. The historical king was actually fairly orthodox; he strictly opposed Lollardy, often considered one of the forerunners of the Reformation.¹³⁵ Shakespeare’s Richard

¹³⁴ William O. Scott, "Landholding, Leasing, and Inheritance in *Richard II*," *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 42, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 277, Project MUSE. Scott contextualizes the play’s ideas of kingship in light of contemporary discourse and custom regarding property transactions at all levels of society.

¹³⁵ This is not to deny that the historical king faced his own crises of ecclesiastical authority. After all, at the beginning of his reign, there were competing popes in Rome and Avignon. As is Shakespeare’s Richard, the historical man was also particularly interested in the potential sacerdotal power of a king. However, Shakespeare

II, on the other hand, insists on his own supremacy. He interferes with or even usurps medieval political-religious rituals such as the chrism and the *judicium Dei*. As Richard does in the secular matter of inheritance claims, he continually substitutes his personal voice for traditional machinery, but his will does not command his environment, and he finds himself thwarted by both a country and a cosmos deaf to his commands. As Richard interacts with ceremonies, the play continually qualifies both his power and the power of these rituals.

Richard's deposition in the fourth act, which was omitted from the initial text, inverts traditional ceremony. Largely due to its textual history, no single scene of the play has attracted as much scrutiny by historically focused critics.¹³⁶ Against the charge that Richard II's deposition may have been deemed too provocative and subject to theatrical as well as press censorship in the 1590s, Garry Wills makes a compelling argument that the controversy most relevant to 1590s censorship surrounds the opposite of deposition, the rituals of coronation, which may have led ecclesiastical censors to deem the scene too volatile. Richard Hooker and others rejected certain, traditional rites that might give the appearance that kings were *made* rather than recognized. Upon the death of one sovereign, the new monarch is so by right of birth, not ceremony. Per Wills, "Of all the 'solemnities' of coronation that Hooker called empty, the chrism [i.e., the anointing of the king's head and shoulders with sacred oil] was the most offensive in Tudor and Stuart England. The anointing had to come from the church, in effect

writes his protagonist's spiritual journey in ways that resonate with Reformation trends, as we will see in the final act.

¹³⁶ See, for example, Janet Clare, "The Censorship of the Deposition Scene in *Richard II*," *The Review of English Studies* 41, no. 161 (February 1990), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/516607>.

subordinating kings to the pope.”¹³⁷ In Richard II’s deposition, the king inverts several elements of the coronation, narrating each action as he performs it: “Now mark me, how I will undo myself” (4.1.203). His list continually underscores his self-dependence as he strips his own body of its kingly markers and powers. His one-man show includes the anti-chrism: “With mine own tears I wash away my balm” (4.1.207). The king’s anointing was a quasi-sacramental rite (analogous to baptism, confirmation, and ordination) that was thought to imprint the king with an indelible character in an unrepeatable ceremony. Richard usurps ecclesiastical prerogative, repeating and reversing the chrism in order to renounce his sacramental status. As the enemies of both Richard II and Edward II discover, kingship is difficult to fully “undo,” but Richard’s actions leave us with doubts about the institutions that traditionally establish kings as well as about the power of kings, themselves.

Richard’s anti-chrism distances him from the “Messiah”—the word literally translates as “anointed one”—even as he appropriates the role of a different Christomimetic figure. The Norman Anonymous speaks of priests as well as kings, attributing their respective statuses to two of Christ’s threefold offices (the third being the prophet). Richard slips from his assigned place, and his relationship with the clergy is part of a profound rupture within the tradition of Christian kingship that is formalized in, rather than achieved by, his anti-chrism. The above litany follows hard upon a rhetorical flourish in which he sarcastically identifies himself as both priest and respondent: “God save the king! Will no man say amen? / Am I both priest and clerk?”

¹³⁷ Garry Wills, *Making Make-Believe Real: Politics as Theater in Shakespeare's Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 64.

(4.1.174-75).¹³⁸ While the largest religious figure in the play, the Bishop of Carlisle, is present in this scene, he echoes John of Gaunt (pre-deathbed) and takes Richard's personal supremacy for his sermon; earlier in the scene, he insists that Richard alone is "the figure of God's majesty, / His captain, steward, deputy elect" and asks, "What subject can give sentence on his king?" (4.1.126-27, 22). Of course, Richard's subjects do "give sentence on [him]," and Carlisle's question serves to reinforce the bishop's limitations rather than the king's powers.

This question, an overarching concern of the play, implicitly appears in its very first scene, which revolves around the past crime of Gloucester's murder. The king ultimately oversteps his spiritual authority in the case, but the trial, itself, is compromised from the beginning by the fact that all assume Mowbray to have been acting as Richard's proxy in the matter. After Bolingbroke charges Mowbray, Richard determines to allow a duel, resolving, "Since we cannot atone you, we shall see / Justice design the victor's chivalry" (1.1.203-4). As requested, he sets the stage for the *judicium Dei*, i.e., the trial by combat (or by ordeal) in which God is presumed to help the innocent. He admits his inability to make peace between them and thereby reconcile them to the state. His invocation of "atone[ment]" straddles political and theological discourse and suggests limitations to the king's role as messianic representative.¹³⁹ (After all, the priest serves as the arbiter of spiritual judgment and as the mediator of the parishioner's participation in Christ's atoning death.) But when the day of the duel arrives, Richard interrupts this political embarrassment. He substitutes his own voice for the appeal to a

¹³⁸ Adrian Streete makes this connection between Richard's speech—in which he identifies himself as king and priest—and Christ's threefold offices, two of which Richard claims. *Protestantism and Drama in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 197.

¹³⁹ Streete identifies this moment as "a crisis of his political absolutism [and] also...an oblique recognition that his sacral status as Christ's representative on earth is under threat" (197).

divine voice of judgment. He forbids the two from fighting and banishes both from the kingdom, charging them to never meet again. Unable to atone them, he performs the opposite: exile and separation (although Richard does allow for Bolingbroke's eventual return).

As Richard interferes with the trial, the play differentiates his voice from the divine one he seeks to replace. For one thing, he here acts with the support of his council, a reminder that other voices lie behind Richard's though the king's voice is still unique. Upon learning that his banishment is to be foreshortened from eleven years to seven, Bolingbroke meditates on the extent of royal verbal power: "How long a time lies in one little word! / Four lagging winters and four wanton springs / End in a word; such is the breath of kings" (1.3.213-15). The king can speak and thereby shape the world of his subjects.¹⁴⁰ However, Bolingbroke's father almost immediately qualifies his son's assessment. Gaunt fears that he will not live to see his son return:

RICHARD. Why, uncle, thou hast many years to live.

GAUNT. But not a minute, King, that thou canst give. (1.3.225-26)

There are some timelines that Richard cannot disrupt. In his final minutes, Richard will return to this theme, bemoaning, "I wasted time, and now doth Time waste me" (5.5.49). The line comes as commentary on his reaction to the "time" of a certain piece of music, but it also serves to underscore Richard's limitations and failures as an all-too-human king.

We see the formal challenge once more in *Richard II*. In the fourth act, a handful of characters are caught up in the larger conflict between Richard and Bolingbroke, resulting in a succession of gauges being thrown. The general discord testifies to the escalating civil conflict, but there is also a comic element to the scene. As glove after glove is thrown, poor Aumerle actually runs out of hands and looks to borrow a couple gloves from a friend. The challenge has

¹⁴⁰ The power of the king's voice even turns it into its own entity, a voice of judgment that can be detached and assigned to appointed representatives—though, according to his detractors, Richard does this too freely.

become a parody of itself. There are too many human voices to accommodate, and Richard's interference seems to have robbed the ritual of both its dignity and its claim to a singular, divine voice of judgment.

Richard against himself

Richard's anti-chrism is part of a general dismantling of his identity as king in which the king is (further) internally fractured as well as severed from external identifications and authorities. Like Edward, he must grapple with the identity of a king whose kingdom is in revolt. Informed that his troops have defected, he grows pale: "But now the blood of twenty thousand men / Did triumph in my face, and they are fled" (3.2.76-77). Richard briefly intuits the lesson that he will immediately forget. The king as body politic is a corporation, and his practical power depends on its members. However, upon Aumerle's urging, he regroups:

I had forgot myself. Am I not king?
Awake, thou coward Majesty, thou sleepest!
Is not the King's name twenty thousand names?
Arm, arm, my name! (3.2.83-86)

But his name does not arm, and neither do the stones or the angels he also invokes. Richard rhetorically merges the two bodies of the king, assigning to his personal body metaphysical power over the people and terrain of his country, a mistake that sets him up to perceive an already present distinction as a catastrophic break. Thus broken, he finally sets himself against even the authority of his name and voice.

In the deposition scene, Richard strips himself of power that has proven discontinuous and fragmented. He asserts the power of the king's voice to negate former utterances: "With mine own tongue deny my sacred state, / With mine own breath release all duteous oaths.... / My acts, decrees and statutes I deny" (4.1.209-13). Richard revokes his current mandate and cedes his future one, but he also imagines erasing his royal past, dispelling his own former statements

and those binding others to the king. The play continually returns to a shifting, multiple temporality established by individuals in uncertain relationships with their pasts. When Richard calls for a mirror, that he might see a record of his transgressions, he dramatizes his shock that his body has failed to write a true history in wrinkles. He again turns to the form of the list, interrogating the image of his face and finding that the truest mirror is shattered glass (4.1.277-86). Yet Bolingbroke casts doubt on even this truth. When Richard claims, “my sorrow hath destroyed my face,” Bolingbroke replies, “The shadow of your sorrow hath destroyed / The shadow of your face” (4.1.291-93). Everything is performance, and this world of shadows allows us access only to copies of dubious provenance, never to originals.

The fracture within the king is also realized in the coexistence of two kings, both onstage. When Richard breaks the mirror, he breaks only one of his onstage mirrors. Indeed, he claims of his own face that it “was at last outfaced by Bolingbroke” and imagines the two kings as paired “buckets” within the “deep well” of the “golden crown,” sharing between them a limited amount of water (4.1.286, 184-85). Of his name, he claims, “I have no name, no title -- / No, not that name was given me at the font -- / But ‘tis usurped” (4.1.255-57). Even the word “usurped” suggests too orderly a transference of power for what we have witnessed. The king’s two bodies are not displayed wholly in either man by himself, or in Richard and Bolingbroke, or in Richard and the mirror. Like that mirror’s fragments, they are spilled across the stage in shards that refuse to come together to form a coherent image.

When Richard seizes on his status as betrayed king in order to cast himself as a martyred Christic figure, the picture—unlike *Edward II’s* dramatic tableau—is only one in a series rather than our final image of the king. Richard is never frozen as an identifiable icon. Even when narrating his (yet bloodless) Passion, he identifies both with and against the group. While he

castigates the assembled “Pilates” who “Have here delivered me to my sour cross,” he moves on to declare, “I find myself a traitor with the rest; / For I have given here my soul’s consent / T’undeck the pompous body of a king” (4.1. 240-41, 248-50). Richard is no sacred outsider; he joins the others as betrayers of a nation. Act five will more fully explore both Richard’s entrance into that collective and his internal fractures, which manifest in multiple roles.

The human king

It is here that I most break with Kantorowicz, whose argument largely depends on three scenes: Richard’s return to England (3.2), Richard’s meeting with Bolingbroke (3.3), and the deposition scene (4.1). Explicating this last (and Richard’s request for a mirror that he then breaks), he writes,

When...Richard dashes the mirror to the ground, there shatters not only Richard’s past and present, but every aspect of a super-world...The features as reflected by the looking-glass betray that he is stripped of every possibility of a second or super-body—of the pompous body politic of king, of the God-likeness of the Lord’s deputy elect, of the follies of the fool, and even of the most human griefs residing in inner man. The splintering mirror means, or is, the breaking apart of any possible duality. All those facets are reduced to one: to the banal face and insignificant *physis* of a miserable man, a *physis* now void of any metaphysics whatsoever. It is both less and more than Death. It is the *demise* of Richard, and the rise of a new body natural.¹⁴¹

First of all, the transference of the body politic from Richard II to Henry IV is neither orderly nor thorough. More importantly, Kantorowicz reads the play’s psychological narrative through the lens of his own broader, anthropological one, but Shakespeare’s interest in Richard’s psychology is, itself, representative of cultural currents, and Kantorowicz ignores the complex interiority of the man that remains. Richard’s prison soliloquy, his only soliloquy in a play full of highly theatrical monologues, shows us a fluid and faceted subjectivity that is not experienced as “one” at all. After all, the splintering mirror is as much an image of fragmented multiplicity as it is of a

¹⁴¹ Kantorowicz, 40.

canceled double. I argue that Richard's fragmentation provides for the imperfect, partial self-reflections of a more ordinary Christomimesis, one available to all of his subjects. *Edward II* ends by iconographically strengthening the parallel between king and Christ—even as it demystifies the icon as merely a political tool. *Richard II* ends by underscoring the king as “but man,” a form of disenchantment that enables new connections to the audience (onstage and off) and to Christ (5.5.39). In addition, while Richard may fail as national patriarch, some of the traits that previously undermined his masculinity—his emotionality and his greater affinity for poetry than for military matters—are newly cast as complexity and imagination, part of the wealth of nations and individuals. Rather than support the political agenda of a specific regime, the final image of the king invites a loose empathy based in shared humanity, religion, and mother country.

The more-than-dual king

In Richard's final scene, he shifts from showpiece monologues performed for others to solitary—but still dramatic—meditation and soliloquy. Unlike in *Edward II*, the titular king does not solidify into a symbol of a broken body politic. Richard instead discovers himself as personally faceted, a collective of one.¹⁴² Rather than lay claim to Christ's office as king, Richard finds himself subject to self-contradictions within the text of Christ as Word. At the core of a fluid and complex self, he discovers a fundamental privation, which serves as the object of

¹⁴² In tracing the portrayal of selfhood from medieval to renaissance drama, Richard Hillman casts a brief look at *Richard II*: “With respect to Shakespeare at least, it is in *Richard II* that the ‘new’ discourse of subjectivity is engendered.” In the prison scene, “his new condition, comprised of multiple and fragmentary identities [stands] in violent contrast with his former presumption of unitary selfhood.” Richard Hillman, *Self-speaking in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama: Subjectivity, Discourse and the Stage* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1999), 108, 109.

pain and doubt but also as the opportunity for charity and humility. In a mundane register, Richard approaches a modality of kenosis in which self-absence is the opportunity for gracious plurality and dialogic expansion.

The forsaken Richard turns from the mirror's singular reflection (since, after all, he smashed it) to fragmented and multiple text. He looks to scripture to make sense of his life and forecast his afterlife, but the ambiguous Word offers dubious comfort and turns his gaze back within himself. Cataloguing his thoughts and roles, he lists the occasional turn towards spiritual matters:

The better sort,
As thoughts of things divine, are intermixed
With scruples and do set the word itself
Against the word, as thus: 'Come, little ones';
And then again:
'It is as hard to come as for a camel
To thread the postern of a small needle's eye.' (5.5.11-17)

Anticipating his death, Richard uses competing scriptural passages to question his salvation. Will God show mercy on him due to his childlike innocence (perhaps reflected in his political naivety)?: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein" (Luke 18:16-17 KJV).¹⁴³ Or will God condemn him for his profligacy on the basis of the very next lines of the book of Luke, Christ's response to the ruler who asks about his own eternal life? In addition to keeping the commandments, the ruler must give all to the poor, "For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:25 KJV).¹⁴⁴ In the first scene of the play, Richard

¹⁴³ See also Matthew 19:14, Mark 10:14.

¹⁴⁴ See also Matthew 19:24, Mark 10:25

claimed the ability to judge men as God’s anointed representative, insisting that the disputants rest secure in “the unstooping firmness of my upright soul” (1.1.121). In his last, he turns that judgment inward and falls prey to the anxiety that necessarily attend all men in the soteriology of English theologians such as Richard Hooker and Lancelot Andrewes, who admitted more doubt in the matter of election than did their continental counterparts.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, Richard looks for himself in—and in dialogue with—the Word of Christ. His self-meditation naturally leads into meditation on God; his reflections impress upon him his own insufficiency outside of divine mercy; and he evaluates past actions according to Christian ethics without assuming them to self-evidently prove (or disprove) his salvation: all central to Calvinist and Lutheran Christology.¹⁴⁶

After losing the power of “the breath of kings” and failing to find security within the Word of the King, Richard explores more ordinary language as the source of his power and identity. He imagines himself—and humanity, more generally—as both miserably lacking and capable of the everyday powers of a poetic pseudo-deity in response. As he compares his cell to the outside world, he initially falters:

And, for because the world is populous
And here is not a creature but myself,
I cannot do it. Yet I’ll hammer’t out.
My brain I’ll prove the female to my soul,
My soul the father, and these two beget
A generation of still-breeding thoughts;
And these same thoughts people this little world,
In humours like the people of this world,
For no thought is contented. (5.5.3-11)

Richard’s discourse on the powers of the imagination lacks a rapturous sense of possibility, such as is to be found in Sir Philip Sidney’s image of the poet as “maker” in *The Defense of Poesy*. He

¹⁴⁵ See above, Introduction, 16-17.

¹⁴⁶ See above, Introduction, 11-17.

does not dream of superseding nature, only of creating its shadow within himself. Thomas Betteridge links Richard's final experience of himself to the relationship Slavoj Žižek structures between the subject and subjectivization. Žižek claims,

If we subtract all the richness of the different modes of subjectivization, all the fullness of experience present in the way individuals 'live' their subject-positions, what remains is an empty place which was filled out with this richness; and this original void, this lack of the symbolic structure is the subject, the subject of the signifier. The subject is therefore to be strictly opposed to the effect of subjectivization: what the subjectivization masks is not a pre- or trans-subjective process of writing but a lack which is the subject.¹⁴⁷

Before, Richard assumed an identity between symbols and the subjects they represent, an equation that governed both his self-perception and his consequent understanding of his ability to affect the external world. He thought himself an absolute monarch in God's image and believed in the power of his own name and his mystical ability to invoke such beings as stones, angels, and loyal supporters.¹⁴⁸ His deposition leaves him hollow, and in its wake he turns to what Žižek calls "subjectivization," assuming a series of "subject-positions" rather than drawing absolute equations. As he seeks to fill his world/self, he continually returns to an awareness of some "original void." He cycles through "still-breeding thoughts"; the moods and roles that he assigns himself never suffice but only lead to further moods and roles. His emotional catalogue includes

¹⁴⁷ Slavoj Žižek, "The Object as a Limit of Discourse: Approaches to the Lacanian Real," *Prose Studies* 11 (1998), 96. Qtd on Thomas Betteridge, *Shakespearean Fantasy and Politics* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire, 2005), 41. This is actually a fairly dated sample of Žižek's theory. More recently, he has actually engaged the link between kenosis and subjectivity more directly, addressing the internal dynamic of a multiple and self-regarding deity. See, for example, Slavoj Žižek, "Only a Suffering God Can Save Us," in *God in Pain: Inversions of Apocalypse*, by Slavoj Žižek and Boris Gunjević (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2012).

¹⁴⁸ This language of invocation will later (in the two parts of *Henry IV*) become an attribute of the Welsh sorcerer king, Glendower, who is mocked for his superstition.

piety, worldly ambition, and stoic acceptance, but none bring satisfaction or finality. His only anchor is in the refrain that “no thought”—and no one—“is contented,” an allusion to their fundamental emptiness as well as their unhappiness. Cycling back to this phrase, he declares “Thus play I in one person many people / And none contented” (5.5.31-32).

But Richard’s new idea of the corporate body, the “many people,” looks rather different than a seamless body politic, incarnate in the king. As he continues, he ponders the strange experience of being king and not king:

Sometimes am I king;
Then treasons make me wish myself a beggar,
And so I am. Then crushing penury
Persuades me I was better when a king;
Then am I kinged again, and by and by
Think that I am unkinged by Bolingbroke,
And straight am nothing. (5.5.32-37)

In Richard’s new understanding of what it means to be king, the body politic—or indeed any mystical corporation—has fallen away. He has reduced the king to an idea, or role, allowing him to assume the fracture of king and not king within his personal body. He moves between his roles on the basis of his own experience and inclination. The kingly breath that could un-king him can also re-king him because the king is nothing but breath. Instead of incorporating the English multitude, he represents them as a similarly complex everyman with various perspectives. His new emphasis on subjective experience enables the audience to connect to him as a man who alternately *feels* himself “a king” and “a beggar.”

Richard’s multiple status enables his own empathy as well. Throughout the final act, the York family drama provides points of comparison with Richard’s plight. York discovers his son, Aumerle, to be involved in a treasonous (to Henry IV, i.e., loyal to Richard) plot, of which he hastens to inform the new king. His wife follows, and the couple fights, the duchess begging for

mercy and the duke arguing against it (and, therefore, for his son's execution). With the arrival of the Duchess as petitioner, Bolingbroke references a popular ballad and declares, "Our scene is altered from a serious thing, / And now changed to 'The Beggar and the King'" (5.3.78-79). His cavalier attitude only adds to his distance from "the shrill-voiced suppliant" even though they belong to the same royal family (5.3.74). In Richard, these two roles have been internalized within one individual, and the disjunction between the two occasions self-directed irony rather than derision. When his loyal groom visits immediately before his murder, he greets Richard,

GROOM. Hail, royal Prince!
KING RICHARD. Thanks, noble peer.
 The cheapest of us is ten groats too dear. (5.5.67-68)

Richard's bitter pun draws on contemporary coinage in which the value of a royal exceeds that of a noble by ten groats. The target of his mockery in naming the groom a "peer" is himself rather than the servant. When his murderers enter, he then draws on the groom's care in order to return it, bidding, "If thou love me, 'tis time thou wert away" (5.5.96). Richard may have failed his anonymous subjects as king, as "peer," he does the only thing he can to save the groom.

While we are told of various cruelties towards Richard, we witness more evidence of love in the final act. At one point in this scene, music plays, inspiring the king to meditations that ultimately disturb him. He calls for it to cease but continues, "Yet blessing on his heart that gives it me, / For 'tis a sign of love; and love to Richard / Is a strange brooch in this all-hating world" (5.5.64-66). The same disjunction—between reported hate and staged affection—takes place earlier in the act, during Richard's procession to the Tower. York later tells his wife of the crowd's "contempt" as "dust was thrown upon his sacred head" (5.2.26, 30). However, the part of the march that we see gives us the play's most extensive interaction between Richard and his queen. The two meet as Richard is led to the Tower, and their conversation revolves around the

pain of their separation as husband and wife as much as their political tragedy. We receive the impression of a genuinely loving couple, one heightened by the contrast with the thoroughly dysfunctional house of York, the focus of the following two scenes.

Richard II is neither optimistic nor despairing. The play balances doubt with hope and inescapable loneliness with irrefutable connection. The king belongs to a Christian congregation of hearts that are the sites of ongoing, internal struggles. As he crowns and deposes himself, Richard ultimately asserts,

But whatever I be,
Nor I nor any man that but man is
With nothing shall be pleased till he be eased
With being nothing. (5.5.38-41)

If these lines call for Christian humility, they also suggest Richard's longing for the absolute peace of the grave, introducing a materialist fatalism into the speech. At the actual moment of his death, he desperately proclaims, "Mount, mount, my soul! thy seat is up on high / While my gross flesh sinks downward, here to die" (5.5.111-12). As king, Richard's final spiritual destination is less important to the play than the role he will play in England's historiography. As man, his oscillation between hope and doubt offers the audience a point of sympathetic identification independent of royal status.

The multi-gendered king

Richard's multiplicity helps make him available to both men and women. As Richard begets his brainchildren, he imagines a "female" brain to receive the impressions of a male "soul." In flesh, his procreative efforts proved less fruitful; his failure to produce an heir contributes to his vulnerability as king and leaves him open to attacks on his heteronormative masculinity that invoke the marriage bed. However, *Richard II*, unlike *Edward II*, places relatively little emphasis on sexuality. The play instead engages gender as something that shapes

and is shaped by language. Both Richard's affinity for poetic rhetoric and his propensity towards verbal self-negation open him to accusations of femininity. Similar to *Edward II*, the play further explores the theatricality of gender through the king's self-dramatizations. This affirmation of gender as performative, in itself, does not meaningfully challenge the respective roles of men and women—though it leaves room for future directors to do so. Quite the opposite. As he establishes himself as would-be father of the nation, Bolingbroke unites the performance of action-focused masculinity with a greater investment in the traditional claims of patrilineage. However, Richard's human complexity, which overwhelms rigidly demarcated, essentialist gender boundaries, compels our attention in a way his immediate successor never will. The play strands us between an affective king and an effective one in a way that will not be resolved until the tetralogy's conclusion.

As national patriarch, Richard fails. His wife brings forth only “woe” (2.2.62-66). His failure to reproduce creates an aura of impotence and opens him to Bolingbroke's (at least partially slanderous) accusation of sodomy. Before executing several of the king's favorites, Bolingbroke charges them with supplanting both him and, more surprisingly, the queen in Richard's affections. He accuses,

You have in manner with your sinful hours
Made a divorce betwixt his queen and him,
Broke the possession of a royal bed
And stained the beauty of a fair queen's cheeks
With tears drawn from her eyes by your foul wrongs. (3.1.9-15)

Richard II is not Edward II, and this allegation is isolated to these few lines. In fact, absolutely nothing in the queen's relationships with either her husband or his friends justifies these claims. Shakespeare instead imbues the royal marriage with romantic (though not overtly sexual) intimacy that (one hopes) was altogether missing from the historical couple. Isabella of Valois

(Richard's second wife, the first also being childless) married at the advanced age of seven, part of a negotiated peace between France and England, and was widowed three years later.¹⁴⁹

Critics reading the play have deconstructed Richard's gender identity on the basis of his behavior and language rather than his sexual proclivities, and their reactions help identify some of the stereotypes at play. James Stone's psychoanalytical look at gender in *Richard II* pairs the play with its critical history. He engages the readings of the nineteenth-century, produced by male critics (predominantly Coleridge and Swinburne) who continually underscore the monarch's feminine characteristics. In both the play and its commentary, he discovers the anxieties that attend a threatened masculinity: "Richard's plight is represented in terms of what the male imagination typecasts as two marks of the 'feminine,' subversive of masculine unity and self-identity: first, the double, and second, the repeated references to the negating words 'none' and 'nothing' and to the prefix 'un.'"¹⁵⁰ Stone looks at the deposed king as he dissolves and multiplies. Even at the material level, Richard is a particularly fluid king. In the 1940s, Richard Altick judged, "in no other history play is the idea of tears and weeping so insistently presented. It is this element which enforces most strongly our impression of Richard as a

¹⁴⁹ Helen Ostovich suggests that the queen's presumed virginity contributes to Shakespeare's presentation of her as it "selectively imitates the apocryphal biography of Mary, from the virgin-birth imagery and the garden association to the sorrowful procession that ends in death," and "establishes Richard as God's vicar on earth, the true king anointed in God's name." Helen Ostovich, "'Here in This Garden': The Iconography of the Virgin Queen in Shakespeare's *Richard II*," in *Marian Moments in Early Modern British Drama*, ed. Regina Buccola and Lisa Hopkins (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Pub., 2007), 24. Taking Ostovich's argument that these echoes are present, I would suggest that they instead highlight their status as echoes, as allusions that reflect the king's theological heritage but are fundamentally altered and distanced.

¹⁵⁰ James W. Stone, *Crossing Gender in Shakespeare: Feminist Psychoanalysis and the Difference Within* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 60.

weakling, a monarch essentially feminine in nature.”¹⁵¹ Passing over Altick’s problematic equations, we can still see these images of Richard as ones that engage his humanity as well as his failures of masculinity. The fellowship with the doomed king that I outline above relies upon a composite audience being able to identify with the king’s emotional movement as well as with his multiplicity and self-negation.

Richard also behaves in a way typed as feminine as he continually resorts to dramatic but largely ineffective—at least with respect to preserving his rule—language. Whether he is dictating to the world (1.3, 3.2), dramatizing for the world (3.3, 4.1), or reflecting his inner world (5.5), the play continually aligns Richard with language against effective, frequently martial government, and his failures prove lethal in the stab-happy genre of history. His verbose impotence undermines his masculinity; without the substantiation of violence, words, we are informed, are a woman’s tool.¹⁵² In the first scene of the play, Mowbray eagerly anticipates his duel with Bolingbroke (which Richard will prevent):

¹⁵¹ Richard D. Altick, "Symphonic Imagery in *Richard II*," *PMLA* 62, no. 2 (June 1947): 348, <http://jstor.org/stable/459267>. In fact, one of the critiques levied at Deborah Warner’s production of *Richard II*, in which she cast Fiona Shaw in the starring role, was that this particular bit of cross casting served to reinforce rather than to challenge gender stereotypes. However, as Klett notes, Shaw’s performance could also serve to undermine the assertion that Richard is “essentially” any one thing. Elizabeth Klett, *Cross-Gender Shakespeare and English National Identity: Wearing the Codpiece* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 32-33.

¹⁵² *Edward II* also casts words without deeds as unmanly. Mortimer rebukes Isabella for a particularly effusive speech: “Nay, madam, if you be a warrior, / Ye must not grow so passionate in speeches” (17.14-15). According to Simon Shepherd in his discussion of the play, “A biological male can weep, but a manly man expresses his emotion in social intervention. The end may not be good, but the manly mode of behavior is still virtuous. Within the emotional economy, manliness gets returns for itself: its sorrows are not ‘bootless’. The ideology of manliness, or

Let not my cold words here accuse my zeal.
'Tis not the trial of a woman's war,
The bitter clamour of two eager tongues,
Can arbitrate this cause betwixt us twain.
The blood is hot that must be cooled for this. (1.1.47-51)

Mowbray finds the inherent limitations of language inadequate to a man's needs and relates this insufficiency to an essential difference between men and women, a "cold"/"hot" distinction that plays into contemporary thought about male and female constitutions. His accuser, Bolingbroke also bemoans the insufficiency of words to express true feeling. After the duel has been canceled and the combatants exiled, his father accuses him of "hoard[ing] thy words" (1.3.253). He responds, "I have too few to take my leave of you, / When the tongue's office should be prodigal / To breathe the abundant dolor of the heart" (1.3.55-57). Emotion—both anger and grief—inspires manly men to action, not poetry. When Richard hands over his crown in the deposition scene, he names his successor the "silent king" (4.1.290). In comparison to a character whose lines comprise more than a quarter of the play, the new Henry IV is.¹⁵³

Yet, for all that the characteristic is typed female, Richard's predilection for dramatic speeches is part of a self-staging that serves to complicate our idea of "natural," singular gender roles, a complication at the heart of Deborah Warner's 1995-96 production of the play at the Royal National Theatre. Warner made the controversial decision to cast a woman, Fiona Shaw, in the lead role. Elizabeth Klett links Warner and Shaw's portrayal to Kantorowicz's theory of the king's two bodies:

masculinity, inscribes the individual within interpersonal completion and denigrates emotion without action." Simon Shepherd, *Marlowe and the Politics of Elizabethan Theatre* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 192.

¹⁵³ "Biggest Roles," PlayShakespeare.com: The Ultimate Free Shakespeare Resource, accessed December 07, 2017, <https://www.playshakespeare.com/study/biggest-roles>. Of all of Shakespeare's plays, *Richard II* has the highest average speech length, reflecting both the play and its eponymous lead's tendency towards monologues.

Shaw's androgynous physical presence defamiliarized the character as well as gender identity by disrupting the iconicity of Richard. As a female androgyne in a male Shakespearean role, Shaw did not look or act like a conventional Richard II...Her alienation of Richard's iconicity enabled her to expand Ernst H. Kantorowicz's seminal reading of *Richard II* as the drama of the 'King's two bodies.' Her portrayal revealed that Richard's identity as King depended upon his successful performance of masculinity; yet she also used her androgynous physicality to explore the character's many different bodies.¹⁵⁴

The choice to cross cast set gender and kingship as intertwined roles, bodies inhabited rather than exclusively possessed by both Fiona as an actress and Richard as an actor. The production invited the audience to "read the body of the actress as a multiply situated, perpetually shifting dramatic script."¹⁵⁵ I would add that Shakespeare's play also asks the audience to relate to the body of the king as such. Richard may have "feminine" aspects, but he also has "masculine" ones. After all, the king fights to his death and kills two servants along the way. His murderer's description of the man becomes an epitaph: "As full of valour as of royal blood" (5.5.113).

The play casts all identifications, including gender, as context-dependent, performative, and potentially hollow. As the king declares, "Thus play I in one person many people / And none contented" (5.5.31-32). His theatricality in the final act, newly thoughtful and self-conscious, creates intimacy between people never wholly contained by the labels afforded them.

The English king

Neither from the idea of polity-centered kingship nor from that of the state as *corpus morale, politicum, mysticum* can there easily be separated another notion which came to new life independently of, though simultaneously with, the organological and corporations doctrines: the *regnum* as *patria*, as an object of political devotion and semi-religious emotion.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Klett, 39. Klett looks at the production and the response it drew in a book devoted to the history of female-for-male cross casting in Shakespeare.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 34.

¹⁵⁶ Kantorowicz, 232.

In her analysis of Warner's production, Klett investigates the disruption occasioned by Shaw as an *Irish* body as well as a female one.¹⁵⁷ After all, it is hard to think of anything more quintessentially English than one of Shakespeare's history plays. They have become the focus of the kind of communal nostalgia that they frequently examine in such speeches as John of Gaunt's paean to the England of yore. Much like its poetic relative, the epic, the English history play participates in the myth-making of a nation. The second tetralogy may show us a fractured English community, but the characters' very sense of their loss keeps that community from being altogether lost. In this final section, I glance at the national ties and national identities affirmed in *Richard II*, particularly those established by a shared past and a shared language. England is not only the political organization under which its characters live; it is home—an amorphous compound that blends elements of common history, family affection, intimate communication, and hallowed ground. The characters generally participate in a sentimental approach to their country that floats between political camps. The all-too-human king becomes a symbol of this home; his very fragility is a promise that he shares in our experience. When deployed by Henry V, this symbol can emotionally empower a narrative of political integration or even national atonement, but a corresponding spiritual atonement has been lost along with the king's divinity. Such is a matter for individuals, even individual kings. In addition, while the tragic portrait of Richard allowed for—even demanded—gender-complexity, this portrait of the English family and nation instead demands demarcated gender spheres. Henry V manages to sentimentalize the bonds between determinedly masculine English warriors as part of a narrative of the *patria's*—the fatherland's—redemption through imperial triumph.

¹⁵⁷ Klett, 53-54.

Even as *Richard II* compromises the ideal, sacred king, it does so by locating him in a past English paradise, John of Gaunt's "demi-Eden." Nostalgia hits low as well as high characters in this play. When Richard's groom visits him in prison, the man reminisces about the former king's rides on his favorite horse. The queen, too, has her own cross-class encounter (though hers is less mutually affectionate). Shakespeare takes her into an actual garden where she overhears a gardener draw an extended metaphor connecting his own charge to the realm as he bemoans Richard's failure to responsibly garden/govern (3.4.29-66). The conceit reinforces our sense that paradise is not elsewhere but *elsewhen*, in a past where the garden was properly tended. When characters are (or shortly will be) elsewhere, they share the status of Englishmen who long for home. The banished Bolingbroke bids "adieu" to "England's ground," "My mother and my nurse that bears me yet!" and proclaims "Where'er I wander, boast of this I can, / Though banished, yet a true-born Englishman" (1.3.306-9). The returning Richard "greet[s]" the "Dear earth," and instead identifies himself as "a long-parted mother with her child" (3.2.10, 6, 8). The two kings are actually family, but they also participate in an image of England as a family, and this idea of an English motherland does not dissipate with the change in its head.

This motherland requires actual mothers or at least a domestic family structure. As Jean Howard and Phyllis Rackin detail, the second tetralogy, particularly when compared to the first (which depicts historically later events), reflects the increasing restriction of women to the private sphere. Concerns of state have become the exclusive domain of men. There is no Joan la Pucelle or Queen Margaret, characters that threaten to assault or subvert the power of the English king. In light of the ruptures of both the earlier tetralogy and its opening play, *Richard II*, the second tetralogy depicts a world where "patrilineal inheritance is no longer sufficient to guarantee patriarchal authority, [and, therefore,] female sexual transgression no longer threatens

to subvert it.”¹⁵⁸ The authority of a father or husband must be continually performed in the household as well as the government. *Richard II*'s female characters—the queen, the Duchess of Gaunt, and the Duchess of York—serve to remind us of the personal cost of political events. As the Duchess of York comes up against her own husband, “the opposition between masculine political considerations and feminine affective loyalty” is, Howard and Rackin argue, “intensified to the point of caricature.”¹⁵⁹ But I would argue that in this caricature, it is not the Duchess who comes off the worst. Her presence in the scene serves to restore meaning to hereditary ties, insisting on the emotional connections of family that endure even when the transference of property has become less certain.¹⁶⁰ Their role in government affairs has been reduced; their importance to the nation has been relocated. The women live in the margins where they serve as emotional buttresses. As for the sometimes feminized Richard, his removal from political power moves him into a gender no man's land where he is strengthened as a figure of national pathos.

Unlike Edward II, Richard does not merely inspire his deposer's (justified) fear. Richard inspires that cornerstone of family relations: guilt. Family—whether individual, aristocratic families or the greater construct of England as a family—is not a space of unqualified love and

¹⁵⁸ Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (London: Routledge, 1997), 138.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁶⁰ When *Richard II* gives way to the two parts of *Henry IV*, Shakespeare cuts out the duchess altogether, focusing on the relationship between fathers and sons in both private and political registers. The largest aristocratic female role in the plays is Kate Percy, the wife of Hotspur, a rebel who fears that the relationship will emasculate him. In the last play of the tetralogy, *Henry V*, for whom Hotspur is a foil, woos an altogether different Kate, the daughter of the King of France. Henry's wooing tangles with his conquering, establishing a household that enriches his power and affirms his masculinity.

happiness in *Richard II*. The cast shares traumatic as well as nostalgic relationships to the past and to one another. The play's allusions to Cain and Abel help shape this dual tone, connecting the civil war to a paradise lost and to the continually rehearsed break therefrom. Richard dead, Henry IV expresses regret rather than satisfaction. King Henry IV reproaches the murderer, Exton, confessing, "Though I did wish him dead, / I hate the murderer, love him murdered" (5.6.39-40). After execution, the greatest punishment is loss of England, and he banishes Exton and dooms him to "With Cain go wander through shades of night" (5.6.43). As previously discussed, his second reference to the bible story reverses the roles of Cain and Abel between the rival political camps. Richard's murder repeats Gloucester's; his story becomes part of the record of national trauma, one of England's "sad stories of the death of kings" (3.2.156). His body, too, enters into this cultural repository, becoming a relic of a past that gains a nostalgic glow by virtue of being past—and through Henry's personal remorse. Henry exiles himself to a never-achieved crusade "To wash this blood off from my guilty hand" and marches the corpse offstage (5.6.50). As he traipses after Richard, his (intended) ultimate destination inflects his current procession. The coffin dominates the onstage tableau as a symbol of an intensely personal England, beloved but betrayed by men no longer worthy to inhabit it.

Each new performance of the play sees its characters rehearse their sins anew. This repetition belongs to the genre of history as well as to the medium of theater.¹⁶¹ Their trauma is collective—a blend of national and religious history—as well as personal. Exton does not await the new king's displeasure to repent; his regret is immediate. After Richard falls, he cries out, "For now the devil that told me I did well / Says that this deed is chronicled in hell" (5.5.115-16).

¹⁶¹ Thomas Anderson reads the play as an investigation into Renaissance historiography that shows "how narratives that appear to leave history behind by archiving events are often at odds with both characters and spectators who repeatedly encounter memories of the past in their failed attempts to move forward." Anderson, 66.

His language tangles cosmic forces and the national record, the “chronicle.” Richard, himself, declares, “That hand shall burn in never-quickning fire / That staggers thus my person,” invoking a context that is domestic as well as cosmic (5.5.108-9). Tom Bishop ascertains, “The burning hand as a spectral revenant originally belonged, poetically speaking, to Thomas Cranmer, the first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, who was burned as a heretic at Oxford on March 21, 1556, and chronicled in his turn by John Foxe.”¹⁶² Bishop’s primary interest is in the kind of subjectivity that emerges in the struggle between iconoclastic and ceremonial/royalist self-staging, but Cranmer’s echo also reassigns Richard’s martyrdom from generally Christian, or even Christic, to specifically English. The subtle link between the dead king and a religious/civil conflict in the original audience’s more recent past helps create a haunted, shifting landscape that touches Golgotha, Pomfret Castle, and Smithfield.

The king who ends the tetralogy, Henry V, privately accepts his participation in the national sin rehearsed in Richard’s overthrow and murder, but he also insists on the mutual independence of a guilty English collective whose members must make their own, never sufficient accountings to God and rely on his mercy. Before Agincourt, Henry begs the Lord, “O Not today, think not upon the fault / My father made in compassing the crown” (4.1.277-82). He reminds God of his own penitence: the new interment of Richard’s body, his personal mourning, the payment of “five hundred poor” to pray for the sin of his murder twice daily, and the endowment of “two chantries, where the sad and solemn priests / Sing still for Richard’s soul” (4.1.283-90). He promises to do more, “Though all that I can do is nothing worth, / Since that my

¹⁶² Tom Bishop, “The Burning Hand: Poetry and Reformation in Shakespeare’s *Richard II*,” *Religion & Literature* 32, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 33, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40059865>.

penitence comes after all, / Imploring pardon” (4.1.291-93).¹⁶³ The past “all” (after which Henry’s own “all” is eternally insufficient) encompasses a kind of original sin, reenacted by his father, and highlights Henry’s ultimate dependence on grace. In accordance with a Protestant faith, he insists on his inability to compel mercy through external actions. Both his own spiritual salvation and that of his countrymen are internal matters of private faith. As “Harry Le Roy,” he persuades his soldiers, “Every subject’s duty is the king’s; but every subject’s soul is his own” (4.1.169ff). These distinctions do not mean that he can’t invoke providential favor after a victory—but this is post facto rhetoric rather than motivating theology.¹⁶⁴

Henry takes the prodigal-son story he perfected at the personal level in the two middle plays of the tetralogy to the international stage, crafting a tale of prodigal England making good and coming home—or rather, expanding home across the sea. England’s “paradise lost” status helps him to conjure a new/old English imperium. After all, when England is no longer set apart as a sacred island, geographically finite hallowed ground, it becomes easier to imaginatively stretch it across the Channel. In the play’s most famous speech, Henry inspires his outnumbered army to military greatness. His rhetoric markedly contrasts John of Gaunt’s in *Richard II’s* showpiece, “This royal throne of kings...” (2.1.40-68). Gaunt assumes the role of “prophet” in order to forecast the disasters of Richard’s reign and inspire his audience to mourning tinged with guilt over their loss of the “other Eden” of England (2.1.31, 42). He focuses on the land, which is characterized as, among other things, the feminine “nurse” and “teeming womb of royal kings,” and protests that a past age of conquering has ended in self-defeat (4.1.51). Henry,

¹⁶³ The literal sense of these last few lines is in debate—in particular, the gloss of the second “all”—and different senses have different implications with regard to any atonement theology implicit in the second tetralogy. See Gary Taylor, Appendix B, 295-301.

¹⁶⁴ See *Henry V*, 4.8.104-9.

instead, champions the heroes that will have carried out a new English invasion, mapping England in their scarred and lusty bodies, which bring England to Agincourt and Agincourt home to England. He tells a tale of men telling tales as they “yearly on the vigil feast [their] neighbors” and recount their deeds of this one St. Crispin’s Day (4.3.45). Rather than dwell on loss, Henry imbues his present with the glow of future nostalgia. He invokes the other extreme of biblical history, the apocalypse, and insists that his audience will survive in their sons’ stories and those of each male generation: “And Crispin Crispian shall ne’er go by, / From this day to the ending of the world, / But we in it shall be remember’d” (4.3.57-59). He uses their shared mortality as the grounds for their common immortality; their human fragility and the odds against success proportionately increase each soldier’s (soon-to-be) legendary honor. Henry turns from the conceit of England as motherland (with a maternal king) and joins his army in a roving, masculine family, addressing them with the often quoted phrase, “we few, we happy few, we band of brothers” (4.3.60). “Harry the king” taps into the personal connections and ambitions of a group he casts as peers—as companions, (qualified) equals, and members of the nobility: “For he to-day that sheds his blood with me / Shall be my brother; be he ne’er so vile, / This day shall gentle his condition” (4.3. 53, 61-63). Henry establishes a new world sense of possibility on the battlefields of France, offering battle as redemption, advancement, and confirmation within the brotherhood. Leaving England is not punishment but opportunity to expand England and, in doing so, elevate oneself.

Henry may be unable to redeem the sins of either Adam or his actual father, but he can redeem the *patria*’s story. Stories, however, have the self-conscious limitations of narratives as well as their power. *Richard II* haunts *Henry V* as irony rather than tragedy. The night before the climactic battle, Henry’s soldiers are less than inspired by their king’s cause, his claim to the

French throne via Salic law, and protest the king's readiness to risk their lives—particularly when Henry's own station secures him for ransom rather than death. Henry may have claimed that he would refuse to be ransomed, but "Ay, he said, so, to make us fight cheerfully: but when our throats are cut, he may be ransomed, and we never the wiser" (4.1.184ff). This promise is never put to the test, but Henry's rhetoric about brotherhood wears a bit thin when he later distinguishes the battlefield dead between those "of name" and "all other men" (4.8.103). As for Henry's England, in the final speech of the play, the Chorus gives the king the epitaph, "Fortune made his sword; / By which the world's best garden he achieved" (Epil.6-7). The Chorus claims that Henry's military victories carved out a new golden age of English empire. Except, of course, that neither Shakespeare nor geopolitics are ever that easy. "Sword[s]" make poor gardening tools. Moreover, Henry's garden quickly goes to seed. The Chorus reminds us that things quickly fall apart under his son, Henry VI, "which oft our stage hath shown" (Epil.13). The second tetralogy ends with the beginning of the first, reinforcing our awareness of national history as the continual repetition of conjoined glory and trauma. We are all brothers...when it is convenient. And triumphs are both written in blood and stories that simply haven't ended.

Which doesn't mean that we shouldn't tell them. The English history, told in English, is a vital meeting place. The tetralogy frames its vernacular as the language of honesty and community. In *Richard II*, Mowbray may disdain "cold words" in the first scene, but upon being exiled, he delivers fifteen flowery lines protesting his banishment from the English-speaking world. He concludes, "What is thy sentence then but speechless death, / Which robs my tongue from breathing native breath?" (1.3.174-75). The play continually meditates on the power of language, often situating it in the speaking body. Language—particularly "native" language—is as necessary to life as oxygen. The exile's "tongue" will isolate him when he is detached from

the community created by the simple act of communication (and the possibility thereof). The king's "sentence" has special, singular power over the voices of others, but his subject's English has power only in being shared.

Yet, this distinction is too neat when the king gives his commands in English, and his purview is limited to a mostly English-speaking world. When the Duchess of York begs Henry IV for her son's life, she refuses to rise until he has granted her wish:

Nay, do not say, "Stand up."
Say, "pardon" first, and afterwards, "stand up."
And if I were thy nurse, thy tongue to teach,
"Pardon" should be the first word of thy speech. (5.3.110-113)

She frames their encounter as a remedial language lesson, teaching the new king the word of royal mercy, the counterpart to the king's heavier "sentences." York mocks his wife's pleas and suggests, "Speak it in French, king; say 'pardonne moi'" (5.3.118). He moves the sound rather than the meaning from one language to another; a pardon for Aumerle becomes an apology refusing that pardon. The Duchess protests,

Dost thou teach pardon pardon to destroy?
Ah, my sour husband, my hard-hearted lord,
That set'st the word itself against the word!
Speak "pardon" as 'tis current in our land;
The chopping French we do not understand. (5.3.119-123)

The Duchess gives the exact phrase that Richard will echo two scenes hence: "set the word itself / Against the word" (5.5.13-14). Richard will refer to his reading of two biblical passages that seem to promise him different divine sentences in the afterlife. Henry here ties the king's own sentence to his sentencing. He finally speaks the word "pardon": "I pardon him, as God shall pardon me" (5.3.130). Having assumed Richard's mantle, he can answer his aunt's "prayer," playing for her the role that God plays for him (5.3.107). However, in the wake of the deposition, the king's sacred authority, his status of being reserved to God alone, has been undermined,

complicating the question of who has the power to judge whom. Rather than absolute worth, the king's word has value "as 'tis current in our land"—as an English word of judgment accepted by English subjects.

When York undermines his wife's "pardon" with French, he presents a danger that resonates with the tetralogy's general concern with the boundaries of the English empire—not all of which speaks English.¹⁶⁵ Richard's Irish wars are peripheral to the play, but *Henry IV, Part One* gives a fuller look at rebelling subjects who are spiritually and linguistically foreign. The Welsh join with those who oppose Henry IV and rally behind Mortimer who claims to hold Richard's own mandate. Their leader, Glendower, self-styles as a powerful magician, and Welsh is cast as the language of incantation—or superstition, depending on one's point of view. Glendower insists that he has mastered both a traditional English education and the "tedious ways of art" and "deep experiments" (3.1.48, 49).¹⁶⁶ Hotspur replies, "I think there's no man speaks better Welsh" (3.1.50). He refuses to endorse Glendower's claim, stripping his linguistic preeminence to a facility with the Welsh language, for which he has little respect. He dismisses Welsh (as well as Irish) as the "barbarian babble" of near animals, claiming to prefer his dog's

¹⁶⁵ David Steinsaltz reads Shakespeare's histories as they reveal the characterization of French as the language of trickery or deception, a theme to be picked up in *Henry V*. He looks at the conflict between the York parents as it reveals cleavage within the English language and a kind of lingering resentment about the Norman Invasion. David Steinsaltz, "The Politics of the French Language in Shakespeare's Histories," *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 42, no. 2 (Spring 2002), Project MUSE [Johns Hopkins UP].

¹⁶⁶ For *Henry IV, Part One*, I use the edition: William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part I*, ed. Claire McEachern (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2000).

“Irish” “howl” to the Welsh song of Glendower’s daughter (3.1.235-34).¹⁶⁷ Their conversation, on the other hand, occurs in English. Indeed, (in his self-report) Glendower not only can “call spirits from the vasty deep,” he can “speak English, lord, as well as you” (3.1.53, 120). Michael Neill claims that Glendower straddles the positions of “external threat” and “troublesome insider”—as does his daughter when she becomes Mortimer’s new wife. The young lady speaks only Welsh, and Mortimer proves more susceptible to her and its charms, “yielding to a foreign enchantress...in what he himself telling figures as an act of linguistic submission”: “But I will never be a truant, love, / Till I have learn’d thy language” (3.1.204-5).¹⁶⁸

Henry IV’s actual successor, Henry V, ultimately secures the English language and extends its reach, aggressively integrating Britain’s various linguistic factions and seizing a chunk of France (and French speakers). The Welsh captain Fluellen now fights for Henry, his pride in his heritage no longer part of an active rebellion. The end of the tetralogy also sees Shakespeare’s only scene written entirely in French. The subject of the scene is translation as Catherine, the king’s daughter, asks her lady-in-waiting, Alice, to help her begin to learn the English language. The scene follows the fall of Harfleur, whose gates Henry persuades open with the threat that his army will otherwise take them by force and then sack the town (3.3.81-123).¹⁶⁹ Catherine prepares to open her own gates. She, too, anchors English in the body that speaks it but not as “native breath.” English is still the language of life and mercy, but it is the kind of qualified mercy shown subjects conquered rather than born. Henry’s military victories have

¹⁶⁷ Michael Neill, “Broken English and Broken Irish: Nation, Language, and the Optic of Power in Shakespeare’s Histories,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 16, www.jstor.org/stable/2871290.

¹⁶⁸ Neill, 16-17.

¹⁶⁹ Henry does not scruple to detail the horrors his army will unleash, spending many lines on how they will kill the men, rape the women, and spit the babies

made their marriage inevitable, and Catherine demands the English labels for various parts of her body, connecting the conquest of France to the conquest and Englishing of its princess. She begins her catalogue with the hand, the common metonym for marriage, and ends with foot and gown, homonyms (with some careful mispronunciation) for “foutre” and “con” (3.4.5-46). Shocked at this foul language—“Ils sont les mots de son mauvais, corruptible, gros, et impudique, et non pour les dames d'honneur d'user”—she, “neanmoins” (nevertheless), runs through the list one more time (3.4.46ff, 50). Catherine marks her sexualized body through its inevitable relationship with the English king, which blurs the line separating consensual from forced marriage. When Henry meets his bride-to-be, he continues her translation, calling her “Kate,” a quintessentially English nickname to match his own “Harry” (5.2.107).

None of which detracts from the onstage humor of the scene between Catherine and Alice. Even with today’s more subtle style of acting, its French practically demands broad gesticulation, and easy, dirty jokes have lost none of their appeal in the intervening centuries. Instead of York mocking his wife with the French “pardon” (which would mean the execution of their son), the English-French homophonic translation now moves in the other direction, defanged as the source of crude comedy. And when the couple actually meets for the first time, Henry plays the scene perfectly, charming the audience and (often) his bride. Henry V “protests too much” the limitations of his soldierly English prose when it comes to courtship. Not one of those promiscuous “fellows of infinite tongue”—facility that the scene links to multilingualism as well as poetic expression—he casts himself as a “fellow of plain and uncoined constancy” (5.2.151-52). When he slips in a flattering French phrase, Catherine declares that he has “fausse French enough to deceive de most sage demoiselle dat is in France” (5.2.210-11). Henry instantly switches from “false French” to “true English” in order to declare his love (5.2.212,

13). English is not imposition but reparation, the plain prose of honest, masculine sentiment and growing families. He restores part of France to this English language communion.

Henry is Shakespeare's most masterfully versatile rhetorician; he effortlessly navigates the tavern, the court, and the battlefield, weaving them into a tapestry of England. Ruthless with his friends, his hard brilliance moves the tetralogy from a melancholy communion through the "sad stories of the death of kings" to this triumphal, imperial imagination of an English community. His is the voice of the St. Crispin's Day speech, and I must admit, while there are certain Shakespearean touchstones that, for all my love of Shakespeare, are overborne by their hype, this is the exception. Without fail, the speech brings me—in spite of my personality, my values, and my overall reading of a more ambivalent play—closer to rabid jingoism than does anything except the summer Olympics. And I'm not even English.

Look back into your mighty ancestors:
Go, my dread lord, to your great-grandsire's tomb,
From whom you claim; invoke his warlike spirit,
And your great-uncle's, Edward the Black Prince,
Who on the French ground play'd a tragedy,
Making defeat on the full power of France,
Whiles his most mighty father on a hill
Stood smiling to behold his lion's whelp
Forge in blood of French nobility. (*Henry V*, 1.2.102-10)

Edward II ends with the beginning of the reign of Edward III, a legendary warrior. Shakespeare's tetralogy ends with Henry V's imitation of both Edward III and his son, the Black Prince (i.e., Richard's better loved, older brother who predeceased their father), "Who on the French ground play'd a tragedy." The plays insist on the reliance of both the world's theater and the theater's theater on known narratives and imitation. The concept of kenosis as an evacuating sacrifice, or martyrdom, is relevant to my reading of *Edward II*—though I note that this is not

truly *self*-sacrifice (which will prove a common theme across my readings). While a different (and limited) kind of self-emptying occurs in the dialogic expansion of Richard II, the pressures of genre come to bear, and history demands the coherence of his story. The tetralogy concludes with its new protagonist's conscious adoption of a normative persona rather than his exploration of himself. These final closures also narrow and determine gender expression as the throne is restored to masculine, martial rulers.¹⁷⁰

While their selfish and ineffective kings are, by no means, set up as ideals in their guises as either private subjects or as monarchs, *Edward II* and *Richard II* initially serve to complicate gender essentialization, their main characters eluding a too rigid binary. In both of these cases, the king's gender queerness or complexity serves to ultimately strengthen the kind of Christomimesis newly available to him in defeat. From the beginning of the play, Edward's status is exceptional; after all, even "the mightiest kings have had their minions" (4.392). By the end, his sodomy has been reframed, from passion to Passion, an exceptional image that helps his son reclaim his traditional, hereditary power. Richard, on the other hand, ends his play navigating between internal and external theaters—as we all must. Neither emphatically masculine, nor (despite what some have argued) emphatically feminine, Richard defies gender caricature, helping a composite audience to connect to this multifaceted king as he explores his own contradictions through the Word.

Along with any metaphysical investment in sacred kingship, the playwrights sacrifice this interim of greater gender openness. Both Edward III and Henry V navigate domestic, affective

¹⁷⁰ With respect to *Henry V*, Katherine Eggert argues that the actual ruler, Queen Elizabeth, hovers threateningly in the background as Shakespeare imaginatively reclaims both the throne and the theater for masculine men. "Nostalgia and the Not Yet Late Queen: Refusing Female Rule in *Henry V*," *ELH* 61, no. 3 (Fall 1994), doi:10.1353/elh.1994.0022.

spheres without being caught by them. Unlike York in *Richard II*, the young Edward III is available to the claims of family affection—though unwilling to let them interfere with justice. He rescues England from his mother as well as from Mortimer, but Isabella’s pain at her son’s betrayal brings tears to his eyes. He sends her away for fear he “shall pity her if she speak again” (25.86). Immediately thereafter, he moves before his father’s hearse, and the play’s final lines marry the resolution of a king with the grief of a son. As for Henry V, he begins a new family in the final act. He woos Catherine, but erotic discourse—like the associated French—is something that Henry conquers rather than adopts, subjecting it to bluff, soldierly rhetoric. His bride accepts him, for her marriage is “as it shall please de roi mon pere,” and the very end of the play dwells on the family ties created between the two crowns (5.2.238). The England of Marlowe and Shakespeare demands a strong national patriarch, who is decisively masculine but fully human. As for spiritual matters? Mind your own business, advises Shakespeare. Marlowe just laughs.

CHAPTER TWO

“MARKS OF WONDER”: DIVINE BIRTHMARKS AND *IMITATIO CHRISTI* IN *TWELFTH NIGHT* AND *CYMBELINE*

Both *Cymbeline* and *Twelfth Night* revolve around a crossdressing female; both contain perceived deaths and resurrections; and both see disguised siblings reunited in their final act, their identity established by a remembered birthmark. They share a subtler connection as well. Each play temporally invokes the incarnation: *Twelfth Night* through the festive calendar (Christmas and the Epiphany) and *Cymbeline* through the historical (the king being best known for reigning at the time of Christ's birth). Their concluding moments return us to their titles. After four-and-a-half acts wandering through deceit and mistakes (victims of symbolic economies grown promiscuous), the characters participate in revelations that refer to Christ's appearance. The moment in which Sebastian and Viola meet stages a *Noli me tangere* moment that recalls Christ's first self-revelation after his death, his encounter with Mary Magdalene in the garden in which he forbids her to touch him (John 20:17). *Cymbeline* ends with the interpretation of a divine prophecy that immediately applies to its characters but also typologically promises both British and Christian dominion as a new day dawns.

The plays' crises are resolved through a legitimating mark of identity, with a divine referent, that appears on (or through) father, brother, and a sister who is dressed as a brother in the final scene. The questions become how and when each of these characters gets to participate in what image of the divine. In each play, a recurrent motif shapes the answer. The more communitarian *Twelfth Night* is a play of twins. It has deeply ingrained hierarchies, but its ideal, spiritual subject relates to an image of Christ that is ultimately neuter—or at least so far beyond us that to parse the gender of his body is as ridiculous as Feste's grammatical parsing of the host.

The play finally invests in an essential, individual subject that remains unfinished and rooted within a community. It explores the boundaries of this subject in a celebration of role-playing rooted in genuine, empathetic identification. The closest a person can come to a Christic ideal is through kindness—a word that encompasses generosity, family, and the likeness of twins.

The more authoritarian *Cymbeline*, on the other hand, is troubled by likeness. The play searches for an authorizing stamp to help its cast distinguish between truth and falsehood and establish a related system of credit. The heir lost and the king emasculated (and largely absent throughout the play), the throne is weak. As for the play's central marriage, it is compromised by the inversion of proper gender dynamics and by related substitutions: for God, which is idolatry, and for the spouse, which is (rumored) adultery. In the confusion of kingdom and household, characters find themselves alienated from their proper identities. *Cymbeline's* solution is a divine, paternal mark that legitimates not only the individual subject but also corporate bodies—marital, familial, and national—by defining their head. The two main threads, the historical/political plot and the wager plot, are each resolved through such a stamp. Guiderius discovers himself an heir; his birthmark redeems Innogen's "stain." Posthumus discovers himself a sinner made in the image of and ultimately redeemed by Christ; only then can he make a proper husband. The play's ideal subject is quintessentially male, the head of household and nation, and its characters come to themselves as they also find their rigidly demarcated places within the greater bodies of family and nation. *Cymbeline* provides for a female subject but insists that she be properly subject *to* man. It ultimately contains the political and spiritual threat posed by Innogen's body, casting it as derivative—but valid—coin and isolating her within a domestic sphere that has been naturalized as a matter of inherent capacity and divine will.

However, both of these plays question the use of force in generating their final communities. In *Twelfth Night*, class hierarchy, self-interest, and a cruelty that masquerades as comedy compromise its multivalent kindness. The play presents acts of humility and charity, but members of its cast also externalize these demands, i.e., self-sacrifice becomes other-sacrifice, and humility becomes humiliation. The darkness at the play's fringes threatens its triumphs and leaves us a little unsettled. It should. The comforts of Christianity and comedy should never become complacency. *Cymbeline's* darkness is much more overt. It does not gently unsettle its happy ending so much as strand us between wonder and incredulity. In the dismemberment and resurrection of Innogen's marriage and England's throne, we can see the restorative hand of providence and/or the simple victory of the strongest. The play offers its directors and readers a choice between tones, throwing us upon our own literary inclinations towards fairy tale or ironic commentary.

These plays demonstrate different approaches to ideal subjectivity and gender dynamics, linking these broad themes to different images of Christ. The ideal of *Twelfth Night* requires horizontal participation, making its hints of Christology inseparable from pneumatology and sacramental theology. Instead of a material host, the play has its members engage one another, often through the central fiction of Cesario. Christ is a role—or, better, a spirit of role-playing—that balances responsiveness with personal integrity. The ideal of *Cymbeline*, marked more strongly by Reformation theology and early modern social dynamics, instead relies on hierarchy and singularity. The play privileges faith—verified through revelation—rather than charity, and attaches its promoted humility to self-knowledge (and sin) rather than generosity. When its idols are dismantled, the play invests, not in *Twelfth Night's* communal spirit, but rather in a divine patriarch and his son.

TWELFTH NIGHT: OR WHAT YOU WILL

Twelfth Night ends with the identical brother and sister appearing together, their revelation drawing the comedy of mistaken identities to a close.¹⁷¹ I examine the excess that pervades the play—its doubled (or more) bodies and meanings—and the denouement that claims to resolve the confusion. The play’s title ties it to the church calendar and positions us on the eve of Epiphany; we inhabit the night that precedes the commemoration of the Adoration of the Magi and, as a time of social license and inversion, has developed its own festive traditions.¹⁷² In this topsy-turvy climate, the play points to an approaching “transcendental signified,” an ultimate guarantor of meaning and identity that ultimately defies total comprehension. *Twelfth Night’s* truth is polysemous and enables participation rather than mastery. The play finally collects its twins—both literal and figurative—into a community inhabited by complex subjects for whom this multi-faceted truth is inseparable from grace. At their most kenotic, the characters of *Twelfth*

¹⁷¹ *Twelfth Night* pairs Viola and Sebastian as apparent twins, their bond and resemblance anchoring a more general motif. For all practical purposes, I treat the characters as such. However, they may or may not be biological twins. Sebastian speaks of his father’s death, “He finished indeed his mortal act / That day that made my sister thirteen years” (5.1.243-44). The distance he maintains from his sister (and her age) here would be odd for a biological twin. Of course, it could be merely poetic. For *Twelfth Night*, I use the edition: William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, ed. Roger Warren and Stanley Wells, The Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹⁷² Particularly suggestive is the traditional incorporation of a “Festus” or “Lord of Misrule.” Rudolph Hassel ties Feste’s role as a Lord of Misrule to the fool’s systematic humiliation of the ensemble, bringing them closer to the Christic ideal of humility enacted in the incarnation. I am slightly less certain that the play endorses humiliation as a path to humility. See Rudolph Hassel, *Renaissance Drama and the English Church Year* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), 77-86.

Night open themselves to the needs and narratives of others; their Christic self-emptying never voids an essential “I” but rather reveals that self as evolving, complex, and responsive.

While the first part of *Twelfth Night*'s title gestures towards divine revelation, the subtitle, *Or What You Will*, retreats from that promise. The subtitle straddles effective communication and its failure. Its “Or” both emphasizes the way different “yous” can arrive at different interpretations and introduces the idea of deference, a willingness to enter into another’s “Will.” In *Twelfth Night*, sets of twins generate hermeneutic obstacles even as they enrich the field of possible identities and meanings. The A-plot revolves around two siblings and the romantic journeys of two women, Viola and Olivia, with strangely anagrammatic names. The B-plot turns on a doubled “hand,” a word that floats between the body that writes and the (hand)writing produced. In this subplot, the conspirators trick Malvolio, whose name connects him to the paired women (as well as signifying his ill will), with a counterfeit note from Olivia that includes a series of letters the steward interprets as a partial anagram of his own name. The characters continually stumble over the interpretive difficulties surrounding bodies, language, and the continual exchanges between and within the two orders. The twin as copy/double forestalls understanding and drives the play’s conflicts. But Viola and Sebastian are family as well as lookalikes, and a multivalent “kindness” allows the play’s limited resolution. Before the twins actually come face to face, Viola begins to suspect that her brother may still live. She exclaims, “O, if it prove, / Tempests are kind and salt waves fresh in love” (3.4.374-75). The word “kind,” echoing throughout the play, has its own semantic generosity, collecting together beneficence, likeness, distinction, and the bonds of family. When the actual twins meet, these meanings converge. As does *Cymbeline*'s Guiderius, the reunited twins help establish their identities through a birthmark, a common trope of the romance. Yet the mark does not appear on

either of their bodies, a visual which would be superfluous on their matching skin; instead, it appears in their memories of their father. The mark becomes a reminder of shared origins, history, and affection—the kin and kindness that ultimately validate their personal identities.

But what are these identities, and how does Viola's approach some kind of ideal selfhood? In other words, how should we imagine this "poor monster," as Viola names herself, and the relationship between her inner woman and her outer man (2.2.34). Her transvestitism has occasioned one of the play's critical cruces—its approach to gender identity, a matter further complicated by the play's participation in a generally transvestite theater in which boys played the female roles.¹⁷³ Does Viola's performance as Cesario open up genuinely liberating opportunities for self-exploration and social subversion, or does the character ultimately underscore the limitations and exclusions to which the contemporary woman was subject? The twins ultimately connect primarily through the bodies of the men of the family (the Sebastians), the lost father and the brother whose image they share. However, I suggest that these resolutions are in the service of an ideal subject that is ultimately neuter—or at least so far beyond us that to

¹⁷³ Among those who believe that Viola's crossdressing constitutes a real challenge to normative gender identity are Laura Levine and Jonathan Crewe. See Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothes: Anti-Theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1652* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 10-25; Jonathan Crewe, "In the Field of Dreams: Transvestism in *Twelfth Night* and *The Crying Game*," *Representations* 50 (1995), JSTOR. On the other hand, Dympna Callaghan contextualizes Viola's transvestitism within a transvestite theater and suggests that in *Twelfth Night* "the male body...repeatedly and ritually enacts the displacement, exclusion, and discipline of its female counterpart." Dympna Callaghan, "'And All Is Semblative a Woman's Part': Body Politics and *Twelfth Night*," *Textual Practice* 7, no. 3 (1993): 432, Taylor and Francis Online. Jean Howard sees Viola as "a properly feminine subjectivity" but locates a "real threat to the hierarchical gender system" in the economically and socially independent Olivia. Jean Howard, "Crossdressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39 (1988): 432.

parse the gender of his person is as ridiculous as Feste's grammatical parsing of the words that institute the host: "That that is, is" (4.2.13-15). The closest the earthly subject can come to the divine one is through his/her participation in a shared father and in a miraculous brother, a composite body more defined by its mysterious complexity than by any decisive masculinity.

I have no intention of dismissing the disturbing aspects of *Twelfth Night's* gender and class politics in the service of an Illyrian utopia. In teasing out the ethical and metaphysical ideals that frame *Twelfth Night's* version of an ideal, Christ-like subject, I also look at the failure of those ideals when brought to bear within worldly power relationships, particularly that of master and servant. The play may champion kindness, but it repeatedly stumbles over its unkind character, Malvolio, a man who may end the play "more sinned against than sinning." It also stumbles over its kindest character, Viola, linked to Malvolio in name, dress, and position. The allusion that casts her as a sacrificial lamb threatens to send our comedy over the tragic cliff; it comes as Orsino vows to kill Cesario and thereby punish both Olivia and his (supposedly) unfaithful (supposedly) manservant. Indeed, the play's darkest moments invoke the church and its typology in ways that cast suspicion on both an eroticized ethic of submission, a bad copy of kenotic self-emptying that rather justifies abuse than promotes community, and a forced festivity that requires the humiliation of those whose power is already limited. In *Twelfth Night*, good Christomimesis is more truly kenotic, both ethically and metaphysically. It results in performances that are generous and diffuse, characterized by ever-evolving improvisations that gesture to some ultimate unity beyond immediate chaos.

Playtime

At the beginning of the third act, the play's two proclaimed artists meet in an exchange full of double entendre and hidden meaning. In their play, they expose a generally promiscuous economy of meaning that covers language, bodies, and the exchanges between the two:

VIOLA. Save thee, friend, and thy music. Dost thou live by thy tabor?

FESTE. No, sir, I live by the church.

VIOLA. Art thou a churchman?

FESTE. No such matter, sir. I do live by the church, for I do live at my house, and my house doth stand by the church.

VIOLA. So thou mayst say the king lies by a beggar if a beggar dwell near him, or the church stands by thy tabor if thy tabor stand by the church. (3.1.10)

Feste's "living" slides from profession to physical address. Viola's explanation extends the wordplay. She follows Feste's logic of proximity but turns it into erotic intimacy, applying it to the sanctified bodies of church and state. She transforms the body that "lives" into the body that "lies" and—in its "tabor"-like part—"stands." Her line leaves the actor to make a choice as to whether to play the straight man or to cheekily underscore the phallic imagery that sets up further, increasingly cryptic sex-organ jokes. Feste's response makes us wonder exactly how much insight he has into Viola's own sexed body.¹⁷⁴ He declares, "A sentence is but a cheverel glove to a good wit: how quickly the wrong side may be turned outward" (3.1.11-12). Contextualizing the line with respect to contemporary medical literature, James Stone associates the "cheverel glove" with the "anatomical reversibility of male and female genitalia," a connection that becomes still more plausible as the conversation continues.¹⁷⁵ Viola protests the promiscuous poetry of Feste's profession, only for Feste to turn his linguistic sleight of hand to a theoretical sister whose name, body, and identity are the object of dalliance:

¹⁷⁴ Directors make different decisions as to the matter. Perhaps the most extreme belongs to Trevor Nunn's film (1996) in which an unseen Feste witnesses Viola's re-costuming as Cesario.

¹⁷⁵ James W. Stone, *Crossing Gender in Shakespeare: Feminist Psychoanalysis and the Difference Within* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 38.

VIOLA. They that dally nicely with words may quickly make them wanton.
FESTE. I would therefore my sister had had no name, sir.
VIOLA. Why, man?
FESTE. Why, sir, her name's a word, and to dally with that word might make my
sister wanton. But indeed words are very rascals, since bonds disgraced them.
VIOLA. Thy reason, man?
FESTE. Troth sir, I can yield you none without words, and words are grown so
false I am loath to prove reason with them. (3.1.14ff)

As Feste invokes his own sister, he picks up Viola's sexualized language, through which she glossed Feste's own "wanton" use of language. Moreover, his assertion of a sister's potential profligacy with name and body recalls his scene partner's disguise. Both characters then turn to personal charges:

VIOLA. I warrant thou art a merry fellow, and car'st for nothing.
FESTE. Not so, sir, I do care for something; but in my conscience, sir, I do not
care for you. If that be to care for nothing, sir, I would it would make you
invisible. (3.1.25ff)

Feste's association between Viola and "nothing," a slang term for female genitalia, reinforces his potential insight into Viola's hidden identity. Words and bodies are most alike in their promiscuity and capacity for misdirection, and yet this very resonance allows for a strange slant truth to emerge in their dialogue.

Feste's wordplay demands at once a total identity between object and word, his sister and her name, and the complete disconnect occasioned by "words...grown...false." In *Twelfth Night* drama and poetry are the objects of an investigation into the limitations on and potential of mimesis in both of the senses that Graham Ward has applied to Christology: both "constitutional representation—the standing-in of an official substitute for the actual presence of another...[and] literary representation—the employment of language to represent the nature of that constitutional representation."¹⁷⁶ The play explores the two in a fallen world that remembers the

¹⁷⁶ Graham Ward, *Christ and Culture* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 44.

incarnation/revelation. What kinds of “troth”—a word that covers loyalty, faith, beliefs, and the bond of marriage as well as factuality—are possible in a world in which “bonds” have “disgraced” “words.” Messages are often distorted or fabricated in Illyria. Feste declares himself Olivia’s “corrupter of words,” claiming his capacity to get between words and their intended meanings as a special providence (3.1.35). Yet it almost seems more incredible when people actually manage to communicate in this play.¹⁷⁷ With the best of intentions, Viola as emissary gets in the way of Orsino’s romantic message. With the pettiest of intentions, Sir Toby and Fabian intercept and reframe Sir Andrew’s challenge and Viola’s reply in order to provoke a duel between the two, staging a fight between two impotent combatants moved “against [their] will” (3.4.305). How much can one enter into either the promise of the holiday Twelfth Night or the offer of “Or What You Will”? The answer depends on one’s generosity, the degree to which one gives oneself over to constitutional representation and displays the will to represent—imperfectly but with the best of intentions—on another’s behalf.

Bad play

¹⁷⁷ According to R.S. White, “Twelfth Night, the most autumnally melancholy of Shakespeare’s romantic comedies, shows a microcosm of a world in which words and selves are estranged in a prevailing air of loneliness based on incipient failure of communication through an inability to listen effectively, and where the successful coupling of lovers is... a matter of luck. [It] is a play about the limitations of conversation.” R.S. White, “Estranging Word and Self in Twelfth Night,” in *Word and Self Estranged in English Texts, 1550-1660*, ed. Philippa Kelly and L. E. Semler (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010), 119. Brayton Polka, on the other hand, sees successful communication as a matter of generosity, a willingness to supply the defects in conversation. Brayton Polka, *Shakespeare and Interpretation, or What You Will* (Newark: U of Delaware, 2011). In linking communication to kenosis, I have it both ways—successful communication is the result of both divine providence and human generosity.

The play occasionally seems to be driven by a mimetic compulsion, expressed through a twinning that covers the play's various imitations, rivalries, doubled characters, and syntax.¹⁷⁸ The dangers *Twelfth Night* threatens include drowning and going to sleep on a long winter's night, but in these, at least, there is a promise of peace. Much more frightening is the play's intimation of a vertigo-inducing eternity of conjoined change and repetition. The insatiable hunger, both for love and for identity, that we see in *Edward II* is given artistic power. The play's first line summons the work into existence; in calling for the music to continue, Orsino also calls for the play to begin: "If music be the food of love, play on" (1.1.1). His 'let-there-be-music' is fundamentally conditional and directed towards its own eclipse: "Give me excess of it, that surfeiting, / The appetite may sicken and so die" (1.1.2-3). He exclaims over the "dying fall" of a certain "strain," which occasions a total artistic and synesthetic experience with different sensory inputs "stealing" and "giving" to one another. (1.1.4-7). At its inception, Orsino threatens the play with a poetic apocalypse—its ultimate rejection by the opalescent imagination that has commanded it—and links this death to a strange, internal open market. He cuts off the musician and meditates on the fickleness of "fancy"—both love and imagination:

O spirit of love! how quick and fresh art thou,
That, notwithstanding thy capacity
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,
Of what validity and pitch soe'er,
But falls into abatement and low price,
Even in a minute: so full of shapes is fancy

¹⁷⁸ In one of the more famous readings of *Twelfth Night* (among other plays), René Girard investigates the play's erotic dynamics and rivalries as they are mimetic. René Girard, *A Theatre of Envy: William Shakespeare* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2000). Even the play's rhetorical patterns bear out its obsession with doubles. Keir Elam identifies "syntactic figures of splitting and doubling," using terminology from George Puttenham's *The Art of Poesy*, that surround the twins. Keir Elam, Introduction, in *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, ed. Keir Elam (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2008), 85.

That it alone is high fantastical. (1.1.9-15)

Before we learn of our geographical situation at the water's edge, we are already there, hovering on the brink of a sea-like imagination. In early modern cognitive theory as well as poetic conceptions of the sea, there existed the model of a shadow world, but Orsino moves beyond simple doubles to conceive a relentless mimetic engine that forestalls either satiation or appreciation (in its economic sense as well as its affective one). Orsino flatters himself with the image of an ultimate, "high fantastical," creator, but his imagination is anti-kenotic, consuming rather than giving. As is his love. He uses Olivia's affection for her brother to reflect on her potential love for him, asking,

How will she love when the rich golden shaft
Hath killed the flock of all affections else
That live in her — when liver, brain and heart,
These sovereign thrones, are all supplied, and filled
Her sweet perfections with one self king! (1.1.34-38)

His version of eros is tyrannical, evacuating Olivia in order that he may occupy her entirely. As for personal integrity, he can only imagine it for himself as an external hunger, demanding sameness and sovereignty at the expense of family affection and of Olivia's own possession of liver, brain, and heart.

Orsino's desire to find himself in Olivia is, itself, a type of mirroring that pairs well with the erotic rivalries of the play. However, the dynamic that best represents the danger of the play's dominant motif, twinning, is revenge. Revenge becomes the figure of relentless mimesis, a kind of twinning without end that is opposite to romance's unions and resolutions. When the curtain falls, the four main lovers have sorted themselves properly. In fact, even Sir Toby and Maria have gotten married, extending the web of family relations, and those not newly wed are at least in accord with the general tone. Characters such as Antonio and Sir Andrew have outlived their

relevance—and Fabian seems to be a character designed as excess from the outset, an extra clown—but the play’s largest denial of closure comes in the characters Malvolio and, more surprisingly, Feste. Both Malvolio’s rage and Feste’s satirical taunting outlast the others’ desire for conflict, and the B-plot ends in continued enmity. The last scene sees the word “revenge” crop up several times in quick succession. Fabian first introduces the word, specifically opposing it to comic harmony. He insists that the tale of Malvolio’s gulling “may rather pluck on laughter than revenge / If that the injuries be justly weighed / That have passed on both sides” (5.1.360-62). However, the play’s conclusion suggests that not all laughter is restorative.

Malvolio is the play’s most expressly anti-kenotic character. Olivia names her steward’s defining attribute in the first act: “O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered appetite. To be generous, guiltless and of free disposition is to take those things for bird-bolts that you deep cannon bullets” (1.5.86-87). The character’s “self-love” prohibits any meaningful self-emptying, and his inability to care for or to forgive others dooms him to resentment, isolation, and repetition. Olivia scolds Malvolio for his treatment of her fool, his suggestion that none laugh, but Feste proves as incapable of forgiveness as does Malvolio. Strangely for one praised for his ability to read a crowd, Feste never quite strikes the right tone in the final scene. Literally. The clown adopts an antic manner in reading Malvolio’s letter to Olivia (in which he protests his mistreatment at, he assumes, her hands) that is at odds both with the letter’s content and with the mood of the group collected onstage. He ultimately aligns himself with the character he burlesques, furthering their mutual animosity. Feste cites Malvolio’s first act offense as the (or at least his own) reason for the prank: “do you remember, ‘Madam, why laugh you at such a barren rascal, an you smile not, he’s gagged’—and thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges” (5.1.364-67). Malvolio instantly echoes the keyword: “I’ll be revenged

on the whole pack of you” (5.1.368). He then exits, but his threat lingers—a deferred violence that contrasts Viola’s own final-act deferral, the embrace with her brother that she postpones to a time after the play has ended. Instead of a promised, full union, he determines to continue a cycle that forbids resolution, with each new aggression inspiring its own revenge. Depending on the actor, Malvolio’s line can actually be quite chilling, teasing the possibility of a sequel in another genre common to the Renaissance stage, the revenge play.

Feste and Malvolio end the play yoked together, their mutual susceptibility to revenge borne out of a shared—but differently manifested—reflexivity they demonstrate as actors within the play. Both serve as foils for Viola, whose approach to acting is more generous.¹⁷⁹ Feste’s own self-love is wrapped up in his occupation; it is a professional slight that he claims to punish.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Kietzmann contrasts Malvolio and Viola as actors and links Malvolio’s style of acting to “personation”: a term late Elizabethan playwrights “to denote a specific mode of creating character by imitating preexisting types” (258). She traces the internal language of the play: “Shakespeare uses the new words *personate* and *act* only to describe Malvolio’s performance. To represent the actor-Viola’s practice, he invents figures like eunuch and monster and appropriates positive terms like *labour* and *practice*” (260-61). Mary Jo Kietzman, “Will Personified: Viola as Actor-Author in *Twelfth Night*,” *Criticism* 54, no. 2 (2012), ADD.

As for Feste, his lack of demonstrated interiority contrasts the play’s treatment of Viola. So does his comfort with disguise without worrying about its effect on others. In Viola’s soliloquy bemoaning Olivia’s mistaken attraction to her, she declares, “Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness, / Wherein the pregnant enemy does much” (2.2.27-28).

¹⁸⁰ Indeed, the character’s brief foray into rivalry is professional rather than erotic, when he sees a fellow musician in Viola. In their previously quoted exchange, Feste establishes Viola as a potential rival fool/musician, a move that contextualizes his animosity, his statement “I do not care for you” (3.1.28). See Thad Jenkins Logan, “*Twelfth Night*: The Limits of Festivity,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama, 22, no. 2 (1982): 229-30, JSTOR. But this is a competitive role that Viola determines not to play. As she understands Feste’s need, she responds to it, giving Feste—who does, in fact, “live by [his] tabor”—“expenses.” She distinguishes

There is no question of Feste's talent. The fool is reflexive in the sense that he is apt but potentially automatic. When Malvolio's response to the counterfeit love letter has him locked up, Feste comfortably assumes the curate's role, and while his treatment of the prisoner may be funny, it is also torture. By this point of the play, even Sir Toby has realized that the business has gone a little too far and wishes "we were well rid of this knavery" (4.2.66-67). When Olivia hears about it shortly thereafter, she deems that Malvolio "hath been most notoriously abused" (5.1.372). For the final two acts, Feste is the character most responsible for driving the prank onward, and his ease in entering into the joke—and into the role of curate—starts to look like a problematic hollowness, an ability to respond to others without truly empathizing or identifying with them. His ease in juggling philosophies (as easily as he plays with words) is also disturbing in light of this missing core; his comic sophistry may indicate the absence of any stable ethical framework. It is not that Feste is a hypocrite but rather that he is wantonly professional, totally available to the jest.

Malvolio, on the other hand, is decried as a hypocrite, a common charge against both actors and Puritans.¹⁸¹ Far from a professional actor, his protests at others' revelry align him with antitheatrical discourse.¹⁸² However, the character certainly acts, if terribly; he even rehearses.

herself as patron rather than the object of patronage. Feste immediately relaxes into the familiar role of beggar, begging—and receiving—more. His insistence on money exactly contrasts the actress Viola. After all she is "no fee'd post" (1.5.274).

¹⁸¹ Maria identifies Malvolio as an occasional Puritan, more of a sycophant or "time-pleaser" than a true believer (2.3.143).

¹⁸² Darryl Chalk looks at the motif of contagion in *Twelfth Night* and links it to these antitheatrical treatises, suggesting that the play "parodies" "the antitheatrical accusation that theatre is contagious" in its treatment of Malvolio (188). Chalk suggests, and I agree, that Malvolio is never in any real danger of being infected. However,

Malvolio's performances are invariably inept and ill timed. He invests in social forms that are empty outside of the communities that give them meaning, and both his aspirations and his behavior occasionally look like a parody of humanist *imitatio*. When the conspirators fall upon him in 2.5, he is rehearsing manners that (he believes) accord with the desired elevation to Count Malvolio. Maria heralds his coming, reporting, "He has been yonder i' the sun practicing behaviour to his own shadow this half-hour" (2.5.14-15). This is performance without its necessary responsiveness, entirely reflexive. His shadow is a hollow imitation of his own hollow imitation of aristocratic behavior. As his imagined treatment of Sir Toby makes clear, he utterly misses the centrality of family to aristocracy, aspiring to rank while despising hereditary connections. He also misses the importance of kindness—or, at least, service—neglecting the foundational obligations of feudalism, a system built on mutual obligation. Malvolio is the petty despot of his shadow world and tyrannizes over his imagined subjects. Whether he is imitating behavior or trying to make an external image resemble him (as he finds himself in the letter's M.A.O.I), the character is, for himself, the ultimate point of reference.¹⁸³

his immunity, his total separation from the rest of the cast, is itself a problem and not just a send-up of political histrionics. Malvolio differs from Olivia, who demands, after her first encounter with Cesario, "Even so quickly may one catch the plague?" (1.5.287). As Olivia falls for a crossdressed woman, Chalk aligns the rhetoric of love-sickness with the kind of "perverse" erotic desires that the theater is said to evoke (183). Darryl Chalk, "'To Creep in at Mine Eyes': Theatre and Secret Contagion in *Twelfth Night*," in *"Rapt in Secret Studies": Emerging Shakespeares*, ed. Darryl Chalk and Laurie Johnson (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2010). But Malvolio is never in any real danger of catching the love "plague." He is held apart from love altogether.

¹⁸³ Sean Benson ties Malvolio's reading habits to Puritan exegetical practice, suggesting that—despite the critical tendency to mock his inability as a reader—his method shares much with that employed by Viola and Sebastian as they rediscover each other. Sean Benson, "'Perverse Fantasies'?: Rehabilitating Malvolio's Reading," *Papers on*

Good play

We depend on Viola to imagine a more generous mode of creation—and a more generous sea—than those provided by the narcissistic fantasist, consummate professional, or unkind shadow puppeteer. Viola continually enters into the work of constitutional representation, representing on behalf of others as well as imitating them. She takes on the roles or problems of others and yet comes across as a strangely honest character (even when deliberately misleading others). Whereas the first scene of the play presents the sea as Orsino’s “receiver,” its second shows us Viola’s “salt waves fresh in love” as the sea providentially delivers her from the shipwreck. Believing Sebastian dead, she longs to forestall her “deliver[y] to the world” until she can come to terms with this loss (1.2.39). Rather than Orsino’s sea/fancy, which is a gluttonous vortex and depreciating market, Viola aims to stay in the sea as an imaginative second womb and space of preservation. Thus is Cesario born, a persona whose name derives from the Latin past participle for “to cut,” *caesus*, thereby registering a fundamental rupture in her personal narrative and admitting the very absences it conceals, Viola’s lack of male genitalia, and loss of her brother.¹⁸⁴ But Viola’s slant honesty also enables her to remember Sebastian in a way that keeps him present. She continually pulls him from the sea and “know[s]” her brother “yet living in my glass” (3.4.370-71). Her acting transmutes absence into memory and, more singularly within the play world, loss into propagation. Cesario offers her the ability at once to withdraw into mourning and to explore the new possibilities that attend her shipwrecked state.

Language and Literature 45, no. 3 (Summer 2009), ProQuest. However, Benson doesn’t take into account the hermeneutic flexibility that the twins display throughout the play.

¹⁸⁴ Stephen Orgel traces this etymology for Cesario and thereby links Viola to the castrati. Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare’s England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 53.

As Cesario, Viola routinely engages and even enacts the viewpoints of other characters. She elects the role immediately on the heels of her identification with the yet unmet Olivia's desire to withdraw from the world after her brother's death. When then installed in Orsino's household, she performs on his behalf, a performance (in which she, having fallen in love with him, works against her own self-interest by delivering his declarations of love to Olivia) that is, perhaps, too effective. When she imagines herself in his place, her representation of his love combines with her personal attractions to incline Olivia towards her representation rather than its ostensible object. Even when not directly speaking for another, she enters into others' stories, demonstrating what Mary Jo Kietzman calls "an emergent actorly ethic...based on sympathetic identification."¹⁸⁵ When Malvolio presents her with the ring in 2.2, there is no risk to Viola's performance as Cesario in denying the fiction of the ring as well as the object, but she immediately affirms Olivia's lie: "She took the ring of me, I'll none of it" (2.2.12). Malvolio tosses the ring down, daring Cesario to pick it up "if it be worth stooping for" (2.2.15). Her acceptance of token and story is also a kind of humility. After his departure, she stoops and delivers a soliloquy in which she feels both for and with Olivia—and for all included within a sisterhood of women (albeit not one defined in particularly empowering terms). Bemoaning the ease with which women are deceived by attractive men, Viola highlights their collective weakness, despairing, "Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we" (2.2.31).

Viola's role-playing never threatens to turn her into the same kind of amorphous creature of fancy with whom she has fallen in love. Instead, her performances allow her to explore different—and evolving—aspects of a multifaceted character. While she identifies with Olivia's desire for someone beyond reach (for Viola, Orsino), she also pities her from that very place of

¹⁸⁵ Kietzman, 268.

distance. For Olivia, she is the unattainable erotic object. As her soliloquy draws to a close, she outlines her conflict between her states of being: “As I am man” (2.2.36) and “As I am woman” (2.2.38). The first dooms her own desire, the second Olivia’s. Rather than distinguish between an external illusion and a hidden truth, she accords both of her identities equal ontological status, subordinating both to the singular subject, “I.” She is man and woman, and she never returns to female dress. Throughout the play, Viola seizes on the possibility for doubleness in order to express complicated truth, but she never appears to lose her own sense of a complex but coherent “I.” In a later scene, she “swear[s]” to Olivia, “I have one heart, one bosom, and one truth, / And that no mistress has, nor never none / Shall mistress be of it save I alone” (3.1.155-58). These lines provide the staunchest declaration of integrity and subjectivity we find in the play, and this subject disables easy gender distinctions. After all, in a transvestite theater, gender identity is entirely a matter of self-assignment and costume, and cross-dressed female characters are nesting dolls of man and woman. Even when the play draws on Viola’s “essential” femininity for comic purposes, it aligns her at least as much with emasculated men as with women. Sir Andrew’s sword arm is as limp and unwilling as is Viola’s.

As for her twin, Sebastian also complicates the gender binary. His relationship with Antonio introduces a potentially homoerotic dynamic that shares qualities with the pairs of Viola-Olivia and Cesario-Orsino.¹⁸⁶ Moreover, though a capable swordsman, he performs in ways that are typed feminine as well as masculine—particularly when reflecting on his family.

¹⁸⁶ In this already too long chapter, I do not have the time to do justice to the character of Antonio. There is no real room for him in this chapter’s Illyria—a quality it shares with Shakespeare’s own. Joseph Pequiney comments on the connection between Antonio’s and Olivia’s self-styling as benefactors to (respectively) Sebastian and Cesario. Joseph Pequiney, “The Two Antonios and Same-Sex Love in *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*,” *English Literary Renaissance* 22, no. 2 (March 1992): 204, Wiley Online Library.

When we first meet the character, Sebastian, too, refuses to leave the sea. He speaks of Viola to Antonio, declaring, “She is drowned already, sir, with salt water, though I seem to drown her remembrance again with more” (2.1.26-28). In his tears, he mirrors and inverts our first image of Olivia in Valentine’s report to Orsino:

But like a cloistress she will veiled walk
And water once a day her chamber round
With eye-offending brine—all this to season
A brother’s dead love, which she would keep fresh
And lasting in her sad remembrance. (1.1.26-31)

Between Olivia and her eventual husband, they cry enough water to inundate lost siblings and enough salt to pickle them. Sebastian’s tears also identify him with his mother (and with mothers/hysteria more generally). In one of the play’s tangles of “kindness,” he declares, “My bosom is full of kindness, and I am yet so near the manners of my mother that upon the least occasion more mine eyes will tell tales of me” (2.1.35ff). Sebastian’s “kindness” is family (and familial affection), similarity in performance (“manners”), and an overwhelming emotional force that results in excess and overflow.

When Sebastian comes to Illyria, he finds that, as Cesario, he is already expected, but his acceptance by this Illyrian community depends upon his willingness to enter into this role and participate in a collective narrative. Viola’s success as Orsino’s servant and Olivia’s suitor has not universally endeared her, and Sebastian is instantly embroiled in tensions as well as alliances. He almost immediately encounters Sir Andrew who, egged on by Sir Toby and Fabian, attacks him. Returning the blow, he wonders, “Are all the people mad?” (4.1.26). When Olivia comes to his rescue and is as mystifyingly loving as the others are antagonistic, he is quick to turn this conclusion back on himself. He reasons, “Or I am mad, or else this is a dream” and determines to enter into the experience: “Let fancy still my sense in Lethe steep./ If it be thus to dream, still let

me sleep” (4.1.59-61). In this very wet play, Sebastian’s determination to submit to “fancy” and so enter the river of oblivion contrasts Orsino’s authoritarian sea-fancy and determination to erase Olivia. Sebastian reenters in 4.3, still struggling to contextualize his experience but ready to commit to it. He follows Olivia and a priest offstage to be married. Confused by the facts of his situation, he turns to a different kind of truth, a pledge of “troth”: he swears that he, “having sworn truth, ever will be true” (4.3.33). In this formulation, truth is not an objective reality but a commitment to another person. As we discover in the fifth act, he fully takes on the identity of Cesario, Olivia’s new husband.

Encountering or entering into the role of Cesario helps each of the central lovers to move forward. For both Sebastian and Olivia, the character generates a sense of new possibility, helping them to move on from their own (lachrymose) mourning. As for Orsino, the relationship that he has built with Cesario enables him to finally speak about Viola in a way that contrasts his earlier speech about Olivia. He declares that she will be “Orsino’s mistress and his fancy’s queen,” a line that replaces the “self king” and the “high fantastical” fancy with a new openness to something and someone beyond his own desire (5.1.381). In addition, his final lines paint his former love object, Olivia, as his own “sweet sister” (5.1.377). He willingly enters into a network of familial relationships rather than determining to replace all other connections. The role of Cesario is a site of gratuity—kindness, love, excess—and a memorial that takes on sacramental dimensions, informing characters and (eventually) incorporating them into a loving community. These characters are most true when most kind, when they are willing to enter into another’s narrative and need. Only so can they redeem “rascally” words into “troth” and communication. To do otherwise is inevitably to corrupt both language and those family ties: to prostitute sisters, betray the memory of brothers, or colonize wives.

Imitatio Christi

I here move from looking at a looser style of gracious—or kenotic—mimesis and into humility and Christliness with more explicit religious points of reference. I look at bad copies of Christ’s—and Christian—kenosis. The play’s darkest moments come as self-sacrifice either slips into erotic abjection or skips the “self-” entirely, becoming a humiliation that utterly fails to engender humility. Revenge and spite bring the play to these passes. Both Viola’s willingness to die for the sake of Orsino’s jealousy and Malvolio’s humiliation at the hands of the conspirators reveal the potential for abuse when religious discourse is cited in support of status quo sexual and social politics—particularly when that discourse champions (or even eroticizes) submission. Yet, at least for Viola, the play quickly replaces one image of Christ—that of sacrificial lamb—with another—that of untouchable, resurrected sibling. I end by looking at the play as it apprehends an ideal subject through *copia*, or excess, rather than singular copies. This subject is best approached sacramentally, through participation in a grace-touched material community. Gender—the (assumed) natural expression of sex—matters because family matters, but (unlike in Henry V) both men and women participate in a conjoined civic and domestic sphere. Olivia has all the power of Orsino. Life’s costumes will ultimately disappear along with life, itself, which serves to stress the importance of the actor’s informing spirit. The play valorizes a generous, Christian theater against empty and self-serving performances.

Bad copies

John bare witness of him, and cried, saying,... For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.... John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold that Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.... And I knew him not: but because he should be declared to Israel, therefore am I come, baptizing with water. (John 1:1-31)

John identifies Christ as God's self-sacrifice and the revelation of a new super-code for the world, "grace and truth" above biblical "Law." As the play moves towards its denouement, the characters find themselves most astray, at the height of error to be corrected. Viola and Malvolio are often seen as foils for one another; their very names almost demand that we read them as such. Both servants desire the hand of their master/mistress. One is kind and humble, the other mean and proud. One ends happily, the other un-. Yet different characters demand that each perform a kind of kenosis—humility for Malvolio, self-sacrifice for Viola—in the play's final two acts. The two are punished (or almost punished) for their presumption, their audacity in setting themselves up as rivals for Olivia's hand. Though both occupy that strange middle ground of the uppermost echelon of servants, their positions are not identical. Viola/Cesario is brought into the household but is "no fee'd post," and her qualities give her "five-fold blazon" (1.5.274, 283). Her crime is more—though not solely—a personal betrayal than it is social overreaching. Yet while Orsino protests the character's treatment of him, he ultimately threatens to kill Cesario in order to harm Olivia and thus robs the murder of even the (paltry) justification of direct retribution. As for Malvolio, his true offense is, well, being a jerk—his aspirations being more the means by which comeuppance is delivered—but there is nothing in his mortification to inspire charity, only resentment and confusion. Both of these scenes leave the audience uncomfortable, a sensation amplified by religious frames. No true redemption is offered within either.

As Orsino appoints Viola to the role of sacrificial lamb in the final act, he (nearly) makes her the victim to homicidal "spite" and her own erotic idolatry. Believing that Viola/Cesario has married Olivia (when it is, in fact, Sebastian/Cesario who has done so), he briefly fantasizes about killing Olivia before determining to kill the object of their shared affections instead:

Live you the marble-breasted tyrant still.
But this your minion, whom I know you love,
And whom, by heaven I swear, I tender dearly,
Him will I tear out of that cruel eye
Where he sits crowned in his master's spite. (5.1.120-24).

Orsino's project is a matter of social correction as well as erotic punishment. His words move between social and sexual relationships of power: "tyrant," "minion," "master." He seeks to restore the proper order to a world inverted by the preference of the servant over the master. As he continues, he moves into typological territory with the declaration: "I'll sacrifice the lamb that I do love, / To spite a raven's heart within a dove" (5.1.126-27). Viola embraces her own death. As the willing lamb, she is martyr rather than simple "sacrifice." She enters into Orsino's grotesque project: "And I most jocund, apt and willingly, / To do you rest, a thousand deaths would die" (5.1.128-29). She matches Orsino's couplet with one of her own, one that picks up Orsino's earlier rhymes with the long I sound. When Olivia protests, Viola asserts that she follows "after him I love / More than I love these eyes, more than my life, / More by all mores than e'er I shall love wife" (5.1.130-32). Her words recall her earlier speech to Olivia in which her equivocations maintained her independence: "I have one heart, one bosom, and one truth, / And that no mistress has, nor never none / Shall mistress be of it save I alone" (3.1.155-58). But she has replaced her triumphant declaration of selfhood with a total submission to "him I love." She prizes Orsino more than "life" or "eyes," a word that echoes with "I's." Rather than portray herself as "mistress" of her own heart, she subordinates the potential love for any "wife" to this all-encompassing devotion. Any wife includes Viola, herself; she has imagined filling that role from the first act (1.4.42).

Viola is not, nor does she (here) properly imitate, the "Lamb of God." Her performance is a bad copy, a degraded mimesis. In invoking Christ's martyrdom, Shakespeare reveals the trope's

perversion into a corrupted model of kenotic self-sacrifice. Viola's intended martyrdom is based in eros rather than in agape. The Passion as a means to the divine end has been replaced with passion as itself the end, a passion that swings from "love" to "spite," a word that appears twice in Orsino's lines (5.1.124, 127). Orsino is, obviously, not God; he is not even Abraham-like, willing to sacrifice his dependent child out of faith. The capricious poet from the play's first scene has resurfaced, fetishizing desire and absence rather than seeking a love or endorsing a system of beliefs to which economics need not apply.¹⁸⁷ More troubling still is Viola's total abjection. Her all-encompassing devotion to Orsino's pettiness is idolatrous, visibly so in light of the religious allusion. As for the "self-love" that she rejects, this is not Malvolio's touchy pride but rather self-worth. She does not simply prefer Orsino's interests to her own (as she does when she sets out to court Olivia on his behalf). She prefers his capricious rage to her own life, failing to value herself outside of an erotic-social relationship in which she is subordinate. Viola's "will" has been the subject of scholarly inquiry—particularly as the character's name is glossed by the foil of Malvolio, whose name suggests ill will. Her "bad" kenosis plays into the feminist anxiety that kenotic humility might be a problematic paradigm for women. Theologians have protested that, in the case of women, this Christological model demands the subjugation of not a robust will but one already compromised through the subjugation of a patriarchal society, thereby reinforcing traditional gender dynamics.

Viola's submissiveness has interested scholars examining the relationship between the class and gender dynamics of the play, another area in which Malvolio and Viola are often paired. The two characters are each transvestites; Viola wears men's breeches, and Malvolio

¹⁸⁷ René Girard locates the play's refusal of closure in Orsino's desire to preserve desire rather than to attain its object (*A Theatre of Envy*, 112-120).

wears stockings that Dymphna Callaghan describes as potentially “suitable if worn by a young gentleman suitor to Olivia, but incongruous and ridiculous when worn by a servant.”¹⁸⁸ Critics have looked at the way that Viola’s femininity (and/or potentially more aristocratic origins) helps to shape the linked negotiations of gender, heteronormative desire, and class dynamics—a negotiation not available to the male Malvolio. For example, Cristina Malcolmson claims that Viola’s “loving and erotic desire mediates the issue of social mobility,” creating an acceptable form of ambition in a newly (and troublingly) fluid social climate.¹⁸⁹ David Schalwyk, on the other hand, relates “Viola’s abject submission of her will to Orsino’s desire” to the “servant-poet of the sonnets,” suggesting that the early modern experience of (literal) service enables a reciprocal affection and true intimacy otherwise impossible to the heterosexual relationship.¹⁹⁰ Schalwyk both inverts the process, having the social enable the sexual dynamic, and appeals to lingering feudal values rather than emerging meritocratic ones. Yet both assume *Twelfth Night* to celebrate Viola’s “service” without properly dealing with this unsettling nadir/zenith of her indulgence of her master. Instead, I tend to agree with Elliot Krieger that Viola’s total surrender rather enacts a certain class-based *fantasy* of appropriate service: “what she and, more important, he assume to be the normative attitude of a servant toward his master.”¹⁹¹ I would pair this

¹⁸⁸ Callaghan, 33.

¹⁸⁹ Cristina Malcolmson, “‘What You Will’: Social Mobility and Gender in *Twelfth Night*,” in *The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. Valerie Wayne (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 39.

¹⁹⁰ David Schalwyk, “Love and Service in *Twelfth Night* and Sonnets,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (2005): 90, ADD.

¹⁹¹ Elliot Krieger, “*Twelfth Night*: ‘The morality of indulgence’” in *Twelfth Night*, ed. R. S. White, New Casebooks (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1996), 49.

fantasy with one concerning a totalizing erotic relationship and say that this moment reveals both to be fundamentally, horrifically *inappropriate*. Orsino's rage and Viola's acceptance highlight the disjunction between attractive rhetoric—idealizations that fuse erotic, social, and religious rhetoric—and disturbing, abusive practice.

Malvolio's punishment for his presumption is less dire than the execution with which Orsino threatens Cesario and Olivia, but it, too, acquires a disturbing religious frame. His persecution at the hands of "Sir Topaz" too closely resembles the inquisitions of the previous century. Even centuries later, Feste/Sir Topaz's determination to find fault and absolute refusal of (even paradoxical) logic can elicit a shuddering sympathy. The scene never endorses any tenet of belief—orthodox or not—as Feste jumps around within classical and Christian metaphysics. Feste's mistreatment of Malvolio is billed as comic retribution but also constitutes an attack on the character's problematic pride/self-sufficiency. The rest of the ensemble demands that he join them in a more topsy-turvy, festive *Twelfth Night*. And yet, Malvolio never quite moves from the butt of the joke to the object of inclusion. The clown's philosophical inconsistency combines with his send-up of religious officials and theologians to deny Malvolio even the bitter correctives of satire or clear mockery. The fourth act's dominant theme is madness. It is the act that houses Sebastian's encounters with Illyrian society—and determination to enter into the madness he finds there—as well as Malvolio's interrogation. However, in this scene, madness looks less like a divine "grace and truth" that supersedes even biblical "Law" and more like an entirely sane sophistry. Feste gestures towards the paradoxes of sacrament and incarnation but never entices Malvolio to participate in a "mad" kenosis: the abandonment of sanity's self-sufficiency in favor of Christian folly. Malvolio's failure is largely due to his own incapacity, which helps shed some light on the nature of grace and truth. Yet his failure also shows the

religious inefficacy of humiliation—particularly when it works upon a pre-existing social subordination—however exalted its rhetoric.

Malvolio is an incredibly literal creature, a quality that helps keep him from any of *Twelfth Night's* truths—or even its facts.¹⁹² The steward loves enforcing rules, and I have already discussed the ways in which he invests in (and even practices) forms of behavior with no regard for their informing spirit. When Feste enters the scene of Malvolio's imprisonment, he is wearing the costume of a curate, and Sir Toby greets him as "Master Parson." Feste replies, "*Bonos dies*, Sir Toby, for as the old hermit of Prague that never saw pen and ink, very wittily said to a niece of King Gorboduc, 'That that is, is.'" (4.2.13-15). The uneducated hermit presents a world in which everything is to be taken at surface value, an assertion compromised by the fact that the hermit's audience is "a niece of King Gorboduc," the king being one of the most famous characters of the early-modern stage. If the hermit were better educated, he might be better equipped to make distinctions. But this education, this exposure to "pen and ink," is the acclimatization to various performances rather than a textual bedrock of reality. Text, too, is a performance of the body, and Malvolio has found himself in his current, undignified position by way of the hermit's faulty logic. He insists on the fact of Olivia's letter without ever realizing that Olivia's "hand" might be Maria's performance rather than Olivia's body. Even the interpretive leap he takes in reading the letter is literal, i.e., by the letters, if bizarre. While the mention of his stockings seems to point to Malvolio, "M.O.A.I." would be a strange and partial anagram for his name.

¹⁹² Malvolio's literalness resonates with his identification as a Puritan, the Puritans' celebration of "plain" speech being well known.

As Feste continues his dialogue to Sir Toby, he moves into distinctly Christological and sacramental territory. He declares, “So I, being Master Parson, am Master Parson; for what is ‘that’ but ‘that’, and ‘is’ but ‘is’?” (4.2.15-17). Feste’s premise mocks the kind of scholastic logic taught in schools, but drawing attention to his religious outfit, he leads his auditors into the most debated words in post-Reformation Europe: “This is my body.” In doing so, he also mocks the relevant tracts of Reform theologians, whose quibbles lead them to torture the very language they seek to explicate.¹⁹³ The ontological possibilities of “this” performing “body” explode in ways that defy easy oppositions. Feste’s words shift the topic from acting to sacrament and incarnation. Christ’s body disables most worldly distinctions; his status as pre-existent Word even undoes the linearity by which we can frequently identify an original from its copy. In a world “under grace” (Romans 6:14) rather than law, one should further suspect worldly appearance and position. After all, Christ’s kenosis leaves him with “no reputation.” Malvolio’s obsession with forms, as well as his social ambition, becomes absurd, an obstacle to truth as found in Christian folly. Throughout the play, Feste maintains that everyone is mad/foolish. He continually moves between interpretive frameworks, “corrupting words” and demonstrating that multiple, sometimes contradicting economies of meaning are in play at the same time. In this scene, he adopts the name Sir Topaz—topaz being thought to cure insanity in early modern gem lore—and targets Malvolio, the character who repeatedly insists that he is no danger of madness, a claim that is all too, ironically, true. Malvolio is immune to much of what is good in Illyria.

Feste attacks—or comically takes advantage of—Malvolio’s insistence on comprehensible and consistent rules. Malvolio beseeches, “Sir Topaz, do not think I am mad.

¹⁹³ Paul Dean, “‘Nothing That Is so Is So’: *Twelfth Night* and Transubstantiation,” *Literature & Theology* 17, no. 3 (2003): 291-92.

They have laid me here in hideous darkness” (4.2.30-31). Malvolio’s darkness is literal, the lack of light that other characters also note, but Feste immediately switches the lens on him. He shifts to a metaphorical and typological understanding of reality in which “there is no darkness but ignorance in which thou art more puzzled than the Egyptians in their fog” (4.2.43-45). Malvolio is not so literal a creature that he cannot understand a literary frame—though he does invert the metaphor to again emphasize the physical darkness. His true folly is his belief that Feste will stay within memorized cultural frames and their accompanying suppositions. However, Feste, instead, subjects Malvolio to the original Catch-22: he must confess to madness before he can be accounted sane. As Sir Topaz, he insists that Malvolio endorse a preposterous position: “Thou shalt hold th’opinion of Pythagoras ere I will allow of thy wits, and fear to kill a woodcock lest thou dispossess the soul of thy grandam” (4.2.59-60). Feste relocates the issue of transubstantiation to ancient philosophy in a way that both burlesques a Catholic understanding of the issue and exposes the absurdity of any attempt to parse divinity. Christ’s innate mysteriousness denies total comprehension. After Feste leaves and returns in his own person, Malvolio swears to him, “I am as well in my wits, fool, as thou art” (4.2.88). Feste points out what is either the flaw or the heart of this logic: “But as well? Then you are mad indeed, if you be no better in your wits than a fool” (4.2.89-90). They are all mad in Illyria, and folly—in a Christian schema—is also truth.

However, as he will in *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare notes the opportunity for abuse opened up by the impossible complexities of both scripture and sacrament. (In *Cymbeline*, however, the grammarians win rather than the fools.) In the opening dialogue with Sir Toby, Feste says of his curate costume, “Well, I’ll put it on, and I will dissemble myself in’t, and I would I were the first that ever dissembled in such a gown” (4.2.4-6). He uses his own dishonesty to underscore the

potential for deceit even when the religious authority is real. Moreover, while he denies Malvolio any stable index of sanity (by denying him the “constant question” the steward requests in order to prove his competence) Malvolio is still put to the “question” (4.2.48). He is tortured (albeit not physically) through a religious inquisition, subjected to an unpredictable catechism that he cannot pass. He is increasingly desperate as the scene progresses and repeatedly protests that he is being abused, an assessment of the situation Olivia endorses when she learns of his treatment (4.2.29, 48, 88; 5.1.369).

Malvolio is imprisoned for behavior that the forged letter scripts; playing on the steward’s ambition, the conspirators set him up for a humiliation linked to castration, again connecting him to Viola as Cesario. In the final act, Feste quotes the letter, focusing on an assertion that has become one of the play’s more famous lines: “Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrown upon them” (5.1.364-65). These repeated words remind us that social presumption contributes to Malvolio’s offense as well as Viola’s; however, the humility that Viola willingly gives is demanded of Malvolio in a way that weaponizes the ideal, turning it into the basis for sexual humiliation. His failed ambition provides a foil for her successful love affair and advancement and contributes to the play’s exploration of an eroticism based in submissiveness and the division “between an acceptably arousing erotics of service and a social taboo.”¹⁹⁴ Moreover, where Cesario’s name may suggest castration, John Astington has linked the letter that gulls Malvolio to Christ’s lecture on divorce

¹⁹⁴ Mary Ellen Lamb, "Tracing a Heterosexual Erotics of Service in *Twelfth Night* and the Autobiographical Writings of Thomas Whythorne and Anne Clifford," in *Staging Early Modern Romance: Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare*, by Mary Ellen Lamb and Valerie Wayne (New York: Routledge, 2009), 2. See also Lisa Jardine, "Twins and Travesties: Gender, Dependency, and Sexual Availability in *Twelfth Night*," in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. Susan Zimmerman (New York: Routledge, 1992).

and celibacy: “For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:12 GNV). Astington reads Malvolio’s humiliation as “a displaced gelding.”¹⁹⁵ His pseudo-castration is not a choice made “for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” but rather an external shaming. His torturers make use of festive inversions and religious trappings, but they use them to abuse and police—to make sure that one who dreams of having “greatness thrown upon them” is instead made a kind of “eunuch by others.” The play questions the moral efficacy of dramatic humiliation as well as the gracious efficacy of religious humiliation. Several critics have read Malvolio’s character as a theatrical type, the humiliated caricature of satire against which the play champions the final harmony of romantic comedy instead.¹⁹⁶ Humiliation does not breed humility but rather resentment in those who understand themselves as the butt of a joke. I assume the same is true of eunuchs violently made (as opposed to the bloodless, dramatic choices of ladies in disguise).

Good copia

But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping: and as she wept, she bowed herself into the sepulcher, And saw two Angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She said unto them, They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She supposing that he had been the gardener, said unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and said unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my

¹⁹⁵ John Astington, "Malvolio and the Eunuchs: Texts and Revels in *Twelfth Night*," *Shakespeare Studies* 46 (1993), 26.

¹⁹⁶ Both Cristina Malcolmson and Mary Jo Kietzmann see *Twelfth Night* as critiquing Jonsonian satire—and as responding to Ben Jonson’s critique of Shakespearean romantic comedy (Malcolmson, 48; Kietzmann, 275-76).

Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and to your Father, and to my God, and your God. (John 20:11-17)

Twelfth Night quickly moves past the danger that comedy will become tragedy with Viola's death, almost immediately replacing the image of the sacrificial lamb with the resurrected Christ, disguised and untouchable, who appears to supplant Mary's mourning with joy. In this movement, the play prioritizes a different relationship and dynamic; instead of Viola's self-destruction in service to an erotic idolatry, we see the twins' more holistic self-alienation and self-discovery within a shared, mysterious body. The play presents us with an essentialist construction of identity—and gender—but one redeemed through its emphasis on process and participation. As for Christ as an ideal subject, the play appeals to him as he sacramentally incarnates a loving family rather than using him as a male exemplar to support sexual hierarchy.

The final scene presents identity as something fundamentally delayed, a yet unrealized composite in the image of Christ to which worldly action can only gesture. I am not the first to use Christ's postmortem encounter with Mary Magdalene—and its refusal of touch—in order to frame *Twelfth Night's* engagement with personal identity.¹⁹⁷ Despite the intensity of the twins' joy and connection when they reunite, they do not embrace. They postpone touch until Viola can change her clothes.¹⁹⁸ She insists on this deferral:

If nothing lets to make us happy both
But this my masculine usurped attire,
Do not embrace me till each circumstance

¹⁹⁷ See Dean; Yu Jin Ko, "The Comic Close of *Twelfth Night* and Viola's *Noli Me Tangere*: An Excursus on Mutability and Desire," in *Mutability and Division on Shakespeare's Stage* (Newark: U of Delaware, 2004), 48-76; Cynthia Lewis, "Soft Touch: On the Renaissance Staging and Meaning of the 'Noli Me Tangere' Icon," *Comparative Drama* 36, no. 1/2 (2002).

¹⁹⁸ While Orsino does touch Viola, he, too, maintains a certain distance from "Cesario" "For so you shall be while you are a man" at the end (5.1.375-76).

Of place, time, fortune do cohere and jump
That I am Viola. (5.1.243-47)

Yu Jin Ko connects Viola's speech to the *noli me tangere* trope in medieval drama and relates it to the romance narrative. He suggests that *Twelfth Night's* delays, unions, and reunions structure an ongoing project of selfhood—an incomplete journey of becoming Viola. He denies Viola as “a Christ figure,” asserting that she lacks the necessary “transcendent spirituality.”¹⁹⁹ However, Ko's own metatheatrical context shifts our image of Christ from the deity himself to the “Christ figure,” the actor played by actors. Cynthia Lewis also refers to the *noli me tangere* trope but further develops Christ as a model of identity. She contextualizes the scene in terms of the dramatic and iconic traditions surrounding the biblical moment. Per Lewis, the frequent depiction of Christ in the costume of a gardener helps legitimate role-playing, a move that takes on new importance within a religious culture both iconophobic (I would icono-ambivalent) and deeply suspicious of disguise.²⁰⁰ Moreover, she contrasts the biblical glosses of Christ's injunction, which emphasize Mary's worldliness, with medieval liturgical drama that sees it more as an explanation dependent on Christ's own yet unrealized divine identity: “Touch me not: *for* I am not yet ascended to my Father” (emphasis added).²⁰¹ This is a reading of the reunion that emphasizes Christ's kenosis, the generous self-emptying in which he identifies with/as man and so introduces a historical “not yet” into his being. Unlike most of Shakespeare's crossdressing women (excepting Innogen, the heroine of the second half of this chapter), Viola never resumes her female costume onstage. The play promises to return Viola to her female costume—and to reintegrate her within the normative gender relationships of her community—but it infinitely

¹⁹⁹ Ko, 54.

²⁰⁰ Lewis, 62.

²⁰¹ Lewis, 64.

postpones this reintegration, gesturing to a moment that will never come to pass within the event of the play.²⁰²

As is this version of Christ, Viola is an actor involved in an ongoing project. The final scene sees her as the virtuoso of a theater that emanates from and returns to an ever-evolving self. This project complicates unilateral gender assignment. The ensemble gathers onstage, presenting us with a series of bodies with whom Viola has engaged and identified. She has her potential rivals—Feste, Sir Andrew, Olivia, and Orsino—as well as her other halves: Sebastian, her twin and brother; Olivia, her anagrammatic twin and new “sister” (5.1.320); and Orsino, the man with whom she anticipates “a solemn combination...Of our dear souls” (5.1.373-74). Viola finds herself in a company that reflects her many facets back to her. In Viola and Sebastian’s status as mutual mirrors, James W. Stone sees the figure of the Ovidian hermaphrodite and a state of “hermaphroditic anamorphism, the quality of being and simultaneously not being one sex; of being both male and female and therefore neither one nor the other.”²⁰³ He theorizes both the personal multiplicity of the characters and a relationship between them in which Viola can “parcel out” an aspect of her identity on another.²⁰⁴ Yet the twins are only one set of the doubles

²⁰² Randall Martin develops his own biblical framework for the play. He draws on a tension within Pauline theology regarding the apocalypse. Per Martin, its approach both disrupts the social order and inspires a conservative reinvestment in traditional norms. He uses *Twelfth Night*'s shipwreck as the catalyst for a play in which “subjective and rhetorical self-invention could conceptually challenge Pauline determined roles and identities with an alternative epistemology of oceanic human potential.” Randall Martin, “Shipwreck and the Hermeneutics of Transience in *Twelfth Night*,” in *Twelfth Night: A Critical Reader*, ed. Alison Findlay and Liz Oakley-Brown (New York: Bloomsbury Arden, 2014), 127.

²⁰³ Stone, 24.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

that populate the stage at this moment. Viola finally appears as a person multiply—though still incompletely—refracted through the collective of her peers.

The twins may only be one of the sets of doubles, but they are certainly the most visible mirrors onstage. Orsino exclaims, “One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons, / A natural perspective that is and is not!” (5.1.209-10). The scene continues to stack dualisms on these one-but-two twins, touching on Christ’s dual nature, the gender binary, and the distinction between body and soul (not to be confused with mind-body dualism). Seeing Viola, Sebastian wonders, “Do I stand there? I never had a brother, / Nor can there be that deity in my nature / Of here and everywhere” (5.1.222-24). In the introduction, I mentioned “real presence” as a Lutheran tenet and suggested that Sebastian’s lines show him using a theological crux in order to express a crisis of identity rather than taking a theological stance. However, I do believe that the Anglican position, developed against Catholic and Lutheran alternatives, helps inform Sebastian’s assumptions and, therefore, his self-understanding through this sacred frame. Divine omnipresence was the subject of the “Black Rubric” added to the Anglican Communion service, which prohibited the adoration of the bread and wine because the natural body of Christ was in heaven rather than on earth.²⁰⁵ Sebastian’s distinction, therefore, explicitly applies to the divine body *as opposed to* the human one, whose limitations he shares.

²⁰⁵ See Dean, 282-83. The relevant section of *The Book of Common Prayer* reads, “For as concernynge the Sacramentall bread and wyne, they remayne styll in theyr verye naturall substaunces, and therefore may not be adored, for that were Idolatrye to be abhorred of all faythfull christians. And as concernynge the naturall body and blood of our saviour Christ, they are in heaven and not here. For it is agaynst the trueth of Christes true natural bodye, to be in moe places then in one, at one tyme.” Brian Cummings, ed., *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 667.

However, the scene associates this sacramental distinction with one it suggests is common to humanity, the separation between body and soul, or “spirit.” It thereby posits human subjectivity as something that ultimately exceeds the mortal, sexed bodies that people wear. While Viola’s disguise seems to make her somehow untouchable, Sebastian is both the “true” image and insistently corporeal. He insists on his physicality. When Viola declares that her brother “so went suited to his watery tomb,” she adds the fear, “If spirits can assume both form and suit, / You come to fright us” (5.1.230-32). He responds,

A spirit I am indeed,
But am in that dimension grossly clad
Which from the womb I did participate.
Were you a woman, as the rest goes even,
I should my tears let fall upon your cheek
And say, ‘Thrice welcome, drowned Viola.’ (5.1.233-37)

Sebastian appeals to a broadly shared humanity, established through the “dimension” in which he does “participate,” as well as to the more specifically shared womb. He is “clad” in physical matter, an image that accords with Christological accounts that identified Christ’s human body as a type of clothing.²⁰⁶ Sebastian turns from his suit of flesh to the matter of Viola’s own identity, which he makes contingent upon her femininity, identifying the obstacle as—in Viola’s words—her “masculine usurped attire.” While the image of the body as *correctly* sexed clothing endorses an essentialist, binary understanding of gender, this understanding is complicated by the implication that the body is *only* clothing, an idea that leaves room for a more gender-neutral, informing “spirit.”

Physical touchstones are important to establish Viola and Sebastian as participants in a shared “dimension,” but true communion requires them to identify each other and themselves

²⁰⁶ For example, the title of the thirteenth chapter of Calvin’s *Institutes* is “Christ Clothed With the True Substance of Human Nature.”

through the common ground of kin and kindness. When reunited, they anchor the (potentially deceptive) visual evidence of their shared reflection, testing one another through their shared origins and memories. Sebastian begs Viola, “Of charity, what kin are you to me? / What countryman? What name? What parentage?” (5.1.26-27). Viola responds, “Of Messaline. Sebastian was my father. / Such a Sebastian was my brother too” (5.1.228-29). Dressed as men, the two share the image of Sebastian, the brother, but “Sebastian” was also their father’s name. The final piece of proof Sebastian requires to identify his cross-dressed sister is a bodily marker, but it is not one found on the twins but in their hearts:

VIOLA. My father had a mole upon his brow.
SEBASTIAN. And so had mine.
VIOLA. And died that day when Viola from her birth
Had numbered thirteen years.
SEBASTIAN. O, that record is lively in my soul! (5.1.236-240)²⁰⁷

Unlike in *Cymbeline*, the birthmark is not a mark of identity that visibly stamps brother and sister alike. Further visual matches would be redundant to these twins. Instead, they confirm one another through the shared memories of their father’s birthmark and his death, the “record[s]” both keep “lively in [their] soul[s].” These lines set up Viola’s *noli me tangere*. In the relevant gospel, Jesus anticipates the reunion between father and child as essential to his full self-restoration. He establishes himself to Mary through a collective father: “Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and to your Father, and to my God, and your God” (John 20:17). In his absence, he refers Mary and his other followers to one another as “brethren,” uniting them as a family.

²⁰⁷ As he continues, he provides the line that gives us leave to doubt whether the two are biological twins: “He finished indeed his mortal act / That day that made my sister thirteen years” (5.1.243-44). One assumes that he would claim a mutual age if, indeed, they did share it.

In the final act of *Twelfth Night*, Viola is the lynch pin of an expanding family yet maintains a slight distance from them—a distance linked to her own incompleteness. She defers the fraternal embrace “till each circumstance / Of place, time, fortune do cohere and jump / That I am Viola” (5.1.245-47). I agree with Yu Jin Ko that the character is never aligned with Christ through some transcendent spirituality, but she is aligned with him through her participation in a corporate Christian body and through a style of role-playing based in love and humility. As she and Sebastian look at one another, we see a double, self-regarding body. As Orsino and Olivia look at them, we see an Illyrian community of brothers and sisters. This community is imperfect. Indeed, in accordance with the philosophy of Jean-Luc Nancy, the community’s very “incompleteness” enables its existence, “taking the term ‘incompleteness’ in an active sense, however, as designating not insufficiency or lack, but the activity of sharing” made impossible in truly seamless identity.²⁰⁸ The fallible inhabitants of Illyria sometimes appropriate festive or spiritual apparatuses for ends that are either selfish or run counter to the radical, New Testament politics that the feast of Twelfth Night honors. At its most gracious, the play gives us glimpses of a divine, informing spirit, an ideal subjectivity that is composite, evolving, and best explored by entering into the histories of others.

CYMBELINE

²⁰⁸ Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, ed. Peter Connor, trans. Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, and Simona Sawhney, vol. 76, *Theory and History of Literature* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 37. Nancy contrasts this community to communion: “What this community has ‘lost’—the immanence and the intimacy of a communion—is lost only in the sense that such a ‘loss’ is constitutive of ‘community’ itself. It is not a loss: on the contrary, immanence, if it were to come about, would instantly suppress community, or communication, as such” (12).

For this ye know, that no whoremonger, neither unclean person, nor covetous person, which is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words...For it is shame even to speak of the [unfruitful works of darkness] in **secret**.... [It] is light that maketh all things manifest. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light....Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the wife's head, even as Christ is the head of the Church, and the same is the Savior of *his* body....Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it....So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife, loveth himself....For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh....This is a great **secret**, but I speak concerning Christ, and concerning the Church. (*GNV* Ephesians 5:5-32)

Where *Twelfth Night* revolves around twins—families of doubled equals—*Cymbeline* revolves around this “one flesh”—corporate bodies arranged (or disarranged) according to the internal hierarchy of marriage. As the play careens from secret to secret, it introduces the challenges of vain words, (presumed) promiscuity, and idolatry—not to mention, marriage, the “secret” of Ephesians heavily debated in Reformation sacramental theology. In the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Church of England formally recognized only baptism and communion as sacraments, denying that the others had “any visible sign or ceremony ordained by God.”²⁰⁹ Martin Luther claimed that the entire classification of marriage as a sacrament was based in a mistranslation of this word, the Greek term *mystêrion* (a mistranslation avoided in the Geneva version quoted above). According to Martin Luther, the word means “mystery” rather than “sacrament.” He asserts that the text’s analogy (of the spousal relationship with the relationship between Christ and the Church) is there in order to reinforce and clarify the lesson, rather than to

²⁰⁹ The phrase comes from the twenty-fifth article, text found online on the official website for the Church of England: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/book-of-common-prayer/articles-of-religion>.

dictate marriage as a channel of salvific grace.²¹⁰ Whatever Shakespeare's own opinion of the matrimonial state, *Cymbeline* repeatedly invokes the imagery of the Ephesians marriage blessing to explore the mystery of marriage, particularly in so far as faulty interpretations and inversions can alienate husband or wife from each other and from themselves.

“Mystery” or “secret” is also a good descriptor for a play whose hermeneutic difficulties breach the fourth wall. Over the centuries, anthologizers have shuffled the play between Shakespeare's genres: from tragedy in the First Folio, to history in the eighteenth century, to comedy at the end of the nineteenth. Today, it is most often spoken of as a romance, but it is still difficult to know what to make of *Cymbeline*, which is sometimes cast as a poor rough draft for the “good” romances of *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*.²¹¹ Critics highlight the way the play's many strands come together, portraying the piece as everything from Shakespeare's “most complete and triumphant vision of unity” to an irredeemable mess of “incongruity” (which can achieve the status of deliberate irony in more modern readings).²¹² The play is history and

²¹⁰ John Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 131.

²¹¹ Even Nicholas Potter, who gives an overview of *Cymbeline*'s critical history, ultimately dismisses the play (along with *Pericles*): “Critical and interpretative ingenuity notwithstanding, [they] are perhaps better regarded in any sustained study of Shakespeare's work as a prelude to two plays...that are unquestionably the greatest of the movement in Shakespeare's imaginative interests that led to the great experiment of these last plays.” Nicholas Potter, *Shakespeare's Late Plays: Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest*, Readers' Guides to Essential Criticism (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 58.

²¹² Samuel Johnson flatly disdained *Cymbeline*: “This play has many just sentiments, some natural dialogues, and some pleasing scenes, but they are obtained at the expense of much incongruity. To remark the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the names and manners of different times, and the impossibility of the events in any system of life were to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for

romance, absurd and enchanting, materialist and Pauline, conservative harmony and radical discord, a play that is constantly of at least two minds and thus available to an extraordinary range of interpretations in performance.²¹³ In fact, the Ephesians verse through which I frame the play uses the word “secret” twice and in startlingly different senses, referring first to the concealment of degenerate acts, second to the revelation of a sacred order. Light makes all the difference, and *Cymbeline* takes place in the strange predawn glow of a world on the precipice of the incarnation.

As does *Twelfth Night*, *Cymbeline*'s title promises revelation. The king's rule was most famous for coinciding with the birth of Christ. However, the character Cymbeline barely appears onstage. Named after this ineffectual and often absent king, the play searches, sometimes desperately, for authority. More particularly, it searches for an authoritative male subject that would also legitimate the corporate bodies he heads: religious, domestic, and political.²¹⁴ James I conventionally portrayed himself as the husband or father of the realm, the head of a national

detection, and too gross for aggravation.” Samuel Johnson, *Dr. Johnson on Shakespeare*, ed. W. K. Wimsatt (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 136. At the other end of the spectrum, J. M. Nosworthy reads the play as “the poet's conscious attempt to unify experience as a whole...In *Cymbeline* what seems a hopelessly varied multiplicity moves towards a great act of union...But Shakespeare is not satisfied until he has subsumed all these independent unions under one union, until he has presented his most complete and triumphant vision of unity.” J. M. Nosworthy, “Introduction,” William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline* (London: Arden 1955, reprinted Methuen 1995), lxxx.

²¹³ Martin Butler details *Cymbeline*'s generic and tonal blend in his introduction to the play. Martin Butler, Introduction, *Cymbeline*, William Shakespeare, ed. Martin Butler (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 15-24.

²¹⁴ Maurice Hunt focuses his discussion of the play's socio-theological framework on its corporate bodies. He also sees a deliberate reference to the Ephesians blessing. Maurice Hunt, "Dismemberment, Corporal Reconstitution, and the Body Politic in *Cymbeline*," *Studies in Philology* 99, no. 4 (2002), JSTOR.

body modeled on the nuclear family. *Cymbeline* engages this model, but it runs into a dilemma. What happens when weak men are yoked to strong women? An inevitable contradiction faces any identity rooted in power: the governor depends on the governed for his very identity (and may not be able to take their submission for granted). This ambivalence is a frequent theme in early modern thinking about masculinity.²¹⁵ One of the dominant strands of criticism on *Cymbeline* concerns the play's attempt "to fix, stabilize, delimit masculinity" when it is dependent on femininity—particularly when that femininity is continually stereotyped as weak and inconstant.²¹⁶

Cymbeline's center is its heroine, Innogen. The various strands of the play converge around her. For all her vaunted fidelity, she is an excessively available character, a vulnerability that enables the play's conflicts. As the scenes in which she sleeps attest, she is susceptible to both physical and figurative trespass, all the more troubling as the play identifies Innogen with England, and her availability to invasion metonymically links the romance plot to the Roman/history plot. She is the heir apparent to the king's role as England. Moreover, her name is that of the legendary wife of Brute, first ruler of Britain. Innogen's name recalls an original English mother, framing her body as necessary to the fulfillment of England's historical destiny, but she simultaneously threatens to derail that destiny. She interferes in the proper succession, and her beauty "leads men astray." Even her brothers, who think her a man, are lulled into lyrical

²¹⁵ See Butler, 27-29.

²¹⁶ Coppélia Kahn, *Roman Shakespeare: War, Wounds, and Women* (London: Routledge, 1997), 168. Perhaps the most influential argument on this matter is Janet Adelman's reading of *Cymbeline* as a "parthenogenetic fantasy," which I lean on heavily elsewhere in my own interpretation. Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to The Tempest* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

digression, forestalling their narrative fulfillment.²¹⁷ Her body is the site of both the “passionate excess” and the “immoderate sleep,” which Garrett Sullivan links to the genre: “In the romance episode, to slumber is to give oneself over to indulgence and ‘the enticements of lust,’ while to awaken is to be restored to both one’s epic identity and one’s quest.”²¹⁸ For much of the play, Innogen might be said to have a “romantic identity,” a total identification with desire in which the subject is entirely constituted through loss and—the desire being idolatrous—errancy.

Innogen tangles the Ephesians analogy—man and wife along the lines of Christ and church—becoming too literal a church to Posthumus. Her husband is still more lost, idolizing a wife who is also his social superior. The two can only be redeemed once *Cymbeline* has found the authority—and model subject—for which it seeks. A distinctly early modern, male ideal emerges in the play’s second half. Debora Shuger opposes the “unified erotic subjectivity of medieval Christianity” (here, I suggest, embodied by Innogen) to a “conflictual selfhood” identified with the image of a masculine Christ.²¹⁹ This new subjectivity is at once coherent and multifaceted, even embattled, caught up in a range of father-son dynamics. As Posthumus comes face to face with his dead father and with his god, the ultra-masculine Jupiter, he newly discovers himself, and *Cymbeline* discovers its spiritual model and proper bridegroom. Newly secure, Posthumus’s new self-conception also looks much like the model of selfhood that Catherine

²¹⁷ David Roberts explores the lyrical excesses that result from encounters with sleeping women as conventional digressions. David Roberts, "Sleeping Beauties: Shakespeare, Sleep, and the Stage," *The Cambridge Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2006).

²¹⁸ Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr., *Sleep, Romance, and Human Embodiment: Vitality from Spenser to Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 46. The internal quotation comes from Boccaccio’s explication of *The Aeneid*.

²¹⁹ Debora Kuller Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice, and Subjectivity*, *The New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 189.

Belsey finds in Renaissance tragedy—unified, autonomous, and self-knowing—idealizing these attributes as part of a divinely sanctioned masculine identity.²²⁰ Nor is he the only man to discover himself. As Guiderius comes face to face with his father, Cymbeline, he, too, finds his identity, and the play finds its proper king and proper heir.

While *Twelfth Night* is (over-)populated with twins, *Cymbeline*'s copies collect under the motif of stamping, or coining. Initially introduced as a figure for counterfeits and adulterations, the motif becomes, by the end, the figure of ultimate authority as well. *Cymbeline*'s birthmark is not the shared memory of the father (and his mole) as in *Twelfth Night*; instead, it is a physical stamp of paternity, shared between Innogen and Guiderius. However, this mark leads sister and brother in very different narrative directions. For Innogen, it reinforces vulnerability, both her own and her husband's, when Iachimo cites it as evidence of adultery. For Guiderius, it secures his identity as the lost heir. Both the political and the marital plot uncover a divine paternal stamp—Cymbeline's mark for Guiderius, Jupiter's and the Leonati's for Posthumus—that ultimately legitimates its subjects. Where *Twelfth Night* ultimately endorses kindness, *Cymbeline* endorses proper authority, a divine paternal stamp that legitimates both a patriarchal order and its subjects. Its ideal subject is the revealed master and king instead of the earlier play's ideal, an illimitable spirit that nonetheless condescends to participate in humanity's history and flesh. This quintessentially male paradigm values Innogen and provides for her as her own subject, but only when she is properly subjected within the corporate bodies of marriage and state. Yet the play never does solve its tonal ambiguity. Its conclusion leaves us wondering whether we have seen divine will justify power or merely the political appropriation of religious topoi. *Cymbeline*

²²⁰ See Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London: Methuen, 1985), 13-125.

dreams of an ideal man in the image of Christ as bridegroom-king, but its sleights of hand strand us between wonder and incredulity, opening up the potential for skeptical resistance.

One Flesh, but Whose?

Cymbeline immediately broods over epistemological uncertainties. Its opening questions revolve around Posthumus—who is he, and what has he done?—questions that prove strangely difficult to answer. The audience enters the play through the eyes of Second Gentleman as he defers to First Gentleman’s greater knowledge of recent events, but the play quickly undermines First Gentleman’s authority. We meet Posthumus as someone that we can never know, not fully. He is both mysterious and mysteriously without peer; we can neither see within him nor understand him through comparison to others who are similar. We can know only that he is somehow “better.” The first gentleman describes Posthumus as

a creature such
As to seek through the regions of the earth
For one his like, there would be something failing
In him that should compare. I do not think
So fair an outward and such stuff within
Endows a man but he. (1.1.19-24)²²¹

Posthumus’s admirer makes our imaginations dash around the world but return without souvenirs; there is no detail or image to which we can hold. The rhetoric is excessive, general, and relies on negation. The second gentleman notes, “You speak him far,” requiring the first to defend his words: “I do extend him, sir, within himself, / Crush him together, rather than unfold / His measure duly” (1.1.25-27). But how can we know Posthumus’s limits, let alone “the stuff within,” without any objects to guide our perspective? Oddly, it is not until the second gentleman turns the conversation to more concrete markers of identity—“What’s his name and birth?”—that

²²¹ For *Cymbeline*, I use the edition: William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, ed. Martin Butler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 2012).

the first confesses the limits of his penetration: “I cannot delve him to the root” (1.1.27-28). Following the obscurity of the previous description, the words indicate, we suspect, a failure to enter into the heart of the man as well as a failure to produce his lineage. Indeed, events will soon undermine this glowing report; Innogen’s husband will begin to seem decidedly less exceptional, both less virtuous and less singular, as the play draws unsettling parallels between Posthumus and the evidently profane Cloten and Iachimo.

We quickly discover that Posthumus can best be known in relation to Innogen, and much of my analysis of this text revolves around the identities of Innogen and Posthumus as they shape and are shaped by the corporate body of their marriage. When the first gentleman finally abandons his superlatives, he returns to the first fact we have regarding Posthumus, his marriage. He tangles religious and commercial discourse, insisting,

To his mistress,
For whom he now is banished, her own price
Proclaims how she esteemed him; and his virtue
By her election may be truly read,
What kind of man he is. (1.1.50-54)

We can know Posthumus’s worth through Innogen’s “own price.” Now imprisoned, Innogen bought her husband with her freedom. This “price” is paid in suffering, a kind of martyrdom that positions us to evaluate her esteem and, more suggestively, the worth of her “election,” “by [which] may be truly read / What kind of man he is.” The idea of a true “election” imports Calvinist discourse, and the following scene returns us to this idea. In response to Cloten’s incredulity that Innogen “should love this fellow and refuse me,” the second lord responds, “If it be a sin to make a true election, she is damned” (1.2.18ff). Innogen as referent, herself, seems to refer to something beyond her, some divine gauge of value. The couple’s free choice tangles with divine will, which, the language insinuates, simultaneously selects and guides them. Such is

predestination, but the invocation of soteriology serves more to explain the muddy waters than to clarify them. The puzzle of Posthumus is linked to the puzzle facing all Protestants: how to read what signs of interior faith and salvation both in others and in the self.

These lines further confuse the issue in their ambivalence over the relationship's dynamic. On the one hand, the lines reinforce our sense of a fully mutual choice, for which the couple suffers the mirror-image (literally inverted) woes of imprisonment and exile. The verse tightens our sense of balance. Lines 51 and 52 are syntactically and metrically parallel, their subjects forming a chiasmus. The couple's mutuality, providentially affirmed, gives them the appearance of an ideal companionate marriage, a paradigm that, itself, implies the existence of single, essentially stable subjects who might be spiritually compatible or not.²²² On the other hand, the sentence moves—in measured steps—in only one direction, from the authority of “his mistress” to “what kind of man he is.” As the two gentlemen rely on Innogen to establish Posthumus, her “election” of him seems to substitute for as much as to shadow God's. We get an impression of an unbalanced, gender-hierarchy-inverted marriage in which Posthumus's reputation entirely depends on his wife. When we again meet up with the character in Italy, it is clear that this imbalance follows him out of England. Iachimo identifies him as the husband of “his king's daughter, wherein he must be weighed rather by her value than his own” (1.4.10ff). The play sets him up as Innogen's dependent, preparing him to unravel at her supposed betrayal.

The play raises concerns over the legal and political status of Innogen's election as well, making us question its extent and validity. Anne Barton was the first to note a potential problem of tenses with regard to the marriage, drawing on the relationship between the spousal, the ritual establishing intention to marry (and, sometimes, carrying most of the legal weight of marriage),

²²² Belsey, 34-35.

and the marital ceremony, itself. Early modern custom had decreased the role of spousal, but there were still two recognized forms.²²³ If their spousal was effected *per verba de futuro* rather than *per verba de praesenti*, their potential failure to consummate the marriage (raised by Posthumus in 2.4) would suggest that they are espoused but not fully married.²²⁴ In addition, Innogen's autonomy in the matter is not fully clear. Protestant discussions of marriage emphasize the woman's spiritual autonomy, but early modern English liturgy had increased the formal role given parental consent (though this was still not technically required) as well as that establishing the partners' mutual consent.²²⁵

More importantly, Innogen is not simply a daughter; she is the (presumed) only child of a king with all the attendant responsibilities of the royal heir. Innogen's "election" of Posthumus

²²³ The relationship between spousal and marriage evolved, in part, due to changes in the ritual transference of property to daughters. Marriage portions were increasingly paid out in cash (rather than goods) and often given to the daughter at a certain age rather than as part of the spousal ceremony, shifts that Christine Peters argues could replace the greater, "temporary symbolic recognition" of the woman's independence with "practical independence for unmarried young women." Christine Peters, "Gender, Sacrament, and Ritual: The Making and Meaning of Marriage in Late Medieval and Early Modern England," *Past & Present* 169 (2000): 93, JSTOR.

²²⁴ Anne Barton, "Wrying but a little": marriage, law, and sexuality in the plays of Shakespeare", in *Essays, Mainly Shakespearean*, pp. 3-30. Martin Butler argues that Jupiter's later insistence that Posthumus has been married in his temple resolves the issue, but, if so, that development is part of the grand denouement, not of our initial understanding (Butler, 26n).

²²⁵ Some Continental reformers did insist on parental consent. In England, Archbishop Cranmer scripted the new, liturgical balancing act (Peters 95).

also has consequences according the political meaning of the word.²²⁶ Her sexual choices have national consequences because her body—by the convention that names rulers by their domain—is, or will be, England, from which Cymbeline now exiles her husband. The iconography of the marriage blessing was also applied to the early modern state, with the king sometimes iconized as his country’s bridegroom as well as its father. In marrying her husband, Innogen’s filial rebellion serves as both a national insurrection and a problematic (within a patriarchal set of values) model of the household carried into her marriage as well. Her parting gift to Posthumus further suggests this inversion. She gives her husband a ring that once belonged to her mother, a matrilineal inheritance whose gift subverts the power of her father over succession.

And yet Innogen, even in male garb, never comes across as anything but utterly, essentially “feminine.”²²⁷ As *Cymbeline’s* performance history attests, she was perfectly poised to become the darling of the nineteenth century. William Hazlitt, with a particular eye to Innogen once claimed,

No one ever hit the true perfection of the female character, the sense of weakness leaning on the strength of its affections for support, so well as Shakespeare—no one ever so well painted natural tenderness free from affectation and disguise — no one ever showed how delicacy and timidity, when driven to extremity, grow romantic and extravagant.²²⁸

²²⁶ A point that King Cymbeline raises when he interrupts the couple in their adieus. The king chastises his daughter for wedding “a beggar” and classifies her decision as an attempt to make his “throne / A seat for baseness” (1.1.141-42).

²²⁷ Unlike all of Shakespeare’s other crossdressing heroines, her male disguise is adopted at the suggestion of a man who bemoans the necessity. Pisanio spends twelve lines drawing clear distinctions between Innogen’s natural femininity and her masculine disguise (3.4.153-64).

²²⁸ William Hazlitt, *The Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (London: Dent, 1906), 2-3.

I may not agree with Hazlitt about the “true perfection of the female character,” but he does provide a good summary of the way Innogen is characterized within the play—both her vulnerability and her emotional strength. Posthumus’s overdependence on Innogen leads to the instability of their “one flesh”—not only because she proves unruly, but also because her “strength” is inseparable from her feminine “weakness.”²²⁹ She is given all the status of head of household without any of the stereotypically masculine characteristics of a leader. Even after she puts on male dress, she displays none of the nuanced gender negotiation that Viola does. She is all woman and to be pitied for the “extremity” that forces her into romantic adventure and pants.

Counterfeits: Idolatry, Adultery, and Adulteration

For all of Innogen’s power, Posthumus is not the only spouse dependent on the other for an identity. Both partners use the other to define themselves in ways that compromise their relationships with each other, with God, and with themselves. They can only be restored to all three after a painful journey: Posthumus wagers with Iachimo over Innogen’s fidelity, believes Iachimo’s false report, orders her execution, and repents. This trajectory frees Innogen as well as her husband. At the beginning of the play, Innogen resembles what has been portrayed as a medieval “unified erotic subjectivity,” a model of Christologically focused subjectivity that locates integrity in an encompassing desire for Christ.²³⁰ This model, already suspect in early

²²⁹ Many critics have commented on Innogen’s essential (and essentialist) femininity. Robin Moffet compares Innogen to the usual heroine of the wager story: “The masculine qualities—the self-sufficiency, the successful energy and resourcefulness...—have been left out entirely in Imogen and her human and feminine limitations stressed (along with her excellence)—weakness, helplessness, subjection to error.” Robin Moffet, “*Cymbeline* and the Nativity,” *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 1962, 210, JSTOR.

²³⁰ Debora Shuger opposes the “unified erotic subjectivity of medieval Christianity” to the early modern, Protestant “chimerical self” and its emphasis on inner conflict. Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice, and*

modern Protestant culture, is made much more problematic as she substitutes her husband for the divine bridegroom (who, to be fair, has not yet entered the stage of history). Posthumus's words become Word-like to her. Early in the play, she compares his letters to "offered mercy" and later, when betrayed, names them "scriptures...turned to heresy" (1.3.4, 3.4.79-80). In her devotion, she takes the lessons of Ephesians to idolatrous extremes, and her abjection prepares her for a martyrdom only forestalled by providence and Pisanio's goodwill. Her husband commits his own form of idolatry, insisting on Innogen's transcendence of human/feminine weakness. He establishes his own value through her "election," and when he subjects his marriage to the wager plot, his loss upends everything he presumes to know about himself. Without Innogen as anchor, he imagines an open market of continually fluctuating and unverifiable identity. He demonizes all women and devalues all men by virtue of their biological dependence on their mothers. Both characters require the death of their false gods before they can develop in more holistic ways; both need to redirect their faith. Posthumus also needs to understand faith, the trust in things unseen. Only so can he anchor the depreciating relativism that pervades once his own golden calf comes tumbling down.

Innogen

To Posthumus's head, Innogen serves as body as well as church, and her underscored physicality makes her vulnerable. The incredibly emotional character begins the play "senseless of [her father's] wrath" but only because "a touch more rare /Subdues all pangs, all fears" (1.1.135-36). She is all feeling, lost in the "touch" of a higher emotion that, for all of its "rarity," is inseparable from bodily experience and the language it anchors. As the play repeatedly stages

Subjectivity, 189. We should note that this medieval model frequently serves more as a straw man than as a fully developed representation of erotic subjectivity in medieval literature; in fact, eros frequently splinters the subject in actual medieval texts.

Innogen sleeping, it highlights her availability to men, a weakness that comes from within as well as without.²³¹ In the moments before Iachimo crawls from the trunk, she prepares to sleep and prays, “To your protection I commend me, gods. / From fairies and the tempters of the night / Guard me, beseech ye” (2.2.8-10). She worries over her openness to both temptation and touch. When she hears that Posthumus believes her to have committed adultery, she returns to the dangers of sleep:

False to his bed! What is it to be false?
To lie in watch there and to think on him?
To weep 'twixt clock and clock? if sleep charge nature,
To break it with a fearful dream of him
And cry myself awake? that's false to's bed, is it? (3.4.38-42)

She dreams; she watches; she weeps. In short, Innogen maintains a kind of holy vigil for her absent husband, to which sex and dreamless sleep are paired betrayals, ways of being “false.” Her definition of being “true” gives us an image of Innogen as a kind female saint, but her all-consuming desire for the absent bridegroom establishes her physical weakness as well as her integrity.

This physical Innogen is associated with physical spaces; the play’s imagery connects her with religious architecture. She is even described as a “temple” three times: by a random lord in her father’s court (2.1.58), by her brother Arviragus (4.2.55), and by her husband (5.4.220). Even

²³¹ The use of sleep, itself, helps establish Innogen’s vulnerability to influence as well as to physical violence. Early modern psychology portrays sleep as a dangerously liminal state, in which the imagination is peculiarly open to suggestion—and the distinction between internal and external dangers is thereby muddled. Lisa Starks-Estes situates Innogen’s prayer within this body of thought and identifies the dangers of an imagination led astray and possibly resulting in “severe melancholy or trauma.” Lisa Starks-Estes, *Violence, Trauma, and Virtus in Shakespeare's Roman Poems and Plays: Transforming Ovid* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 171.

Iachimo finds himself unexpectedly at church when he achieves her bedroom. He begins to blazon her body. After a few formulaic comparisons, he describes her situation:

'Tis her breathing that
Perfumes the chamber thus: the flame o' the taper
Bows toward her, and would under-peep her lids,
To see the enclosed lights, now canopied
Under these windows, white and azure laced
With blue of heaven's own tinct. But my design,
To note the chamber. (2.2.17-23)

Innogen and the room physically extend towards one another. In breathing, Innogen flows out to “perfume the chamber” while “the flame of the taper / Bows toward her.” If the spirit as breath infuses the body, a common trope, it here also infuses the room, linking body to dwelling as concentric habitations. The next line reverses the exchange as the flame draws towards the “windows” of Innogen’s eyelids. For a moment, Iachimo finds himself caught in a sensory, pseudo-religious experience, his blazon stalled by a poetic impetus towards conceit rather than towards a string of unrelated metaphors. Pulling himself from this reverie, Iachimo reminds himself of his “design, / “To note the chamber,” but this is exactly what he has been doing, noting Innogen *as* the chamber. His following inventory of the objects in her bedroom seems more a continuation of the original blazon than a radical shift. He then moves in to touch the sleeping Innogen and prays, “And be her sense but as a monument, / Thus in a chapel lying!” (2.2.32-33).

There is something hollow about the churches of Innogen and her bedroom. A congregation of one, Innogen is jealous of her singularity, insisting that her love marks—and separates—her as special. When Pisanio promises to take her to Posthumus, she addresses him,

Then, true Pisanio,
Who long'st like me to see thy lord; who long'st—
O let me bate!—but not like me—yet long'st
But in a fainter kind—O, not like me,

For mine's beyond beyond (3.2.53-57)

The entire speech is an exuberant mess. Her desire for Posthumus erupts in ecstatic exclamations that disjoint her speech and mark out a privileged space—textually as well as cosmically—for Innogen. As she continues, she bombards poor Pisanio with a series of questions without ever giving him a chance to reply. What should be a dialogue becomes a monologue in which Innogen's very desire for the information (or at least its subject) interferes with her ability to receive it. In its excess, her "longing" frustrates itself, becoming its own cause. Even her apophatic gesture ultimately rebounds to describe her desire rather than the desired. Her longing is "beyond beyond" and turns her gaze within an estranged self. Innogen's obsession with "mine," well, mines her to the core where it discovers only itself, infinite need.

As Innogen discovers Posthumus's betrayal, i.e., his belief in her dishonesty and decision to kill her, this infinite need becomes abjection and (almost) martyrdom. Her looming death tags as untenable any subjectivity primarily defined through erotic idolatry. It also throws into question the more quotidian mystification of marriage as a sacrament. Innogen encourages Pisanio to kill her: "Come, fellow, be thou honest, / Do thou thy master's bidding. When thou sees him, / A little witness my obedience" (3.4.62-64). She repeats the keyword of the Ephesians moral for wives a few lines later, claiming to be "obedient as the scabbard," before Pisanio's blade (78). The scene she paints is eerily sexualized. She begs him to stab her through her heart, metaphorically associated with the womb, now "empty of all things but grief" since "thy master is not here" (3.4.68-69). She designates Pisanio as a husband's proxy, another unsettling substitution that contributes to our sense of things out of place, and invites her own destruction in the violent consummation of their marriage. After all, Posthumus's rejection has already evacuated her, leaving a shell behind. Innogen casts herself in the same mold that Viola assumes

when threatened by Orsino, that of the willing, sacrificial lamb. She narrates her own pleas to Pisanio: “The lamb entreats the butcher” (3.4.95). Whereas Viola’s turn as “lamb” jars the audience and reveals a disturbing excess of service, Innogen’s—while no less disturbing—seems inevitable, a natural consequence of her approach to her husband. The tangle of matrimony with Christ’s martyrdom further draws on late medieval Passion theology. In the fifteenth century, the belief that all sacraments were instituted at the Crucifixion became increasingly popular.²³² The idea of marriage as a channel of grace through the sacrifice and execution of Christ is here perverted into marriage as idolatry and death.

This paradigm survives even Innogen’s pain and anger with her deity; it takes her husband’s presumed death for her to “wake up,” to discover a healthier self-conception and religion. After her stepmother’s potion has put her into a death-like sleep, she awakens to find herself still in a nightmare state, “the dream...without me, as within me,” next to a headless Cloten in her husband’s clothing (4.2.305-6). She blazons this misidentified body:

A headless man! The garments of Posthumus!
I know the shape of's leg; this is his hand;
His foot Mercurial; his Martial thigh;
The brawns of Hercules; but his Jovial face—
Murder in heaven! (4.2.307-11)

²³² According to Christine Peters, “By the fifteenth century, as part of the intensification of the devotion to the Passion of Christ and to the five wounds, the belief that the sacraments were instituted at the Crucifixion was increasingly emphasized, and their ability to confer grace was viewed from this new perspective. Such ideas were not new: Aquinas had maintained that all sacraments derive their power from the Passion of Christ. Before the fifteenth century, however, this had not been widely disseminated in the parishes, and where a connection had been made between the sacrament of marriage and Christ it was in terms of his role at the Marriage of Cana rather than his institution of sacraments as channels of grace” (74).

She substitutes Posthumus for Cloten, the clothing for the man, and a new god for every body part, excavating Mount Olympus in order to figure Posthumus in the image of the divine. But this image has no integrity. Nor does it have a head (which, when staged, is an omission considerably more striking). Drawing on the Ephesians imagery, she is now a headless wife, a headless church. When Lucius discovers her cradling this corpse, she declares, “I am nothing; or if not, / Nothing to be were better” (4.2.367-68). Innogen’s trajectory follows the standard U-shape of the romance, but her nadir comes not in her apparent death but almost immediately thereafter, in her perception of her husband’s murder. Her blazon shows her at her most clearly idolatrous, but it also shows her at the death of her “god,” opening up new possibilities for Innogen as a person and for her marriage. She joins Lucius as his page, a move that will ultimately lead to her reunion with Posthumus. As Lucius says to close the scene, “Some falls are means the happier to arise” (4.2.402). So it is with mankind (in a Christian history of the world), so with Innogen here.

Posthumus

In order for their marriage to enter a new, healthier model, Posthumus must change as well. He must overcome his own idolatries and the insecurity they foster. He initially professes himself Innogen’s “adorer, not her friend” (i.e., lover), establishing him as a kind of religious supplicant rather than governor within his marriage (1.4.55).²³³ Her fidelity anchors his faith, and her perfection frames his identity. As does his wife (with better reason), Posthumus collapses in the wake of her (presumed) betrayal, but he feels himself over- rather than under-populated, the product of a pervasive, adulterer’s market. Innogen’s sin becomes that of all women, and

²³³ Posthumus, too, will be able to recognize Innogen’s birthmark, suggesting that he does not intend to imply Innogen’s virginity so much as to distinguish between the seduction of a paramour and the sanctified duty of a husband.

Posthumus condemns humanity to the status of bastards and whores, denying the existence of either personal integrity or verifiable genealogy. People are merely counterfeit currency—debased copies detached from any consistent system of value and so defined through passing inclination. This vision rejects predestination as well as the broader Christological touchstones: man’s creation in God’s image and Christ’s redemption of—through participation in—man. Once convinced of humanity’s basic sinfulness, Posthumus then must come to believe in a divine economy, established through a divine patriarch, that forgives debts rather than rewards manifest perfection. He must discover faith.

When Posthumus wagers on Innogen’s fidelity, he does so in order to secure her transcendence and the identity he gains thereby. He puts his wife on the market in order to ratify her immunity to all markets. (It is, perhaps, not surprising that this backfires.) The object that he will wager is the ring Innogen gave him, an accessory that serves as a symbol of their marriage and matches his wife’s surpassing excellence. Posthumus “esteem[s]” this ring “more than the world,” but he contrasts Innogen’s gift, which is something that theoretically could be for sale, with Innogen, herself, who is “only the gift of the gods” (1.4.63, 64, 69). Iachimo, on the other hand, conflates the two; he refuses the gratuity of personal esteem or divine providence and subjects all value to an open market.²³⁴ He admits that the diamond ring “outlustres many I have

²³⁴ James Siemon characterizes Iachimo’s denial of Innogen’s transcendence: “he challenges any and all values of nation or individual in the name of an imaginary market space that is presented as overwhelming the claim of any actual instance in its capacity for open-ended possibility.” Siemon describes Iachimo’s “alienating modernity,” a quality that sets up the character’s effect on Posthumus, as the latter’s values and identity are unhinged when their anchor is discredited. James R. Siemon, “Perplex’d Beyond Self-Explication’: *Cymbeline* and Early Modern/Postmodern Europe,” in *Shakespeare in the New Europe*, ed. Michael Hattaway, Boika Sokolova, and Derek Roper (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 306.

beheld” in the same way that she presumably “excel[s] many” (1.4.59ff). The worth of each is relative within a set, and the beauty of each only makes them more vulnerable to the desire of “a cunning thief” or an “accomplished courtier” (1.4.75).

However, Iachimo does not introduce this economic discourse into either the play or the marriage; Posthumus has already done so, and in the very first scene. In the wager plot, the romantic, pseudo-sacramental conception of marriage fuses disastrously with an economic one. When Posthumus and Innogen part ways, they exchange jewelry, this ring and (for Innogen) a bracelet. Posthumus emphasizes the ring’s market value as it exceeds the bracelet:

As I my poor self did exchange for you
To your so infinite loss, so in our trifles
I still win of you. For my sake wear this:
It is a manacle of love, I’ll place it
Upon this fairest prisoner. (1.1.19-23).

Posthumus makes this exchange of commodities, in which one person can “win,” an analog to their marriage, an association that Iachimo will exploit. Moreover, he highlights his own insecurity within the marriage with rhetoric that is covertly hostile (and no less so for being conventional). Innogen is doubly imprisoned in this scene. She is, literally, a prisoner of her father, and her husband attempts to re-imprison her, metaphorically, but within the confines of marriage rather than of family and state. Both of these containments fail. Innogen escapes the court, and Iachimo steals the bracelet and, thereby, wins the ring.

For all of Posthumus’s insistence to Iachimo that the ring is just a symbol, he treats it as the Eucharist of their marital communion. As does Innogen’s acceptance of marital martyrdom, Posthumus’s treatment of the ring serves as an idolatrous perversion of marriage as sacrament. When Innogen presents her gift, she instructs Posthumus to “keep it till you woo another wife, / When Innogen is dead” (1.1.113-14). Her version of “Til’ death do us part” helps characterize the

ring as an icon of their vows, something to “keep” in trust. As he later debates Iachimo, Posthumus uncomfortably navigates between the ring’s dual status as expensive object and as an icon of their marriage—but, for him, the icon does not rely on active keeping. The ring becomes a metonym (synecdoche, even) of marriage’s “one flesh” and inherent to Posthumus as he is constituted therein. He characterizes the token as “dear as my finger, ’tis part of it” (1.4.107ff). After Iachimo persuades Posthumus to enter both Innogen and ring into the wager, their loss (to trickery), returns Posthumus to Innogen’s initial terms. Her insistence that he keep the ring until her death somehow becomes his insistence that she die for the ring’s loss, a perversion of its intended, symbolic function.²³⁵ While maintaining the existence of a sacramental, bodily connection between the ring and the spouses, he pulls everything into a market in which exchange works in both directions. Instead of an icon of their vows, the ring has become a strange voodoo doll, one in which economic equivalence (when *this* is devalued, so is *that*) has all the force of sympathetic magic.

Thus unmoored, Posthumus loses his own sense of identity. In fact, all particularity dissolves as he enters into a misogynistic rant in which he extrapolates from Innogen’s perfidy to that of all women, and from there to the instability of all men:

Is there no way for men to be, but women
Must be half-workers? We are all bastards,
And that most venerable man, which I
Did call my father was I know not where

²³⁵ Many Reform polemicists mocked (what they characterized as) a Catholic superstitious reverence of the Eucharist, an over-identification of the physical object with its divine referent. They would satirize the (by no means common to Catholic understandings of the Mass) idea that the host might suffer physical damage (might be dropped on the floor, consumed by animals, or otherwise violated) in a way that would nullify or pervert the sacrament. While not a perfect parallel, there seems to be a similar inversion of logic at play in Posthumus’s treatment of the ring.

When I was stamped. Some coiner with his tools
Made me a counterfeit. (2.5.1-6)

Posthumus's speech most explicitly reveals one of the "two interlocking fantasies" that Janet Adelman has argued drive the play: "the achievement of the parthenogenetic family in Cymbeline's recovery of his sons and the exorcism of the woman's part in Posthumus."²³⁶ These fantasies identify women as a threat to both corporate bodies and personal ones, a weakness that must be secured or, even better, eradicated. Posthumus bemoans the ordinary means of reproduction, which make a secure male identity impossible. The biological/ontological question of how "men" might "be"—be absolutely men, without women—gives way to the metaphor of currency, driven there by female inconstancy. These economics are not tied to some higher truth. Innogen is not the "nonpareil" once thought, the transcendental coatrack on which Posthumus might hang his very identity (2.5.8). She is merely a woman, and "even to vice / They are not constant, but are changing still" (2.5.29-30). Her betrayal becomes his mother's, and their collective failure completes the rupture in Posthumus's already partial genealogy (recounted by First Gentleman in the first scene). Posthumus has defined himself through Innogen's "election," and he now finds himself to be "a counterfeit."²³⁷

His idol discredited, it still requires Innogen's presumed death to prepare Posthumus for healthier relationships with himself and others. Even before learning of Innogen's innocence (and survival) Posthumus discovers that his calculations have been off—and so has his

²³⁶ Adelman, 199.

²³⁷ Patricia Parker deepens the connection between coining and adulterous sex, identifying "counterfeiting" as a "homophone of counter-fitting, a fit sexualized by Cloten in IV.i.3." Patricia Parker, "Cymbeline's Much Ado About Nothing, Noting, (K)not Knowing, and Nothus." *Actes Des Congrès De La Société Française Shakespeare* 31 (2014): 114. Web. <<http://shakespeare.revues.org/2826>>.

calculator. Romantic idolatry may have been a poor basis on which to determine the value of individuals and their relationships, but an open market flooded with false currency is no better a model for humanity. After his misogynistic rant, Posthumus disappears for all of the third and fourth acts only to reappear as a changed, penitent man. For the audience, his change of heart is sudden, miraculous. Rather than see him guided by external means, we see Posthumus as he is graciously, individually inspired.²³⁸ His vision thus cleared, he addresses the audience,

You married ones,
If each of you should take this course, how many
Must murder wives much better than themselves
For wrying but a little! (5.1.2-5)

Posthumus is mistaken about Innogen's transgression but not about her human ability to transgress. His evaluation of her as "better" is now based, not in a fantasy of perfection, but rather in a moral mathematics with which I happen to agree; murder is worse than adultery. Furthermore, he now offers a vision of marriage as a matter of charity between similarly errant individuals. He will later extend his forgiveness even to Iachimo, fully overcoming a worldview in which justice is retributive and value is either manifest or relative.

True Coin: "Pieces for the figure's sake"

Forgiveness is central to Sarah Beckwith's reading of the play's denouement, which she reads in light of contemporary confession theology. She names the play's final gathering as "a Eucharistic community because it embodies forgiveness, and because it imagines the restoration

²³⁸ Grace Tiffany contextualizes Posthumus's abrupt repentance—and its lack of a clear, immediate prompt—within Reformation theology, using Lancelot Andrews's sermons and his assertion "that we can only repent 'according to the several measures of [God's] grace in us.'" Grace Tiffany, "Calvinist Grace in Shakespeare's Romances: Upending Tragedy," *Christianity and Literature* 49, no. 4 (2000): 424, Sage Pub. Internal quotation from "Sermon 2 of the Passion: Good Friday 1604."

of each person to him or herself as inseparable from, intimate with, the restoration of that community.”²³⁹ The ending sees a general atonement with the reparation of the fractures both within and between the members of the cast. Yet, *Cymbeline* also presents the reparation of order and hierarchy as part of (or even a condition for) community. The play’s corporate bodies can only re-form themselves under restored heads. In *Posthumus*, the play gives us a tale of self-discovery through his proper relationship with a quintessentially male god, his own paternal line, and a cherished, obedient wife. Humility is fundamental to this identity—not as any kind of erotic abjection but rather as a guiding ethic and an awareness of one’s own sinfulness. Instead of a system of value anchored in an idol, we see one generated with respect to one’s own unworthiness and the infinite love of a deity that can overcome it—the conclusions of a proper, meditative engagement with Christ as laid out by Luther and Calvin. *Posthumus*’s humility is the paradoxical expression of a now robust self, whose sacrifice and forgiveness can participate in those of the truly ideal bridegroom, Christ. Its exclusiveness undermines its humility, which it claims as kenotic, and models the problem that many theologians have had with both patristic and early modern Christology. As a newly “healthy” subject, *Posthumus* is autonomous, unified, and self-knowing—the three major attributes that Catherine Belsey identifies for the (quintessentially male) liberal humanist subject of Renaissance tragedy. This is not to say that *Cymbeline* dismisses Innogen, only that it contains and subordinates her. While Innogen’s faith and humility are expanded beyond *Posthumus*, she expresses these attributes in a series of fundamentally domestic relationships with men. Safely removed from the line of power, she gives us an image of the female, Christian subject as an obedient caretaker.

Posthumus

²³⁹ Sarah Beckwith, *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 105.

The fifth act sees Posthumus embrace his own freedom, which enables him to dedicate himself to both the gods and Innogen without being either overwhelmed or compromised by an external referent. As he regrets his wife's murder, he also bemoans Pisanio's over-readiness to follow orders, drawing a distinction between proper and improper obedience. Posthumus insists, "Every good servant does not all commands: / No bond but to do just ones" (5.1.5-7). He engages a theme that would become more and more relevant as the seventeenth century progressed and Puritan writers insisted on the spiritual liberty of the political subject.²⁴⁰ He exhorts the gods to "do your best wills, / And make me blest to obey!" (5.1.16-17). The "good servant's" autonomy liberates him and, thereby, exalts his obedience as it comes from his own will. Posthumus decides to devote himself to England and its princess, spending most of the final act in the roles of, first, the British peasant and, then, the vanquished, foreign foe. In the terms of the Philippians hymn, he "[makes] himself of no reputation" (Philippians 2:7) and "thus, unknown, / Pitied nor hated, to the face of peril / Myself I'll dedicate" (5.1.27-29). By the time he is clapped in chains, he has fully embraced the Christian paradox in which proper submission empowers and finally liberates the soul: "Most welcome, bondage! for thou art a way, / I think, to liberty" (5.3.97-98).

His role-playing serves as an expression of his penitence, part of his pursuit of wholeness within and without. Posthumus is determined to atone—to become *at one* with the gods—and wonders what constitutes sufficient repentance: "Is't enough I am sorry? / So children temporal fathers do appease; / Gods are more full of mercy" (5.3.105-7). His transgression against Innogen becomes a transgression against the gods, the ultimate judges and the ultimate parents of

²⁴⁰ According to Belsey, while the Anglican position did not provide for political disobedience, it did "locate the sovereign within rather than above the law," qualifying the king's authority over his subjects (111).

mankind. This shift affords Posthumus a way out of strict, moral accounting and into a more charitable system of value. He returns to the play's money motif but transforms it in light of a divine creation that supersedes the (occasionally adulterous) affairs of mortal parents. He frames himself as both a "debtor," rhetoric that anticipates Christ's status as the ultimate redeemer, and as insufficient coin (5.3.113):

For Innogen's dear life take mine; and though
'Tis not so dear, yet 'tis a life; you coin'd it:
'Tween man and man they weigh not every stamp;
Though light, take pieces for the figure's sake. (5.3.116-19)

He returns to the idea of offspring as the "coin" of their parents but no longer fears counterfeiting, bemoaning male dependence on naturally treacherous women. Instead, he appeals to a spiritual commonality based in a shared, divine derivation. His flaws are part of his human integrity rather than its destruction—men are only "pieces," not the "figure." "Though light," he is finally validated and unified through a divine image. The charity he is newly able to show others springs from this faith and humility.

For all that Posthumus appoints Innogen his moral and spiritual superior—he is "not so dear" as she—his divine image is importantly male, and his divine ancestry importantly patrilineal. James Stone, who examines the play in light of its defining network of homosocial bonds, posits, "Perhaps the most important homosocial relationship is that between man and god, for it serves as the capstone of the hierarchical pyramid that makes possible and secures all other male-male bonds."²⁴¹ However, this "securing" bond is also importantly familial, creating a relationship between the divine father and the man stamped in his image.²⁴² Posthumus's dead

²⁴¹ Stone, 124.

²⁴² Early in the play, Innogen rejects Cloten, who is often used as a foil to Posthumus, and declares that she would do so "Wert thou the son of Jupiter" (2.3.119). As Posthumus now finishes his soliloquy, he enters into a masculine

family appears and reassures him of his place within the warrior Leonati line before reaching back still further to a divine father. They harangue Jupiter for his careless treatment of Posthumus and insist that he appear to “take off his miseries” (5.3.153). Jupiter enters in all his hyper-masculine, thunderbolt-throwing glory. He is, indeed, “full of mercy”—though irate—and establishes Posthumus as pre-forgiven (for his completely unmentioned crimes) and even cherished. He declares,

Our Jovial star reign'd at his birth, and in
Our temple was he married. Rise, and fade.
He shall be lord of lady Innogen,
And happier much by his affliction made. (5.3.169-72)

Present at both Posthumus’s birth and his marriage, Jupiter ratifies the man’s identities as son and husband, tying both to his own, ultimate governance. The father of the gods makes Posthumus “lord of lady Innogen” and can ultimately testify on his behalf, a far cry from the beginning of the play when the courtiers primarily evaluated him through *her* romantic choice.

Posthumus’s nap plays very differently than does either of Innogen’s. Both of her sleep scenes dramatize deception and failures of knowledge; Posthumus’s, instead, is a scene of revelation. The entire point of the scene is to advance his self-knowledge, confirming his genealogy and his select status as Jupiter’s favorite. When Jupiter initially enters, the god is not amused by the presumption of Posthumus’s ancestors in summoning and questioning him. He insists on his own divine inscrutability, but he enters the play in order to explain himself (and how he has shaped Posthumus):

Whom best I love I cross; to make my gift,
The more delay'd, delighted. Be content;
Your low-laid son our godhead will uplift:

dreamscape in which both human and divine paternity can be confirmed—seeming to now contrast even this non-identity of Cloten.

His comforts thrive, his trials well are spent. (5.3.165-68 74)

Posthumus's misfortune is now to be read as a sign of Jupiter's "election" rather than as a consequence of Innogen's. The god confirms his "predestination"—transposed into a Roman pantheon. He does not address the external circumstances of Posthumus's suffering; the "miserics" he "take[s] off" (at the request of the man's dead mother) instead have to do with personal insecurity (5.3.153). This is a bizarre *deus ex machina* because it is entirely redundant to the resolution of the plot. Jupiter foretells the happy ending but does not—through his appearance—bring it about. In fact, Posthumus cannot even understand the text until its events have already transpired; it confirms his status as special without directing his actions. The "tablet" Jupiter leaves behind, "wherein / Our pleasure his full fortune doth confine," remains opaque until readers can use it to gloss the past rather than to predict the future (5.3.173-74).²⁴³

The staging of the divine, here in classical dress, recalls the now-prohibited religious drama but with crucial differences. In medieval drama, when God (the Father) leaves tablets behind, he is interested in your obedience, not your self-esteem—and if he does tell you the future and insist that you're special, he probably has a boat he needs built. But most importantly, when God appears onstage, he does so in order to foster knowledge of God. Jupiter here acts as a burning

²⁴³ Looking at scenes of reading in the play, Sarah Wall-Randell identifies the prophecy as a "false or empty interpretive crux" that, in the play's conclusion, "becomes just one more anticlimax, especially because of the pointedly strained wordplay required to get the riddle to make sense." However, she also suggests that the cryptic riddle provides, for Posthumus, "the gift of being able to un-know himself" or to receive himself in "gnomic wholeness" "through a bookish distance." Instead, I assert that the book functions as a sort of divine claim—rather than explication—presented as the only true (Christian) form of self-knowledge. Sarah Wall-Randell, "Reading the Book of the Self in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and Wroth's *Urania*," in *Staging Early Modern Romance: Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare*, ed. Mary Ellen Lamb and Valerie Wayne (New York: Routledge, 2009), 112.

bush that, instead of expressing the ontological tautology “I am that I am,” declares, “You are who you are,” a member of my chosen few.²⁴⁴

Jupiter insists that Posthumus’s misfortune is a mark of his elite status; revealed to himself through this divine mirror, Posthumus (instead of Innogen in her presumed perfection) becomes his own point of reference from which to evaluate everyone else. His intermixture of exaltation and humility helps characterize *Cymbeline*’s ultimate community as one united by a collective surplus of grace. In the final scene, all of the play’s deceptions come to light. After Iachimo confesses, he claims to see Posthumus amongst the crowd. The recital of Iachimo’s crimes strikes a chord, and Posthumus responds, “Ay, so thou dost, / Italian fiend! Ay me, most credulous fool” (5.4.209-10). He slips from the “Ay” (homophone of “I”) that acknowledges Iachimo, the “Italian fiend,” to the “Ay” that recognizes himself, the “most credulous fool.” Still in disguise, he proceeds to identify himself to the rest of the cast: “it is I / That all th’abhorred things o’th’earth amend / By being worse than they” (5.4.215-17). Posthumus’s own tribulations were a mark of his blessings, and he affords his sins against others an equally paradoxical role, suggesting that something therein actually redeems “all th’abhorred things o’th’earth.” Posthumus’s language resonates with the way in which Luther emphasizes the real humanity of Christ. Posthumus is condemned (so he thinks) to hang as an enemy of the state, context that aligns him with the Christ of Galatians 3:13, which reads: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, made a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (KJV). In explicating this passage, Luther insists that salvation through Christ is contingent on Christ being the worst sinner, bracketing humanity as both deity and “the greatest

²⁴⁴ Catherine Belsey makes the point that this shift is a general feature of Renaissance drama—and the subject it frames (65). However, the change is not usually dramatized quite so explicitly.

transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, blasphemer that ever was or ever could be on earth.”²⁴⁵ He explicitly opposes this understanding to a Catholic *imitatio Christi*: “In separating Christ from us sinners and holding Him up as a holy exemplar, errorists rob us of our best comfort. They misrepresent Him as a threatening tyrant who is ready to slaughter us at the slightest provocation.”²⁴⁶ Posthumus becomes an exemplary Christian subject as he aligns himself with Christ as the apogee of sin and links his own atonement to the redemption of others. At the very end of the play, Iachimo kneels before him, and Posthumus raises him to his feet. Jupiter has pre-forgiven Posthumus, and from that position, Posthumus is able to raise Iachimo to his feet and forgive this unflattering mirror.

Innogen

Posthumus becomes a better image of Christ, the bridegroom; in doing so, he also becomes a better (at least, less uxoricidal) husband. Innogen becomes a better wife and—in the guise of the suggestively named Fidele—comes closer to the Lutheran version of the Christian subject as bride. The construction of Christ as a bridegroom is not limited to the Ephesians blessing. There is a long theological tradition, drawing particularly on an allegorical reading of the Song of Songs, that develops the theme of bridal mysticism as the ultimate experience of divine love (something that also will be important in my analysis of *The Faerie Queene*). Bernard of Clairvaux describes this pinnacle as total absorption and self-loss. In contrast, Luther’s most notable use of the motif comes in *On the Freedom of a Christian* (1520), in which he develops the doctrine of justification. Comparing the two, Jack Kilcrease notes the shift in Luther who “does not describe the divine-human relationship in terms of desire” but rather in

²⁴⁵ Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians* (1531) in Jack Kilcrease, “The Bridal-Mystical Motif in Bernard of Clairvaux and Martin Luther,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 65 (2014): 275-76, Cambridge Journals Online.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

terms of faith and humility as “the trusting subject looks...to the absolutely trustworthy promisor made manifest in the flesh of Christ.”²⁴⁷ Innogen’s journey reflects a movement between these two understandings of the Christian subject as bride; she shifts from a self-identity formed through erotic mysticism to one formed through faith and humility.

While Innogen’s initial performance as Fidele may shift towards these virtues, it is still problematically directed towards her absent husband; the end of the play, on the other hand, sees her still a faithful, even ardent, wife but also a member of a larger community of love. Pisanio, Posthumus’s proxy, initially gives Innogen her disguise, which she accepts in the hope that she might so inhabit the area and potentially hear news of her husband. Wandering in the country, she discovers her (unknown as such) brothers and Belarius and joins these fellows in their humble, country life. She embraces her new companions as equal “friends” and “brothers,” relinquishing her royal mantle of privilege (3.6.72-73). After discovering (she thinks) Posthumus dead, she chooses to maintain her disguise, no longer as it might be instrumental to her marriage but rather as a fuller abandonment of her old identity. She becomes the page of Lucius, the Roman envoy, calling Posthumus her former “master” and declaring that she will “leaving so his service, follow you / So please you entertain me” (4.2.392-93). When later captured, Lucius champions Innogen’s faithful service to him as he asks Cymbeline to spare him/her on the basis of her identity as Fidele and not as the missing daughter that neither has identified:

Never master had
A page so kind, so duteous, diligent,
So tender over his occasions, true,
So feat, so nurse-like. (4.4.85-88)

Innogen does not abandon this care when returned to the court and her proper identity. Recognizing Posthumus’s lost ring, her first priority becomes her husband (as Ephesians insists

²⁴⁷ Kilcrease, 275.

that it should be), but when recognized, herself, she becomes the cause of the mercy shown Lucius: “My good master, / I will yet do you service” (5.4.403-4). Innogen is no longer consumed by her love for Posthumus and is able to extend her love even beyond family and nation.²⁴⁸ According to Kilcrease, while the first half of *On the Freedom of a Christian* lays out the proper relationship with God in terms of faith, “in the latter half of the treatise, which deals with social ethics, the presence of the word ‘love’ is as conspicuously present as it is absent in the [first].”²⁴⁹ This love is not *eros* but *agape*. At the end of the play, Innogen navigates a series of loyalties. She performs as wife, daughter, sister, and friend, continually re-identifying herself within a network of relations and helping to inscribe a greater community of care.²⁵⁰

Each of the roles that Innogen claims revolves around a different, fundamentally domestic relationship with men. Indeed, she is the only woman left standing at curtain’s close. Unlike Viola, she does not gain a sister but loses (and good riddance) a stepmother. “Wife” is both the most important of her roles and the one that most informs the others. When she

²⁴⁸ Judy Schavrien suggests that Innogen, though “disassembled and turned around,” “is easiest to reassemble as an identity because this utter devotion to her beloved gets dislodged only for the merest instant. It quickly snaps back into place and becomes crucial to the healing of the Cymbeline universe.” Judy Schavrien, “Shakespeare’s *Cymbeline* and the Mystical Particular: Redemption, Then and Now, for a Disassembled World,” *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* 32, no. 2 (2013): 124. However, Innogen serves as the caring connective tissue in the play’s final community, but she largely does so because when restored to herself, she discovers a newly social Innogen, primarily anchored in marriage’s “one flesh” but not consumed by it.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 278.

²⁵⁰ Bonnie Lander reads the identity Innogen establishes in a similar way, seeing Innogen as someone who finally mediates between an “essential I” and various social relations, a compromise between inner truths and outer forms. Bonnie Lander, “Interpreting the Person: Tradition, Conflict and *Cymbeline*’s Imogen,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59, no. 2 (2008): 180-81, Project MUSE.

discovers her siblings, she takes on the role of “housewife” to her new companions (4.2.44). As the men prepare to hunt, they take pains to praise her “neat cookery” (4.2.49). Innogen may dress as a man, and her status may threaten to overwhelm her husband, but she never truly challenges the gender roles established though the (in early modern England, increasing) distinction between private and public spheres. Cymbeline acknowledges that her brothers’ restoration reduces Innogen’s power: “Thou has lost by this a kingdom” (5.4.373). Innogen privileges the bonds of family and household over those of nation. She replies, “No, my lord, / I have got two worlds by’t” (5.4.373-74). She insists on the trope of man as microcosm and seems all too happy to be done with the type of political concerns that threatened her marriage at its inception (as her father exiled her husband). Moreover, this trope is only a trope. Her husband and marriage demystified, she shows no inclination to erect new, brotherly golden idols. Properly contained within her families and subordinated to the men in her life, Innogen safely can be Innogen once more.

National Corpus: Nature and the Royal Subject

The wager plot is only one of the stories told in *Cymbeline*. Many years ago, a disaffected subject kidnapped Innogen’s brothers and raised these lost heirs in the Welsh countryside, which (conveniently) is where Innogen’s own adventures take her. The monarchy has been left vulnerable, and both of the play’s main female characters further destabilize the country. *Cymbeline*’s national, royal body needs to be restored as well as the marital “one flesh.” The play’s evil queen provides an explicit threat to the king and country, scheming to kill both father and daughter and establish her son as ruler. The queen also insists on challenging the Roman emperor, the super-patriarch of England, leading to a military incursion, which the true

heirs help repel.²⁵¹ At the end of the play, she meets the usual fate of the evil stepmother and dies, freeing the country of her plots and her (weak) husband of her influence. England also defeats the Romans, but King Cymbeline then voluntarily submits to Rome once more, a move that Jodi Mikalachi has characterized as the reestablishment of a male homosocial civility after the exorcism of a female “savage” resistance.²⁵² England, too, is a prodigal son returned, the destined heir of both the imperial mantle and “true,” original Christianity. Christian language is less pervasive in this plot than in the romantic one. The discovered heirs are not interested in atonement and divine mercy; their perspectives are instead the products of a classical heroic code and a materialist pragmatism suited to their subsistence on the frontier. However, as the play’s intimation of Christ’s historical birth reminds us, this restoration enables the eventual transmission of Christianity across the Roman empire.²⁵³

However, I am less interested in the queen’s challenge than I am in the way that Innogen, the play’s least ambitious character, threatens her country. Indeed, Innogen’s very refusal to acknowledge her political position (as Cymbeline’s presumed heir) enhances the danger that her physical/political body poses to the kingdom.²⁵⁴ She seems oblivious to the fact that her

²⁵¹ The play establishes a strange double status for Rome as both invaders who trouble English borders (and must be repelled by the true royal heirs) and proper (though properly distant) governors whose power only supports the king of England.

²⁵² Per Mikalachi, “The exorcism of this female resistance, constructed as savage, grounds the stable hybrid that crowns these plays with a promise of peace for Britain and wider membership in the Roman world of civilization.” Jodi Mikalachi, “The Masculine Romance of Roman Britain: *Cymbeline* and Early Modern English Nationalism,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (1995): 303, JSTOR.

²⁵³ See Hunt, 428-30.

²⁵⁴ When her chastity comes under attack, her role in the wager plot seems to infect her role in the national one. Her situation potentially recalls succession crises safely past, in which adultery could, itself, become treason. See Karen

challenge to her father's authority is also a challenge to the king's. The play restores the lost princes to their country and to their proper identities. As it does so, it contrasts the royal siblings and their effects on others. I look at these bodies as they are defined poetically, through blazons, and physically, through birthmarks, as a "right" male body repairs the dangers and disorder occasioned by the female.²⁵⁵ Innogen's body (and its participation in her father's image) unsettles both her nation and the men she encounters until secured through an intermediary brother as well as a mediating husband.

Blazon

The members of the royal family's younger generation are each characterized by the blazon, but their sexes determine how so. Those who describe the princess and princes frame them in their settings, structuring different, gendered relationships with their environments. These different relationships accord with romantic and epic modes of engagement with the *locus amoenus*, the "pleasant place" that situates the idylls of these genres, as identified by Garrett Sullivan. Sullivan takes as exemplary the different attitudes found towards the Garden of Armida in Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, claiming, "Tasso's view of epic heroism assumes the human to exist in a relation of agonistic superiority both to other forms of life and to the environment; according to epic, the landscape of the *locus amoenus* is to be mastered, neither succumbed to

Cunningham, *Imaginary Betrayals: Subjectivity and the Discourses of Treason in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

²⁵⁵ The politics of *Cymbeline* align it with other Jacobean romances and their treatment of monarchy. However, even as the restoration of patriarchy provides a central theme in this play, I do not look at with respect to the succession between Elizabeth and James. I do not have time, and contemporary politics must wait for my discussion of the earlier *Faerie Queene*.

nor passively mirrored (as in romance).”²⁵⁶ Whether they take place in her bedroom (as seen above) or the countryside (the proper *locus amoenus*), blazons on an unconscious Innogen integrate her setting as the two become figures of one another. These descriptions are love poetry’s blazons, and both help represent the mutual vulnerability between the poet and the object of his poetry. While Innogen’s sleeping body remains available to physical and poetic trespass, it also threatens the men who encounter it with emasculation and paralysis. In contrast, the two brothers are figured with an eye towards the heraldic blazon. Belarius describes the two as the incarnation of aristocratic, martial virtue. As they exert dominion over the landscape, they reveal their debt to a higher, “divine Nature,” one that naturalizes their nobility—royalty, even—in preparation for the final act’s restorations.

Cymbeline positions the brothers as heirs destined to reclaim their positions and redeem a corrupt court. The text anticipates their ultimate status as Belarius depicts the princes as the countryside’s masters:

Thou divine Nature, how thyself thou blazon'st
In these two princely boys! They are as gentle
As zephyrs blowing below the violet,
Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as rough,
Their royal blood enchafed, as the rudest wind,
That by the top doth take the mountain pine,
And make him stoop to the vale. (4.2.169-75)

This is less a blazon on the princes than it is a characterization of them as a “blazon”—or at least as physically bearing self-evident symbolic markers that indicate their transcendent nobility. Stripped of their actual coat of arms and their born identities, their bodies yet testify to the “divine Nature” that informs them. In Belarius’s imagination, the princes animate the scene, and while Guiderius and Arviragus may be capable of the restraint of “zephyrs,” when “their royal

²⁵⁶ Sullivan, 16.

blood” is duly enflamed, they express their inherent dominion over it, “mak[ing the mountain pine] stoop to the vale.” Belarius naturalizes feudalism as the expression of innate nobility and hierarchy (among men as well as between men and the environment). The brothers’ vigor is not the animalism of the would-be rapist Cloten but rather part of their paradoxically natural civility:

'Tis wonder
That an invisible instinct should frame them
To royalty unlearn'd, honour untaught,
Civility not seen from other, valour
That wildly grows in them, but yields a crop
As if it had been sow'd. (4.2.169-80)

This “invisible instinct” floats between the divine creator and the human “frame[d]” in his image. The brothers are the true “princely boys,” and their proper identification at the play’s end restores the meaning of the language (and other symbols) of royalty. They are the natural, divinely inspired, heirs to “royalty,” “honour,” “civility,” and “valour.” They embody the authority of rank and the “masculine” virtues that secure it.

But this happy ending is indefinitely on hold when we first meet the brothers, a fact that chafes even though they remain ignorant of their heritage. Guiderius and Arviragus’s attitude towards their environment is aversion as well as mastery; they are determined to leave this pastoral retreat, to assume their places in history and fulfill their epic destiny. Belarius denigrates the court’s corruption and praises the quiet country life to the men, but they protest their rural “cell of ignorance” that keeps them from maturity and full civility (3.3.33). They worry that they too thoroughly reflect their limited world. Arviragus declares, “We have seen nothing. / We are beastly” and proceeds to compare the brothers to foxes, wolves, and caged birds (3.3.39-40). The brothers want to enter into the stories as well as into the world of men. Belarius’s past as a soldier has furnished them with their entertainment, the two acting out these “warlike feats” (3.3.89). The time has come for them to develop their own history. Arviragus asks, “What should

we speak of / When we are old as you?" (3.3.35-36). To the brothers, entering into story and entering into the world are one and the same. They require a change of mode or genre, an escape from romance into epic or martial history.

It is not only their kidnapper/foster father who proves an obstacle to their epic fulfillment but also their sister. Innogen has usurped her brother's (Guiderius's) position as heir, and threatens to further postpone their (particularly Arviragus's) manly adventures when the siblings meet. The brothers are so enamored of Innogen/Fidele that they leave their complaints and embrace the joy of playing house with their new companion (4.2.44-51). In part, their attraction to Innogen further ratifies the innate nobility of all three. Both brothers affirm that they are so drawn to their new acquaintance that they would prefer his life to even that of their father, an avowal that (understandably) makes the listening Belarius exclaim. His following aside can be played with irony or bitterness, but he claims that the brothers' preference attests to Fidele's "noble strain" and that the stranger's identity "doth miracle itself," a comment that ties into the larger theme of identity as divine revelation. However, Innogen also presents a trap for the brothers, unconsciously luring them into a romantic stasis. In fact, Innogen is quite literally unconscious at one of the brothers' moments of danger. The victim of her stepmother's poison, which a doctor has replaced with a sleeping potion, our heroine embarks on her second staged nap of the play. This time, Arviragus depicts the (he thinks) dead (he thinks) Fidele. Arviragus's blazon emphasizes Innogen's passivity, her availability to misconception and to physical and verbal imposition. As does Iachimo earlier, he explores the relationship between Innogen and her environment, painting the two as spiritually interanimate:

With fairest flowers
Whilst summer lasts and I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave: thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose, nor

The azured harebell, like thy veins, no, nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath. (4.2.217-23)

He covers her with floral comparisons and promises to cover her with those actual flowers. If the blazon is frequently understood as a dissection of the body, Arviragus's fantasy simultaneously dismantles the countryside. As he refigures Innogen's body in the picture of various flowers, he mentally arranges those flowers into a picture of her body. Innogen becomes the pastoral landscape, the romance's periphery to the history's court, and it is here that Arviragus imaginatively dwells for the duration of his speech.

His brother, Guiderius, insists that Arviragus's speech both unmans and delays him, protesting the idolatrous passivity inspired by Fidele's own insensibility. He protests,

Prithee, have done;
And do not play in wench-like words with that
Which is so serious. Let us bury him,
And not protract with admiration what
Is now due debt. To the grave! (4.2.228-232)

While the restoration of Posthumus and Innogen's marital body requires the restoration of a spiritual masculinity (with attendant, Christian paradoxes), Guiderius remains the most emphatically materialist of the plays' characters (despite the providence of his identity). Shortly hereafter, he claims (with respect to Cloten's body), "Thersites' body is as good as Ajax', / When neither are alive" (4.6.251-52). He dismisses all poetry, even epic, in the face of the corpse's ultimate materiality. Even Guiderius, though, has been uncommonly fanciful when gazing at Innogen's sleeping body, imagining an erotic, pagan afterlife for the body (but not the soul): "If he be gone, he'll make his grave a bed; / With female fairies will his tomb be haunted, And

worms will not come to thee” (4.2.215-17).²⁵⁷ Despite the oddly whimsical (or even “wench-like”) nature of this detour, Guiderius’s postmortem fantasy is of an enduring, heteronormative masculinity—one problematically attached to his sister.²⁵⁸ Whether the brother is emasculated or the sister unsexed, this family body is disordered.

So is the country it heads. And while Innogen may serve as the play’s most interesting disarrangement, she is not one of the play’s actual villains, the step-appendages to the royal body that aim to overthrow it entirely. The queen’s son, Cloten, aims to destroy Innogen’s marriage, killing her husband and raping his way to the position of heir presumptive. The true heir comes into conflict with this would-be head of his country and, appropriately, beheads him (creating the corpse Innogen will misidentify as her husband). The men subsequently leave their retreat and thwart the Roman incursion. Cymbeline determines to reward the trio but then discovers that Guiderius has slain Cloten. The king (with regret) determines that Guiderius must die for the crime, protesting “He was a prince.” His son replies, “A most uncivil one” (5.4.291-92). The true prince has disposed of the false one and come home.

Birthmark

²⁵⁷ Guiderius is not the first to ruminate on the similarity between sleep and death over Innogen’s prone body. When Iachimo invades Innogen’s bedroom, he prays, “O sleep, thou ape of death, lie dull upon her!” (2.2.31). The inability of characters to distinguish between sleep and death (and our own awareness that we watch actors merely pretend to do either) emphasizes the vulnerability of the cast to the interpretations of others. Indeed, Innogen would not thank Guiderius for his invocation of the very dangers she fears when closing her eyes. In the moments before Iachimo crawls from the trunk, she prays, “To your protection I commend me, gods. / From fairies and the tempters of the night / Guard me, beseech ye” (2.2.8-10).

²⁵⁸ When competing images of fairies and worms draw one into an ontological query regarding the sexual identity of Innogen’s corpse and whether these postmortem visitors would safeguard or threaten that corpse’s chastity, I think we might tag the excessive-to-the-point-of-absurdity emphasis placed on both Innogen’s femininity and her chastity.

In order to thwart Guiderius's execution, Belarius reveals the man's true identity (and superior rank), finally establishing it through the royal birthmark. This mark is claimed on behalf of Guiderius alone, but it is not the first time it appears in the play, nor is this the first body that displays it. The restoration of Guiderius secures the royal body and its succession against the dangers posed through Innogen's over-available body as well as against the threats of Cloten and Rome. In Guiderius, the paternal birthmark is restored to its proper meaning as we return to the idea of a paternal "stamp" that can authenticate identity (particularly special ones).²⁵⁹ Both he and his sister have the evidence of their royal patrimony naturally inscribed on their skin, but Innogen's is twisted from its purpose, the designation of heredity. Iachimo turns her mole into a mark of betrayal and invasion. When Guiderius returns as the kingdom's rightful heir, the mark instead helps establish him as a man created in the image of his father—a composite being that includes both his biological parent and a transcendent being. The play's happy ending requires the containment and even erasure of Innogen's body as Guiderius's reappearance restores proper order to the national corpus.

The end of the play again sanctifies Guiderius as the offspring of both the king and "a divine Nature." When Belarius presents Cymbeline with his lost son, the king informs us of a particularly distinct mark Guiderius had as a child, "a mole, a sanguine star" (5.4.364). Belarius assures him,

This is he,

²⁵⁹ Jean Feerick explores the birthmarks as they relate to "the ancient Britons' practice of staining their bodies with woad" (41). According to Feerick, this allusion shows the attempt to naturalize certain patriarchal ties even as it destabilizes them, recalling a cultural process rather than a natural mark. Jean Feerick, "A 'Nation...Now Degenerate': Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, Nova Britannia, and the Role of Diet and Climate in Reproducing Races," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 1, no. 2 (2003), JSTOR.

Who hath upon him still that natural stamp.
It was wise nature's end in the donation,
To be his evidence now. (5.4.365-68)

Whereas Posthumus received confirmation of his lineage in a strange vision that spiritually linked him to a divine patriarch, Jupiter, as well as to his own father, Guiderius's physical mark attests both to his genealogical origin and to his specific creation at the hands of a more-than-human "wise nature." The prince manifests this "donation" in both his innate nobility and the "natural stamp" of his birthmark. Yet while convention often types Nature as feminine, the play does not. The speech on the princes as bearing Nature's "blazon" located them with a masculine, martial (or, at least agonistic) lineage. In this final scene, the king appropriates nature's traditional maternity in a declaration of independence from biological motherhood. Immediately upon learning of Guiderius's mole, Cymbeline exclaims, "Oh, what am I, / A mother to the birth of three? Ne'er mother / Rejoiced deliverance more" (5.4.368-70). He imagines himself as the sole creator of his family, the fulfillment of the parthenogenetic fantasy mentioned above (and elucidated in the criticism of Janet Adelman). The word "deliverance" moves between registers. It refers to the "the birth of three," but it also reminds us of the romance's machinery and the play's historical timeline. Providence has saved Cymbeline from a tragic ending to the play and reminds us of the deliverance to be "rejoiced" during Cymbeline's reign: Christ's birth, man's introduction to the Trinity and his potential salvation. Unlike Posthumus, Guiderius never enters into Christian, spiritual concerns, but his story still attests to the "donation" and "deliverance" of a male monarchy in the image of—and legitimated by—a male deity.

This transcendent father marks his daughter as well, but Innogen's mole serves to indicate a body that is over-available rather than privileged, illustrating her combined vulnerability and power. Furthermore, Iachimo makes the royal mole testify out of place, using his (true)

knowledge of it (falsely) to discredit the princess. Innogen's birthmark evinces a dislocated royal body at the mercy of dubious claims, invasion, and the ever-dangerous influence of women. After Iachimo invades Innogen's bedroom, he looks over her sleeping body, peeking underneath her clothing. Whereas Guiderius's birthmark is true "evidence" of paternity, Iachimo (upon spying Innogen's) claims it as a false "voucher, / Stronger than ever law could make" (2.2.39-40). His line touches on legal discourse regarding property rights and warranties of title, as he anticipates making a fraudulent claim to Innogen's body.²⁶⁰ When he reports back to Posthumus, her husband demands some "corporal sign" of her treachery (2.4.119). (Posthumus is initially willing to dismiss Iachimo's descriptions of the bedchamber as the result of rumor and—at Pisanio's insistence—his possession of her bracelet as the result of theft.) The mole—its image annexed to Iachimo's tale—convinces immediately and entirely. Iachimo describes the mark and prompts, "You do remember / This stain upon her?" (2.4.137-38). According to Cymbeline, his son's birthmark was a natural "mark of wonder" (5.4.365). His daughter's "stain" instead suggests pollution and disgrace, a body compromised rather than sanctified.

Innogen's birthmark contributes to a perversely erotic female body that compromises and overwhelms men. Her mark is identical to that of her brother in shape and color, but one could be forgiven for not recognizing the image of the one in the other.²⁶¹ Guiderius's is "a sanguine star" that evinces his noble birth and higher nature (5.4.364). Innogen's mole, also red with five points, is "like the crimson drops / I'th'bottom of a cowslip" (2.2.38-39). The image is of a bloodstained flower, an emblem of compromised virginity, and is further sexualized through its location on Innogen's body. Iachimo reports,

²⁶⁰ According to the OED, Shakespeare also uses the word in this way in *Hamlet* (5.1.102).

²⁶¹ Personally, I had to look at the image of a cowslip online in order to see the star in its markings.

If you seek
 For further satisfying, under her breast —
 Worthy the pressing — lies a mole, right proud
 Of that most delicate lodging. By my life,
 I kissed it, and it gave me present hunger
 To feed again, though full. You do remember
 This stain upon her?
 POSTHUMUS. Ay, and it doth confirm
 Another stain, as big as hell can hold,
 Were there no more but it. (2.4.133-40)

As the two men revisit the mark in their memory, it slips from the worldly to the underworldly, tempting Iachimo into a gluttonous eroticism. Rather than marking a healthy fertility, it becomes the site of debased suckling.²⁶² It confirms her patrimony but also perverts her sexuality from marital to sinful ends, damning both her and her husband. (This scene also ushers in Posthumus’s own identity crisis inspired by a now general distrust of woman—including his mother.)

In citing the mole, Iachimo truly proves only his own sin; even as the play punishes the malefactor and depicts his remorse, it vindicates Innogen’s virtue but reinforces our sense of her body as a dangerous emasculator of men. The mole is one of the “natural notes” for which Iachimo searches Innogen’s sleeping body, yet he is marked by her even as he marks her (2.2.28).²⁶³ He stops his note-taking with the question “Why should I write this down that’s

²⁶² It somewhat begins to look like the devil’s mark, the witch’s identifier, sometimes depicted as a teat for the witch’s familiar. On the witch’s mark in Renaissance England, see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 445-46.

²⁶³ The word “notes” belongs to the language networks through which Patricia Parker explores *Cymbeline*’s epistemological and gender anxieties, which bear on the providentially assigned gender identities I here investigate: “Like *Much Ado About Not(h)ing*, *Cymbeline* not only exploits the homophones of nothing, noting, knots, and nought/naught/not, but reflects the broader early modern network of Latin *nota*, including slander and accusation; branding, blot, or stain; the *ars notaria* or writing, the *notus* and *ingnotus* of knowing or (not) knowing; the female “nothing,” nought” or “O,” and fears of female infidelity conflated with the “O” or “cipher” of arithmetical notation,

riveted / Screwed to my memory?" (2.2.44). Shortly thereafter, he returns to the trunk and hopes for dawn's swift arrival. He confesses, "I lodge in fear; / Though this a heavenly angel, hell is here" (2.2.49-50). The line gives us a foretaste of Iachimo's ultimate repentance (for which an awareness of his sin as such is necessary). "Hell" is "here" in Iachimo who is "here" in the room. Yet neither "hell" nor "here" are perfectly clear terms. Iachimo's greatest crime is of language, his slander of Innogen, and he already marks her with a corrupt language in this line. The focus on her sexualized body allows a secondary meaning, the slang sense of "hell" as female genitalia, to enter the line.²⁶⁴ When Iachimo later describes Innogen's "stain" to Posthumus, her husband returns us to this netherworld of nether parts, bemoaning an overwhelming fissure of female sexual perfidy "as big as hell can hold." Both language and lust structure complicated relationships between their subjects, those who experience the emotion or use the word, and their objects. Iachimo's "hell" is his spiritual and linguistic depravity but is also Innogen's sexual body, which acts as a potential snare. As such, Iachimo's crime finds its own proper punishment. On coming to England as part of the Roman force, Iachimo's first sentence is "The heaviness and guilt within my bosom / Takes off my manhood" (5.2.1-2). His sword proves inadequate as he tries to fight off the English defenders; on behalf of its princess, the country's environment "revengingly enfeebles" him (5.2.4). He has returned to a space defined through its relationship with Innogen, and it enervates him. Innogen's invaded body colluded with Iachimo's own desire

revenge as payback and commercial notes as "IOU"; and the "bastard" or "counterfeit" *Nothus*, homophone of *Notus*—the unhealthy south wind identified with the "spongy south" and infecting "Italian" Iachimo of *Cymbeline*, who wins this "Roman" play's anachronistic wager by counterfeiting "similar proof enough" (III.ii.4; IV.ii.348; V.iv.200)." Parker, "*Cymbeline's* Much Ado About Nothing, Noting, (K)not Knowing, and Nothus," 104.

²⁶⁴ Iachimo's line recollects the conclusion of Sonnet 129, Shakespeare's famous denigration of lust. The sonnet ends, "All this the world well knows; yet none knows well / To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell."

to tempt him; her invaded country colludes with his repentance to emasculate him. It takes a male rival to forgive and so restore him at the end of the play.

Like Viola, Innogen retains her masculine clothing at the end of the play, but there the similarities end. Viola's disguise opens up new erotic possibilities for the character. While disguised as Cesario, she imagines herself in various (and variously gendered) erotic roles—the wife of Orsino and the suitor of Olivia. For Innogen, the costume instead protects both her and others from unlawful attraction. She dons an otherwise unwanted outfit out of wifely fidelity (in order to maintain proximity to Posthumus), and it secures her from the romantic attentions of those she meets while wearing it. Dressed as a man, she may tempt her brothers into passivity but never into lust, a near miss underscored by the play.²⁶⁵ In the last act, the play attempts to dematerialize the transvestite altogether as the soothsayer interprets Posthumus's divine prophecy. He identifies Innogen's role within it as “the piece of tender air... Which we call *mollis aer*, and *mollis aer* / We term it *mulier*; which *mulier* I divine / Is thy most constant wife” (5.4.444-47). This is not *Twelfth Night's* exuberant wordplay; it is a process of careful translation in and out of Latin. Here, in the historical era surrounding the birth of Christ, Innogen is subjected to something that almost looks like a reverse incarnation; instead of Christ, the Word, becoming flesh and fulfilling biblical prophecy, we see Innogen translated—through a Latin filter—into Jupiter's “piece of tender air.”

The character of Innogen makes visible the absences decried by Luce Irigaray (among others): the lack of a holistic feminine identity, which is linked to a missing “symbol of the

²⁶⁵ On their first meeting, Guiderius announces, “Were you a woman, youth, / I should woo hard but be your groom in honesty; / Ay, bid for you as I'd buy” (3.6.66-68). Immediately thereafter, Arviragus contends with the disappointment of Innogen proving male: “I'll make't my comfort / He is a man, I'll love him as my brother” (3.6.74).

divine mother.” Irigaray claims that “God made man” is as insufficient to “sanctify the female sex” as is “God the Father,” tying her position to the Christological crux of a male image and ideal.²⁶⁶ Among a “people gathered in the name of the Father,” she asserts, “what women need is a mother of daughters...and not a mother of sons whose predications are defined by the incest taboo among others.”²⁶⁷ Like all the best fairytale heroines, Innogen is a poor, motherless girl. The play subverts her one claim to a matrilineal inheritance, the ring, and kills off her twisted stepmother (a woman who had sought to murder Innogen out of an all-consuming ambition on behalf of her son). Male models serve her ill. Her manly clothes are uncomfortable and only facilitate her ability to minister to men in a domestic capacity. Her paternal birthmark leads others to slander her and debase her sexuality. The play proves to be as dissatisfied as Irigaray is when it comes to a woman’s ecstatic identification with a holy bridegroom, but *Cymbeline’s* world—missing the female relations and feminine symbol that provide for “an *ekklesia* of women”—ultimately provides for Innogen only as a stunted, secondary subject.²⁶⁸

Resurrected Bodies: Holy Writ or Horror Story?

Yet this translation of Innogen into Latin also betrays a little of the tension surrounding *Cymbeline’s* ending, which is either miraculously providential or suspiciously convenient. The play taps into Reformation debate over marriage and exposes an untenable spousal idolatry that disarranges the family and comes between the individual and God. The iconoclastic energy of the Reformation found multiple targets. In addition to material aids to worship, Reformers attacked the employment of Latin bibles and services—devices that required the priests’ re-translation and

²⁶⁶ Luce Irigaray, “Equal to Whom?” in *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader*, ed. Graham Ward, Blackwell Readings in Modern Theology (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 210.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 209.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

explication of the Word, getting between the parishioner and scripture and putting the public at the mercy of their readings. After all, per Martin Luther, bad Latin led to the whole mystification of marriage as a sacrament in the first place. The play finally endorses established, male authority, but *Cymbeline* also exposes that authority's sleights of hands and even violence; as for the providential cast of its hierarchical corporations, the play continually troubles the lines separating "providence" from "seizure" from "happenstance."

Restored to themselves and to one another, Posthumus and Innogen now embody an ideal marriage—so long as that marriage includes domestic abuse. (By the end of the fifth act, Innogen evidently has been upright for too long and must be laid prone.) When her husband reveals himself to the assembled cast, the still disguised Innogen attempts to go to him. Caught up in his own guilt and in the melodramatic moaning of his supposedly murdered wife's name, Posthumus is in no mood to be accosted. He strikes the "scornful page," and she falls to the ground, in a tableau that telescopes their relationship through the third and fourth acts (5.4.228). The horrified Pisanio protests, "You ne'er kill'd Innogen til now" (5.4.231). The couple's most violent encounter opens this "tender" scene of reconciliation, the lyrical beauty of which has been championed by such disparate defenders as Virginia Woolf and Alfred, Lord Tennyson (who, famously, was buried with a copy of the play).²⁶⁹ Posthumus, now recognizing his wife, vows to "throw" her from him no longer: "Hang there like a fruit, my soul, / Till the tree die!" (5.4.263-64). Posthumus claims a now-lasting harmony for him and his lady, but his moment of brutality highlights an uncomfortably cyclical series of events in which Innogen has been

²⁶⁹ Schavrien quotes Hallam Tennyson on his father and his love for this line (130). Virginia Woolf demonstrates similar passion, rhapsodizing over its poetic beauty in a letter to her brother, Thoby Stephens, dated Nov. 5, 1901. Qtd. in Julia Briggs, "Virginia Woolf Reads Shakespeare: Or, Her Silence on Master William," *Shakespeare Survey* 58, Writing About Shakespeare (2005): 119.

violated and rendered unconscious (or violated while unconscious). The physical stage action is disturbing enough to trouble its own translation into a symbolic register. It also reminds us that Posthumus ordered Innogen's execution. Her apparent death may ultimately serve productively iconoclastic ends, but the claim that attempted murder provides for the health of the union is counterintuitive, at best.

The nationally restored body, figured in Guiderius, has its own brutality. Though the two plots investigate similar problems (dislocated authority, invasion, disordered community) their philosophical tones clash. The Christian overtones of Posthumus's redemption are entirely missing in the insistently material outlook of the lost heir. The play may naturalize his nobility and thereby his right to rule, but while his rural upbringing frees him from the corruption of the court, it also frees him from its laws and infrastructure, a lack the play makes explicit in his treatment of Cloten. Guiderius justifies his murder on the grounds that one should behead before being beheaded. Belarius and the two princes are "held as outlaws," and Guiderius responds to his foster father's complaint that that are now "undone" (4.2.67, 122):

Why, worthy father, what have we to lose,
But that he swore to take, our lives? The law
Protects not us: then why should we be tender
To let an arrogant piece of flesh threat us,
Play judge and executioner all himself,
For we do fear the law? (4.2.123-28)

Guiderius assumes those very roles for Cloten. Instead of the agreements that sustain any complex society, Guiderius has been educated in the unilateral exercise of power—and that power is coarse and brutal. He makes this speech while carrying around the "empty purse" of Cloten's head. Guiderius's touted natural "civility" looks more like the politics of nature, or rather of its animal kingdom. Growing up in Wales, he appears to have absorbed the stereotyped "primitiveness" of this imperial outpost rather than any more cosmopolitan sympathy,

understanding the court only as it licenses Cloten to unchecked tyranny on the frontier. As a history, *Cymbeline* explores both English and Roman imperial peripheries, depicting Shakespeare's nation as prodigal son and heir to Rome's mantle. Guiderius may not be the best person to assume this formerly errant authority by the standards of either Shakespeare's society or our own. Should all lost sons be found?

As directors have discovered, *Cymbeline* opens itself to entirely different tones. Not unlike the work of Beaumont and Fletcher, this Jacobean romance can either be respectfully conservative or subversively ironic. This is a play that never conceals its artistic engine, highlighting its conventional coincidences and the possibilities of the theater. It turns even the stage's limitations into opportunities; theater's bounded space and time enable the final mosaic of characters that have repeatedly stumbled over one another. *Cymbeline* even dares to straddle Milford Haven and Mount Olympus, bringing Jupiter to the stage, a move that often evokes amusement in today's audiences (for the announced drama of the stage directions must always fall short) but also a sort of baffled awe at Shakespeare's audacity.²⁷⁰ So much depends on choice, and so much of tone is located within the reader, the performers, the director, the audience. In the course of writing this dissertation, I have been forced, on multiple occasions, to acknowledge my own tendency to insist that writers I love expose, rather than endorse, politics a twenty-first century woman often finds abhorrent. On *Cymbeline's* behalf, I often appeal less to its moments of beauty than to its moments of sheer ridiculousness. In the middle of the final act's

²⁷⁰ In comparing certain staged scenes of sleep of Renaissance drama to medieval scenes, David Bevington declares, "The sleeper, as before, remains the focus of an epiphany, a meeting between mortals and immortals, but that meeting is more apt to be suggestive of ideas about the magic of theater than about providential concern with human destiny." David Bevington, "Asleep Onstage," *From Page to Performance: Essays in Early English Drama*, ed. John A. Alford (East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 1995) Google Books.

anagnorisis cascade, Innogen shies away from Pisanio, whom she believes to have tried to poison her. The queen's doctor, who has already detailed her crimes and eventual death, cries out, "O gods, / I left out one thing which the queen confess'd," and attributes the poison (for which he substituted a sleeping draught) to the queen (5.4.243-44). In the overwhelming chaos of explanations, this fairy-tale staple (homicidal stepmother attempts to kill princess) is deferred until immediate events cause the doctor (amid much head-slapping, I am sure) to remember something presumably hard to forget. (Ah, yes, so sorry, your highness. Earlier, when I was telling my tale, I forgot to mention that your deceased wife was trying to kill your beloved daughter. But, hey, look! She's alive. No harm, no foul?) My reading of the play is the product of sophisticated analysis, to be sure, but it is also due, in part, to the fact that moments like this one feel to me more like dark comedy than fairy tale.

In *Twelfth Night* and *Cymbeline*, one playwright recycles already well-worn tropes to different effects. I structure a conversation between them partly in the hope that such work reveals the major buzzwords of my dissertation as, themselves, sites of continual conversation. When it comes to gender, one can narrate across the two, discovering increasingly straightened (and sexually straightened) roles for women. One even should tell this story as it highlights certain stages in Shakespeare's own career (*Twelfth Night* being a romantic comedy and *Cymbeline* a romance or tragicomedy) and contrasts a late Elizabethan play with one written for a Jacobean audience. Yet, we should also remember that only a decade separates the two. *Cymbeline* tells a story about predestined characters living in a predestined country. That does not mean that we should.

Our story should be equally informed by the temporalities of *Twelfth Night*, a play that swings between the hourglass and the cycling analogue clock.²⁷¹ In the same scene, Feste sings, “Youth’s a stuff will not endure,” and Sir Toby breaks the fourth wall to carol, “O’ the twelfth day of December,” which reminds us of the title’s festive occasion (2.3.50, 79). Malvolio breaks up the merriment to insist that the group displays “no respect of place, persons, nor time,” a fair charge given that Olivia has put the house in mourning (2.3.80). Sir Toby counters, “We did keep time, sir, in our catches” (2.3.87). The character appeals to different times, established by the beats of a song and the festive calendar. The play’s roster of names returns us to this occasion. According to Steve Sohmer, the play is heavily populated by characters with the names of early saints whose feast days are in winter: Sebastian, Fabian, Valentine, Antonio, and Andrew.²⁷² These are the names of martyrs as well as holidays, and the play strands us between mourning and celebration in the midst of a cold winter. After all, we should remember that only one of the deceased brothers is recovered by play’s end.

Feste’s is the character most attuned to *Twelfth Night*’s present. In fact, he is frequently over-present, a quality that perfectly suits him to his profession. In her praise of the fool’s artistry, Viola remarks, “He must observe their mood on whom he jests, / The quality of persons, and the time” (3.1.61-62). His very existence seems strangely local to the play. He appears out of

²⁷¹ Even within the plot, two different time counts answer two different narrative needs. Valentine’s assertion that the Duke has only known Cesario three days before sending him off to Olivia directly competes with Orsino’s later assertion that he has known the boy three months (1.4.1, 5.1.94). As the need to emphasize the speed of connection becomes the need to emphasize its depth, days become months.

²⁷² Steve Sohmer, *Shakespeare’s Mystery Play: The Opening of the Globe Theatre 1599* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1999), 206.

nowhere, having disappeared for a noticeable period of time prior to the play's beginning.²⁷³ He appears *from*, but this "from" never finds its object, emphasizing Feste's status as traveler without positing any origin. Carrying no burden of history or destiny, he can be whatever the moment requires. His availability to others seems as if it should be a good thing, but (as I have explored above) the final two acts yoke him to Malvolio in some of *Twelfth Night's* most disturbing moments. His willingness both to torture and to mirror Malvolio exposes the missing ethical and emotional distance, the absence of the interior space necessary for true generosity as opposed to empty replication. Perhaps, the critic engaging the literature of the past faces some of the same challenges as do Shakespeare's characters. We move between texts and struggle to draw conclusions that are local and responsive while maintaining a coherent story and consistent ethical investments.

²⁷³ Maria threatens him, "my lady will hang thee for thy absence" (1.5.3) or "you will be... turned away—is not that as good as a hanging to you?" (1.5.15-17). Coming from nowhere, Feste is threatened with being exiled to nowhere, with being sent outside.

CHAPTER THREE

“PERFECT HOLE”: ERASURE AND PERFECTION IN *THE FAERIE QUEENE*

In that Faery Queene I meane glory in my generall intention, but in my particular I conceiue the most excellent and glorious person of our soueraine the Queene, and her kingdome in Faery land. And yet in some places els, I doe otherwise shadow her. For considering she beareth two persons, the one of a most royal Queene or Empresse, the other of a most vertuous and beautifull Lady, this latter part in some places I doe expresse in Belphoebe. (L.R.32-36)

As Edmund Spenser declares, *The Faerie Queene* is an extravagant political compliment, a contribution to England’s national mythology and to the particular self-styling of its Virgin Queen. Yet, rather than simply idealize its queens—both Faery and Elizabeth I—the text interrogates their idealization, continually presenting the reader with undermined ideals and problematic idols even as it buttresses Elizabeth’s construction as Virgin Queen. The character of the Faerie Queene provides Spenser with an ideal, female subject whose Christomimesis draws both on the political theology of the dual-bodied monarch and on the self-consciously literary theology surrounding an ultimate truth perceived piecemeal, the Word refracted in words. As she is distributed throughout the text, she displays the tension that defines Christ’s kenosis, the metaphysically strange conjunction of absence and presence. We never meet the Faerie Queene. The closest that we come is when Arthur dreams of her, wakes to find the imprint of her body beside him, and sets off to find her in the flesh. Instead, we find a bevy of beautiful women who stand in varying relation to the queens of Faeryland and England.

So long as the ideal female subject is left as the disembodied “perfect hole,” the absent Gloriana that encompasses the text, the text comfortably draws everything towards her; she is destiny, truth, and England. Per David Lee Miller, the resulting textual corpus—or at least the 1590 text—is “organized with reference to the anticipated-but-deferred wholeness of an ideal body...derived from the religious myth of the corpus mystical and its imperial counterpart, the

notion of the monarch as incarnating an ideal and unchanging political body.²⁷⁴ The actual (or, at least, imagined as physical) female body, on the other hand, continually causes the text to stumble—particularly where it conflicts with a superimposed ideal, either masculine or feminine. As the governing monarch, Elizabeth maintained that she was king as well as queen, claiming a masculine body in addition to her personal form as a woman. As the Virgin Queen, she drew on other idealizing codes, again insisting on her inviolability but now emphasizing her femininity. Her court became a space of courtship, with Elizabeth as the unattainable mistress whose male subjects lived in endless pursuit. In *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen*, Philippa Berry explores the poetic and philosophical culture surrounding Elizabeth's personal mythology. Like the composite body of the king, the idea of the chaste woman served as a point of intersection, a form to which a man could appeal for a holistic dream—of himself this time rather than his nation: “The hypothesis that a chaste woman could serve as a bridge between the material world and an invisible spiritual dimension enabled Petrarchan poet and Neoplatonic philosopher to elaborate a new concept of masculine wholeness and self-sufficiency through or across her idealized figure.²⁷⁵ Even in a work titled *The Faerie Queene*, the ideal subject—where that subject is an embodied, particular *subjectivity* rather than a universal abstract—is avowedly male, and so is its ideal ruler: “I labour to pourtraict in Arthure, before he was king, the image of a braue knight, perfected in the twelue priuate morall vertues” (L.R.18-19). The never fulfilled marriage between Gloriana and Arthur would weld this eternal, feminized body politic to the man best suited to govern it. The text continually betrays its

²⁷⁴ David Lee Miller, *The Poem's Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590 Faerie Queene* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 4.

²⁷⁵ Philippa Berry, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen* (London: Routledge, 1989), 2.

own ambivalence towards Spenser's human queen. Her mortal, female form is the site of personal vulnerability and necessarily highlights the disjunction between the two bodies of the king. As "a woman who was possessed of both political and spiritual authority," she also complicates the male poetic project of self-definition.²⁷⁶ She contributes to her subjects' vulnerability, determining their identities as courtiers in ways that are potentially constricting or invasive.

While Elizabethan self-determinations may fail, scripting others is no less fraught. Spenser confesses the ethical dangers inherent to his project, the potential for abuse when one sets out to write, and write for, others even when idealizing them. In this chapter, I revisit the relationship between torture and idealization, exploring different—and differently gendered—codes than in my first. In *Edward II*, the disjunction between the real king and the symbol can be resolved by making him all body, torturing him into image and corpse. Mutilated into a political symbol, Edward's male body is allowed a certain gender-queerness that his play frames as part of his exceptional status. Spenser's titular queen is, instead, bodiless, left as dream and hollow impression upon the ground. The body of Elizabeth's announced representative, Belphoebe, is a site of tension between weak flesh, the Christomimetic monarch, and a Petrarchan code that already contains its own ambivalence. The poem turns from her ambiguous power to a twin that can be more easily contained and penetrated. The enchanter Busirane chains and stabs Amoret, using her blood to power a magical masque that metaphorizes her predicament as love poetry's emotional torment. Britomart rescues her, but Amoret's restoration to the surrounding allegory blurs the distinction between salvation and sacrifice. Spenser leaves us to wonder what happens to the wife as an individual within the composite "one flesh" of marriage and what happens to

²⁷⁶ Berry, 1.

Amoret as an individual, a dynamic character in the narrative, when resolved as an allegory of marital chastity. An imposed fantasy of perfection can be as intrusive as Busirane's degenerate masque.

While I here return to the Christomimetic figures of the marital "one flesh" and the king, asking what identities they leave available for women, even queens, I also shift away from direct Christomimesis to explore poetic possibilities in a movement that repeats my engagement with *Twelfth Night*. In discussing that play, I engage direct references to Christ but also look at a more generally gracious spirit of role-play, a kenotic openness to the narratives and needs of others. Here, I look at Spenser's Christian allegory, an idealizing mode that contains its own fracture. In the influential *Allegory and Violence*, Gordon Teskey declares, "The very word allegory evokes a schism in consciousness—between a life and a mystery, between the real and the ideal, between a literal tale and its moral—which is repaired, or at least concealed, by imagining a hierarchy on which we ascend toward truth."²⁷⁷ However, Spenser often seems to disdain such concealment, and Teskey uses Amoret's torture as the paradigmatic example of a poet exposing his own artistry as he seeks to assimilate the world into a consistent metaphysical framework. Instead of the usual veil drawn over this operation, "we are confronted instead with a struggle in which the rift between heterogeneous others is forced into view. The woman continues forever to resist being converted into an embodiment of the meaning that is imprinted on her."²⁷⁸ While these metaphysics are gendered, this tension can inform male as well as female characters. In articulating his project in his letter to Raleigh, the poet frames the human subject (and designated reader) as a work in progress, continually "fashion[ed]" with respect to imagined ideals. These

²⁷⁷ Teskey, 2.

²⁷⁸ Gordon Teskey, *Allegory and Violence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 19.

ideals are, themselves, no more static than the men supposed to emulate them or the ever-evolving poem supposed to represent them. There is good allegory and bad in *The Faerie Queene*. For Spenser, good allegory is more an exploration through narrative contingencies than it is a rigid set of equations. It shares some of the hallmarks of *Twelfth Night*'s kenotic theater; flexible and responsive, it, too, finds an opportunity for confession and change in catastrophe rather than uncritically adhering to outdated models. Bad allegory is rigid; it neglects both contingency and humanity in favor of a pristine fantasy in which the world is simple and moral choices always clear. Rather than replace God, the work of idolatry, bad allegory operates by replacing other objects—most importantly other people—with a lazily determined significance.

This chapter focuses in on Amoret and Belphoebe, the twins who respectively represent marital and virginal chastity. Spenser's twins are not Shakespeare's Viola and Sebastian. Instead of coming together in an image of dynamic mutuality that figures a greater community, they are split up from birth and figure chastity as isolated, complementary halves of a virtue. I look at the twins' origins, characterizations, and relationships with men. Most of all, I look at their relationship to their own literary constructions. I spend my time where they do, in Books III and IV. Respectively devoted to the virtues of chastity and friendship, these books are frequently read together, for several stories span across both. As Spenser navigates different kinds of autonomy and relationship, these virtues provide ways of thinking about all kinds of interactions. My title for this chapter comes from a pun Spenser uses to describe the healing of Amoret, who is stabbed but made "perfect hole." I explore the wholeness of both twins as the text defines them through national and marital corporate bodies and through their status as complementary allegories. In doing so, I also explore the "perfect hole" as a fantasy of erasure in which the woman becomes (a) the genital conduit for the perpetuation of self and nation and/or (b) the

blank slate for the writing of others. This “hole” is not the achieved kenosis of a full subject looking to imitate and be filled with Christ but rather the assimilation of one person by another.

Belphoebe is not a ruler, but she is Elizabeth’s most explicit proxy within the text. I focus, first, on her imperfect establishment in a Christomimetic royal body, and, second, on her betrayal of that image in favor of idealizing literary paradigms—Petrarchan lyric and a particular moral allegory. These paradigms, which better accommodate her femininity, clash with her kingly body and kingly duties. They purchase Elizabeth’s autonomy at a price paid by her subjects. Her chastity leaves her nation’s future insecure, and her romantic withholding leads her to reject loving subjects as well as suitors. After Belphoebe rescues Timias and Amoret, her twin, from Lust, she blames the victims. Her cruel treatment of the wounded Timias forms part of an episode frequently discussed in a historicist vein, an episode in which the reader is aware of the heightened interplay between text and world. The poem suggests that Elizabeth has replaced traditional notions of reciprocal service between monarch and retainer with a Petrarchan notion of service that ill fits certain real-world contexts. Spenser also critiques a type of literary absolutism, an insistence on structuring the world according to a Manichean and self-centered paradigm. Belphoebe’s misreading of the situation leads her to condemn her own, chaste twin. Her refusal to forgive Timias further discredits the Christic mantle so carefully set up in her origin story—particularly when Timias’s crime, conscious and illicit desire, looks a lot like the original sin for which Christ’s death serves as sufficient sacrifice and divine forgiveness. In problematizing Belphoebe’s virginal chastity, Spenser undermines Elizabeth’s own exceptionalism—both as an ideally Christ-like monarch and as a woman outside of the championed Protestant ideal: *marital* chastity.

Which brings us to her twin. Yet Spenser's endorsement of Amoret's wedded state is oddly ambivalent. The character ultimately vanishes from the text, and her trauma and disappearance qualify the kind of Christomimesis that marriage can offer women. The text suggests that we sometimes mistake silence for completion and male conquest for meaningful participation in Christ through a companionate marriage. However, Amoret also serves as another proxy for Elizabeth, one that is written with more sympathy if less respect. She repeatedly suffers the sharp end of both pen and weapon. Her situation in the House of Busirane reminds us both of Elizabeth's particular vulnerability (as a female monarch within a patriarchal culture) and of the vulnerability that we all share, shaped by the perspectives (and the writings) of others. The text implies an ecology of corpuses—artistic, discursive, and physical—that precludes autonomy and enables abuse. If Belphoebe's insistence on a self-serving, all-encompassing vision can lead her to harm those she, thereby, denigrates, the idealization of others can be insidiously abusive. This principle of literary ethics takes us beyond the particulars of wife or queen. When Busirane wounds Amoret, the aftermath of her ordeal extends culpability beyond the original enchanter poet even to Amoret's would-be rescuers and the fantasy of perfect healing in which they participate. As the text examines the deployment of literary codes, it opposes idealization, always hovering near idolatry, to an ethos of friendship based in respect and active care. Chimeras replace people, and daydreams replace careful reading. Amoret's story reveals the role that erasure plays in a cycle of continual rape and re-inscription.

I end this chapter with the Faerie Queene's intended spouse and Belphoebe's foil, Arthur. The text endorses a temporal patriarchy. It assumes the greater vulnerability of women, which further leaves them less available to address the needs of others—whether because they are victims themselves or because the constructions that can empower them, in spite of the world,

lead them to spite the world. Arthur comes across both Timias and Amoret in the aftermath of Lust's attack, and his responses serve as a corrective to Belphoebe's. His masculinity secures him against the vulnerability of all Elizabethan women and from the problems that accompany Elizabeth's political and poetic solutions. In fact, Arthur may be Spenser's freest character. As a legend, he is unburdened by the limitations of either a singular allegorical virtue or the demands that history places upon a ruler. Arthur becomes a site for friendship, the holistic interaction between literary paradigms, virtues, and people. However, in his juggling, he ultimately drops the ball, i.e., Amoret, and his failure leads me to a final warning against complacency.

As I replace drama with poetry, I explore some of the same themes in a different key. I also look at *The Faerie Queene's* most conscious engagement with theater, Busirane's imprisonment of Amoret in the Masque of Cupid. This episode helps me to move into the audience and behind the curtain, part of a more sustained investigation of the ethics involved in reading and writing others. *The Faerie Queene* adopts a conventionally gendered, literary metaphysics in which female matter interacts with male forms, but its literary ethics are gender neutral (although men are commonly in the position to do the most damage). Spenser exposes the temptation to reduce others to signs; we may delude ourselves that we do so in service to a holistic truth, but we inevitably seize them as egocentric props. This is the formal inversion of kenosis, not self-emptying or self-transformation but the reduction and reification of others. Our own spiritual health depends on being attentive readers and on treating others as readers in their own rights. Spenser imagines abstract ideals as subjects and allegorizes real people. His overarching project—i.e., conceiving an ideal Christian subject and, thereby, improving his readers—is this study's most self-conscious exploration of subjectivity along Christological lines. Spenser brings us into the limitations and possibilities of fashioning the self and/or others

in the image—here, refracted—of a deity that is also man, perfected. All of this dissertation’s major themes are in the following pages: the often blurred line between invasion and holistic integration; the importance of local, human connection and responsive role-play; the self-contradiction at the heart of selfhood; and the problem of imagining woman in the image of Christ only through marriage, a limitation that constrains nations as well as individuals. Perhaps the moral of the story—and of the dissertation—is that we can best fashion ourselves in Christ’s image when we abandon the notion of image, or at least its implicit singularity, altogether. Perhaps we should be epic, romantic, multi-vocal, unfinished messes in the name of whatever metaphysics we choose.

“Dew Perfection”

As Elizabeth’s stand-in, Belphoebe inhabits the contradictions that attend a female king. She is the vehicle for some of Spenser’s most elaborate praise, but her body also focuses the tension between the eternal Christomimetic monarch and the vulnerable female body. The theory of the king’s two bodies may have been articulated as a legal theory under Elizabeth, but Plowden et al actually sought to delimit the powers of the present monarch rather than to extol the eternal sovereign. Marie Axton contextualizes the theory, noting the political affiliations of those who cited it:

a number of the judges mentioned in Plowmen’s Reports — that is, the men who frequently used the concept of the king’s two bodies — personally suffered from the demise of Queen Mary and from the political and religious innovations of her successor. It is understandable that these men should seek to minimize the personal impact of the new sovereign and should emphasize the continuity of the monarchy in their professional work....The judges affirmed their allegiance by exalting the Queen’s body politic while at the same time they frustrated the wishes of her body natural.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁹ Marie Axton, *The Queen’s Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), 16.

For example, when Elizabeth I wished to reallocate the Duchy of Lancaster, her lawyers argued that Edward was still a minor at the time of the prior grant. Despite repeated appeals, they were informed that Edward had acted in his body as king, which is not subject to the debility of youth. The debate highlights the fracture between the two bodies of boy and king, which Elizabeth sought to exploit, but there is also a fracture between the bodies of woman and king. In a frequently quoted statement, Elizabeth declares to troops assembled at Tilbury, “I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too.”²⁸⁰ Elizabeth was as likely to cite her womanliness when politically convenient; she would appeal to her feminine modesty as the reason for noncommittal or use her practically maternal affection for the future James I to distance her person from his actual mother’s execution.²⁸¹ Paola Baseotto classifies Elizabeth’s rhetorical strategies according to three different approaches to her gender: “appropriation of Renaissance clichés regarding women; ascription to herself of masculine qualities; and reference to the masculinity of her mystical body.”²⁸² As queen, Elizabeth coopted Petrarchan rhetoric as well as Christian platitudes, structuring her court as a place of (eternally thwarted) courtship. She moves between different, gendered ideals as well as between different genders.

²⁸⁰ "Elizabeth's Tilbury Speech" (1588), British Library, accessed February 2, 2018,

<http://www.bl.uk/learning/timeline/item102878.html>.

²⁸¹ See Paola Baseotto, "Mary Stuart’s Execution and Queen Elizabeth’s Divided Self," in *Representations of Elizabeth I in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Alessandra Petrina and Laura Tosi (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 66-82.

²⁸² Baseotto, 68. Baseotto also notes that Elizabeth sometimes conflates strategies “by first repeating commonplaces about feminine frailties only to draw attention promptly to her masculine strengths or to the fact that, as a monarch, she possesses a masculine mystical body” (Ibid.)

Spenser's Belphoebe also floats between various idealized bodies: warrior, beauty, Christ-like figure, and Virgin. Spenser only explicitly identifies the forest's huntress with the ruling queen in the framing material, an evasion that frees Belphoebe from some of Elizabeth's tensions and enables some of Spenser's most lavish compliments. Belphoebe's impossible beauty is unproblematic so long as it is elsewhere and unseen. Her physical body is easily abstracted into metaphysical metaphor, and her idealized form invites one into an ideal, conceptual realm. However, as soon as Belphoebe engages a social world, her female body makes her vulnerable. Her "real" body opens her up to male aggression; her idealized beauty is implicated in male desire; and Christ's mantle hangs askew on her fantastically white shoulders.

Unlike Spenser's questers, both his knights and his readers, Belphoebe was born perfect, even Christ-like. Spenser assumes our incredulity at this innate virtue and opens the canto with an address to his female readership:

Well may I weene, faire Ladies, all this while
Ye wonder, how this noble Damozell
So great perfections did in her compile,
Sith that in saluage forests she did dwell,
So farre from court and royal Citadell,
The great schoolmaistresse of all courtesy. (3.6.1.1-6)

The text pauses to worry that, as an allegorical ideal, Belphoebe might be too ideal, might somehow threaten the writer's project: "to *fashion* a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline" (L.R. 8, my emphasis). Belphoebe's natural perfection is a mystery in potential tension with the lessons of the text, one that might undermine the credibility of either character or narrator. Virtue is hard work that must be learned; good people must be good readers. But Belphoebe, like Elizabeth, is not to be classed with mere people—particularly not with the ordinary women reading *The Faerie Queene*. She is fundamentally (biologically, even) different from other people, and her natural perfection finds its analog in the incarnation of the Word:

Her berth was of the wombe of Morning dew,
And her conception of the ioyous Prime,
And all her whole creation did her shew
Pure and vnspotted from all loathly crime,
That is ingenerate in fleshly slime
So was this virgin borne, so was she bred,
So was she trained vp from time to time,
In al chaste vertue, and true bounty-hed
Till to her dew perfection she was ripened. (3.6.3)

Belphoebe's (and, by extension, Amoret's) birth and Christ's are analogous miracles. Thomas P. Roche notes the resonance between the verse's first line, "Her berth was of the wombe of Morning dew," and Psalm 110:3, "The dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning," a line commonly thought to forecast the Incarnation.²⁸³ Spenser pulls Belphoebe out of time as well as "court and Citadel." The "dew" reappears in the final line, a pun that refers her final (due) "perfection" back to her origin. Belphoebe was, is, and will be the ideal. Her removal from the greater world helps keep her uncontaminated by it. (Indeed, well may we hear a gentle irony in the assertion that the lessons and literatures of the court will always serve to develop "courtesy"—let alone chastity.) Belphoebe's sacred origins further keep her quite safe from the charges brought against her worldly counterpart, Elizabeth, and the political problems caused by the marital revolving door leading to Henry VIII's bedroom.

Spenser sets Belphoebe above his other allegories by identifying her with ultimate Truth and Revelation, crafting her backstory with reference to Christ's virgin birth and to the immaculate conception of *the* Virgin: born "pure and vspotted from all loathly crime / That is ingenerate in fleshly slime." The account of her birth continually emphasizes hybridity and twinning, a nod to the twofold nature of both Christ and the monarch. Spenser traces her

²⁸³ This interpretation by Roche draws on the biblical commentary and contemporary liturgy of Psalm 110. Thomas P. Roche, *The Kindly Flame* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964), 105-6.

matrilineage back to her grandmother, the fairy Amphisa, whose name derives from the Greek for double nature and whose status as a faery seems to blend (or, perhaps, bridge) the human and the superhuman. Her mother (Amphisa's daughter), Chrysogonee, extends the emphasized duality in giving birth to the twins, Belpheobe and Amoret. "Enwombed in the sacred *throne* / Of her chaste bodie," they combine to embody the two halves of female chastity—virginal and marital (3.6.5.7-8, my emphasis). Even Spenser's turn to Ovid reinforces the Christian narrative. Chrysogonee's name, which means golden-born, and impregnation both draw on the myth of Danae visited by Jove in the guise of a golden shower. While Chrysogonee is asleep,

The sunbeames bright vpon her body playd,
 Being through former bathing mollifide,
 And pierst into her wombe, where they embayd
 With so sweet sence and secret power vnspide,
 That in her pregnant flesh they shortly fructifide. (3.6.7.5-9)

Chrysogonee's virginity leaves her untouched by Eve's curse, and her delivery is painless (3.6.27). When they emerge, the "two babes" are "as faire as springing day" (3.6.26.9). Conceived by a divine father and a pure mother in a visitation of light, they participate in traditional imagery connecting the Word to the light and Christ's coming to the dawn. They are "dew[ly]" perfect.

The text moves from kenotic movement to kenotic movement. Another divine outpouring follows this history and moves into a cosmic view of Creation that reinforces a female-friendly construction of divinity. The central womb of the second half of the canto is not Chrysogonee's but rather "the wide wombe of the world," the "eternal Chaos, which supplyes / The substaunces of natures fruitfull progenyes" (3.6.36.8-9). We find ourselves in the Garden of Adonis, who serves as an immortal father:

All be he subject to mortalitie,
 Yet is eterne in mutabilitie,

And by succession made perpetuall,
Transformed oft, and chaunged diuerslie:
For him the Father of all formes they call;
Therefore needs mote he liue, that liuing giues to all. (3.6.47.4-9)

Adonis must live because he provides the form that creates life out of the raw material of the world. As for everything else, “all be he,” it is infinitely recycled, inhabiting one given form only to die and be changed into something new. Adonis’s role is identical to that of the sun, which impregnates Chrysogonee earlier in the canto:

So after Nilus inundation,
Infinite shapes of creatures men doe fynd,
Informed in the mud, on which the Sunne hath shynd.

Great father he of generation
Is rightly cald, th’authour of life and light. (3.6.8.7-9.2)

Spenser plays with a contemporary conception of the Nile as a particularly fertile place in which spontaneous generation might take place.²⁸⁴ However, he poetically reconciles this apparent autogenesis with Christian metaphysics. Life happens through divine imprint on gross matter, and the tale of Belpheobe’s incarnation prepares us to receive the Egyptian sun through the lenses of Greco-Roman and Christian mythology.

But the canto emphasizes maternity rather than paternity. While Spenser’s account of Creation maintains traditional gender associations, it inverts their priority. The “wombe” of “Chaos” provides natural “substaunce,” the feminine raw matter that can take masculine forms, but—as the text moves into safely abstract, Neoplatonic territory—the women are given the agency. Father Adonis might shape life, but his role is preceded by the dark womb of Chaos,

²⁸⁴ Edward Geisweidt explores this concept of spontaneous generation from an earth characterized as excremental in its “dungy” texture as it challenges established political and metaphysical hierarchies in Antony and Cleopatra. See “Like Life in Excrements’: Natural Philosphy, Hair, and the Limits of the Body’s Vitality in Early Modern English Thought” (PhD diss., University of Alabama, 2010), 142-154.

contained within a female space, and actuated by female desire. The grove is governed by women. Cupid's absence leads his searching mother to discover the twins at the beginning of their tale, and, though he returns to the Garden, it is his mate Psyche who is given guardianship of Amoret (3.6.51). Chrysogonee may have been completely passive as the virgin, sleeping mother, but here, it is Adonis who sleeps and Venus who initiates procreation:

There wont fayre Venus often to enjoy
Her deare Adonis ioyous company,
And reape sweet pleasure of the wanton boy;
...
But she her selfe, when euer that she will,
Possesseth him, and of his sweetnesse takes her fill. (3.6.46)

Venus's sexual harvest, which seems to combine "reap[ing]" with raping, may be a bit disturbing (particularly in light of the traditional tale of Venus and Adonis), but Spenser chiastically insists on the mutuality of their "sweet pleasure": "There now he liueth in eternal blis, / Ioying his goddesse, and of her enioyd" (3.6.48.1-2). In the Garden of Adonis, the text recasts the fundamental themes, characters, and imagery of Book II's corrupt Bower of Bliss. Its frank sexuality is a family affair, and procreation—even pleasure—is inseparable from the ongoing act of divine Creation. The poetic, metaphysical terrain provides a holistic image of Spenser's poetry at its most kenotic. Material continually evolves and reemerges in a gracious blend of form and chaotic potential.

While a tale of supernatural virginity easily complements and frames erotic material in the recess of this metaphysical womb, other spaces are less safe. Belphoebe, the magical seedling, wears the mantles of Christ and Chastity more comfortably than does the adult female. The text dwells on the attractions of her body, leaving us to suspect that they interfere with (rather than conduce to) spiritual engagement. We get our first glimpse of Belphoebe before the above etiology, meeting her in Book II through the sustained gaze of a ten-stanza blazon. The

blazon underscores Belphoebe's special status as an allegory with Christic dimensions, taking many of its comparisons from the Song of Solomon, which is often read as an allegory of Christ's union with the soul or with the church. David Wilson-Okamura argues that the passage also presents Belphoebe as a priestly ruler, a husband to Christ's church (in Christ's place) and subject to a clerical celibacy still popular even after the legalization of clerical marriage. He focuses on the description of her thighs:

Like two marble pillours they were seene,
Which doe the temples of the Gods support,
Whom all the people decke with girlands greene,
And honour in their festival resort. (2.3.28.1-4)

Where this imagery occurs in the Song of Solomon, it refers to the husband (Christ in the Christian allegorical tradition) rather than the wife.²⁸⁵ Wilson-Okamura presents these lines as a celebration of Elizabeth in her "undivided, Christlike dedication which a queen—specifically an unmarried queen (since this is Belphoebe)—tenders to God's people, His English church."²⁸⁶ But Spenser's English Faerieland is as postlapsarian as the Englands of Marlowe and Shakespeare, and even if Belphoebe's form is truly sacred, we find ourselves in the same position as readers looking over the shoulder of Milton's Satan: we look through a self-evidently fallen gaze, our eyes directed to the space between Belphoebe's thighs.

We actually have two sets of eyes to adopt. While Trompart openly looks at her and is stunned into wonder, Braggadocchio peeks from behind a bush and, when discovered, seeks to defile her in his lust. Part of the sin seems to fall to Belphoebe. Her beauty is transcendent but also something that elicits sexual response:

²⁸⁵ Spenser here elaborates on the biblical phrase: "His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold" (*KJV* Song of Solomon 5:15).

²⁸⁶ David Scott Wilson-Okamura, "Belphoebe and Gloriana," *English Literary Renaissance*, 2009, 61.

Her face so faire as flesh it seemed not,
But heuenly pourtraict of bright Angels hew,
Cleare as the skye, withouten blame or blot,
Through goodly mixture of complexions dew;
And in her cheeks the vermeil red did shew
Like roses in a bed of lilies shed,
The which ambrosiall odours from them threw,
And gazers sence with double pleasure fed,
Hable to heale the sicke, and to reuiue the ded. (2.3.22)

No allegorical reading of these lines can fully obviate the Song of Solomon's frank eroticism.²⁸⁷

Philippa Berry notes the "disturbing combination of sexual with spiritual power, of Venus with Diana": "the passage reveals the problems attendant upon constructing a female figure as an earthly incarnation of the logos."²⁸⁸ The red cheeks may not be "blame or blot," but they are the source of sensual "double pleasure," a strange engine of salvation in a Christian scheme. In Berry's words, "Christ-like powers of healing the sick and reviving the dead are ascribed to Belphoebe's pleasing 'odours' and erotic appeal to the 'gazers sense' (hence the reference to resurrection probably carries a sexual pun)."²⁸⁹ "Her face" may be "so faire as flesh it seemed not," but like all "seemings" within Spenser's Faerieland, this appearance should be carefully scrutinized. Neither the substitutions of the blazon nor the allusions to the Song of Solomon can separate Belphoebe from the temptations of the "flesh" her very beauty presents.

Spenser initially insists that Belphoebe's purity quells lustful impulses, but he exposes

²⁸⁷ Spenser moves between spouses in this passage. The woman is the "rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys" (*KJV* Song of Solomon 2:1). Though she claims that she is dark, she seems to be the object of the phrase, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee" (4:7). As for the man, "His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh," and "the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak" (5:13, 7:9).

²⁸⁸ Berry, 158-59.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 159.

this falsehood mere stanzas later, making us again question whether her absolute perfection can endure in a more social world—particularly that of the court. The verse describes the “liuing lamps” of Belphoebe’s eyes as

so wondrous bright;
That quite bereau’d the rash beholders sight:
In them the blinded god his lustfull fyre
To kindle oft assayd, but had no might;
For with dredd Maiestie, and awfull yre,
She broke his wanton darts, and quenched bace desyre. (2.3.23.4-12)

However, we see such a “rash beholder” in Braggadocchio, and the man is neither blinded nor swayed from his “bace desire.” When Braggadocchio emerges from the bushes, having betrayed himself with a rustle, he, too, objects to Belphoebe’s placement in the country—though he extolls the pleasures of the court rather than its opportunities for education. Belphoebe begins to discourse on the well-lived life and the proper place of contemplative retreat within it, but she is unable to finish her sermon:

The rest she would haue sayd,
But that the foolish man, fild with delight
Of her sweete words, that all his sence dismayd,
And with her wondrous beauty rauisht quight,
Gan burne in filthy lust, and leaping light,
Thought in his bastard armes her to embrace.
With that she swaruing back, her Iaelin bright
Against him bent, and fiercely did menace:
So turned her about, and fled away apace. (2.3.42)

Rather than enlighten Braggadocchio, her words fill—perhaps even “file,” or defile—him “with delight” and “dismay” “his sence.” Rather than her eyes blinding him, her beauty “rauish[es]” him such that he “burne[s] in *filthy* lust.” The earthly attractions of her body compromise her allegorical function; they also compromise her power. Diana’s foster daughter winds up as prey rather than huntress in this episode. Belphoebe’s Christic mantle is not supported by the mutual intercourse of the Song of Solomon’s lovers. Or rather, her body can only sustain this allegorical

weight when safely distanced by imagination and abstraction. Confronted with courtiers, she enters into a state of mutual vulnerability. Trompart and Braggadocchio can either freeze in wonder or burn in lust. Attacked by the attempted embrace of the latter, she cedes the field. Belphoebe's female body provides the poem with an opportunity for female, abstract perfection—idealization that, unlike the construction of her twin, does not necessarily strip her of all agency—but this opportunity is betrayed within an imagined world that is physical and social. The very paradoxes that are poetically generative in the Garden of Adonis are insupportable within a space she must flee.

“Sweet Ravishment”

Yet Belphoebe is not truly one of *The Faerie Queene's* many female victims. When her connection to Elizabeth draws most strongly on real life events, she becomes, instead, one of the text's tyrants, which I will explore in the next section. Victim status falls to her twin, Amoret. Gordon Teskey reads Amoret's torment in the Masque of Cupid as an episode in which the usually implicit violence of allegory is revealed and feminine Matter resists the forms imprinted on it by the Father, the ultimate source of truth and meaning.²⁹⁰ The House of Busirane is certainly not the female-friendly Garden of Adonis; Cupid here is not Amoret's absentee foster sibling or parent but rather her master, and poetry here constricts existing bodies rather than generates new ones. Set forth as Belphoebe's counterpart, Amoret allows Spenser to explore Elizabeth's specific vulnerability as a queen, the tension between her bodies and between her power and dominant social and religious codes. Moreover, if Belphoebe presents a feminine, Christic ideal that fractures as soon as we really look at it, Amoret provides no easy, normative alternative. Provisionally licensed for passion, her body (unlike that of her twin) is not the site of

²⁹⁰ Teskey, 18-19.

an immediate tension between sexual and religious rapture. Instead, moral allegory, Christology, and poetry constructively interfere, but their interaction still makes us uncomfortable. Amoret's suffering exposes the violence of conventional, romantic resolutions to the presumed inferiority of women: the compensatory idealization of their beauty and/or their perfection within the composite body of marriage.

Amoret's participation in the Masque of Cupid self-consciously tangles life with fiction. Immediately following her wedding, the enchanter Busirane abducts her. He makes use of a scenario that will become a commonplace of Renaissance revenge tragedy, in which violence is enacted under the guise that it is "safely" art. Amoret winds up imprisoned in the Masque of Cupid because the attendees of her wedding feast assume it to be part of the festivities; they accept her rape as literary convention and social revelry. Busirane brought his play to the feast, "And there the Ladie ill of friends bestedded,/ By way of sport, as oft in maskes is knowen,/ Conueyed quite away to liuing wight vnknowen" (4.1.3.7-9). Unlike the enchanters of the first two books, Archimago and Acrasia, Busirane tempts his audience into *not* crediting the sight before them, into dismissing his artistic "sport." We first hear of Amoret's captivity (only getting this backstory later) when we meet her new husband, who waits outside Busirane's castle (which is impenetrable to him). When Britomart discovers him and vows to rescue Amoret, Scudamour bemoans the wickedness of the enchanter who has "these seuen monethes day in secret den / My Lady and my loue so cruelly to pen" (3.11.10.8-9).

We follow Britomart inside to find that Busirane has indeed "pen[ned]" Amoret in more than one sense of the word. He has chained Amoret to a pillar, stabbed her in the heart, and used the resulting blood to write a masque. Amoret's body is projected onstage, where it looks "like a dreary Spright"; a knife pierces the projection's heart as well, which is "yet freshly bleeding

forth her fainting spright” (3.12.19.4, 20.7). Amoret is caught between “Spright” and “spright” and between feints and faints. Britomart makes her way to Amoret’s actual body, but her penetration behind the curtain serves to reinforce the confusion rather than to expose the fiction through a “real” counter vision. The knight discovers Busirane writing “those characters,” the written incantations that power the masque, with Amoret’s “liuing blood” (3.12.31.3). This Amoret, the character/inkwell, is only “seeming transfixed with a cruel dart” (3.12.31.5) rather than “quite through transfixed” (3.12.21.3). The knife does not wound her as deeply as it does her counterpart, but it still marks her, connecting her to her simulacrum and revealing her vulnerability to “seeming[s].”

On one level, the relationship between the two Amorets models, in the words of Lauren Silberman, “the link between a conscious subject and an object of representation,” a dual status that we all share.²⁹¹ However, Amoret is not the only one whose particular vulnerability is exposed in this scene; Spenser’s own monarch is bared as well. The episode of the Masque of Cupid plays into the very specific iconography of Queen Elizabeth. There are three figures of chastity in this scene, each of which stands in relation to the queen: real Amoret, false Amoret, and Britomart. Spenser moves from Amoret’s biological twin, Belphoebe, to new mirrors, her simulacrum and her rescuer. Susan Frye reads the scene’s violence as it relates these bodies. She contends that the episode appropriates Elizabeth’s “conceptualization of chastity as virginal—which in the sixteenth century meant self-possessed, powerful, and magical”—and replaces it with an image of marital (or on-the-way-to-marital) chastity, an ideal that continually secures

²⁹¹ Lauren Silberman, *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 61.

otherwise vulnerable women through the control of men.²⁹² Frye situates her argument with respect to Elizabeth's self-presentation in court spectacles (as well as other media), which often rehearsed a rescue narrative similar to Britomart's salvation of Amoret; the queen herself would play an androgynous virginal Chastity come to save a maiden from rapists and evildoers. These spectacles championed the Virgin Queen, but they occasionally reinforced her autonomy at the cost of reminding the audience of the threats to it.²⁹³ Frye sees Spenser as absolutely enforcing a construct of chastity that is hostile to the Virgin Queen where I see, instead, the exposure of the tension occasioned by real world gender politics intruding upon an ideology—and a queen—declared to be safe from them.²⁹⁴ Spenser's exposé of poetry and royal self-fashioning undermines the female "perfect whole" as a vision of individual sufficiency (Elizabeth's and Belphoebe's chaste autonomy).

As the text turns to Amoret, it pursues different artistic and Christomimetic strategies than it did with her twin—though it gives her the same pseudo-divine birth and is equally a focus of erotic, lyrical attention. When Spenser describes Belphoebe, he approaches allegory as biblical exegesis, translating erotic object into spiritual spouse through the mediation of the Song of Solomon. Through her relationship to Elizabeth, Belphoebe further draws on the male body of the Christomimetic king, the bridegroom of a nation. However, this *poesis* only works when

²⁹² Susan Frye, "Of Chastity and Violence: Elizabeth I and Edmund Spenser in the House of Busirane," *Signs* 20, no. 1 (1994): 50, JSTOR.

²⁹³ Frye, 53-59.

²⁹⁴ As Elizabeth multiply populates the text and is also Britomart, the poet-sorcerer's destroyer, the episode also reveals the mutual vulnerability between poet and reader, a vulnerability particularly pressing when the reader has royal power. Another avatar of Elizabeth's takes her revenge in Book V, pinning a poet to a post and forcibly changing his name and meaning (5.9.25-26).

bodies are distanced by text. While Braggadochio's assault may suggest the aggression of the blazon (which metaphorically dismembers its women and replaces them with metaphors), this is submerged violence, easily shrugged off as we move on to the next episode in the Book of Temperance. In the Book of Chastity, Spenser makes Amoret the unwilling participant in a masque, a form of theater that more self-consciously turns bodies into abstracts. The Masque of Cupid literalizes Petrarchan tropes as a cast of allegorical characters (including *Losse of Time*, every graduate student's dreaded foe) forms a procession that climaxes in the torture of Amoret and the piercing and removal of her heart by *Despight* and *Cruelty*. The masque inverts the gender dynamics of a commonplace sonnet scenario in which the (usually male) poet is tormented at the hands of a cruel mistress who steals his heart, but the poetry confesses this Petrarchan mode as, itself, an assault. Busirane's crime becomes general to even those poets who write themselves as Amorets, seizing literary agency as they blame the woman for lost emotional agency and pinning the woman in penning her.

More troublingly, this violence inflects even Amoret's rescue and redemption, making us worry over the ethics of allegorical *poesis* as well. Pierced hearts are common in romance narratives and saints' lives, genres that should help shape our reception of Spenser's image.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁵ In the romance, this convention's gendering is more mixed. With specific reference to the Masque of Cupid, Chis-hsin Lin attaches the transfixed heart to the knight as a sign of unrequited love. "Amoret's Sacred Suffering: The Protestant Modification of Courtly Love in Spenser's," *Studies in Philology* 106, no. 3 (2009): 367, Project MUSE [Johns Hopkins UP].

However, in her more general look at the trope, Helen Cooper differentiates between the romance, where it is often the heroine's heart that is pierced, and the Petrarchan lyric: "There is... a key generic difference between such language when it is ascribed to women, within romance narratives, or to men, in sonnets or comparable self-contained lyric forms. The lyric encourages stasis, an analysis of emotion that relies on the woman's

Where Edward II's non-normative passion had to be re-written as Passion, Amoret's Passion is relentlessly determined as romantic passion and marriage. Maureen Quilligan declares that the Petrarchan poetics at play imprison Amoret and interfere with love's proper end, "divinely ordered procreation," but allegorical romance redeems this corrupted language, bringing it into the service of a higher Christian truth.²⁹⁶ However, Amoret's heart is not pierced by her beloved but by an enemy, a distinction that rather links Amoret to the Passion of Christ and the suffering of his saints. The piercing of Christ's side into his heart is one of the five holy wounds replicated in stigmata. Consequently, Chis-hsin Lin reads the episode as "a sign of ultimate faithfulness on two levels," wifely fidelity and "God's holy truth" as revealed within the sanctity of a (specifically Protestant) marriage.²⁹⁷ Though they emphasize different frameworks, both Lin and Quilligan assume (1) that Busirane's rape serves as counterpoint to the dynamics of a divinely ordained relationship and (2) that allegory is a way of translating trauma into revelation. But when Amoret resists brutal penetration on what should be her wedding night, we should wonder

unresponsiveness... Narrative by contrast relies on action, and the women of the early romances take their soliloquies as a preliminary to getting their man, to converting their expressions of emotion into practical action." Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), MOBI, Loc 3463.

Cooper's distinction is useful as it helps distinguish Britomart from Amoret. Britomart sets out in pursuit of Artegal. Tricking Redcrosse into speaking of him, she feeds her love, and "the deep Wound more engor'd her heart" (3.4.6.4). Amoret is never given a romantic heroine's agency.

²⁹⁶ Maureen Quilligan, *The Language of Allegory: Defining the Genre* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 84-85.

²⁹⁷ Chis-hsin Lin, "Amoret's Sacred Suffering: The Protestant Modification of Courtly Love in Spenser's," *Studies in Philology* 106, no. 3 (2009), 368-69, Project MUSE.

if this episode is counterpoint or simple displacement—particularly after the retcons of Book IV. How can one separate rape from rapture in a corrupt language, let alone a corrupt world?

Spenser also leaves us unsure whether the end of Book III emphasizes Amoret's perfection or her erasure—through marriage and beneath allegory. If the virginal Belpheobe's Christomimesis as a pseudo royal priestess is threatened by her interaction with men, the bridal Amoret's is achieved through her union with one man but at the possible expense of her individuation. After all, per Augustine (glossing 1 Corinthians 11): "Woman does not possess the image of God in herself, but only when taken together with the man who is her head, so that the whole substance is one image...But as far as the man is concerned, he is by himself alone the image of God."²⁹⁸ The final image of the 1590 Book III portrays Amoret's disappearance into an emblem of her marriage. Allegory, like Christ's kenosis, always blends revelation and concealment, directing you beyond the immediate vision and to a higher truth that remains just beyond human sight. However, the text prepares us for this vision with a fantasy of healing that is suspiciously fantastic. Allegory offers up the temptation to cloak others—not because we cannot bear the pain of seeing God but because we cannot bear the pain of seeing other people suffer and so choose not to, neglecting their needs and superimposing a better world on this dark one.

If Busirane's masque-making is a form of bad poetry, then we should probably be concerned by the fact that Amoret's poetic healing is the sonic mirror to her poetic rape. Britomart insists that the enchanter recant his spell, but his cure seems rather to repeat the injury than to address it: Busirane

²⁹⁸ Augustine of Hippo, *On the Trinity* c.417. in CHURCH FATHERS: On the Trinity, Book XII (St. Augustine), Section 10. Accessed October 06, 2017. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/130112.htm>.

rising vp, gan streight to ouerlooke
 Those cursed leaues, his charmes back to reuerse;
 Full dreadfull thinges out of that balefull booke
 He red, and measur'd many a sad verse,
 That horror gan the virgins hart to perse,
 And her faire locks vp stared stiffe on end,
 Hearing him those same bloody lynes reherse;
 And all the while he red, she did extend
 Her sword high over him, if ought he did offend. (3.12.36)

While Busirane punishes Amoret by making her identify with the sonneteer's torture, his audience, Britomart, feels Amoret's torture. The pierced heart also is an image of simple empathy. Spenser's customary pronoun confusion here tangles the women together. Amoret is the "she" that can hear the lines as the "same," while Britomart is the "she" that holds the sword. They combine as a collective "virgins hart" that is "perse[d]" anew in this suspect cure. She has the villain go to the same book of magic to undo his work, "his charmes backe to reuerse." It's as if the text, the "verse," hits its own rewind button and finds its Satanic backmasking. The word "reuerse" has led some critics to read a new direction into this incantation, a new (or, at least, different) poetic possibility guided by the auditor Britomart rather than by Busirane, but the rest of the stanza—and the canto—seems to belie this possibility.²⁹⁹ Instead, we find an illusion of reversal exposed as repetition. "Reuerse" becomes "reherse" as the women listen to "those same bloody lynes."

The idea that one can simply hit rewind is incredibly attractive. It is also impossible, a game of make-believe eerily similar to the rape itself. When Busirane has finished his incantation,

²⁹⁹ Katherine Eggert, "Spenser's Ravishment: Rape and Rapture in *The Faerie Queene*," *Representations* 70 (2000): 14, JSTOR; Caroline McManus, *Spenser's Faerie Queene and the Reading of Women* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2002), 102; Susanne Lindgren Wofford, "Gendering Allegory: Spenser's Bold Reader and the Emergence of Character in *The Faerie Queene* III," *Criticism* 30, no. 1 (1988): 14, JSTOR.

The cruell steele, which thrid her dying hart,
 Fell softly forth, as of his owne accord,
 And the wyde wound, which lately did dispart
 Her bleeding brest, and riuen bowels gor'd,
 Was closed vp, as it had not beene sor'd,
 And euery part to safety full sownd,
 As she were neuer hurt, was soone restor'd:
 Tho when she felt her selfe to be vnbownd,
 And perfect hole, prostrate she fell vnto the grownd. (3.12.38)

The stanza insists on its own counterfactuality, the imaginative labor demanded with each use of the word “as.” These mental leaps—these “as ifs”—combine in a fiction that tries to undo the past and negate Busirane’s crime. The first “as” unwrites the writer, displacing his agency onto his instrument. Busirane vanishes along with the wound when the “cruell steele” falls out of Amoret’s heart “as of his owne accord.” Treating objects as subjects is the inverse of treating subjects as objects; we must make the same mental leap. If we invest this phallic dagger with the power of “accord”—or, to use another word, *consent*—we can deny Amoret the same power. We can disallow her interiority and/or project upon her body. In fact, Spenser ensures that we do. He loads the stanza with double valences that move between inside and outside, subjects and objects. In “thrilling” Amoret, the dagger not only pierces her physical heart; it writes excitement—thrill—into her emotions.

Spenser offers the reader a tabula rasa fantasy undisturbed by a painful healing process: “And the wyde wound...Was closed vp, as it had not beene sor’d.” This is such an attractive image that Spenser immediately extends it across the body: “And euery part to safety full sownd, / As she were neuer hurt, was soone restor’d.” But Amoret, of course, has been “sor’d,” has been “hurt,” and the very next turn of the poetry reveals some of this tension: “Tho when she felt her selfe to be vnbownd / And perfect hole, prostrate she fell vnto the grownd.” The “tho” at once registers connection and disjunction: as Spenserian “then,” the word moves the verse to its next

logical step; as “though,” it sets these lines against what has come before. After her healing, Amoret collapses—both out of gratitude for her rescue and out of exhaustion from a trauma still experienced. The verse gives us a fantasy of absolute, instantaneous healing while exposing it as untenable. This fantasy, Amoret’s rescue, denies the character the scar that records the body’s trauma and attests to its endurance. Her erasure contributes to a cycle of repeated rape and reinscription.³⁰⁰

Amoret’s scar is not the only thing that goes missing. As the 1590 version of the text gives way to the 1596 one, the third book’s previous ending vanishes. In fact, the very first narrative stanza of the newly added Book of Friendship confesses the narrator’s desire to retract Book III’s stories of raped women, the most “piteous ever...ytold” tales of “Amorets hart-binding chaine” and “Florimels vnworthie paine”:

The deare compassion of whose bitter fit
My softened heart so sorely doth constraine,
That I with teares full oft doe pittie it,
And oftentimes doe wish it neuer had bene writ. (4.1.1)

The narrator acknowledges both the desire to un-write the tales about Amoret and Florimell and the impossibility of doing so. These chronicles have already joined the narrative storehouse “of louers sad calamities of old” (4.1.1.1). The most the poet can do is to *re-tell* pieces of these stories, work that he has already started—a new ending precedes this new beginning. The 1596 *Faerie Queene* alters the conclusion of Book III, opening Amoret’s story back up. She no longer reunites with her husband Scudamour, who has given up on her rescue and departed, leaving Amoret to hit the road with Britomart. The new stanzas cannot entirely erase the old ones, nor

³⁰⁰ Frye’s article concludes with a valuable look at the episode’s narration as it enacts “a cultural and literary pattern, in which rape is both obsessively inscribed and obsessively erased,” moving outwards from her specific historical context to an always pressing examination of the cultural conditions that shape and permit sexual violence (67).

should they try to. The old text has been written and published. Their overlap creates a textual scar that stands in for Amoret's missing physical scar. In fact, what goes missing is, itself, a fantasy of erasure. The original prior ending is complicit in Amoret's disappearance.

The 1590 conclusion presents the reader with another perfect (w)hole. Amoret emerges from the House of Busirane only to disappear into a disappearing couple. She and Scudamour melt into one another, combining into an emblem of marital chastity, the hermaphrodite, but the perfection of this married couple is an artistic/imaginative event in which the couple is replaced rather than completed. We are informed,

Had ye them seene, ye would haue surely thought,
That they had been that faire Hermaphrodite,
Which that rich Romane of white marble wrought,
And in his costly Bath causd to bee site. (3.12.46.1-4)

The poem speculates about our speculation. We don't see the couple, of course, so who knows what we would have thought? And even if we did make this connection, Spenser has previously employed exactly this kind of hypothesis to emphasize the reader's fallibility—such as when Archimago dresses up as the Redcrosse Knight in Book One. Our image is further mediated. It is not that the couple would look *like* the mythical hermaphrodite but that they would look like another artistic representation of it; the poem leads us to a statue. Or does it? Spenser sends our brains scrambling after—not just any statue—but after a specific statue...that doesn't exist. Both the poet's vision of his readers and our vision of the lovers become all intention, a hungry determination that never finds its objects and replaces them with consciously false projections.

Part of our difficulty in accessing a singular, authoritative image of the couple arises from the fact that there are multiple traditions in play here. Donald Cheney distinguishes between Neoplatonic and classical traditions.³⁰¹ In Renaissance emblems, an embracing couple presents

³⁰¹ Donald Cheney, "Spenser's Hermaphrodite and the 1590 *Faerie Queene*," *PMLA* 87, no. 2 (1972), JSTOR.

the ideal of Christian marriage. Amoret's moral and genital perfection as "perfect hole" has prepared her for this union with her husband and their joint allegorical fulfillment. On the other hand, Roman statues tended to present a single, bisexed figure, an image that accords more with the audience of Amoret and Scudamour, Britomart, than with the couple themselves. Rachel Eisendrath contextualizes this imagined statue in terms of fifteenth and sixteenth-century archeological discoveries, looking at it as part of a progression of art and artifacts begun in the House of Busirane. The object combines the subject matter of the first room's tapestries, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, with the status of the second room's relics.³⁰² Spenser implies a history of plunder to surround what is a depiction of a mythological rape. Ovid's etiology of the hermaphrodite has the naiad Salmacis assault the reluctant Hermaphroditus. She prays to be forever united with him, and the gods fuse their two bodies together. The resolution to the story extends this violent metamorphosis. Hermaphroditus demands a new form of self-perpetuation, and curses all who drink from this particular lake to be changed as he has been. In the words of Cheney, this single story "may thus betoken either the destruction of the individual or the creation of a new synthesis."³⁰³ Spenser's invocation of the antique tradition (and its antiquities) brings this tension to the patristic understanding of woman's participation in the image of Christ as mediated through the marital one flesh.

A sense of Amoret's destruction haunts the 1590 ending, making us doubt that her marriage can provide a positive future for her to inhabit as a character. Both Scudamour and Amoret disappear into the emblem, but their joint dissolution provides neither parity nor peace.

³⁰² Eisendrath traces an emerging objectivity in the movement from the tapestries that depict and elicit rapture to the historical artifacts that invite a more detached scrutiny. Rachel Eisendrath, "Art and Objectivity in the House of Busirane," *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual* 27 (2012).

³⁰³ Cheney, 193.

The imagery resonates with that found in the final chambers of the House of Busirane, the space of the theater, as well as with the cultural spoils of the first two. As Scudamour embraces his wife, certain words return us to the rooms in which Amoret is staged and tortured:

Lightly he clipt her twixt his armes twaine,
And straightly did embrace her body bright,
Her body, late the prison of sad paine,
Now the sweet lodge of loue and deare delight:
But she faire Lady ouercommen quight
Of huge affection, did in pleasure melt,
And in sweete rauishment poured out her spright. (3.12.45.1-7)

The verse ostensibly translates rape into chaste rapture, but the echoes of the original—Amoret’s imprisonment and the expulsion of her “spright”—confuses the continuation of the ordeal with its resolution. Even the assertion that Amoret and Scudamour “with sweet counteruayle, / Each other of loues bitter fruit despoile” becomes ambivalent in this context (3.12.47.1-2). “Despoile,” itself, tangles undoing and redoing. (How does one de-spoil something? Much easier to despoil it.) As for “countervail,” it runs into “counter-veil.” The active reparation of “countervail” conflicts with a damaging denial, the pretense that all is well and the labor of healing can be over. The 1590 version concludes with a georgic topos of conclusion, the poet’s own confession of exhaustion, and invites us to share in the poem’s respite: “Now cease your worke, and at your pleasure play; / Now cease your worke; to morrow is an holy day” (3.12.47.8-9). Spenser leaves us wondering if we (and the many characters of *The Faerie Queene*) can finally breathe or if that rest is truly neglect. After all, the very first lesson of the text is never to let one’s guard down.

Amoret and Scudamour’s story re-concludes in the 1596 version with a final glimpse of the couple rather than a claim to resolution. Near the end of Book IV, Spenser ends their story

with its beginning, their first meeting, and the regressions don't end there.³⁰⁴ The violence within the relationship has become explicit, and the line between rape and rescue—and between being sacrificed to or emancipated from a problematic allegory—still less clear. Scudamour recounts his adventures in the Temple of Venus where he encountered a cast of embodied abstracts who are no less self-consciously allegorical than the characters in the Masque of Cupid.³⁰⁵ When he kidnaps Amoret from the temple, his actions participate in the textual self-examination that surrounds his wife-to-be, but they seem to enact contradictory literary interventions. On one hand, his mission responds to the imposition of allegory on Amoret's body. He rescues the character from her allegorical stasis, inviting her into history and narrative. There's just one problem. The more that we read Amoret at the levels of narrative and character, the more that we

³⁰⁴ Lauren Silberman reads the transition between Books III and IV as Spenser “shifts focus from discourse to textuality....The continuation of the original *Faerie Queene* in the 1596 edition focuses attention on the status of the poem as a text and how, as a text, it absorbs and refracts processes of reading and writing.” Scudamour's retelling of the story emphasizes both the attempt to fix meaning and the impossibility of ever doing so. Lauren Silberman, *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 71. The attempt is not only impossible; it is dangerously abusive as bad, rigid hermeneutics constraint individuals and lead to the false application of principles.

³⁰⁵ Andrea Walkden explores the way that Scudamour's narrative reflects his own increasing allegorization and his resulting dissatisfaction. See Andrea Walkden, "Allegorical Insubordination and the 1596 *Faerie Queene*," *SEL Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 48, no. 1 (2008), Project MUSE [Johns Hopkins UP]. But I think it important to note that Scudamour is given a pulpit from which to complain in such a way that ensures our inability to reduce him to an allegory.

must take seriously her claim that *she does not want to go*:³⁰⁶

She often prayd, and often me besought,
Sometime with tender teares to let her goe,
Sometime with witching smyles: but yet for nought,
That euer she to me could say or doe,
Could she her wished freedome fro me wooe. (4.10.57.1-5)

It is not Scudamour but Amoret who “wooes,” unsuccessfully suing not for his hand but for her own. Scudamour’s seizure thereof becomes the completion of an allegory she refuses rather than its disruption. Amoret resists chaste love no less than its corruption in the House of Busirane.

Her allegorical function was assigned (at birth even) rather than personally elected. Chis-hsin Lin reads the Temple of Venus as redeeming the Petrarchan conventions of the Masque of Cupid within a Reformed celebration of marital chastity, pointing to figures in the new Temple that do not have analogues in the Masque: Silence and Obedience.³⁰⁷ However, it is just these virtues that are most suspect as unilateral virtues and as virtues that Amoret here possesses. Amoret’s distress suggests that she might prefer her sister’s sacred virginity to her own marital devotion. Womanhood, herself, protests Amoret’s abduction, “Saying it was to Knight vnseemely shame, / Vpon a recluse Virgin to lay hold, / That vnto Venus seruices was sold” (4.10.54.3-5). Amoret begins to look like a nun, a once viable option for noble women. When Scudamour criticizes Amoret’s position in the temple, he returns us to one of the horrors of the House of Busirane, a wedding night that is mediated and usurped by the enchanter. He complains, “For ill your goddesses seruices are drest / By virgins, and her sacrifices let to rest” (4.10.54.8-9). His protest slides from virgin priestesses to halted rites, which is appropriate to the

³⁰⁶ Sheila Cavanagh warns us of the dangers of reading gender in the poem solely allegorically, particularly with regard to the omnipresent incidents of violence against women. Sheila T. Cavanagh, *Wanton Eyes and Chaste Desires: Female Sexuality in The Faerie Queene* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 6-10.

³⁰⁷ Lin, 364-65.

bloody “sacrifice” he demands, the defloration necessary for a woman to transition from virginity into marriage.

The role of *human* sacrifice still affords Amoret more dignity than other characterizations she suffers in her husband’s narration; Scudamour dehumanizes her as loot and as allegorical prop. Scudamour’s name paints him as the shield of love, but his claim to the name is heraldic rather than descriptive: he is not the shield (particularly not of Amoret, the little love); he has the shield. Amoret is or, at least, is equal to the shield, a status that makes her a prosthetic for Scudamour’s identity more than it contributes to her own (no matter how problematic that allegory is). In the temple, he carries the day by carrying the shield that gives him the right to Amoret: “Blessed the man that well can vse his blis: / Whose euer be the shield, faire Amoret be his” (4.10.8.8-9). The lines cast Amoret as an object to be seized, a possession much like the shield. Scudamour’s aggression further begs the question of what constitutes proper “vse” of “blis.” As for the shield, Scudamour uses it to intimidate rather than to protect women, intimidating Womanhood, herself:

With that my shield I forth to her did show,
Which all that while I closely had conceald;
On which when Cupid with his killing bow
And cruell shafts emblazond she beheld,
At sight thereof she was with terror queld
And said no more. (4.10.55.1-5)

Scudamour menaces Womanhood with the image of “cruell shafts,” upon which she quiets. The women of the temple are vulnerable to rape—both abduction and forced penetration—and silenced by it. Silence and Obedience are not virtues triumphantly claimed by women but rather sentences they suffer in marriage. While Scudamour holds the shield and threatens Womanhood, he continues to clutch Amoret:

but I which all that while

The pledge of faith, her hand engaged held,
Like warie Hynd within the weedie soyle,
For no intreatie would forgoe so glorious spoyle. (4.10.55.6-9)

Amoret is the preferred prey of Scudamour and Cupid, their “warie Hynd” and “glorious spoyle.” Scudamour exits the Temple, his two prizes in either hand.

As has Womanhoold, Amoret has stopped talking. There is no further “intreatie.” By this point of the text, she has slipped out of the immediate timeline altogether, a character who gets lost and is never again retrieved by *The Faerie Queene*, leaving Scudamour to tell their story. Even as Scudamour reports Amoret’s objection, his words stand in for a character no longer there to represent herself. She has become the “perfect hole,” the space in which Scudamour writes himself.

Lust’s shield, Latonae’s daughter, and England’s king

A little earlier in the text (but later in the chronology), Amoret actually serves as a shield. She is again wounded and comes into contact with her long-lost twin, Belphoebe. Book IV’s encounter with the monster Lust produces two victims, Amoret and Timias, and two heroes, Belphoebe and Arthur. Belphoebe defeats her allegorical foe but fails to tend its victims. Whereas earlier, Belphoebe’s embodied femininity presented a challenge to her abstraction, here, the challenge works in the other direction as the character’s allegorical baggage interferes with her understanding and care. King Arthur, who happens upon the scene in the aftermath of Lust’s death, provides a foil to Belphoebe’s intransigence. His own defining virtue is magnificence, a holistic ideal of personhood and kingship, rather than the chastity of the Virgin Queen, which here slips from a healthy autonomy into cruel withholding. Free of this political allegory—made particularly pressing by the episode’s resemblance to contemporary events—he can better identify and respond to the needs of the wounded. Belphoebe’s repudiation of Timias shows us a

literary code grown tyrannical, while Arthur's treatment of Amoret temporarily addresses her neglected personhood.

Scudamour's bride undergoes a second allegorical rape/rape by allegory, but this time the text insists that we face its consequences and the needs of this *character*, rather than comfortably retreating into abstracts and emblems. After the House of Busirane, Amoret has been restored to "perfect hole," but her wound was, among other things, a now-lost badge of her resistance. In fact, it was the visual marker of her *personal* chastity, her will to say "no." Sans scar, Amoret takes on the availability of the cipher and requires re-inscription. Amoret's flesh has lost its record of her history, a fantasy of perfection that gets in its own way. As the allegory's re-asserts itself, it risks slipping into camp. Its violence is both horrifying and, well, a little funny. In Book IV, Amoret is kidnapped by a bi-sexed monster that recalls the imagery of the hermaphrodite. The text connects these moments, each of which tangles artistic erasure, female persecution and the power dynamic within marriage.³⁰⁸ Lust comes upon Amoret when she walks in the woods at night "for pleasure, or for need" (4.7.4.2). The character either becomes susceptible to Lust when she wanders in pursuit of "pleasure," slipping from her assigned role as marital chastity, or she is punished for wandering out of the allegorical economy altogether. Camping in the woods, Amoret rises in the middle of the night and "need[s]" to take a short stroll. One could say that she seeks to use her "hole" in that most forbidden of ways and, thereby, violates one of the implicit laws that govern allegories: thou shalt not urinate. The greater allegory cannot tolerate

³⁰⁸ Judith Anderson makes this point and also links the interaction between Amoret and Britomart in the beginning of Book IV to these hermaphroditic moments, suggesting the "continuation of unfinished poetic business." The androgynous Venus that presides over Amoret's abduction from her temple belongs to this group as well. Judith H. Anderson, "Britomart's Armor in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*: Reopening Cultural Matters of Gender and Figuration," *English Literary Renaissance* 39, no. 4 (2009): 82.

this rebellion and immediately punishes Amoret. Lust drags her off to its cave, where she joins his other victims, a young woman named Amelia and a nameless old woman. She there faces the threat of cannibalism as well as of rape, the threat of material as well as symbolic assimilation.

Amoret's second wound occurs at the height of her symbolization (and the height of her indignity). She flees the cave but is easily overtaken by Lust, at which point Timias hears her screams and hurries to her aid. In the ensuing conflict, Timias is both wounded by Lust, himself, and accidentally wounds Amoret:

Thereto the villaine vsed craft in fight;
For euer when the Squire his iauelin shooke,
He held the Lady forth before him right,
And with her body, as a buckler, broke
The puissance of his intended stroke.
And if it chaunst, (as needs it must in fight)
Whilst he on him was greedy to be wroke,
That any little blow on her did light,
Then would he laugh aloud, and gather great delight. (4.7.26)

Lust takes Amoret, whose name means "little love," and uses her as a shield. She literally becomes the "shield of love." While Lust's actions may contrast Scudamour's, who better divines the proper "use" of shield and of Amoret, they also anticipate Scudamour's equation of these two items as "spoyle." At the meta-poetic level, we can also distinguish between the poem's treatment of Amoret as shield and its treatment of those characters, such as the knights, whose relationships with allegorical heraldry are more nuanced. The allegory has consumed her, and it is at this moment that she is again stabbed, marked by a phallic pen/spear. Yet, Timias's inability to not hurt Amoret is also poignant. We last saw the character in Book III as Arthur's squire turned into Belpheobe's devoted attendant, wasting away from love-sickness while contriving to hide the disease from its cause. His misadventures with his spear speak to the challenges faced by ordinary humans liable to such sins as lust. Intercourse may be dangerous,

but disengagement is certainly not an ethical alternative. Both chivalry and Christianity demand that Timias not simply abandon Amoret to her fate.

The battle's aftermath underscores the intimacy between the page and the world. Timias, too, is wounded by allegory, but he ultimately suffers less from Lust's attack than from the rejection of his purported savior. Belpheobe comes to the rescue, but she is then enraged when she discovers Timias cradling the unconscious Amoret. The huntress flees the scene and proceeds to hold a grudge, and the canto ends with her maintaining her ire in the face of Timias's abject apologies. It is generally accepted that this episode draws inspiration, at least in part, from real-world events. Timias takes on the role of Sir Walter Raleigh, whose affair with Elizabeth Throckmorton, one of the queen's ladies in waiting, was a well-known scandal.³⁰⁹ In 1591, the couple married secretly and without royal permission and then quickly conceived a child. Elizabeth Raleigh left court to bear the child in 1592, only to return and resume her place as one of the queen's *virginal* attendants. Elizabeth I discovered the conspiracy and, after a brief imprisonment, the Raleighs remained out of favor for years. The complexity of this court intrigue would far exceed the grasp of Spenser's simple squire, and the complexity of Spenser's allegory does far exceed the political scandals of his day. Yet the parallels between the Raleighs' marriage and the events of Book IV heighten our sense of the interplay between real people and poetry or fiction.

³⁰⁹ See H. M. English, Jr., "Spenser's Accommodation of Allegory to History in the Story of Belpheobe and Timias," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 59, no. 4 (July 1960): 417-29, JSTOR; William A. Oram, "Spenser's Raleghs," *Studies in Philology* 87, no. 3 (Summer 1990), JSTOR. Caroline McManus explores the treatment of the affair in the character of Serena. Caroline McManus, *Spenser's Faerie Queene and the Reading of Women* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2002), 182-217.

Elizabeth's specific self-allegoresis is also under scrutiny. As Diana's foster daughter, Belphoebe's slaying of Lust fulfills her allegorical function but also reminds the reader that Elizabeth's refusal to marry has put the nation in danger of a succession crisis, one compounded by the monarch's continuing refusal to name a successor. The verse draws an analogy between her foster mother, Diana (Latona's daughter), and Belphoebe; she pursues Lust

As when *Latonaes* daughter cruell kynde,
In vengeance of her mothers great disgrace,
With fell despite her cruell arrowes tynde
Gainst wofull *Niobes* vnhappy race,
That all the gods did mone her miserable case. (4.7.30.5-9)

Spenser's Greco-Roman allusion simultaneously elevates the conflict to the Olympian stratosphere and deflates it to a personal squabble, a matter of "vengement" rather than a battle between comfortably abstract entities. Belphoebe's rescue may be kind, but the verse is unclear as to which meaning of the word "kynde" is in play: Diana is more kin than kind while Belphoebe never seems to recognize her long lost twin. Regardless, the use of the arrows is definitely "cruell." The punishment is excessive; it even sets her against "all the [other] gods" who are moved to pity. Perhaps the greatest betrayal of *The Faerie Queene's* ambivalence lies in the nature of Niobe's punishment, the death of all her children. The mythological frame links Lust to procreation, the continuation of a "race," and casts Belphoebe as an infanticide. We remember that Elizabeth's self-portrait as the Virgin Queen has given and helped maintain her power but may present problems with regard to her nation's future.

As the narrative continues, Belphoebe's interpretations are also cruel. Lust dead, his female victims emerge from the cave, and our perspective of their activities therein changes when they are brought into the light. Belphoebe teaches us to despise one of *The Faerie*

Queene's most unsung heroines: the Hag.³¹⁰ Yet, we are given room to doubt that this new perspective results from our access to a higher truth. Indeed, it seems to be further mediated through an insistently literary frame, one produced by Belphoebe's adherence to her own fiction; the huntress displays a kind of allegorical absolutism that refuses moral ambiguity or the complications of context. Twice named as the "old woman" earlier in the text, Aemylia's cellmate has been quite the friend to the younger woman (4.7.13.7; 19.6). Still in the cave, Aemylia tells Amoret,

Through helpe (quoth she) of this old woman here
I haue so done, as she to me hath showne.
For euer when he burnt in lustfull fire,
She in my stead supplide his bestiall desire. (4.7.19.6-9)

The antithesis of Shakespeare's Isabella from *Measure for Measure*, the old woman likewise makes us wonder about the limits on friendship. Whether or not one judges the sacrifice as appropriate (or even as sacrifice), Aemylia casts it as such. When reinterpreted through Belphoebe's judgmental gaze, the other woman's "helpe" becomes self-indulgence. Suddenly the "old woman" becomes "the Hag," an object of revulsion rather than gratitude (4.7.34.3):

A foule and lothsome creature did appeare;
A leman fit for such a louer deare.
That mou'd Belphoebe her no lesse to hate,
Then for to rue the others heauy cheare. (4.7.34.4-7)

Belphoebe defines the Hag through her association with a comfortably allegorical character. She never interrogates the situation to engage the complex dynamic between Lust, the old woman, and Aemylia. In casting the old woman as "a leman fit for such a louer deare," she fails to

³¹⁰ Dorothy Stephens contrasts the Cave of Lust to the House of Busyrane, casting it as a private space in which a sort of feminine community is possible. As they emerge back into the world, the Hag assumes the burden of the fear and disgust properly attributed to the male rapist while they were in the cave. Dorothy Stephens, "Into Other Arms: Amoret's Evasion," *ELH* 58, no. 3 (1991): 536-38, JSTOR.

navigate between different types of loves: sexual love, female friendship, and Christian self-sacrifice. Thus rejected, the old woman disappears from the text shortly thereafter. No one troubles to mark her departure.

When Belpheobe rejoins Timias and Amoret, she is as quick to condemn the pair. Her rejection of Timias discredits a particular idealization of service, which is neither possible in a fallen world nor a healthy political model. Having led the women from the cave, she returns to where she had last seen Timias:

There she him found by that new louely mate
Who lay the whiles in swoune, full sadly set,
From her faire eyes wiping the deawy wet,
Which softly stild, and kissing them atweene,
And handling soft the hurts, which she did get.
For of that Carle she sorely bruz'd had been,
Als of his owne rash hand one wound was to be seene. (4.7.35.3-9)

Belpheobe discovers a tender scene—and one produced through the encounter with Lust—but the predominant emotion is regret rather than desire. Timias tends Amoret's tears and wounds, caring for her after her ordeal and regretting his part in it. Yes, he is guilty of sexual desire. We last saw him as he yearned for Belpheobe, and, as her twin, Amoret serves as a more available body (i.e., one not sworn to celibacy) onto which he projects that desire. He wounds and is wounded in the encounter with Lust, betraying some sort of allegorical fault. Yet, like the old woman, his participation in this episode is complex, his wrongs tied to charitable impulses on behalf of an endangered young woman. At the narrative level—unlike the historical Sir Walter Raleigh—he has really done nothing wrong. He is not concealing a forbidden marriage (thereby challenging the power that forbade it). The illicit affair lies entirely in Belpheobe's mind. She characterizes Timias according to his association with “that new louely mate” in the very stanza after she identifies the old woman according to her “louer deare.” In both cases, she focuses on

the wrong type of love.³¹¹ In postmodern, feminist vocabulary, Belphoebe falls prey to what Catherine Keller identifies as true sin within the paradigm of the kenotic, or self-emptying, God: “feminist ethics may best define ‘evil’ as that which projects its evil onto another; therefore, evil is the effect upon the network of relationships of an individual or systemic denial of interrelatedness itself.”³¹²

Belphoebe’s perspective is shaped through her participation in a Petrarchan code, which again interferes with her supposed connection to a Christ-like ruler (though this time the code colors her outlook rather than that of those looking at her). She hastily judges the situation,

Which when she saw, with sodaine glauncing eye,
Her noble heart with sight thereof was fild
With deepe disdaine, and great indignity,
That in her wrath she thought them both haue thrild
With that selfe arrow, which the Carle had kild:
Yet held her wrathfull hand from vengeance sore,
But drawing nigh, ere he her well beheld;
Is this the faith, she said, and said no more,
But turnd her face, and fled away for euermore. (4.7.36)

She does not stay to inquire into the details; she takes in the tableau “with sodaine glauncing eye.” Both her verdict and her actions are impetuous, never a good quality for a ruler. She neglects the unconscious woman (her own long-lost twin), fastens on the perceived betrayal, and runs away. Spenser again employs the potential homonyms of “fill” and “(de)file” as her “noble heart” turns to “disdaine,” “indignity,” and homicidal rage. Her total rejection of Timias turns

³¹¹ I freely admit that a twenty-first century feminist indignation shapes my reading of the Hag. Spenser’s contemporaries would likely be less stalwart defenders than I, but the noted ethical complexity is still present—and self-conscious in the similarity between Timias and the Hag.

³¹² Catherine Keller, “Scoop Up the Water and the Moon Is in Your Hands: On Feminist Theology and Dynamic Self-Emptying,” in *The Emptying God: A Buddhist-Jewish-Christian Conversation*, ed. John B. Cobb and Christopher Ives (Eugene, OR.: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 110.

her own half question, “Is this the faith,” against her. The verse suggests that the faith Belphoebe demands is both idealized and inappropriate. This absolute fidelity refuses the complication of other people and their potential needs, and eros proves a poor substitute for the reciprocal service that underpins the feudal system. The jealous petulance of a scorned lover ill suits the queen’s most advertised proxy in the poem. Belphoebe’s also fails to forgive.³¹³ She remains intransigent through the end of the canto: “when he did grace entreat...Her mortall arrowes, she at him did threat, / And forst him backe with fowle dishonor to retreat” (4.7.37.6-9). Timias’s crime—in so far as he has committed one—is a guilty desire. His fault stems from the first fault, after which Adam and Eve discovered themselves to be naked and covered themselves. His denied suit for “grace” thus divorces Belphoebe from the Christomimesis surrounding her birth.

The canto’s conclusion ties Belphoebe’s manichean worldview to problematic, overly rigid typologies. She refuses to allow either human error or semiotic complexity. When she insists that he having failed to perfectly embody honor, “with fowle dishonor...retreat,” she wrests Timias from his very name, the root of which lies in the Greek for honor. Her tyranny is bad poetry and worse politics. Even before this full rejection, Timias suffers from lovesickness in Book III, and his symptoms point to a discourse as well as a man that is unsound:

That neither blood in face, nor life in hart
It left, both both did quite drye vp, and blast;
As percing leuin, which the inner part
Of euery thing consumes, and calcineth by art. (3.5.48.6-9)

The flame of his love devours him from within. William Oram reads Timias’s ordeal as a parody that reflects on the relationship between Elizabeth and Raleigh, revealing the absurdity of

³¹³ Through the character of Mercilla, the following book will explore necessary *limitations* on the mercy of the queen, an ethic that is gendered feminine and depicted as an impulse potentially at odds both with moral justice and political stability.

Raleigh's adopted role of ardent suitor when its rhetoric is taken literally.³¹⁴ More than merely absurd, this literalization—and something in the rhetoric itself—is unhealthy. Timias risks freezing into an emblem—in his case, that of the unlucky suitor. When Belphoebe repudiates him, he again draws near death and begins to calcify, his body straddling the type of the scorned lover and an allegory of penitence.

Timias's retreat from the world and self-flagellation draws uncomfortably near the conclusion of Malbecco's story in Book III. Even more than the rape of Amoret, the metamorphosis of Malbecco is commonly read as both a moral allegory and a metapoetic commentary on the nature of allegory itself.³¹⁵ Michael Slater uses George Puttenham's definition of allegory in *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589) to draw these characters together:

Whereas Amoret's torture stages primarily the violence of this allegorical yoking, Malbecco's transformation into 'Gealosie' instead concentrates on the violence that comes before—the process Puttenham describes as wresting. This episode largely entails the opposite side of the allegorical coin: the preparatory work of making an individual character into the substance of allegory.³¹⁶

Slater relates Malbecco's story to gendered metaphysics at work in the de-formation of the male into feminized matter, which can take a new form.³¹⁷ After losing his wife and his treasure, Malbecco comes undone. He attempts to kill himself—only to find that he no longer has a self to

³¹⁴ Oram, 353.

³¹⁵ Both Lisa Freeman and Michael Slater look at the two characters in conjunction with one another. Kelly Lehtonen, "The Abjection of Malbecco: Forgotten Identity in Spenser's Legend of Chastity," *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual* 29 (2014): 179-96; Michael Slater, "Spenser's Poetics of "Transfixion" in the Allegory of Chastity," *SEL Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 54, no. 1 (2014): 41-58, Project MUSE.

³¹⁶ Slater, 49.

³¹⁷ Per Slater, Malbecco "must be thoroughly emasculated, even beyond his status as *senex*, before (s)he can be penetrated, a cross-gendering figured as a humoral imbalance that quite literally de-forms and transforms the male body in the feminine *mater* or matter" (Ibid.).

kill. He throws himself off of a cliff

But through long anguish, and selfe-murdring thought
He was so wasted and forpined quight,
That all his substance was consum'd to nought,
And nothing left, but like an aery Spright,
That on the rockes he fell so flit and light,
That he thereby receiu'd no hurt at all. (3.10.57.1-6)

In his jealousy, Malbecco turns completely in on himself, a perversion of the Book of Chastity's titular virtue. His obsession with his own (former) possessions has led him to detach from the rest of the world—indeed, he wants to leave it entirely—but this extreme turn inwards constitutes a “selfe-murdring” that precedes and thus precludes actual self-murder. Malbecco's evacuation is precisely anti-kenotic. It is not self-sacrifice that paradoxically leads to fullness. It is a collapse inward that severs him from all connection. Recent criticism interrogating a Spenserian “self” has tended to open up an early modern paradigm that champions extreme self-control. It has examined religious, physical, and social experiences that draw subjects into communities that threaten their individual border patrols but ultimately contribute to their fulfillment.³¹⁸ Malbecco alienates himself from the omnipresent relations that help define a body in the world. He figuratively loses his body and is available to be made an allegory.

Alone, Malbecco can no more complete himself as an allegory than he can kill himself altogether. His designation as Gelosy comes from outside as the imposition of a certain literary, moral framework:

³¹⁸ James Kuzner, *Open Subjects: English Renaissance Republicans, Modern Selfhoods, and the Virtue of Vulnerability*, Edinburgh Critical Studies in Renaissance Culture (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 39-83; Terry G. Sherwood, *The Self in Early Modern Literature: For the Common Good*, Medieval and Renaissance Literary Studies (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2007), 50-102; Steven Swarbrick, "The Life Aquatic: Liquid Poetics and the Discourse of Friendship in *The Faerie Queene*," *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual* XXX (2015).

Yet can he neuer dye, but dying liues,
 ...
 There dwels he euer, miserable swaine,
 Hatefull both to him selfe, and eevery wight;
 Were he through priuy grieffe, and horroure vaine,
 Is woxen so deform'd that he has quight
 Forgot he was a man, and *Gelosy* is hight. (3.10.60)

Malbecco self-destructs, playing into his allotted role as *Gelosy*, but he is not unobserved. He is “hatefull both to him selfe, and eevery wight,” a line that characterizes him from the outside as well as from the inside, a double vision continued in the final line. He actively “forgot he was a man,” but the verse turns to the passive voice to record his renaming. Even if Malbecco does think of himself as *Gelosy*, he does so as the internalization of an absolutist moral and literary code. This final half-line of Malbecco’s story reminds us that it is a story; the poetry implicates itself in the torture and ultimate erasure of the “man.” Jealousy will contribute to Timias’s predicament as well, where it characterizes the process of naming (though not the name, itself): Belphoebe’s possessiveness makes her refuse rival perspectives and begrudge rival beauties.

Timias never quite descends to Malbecco’s level, but the end of Book IV, Canto vii shows him in danger of becoming Penitence. Having failed to fit Belphoebe’s paradigm of chaste devotion, he now takes the virtue to extremes. Like Malbecco, Timias removes himself from the world, and his self-flagellation takes on the air of self-erasure as he “on him selfe...wreake[s] his follies owne despight” (4.7.39.9). Both characters retreat into a highly stylized existence where they suffer as much from an excess of symbolism as from an excess of emotion. Malbecco discovers a precariously positioned cave and makes his home “In drery darkenes, and continuall feare / Of that rocks fall” (3.10.58.3-4); Timias

chose out a gloomy glade,
 Where hardly eye mote see bright heauens face,
 For mossy trees, which couered all with shade
 And sad melancholy: there he his cabin made. (4.7.38.6-9)

Malbecco lives in darkness and “feare,” Timias in darkness and “melancholy.” Malbecco feeds on poisonous toads and frogs, which breed in him “A filthy blood, or humour rancorous” while he “doth himselfe with new sorrow sustaine (3.10.59.4, 60.2); as for Timias,

There he continued in this carefull plight,
Wretchedly wearing out his youthly yeares,
Through wilfull penury consumed quight,
That like a pined ghost he soone appeares.
For other food then that wilde forrest beares,
Ne other drinke there did he euer tast,
Then running water, tempred with his teares,
The more his weakened body so to wast:
That out of all mens knowledge he was worne at last. (4.7.41)

Timias’s “wilfull penury” goes beyond monastic rusticity. When Arthur later encounters him, he will assume that his cabin houses either “some woodman” or a “some holy Hermit...That did resort of sinfull people shone,” but Timias rejects himself rather than others, laying waste to his body (4.7.42.7-8). His near-starvation diet of the woods’ bounty and his own tears endangers his very physicality, making him “appeare” “like a pined ghost.” The pun, i.e., that Timias’s “wilde forrest” diet makes him appear “pined,” suggests that Timias risks being over-assimilated as well as dematerialized. Timias’s war on Timias is so successful “that out of all mens knowledge he was worne at last.”

However, whereas Malbecco becomes so “like an aery Spright” that gravity fails him, Timias never fully loses either his corporeality or his sense of identity. Malbecco’s jealousy makes him ultimately vulnerable to transformation. Timias’s service, on the other hand, better belongs in the Book of Friendship. His love for both Arthur and Belpheobe ensures points of reference outside himself. Belpheobe will eventually take pity on the nearly destroyed Timias in the following canto. Timias befriends a turtle dove upon whose neck he hangs a previous gift from Belpheobe: “a Ruby of right perfect Hue, / Shap’d like a Heart, yet bleeding of the Wound,

/ And with a little golden Chain about it bound” (4.8.6.7-9). The dove wanders, is discovered by Belphoebe, and leads her back to Timias. Belphoebe pities the still unrecognized Timias, who eventually reveals himself to her and earns her forgiveness with his “sory words” and “ruefull plight” (4.8.17.6, 7). The episode is generally read as Spenser’s plea on behalf of his friend, Raleigh, a real-world context against which the text’s dependence on fortuitous circumstance and hackneyed symbolism shows more strongly: a queen should not require either the hand of fate or the excuse of poetry to do right by her subject.³¹⁹ Belphoebe’s intransigence undermines her Christomimetic status. Her defining ideal, chastity, interferes with care in so far as it is rigidly defining. She neglects the person’s needs and assimilates him to her allegorical code. Lust’s rape and cannibalism were metapoetic as well as practical, and Belphoebe draws uncomfortably near her foe as concerns the imposition of allegory. As concerns that alone. Should we forget the practical difference between the abductor and the rescuer, we would be guilty of some of the same flaws of which I accuse Belphoebe. The lesson is in generosity and the navigation of complexity. As Spenser develops his allegories, his characters must balance responsibility to oneself with responsibility to others, and ethical rigor with a readiness to shift perspectives and even paradigms—all the more so when one rules a country and bears the over-determined symbolic freight of a queen.

Spenser ends this canto with a kingly counterexample of love. Arthur enters the Book of Friendship to find an unrecognizable friend of old, and their interaction highlights Timias’s care for others, which keeps him from degenerating into complete allegory, and Arthur’s, which makes him better fit to rule. When he meets his former master, Timias, “as one with grieffe and

³¹⁹ In the next book, the Book of Justice, Spenser will instead explore the limits on a queen’s mercy, approaching Elizabeth’s treatment of Mary, Queen of Scots rather than of Sir Raleigh.

anguishe ouercum,” proves almost entirely unresponsive (4.7.44.4). Almost. Timias maintains his silence as Arthur addresses him, but he does respond to the fact of that addressal:

And euer when the Prince vnto him spake,
He louted lowly, as did him becum,
And humble homage did vnto him make,
Midst sorrow shewing ioyous semblance for his sake. (4.7.44.6-9)

His ability to find in Arthur a cause for joy demonstrates that he is not totally lost to despair. His response partially returns him to himself; his behavior allows Arthur to detect “secret signes of manlinesse, / Which close appeard in that rude brutishness” (4.7.45.4-5). In his courtesy, Timias shows enduring traces of humanity, masculinity, and gentility.³²⁰ After Arthur “long had marked his demeanor,” he judges all possible intervention (on his part) to be fruitless (4.7.47.1). His careful scrutiny contrasts Belphoebe’s hasty judgment, and his ongoing search for a squire, even one who has abandoned his services, contrasts her jealousy and neglect.

While Belphoebe slays Lust, it is Arthur who cures Timias’s fellow victim, Amoret. The true king heals her with magical ointment and the still stranger expedient of treating her like an injured person.³²¹ While riding through the forest, Arthur comes upon Amoret and Aemylia, Amoret’s fellow captive,

³²⁰ Arthur also notes Timias’s response to the name the hermit has carved on every tree, Belphoebe: “Yet saw he often how he wexed glad, / When he it heard, and how the ground he kist, / Wherein it written was, and how himselfe he blist” (4.7.46.7-9). Appropriately, Timias’s response to Belphoebe is more equivocal than is his to Arthur. “Blist” hovers between “blessed” and “blistered,” or cursed.

³²¹ Robert Tate explores some of the same ethical problems that I do—only with respect to Florimell rather than to Amoret. He cautions against the fantasy of beauty that False Florimell presents: “Far too often, hiding in plain sight amid a kaleidoscopic play of images, there are individuals—beloveds—whom we have failed to see and acknowledge.” Robert W. Tate, “Haunted by Beautified Beauty: Tracking the Images of Spenser’s Florimell(s),” *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual* 29 (2014): 212-13.

Whom when the Prince beheld, he gan to rew
The euill case in which those Ladies lay;
But most was moued at the piteous vew
Of Amoret, so neare vnto decay,
That her great daunger did him much dismay.
Eftsoones that pretious liquor forth he drew,
Which he in store about him kept alway,
And with few drops thereof did softly dew
Her wounds, that vnto strength restor'd her soone anew. (4.8.20)

We have seen this miraculous liquor before, in the Book of Holiness. In the Book of Friendship, it provides a natural link between the two virtues. Amoret's first wound was magically perfected through Busirane's verse, and her body then incorporated into the "one flesh" of her marriage as she rejoined her husband. This new medicine instead recalls sacramental fluids—particularly the water of baptism—that integrate Amoret into a vast communal body. In this moment, she is not absolute bride but rather a member of a church whose allegorical bridegroom is Christ. She is offered friendly aid within an implied community.

These benefits do not mean that the application of the balm is, itself, sufficient. Amoret is restored to strength but without the insinuation that her ordeal is over. The verse freely confesses the inevitable social and physical aftermath of the ladies' misadventure. On departing the scene of the crime, the trio almost immediately runs into Sclaunder, and, as Arthur leads the ladies away from that "foule and loathly creature," Amoret's returning strength is still partial (4.8.24.1). They journey as gently as possible, in part "for great feeblesse, which did oft assay / Faire Amoret, that scarcely could she ride" (4.8.37.3-4). Arthur assumes as much of the discomfort as is possible. He leads them on foot—despite the awkwardness of carrying his arms—and even guides his horse so as to minimize the animal's discomfort. This stanza concludes, "So was his toyle the more, the more that was his care" (4.8.37.9). Arthur has the right tools in order to heal Amoret. Perhaps more importantly, he has the right mindset, understanding the importance of

ongoing, active care.

Unfortunately, Arthur allows his care to lapse, finally neglecting Amoret when she may need him the most. One of the things that Arthur initially does right—at least from a therapeutic standpoint—is to listen. He communicates with the women. After being discovered, Amoret and Aemylia take Arthur through the story, literally taking him through its scene as well. Unlike Busirane’s castle, the cave has not magically vanished, and the ladies are able to revisit both the events and the locale in a potentially therapeutic vein rather than psychically reliving the trauma. But after the pair has returned Aemylia to her lover, they ride along in silence—even though this silence torments Amoret: “Left in the victors powre,” she mistakenly believes that she stands in danger of Arthur’s “burning lust” (4.9.18.7, 9). As they travel, “neither shewed to the other their hearts priuity” (4.9.19.9). The oblivious Arthur does not extend himself to Amoret, and his failure to attend to her needs immediately becomes a much more remarkable instance of neglect. This description of the duo ends in the nineteenth stanza of canto nine, exactly one canto after Arthur first took Amoret into his care. In the very next stanza, they come across some skirmishing knights. Arthur intervenes and joins up with Britomart and Scudamour who are under attack. Somehow in the bustle, Amoret disappears, simply falls out of the text. After the fight, Britomart and Scudamour talk about their ongoing search for her in a scene with absolutely no indications that Amoret is present and a strong suggestion that she is not. Our only further sight of the character comes as Scudamour recounts their incredibly disturbing love story, in which he, like Lust, treats her like a hybrid of shield and sex object. Amoret’s past trauma will linger in the poem, being explored through new characters and episodes—most notably Serena in Book VI—but the narrative has finally given up on her present or future. The character is gone, and Arthur has completely failed to remark her departure.

One is not done with care after a canto. Spenser's cantos—even his books, even his three-book installments—are useful artistic structures, but they overflow, forcing us to continually return to old characters with new problems, or vice versa. The importance of continual labor within *The Faerie Queene* is axiomatic, but I want to suggest that this need for vigilance, this inability to stop or to go back, is an ethos of care as well. When we imaginatively negate an individual's past, denying the pieces of them that are written in those scars, or fail to provide for their future, we miss opportunities for active healing as a community. This is an ethic that generates *The Faerie Queene's* kenotic *poesis*—figured in the Garden of Adonis as divine, metaphysical recycling and family love.

Arthur seems to make the same mistake, albeit metaphorically, that Britomart made when Amoret was captured by Lust while in her care. He falls asleep on the job. In fact, Amoret's fear of Arthur marks a kind of traumatic, narrative regression. At the beginning of Book IV, she journeys with the disguised Britomart after being released from Busirane's castle. Her unease regarding her new protector's potential demands is not helped by Britomart's over-commitment to her role: "Thereto her feare was made so much the greater / Through fine abusion of that Briton mayd" (4.1.7.1-2). Britomart's own insecurity leads her into the "fine abusion" of Amoret." Worried that her disguise as a man will be penetrated, Britomart woos Amoret: "For other whiles to her she purpose made / Of loue, and otherwhiles of lustfulnesse, / That much she feard his mind would grow to some excesse" (4.1.7.7-9). It takes Britomart's forced unmasking to assuage Amoret's fears. The knight of chastity has rescued Amoret from a nightmare of symbolic theater only to become complicit in the abuse, using it to "hide her fained sex the better, / And *maske* her wounded mind" (4.1.7.3-4, my emphasis). Britomart's own vulnerability

compromises her ability to consider Amoret's. Her cross-dressing, unlike that of Viola or Innogen, identifies her with a lost lover rather than a lost brother. She defines herself through her ultimate relationship with Artegall to the extent that she assumes the guise of knight errant—and, here, the guise of knight *morally* errant—in pursuit of him.

Of the women in men's clothing I examine, Britomart is the most explicitly idealized, though least the object of Christomimetic language. She is the paragon of loving chastity, but the text is not completely comfortable with even her male performance. Spenser's narrator never chastises his heroine, but her final adventure comments upon transvestitism and gender roles. Artegall has been imprisoned by Radigund, who rules at the head of a group of armor-wearing Amazons and forces men to wear female clothing in order to humiliate them. Britomart defeats her perverse shadow and goes to free Artegall and the other men. She enters Radigund's prison,

Where when she saw that lothly vncouth sight,
Of men disguised in womanishe attire,
Her heart gan grudge, for very deepe despight
Of so vnmanly maske, in misery misdight.

At last when as to her owne Loue she came,
Whom like disguise no less deformed had,
At sight thereof abasht with secrete shame,
She turnd her head aside, as nothing glad,
To haue beheld a spectacle so bad. (5.7.37.6-38.5)

The “like disguise” of Britomart's “owne Loue” refers to the garb he shares with the other men in captivity, but her own costume also draws the two adjectives “like” and “owne” together. Her story began when she saw Artegall, her true love, in a magic mirror, assumed a suit of armor, and set out on a quest to find him. It ends with the unflattering mirrors of Radigund in male, martial regalia and, now, Artegall in “womanishe attire.” Her participation in his “secrete shame” implicitly colors her own dress as well.

In victory, she redresses (re-dresses) the problem. In recording Artegall's initial humiliation at Radigund's hands, the narrator abstracts,

Such is the crueltie of womenkynd,
When they haue shaken off the shamefast band,
With which wise Nature did them strongly bynd,
T'obay the heasts of mans well ruling hand,
That then all rule and reason they withstand,
To purchase a licentious libertie.
But vertuous women wisely vnderstand,
That they were borne to base humilitie,
Vnlesse the heauens them lift to lawfull soueraintie. (5.5.25)

Throughout the text, relationships between men and women are zero-sum games that—unless they are queen—women lose. They are supposed to lose; women can win only at the cost of moral defeat. After Britomart defeats Radigund, the text praises her rule mainly on the grounds that she “the liberty of women did repeale” (5.7.42.5). It does not truly allow even Britomart herself the exceptional status it accords “lawfull” queens. She makes her subjects “sweare fealty to Artegall,” and when he leaves, she takes off for parts unknown rather than stay and rule her domain (5.7.43.6). Like Amoret, she quietly slips out of the text.

Amoret's trauma repeats. Where Edward's murder hallowed him as a singular, political martyr, Spenser pens Amoret into a cycle of erasure and re-inscription that is made common. Britomart and Artegall are the text's closest approximation of its fantasized union between Gloriana and Arthur, and the resolution to their story again reminds us that the text's ideal subject is male. In this episode, Britomart serves as a means of correction to a problematic gender dynamic, but the text refuses to accommodate her once she has served her purpose. For all of my investment in Spenser's sophisticated metapoetics and ethics, I think it important never to lose sight of what is utterly banal and expected: patriarchy, sexism, and a masculine ideal. *The Faerie Queene* betrays the constrained participation in Christ's image afforded women in early

modern England, but the poem, nevertheless, reveals the coexistence of a model of subjectivity that will be later articulated within a feminist Christology, which invests in a responsive and multiple personhood. Now if only this pseudo-feminist model were made available to the actual female characters in the text.

CONCLUSION

In this project, I have tried to expose and break down harmful idealizations along Christological lines, to deconstruct often idolatrous constructs of self and God that privilege a coherent—and, here, irredeemably patriarchal—ideology over the needs of other people. At the same time, I have provided for a relational subjectivity *still along Christological lines*. This model of selfhood is not a new invention, the gift of feminists to Christian theology; it is provided for in the very idea of a self-emptying God. “Model” is, perhaps, the wrong word; a “dynamic” or even “poetic” of subjectivity comes closer to my meaning. As such, early modern literature is a perfect site in which to see this poetic as writers play with internal mysteries and external demands, toying with the implicit literariness of both subjectivity and Christianity.

The idea of kenosis has much to offer the study of early modern literature. It helps to open up Christology, a theological branch with ethical, metaphysical, and poetic dimensions, in order to nuance and challenge paradigms that begin to crystallize therein and make their way into early modern texts. Writers frequently pair enduring medieval and patristic distinctions about the particulars of Christ’s body with a turn inside the individual and away from the communities that anchored much of medieval Catholic practice. In one trend, they dwell on internal mysteries while reifying external roles, but an alternative, looser dynamic modeled on kenosis is also present. Ideals surrounding Christ’s self-evacuation and Christian friendship sometimes produce a collective artistic project based in the care of and response to others. Improvisation here replaces ritual as the gracious act as the art twists and evolves. As an ethic of continual self-evacuation, kenosis also helps to break down a metaphysical Christology in which Christ’s dual nature excuses a correlation between masculinity and divinity. It provides a new vocabulary in which to explore the exuberant gender play that transpires on the Renaissance stage. In addition,

even as kenotic theologians generally celebrate Christ's humanity, their work can also contribute to a critique along post-humanist lines, helping to explicate submerged energies in texts otherwise presumed to reflect ideals with which the academy has grown disenchanted. The dynamism of kenosis—as opposed to a static image—provides for readings that champion Christ's humanity as an action of superlative humility rather than as an ontological distinction that confirms man as the master of all he sees.

As we move away from static ideals and towards a more responsive ethic, this shift should also inform the way we read, demanding that we emphasize the locality of the characters and concepts that we find. It is here that my dissertation reveals what literary analysis can and should bring to the work of theologians interested in kenotic Christology. Literary close-reading opens up kenosis as a poetic. Or, perhaps, as poetics: of meditation, of incarnation, and of romance. The first two are better covered within existing criticism and theory. While my dissertation never engages early modern religious poetry, the genre offers multiple examples of Catholic and Protestant poets alike claiming devotional self-evacuation through meditation on Christ (Southwell, Crashaw, Donne, Herbert, etc.). As for incarnation as a dramatic principle, it has been explored on both sides of the disciplinary divide between literary and religious studies, attracting critics who study medieval drama and theologians who find theater an apt model for Christ's kenosis—whether they use this correlation to exalt theater or to devalue it as a mockery of miracle (as one sees in certain early modern Protestant polemics). However, I want also to endorse kenosis as a romantic poetic. Known tropes punctuate the romance, but of these, the most essential is the wandering of characters and narrative. In this exploration, catastrophe serves as punctuation and opportunity. At its most gracious (I believe), the work refuses coherence that is purchased at the expense of honesty or the consideration of other viewpoints.

The lessons of such an insistently ethical poetic transcend any given literary medium; it influences Viola's scene work as well as Spenser's narrative.

Romance brings me to the dominant genres—or, preferably, modes—of my dissertation. The Christological investments of the early modern history/epic differ from those of romance. As I worked on parts of *The Faerie Queene* and on the history plays (including the hybrid *Cymbeline*), I found myself continually drawn towards contemporary Christological context. As they consciously engage a triumphal, national narrative, these texts appeal to contemporary understandings: of Christomimetic kingship, of dialogic engagement with the Word, and of marriage, which (as the family's building block) both models and can help stabilize national affairs. Histories narrate corporations: the emergence of nations and their preservation through or against threats. Their writers can iconize this greater body through a Christomimetic king or draw upon looser constructs of a national family and the Christian values of a Christomimetic people. Successful characters play normative gender roles and script themselves within narratives of England's great destiny; unsuccessful characters, instead, are sacrificed *to* this mythology. Yet, these texts are not simple; as we see in *Edward II's* atrocities or *Henry V's* ironies, writers sometimes expose these constructs—as either brutally maintained or suspiciously convenient—rather than endorse them.

The very structure of romance, on the other hand, licenses alternative viewpoints and digression. Its landscape, self-consciously metaphysical, enables more overt providential intervention and the use of Christological topoi such as resurrection. Yet, the energy of romance better suits a Christological vocabulary rooted in postmodern rather than early modern theory. It often portrays non-normative role-play, though its conclusions generally return us to an epic narrative and/or discipline these departures in the interest of social harmony (as in romantic

comedy). The genre can supplement history, enriching the characters of history's victors and providing a space for its losers.³²² At its most liberal, it can subvert apparent inevitabilities and emphasize local identities and relationships. This is not to claim that the genre always serves subversive ends. (Indeed, early modern romances have more often been portrayed as socially conservative.) The peregrinations and conclusions of romance frequently justify the status quo or substitute for social change—in this way, serving a similar function to that claimed on behalf of festive inversions, though at the level of personal narrative rather than social ritual. As in the history, the same tropes can serve ideologically opposite ends.

In sum, I offer the reader a problem and its solution. The problem lies in a masculine ideal whose Christological components have been too little considered in early modern literary studies—despite the general acceptance of the increased logocentrism and historicity (both Christ-centered developments) of English religion after the Reformation. The solution lies in the inherent literariness of Christology, which enables a poetic that destabilizes its own totems.

³²² The mode of romance can serve this function even when alienated from its original terrain. In tracing the evolution of romance into the nineteenth century, Fredric Jameson notes its movement away from a self-consciously metaphysical landscape and into the psyche; instead of externalized eschatology and psychomachia, the phantasmagoric struggle between good and evil is internalized. Fredric Jameson, "Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre," *New Literary History*, Critical Challenges: The Bellagio Symposium, 7, no. 1 (1975): JSTOR.

AFTERWORD

“NOTHING WILL COME OF NOTHING”: CANCELED ROMANCE AND DELETED HISTORY IN *KING LEAR*

And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my father's business? (Luke 2:49 KJV)

CORDELIA. O, dear father,
It is thy business I go about. (*King Lear* 4.4.23-24)³²³

This is a coda that serves to gloss the tone and evolution of this dissertation rather than its content. I offer a brief reading of *King Lear* that is critically grounded but unapologetically personal, an excursus into the disenchantments of that text that reveals some of my own frustrations with the foundational literary-theological constructions of my own work—specifically with the sacrificial narrative associated with kenosis. What happens to texts when Christological symbols are stripped of both epic and romantic justification? In the bleakest of my readings heretofore, *Edward II* strips its history of any romantic prosthetic, denying the relevance of Christian morality or eschatology, but history and a grand English narrative endure. It is not *King Lear*. In this dissertation's final moments, I want to turn to a more total apocalypse, to consider the cost of kenosis without assuming that this price purchases anything.

Cordelia, the king's most loved and most abused daughter, may well be the Shakespearean character most explicitly framed through Christic typology. The very first scene of *King Lear* frames Cordelia's virtues in light of the New Testament's inversions; she is “most rich, being poor; / Most choice, forsaken; and most loved, despised” (1.1.249-50). Rejected by her father, she returns with France's army at her back, determined to restore to him both the

³²³ For *King Lear*, I use the edition: William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. Kenneth Muir, Arden Shakespeare (London: Routledge, 1993).

daughter and the kingdom he thoughtlessly discards at the beginning of the play. A royal attendant describes her to the king as “One daughter, / Who redeems nature from the general curse / Which twain have brought her to” (4.6.202-4). The “twain” bad daughters, Regan and Goneril, are as much a type as the good Cordelia. Their ingratitude is “sharper than a serpent’s tooth,” and their general lust and treachery sets up Lear’s identification of women with sin, a rant that participates in patristic excuses for misogyny (1.4.286). This typological characterization of Cordelia sets up *King Lear’s* last scene, the play’s most haunting and iconic image: a gender-inverted Pietà of Lear cradling his dead child.

This tableau is so thoroughly identified with *King Lear* that it now appears inevitable. As an audience, we await this moment and judge productions accordingly. And yet, when the play first debuted in 1606, it must have shocked an audience expecting to see Cordelia and Lear emerge victorious. All previous tellings of the story have them do so in accordance with Holinshed’s chronicle. While poets frequently continue the tale into Cordelia’s ultimate reversal of fortune and suicide, the 1594 play, *King Leir*, ends at the same point in the story that Shakespeare’s does—but with greater fidelity to the source material. *King Leir* concludes with the father and daughter’s defeating the sisters’ armies. In erasing this triumphant mark of punctuation, Shakespeare violates known history. He pulls defeat out of the jaws of victory. *King Lear’s* publication history appears to reflect the need for the reconsideration of the play’s genre. As the text moves from the 1608 quarto to the 1623 folio, its title changes. No longer *The True Chronicle History of King Lear*, the play is now (better) labeled as *The Tragedy of King Lear*.

While the subject matter of the play identifies it as history, its patterns initially locate the play within the moral terrain of the romance. In the eighteenth century, the famous critic Samuel Johnson declares himself “shocked by Cordelia’s death” and insists, “Shakespeare has suffered

the virtue of Cordelia to perish in a just cause, contrary to the natural ideas of justice, to the hope of the reader, and, what is yet more strange, to the faith of the chronicles.”³²⁴ For centuries, editors and performers addressed this perceived deficiency, revising *King Lear* into a romance. After all, Shakespeare sets up a struggle between the good children and the bad, and the play’s initial tropes condition us to anticipate resurrection, the lost children of romance that are always miraculously found. While altering Shakespearean text was normal practice in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, *King Lear* suffered the most drastic revisions. Even into the nineteenth century, the dominant version onstage was that of Nahum Tate, which added a romantic subplot between Cordelia and Edgar to a newly happy ending.

Shakespeare, himself, consciously draws from romance as well as history, pulling his own subplot from the story of the Paphlagonian king in Sidney’s *Arcadia* (which ends as tragically as it does in Shakespeare’s play). He pairs the story of Gloucester’s sons with that of Lear’s daughters. A “bad” child, Edmund, again supplants the “good” one, Edgar, and then betrays his father. If *King Lear*’s most iconic scene is the Pietà, its most gruesome is Gloucester’s blinding, the aftermath of which only confirms the machinery of romance.³²⁵ Regan

³²⁴ Qtd. in Kenneth Muir, introduction, in *King Lear*, by William Shakespeare, ed. Kenneth Muir, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Routledge, 1993), xl, xxxi.

³²⁵ In the blinding scene, one of Cornwall’s servants objects to this mutilation, rebels, and fatally stabs his master before being, himself, killed. John Staines and Matthew Martin read this with an eye to some of the same theory I brought to Edward II; they see a “sacrificial crisis,” as articulated by Rene Girard, and argue that this scene aligns the audience with the servant against cruel and arbitrary exercises of power: “*King Lear* takes the language of revenge and abuses it further in order to make the audience feel the literal meaning of the ritual symbols and then face up to what they mean for real human beings in a social and political world.” John D. Staines and Matthew R. Martin, “Radical Pity: Responding to Spectacles of Violence in *King Lear*,” in *Staging Pain, 1580-1800: Violence and Trauma in British Theater*, ed. James Robert Allard (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 91.

and Cornwall (her husband) gouge out his eyes and send the now sightless old man to wander in the storm. He comes across his own son, Edgar, disguised, and asks this Poor Tom to lead him to a cliff from which he might jump. Edgar leads Gloucester about, narrating their climb, and then leaves him to fall. Gloucester falls...onto the level surface he has never left, and Edgar takes on a new role as the man who “discovers” this miraculously preserved suicide. He glosses his actions as the preservation of both his father’s life and his immortal soul: “Why I do trifle thus with his despair / Is done to cure it” (4.6.33-34). Gloucester arises, determined to bear his afflictions and live out the lifespan given him by the gods. This episode participates in a greater theme of apparent death and resurrection.³²⁶ Moreover, the means by which Edgar establishes the scene are the same as those a playwright would use, poetically imagining a setting and its steep terrain on the level stage of the Globe. The episode teaches us to distrust the theatrical presentation of death as the nadir necessary to ultimate salvation.

Our doubt sets up Lear’s own state of denial in this iconic final scene. When Cordelia dies, her father cannot fully believe that she is gone. He careens between hope and despair. The onlookers ask the question that we might:

KENT. Is this the promised end?
EDGAR. Or image of that horror? (5.3.263-64)

At one point, Lear convinces himself that Cordelia’s breath stirs a feather: “she lives! if it be so, / It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows / That ever I have felt” (5.3.264-66). But Cordelia

Regan, herself, makes much the same case for the internal audience of *Lear’s* world. The literally blind Gloucester proves a much greater political threat than the figuratively blind one: “It was great ignorance, Gloucester’s eyes being out, / To let him live: where he arrives he moves/ All hearts against us” (4.5.11-13). Gloucester’s wounded body serves as the object of empathy and empowers resistance. As in *Edward II*, this image of torture is made politically effective, but its very efficacy is disconcerting.

³²⁶ See also King Lear’s reunion with Cordelia.

never wakes up; there is no redemption, and *King Lear* is tragedy, not romance. Nor is it history. In *Edward II*, the image of the protagonist's death is available to his son, an icon that helps him to restore the country and move into the future. The death of kings and fathers is inevitable, even culturally necessary. The death of children is something else altogether. In *King Lear*, even the restored child, Edgar, is somehow unbearable, literally breaking his father's heart, which "twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief / Burst smilingly" (5.3.201-2). Instead of depicting the transitions of history, *Lear* shows its abbreviation and mutilation. The "gor'd state," may be "sustain[ed]" but never healed (5.3.319). Edgar speaks the final lines of the play: "The oldest hath borne most: we that are young / Shall never see so much, nor live so long" (5.3.324-25).

Sans history and romance, what structures does Shakespeare leave us to make sense of Cordelia's death? Is there another Christological poetic at play to be found in the play's echoing "nothing"? The play ends as it began: with a king desperately listening for the voice of a daughter with "nothing" to say (1.1.86, 5.3.270-2). I am not the first to think about the play with respect to the evacuations of kenotic Christology. Larry Bouchard seizes on this network and extends a kind of kenotic integrity to the characters of Cordelia, Kent, Edgar, and the Fool, an integrity based in harmonious mutuality rather than an inviolate individuality. These characters pick up the pieces of the shattered pieces of another's identity, playing nothing for their sake.³²⁷ It is true that a great production of *King Lear* leaves the audience devastated, but it is hard to mourn Cordelia for herself. We feel most for the pain of a parent who has lost his child. In fact, we only know Cordelia as she is defined through the "bonds" through which she claims identity—even her status as wife/queen enters the play only so far as it is instrumental to the plot

³²⁷ Larry D. Bouchard, *Theater and Integrity: Emptying Selves in Drama, Ethics, and Religion* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011), 311-332. See also Larry D. Bouchard, "Playing Nothing for Someone: Lear, Bottom, and Kenotic Integrity," *Literature & Theology* 19, no. 2 (June 2005): 169.

and to her father's story (1.1.92).

I am willing to walk with Bouchard up to and over the Dover cliffs, even to the very edges of the play, but I think that there is one danger that he neglects. After characterizing Cordelia as kenotic, her identity as provisional, he may fall prey to the same malady that plagues the cast of characters, making nothing of one who plays nothing. This critical move reveals the difficulty of disentangling a postmodern understanding of kenosis from a tale of theologically justified murder. Bouchard ends by emphasizing Lear; he argues that the protagonist's final speeches call the audience to account as he requires someone to "look there," asking us to finally assume the burden of completing Lear's experience of himself in the wake of Cordelia's death. I refuse to believe that the end of kenosis is the ultimate validation of another's solipsism. In treating Cordelia as just Lear's daughter, as just this role or even just this icon, we do not succeed as a community but fail. Counter to biblical injunctions to lose the world gladly, we most betray the principle of *caritas* at the moment that we start treating the world like a play of players, when we approach pain as entertainment and play games with others' lives—as though we (or some religious meta-narrative) can bring them back from the dead. Edmund serves as our most apt representative at the end of the play (though he dies before he can witness the famous *Pietà*). Strangely validated by the twisted ends of Regan and Goneril, Edmund determines to do some good "despite of [his] own nature" (5.3.249). Having given Cordelia's death order, he tries to revoke it. Of course, he is too late.

Even Shakespeare's potentially salvific intervention steals Cordelia's agency. In *Holinshed* and other versions, her sister's sons eventually reclaim the kingdom, and she kills herself in despair while in prison. As with Gloucester's attempt, Cordelia's suicide becomes an internal fiction of the play. Shakespeare writes under the story as Edmund attempts to frame

Cordelia for her own murder.³²⁸ In anticipating her death, the playwright rescues Cordelia from this mortal sin, reserving her to whatever heaven may exist in the margins of the text. Perhaps. What the audience immediately sees is Cordelia's wholesale victimization as she is stripped of the last of her agency. Shakespeare's *Pietà* shows Cordelia at the moment in which being made nothing displaces her ability to play nothing. She confronts us with the image of our shattered collectivity, the absolute failure of network-constructed identity before a solipsism that leads us to treat others as mere players in our own grand, self-absorbed drama. The players left over after Lear's holocaust do not express faith in a rejuvenated community; they mourn something that is dwindling and will soon be lost.

The investments that ultimately lead to this project were the same that led to my choosing to pursue a doctorate at all: a love of Shakespeare and an interest in the twin claims of religion and literature to an added dimension of experience. At the time I entered my first graduate class, my favorite religious keyword was "gratuity," the gracious remainder in Christian accounting. Years later, it is "kenosis," a word that names the same exchange but highlights the cost rather than the gain. I also began my graduate career with *King Lear*. My writing sample looked at the play as Shakespeare's own attempt to trifle with our despair in order to cure it, focusing on his revision of Cordelia's suicide as it fits within the greater text. I now find this apology inadequate. As this project grew, it darkened. So did the world in which I wrote it (or at least the basic optimism through which I once viewed the world). Where I was once preoccupied with the phenomenology of the icon, I now find myself more preoccupied with the ethics of the icon and the golden idols with which people are bludgeoned.

³²⁸ Shakespeare takes the form of Cordelia's "suicide" from Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, which provides a short synopsis as part of an English history in Book II. Spenser's Cordelia hangs herself where all previous versions had her use a knife.

The alternative, an ethos centered in attention and openness is both fragile and nebulous. A sacrificial narrative is much easier to understand. Postmodern theories of kenosis are unwieldy, a quality I have tried to address by discovering—and submerging them—in early modern text. Even then, the ethic of responsiveness I champion is dangerously diffuse and passive. Example serves better than precept. If early modern literature can benefit from postmodern theology, that theology positively demands the literature. One can more easily take guidance from Arthur's active treatment of Amoret and respect for her trauma. But my favorite hero of this dissertation is Viola, whose style of improvising responds also to a less urgent and so more neglected need. We do not only need the care of others, we need their indulgence. Where would we be without the freedom to play and companions therein? Certainly sans Shakespeare.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adelman, Janet. *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to The Tempest*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1992.
- Agamben, Giorgio. "Sovereign Body and Sacred Body." In *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen, 91-103. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Altick, Richard D. "Symphonic Imagery in *Richard II*." *PMLA* 62, no. 2 (June 1947): 339-65.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/459267>.
- Amussen, Susan Dwyer. *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993.
- Anderson, Judith H. "Britomart's Armor in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*: Reopening Cultural Matters of Gender and Figuration." *English Literary Renaissance* 39, no. 4 (2009): 74-96.
DOI: 10.1111/j.1475-6757.2009.01040.x.
- Anderson, Judith H. "Whatever Happened to Amoret?: The Poet's Role in Book IV of *The Faerie Queene*." *Criticism* 13, no. 2 (1971): 180-200. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23098703>
- Anderson, Thomas Page. *Performing Early Modern Trauma from Shakespeare to Milton*. Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2006.
- "Antichrist." In *Chester Cycle*. Accessed October 18, 2017.
<http://pages.vassar.edu/chestercycle/files/2010/05/Chester-Cycle-Antichrist.pdf>.
- Astington, John. "Malvolio and the Eunuchs: Texts and Revels in *Twelfth Night*." *Shakespeare Studies* 46 (1993): 23-34.

- Augustine of Hippo. *On the Trinity*. C.417. In CHURCH FATHERS: On the Trinity, Book XII (St. Augustine). Accessed October 06, 2017.
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/130112.htm>.
- Axton, Marie. *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession*. London: Royal Historical Society, 1977.
- Von Balthasar, Hans Urs. *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*. Vol. 1-5. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1988.
- Barton, Anne. "Wrying a Little" in *Essays, Mainly Shakespearean*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. 3-30.
- Baseotto, Paola. "Mary Stuart's Execution and Queen Elizabeth's Divided Self." In *Representations of Elizabeth I in Early Modern Culture*, edited by Alessandra Petrina and Laura Tosi, 66-82. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Beckwith, Sarah. *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011.
- Belsey, Catherine. "Desire's Excess and the English Renaissance Theatre: *Edward II*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Othello*." In *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, edited by Susan Zimmerman, 84-102. New York, NY: Routledge, 1992.
- . *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama*. London: Methuen, 1985.
- Benson, Sean. "'Perverse Fantasies'?: Rehabilitating Malvolio's Reading." *Papers on Language and Literature* 45, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 261-86. ProQuest.
- Berry, Philippa. *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen*. London: Routledge, 1989.

- Betteridge, Thomas. *Shakespearean Fantasy and Politics*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire, 2005.
- Bevington, David. "Asleep Onstage." *From Page to Performance: Essays in Early English Drama*. Ed. John A. Alford. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State UP, 1995. *Google Books*.
- "Biggest Roles." PlayShakespeare.com: The Ultimate Free Shakespeare Resource. Accessed December 07, 2017. <https://www.playshakespeare.com/study/biggest-roles>.
- Bishop, Tom. "The Burning Hand: Poetry and Reformation in Shakespeare's *Richard II*." *Religion and Literature* 32, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 29-47.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40059865>
- Bouchard, Larry D. "Playing Nothing for Someone: Lear, Bottom, and Kenotic Integrity." *Literature & Theology* 19, no. 2 (June 2005): 159-80.
- . *Theater and Integrity: Emptying Selves in Drama, Ethics, and Religion*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011.
- Briggs, Julia. "Virginia Woolf Reads Shakespeare: Or, Her Silence on Master William." *Shakespeare Survey* 58, Writing About Shakespeare (2005): 118-29.
- Brink, Jean R. "Materialist History of the Publication of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*." *The Review of English Studies* 54, no. 213 (2003): 1-26.
- Butler, Martin. Introduction. In *Cymbeline*, by William Shakespeare, edited by Martin Butler. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Bynum, Caroline Walker. *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984.
- Callaghan, Dympna. "'And All Is Semblative a Woman's Part': Body Politics and *Twelfth Night*." *Textual Practice* 7, no. 3 (1993): 428-52. Taylor and Francis Online.

- Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Translated by Henry Beveridge. 1845.
<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes>.
- Cartelli, Thomas. *Marlowe, Shakespeare, and the Economy of Theatrical Experience*.
 Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991.
- Cavanagh, Sheila T. *Wanton Eyes and Chaste Desires: Female Sexuality in The Faerie Queene*.
 Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Cefalu, Paul. *Moral Identity in Early Modern English Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge
 University Press, 2005.
- "Chalcedonian Creed." *Theopedia.com*. Accessed May 21, 2018.
<http://www.theopedia.com/chalcedonian-creed>.
- Chalk, Darryl. "'To Creep in at Mine Eyes': Theatre and Secret Contagion in *Twelfth Night*." In
"Rapt in Secret Studies": Emerging Shakespeares, edited by Darryl Chalk and Laurie
 Johnson, 171-93. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2010.
- Cheney, Donald. "Spenser's Hermaphrodite and the 1590 *Faerie Queene*." *PMLA* 87, no. 2
 (1972): 192-200. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/460876>
- Clare, Janet. "The Censorship of the Deposition Scene in *Richard II*." *The Review of English
 Studies* 41, no. 161 (February 1990): 89-94. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/516607>
- Coakley, Sarah. "Kenosis and Subversion." In *Swallowing a Fishbone?: Feminist Theologians
 Debate Christianity*, edited by Daphne Hampson, 82-111. London: SPCK, 1996.
- . "Kenosis: Theological Meanings and Gender Connotations." In *The Work of Love: Creation
 as Kenosis*, edited by John Polkinghorne, KF8. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2001.
- Cobb, John B., and Christopher Ives, eds. *The Emptying God: A Buddhist-Jewish-Christian
 Conversation*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005.

- Cooper, Helen. *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. MOBI.
- . *Shakespeare and the Medieval World*. London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2010.
- Crewe, Jonathan. "In the Field of Dreams: Transvestism in *Twelfth Night* and *The Crying Game*." *Representations* 50 (1995): 101-21.
- Cummings, Brian, ed. *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Cunningham, Karen. *Imaginary Betrayals: Subjectivity and the Discourses of Treason in Early Modern England*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.
- Dean, Paul. "'Nothing That Is so Is So': *Twelfth Night* and Transubstantiation." *Literature & Theology* 17, no. 3 (2003): 281-97. Oxford Journals Online.
- De Certeau, Michel. *The Mystic Fable*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Diehl, Huston. *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Popular Theater in Early Modern England*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- Dollimore, Jonathan. *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology, and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- Eggert, Katherine. "Nostalgia and the Not Yet Late Queen: Refusing Female Rule in *Henry V*." *ELH* 61, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 523-50. doi:10.1353/elh.1994.0022.
- . "Spenser's Ravishment: Rape and Rapture in *The Faerie Queene*." *Representations* 70 (2000): 1-26. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2902891>
- Eisendrath, Rachel. "Art and Objectivity in the House of Busirane." *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual* 27 (2012): 133-61.

- Elam, Keir. Introduction. In *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, by William Shakespeare, edited by Keir Elam, 1-153. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2008.
- "Elizabeth's Tilbury Speech." British Library. Accessed February 2, 2018.
<http://www.bl.uk/learning/timeline/item102878.html>.
- English, H. M., Jr. "Spenser's Accommodation of Allegory to History in the Story of Belphoebe and Timias." *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 59, no. 4 (July 1960): 417-29. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27707499>
- Essary, Kirk. "The Radical Humility of Christ in the Sixteenth Century: Erasmus and Calvin on Philippians 2:6-7." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 68, no. 4 (November 2015): 398-420. Cambridge Core.
- Evans, C. Stephen, ed. *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God*. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2010.
- Evans, Kasey. "Misreading and Misogyny: Spenser, Ariosto, and Shakespeare." *Renaissance Drama* 36/37. Italy in the Drama of Europe (2010): 261-92.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41917461>
- Feerick, Jean. "A 'Nation...Now Degenerate': Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, Nova Britannia, and the Role of Diet and Climate in Reproducing Races." *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 1, no. 2 (2003): 30-71. DOI:10.1353.eam.2007.0059
- Felperin, Howard. *Shakespearean Romance*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972.
- Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schussler. *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology*. New York, NY: Continuum, 1995.

- Fiske, Bruce N. "The Odyssey of Christ: A Novel Context for Philippians 2:6-11." In *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God*, edited by C. Stephen Evans, 45-73. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2010.
- Forker, Charles R. "Spilling Royal Blood: Denial, Guilt, and Expiation in Shakespeare's Second Historical Tetralogy." In *Shakespeare's Second Historical Tetralogy: Some Christian Features*, edited by Beatrice Batson, 107-28. West Cornwall, CT: Locust Hill Press, 2004.
- Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957.
- Frye, Susan. "Of Chastity and Violence: Elizabeth I and Edmund Spenser in the House of Busirane." *Signs* 20, no. 1 (1994): 49-78. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0097-9740%28199423%2920%3A1%3C49%3AOCAVEI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-K>
- Fulkerson, Mary McClintock. "Contesting the Gendered Subject: A Feminist Account of the Imago Dei." In *Horizons in Feminist Theology: Identity, Tradition, and Norms*, edited by Rebecca S. Chopp and Sheila Greeve Davaney, 99-115. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997.
- Geisweidt, Edward J. "'Like Life in Excrements': Natural Philosophy, Hair, and the Limits of the Body's Vitality in Early Modern English Thought." PhD diss., University of Alabama, 2010.
http://acumen.lib.ua.edu/content/u0015/0000001/0000237/u0015_0000001_0000237.pdf.
- Girard, René. *A Theatre of Envy: William Shakespeare*. Leominster: Gracewing, 2000.
First published in 1991 by Oxford University Press.
- . *Violence and the Sacred*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1979.

- . "The God of Victims." In *Job, the Victim of His People*, 154-68. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987.
- Goldberg, Jonathan. "The Mothers in Book III of *The Faerie Queene*." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1975): 5-26.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40754360>
- Grady, Hugh. *Shakespeare, Machiavelli, and Montaigne: Power and Subjectivity from Richard II to Hamlet*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988.
- . *Hamlet in Purgatory*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- . *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- Groves, Beatrice. "'Now Wole I a New Game Begynne': Staging Suffering in *King Lear*, the Mystery Plays, and Grotius's *Christus Patiens*." *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 20 (2007): 136-50.
- Guenther, Genevieve. "Spenser's Magic, or Instrumental Aesthetics in the 1590 *Faerie Queene*." *English Literary Renaissance* 36, no. 2 (2006): 194-226.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/24463756>
- Guy-Bray, Stephen. Introduction. In *Edward II*, by Christopher Marlowe, edited by Martin Wiggins and Robert Lindsey, Vii-Xxxiv. New Mermaids. London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2014.
- Hassel, Rudolph Chris. *Renaissance Drama and the English Church Year*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1979.

- Hampson, Daphne, ed. *Swallowing a Fishbone?: Feminist Theologians Debate Christianity*. London: SPCK, 1996.
- Hazlitt, William. *The Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*. London: Dent, 1906.
- Hillman, Richard. *Self-speaking in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama: Subjectivity, Discourse and the Stage*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1999.
- Hollander, John. "Twelfth Night and the Morality of Indulgence." *The Sewanee Review* 67, no. 2 (1959): 220-38. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27538802?origin=JSTOR-pdf>
- Howard, Jean. "Crossdressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39 (1988): 418-40.
- , and Phyllis Rackin. *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Hunt, Maurice. "Dismemberment, Corporal Reconstitution, and the Body Politic in *Cymbeline*." *Studies in Philology* 99, no. 4 (2002): 404-31. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4174741>
- . "A New Taxonomy of Shakespeare's Pagan Plays." *Religion & Literature*, 2011, 29-53. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23049353>
- Irigaray, Luce. "Equal to Whom?" In *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader*, edited by Graham Ward, 198-214. Blackwell Readings in Modern Theology. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997.
- Žižek, Slavoj. "Only a Suffering God Can Save Us." In *God in Pain: Inversions of Apocalypse*, by Slavoj Žižek and Boris Gunjević. New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2012.
- . "The Object as a Limit of Discourse: Approaches to the Lacanian Real." *Prose Studies* 11 (1998): 94-120.

- Jameson, Fredric. "Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre." *New Literary History*, Critical Challenges: The Bellagio Symposium, 7, no. 1 (1975): 135-63.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/468283>
- Jardine, Lisa. "Twins and Travesties: Gender, Dependency, and Sexual Availability in *Twelfth Night*." In *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, edited by Susan Zimmerman, 27-38. New York, NY: Routledge, 1992.
- Johnson, Elizabeth. "Redeeming the Name of Christ-Christology." In *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*, edited by Catherine LaCugna. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1993.
- Johnson, Samuel. *Dr. Johnson on Shakespeare*. Edited by W. K. Wimsatt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969.
- Jones, Serene. *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology: Cartographies of Grace*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000.
- Kahn, Coppélia. *Roman Shakespeare: War, Wounds, and Women*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Kahn, Victoria. "Political Theology and Fiction in *The King's Two Bodies*." *Representations* 106, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 77-101. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/rep.2009.106.1.77>
- Kantorowicz, Ernst Hartwig. *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1997.
- Keller, Catherine. *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism, and Self*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1986.
- . "Scoop Up the Water and the Moon Is in Your Hands: On Feminist Theology and Dynamic Self-Emptying." In *The Emptying God: A Buddhist-Jewish-Christian Conversation*, edited by John B. Cobb and Christopher Ives, 102-15. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005.

- . "Seeking and Sucking: On Relation and Essence in Feminist Theology." In *Horizons in Feminist Theology: Identity, Tradition, and Norms*, edited by Rebecca S. Chopp and Sheila Greeve Davaney, 54-78. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1997.
- Kelly, William B. "Mapping Subjects in Marlowe's *Edward II*." *South Atlantic Review* 63, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 1-19.
- Kietzman, Mary Jo. "Will Personified: Viola as Actor-Author in *Twelfth Night*." *Criticism* 54, no. 2 (2012): 257-89. ADD.
- Kilcrease, Jack. "The Bridal-Mystical Motif in Bernard of Clairvaux and Martin Luther." *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 65 (2014): 263-79. Cambridge Journals Online.
- Klett, Elizabeth. *Cross-Gender Shakespeare and English National Identity: Wearing the Codpiece*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Ko, Yu Jin. *Mutability and Division on Shakespeare's Stage*. Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2004.
- Krieger, Elliot. "Twelfth Night: 'The morality of indulgence'." In *Twelfth Night*, edited by R. S. White, 37-71. New Casebooks. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1996.
- Kuzner, James. *Open Subjects: English Renaissance Republicans, Modern Selfhoods, and the Virtue of Vulnerability*. Edinburgh Critical Studies in Renaissance Culture. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011.
- Lamb, Mary Ellen. "Tracing a Heterosexual Erotics of Service in *Twelfth Night* and the Autobiographical Writings of Thomas Whythorne and Anne Clifford." In *Staging Early Modern Romance: Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare*, by Mary Ellen Lamb and Valerie Wayne. New York, NY: Routledge, 2009.

- Lander, Bonnie. "Interpreting the Person: Tradition, Conflict and *Cymbeline's* Imogen." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59, no. 2 (2008): 156-84. Project MUSE.
- Latour, Bruno. "What Is Iconoclasm? Or Is There a World Beyond the Image Wars?" In *Iconoclasm: Beyond the Image Wars in Science, Religion, and Art*, edited by Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, 16-38. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002.
- Lawrence, Sean. *Forgiving the Gift: The Philosophy of Generosity in Shakespeare and Marlowe*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2012.
- Lehtonen, Kelly. "The Abjection of Malbecco: Forgotten Identity in Spenser's Legend of Chastity." *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual* 29 (2014): 179-96.
- Levine, Laura. *Men in Women's Clothes: Anti-Theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1652*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Lewis, Cynthia. "Soft Touch: On the Renaissance Staging and Meaning of the 'Noli Me Tangere' Icon." *Comparative Drama* 36, no. 1/2 (2002): 53-73.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41154109>.
- Lieb, Michael. "Milton and the Kenotic Christology: Its Literary Bearing." *ELH* 37, no. 3 (1970): 342-60. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2872309?origin=JSTOR-pdf>
- Lin, Chis-hsin. "Amoret's Sacred Suffering: The Protestant Modification of Courtly Love in Spenser's." *Studies in Philology* 106, no. 3 (2009): 354-77. Project MUSE.
- Logan, Robert A. *Shakespeare's Marlowe: The Influence of Christopher Marlowe on Shakespeare's Artistry*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007.
- Logan, Thad Jenkins. "Twelfth Night: The Limits of Festivity." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900, Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*, 22, no. 2 (1982): 223-32.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/450337?origin=JSTOR-pdf>

- Lugioyo, Brian. "Martin Luther's Eucharistic Christology." In *The Oxford Handbook of Christology*, edited by Francesca Aran Murphy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Luther, Martin. "A Meditation on Christs Passion, 1519." Translated by Martin H. Bertram. In *Luther's Works*, edited by Martin O. Dietrich and Helmut T. Lehmann, 7-14. Vol. 42. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1969.
- Mackenzie, Clayton G. "Paradise and Paradise Lost in *Richard II*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (Autumn 1986): 318-39. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2870102>.
- Malcolmson, Cristina. "'What You Will': Social Mobility and Gender in *Twelfth Night*." In *The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, edited by Valerie Wayne, 29-58. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991.
- Marcus, Leah S. "Antitheatricality: The Theater as Scourge." In *A New Companion to Renaissance Drama*, edited by Arthur F. Kinney and Thomas Warren Hopper, 182-92. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2017.
- Marshall, Cynthia. *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2002.
- Marlowe, Christopher. "Doctor Faustus." In *Renaissance Drama: An Anthology of Plays and Entertainments*, edited by Arthur F. Kinney, 155-88. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2003.
- . *Edward II*. Edited by Martin Wiggins and Robert Lindsey. New Mermaids. London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2014.
- Martin, Randall. "Shipwreck and the Hermeneutics of Transience in *Twelfth Night*." In *Twelfth Night: A Critical Reader*, edited by Alison Findlay and Liz Oakley-Brown, 123-43. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Arden, 2014.

- Matter, E. Ann. "The Undebated Debate: Gender and the Image of God in Medieval Theology." In *Gender in Debate from the Early Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, edited by Thelma S. Fenster and Clare A. Lees, 41-55. The New Middle Ages. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
- Mazzola, Elizabeth. "Apocryphal Texts and Epic Amnesia: The Ends of History in *The Faerie Queene*." *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 78, no. 1 (1995): 131-42.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41178691>
- McLaughlin, Eleanor. "Feminist Christologies: Re-Dressing the Tradition." In *Reconstructing the Christ Symbol: Essays in Feminist Christology*, edited by Maryanne Stevens, 118-49. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1993.
- McManus, Caroline. *Spenser's Faerie Queene and the Reading of Women*. Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2002.
- Mikalachki, Jodi. "The Masculine Romance of Roman Britain: *Cymbeline* and Early Modern English Nationalism." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (1995): 301-22.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2871120>
- Milbank, Alison. "Seeing Double: The Crucified Christ in Western Mediaeval Art." In *The Oxford Handbook of Christology*, edited by Francesca Aran Murphy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Miller, David Lee. *The Poem's Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590 Faerie Queene*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Moffet, Robin. "Cymbeline and the Nativity." *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 1962, 207-18.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2866790>

- Montrose, Louis Adrian. "Spenser and the Elizabethan Political Imaginary." *ELH* 69, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 907-46. Project MUSE.
- Muir, Kenneth. Introduction. In *King Lear*, by William Shakespeare, edited by Kenneth Muir, vii-lviii. The Arden Shakespeare. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Murphy, Francesca Aran, and Troy A. Stefano, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Christology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Inoperative Community*. Edited by Peter Connor. Translated by Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, and Simona Sawhney. Vol. 76. Theory and History of Literature. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.
- Neill, Michael. "Broken English and Broken Irish: Nation, Language, and the Optic of Power in Shakespeare's Histories." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 1-32.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2871290>
- Norbrook, David. "The Emperor's New Body? *Richard II*, Ernst Kantorowicz, and the Politics of Shakespeare Criticism." *Textual Practice* 10, no. 2 (1996): 329-57.
doi:10.1080/09502369608582250.
- Nosworthy, J. M. Introduction. In *Cymbeline*, by William Shakespeare, edited by J. M. Nosworthy. London: Arden, 1955.
- Orgel, Stephen. *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- . "Nobody's Perfect: Or Why Did the English Stage Take Boys for Women?" In *Displacing Homophobia: Gay Male Perspectives in Literature and Culture*, edited by Ronald R. Butters, John M. Clum, and Michael Moon, 7-30. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1989.

- Oram, William A. "Spenser's Raleghs." *Studies in Philology* 87, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 341-62.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4174368>
- Osborne, Laurie. "Cutting up Characters: The Erotic Politics of Trevor Nunn's *Twelfth Night*." In *Spectacular Shakespeare: Critical Theory and Popular Cinema*, edited by Courtney Lehmann and Lisa S. Starks-Estes, 89-109. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002.
- Ostovich, Helen. "'Here in This Garden': The Iconography of the Virgin Queen in Shakespeare's *Richard II*." In *Marian Moments in Early Modern British Drama*, edited by Regina Buccola and Lisa Hopkins, 21-34. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007.
- Parker, John. *The Aesthetics of Antichrist: From Christian Drama to Christopher Marlowe*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007.
- Parker, Patricia. "Cymbeline's Much Ado About Nothing, Noting, (K)not Knowing, and Nothus." *Actes Des Congrès De La Société Française Shakespeare* 31 (2014): 103-21.
<http://shakespeare.revues.org/2826>.
- . *Inescapable Romance: The Poetics of a Mode*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979.
- . *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property*. London: Methuen, 1987.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. "The Person of the God-Man." In *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, 226-331. Vol. 1. *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1977.
- Pequiney, Joseph. "The Two Antonios and Same-Sex Love in *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*." *English Literary Renaissance* 22, No. 2 (March 1992): 201-21. Wiley Online Library.

- Perry, Nandra. *Imitatio Christi: The Poetics of Piety in Early Modern England*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014.
- Peters, Christine. "Gender, Sacrament, and Ritual: The Making and Meaning of Marriage in Late Medieval and Early Modern England." *Past & Present* 169 (2000): 63-96.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/651264>
- Pettitt, Tom. "'Skreaming like a Pigge Halfe Stickt': Vernacular Topoi in the Carnavalesque Martyrdom of Edward II." *Orbis Litterarum* 60 (2005): 79-108. Wiley Online Library.
- Plowden, Edmund. *Commentaries or Reports*. London, 1816.
- Polka, Brayton. *Shakespeare and Interpretation, or What You Will*. Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2011.
- Post, Gaines. "Status Regis: Lestat Du Roi in the Statute of York." In *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought: Public Law and the State 1100-1322*, 368-403. Clark, NJ: Lawbook Exchange, 2006.
- Potter, Nicholas. *Shakespeare's Late Plays: Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest*. Readers' Guides to Essential Criticism. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Puttenham, George. *The Art of English Poesy*. London, 1589.
- Pye, Christopher. *The Vanishing: Shakespeare, the Subject, and Early Modern Culture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Quilligan, Maureen. *The Language of Allegory: Defining the Genre*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992.
- Rackin, Phyllis. *Shakespeare and Women*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Ramachandran, Ayesha, and Melissa E. Sanchez, Eds. "Spenser and 'the Human.'" Special Issue, *Spenser Studies* 30 (2015).

- Reid, Robert L. "Epiphanal Encounters in Shakespearean Dramaturgy." *Comparative Drama* 32, no. 4 (1998-99): 518-40. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41153946>
- Roche, Thomas P. *The Kindly Flame*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964.
- Roberts, David. "Sleeping Beauties: Shakespeare, Sleep, and the Stage." *The Cambridge Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2006): 231-54.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Women-Church: Theology and Practice of Feminist Liturgical Communities*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001.
- . *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1993.
- Ryan, Patrick. "Marlowe's *Edward II* and the Medieval Passion Play." *Comparative Drama* 32, no. 4 (Winter 1998-99): 465-95. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41153944>
- Sanchez, Melissa. "Fantasies of Friendship in *The Faerie Queene*, Book IV." *English Literary Renaissance* 37.2 (2007): 250-73. Web. Doi: 10.1111/j.1475-6757.2007.00103.x
- Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Schalkwyk, David. "Is Love an Emotion?: Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and *Antony and Cleopatra*." *sympleke* 18.1-2 (2010): 99-130. Project MUSE.
- . "Love and Service in *Twelfth Night* and *Sonnets*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (2005): 76-100. ADD.
- Schavrien, Judy. "Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and the Mystical Particular: Redemption, Then and Now, for a Disassembled World." *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* 32, no. 2 (2013): 122-40.
- Schumacher, Michele M. "Feminist Christologies." In *The Oxford Handbook of Christology*, edited by Francesca Aran Murphy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015

- Scott, William O. "Landholding, Leasing, and Inheritance in *Richard II*." *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 42, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 275-92. Project MUSE.
- Shakespeare, William. *Cymbeline*. Edited by Martin Butler. The New Cambridge Shakespeare. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 2012.
- . *Henry IV, Part I*. Edited by Claire McEachern. The Pelican Shakespeare. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2000.
- . *Henry V*. Edited by Gary Taylor. The Oxford Shakespeare. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- . *King Lear*. Edited by Kenneth Muir. The Arden Shakespeare. London: Routledge, 1993.
- . *King Richard II*. Edited by Charles R. Forker. The Arden Shakespeare. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.
- . *The Sonnets*. Edited by Stephen Orgel. The Pelican Shakespeare. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2001.
- . *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*. Edited by Roger Warren and Stanley Wells. The Oxford Shakespeare. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- . *The Tempest*. Edited by David Lindley. The New Cambridge Shakespeare. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Shepherd, Simon. *Marlowe and the Politics of Elizabethan Theatre*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1986.
- Sherwood, Terry G. *The Self in Early Modern Literature: For the Common Good*. Medieval and Renaissance Literary Studies. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2007.

- Shuger, Debora Kuller. "'The Hungering Dark: Spiritual Psychology and the Failure of Participation.'" In *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance: Religion, Politics, and the Dominant Culture*, 69-90. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.
- . *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice, and Subjectivity*. The New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998.
- Siemon, James R. "'Perplex'd Beyond Self-Explication': *Cymbeline* and Early Modern/Postmodern Europe." In *Shakespeare in the New Europe*, edited by Michael Hattaway, Boika Sokolova, and Derek Roper. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994.
- Silberman, Lauren. *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995.
- Simpson-Younger, Nancy. "'The Garments of Posthumus': Identifying the Non-Responsive Body in *Cymbeline*." *Staging the Blazon in Early Modern English Theater*. Ed. Deborah Uman and Sara Morrison. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013. MOBI.
- Slater, Michael. "Spenser's Poetics of 'Transfixion' in the Allegory of Chastity." *SEL Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 54, no. 1 (2014): 41-58. Project MUSE.
- Smith, Megan Kathleen. "Reading It Wrong to Get It Right: Sacramental and Excremental Encounters in Early Modern Poems about Hair Jewelry." *Philological Quarterly* 94, no. 4 (Fall 2015): 353-76.
- Sohmer, Steve. *Shakespeare's Mystery Play: The Opening of the Globe Theatre 1599*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.
- Sokol, B. J., and Mary Sokol. *Shakespeare, Law, and Marriage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

- Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. Edited by A. C. Hamilton, Hiroshi Yamashita, and Toshiyuki Suzuki. 2nd ed. Longman Annotated English Poets. New York, NY: Routledge, 2007.
- Spiller, Elizabeth. "Poetic Parthenogenesis and Spenser's Idea of Creation in *The Faerie Queene*." *SEL Studies in English Language, 1500-1900* 40, no. 1 (2000): 63-79. Project MUSE.
- Staines, John D. "Pity and the Authority of Feminine Passions in Books V and VI of *The Faerie Queene*." *Spenser Studies* XXV (2010): 129-61.
- and Matthew R. Martin. "Radical Pity: Responding to Spectacles of Violence in *King Lear*." In *Staging Pain, 1580-1800: Violence and Trauma in British Theater*, edited by James Robert Allard, 75-92. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009.
- Staykova, Julia D. "'We Sit in the Chaire of Pestilence': The Discourse of Disease in the Anti-theatrical Pamphlets, 1570s-1630s." In *Medieval and Early Modern Literature, Science and Medicine*, edited by Rachel Falconer and Denis Renevey, 207-22. Tübingen: Narr, 2013.
- Steinsaltz, David. "The Politics of the French Language in Shakespeare's Histories." *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 42, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 317-34. Project MUSE.
- Starks-Estes, Lisa S. *Violence, Trauma, and Virtus in Shakespeare's Roman Poems and Plays: Transforming Ovid*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Stephens, Dorothy. "Into Other Arms: Amoret's Evasion." *ELH* 58, no. 3 (1991): 523-44.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2873454>
- Stone, James W. *Crossing Gender in Shakespeare: Feminist Psychoanalysis and the Difference Within*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010.

- Streete, Adrian. *Protestantism and Drama in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Sullivan, Garrett A., Jr. *Sleep, Romance, and Human Embodiment: Vitality from Spenser to Milton*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Swarbrick, Steven. "The Life Aquatic: Liquid Poetics and the Discourse of Friendship in *The Faerie Queene*." *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual* XXX (2015): 229-53.
- Stymeist, David. "Status, Sodomy, and the Theater in Marlowe's *Edward II*." *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 44, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 233-53. Project MUSE.
- Tate, Robert W. "Haunted by Beautified Beauty: Tracking the Images of Spenser's Florimell(s)." *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual* 29 (2014): 197-218.
- Ten Kate, Laurens. "Econokenosis: Three Meanings of Kenosis in Modern Thought." In *Letting Go: Rethinking Kenosis*, edited by Onno Zijlstra, 285-310. Bern: Peter Lang, 2002.
- Teskey, Gordon. *Allegory and Violence*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996.
- "The Thirty-Nine Articles." The Church of England. Accessed November 10, 2017.
<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/book-of-common-prayer/articles-of-religion>.
- Thomas, Keith. *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971.
- Tiffany, Grace. "Calvinist Grace in Shakespeare's Romances: Upending Tragedy." *Christianity and Literature* 49, no. 4 (2000): 421-45. Sage Pub.
- "The Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge." In *Medieval Drama: An Anthology*, edited by Greg Walker, 196-200. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009.

- Vattimo, Gianni. *Belief*. Translated by Luca D'Isanto and David Webb. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999.
- Walkden, Andrea. "Allegorical Insubordination and the 1596 *Faerie Queene*." *SEL Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 48, no. 1 (2008): 93-109. Project MUSE.
- Wall-Randell, Sarah. "Reading the Book of the Self in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and Wroth's *Urania*." In *Staging Early Modern Romance: Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare*, edited by Mary Ellen Lamb and Valerie Wayne, 107-21. New York, NY: Routledge, 2009.
- Ward, Graham. *Barth, Derrida, and the Language of Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- . *Christ and Culture*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
- Watkins, John. "'And Yet the End Was Not!': Apocalyptic Deferral and Spenser's Literary Afterlife." In *Worldmaking Spenser: Explorations in the Early Modern Age*, edited by Patrick Cheney and Lauren Silberman. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2000.
- White, R. S. "Estranging Word and Self in *Twelfth Night*." In *Word and Self Estranged in English Texts, 1550-1660*, edited by Philippa Kelly and L. E. Semler, 107-20. Farnham: Ashgate, 2010.
- Whitford, David M. "Mistaking the Tree for the Forest: Why Kenotic Theory in Milton Is Anachronistic." *Milton Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (2007): 149-64. Wiley Online Library.
- Wills, Garry. *Making Make-Believe Real: Politics as Theater in Shakespeare's Time*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014.

Wilson-Okamura, David Scott. "Belphoebe and Gloriana." *English Literary Renaissance*, 2009, 47-73.

Witte, John. *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition*. 2nd ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012.
First published 1997.

Wofford, Susanne Lindgren. "Gendering Allegory: Spenser's Bold Reader and the Emergence of Character in *The Faerie Queene* III." *Criticism* 30, no. 1 (1988): 1-21.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23113331>

Young, Pamela. "Neither Male nor Female: Christology beyond Dimorphism." In *From Logos to Christos: Essays on Christology in Honour of Joanne McWilliam*, edited by Ellen M. Leonard and Kate Merriman, 181-96. Vol. 34. Editions SR. Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2010.

Zachman, Randall C. "The Christology of John Calvin." In *The Oxford Handbook of Christology*, edited by Francesca Aran Murphy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.