Shakespeare's Propertied Bodies

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Abstract

This thesis examines four of William Shakespeare's plays that 'property' bodies and dehumanize characters, and uncovers how these two processes interact. Close readings of the plays and analyses of bodily props are contextualized in criticism on early modern material culture and theories about the human body, as well as research on properties, players, and performance on the Renaissance stage. Chapter 1, '*Titus Andronicus*: The Body as Food', considers Chiron and Demetrius's meat-pie. I discuss how warfare and vengeance cause the Romans and Goths to treat each other as food to be consumed. I explore the ways that, in this play, revenge is a hunger that is fed by Alarbus's execution and Lavinia's rape and mutilation, before Tamora cannibalizes her sons. Chapter 2, '*The Merchant of Venice*: The Body as Currency', considers Antonio's 'pound of flesh'. I explore how a risky and ruthless mercantile economy causes characters to be viewed as investments, bets, and potential currency. I analyze Portia's position as the prize of the hazard, Jessica's absconding from her father's house with his wealth, and the trial scene during which Antonio's flesh might be forfeit to repay his debt. Chapter 3, '*Othello*: The Body as Textile', considers Desdemona's handkerchief. I explore how Othello's misogyny causes him to see his wife's chastity and fidelity as indicated by a handkerchief rather than her word. I expand the reading of textiles to other fabrics that frame characters' bodies, including costuming and bedclothes. Chapter 4, '*The Winter's Tale*: The Body as Artwork', considers Hermione's 'statue'. I explore how anxieties surrounding female sexuality and reproductive power compel men to capture them in things, including the treasures that surround the infant Perdita. I analyze Leontes's attraction to the statue that seems to freeze time, and Hermione's use of this art object to come back to life.

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Note to the Reader

In quoting Shakespeare, I have used modern editions, which are identified in my footnotes.

In quoting pre-nineteenth-century texts, I have preserved original spelling and punctuation, but I have changed some italics and capitalization, as well as regularized u/v, i/j, the long 's', the thorn symbol, and diacritical marks.

Because this version of my thesis will be made accessible online and in a printed copy after my PhD is awarded, I have redacted some epigraphs, the list of illustrations, all figures, all figure captions, all parenthetical figure mentions, all associated footnotes, and some associated bibliographic entries.

Acknowledgements

For Enriqueta and Helen.

Thank you to my supervisors, Prof. Judith Buchanan, Dr. Richard Rowland, and Prof. Helen Smith.

Thank you, Mom and Dad.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university. All sources are acknowledged through references.

In the section of the introduction titled 'Subject and Object, Body and Prop', I have indicated in footnotes where my brief discussion of *Romeo and Juliet* draws on part of my 2014 unpublished dissertation for the MA in Film and Literature at the University of York: '"O Happy Dagger": Weaponry and Foiled Endings in *Romeo and Juliet* and Its Cinematic Afterlives'.

In Chapter 1, I have indicated in footnotes where my discussion of *Titus Andronicus* draws on part of an essay that I submitted for the 'Theatres of Revenge' module during the MA at York: '"This is Pie Body": Cannibalism and the Eucharist in Two Revenge Plays'. I presented material from this essay at the 2014 CREMS Cabinet of Curiosities Symposium at York and the 2014 Reformation Studies Colloquium at the University of Cambridge with the title '"This Is *Pie* Body": Reforming and Performing the Liturgy as Cannibalism in *Titus Andronicus*'.

I presented a brief, early version of Chapter 4 at the 2017 Othello's Island conference with the title 'Manifestations of Masculine and Feminine Time in *The Winter's Tale*'.

Introduction

They have here propertied me…

– Malvolio, from William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (1601), 4.2.91.[1]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[1] William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, eds J.M. Lothian and T.W. Craik, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 1192-1217.
[redacted]

The Selection of Plays and Properties in This Study

The purpose of this thesis is to examine four of William Shakespeare's plays that 'property' bodies and dehumanize characters, and to uncover how these two processes interact.[3] I analyze how bodies become props through the cannibalistic meat-pie in *Titus Andronicus* (1593-94); the 'pound of flesh' (3.3.33) that is almost claimed in *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-97); the mummy-dyed handkerchief in *Othello* (1604); and the 'statue' played by Hermione in *The Winter's Tale* (1611).[4] A recent study from Sophie Duncan, *Shakespeare's Props: Memory and Cognition*, 'interrogates how the "beyond the-skull-and-skin" objects and things brought onstage as theatrical props enact, constitute, and effect extended cognition for characters and audiences'.[5] My contribution to Shakespeare studies in *Shakespeare's Propertied Bodies* is to perform an in-depth analysis of the class of bodily, 'skull-and-skin' objects that Duncan mentions, and to argue that it reflects how, in Shakespeare's plays, the physical *human* body becomes a forum in which worth, agency, and abstract *humanity* is made and unmade.

Chapter 1, '*Titus Andronicus*: The Body as Food', considers Chiron and Demetrius's meat-pie. I discuss how warfare and vengeance cause the Romans and Goths to treat each other as food to be consumed. I explore the ways that, in this play, revenge is a hunger that is fed by Alarbus's execution and Lavinia's rape and mutilation, before Tamora eats her sons' bodies at the banquet. Chapter 2, '*The Merchant of Venice*: The Body as Currency', considers Antonio's 'pound of flesh'. I explore how a risky and ruthless mercantile economy causes characters to be viewed as investments, bets, and potential currency. I analyze Portia's position as the prize of the hazard at Belmont, Jessica's absconding from her father's house with his wealth, and the trial scene during which Antonio's flesh might be forfeit to repay his debt. Chapter 3, '*Othello*: The Body as Textile', considers Desdemona's handkerchief. I explore how Othello's misogyny causes him to see his wife's chastity and fidelity as indicated by a handkerchief rather than her word. I expand the reading of textiles in the play to other fabrics that reveal, obscure, and otherwise frame characters' bodies, including costuming and bedclothes. Chapter 4, '*The Winter's Tale*: The Body as Artwork', considers Hermione's statue.

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[3] For recent work on Shakespeare and materiality, see the following: Annalisa Castaldo and Rhonda Knight, eds, *Stage Matters: Props, Bodies, and Space in Shakespearean Performance* (Lanham: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2018); Sophie Duncan, *Shakespeare's Props: Memory and Cognition* (New York: Routledge, 2019); Jonathan Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Farah Karim-Cooper and Tiffany Stern, eds, *Shakespeare's Theatres and the Effects of Performance* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); Erika T. Lin, *Shakespeare and the Materiality of Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Catherine Richardson, *Shakespeare and Material Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[4] William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, 3rd ed., ed. John Drakakis (London: Arden, 2010). All references to *The Merchant of Venice* will be from this edition unless otherwise stated.

[5] Duncan, *Shakespeare's Props*, 8.

I explore how anxieties surrounding female sexuality and reproductive power compel men to capture them in things, including the treasures that surround the infant Perdita. I analyze the marital dynamic of Leontes and Hermione: the former finds solace in the statue that seems to freeze time and thereby prevent change, but the latter uses the statue as a means of coming back to life.

There are many examples of dehumanization related to objects and stage properties in Shakespeare's plays, some of which I mention in this introduction or in the body of this study as points of illustration or comparison. But I have chosen these plays and their properties for three main reasons. Firstly, they span the majority of Shakespeare's active years as a playwright, and therefore, analyzed together, they offer a longitudinal sense of the development of Shakespeare's interest in and depiction of the dehumanized and propertied body. Secondly, these objects serve a metonymic function with regards to their respective plays: the handkerchief, for example, conjures *Othello*.[6] While *The Merchant of Venice's* 'pound of flesh' is never actually excised from Antonio's body, the phrase itself, which appears six times in the play-text, has become shorthand for the play's premise.[7] Metonymy stems in part from these objects' ability to distill the internal logic of these plays and aspects of how characters see each other. Thirdly, they are four objects that are not simply symbols of characters as they are reified, but objects that actually consist of the human body.[8] *Titus Andronicus's* pie is filled with human meat. *The Merchant of Venice's* 'pound of flesh' is almost cut from a man's body. *Othello's* handkerchief is dyed with virgins' mummy. *The Winter's Tale's* statue is/becomes Hermione's body. While also discussing the concepts of things and objects, I focus on *props* (stage properties) because of their relationship to performance, and because 'property' conveys potential for transformation of even the human.[9] Andrew Sofer explains in *The Stage Life of Props*: 'In this period the word *property* begins to hover between object and attribute; it is both something you *own* and something you *are* (or might become)', and 'To be "propertied," meanwhile, is to be turned into a mere thing: "They have here propertied me,"

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[6] Frances Teague, *Shakespeare's Speaking Properties* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1991), 23.

[7] *The Merchant of Venice* features the phrase 'pound of flesh' in the following lines: 3.3.33, 4.1.98, 4.1.228, 4.1.303, 4.1.304, and 4.1.322. The *OED's* first entry for the phrase is from *The Merchant of Venice*. The *OED* defines the phrase's figurative meaning as 'something strictly or legally due, but which it is ruthless or inhuman to demand'. 'pound, *n.1*', 1.f., *OED Online*.

[8] For recent work on the human body in the Renaissance, see the following: Charis Charalampous, *Rethinking the Mind-Body Relationship in Early Modern Literature, Philosophy and Medicine: The Renaissance of the Body* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Jean E. Feerick and Vin Nardizzi, eds, *The Indistinct Human in Renaissance Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Sidia Fiorato and John Drakakis, eds, *Performing the Renaissance Body,* Vol. 11 of *Essays on Drama, Law, and Representation*, eds Daniela Carpi and Klaus Stierstorfer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016); Valerie Traub, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Embodiment: Gender, Sexuality, and Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[9] Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 113.

complains an imprisoned Malvolio to his tormentor Feste in *Twelfth Night* (4.2.91)'.[10] Hence, in my analysis of props, I consider not only objects that would be listed in a theatrical inventory but also anything that becomes "propertied" in performance, including, at times, the body.

Part of this study's methodology is to meet each play – its milieu, concerns, and motifs – on its own terms and acknowledge that each of these props captures some unique aspect of its respective play-text's operations. Yet across these four chapters, I endeavor to trace a progression and thereby develop a story. In the first chapter, I describe the realization of metaphorical food in literal form in *Titus Andronicus*. In the second chapter, we can perceive a denial of this kind of climax as the threat to transform the body into currency is not fulfilled in *The Merchant of Venice*. In chapter three, *Othello* reverses the trend of *Titus Andronicus*: the bodily object of the handkerchief has been made before the timeline of the narrative begins, and it enters into a sustained mutual representation with Desdemona. In the final chapter, the statue scene in *The Winter's Tale* totally transforms the full body into an object in a manner unprecedented in Shakespeare's work – and even more spectacularly, it portrays the object turning back into a living body.

Each chapter of this study is developed around an iconic object and how it crystallizes the broader attitudes of objectification in the play. I want to analyze the significance of these objects not in isolation or as materials, but within the interpersonal frameworks of the play and the language that characters use to describe one another, their relationships, and the societies in which they operate. I trace the sophistication of this motif over time, exploring Shakespeare's early, enduring, and evolving interest in how the body of the character and/or player can be literally or figuratively turned into an object on stage, and the implications these various modes of destabilization have for their respective plays. A core method of this thesis is to engage in close readings at local moments to uncover repeated references to classes of objects and to discern how patterns of dehumanization emerge in characters' thoughts, word choices, and syntax. For context, I refer to other early modern works, including the plays of Shakespeare's contemporaries. This exploration is guided by the following questions. How does each iteration demonstrate a persistent interest in Shakespeare's work? And how is each object idiosyncratic, specific to the social dynamics of each play, and reflective of other verbal and representational motifs? While analyzing the plays in

[10] Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props*, 113, emphasis in source.

discrete chapters, I am cognizant of moments when Shakespeare cannibalizes his own corpus. Are there moments when the texts seem to draw from, build on, respond to, interpolate, and fulfill or deny the expectations generated by earlier iterations?

Shakespearean (Im)materiality

In this thesis I interrogate how the linguistic as well as the physical valences of the individual plays dehumanize characters, and how the specific objects I study reflect these changes and the social forces that cause individuals or groups to be dehumanized. Characters are both figuratively dehumanized by language and transformed into objects that are literally non-human. In *Shakespeare and the Materiality of Performance*, Erika T. Lin warns that '[the] narrowing of the definition of materiality to that which seems solid, physical, and concrete suggests the lure of a fixity that is specifically at odds with the fluidity of performance'.[11] Rather than focusing solely on materiality, my study contributes a broader reading that explores how these *materials* relate to *immaterial* dehumanizing trends that pervade these plays through characters' language, cognition, and actions. While situated within recent criticism on Shakespeare's relationship to materiality, this study considers these *materials* as indicative of and emerging from the *immaterial*: the literal as prefigured by the figurative.

Frances Teague's work in *Shakespeare's Speaking Properties* is an instructive example that relates the material and immaterial. Teague argues that Shakespeare employs '*presentational* image clusters' and '*verbal* image clusters', and these categories are mutually reinforcing: that is, taken together, the props on stage and the words that the players speak create a unique world.[12] I am interested in how words dehumanize the character, how props objectify the body, and how these two processes affect each other. The climax of these processes in bodily objects can be thought of as a kind of visual pun, or even antanaclasis, a rhetorical technique that Patricia Dorval and J.M. Maguin argue can also consist, in performance, of '[p]laying on [t]hings as [w]ell as [w]ords'.[13] They write:

> Classical rhetoric defines antanaclasis as the use of a word in several senses…[T]his rhetorical figure provides a convenient way of describing at one and the same time some features of screen or stage business and a framework within which to discuss the problem of referentiality concerning stage properties.[14]

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[11] Lin, *Shakespeare and the Materiality of Performance,* 7.
[12] Teague, *Shakespeare's Speaking Properties*, 10, 34, emphasis mine.
[13] Patricia Dorval and J.M. Maguin, 'Playing on Things as Well as Words: Antanaclasis on Screen and Stage', *Cahiers Élisabéthains: A Journal of English Renaissance Studies*, 42.1 (1992): 57.
[14] Dorval and Maguin, 'Playing on Things as Well as Words', 57.

For example, when Othello sees the sleeping Desdemona and anticipates killing her, he says 'Put out the light, and then put out the light!' (5.2.7).[15] As he goes about the stage business of putting out a literal light in order to render the site of murder clandestine, he indicates by repetition that it is akin to Desdemona's figurative light (both her alive state and her white skin).[16] Teague analyzes the relationship between stage property and speech in this moment:

> [T]he equation between…Othello's light and Desdemona's life is clear… During the closing scene, the appearance of Othello's light offers a presentational image cluster. The light property is associated both with Desdemona and violence by means of Othello's speech, so that the central symbolic representation of Desdemona's murder becomes the candle.[17]

The conveniently present prop of the candle becomes an occasion for the audience to understand how Othello sees Desdemona's body as he enters their bedchamber: bright, warm, small, and easily extinguished. Through this metaphor, Desdemona is contrasted against Othello himself, who not only has dark skin but becomes a bringer of darkness when he snuffs out two 'lights' in this scene.

The Renaissance body is an apt tool of antanaclasis because, as John Drakakis argues, 'the "body" is more than simply a brute fact of material life. It is already textualised, and endowed with meanings that were contested in the early modern period'.[18] In the four plays that I consider, the human body is a site upon which human consciousness, dignity, respect, equality, legal status, and autonomy are either confirmed or contested. These bodily objects are able to demonstrate in jarring ways that human value can be determined through the human body in Shakespeare's plays, and that as metaphorical as dehumanization can be it also tends to erupt into the material. Through these objects, I explore the twinned processes by which characters are framed as *non-human* and treated *inhumanely* through transformation into bodily props.

Each chapter of this study considers the unique ways in which dehumanization occurs in a given play, emerging from its underpinning philosophy about what makes a person, what (if anything) gives them intrinsic value, and what makes their devaluation exploitable by other characters. Indeed, part of this study's uniqueness is that it allows for a reading of how each object captures the distinct operations and material realms of each play. In Shakespeare's

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[15] William Shakespeare, *Othello*, 3rd. ed., ed. E.A.J. Honigmann (London: Arden, 1997). All references to *Othello* will be from this edition unless otherwise stated.
[16] Teague, *Shakespeare's Speaking Properties*, 83.
[17] Teague, *Shakespeare's Speaking Properties*, 83.
[18] John Drakakis, 'Foreword', in *Performing the Renaissance Body*, eds Sidia Fiorato and John Drakakis, Vol. 11 of *Essays on Drama, Law, and Representation*, eds Daniela Carpi and Klaus Stierstorfer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), viii.

plays, all things aren't equal, or more precisely, all things aren't *the same*. Food is different from currency is different from textile is different from artwork. The lexicon of each play reflects these distinctions. As the presence of each of these object types moves from the figurative plane (characters' language) to the literal (props on stage), we can also understand how the use of such language about other characters both stems from and reinforces dehumanizing tendencies. As characters discuss and therefore *perceive* others as non-human over the course of the play, the non-human status becomes normalized and eventually escalates.

Psycholinguistics can illuminate these functions of figurative language. In this field, '[t]he Whorf hypothesis' – specifically the aspect of it called '[l]inguistic determinism' – posits that language affects perception.[19] In *Shakespeare: Rhetoric and Cognition*, Raphael Lyne explores the way that language and thought affect each other in Shakespearean speech, especially when characters are in crises or at crossroads:

> In Shakespeare, we see characters appear to solve their emergent problems by means of rhetoric…[A]t key moments, rhetoric comes to look like a problem-solving process whose goal is to make sense of things that are not easily made into sense…The implication of this is that metaphor and simile (and other tropes) are manifestly heuristic in their nature: they facilitate attempts to express, and think about, the most important and challenging things in life.[20]

This relationship is not as unidirectional as rhetoric *expresses* cognition ('I have a thought and I say the thought'), but it also allows that rhetoric *shapes* cognition ('I speak to make sense of, develop, rationalize, deny, or test the validity of my thoughts'). Shakespeare's characters do not only think *and then* speak; they also think *by* speaking.[21] This process does not occur solely at the individual level. In Chapter 3, I argue that in *Othello* Desdemona becomes a textile figure whose fate becomes tied to that of the handkerchief. Othello, Brabantio, Iago, and Michael Cassio all use textile terms to describe her character. The framing of Desdemona in textile language is not the psychological or rhetorical process of one character, but of a community of men who together develop a vocabulary to determine Desdemona's representation. Sophie Duncan explores 'Early Modern concepts of how mind and identity were constituted, manipulated, and destabilised through objects'.[22] Stage properties contribute to the process in which, as Lyne describes, characters speak to comprehend their circumstances.[23] In Chapter 2, I discuss

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[19] David W. Carroll, *Psychology of Language*, 4th ed. (Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth, 2004), 377.
[20] Raphael Lyne, *Shakespeare: Rhetoric and Cognition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 10-11.
[21] Lyne, *Shakespeare: Rhetoric and Cognition*, 8-11.
[22] Duncan, *Shakespeare's Props*, 6.
[23] Lyne, *Shakespeare: Rhetoric and Cognition*, 2-3.

Shylock's reaction to Jessica fleeing his house with part of his fortune in *The Merchant of Venice*. He responds by saying, 'My daughter! O, my ducats!' (2.8.15). The simultaneity of losing both prompts Shylock's expression of his sentiment that they are similar losses: that losing a daughter is tantamount to losing ducats, that progeny is money.

Lin describes how words can change objects in the playhouse: '[the] process of transformation happens most overtly in theatre's semiotic function, as…is sometimes effected through speech acts, as when Rosalind in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* declares the bare platform stage to be the Forest of Arden'.[24] When Rosalind calls a stage a forest, it becomes a forest. Words can make the things on stage into what they are in the world of the play, and they can even reinvent the stage itself. Drama represents an extreme fulfilment of linguistic determinism (or, to use Lin's framework, the speech act) that is wondrous yet potentially dangerous because metaphor threatens to bring about metamorphosis. This transformative ability becomes potent and frightening when one considers characters' language about others that can not only reflect dehumanization but also contribute to it. For example: in *Titus Andronicus* Aaron calls Lavinia a 'dainty doe' (1.1.617); in *The Taming of the Shrew* (1593-94) Petruchio calls Katherina 'my goods' (3.2.229); in *The Merchant of Venice* Salanio calls Shylock 'dog' (2.8.14); in *Othello* Iago calls Othello 'ram' (1.1.87) and 'horse' (1.1.110); and in *The Tempest* (1610-11) Prospero calls both Ariel and Caliban 'slave' (Ariel at 1.2.270; Caliban at 1.2.314).[25]

Subject and Object, Body and Prop

A study by Peta Motture and Michelle O'Malley focuses on the object and its relationship to the social history of the Renaissance.[26] They call for analysis of the relationship between producer and product, as well as an exploration of how objects affected people's behavior. In doing so, they build a case about the

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[24] Lin, *Shakespeare and the Materiality of Performance*, 7.

[25] For recent work on Shakespeare, animal studies, and the language of the bestial, see the following: Andreas Höfele, *Stage, Stake, and Scaffold: Humans and Animals in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Laurie Shannon, *The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolity in Shakespearean Locales* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013). William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, 3rd. ed., ed. Jonathan Bate (London: Arden, 1995). All references to *Titus Andronicus* will be from this edition unless otherwise stated. William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Brian Morris, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 1042-69. William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, eds Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 1072-95.

[26] Peta Motture and Michelle O'Malley, 'Introduction', in *Re-thinking Renaissance Objects: Design, Function and Meaning*, eds Peta Motture and Michelle O'Malley (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 5-7. For recent work on objects and materiality in the Renaissance, see the following: Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Luca Molà, 'The Global Renaissance: Cross-cultural objects in the early modern period', in *Global Design History*, eds Glenn Adamson, Giorgio Riello, and Sarah Teasley (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 11-20; Jonathan Goldberg, *The Seeds of Things: Theorizing Sexuality and Materiality in Renaissance Interpretations* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009); Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, eds, *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

cycle of subject-affecting-object-affecting-subject *ad infinitum*.[27] This multidirectional relationship between subject and object is relevant to my project about one turning into the other, and it suggests that objects – and by extension, the *objectified* – are not as wholly without agency as they may seem. Introducing their study of medieval and Renaissance '[e]veryday [o]bjects', Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson write: 'Knowing about people's possessions is crucial to understanding their experience of daily life, the way they saw themselves in relation to their peers and their responses to and interactions with the social, cultural and economic structures and processes which made up the societies in which they lived'.[28] One of these cultural structures is early modern drama. Bearing in mind the quotidian associations of objects that are represented on stage is important to my analysis, which considers objects such as food, coins, clothing and accessories, and sculpture. While these objects become theatrical novelties that are seen anew and given new meaning on stage, they already existed in people's daily lives; they are familiar objects before they are defamiliarized props.[29] To help us understand the material and visual culture in which Shakespeare's references are situated, this thesis includes images of relevant Renaissance objects and artwork. For example, the chapter on *Titus Andronicus* features a painting of a spread of food and an example of a cookery tool, while the chapter on *The Merchant of Venice* features a ducat coin and a set of money scales.

On the literary side of early modern studies, the field has shown a self-awareness of its evolving relationship with these categories of subject and object. In 1996's *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass perceived that the focus in Renaissance studies had been primarily on the human subject, and they brought attention to the inanimate object. They questioned the binary that had been applied retroactively in readings of the subject and object in the Renaissance, allowing themselves, and encouraging the reader, to see this binary as fluid.[30] My analysis of the destabilization of the binary in the period has less to do with changing the view of criticism so much as it concerns seeing the ways in which Shakespeare himself is interested in various means of destabilizing the distinction, often by reflecting upon and challenging social status and dynamics. Hence, my methodology is less

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[27] Motture and O'Malley, 'Introduction', in *Re-thinking Renaissance Objects*, 5-7.
[28] Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, 'Introduction', in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings*, eds Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 1.
[29] Teague, *Shakespeare's Speaking Properties*, 16-17.
[30] Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass, 'Introduction', in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, eds Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3-4.

preoccupied with changing the way we read the subject and object, and more with attending to the way Shakespeare already writes them as categories capable of flux.

While de Grazia, Quilligan, and Stallybrass wonder whether the binary of subject and object itself could be a distinction that is imposed – or if, at least, the categories are seen to be more discrete than they really are – I suggest that the binary does exist but can be destabilized by characters in power for personal and/or political ends.[31] Consider the subject and object as presented in this speech from Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, one of Shakespeare's earliest plays:

> But for my bonny Kate, *she* must with me.
> Nay, look not big, nor stamp, nor stare, nor fret;
> I will be master of *what* is mine own.
> *She* is my *goods*, my chattels, *she* is my house,
> My household stuff, my field, my barn,
> My horse, my ox, my ass, my *any thing*,
> And here *she* stands. (3.2.226-32; emphasis mine)

Without the fundamental distinction of subject and object, there would be no humor, shock value, or challenge to status in Petruchio's description of Katherina as various of his inanimate possessions. Yet Shakespeare creates all of these in Petruchio's linguistic degrading of person into thing. And he revels in the funny fluctuations of her existence in so few lines: from 'she' to 'what' (rather than 'whom') to 'she' to 'goods' to 'she' to the radical potentiality of 'any thing' and back to 'she' again. This is all to say, by way of example, that Shakespeare replicates the boundaries of subject and object before troubling them.

We can contrast this material moment from *The Taming of the Shrew* with one from another early play, *Romeo and Juliet* (1594). Just before killing herself, Juliet says, 'O happy dagger. / This is thy sheath. There rust, and let me die' (5.3.168-69).[32] Her address to Romeo's dagger reverses the positions of subject and object. She imagines that the anthropomorphic dagger can feel happiness, while her own still living body will be transformed into the inert object of the sheath through death.[33] Sofer describes a theatrical tradition in which the acting body becomes prop-like when presented as a character's corpse.[34] Juliet's is a unique take on this tradition in which, through becoming a corpse, she also becomes like something that is not even bodily. Unlike Kate who is made an

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[31] de Grazia, Quilligan, and Stallybrass, 'Introduction', in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, 3-4.
[32] William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. Brian Gibbons, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 1008-40.
[33] Julia Elizabeth Erdosy, '"O Happy Dagger": Weaponry and Foiled Endings in *Romeo and Juliet* and Its Cinematic Afterlives', unpublished MA thesis, University of York, 2014, 24-25.
[34] Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props*, 9.

object through a man's demeaning words that strip her of power, Juliet makes a speech in which she represents herself as a thing and she gains power over her fate in that process.[35]

Working in the school of thing theory, Sherry Turkle explores the relationship between thing and thought: 'we consider objects as companions to our emotional lives or as provocations to thought…We think with…objects' and 'The object [is] a companion in life experience'.[36] In experiencing the last moments of her life, Juliet thinks with her husband's phallic dagger. In doing so, she constructs herself as its penetrated companion, its sheath.[37] Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes that engaging with objects can make us aware of the human body as 'a thing among things'.[38] For Juliet, this realization presents not a problem but a solution.[39] These two examples of Katherina and Juliet demonstrate the importance of considering the changeable dynamic of who objectifies whom. In Chapter 4, this question is of paramount importance when Hermione (with Paulina's help) presents herself as a statue. Juliet figuratively understands herself as an object in order to cope with death.[40] But Hermione presents herself as a literal object in order to step back into her life. Many of the examples in this introduction concern the relationship between women and objects. Due to the absence of female players on the Renaissance stage, the female character's body was always a site of conspicuous artifice and constructed-ness that was partially reliant on costuming and props, creating an intimate relationship between women and things in early modern drama. The relationship between materiality and gender is a supporting theme of this thesis, and I look to Will Fisher's *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* for work on this subject.[41] Sometimes, in Shakespeare's work, the treatment of women is indicative of dehumanization as it develops early in a play – the female character is the canary in the coalmine. Lavinia is figured as producing 'honey' (*Tit.* 2.2.131) long before Chiron and Demetrius are baked into a pie. Portia is the prize of the hazard and the metaphorical 'golden fleece' (*MV* 1.1.170) before the trial scene at which Antonio's flesh is almost forfeit. At other times, a female character is the main figure made object-like through the play's metonym. Desdemona's integrity and

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[35] Erdosy, 'O Happy Dagger', 25-26.
[36] Sherry Turkle, 'Introduction: The Things That Matter', in *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With*, ed. Sherry Turkle (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 5.
[37] Erdosy, 'O Happy Dagger', 24-26.
[38] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Basic Writings*, ed. Thomas Baldwin (Oxford: Routledge, 2004), 254.
[39] Erdosy, 'O Happy Dagger', 24-26.
[40] Erdosy, 'O Happy Dagger', 24-26.
[41] Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

fate are directly linked to the handkerchief. Hermione *is* the statue in *The Winter's Tale*.

In addition to becoming prop-like by playing a corpse, the acting body can be assigned a function that centers its identity around an object, rendering it a tool in another object's service. Sofer writes: 'We recall that a common term for a supernumerary in the seventeenth century was a *property-boy*, and to this day the stalwart spear-carrier becomes the prop's prop'.[42] In Chapter 2, I explore the way that Othello centers Desdemona's identity around the handkerchief that he gifts her, and later punishes her when she loses it. In the discourse of stage properties and players' interactions with them, we can perhaps think of Desdemona as being assigned by her husband the role of 'handkerchief-carrier'. In the four plays that I have selected and others, Shakespeare is interested in the many ways that the categories of person and thing can be disrupted, and the varied responses that these disruptions can elicit in his audience. A bodily object prompts horror and disgust in *Titus Andronicus* in the form of the cannibalistic pie. But another bodily object draws laughter in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595-96): when Tom Snout plays Wall in the mechanicals' production of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, the potential of a person's body to transform into something else entirely becomes a gag that is ripe for physical comedy.[43] Teague describes how props always serve a '*dislocated function*': 'Properties do not operate in performance as they do in a nontheatrical context – they *mean differently*', and '[I]n performance if an actor wishes to call a matchbox a gun, he may do so. If he waves his matchbox about threateningly or points it at another character…then we will probably accept the performance as one that signifies a man with a gun'.[44] This thesis explores how the slipperiness of the meaning of props can cause bodies on stage to mean differently as well.

While Drakakis focuses on how the human body in the Renaissance can generate multiple meanings, nowhere is this process more explicit than on stage through the body of the player, as Annalisa Castaldo and Rhonda Knight observe:

> [T]he very heart of early modern acting…[is] the requirement that the playgoers see human bodies as other than what they were: boys must be seen as women, actors doubling parts must be seen as distinctly different characters, healthy men must be seen as mortally wounded, or dead, or even as ghosts, and human actors must be accepted as devils or fairies.[45]

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[42] Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props*, 114, emphasis in source.
[43] William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Harold F. Brooks, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 890-912. Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, 'Introduction: towards a materialist account of stage properties', in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, eds Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), 11.
[44] Teague, *Shakespeare's Speaking Properties*, 17, emphasis in source.
[45] Annalisa Castaldo and Rhonda Knight, 'Introduction', in *Stage Matters: Props, Bodies, and Space in Shakespearean Performance*, eds Annalisa Castaldo and Rhonda Knight (Lanham: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2018), 8.

The acting body on the early modern stage was ready to fulfill a dislocated function. When a player walks onto the stage in Renaissance drama, their humanity, identity, and status are granted by the conventions of the theatre. On the early modern stage, the body has the ability to become a character and thereby mean *anybody*. But this potentiality threatens to devolve the body, and when the body is treated like a prop, it runs the risk of meaning *anything*. Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda write that Renaissance props 'make visible, by virtue of their conspicuous fabricatedness, alternate dramas of manufacture and the body'.[46] I explore how props affect the meaning not only of the human body, but of humanity. In doing so, I am conscious of Castaldo and Knight's description of props that form parts of characters' bodies on the Renaissance stage:

> The written language of the play and the unwritten conventions of playgoing become the new "culture" for objects and bodies, which in turn shift their meaning from their own cultural milieu to product of spectacle, often at the intersection of body and object. For example, a pillow is both itself and a representation of a pregnant belly; a dab of makeup remains itself, while it is also a bruise and a sign of violence. Objects and bodies on the early modern stage were fluid in their meanings, so that different representations merge and morph…[47]

In their interactions on stage, player and prop can have a mutual relationship of actively dislocating each other's functions.

Shakespearean (In)humanity

Considering Shakespeare's portrayal of dehumanization is an important area of inquiry in part because critics have framed Shakespeare as a writer and even progenitor of what we think of as humanity. In *Big-time Shakespeare*, Michael D. Bristol quotes John Russell Brown who says, 'Shakespeare's plays, like the great myths, say something timeless about human beings'.[48] Harold Bloom, in *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, claims that Shakespeare did not just reflect humanity as it already existed but refined what contemporary viewers and Renaissance society thought of as the human condition.[49] One reason that accounts for this power, Bloom argues, is that '[i]n Shakespeare, characters develop rather than unfold, and they develop because they reconceive themselves'.[50] In a section titled 'Shakespeare's Universalism', Bloom's study implicitly democratizes Shakespeare's characterizations by arguing that

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[46] Gil Harris and Korda, 'Introduction: towards a materialist account of stage properties', 11.
[47] Castaldo and Knight, 'Introduction', in *Stage Matters*, 8.
[48] John Russell Brown quoted by Michael D. Bristol in *Big-time Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 1996), 108.
[49] Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1998), xvii-xviii.
[50] Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, xvii.

Shakespeare portrays the human experience, rather than the experience of any one segment of the population (such as the male experience or the English experience). In doing so, it reaches toward a universal humanity that is both described and designed in Shakespeare's works, one in which demographic identities dissipate in light of common attributes and experiences.[51]

But Stefan Herbrechter points out that these plays perform a more ambivalent function; Herbrechter writes that 'Shakespeare's "invention of the human"…implies the invention of the inhuman', a flood that destroys the very humanity that Shakespeare has created.[52] This demonstration of action and reaction is unsurprising, considering that Shakespeare's writing exhibits a compulsive habit of antithetical thinking.[53] *Richard III* (1592), for instance, opens with antithetical language:

> Now is the winter of our discontent
> Made glorious summer by this son of York;
> And all the clouds that lour'd upon our House
> In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.[54]

Through opposing imagery, Richard starts by figuratively destabilizing the two pillars of theatrical setting: time (from the coldest season to the hottest) and place (from high in the sky to deep in the sea). Helen Vendler describes the more abstract aspects of opposition in Shakespeare's writing, and although she focuses on his sonnets, her observations are also applicable to his plays:

> In conceptual matters, Shakespeare displays an exceptionally firm sense of categories (logical, philosophical, religious), together with a willingness to let them succeed each other in total aspectual contradiction. Within the process of invention itself…his mind operates always by antithesis. As soon as he thinks one thing he thinks of something that is different from it.[55]

In this thesis, I explore how through bodily props the category of human subject bleeds into that of inanimate object. In the plays that I discuss, social evils and problems lead to differences between characters becoming foregrounded with the result that certain groups are treated as non-human. I argue that the treatment of

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[51] Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, 1-17, especially 3, 10-11, 17.
[52] Stefan Herbrechter, '"a passion so strange, outrageous, and so variable": The Invention of the Inhuman in *The Merchant of Venice*', in *Posthumanist Shakespeares*, eds Stefan Herbrechter and Ivan Callus (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 45-46. Kiernan Ryan, 'Shakespeare's Inhumanity', *Shakespeare Survey*, 66, ed. Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 220-21.
[53] Russ McDonald, *Shakespeare and the Arts of Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 164.
[54] William Shakespeare, *King Richard III*, ed. Antony Hammond, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 702-41. Michael Cordner, 'Speak the speech…trippingly on the tongue', a talk by Michael Cordner and Tom Cantrell, University of York, York International Shakespeare Festival, 16 May 2017.
[55] Helen Vendler, *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 35.

bodies as various kinds of props in the plays captures the dehumanization processes that persist in them.

Of course, the notions that Shakespeare humanizes or dehumanizes characters are not mutually exclusive. It may be that while the *characters* dehumanize certain groups, Shakespeare cultivates in the *audience* a pathos of the othered, creating an emotional connection that does not allow the distinction between 'us' versus 'them' to be maintained. Whether Shakespeare is making or unmaking the human at any given moment, a theme that we see repeated in these plays is that human status can by no means be assumed or assured, but can be stripped for political and personal reasons. The body is the center on which humanity is predicated, and sometimes that center does not hold. This study of propertied bodies shows that Shakespeare's position as inventor of the human is earned not only by demonstrating what humanity is and how the human experience can be expressed, but also by teaching us equally valuable and cautionary lessons about how inhumanity is acted out and how dehumanization is brought about. I read the interactions of bodies and props in these plays as parables of these processes. Two questions that can help us understand these lessons are: What does the Shakespearean object teach us about objectification? What does the Shakespearean stage property teach us about how people can become 'propertied'?

Chapter 1
Titus Andronicus: The Body as Food

[redacted]

Introduction

Titus Andronicus, like Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* in the *Oresteia* long before and Shakespeare's own *Othello* shortly after, centers on a warlike protagonist who cannot leave violence behind once he has quit the field of battle and returned home.[3] Violence and vengeance cannot be conveniently sequestered. Rather, impulses from the battlefront are carried into the spaces of the home: in Agamemnon's case, to his house where Clytemnestra murders him for sacrificing their daughter to win the Trojan War; in Othello's, to his bed where he kills Desdemona and then himself; and in Titus's, to his kitchen and dining table where he butchers two Goths and serves them to their leader and mother. In *Titus Andronicus*, the end of war does not signal the end of the tendency to dehumanize the enemy in pursuit of satisfaction. Hunger becomes the metaphor for the insatiable quest for retribution, and people's bodies are figured as the food that will satiate it, at least for a time. Cannibalism is the repeated, consuming act in the cyclical need for post-war bloodshed, making politicized violence out of the domestic, and comestibles out of characters.[4] In the form of figurative language, cannibalism permeates the play, and it manifests itself literally in Act 5's meat-pie, filled with Chiron and Demetrius's flesh. The setting of the banquet is the perfect interpenetration of the two worlds of the play: it is an affair of state that takes place in the dining hall of Titus's home.

This chapter analyzes the transformation of character into prop through the process of cannibalism in *Titus Andronicus*, focusing finally on the meat-pie as the most literal embodiment of the cannibalistic tendencies of the play. I explore how Shakespeare employs cannibalism as a metaphor to describe destructive social forces, pathological interpersonal relationships, and the objectification of people through sexual exploitation and violence. But the cannibalism of this play can never be fully relegated to the realm of the figurative, the linguistic, and the symbolic. The cannibalistic meal *will* appear and obstinately insist on its own literalness.[5] In this way, the cycle of vengeance is shown not only to repeat but also to *gain momentum*. The constant preying upon others creates a 'dog-eat-dog' world, one in which eating other people almost seems like the next logical step as the human meat-pie enters the play.

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[3] Aeschylus, *Oresteia*, trans. Christopher Collard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[4] Keri Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare: Appetite and Authority on the Early Modern Stage', PhD thesis, University of Kansas, 2011, accessed on 3 July 2019, https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/bitstream/handle/1808/10421/Behre_ku_0099D_11422_DATA_1.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y, 13, 125-26.

[5] Julia Elizabeth Erdosy, '"This is Pie Body": Cannibalism and the Eucharist in Two Revenge Plays', essay for the 'Theatres of Revenge' MA module, University of York, 2014, 4.

Through language or ritual or rape or murder or baking and eating in *Titus Andronicus*, characters are made to '*mean differently*' (to borrow Frances Teague's phrase) from the perspective of the other characters onstage. Titus conceives of Chiron and Demetrius as ingredients in a pie, and through his performance as the solicitous chef for a banquet, he causes Tamora to treat them as food as well.[6] As I described in the introduction, Teague explains that this process of meaning differently is the distinction between a prop and any other thing on stage. The characters in this play become props not only in the eyes of the audience, but also in the experiences of the other characters (that is, they become prop-like *within* the framework of the play). At the end of *Titus Andronicus*, two of the play's characters will be transformed into objects on stage, props to serve as spectacle for characters and viewers alike.

In her historicist analysis, Louise Noble situates the play's complex relationship to cannibalism within early modern mores that cast this practice as vacillating 'between "civilized" and "barbaric"'.[7] She observes that, under the aegis of 'pharmocopoea [*sic*]', the consumption of human flesh could be rendered 'abhorrent and taboo' or 'socially sanctioned', depending on context.[8] Yet I explore how, in addition to destabilizing the cannibalistic as caught between acceptable and contemptible, *Titus Andronicus* can cause us to question what qualifies as cannibalism. In doing so, the play troubles our perceptions of acceptable behaviors by coloring them as contemptible.[9] There can be no doubt that when Tamora eats a meat-pie filled with her sons' flesh this act is a performance of the cannibalism taboo. But what of other forms of 'eating'? Does breastfeeding count as cannibalism? Does oral sex? Does the receiving of the Eucharist? I pose these questions because Shakespeare's dialogue discusses all of these practices – albeit, with varying degrees of candor – in the play. In fact, they are all suggested *before* Titus serves the meat-pie. Act 5's feast is not the introduction but the climax of the cannibalistic forces of Shakespeare's drama.

Alarbus's Entrails

We encounter Titus at a transitional moment from war to peacetime, as the conflict between Romans and Goths is apparently coming to a close. As he mourns the loss of 25 of his sons, Titus faces a choice between seeking retribution

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[6] Carol Chillington Rutter, 'Looking Like a Child – or – *Titus*: The Comedy', *Shakespeare Survey*, 56, ed. Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.
[7] Louise Noble, '"And Make Two Pasties of Your Shameful Heads": Medicinal Cannibalism and Healing the Body Politic in *Titus Andronicus*', *English Literary History*, 70.3 (2003): 678.
[8] Noble, 'And Make Two Pasties of Your Shameful Heads', 678.
[9] Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare', 13-14.

and granting clemency: whether or not to have Tamora's eldest son Alarbus executed. Tamora begs Titus to be merciful and spare Alarbus. She emphasizes that the war is already over and that Titus's side has won: 'Stay, Roman brethren, gracious *conqueror*, / *Victorious* Titus' (1.1.107-108; emphasis mine). Unable to reintegrate into civilian life and still fixed in the dehumanizing mindset of warfare, Titus orders that Alarbus be killed. Winning is not enough for him. He seeks to avenge his sons in order '[t]'appease their groaning shadows that are gone' (1.1.129). The mentality of viewing people as meat to satisfy hunger is introduced in this ritual.[10] Lucius suggests, 'Let's hew his limbs till they be clean *consumed*' (1.1.132; emphasis mine). And he reports back to his commander about how precisely this consumption satisfies: 'Alarbus' limbs are lopped / and entrails *feed* the sacrificing fire' (1.1.146-47; emphasis mine). Alarbus's dismembered body is figured as both a tree (through the description of his hewn limbs) and food. If his limbs are also burned like wood in the fire, this fuel would cause the fire to grow larger and last longer, a representation of the nature of vindictiveness that expands the more it is enacted. Titus thinks this act is one of closure, but the irony is that this event is the catalyst for the dramatic action of the rest of the play, as well as the establishment of the cycle of vengeance, the intrusion of violence on post-war life, and the continued need for human bodies to feed a dark appetite in these characters.

The specific use of entrails to feed this hunger begins to suggest this cycle of consumption. Entrails were a familiar part of contemporary English cuisine: in culinary terms, the word 'entrail' referred to a dish of '[t]he stuffed stomach of an animal'.[11] A fifteenth-century cookery book provides a recipe: 'An Entrayle. – Take a chepis wombe; take polettys y-rostyd, & hew hem; then take porke, chese, & spicery, & do it on a morter, & grynd alle y-fere; then take it uppe with eyroun y-swonge, & do in the wombe, & salt, & sethe hem tyl he be y-nowe, & serve forth'.[12] The evocation of this familiar dish at the start of the play prefigures the quotidian consumption of meat-pie at the play's end. The use of the stomach creates a palimpsestic double image of digestion: food stuffed into a part of an animal that digests. Adding to these aspects of repetition, the parts of the body that are burned are the internal organs, which include part of the digestive system; in a circularity that mimics the cycle of vengeance, the fire eats *that which digests*. As

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[10] This paragraph draws heavily on: Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare', 125-26.
[11] 'entrail, *n.1*', I.4., *OED Online*.
[12] *Harleian MS.279*, in *Two Fifteenth-Century Cookery Books: Harleian MS.279 (ab.1430), & HARL. 4016 (ab.1450) With Extracts from Ashmole MS.1439, Laud MS.553, & Douce MS.55*, ed. Thomas Austin, Early English Text Society (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 38. 'entrail, *n.1*', I.4., *OED Online*.

I will explore, *Titus Andronicus* features these Gordian knots of metaphorical eating as it functions in problematic interpersonal relationships. In the Renaissance, the term 'entrail' could also describe the appearance of 'entwining' and 'coiling'.[13] In Book I of *The Faerie Queene* (1590), Edmund Spenser describes the monstrous Error's 'hideous taile /…stretcht now forth at length without entraile' (I.1.16.2,4).[14] With its twisting and winding, the term 'entrail' (often specifically referring to 'the intestines'), conveys the course of vengeance as it turns and *returns*.[15]

Alarbus's death also establishes in this play that it is often child sacrifice that is employed to satisfy revenge (when I discuss 'children' and 'child sacrifice' in this play, I mean both young characters and adult characters who are key to the plot as the offspring of the leads of Titus and Tamora). His feeding to the fire answers for the deaths of Titus's own sons. But later, child sacrifice will feed characters rather than flames, first in the form of Lavinia's assailants, and then Tamora herself when she eats her sons. Like Iphigenia, Alarbus is sacrificed in the hope that the violence of war can conclude. The unanticipated result of both sacrifices is that they extend the violence of war into the post-war era and into the domestic sphere: they cause both Clytemnestra and Tamora to perpetrate violent acts in order to avenge their children. Neither Titus nor Agamemnon can check the ramifications of their wartime activities at their household doors. In 'Looking Like a Child – or – *Titus*: The Comedy', Carol Chillington Rutter describes Shakespeare's use of children as a lens in his plays: 'All across his work…Shakespeare puts a child on stage to look, to be looked at, to focus what's at stake: my "looking like a child" is of course a double-entendre, not just what the child looks like to spectators, his image in performance, but what he's looking at, including how spectators look at him looking'.[16] The audience is invited into the child's perspective and experience, giving us access to a subjectivity in these characters. But in *Titus Andronicus* these children's subjectivities are compromised when they become dehumanized extensions of their parents: as such they become surrogates on whom revenge can be acted out against the patriarch or matriarch.

The play yokes together Titus's sacrifice of Alarbus and Titus's sacrifice of his own son Mutius.[17] In contemplating whether or not to kill Mutius, Titus is like

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[13] 'entrail, *n.2*', *OED Online*.
[14] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton, 2nd. ed. (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2007). 'entrail, *n.2*', *OED Online*.
[15] 'entrail, *n.1*', I.1., *OED Online*.
[16] Rutter, 'Looking Like a Child', 2.
[17] Jonathan Bate, 'Introduction', in *Titus Andronicus*, by William Shakespeare, 3rd. ed., ed. Jonathan Bate (London: Arden, 1995), 103-105.

Abraham in the *Akedah* when he is ordered to kill his son Isaac, but God does not stay Titus from stabbing his son.[18] The ideology in *Titus Andronicus* is satisfied not by a test of loyalty, but by human flesh. Titus's son must be killed for Titus to outmaneuver the Goths. When Lavinia refuses to marry the emperor Saturninus and flees with Bassianus, Titus chases her, only to be blocked by Mutius (whom Shakespeare has apparently named for this act of *mutiny* against his father and general). Titus rebukes his son, saying 'What, villain boy, barr'st me my way in Rome?' (1.1.295) – in this moment, Mutius is not only literally standing in front of Titus to prevent his pursuit of Lavinia, but also symbolically preventing what Titus perceives as assuming his post-war position in society that would be earned by courting the emperor's favor.[19] Titus then murders Mutius. Shakespeare may have added the deaths of Alarbus and Mutius in tandem to the play, suggesting that he viewed them as contrapuntal.[20] Jonathan Bate writes: 'The first scene includes the killing of both Tamora's oldest son and Titus's youngest son. They are suggestively parallel actions, in that they are both undertaken out of an obsession with honour'.[21] Demonstrating how far the paterfamilias Titus is willing to go in order to maintain his family's standing, these murders also contribute to the theme of child sacrifice early in the play. Alarbus's death will be answered with Lavinia's rape and dismemberment, as the Goths and Romans continually jockey for position in what Keri Sanburn Behre calls the play's 'food chain'.[22] As I will later discuss, the cycle of child sacrifice in *Titus Andronicus* also refers to and profanes God's sacrifice of his son Jesus Christ, which is the Gospel's adaptation of the story of the *Akedah*.[23]

Lavinia's Honey

In *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies: Stage and Screen Performance*, Pascale Aebischer argues that Lavinia's violation in Act 3 is the central event of *Titus Andronicus*.[24] But she also points out that this 'obscenity' takes place '*ob-scene*' (beyond the visible limits of the stage).[25] The dialogue that constitutes the lengthy lead-up to the rape

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[18] Nicholas R. Moschovakis, '"Irreligious Piety" and Christian History: Persecution as Pagan Anachronism in *Titus Andronicus*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 53.4 (2002): 468. Peter S. Donaldson, 'Game Space/Tragic Space: Julie Taymor's *Titus*', in *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*, eds Barbara Hodgdon and W.B. Worthen (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 469. Donaldson makes this connection between Abraham/Isaac and Titus/Mutius while analyzing Julie Taymor's film *Titus* (1999), in which Mutius is depicted as a lamb on an altar in Titus's flashback.
[19] Bernice Harris, 'Sexuality as a Signifier for Power Relations: Using Lavinia, of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*', *Criticism*, 38.3 (1996): 389.
[20] Bate, 'Introduction', in *Titus Andronicus*, 103-105.
[21] Bate, 'Introduction', in *Titus Andronicus*, 104.
[22] Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare', 14, 126.
[23] Moschovakis, '"Irreligious Piety" and Christian History', 468.
[24] Pascale Aebischer, *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies: Stage and Screen Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 25.
[25] Aebischer, *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies,* 29, emphasis in source.

imbues this act with meaning and ensures its significance in the play's plot. Discussion of rape begins in the first scene of the play, in an argument that figures Lavinia as someone/something between person and property. These lines, as Aebischer notes, 'bear…witness to the uncomfortable slippage whereby…"rape" may refer as much to the theft of one man's property by another as to a sexual assault':[26]

> SATURNINUS:
> Traitor, if Rome have law or we have power,
> Thou and thy faction shall repent this rape.
> BASSIANUS:
> "Rape" call you it, my lord, to seize my own,
> My true betrothed love, and now my wife?
> But let the laws of Rome determine all;
> Meanwhile am I possessed of that is mine. (1.1.408-13)

In the dialogue immediately preceding Lavinia's rape in Act 2, the characters continue to question Lavinia's status. Shakespeare toys with the boundaries of cannibalism, in this case by casting Lavinia as food.[27] In his framing of the rape, Lavinia is no longer the respected and chaste daughter of a lauded general of Rome. Rather, she is defamiliarized from her previous status (in a way that parallels her rapists' defamiliarizing as pie at the drama's end). Forwarding the play's gastronomic theme, she is figured as food, in the forms of both flora and fauna. This multivalent rendering of Lavinia as non-human is entwined with her treatment as a sexual object. She is a plant to be harvested, as Demetrius says when urging Tamora to let him and Chiron rape her before maiming or killing her: 'First, thrash the corn, then after burn the straw' (2.2.123). Louise Noble observes:

> Demetrius describes…Lavinia's partly consumed, and therefore polluted, married state. As a wife, she is spoiled goods: "a cut loaf" from whose body it is easy to "steal a shive" (2.1.87). Lavinia is food, bread to be "snatch[ed]" (2.1.95) and forcibly putrified: "enforced, stained, and deflowered" (5.3.38)…[T]his reference to Lavinia's body as sliced food…predicts the dismemberment that follows her rape…[28]

Chiron and Demetrius's treatment of Lavinia recalls a moment in *Lucrece* (1594), a poem written around the same time as *Titus Andronicus* and possibly developed concurrently. Tarquin, too, is a ravenous sexual predator as he hunts Lucrece:

> As the grim lion fawneth o'er his prey,
> Sharp hunger by the conquest satisfied;
> So o'er this sleeping soul doth Tarquin stay. (421-23)[29]

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[26] Aebischer, *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies*, 25. Aebischer quotes and analyzes the extract that follows.
[27] Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare', 126.
[28] Noble, 'And Make Two Pasties of Your Shameful Heads', 696.
[29] William Shakespeare, *Lucrece*, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 63-82.

After the brothers rape and maim Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, Marcus describes her as looking like a tree, saying that her dismembered body is 'bare / Of her two branches' (2.3.17-18). Her dismemberment here resonates with Alarbus's execution, the transgression for which Lavinia finds herself unfairly punished. While Alarbus suffered the lopping of his 'limbs', Lavinia is rendered the trunk that, with the addition of branches, makes a tree.

Lavinia acknowledges an intertextual kinship with Ovid's Philomel, showing her family pages of this myth in order to communicate the details of her own trauma (and later on *Titus Andronicus*, like Ovid's myth, ends with cannibalistic revenge).[30] Shakespeare reworks another of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* through Lavinia's experience. The chaste Daphne is pursued in the woods by Phoebus, who sees her as 'prey' (*Metamorphoses* I.738) that continuously 'eludes those snapping jaws' (I.742). As a prey animal, Lavinia is a 'dainty doe' (*Tit.* 1.1.617) who is hunted by her rapists (during the period, 'dainty' could mean '[p]leasing to the palate', according to the *OED*).[31] When Daphne is turned into a laurel bough to escape the rapacious predator, her human body is sacrificed to preserve her virginity. The myth pays particular attention to her arms and their transformation: '[Phoebus] praises everything that he can see – / her fingers, hands, and arms, bare to her shoulders…' (*Metamorphoses* I.691-92), and through Peneus's powers 'her arms / grow into branches' (I.758-59). But *Titus Andronicus* inverts this myth in its presentation of Lavinia. No *deus ex machina* saves her from rape, and the brothers transform her into a tree as part of the consumption of their prey. Lavinia's relationship to the tree fashions her in an *imitatio Christi*: Jesus was nailed to the wood of the cross, whilst Lavinia's assailants add parts of a tree to her body. Nicholas R. Moschovakis argues that '[t]he deaths of Alarbus and Lavinia mark a trajectory of crime and expiation without redemption, the overarching design of which may be viewed as a parody of Christian history'.[32] Within this design, Lavinia's body is made into the cross: the very symbol of this Christian history. Yet all of the sacrifices in *Titus Andronicus* fundamentally differ from Christ's giving of his own life and God's giving of his son because the play's sacrifices contribute to and are unable to stop a cycle of violence.

Tamora offers another sexualized zoological image for Lavinia, in addition to the deer. She advises her sons: 'But when ye have the honey we desire, / Let not this wasp outlive, us both to sting' (2.2.131-32). At the time of the play's

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[30] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. and trans. Charles Martin (New York: Norton, 2010). Bate, 'Introduction', in *Titus Andronicus*, 90-92.
[31] Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare', 126. 'dainty, *adj.*', 6., *OED Online*.
[32] Moschovakis, '"Irreligious Piety" and Christian History', 469.

writing, 'wasp' already had the figurative meaning of an annoyance or irritation, whether in the form of a thing or a person.[33] Tamora's concern that Lavinia will disrupt the Goths' plans by reporting her assault to her family gives credence to this reading. But Tamora's intention to let her sons rape Lavinia also supports a sexual reading of the metaphor. The anatomy of a wasp could be a visual code that evokes the appearance of the vulva: the large abdomen (including the stinger) is similar to the prepuce of the clitoris; the smaller thorax and head are akin in placement to the glans of the clitoris and urethra (respectively); the wings, when folded, frame these body parts like labia. Indeed, anatomist Thomas Bartholin in 1668 evokes the image of a flying insect or bird when he refers to parts of the female external genitalia as wings: 'Two red productions offer themselves to our view between the lips, which they term pterugia, and alas, that is the wings'.[34] From context, we can discern that, while 'lips' likely refers to the labia majora, 'wings' refers to the labia minora. If Shakespeare uses the wasp as a sexual image, such a graphic evocation of the appearance of her sex would shame the chaste Lavinia, a woman who is so innocent that at one point she begs not for her *life* but for her modesty even in *death*:

> [T]umble me into some loathsome pit
> Where never man's eye may behold my body.
> Do this, and be a charitable murderer. (2.2.176-78)

This conjuring of the image of Lavinia's genitalia juxtaposes an explicitness of language with an implicitness of action. While we hear protracted plans for the rape, the act itself is perpetrated offstage. Shakespeare furnishes our imaginations not with displays but with descriptions of Lavinia's sex and its violent violation.

Like the doe that is hunted and the corn that is thrashed (both comestibles), the wasp is an image that implies the rapists' eating of Lavinia. Tamora's suggestion that her sons will partake of Lavinia's 'honey' creates a quasi-cannibalistic image.[35] It is a possible euphemism for Chiron and Demetrius performing cunnilingus on Lavinia, during which they would feast on the fluid of her sexual secretions.[36] *The Wasp or Subject's Precedent*, an anonymous drama written in the 1630s (though possibly never performed), offers an extended eroticizing of this insect as both participants in a sexual encounter.[37] *The Wasp* calls for the

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[33] 'wasp, *n.1.*', 2.a.,b., *OED Online*.
[34] Thomas Bartholin, *Bartholinus anatomy; made from the precepts of his father, and from the observations of all modern anatomists, together with his own. With one hundred fifty and three figures cut in brass, much larger and better than any have been heretofore printed in English. In four books and four manuals, answering to the said books.* (London: 1668), sig. Aa1r.
[35] Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare', 126.
[36] The *OED's* first entry for 'honeypot' as '[a] person or thing which is very attractive, tempting, or a source of pleasure or reward; *spec.* an attractive young woman' is from 1618. 'honeypot, *n.*', 2.a., *OED Online*.
[37] J.W. Lever, Introduction to *The Wasp or Subject's Precedent*, ed. J.W. Lever, The Malone Society Reprints (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1976, xv-xvii.

character Gilbert to disguise himself in a wasp costume, and in this persona he speaks of his international conquests:

> PROREX:
> …what country yelds best honny.
> GILBERT:
> …excellent hony all Italy over; but tas a smack of narcissus flower…
> PROREX:
> tis a shrowd blemishe to the cuntry… (5.2.1999-2007)[38]

Gilbert then describes the 'honey' in Spain, France, Russia, and Britain, in each case relating its flavor to the temperament of the woman from whom it comes. The punning on 'country' specifies the part of the female anatomy that yields the prize, much like Hamlet's (1600) mentioning of 'country matters' (3.2.118) as he asks Ophelia to let him lay his head in her lap.[39]

Shakespeare makes a similar allusion to women being rendered wasp-like when oral sex is performed on them in *The Taming of the Shrew*. These two early plays of *Titus Andronicus* and *The Taming of the Shrew* reinforce each other's themes and imagery: *The Taming of the Shrew* also turns feasts into spectacles, and foodstuff into instruments of power.[40] In this comedy, potential lovers Petruchio and Katherina argue (flirt) by saying:

> PETRUCHIO:
> Come, come, you wasp; i'faith you are too angry.
> KATHERINA:
> If I be waspish, best beware my sting.
> PETRUCHIO:
> My remedy is then to pluck it out.
> KATHERINA:
> Ay, if the fool could find where it lies. (2.1.210-13)

Katherina, expounding on Petruchio's wasp metaphor, baits him by saying that he may not be able to find her stinger for the plucking. In *The Taming of the Shrew* the stinger represents the clitoris, which is an apt comparison as Bartholin expresses the popular view of the clitoris as the '*Contemptus virorum*[:] the contempt of mankind'.[41] Petruchio and Katherina's badinage continues:

> PETRUCHIO:
> Who knows not where a wasp does wear his sting? In his tail.
> KATHERINA:
> In his tongue.

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[38] *The Wasp or Subject's Precedent*, ed. J.W. Lever, The Malone Society Reprints (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1976.
[39] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Harold Jenkins, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 292-332.
[40] Sally Templeman, '"What's this? Mutton?": Food, Bodies, and Inn-Yard Performance Spaces in Early Shakespearean Drama', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 31.1 (2013): 87.
[41] Bartholin, *Bartholinus anatomy*, sig. Y4v. Bettina Mathes, 'As Long as a Swan's Neck? The Significance of the "Enlarged" Clitoris for Early Modern Anatomy', in *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Elizabeth D. Harvey (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 104.

> PETRUCHIO:
> Whose tongue?
> KATHERINA:
> Yours, if you talk of tales, and so farewell.
> PETRUCHIO:
> What, with my tongue in your tail? (2.1.214-17)

Petruchio, contending that he is in fact 'cliterate', says that he knows exactly where the stinger is and hints that upon finding it he would explore it with his tongue in an act of oral sex. Like Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, Katherina is figured by another's words as a wasp to be enjoyed orally by a man. Both Shakespearean women are imaginatively acted upon by the mouth's *language* and will potentially be acted upon by the mouth's *physicality*.

Shakespeare develops a new aspect of Lavinia's representation as food during Act 3's meal, when even she participates in the consumption of her body.[42] Lavinia refuses to drink when she and her family are at table (in the dinner scene that first appears in the Folio).[43] Her father interprets her refusal and her crude signing: 'She says she drinks no other drink but tears, / Brewed with her sorrow, mashed upon her cheeks' (3.2.37-38).[44] The image of her drinking her own lachrymose libation is one of autocannibalism, and it demonstrates that Lavinia has internalized the other characters' attitudes towards her as an alimentary object.[45] The fact that Titus must give voice to this action reminds us that the cannibalizing of Lavinia is still, to a certain extent, the purview of men and their mouths. The drinking of tears also recalls Lavinia's earlier offering of her tears to her father and to the ground by her brothers' tomb:

> Lo, at this tomb my tributary tears
> I render for my brethren's obsequies,
> And at thy feet I kneel with tears of joy
> Shed on the earth for thy return to Rome. (1.1.162-65)

Feeding of the hungry earth – and the stage and playhouse that represent it – is another motivation that pervades *Titus Andronicus*, one to which I return later in this chapter.[46]

Lavinia's consumption renders her like an inanimate object, but so too does her indeterminate state after she is attacked. She has been partly consumed yet left alive and suffering. *Othello's* Emilia later laments that women can find

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[42] Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare', 128.
[43] Bate, ed., *Titus Andronicus*, 206. Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare', 128.
[44] Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare', 128.
[45] Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare', 128.
[46] Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare', 126-27.

themselves in this 'partially digested' state after men have satisfied their sexual appetite:

> They are all but stomachs, and we all but food:
> They eat us hungerly, and when they are full
> They belch us. (3.4.105-107)

Emilia, in her distanced and contentious relationship with Iago, indicates that the object once hungered for can later be rejected. After Lavinia is assaulted in *Titus Andronicus*, she finds herself caught between being the coveted object and the shunned object, and also between life and death. Marcus and Titus's back and forth summarizes her vacillant status:

> MARCUS:
> This *was* thy daughter.
> TITUS:
> Why, Marcus, so she *is*. (3.1.63-64; emphasis mine)

Marcus uses the past tense, as though Lavinia is dead and he is presenting her corpse to her father. Titus responds with the pointed use of the present tense, emphasizing that Lavinia still lives even in her wounded body. The uneasy theme of helpless beings existing between life and death pervades the play. Think of the argument to determine the fate of Aaron and Tamora's babe:

> CHIRON:
> It shall not *live*.
> AARON:
> It shall not *die*. (4.2.82-83; emphasis mine)

In *The Early Modern Corpse and Shakespeare's Theatre*, Susan Zimmerman writes:

> The idea of a corpse as quasi-sentient and empowered was…strongly inscribed in the communal imagination. As a consequence there was a popular suspicion that, in publicly exposing the internal secrets of the corpse, the new anatomists presumed literally to strip away the mystery of what cannot – or should not – be made visible: the boundaries between the living and the dead.[47]

In this context, Lavinia, who wanders while mute and weak, might conjure the notion of the quasi-sentient corpse. The exposure of the fresh wounds to Lavinia's arms and tongue might even have been seen, like the anatomists' exploratory incisions, as membranes between life and death that we are not meant to witness.

Lavinia is introduced as a nurturing, feeding figure who gives the earth her tears and sustains the weary Titus when he returns from war. But after she is attacked, Titus can no longer find this kind of nourishment in her. When she tries to soothe Titus with a kiss, Lucius says, 'Alas, poor heart, that kiss is comfortless /

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[47] Susan Zimmerman, *The Early Modern Corpse and Shakespeare's Theatre* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 9.

As frozen water to a starved snake' (3.1.251-52). While she has slaked the thirst of the earth and her own body with tears, she cannot do the same for her father. She can no longer renew him, and in fact she *drains* him, for he describes Lavinia as 'her for whom my tears have made me blind' (5.3.48). Titus's solution to his anguish is to purge himself and the play of Lavinia completely. He admits that it is not only for her sake but also for his that she must be killed: 'Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee, / And with thy shame thy father's sorrow die' (5.3.45-46).

Is Lavinia after her rape solely an object of disgust, or can she evoke other responses? Aebischer argues that Lavinia's wounds could have a different effect on the audience: 'the incisions in her body open her up to the spectators' *voyeuristic* gaze'.[48] These disparate readings point to interest and dread, conflicting reactions that cause the audience to want to look *at* Lavinia and *away* from her. Consider how Lavinia appears and functions between her assault and her murder, in Titus's words: 'Thou hast no hands to wipe away thy tears, / Nor tongue to tell me who hath martyred thee' (3.1.107-108). Elizabeth Gruber argues that in *Othello* Desdemona's corpse fulfills an early modern feminine ideal, one that is predicated on silence, beauty, and 'passivity'.[49] Desdemona, like Lavinia, exemplifies the concept of the liminal early modern corpse. She manages to speak a few lines even after she has been smothered. These female characters are coveted objects of the male gaze during/after their deaths. They also represent specific early modern ideas about the corpse. They are not completely lifeless bodies; rather, they hover between life and full death. As I explore further in Chapter 4, *The Winter's Tale's* Leontes directs us, while viewing Hermione's statue, to search the inanimate female form for signs of life.

Chiron and Demetrius 'literally "dis-arm"' Lavinia, to use Bernice Harris's phrase.[50] Lavinia in her dismembered, semi-cadaverous state – rendered so by men who rape and maim her, and then interpreted by men, fed by men, looked at by men, spoken to by men – is, in a warped way, an object of desire just as surely as Lavinia the virgin and Lavinia the wife. Perhaps she is even more so. Early in the play, she demonstrates her disobedience by refusing to wed Saturninus, and later she speaks in barbs to Tamora before Chiron and Demetrius arrive, such as, ''Tis thought you have a goodly gift in horning' (2.2.67). The Lavinia of the first half of the play is framed as a sinister fantasy: chaste, to be

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[48] Aebischer, *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies*, 30, emphasis mine.
[49] Elizabeth Gruber, '"No Woman Would Die Like That": *Stage Beauty* as Corrective-Counterpoint to *Othello*', in *Structuring the Feminist Gaze and Spectatorship in Postwar Cinema*, ed. Marcelline Block (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 226.
[50] Harris, 'Sexuality as a Signifier for Power Relations', 390.

pursued, to be had 'by force, if not by words' (1.1.618). But we may be loath to admit that the Lavinia of the second half could also be framed as a fantasy *precisely because of how grossly she is objectified*. Her capacity to express her subjectivity is removed with her tongue and hands (taken so that she cannot identify her assailants).[51] In *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern*, Katherine Rowe explores the literary relationship between hands and 'meaningful human action'.[52] She writes that 'Lavinia…undergo[es] a…radical loss of the signs and instruments of agency. In losing her hands, Lavinia appears to lose the ability to *do* for herself: to wash, to express thirst, or even to hang herself'.[53]

The literal and figurative disarming of Lavinia leads Rowe to wonder: 'is she a character that functions as a *prop*[?]'[54] Andrew Sofer clarifies what constitutes a prop: 'It is not enough for an object to be handled by an actor; it must also be perceived by a spectator *as a prop* – in other words, as a sign'.[55] Aebischer's description of Lavinia's function after the rape sounds akin to a prop for other characters/players to use as a sign: 'mutilated Lavinia is available for interpretation not so much as a suffering subject of violence but as an object: an object of contemplation for her uncle Marcus, an "objective correlative" for Titus' grief, an "object" the sight of which figuratively "kills" Lucius (3.1.65)'.[56] Lavinia can make no speech to try to process her own trauma. Through assault she is stripped of her subjectivity and rendered a feminine object: without speech, without agency, to be seen and not heard. As this feminine object, she serves as a cipher into which men can read their own subjective experiences. Aebischer captures the potential twisted enjoyment one might find in watching Lavinia first emerge from her ordeal: 'the stage direction in act 2 scene 3…in its explicit display of the opened-up female body, borders on sadistic pornography'.[57] Hence, Lavinia is an extreme version of the 'perfect woman' realized – an ideal that is made complete by dismemberment.

Even Lavinia's abstention from fluids, aside from her own tears, elevates her as a passive and disciplined feminine ideal. Sanburn Behre argues that 'Lavinia's refusal of water is analogous to self-starvation'.[58] In this play in which eating is an exercise in power, Lavinia shows herself to be powerless by

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[51] See: Aebischer, *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies*, 27-28, 45. Harris, 'Sexuality as a Signifier for Power Relations', 390.
[52] Katherine Rowe, *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 2.
[53] Rowe, *Dead Hands*, 70, emphasis in source.
[54] Rowe, *Dead Hands*, 78, emphasis mine.
[55] Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props*, 31, emphasis in source.
[56] Aebischer, *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies*, 27-28.
[57] Aebischer, *Shakespeare's Violated Bodies*, 29.
[58] Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare', 128.

performing starvation. She is like Anne Frankford in Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603), of whom the servant Jenkins says: 'there's no help of life in her, for she will take no sustenance. She hath plainly starved herself, and now she is as lean as a lath' (16.33-35).[59] Like Lavinia, Anne is a figure on the cusp of death whose liminality is both abhorrent and intriguing. Christopher Frey and Leanore Lieblein contextualize Anne's fasting within medieval hagiography about female ascetic saints who mortify themselves through fasting, as well as the later lauding of 'the self-sacrifice of the Renaissance ideal mother'.[60] We can also understand Lavinia through these traditions, as she drinks nothing but her own tears, consuming only herself.

Tamora's Milk

In the dialogue preceding Lavinia's rape, another possibly cannibalistic practice is mentioned: the history of Tamora breastfeeding her sons. Lavinia speaks to Chiron and Demetrius and their mother while begging for mercy:

> When did the tiger's young ones teach the dam?
> O, do not learn her wrath: she taught it thee.
> The milk thou suckst from her did turn to marble;
> Even at thy teat thou hadst thy tyranny. (2.2.142-45)

Like Lavinia the doe, Tamora is represented in bestial terms, in this case as a tigress mother of two cubs. The description of Tamora as a breastfeeding mother is related to the 'otherness' of her characterization: Renaissance science held that full and drooping breasts resulted from nursing, and concurrent with this theory were travel narratives describing women of color with surrealistically enormous chests.[61] Rachana Sachdev explores the link between nursing and othering in Tamora's characterization:

> Tamora's status as an outsider, a Goth, is particularly significant, and fits well with her representation as a nursing mother. She exists on a continuum with…non-European women…especially as she demonstrates her untamed sexuality in her alliance for sexual pleasure with Aaron, an African man. The reference to her maternal nursing allows the full scope of her otherness to unfold at the exact moment when her sons are engaged in the desecration of white femininity.[62]

When she raises the subject of Tamora nursing, Lavinia indicates that Chiron and Demetrius absorbed their turpitude from their mother through her milk. The idea

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[59] Thomas Heywood, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, ed. Frances E. Dolan (London: New Mermaids, 2012).
[60] Christopher Frey and Leanore Lieblein, '"My breasts sear'd": The Self-Starved Female Body and *A Woman Killed with Kindness*', *Early Theatre*, 7.1 (2004): 46-47.
[61] Rachana Sachdev, 'Of Paps and Dugs: Nursing Breasts in Shakespeare's England', *English Language Notes,* 47.2 (2009): 53-55.
[62] Sachdev, 'Of Paps and Dugs', 55.

of milk marbling is troubling in more than one way, stemming from the polysemous nature of the word 'marble'. If it refers to the material, the whole phrase indicates that the warm and liquid breast-milk becomes cold and implacable, as do the babies' characters when they drink it.[63]

But for an early modern viewer, the word 'marble' might have also brought to mind the phrase 'French marbles', which was slang for syphilis.[64] Robert Greene writes of avoiding communicable disease in *A quip for an vpstart courtier* (1592): 'neither doe I frequent whorehouses to catch the marbles'.[65] According to Keith Thomas, '[t]o the respectable and the pious, syphilis and gonorrhea were the just judgments of God upon adulterers, fornicators, and prostitutes…The words that observers most frequently applied to syphilis were *loathsome* and foul; they carry a sense of physical aversion and moral repugnance'.[66] Syphilis might therefore have seemed, to the Elizabethan audience, fate's fitting punishment for a woman who has a child with another lover while married to the emperor. If, in Lavinia's description, 'marble' can refer not only to a type of stone but also to a disease that can result from promiscuity, the use of the word here might indicate that breast-milk can spread infection from mother to child. The mother's accompanying sexual deviancy might, too, be transmitted through her milk.[67] This point is salient, considering that in this scene Tamora urges Chiron and Demetrius to rape Lavinia to earn their mother's approval, saying, 'The worse to her, the better loved of me' (2.2.167).

It is important to note that Lavinia's description of Tamora engendering her sons' unscrupulous dispositions through nursing is a *literal* rather than a *figurative* account of the formation of their temperaments. According to Jonathan Bate, when *Titus Andronicus* was written, '[t]he idea of sucking one's nature from one's mother's breast was commonplace'.[68] The belief that a babe suckled goodness from the mother's breast was reflected in and popularized by icons of the '*Madonna lactans*': the breastfeeding Virgin Mary [redacted].[69]

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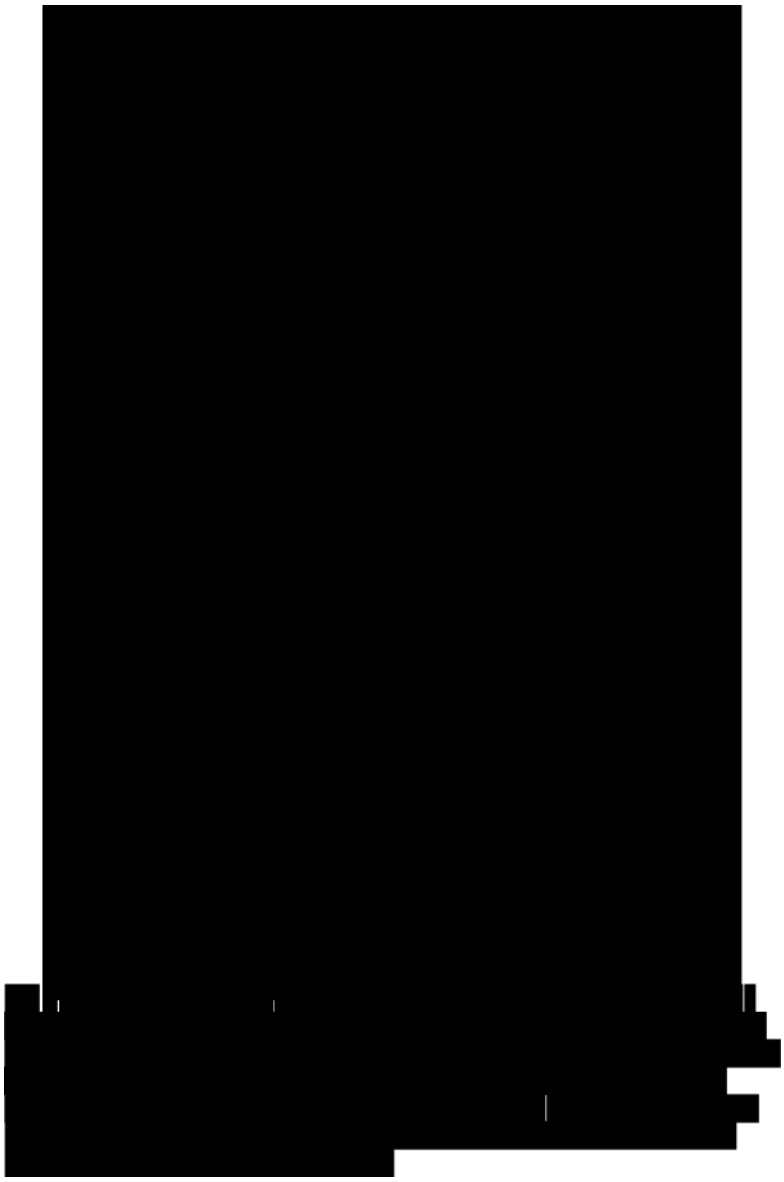
[63] Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare', 158.
[64] 'marble., *n.* and *adj.*', A.*n.*II.9., *OED Online*.
[65] Robert Greene, *A quip for an upstart courtier: or, A quaint dispute between velvet breeches and cloth-breeches. Wherein is plainely set downe the disorders in all estates and trades.* (London: 1592), sig. C4r. 'marble., *n.* and *adj.*', A.*n.*II.9., *OED Online*.
[66] Keith Thomas, 'Health and Morality in Early Modern England', in *Morality and Health*, eds Allan M. Brandt and Paul Rozin (New York: Routledge, 1997), 24-25, emphasis in source.
[67] Bate, ed., *Titus Andronicus*, 176.
[68] Bate, ed., *Titus Andronicus*, 176.
[69] Naomi Yavneh, 'To Bare or Not to Bare: Sofonisba Anguissola's Nursing Madonna and the Womanly Art of Breastfeeding', in *Maternal Measures: Figuring caregiving in the early modern period*, eds Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 65-69.



But there is an ambivalence inherent in the theory of suckling character from one's mother: is the act of maternal nursing ethical if breast-milk can transmit vice as well as virtue?[70] In a 1591 sermon on the institution of marriage, Henry Smith employs a contemporary proverb about nursing: 'he suckt evill from the dugge'.[71] A number of Shakespeare's plays reflect the anxiety surrounding breastfeeding.[72] With wry understatement, Beatrice Groves observes that in Shakespeare's work '[t]he only characters who appear to have exclusively breast-fed their children are the unpromising trio of Volumnia, Tamora, and Lady Macbeth'.[73] In the cases of Coriolanus, Chiron, and Demetrius, does a history of being breastfed have a

[70] Beatrice Groves, 'The morality of milk: Shakespeare and the ethics of nursing', in *Shakespeare and Renaissance Ethics*, eds Patrick Gray and John D. Cox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 139.
[71] Henry Smith, *A preparative to mariage. The summe whereof was spoken at a contract, and inlarged after. Whereunto is annexed a treatise of the Lords Supper, and another of usurie.* (London: 1591), sig. G8v. Groves, 'The morality of milk', 139-40.
[72] Groves, 'The morality of milk', 143.
[73] Groves, 'The morality of milk', 143.

deleterious effect on the adult male? Whether leading to good or ill, these plays agree that breast-milk, the breast from which the milk comes, and the body of which it is a part are all formidable forces. As Groves writes of wet-nursing, '[t]he belief that babies sucked in their nurse's ethics with their milk makes the breast into a locus of female power'.[74]

The nursing breast as a site of specifically *female* power is complicated by the performance of women by men on the Elizabethan stage. Dialogue that draws attention to breasts also potentially draws attention to their conspicuous absence, and the fact that the breast must be a theatrical fiction. Lavinia finds in Tamora's character a dearth of femininity, while incidentally reminding us that the player is not a woman: 'No grace? No womanhood?' (2.2.182). Focusing on the breast and its absence from the actual body is, paradoxically, a way of invoking both the maternal and the non-maternal. It is even possible that Tamora, who breastfed despite having no womanhood, evokes the Renaissance belief that men could lactate, a classical theory expressed by Aristotle. Male lactation was an ability especially attributed to the inhabitants of the New World.[75] The suggestion that Tamora might possess this ability again emphasizes her otherness. Writing for male players, Shakespeare frames maternal breast-feeding as a behavior that transmits to the child masculine vigor and reinforces patriarchal power. Groves observes that in *Coriolanus* (1607-1608) 'Volumnia is proud to say that her son has sucked her "valiantness" from her', operating within 'an aggressively masculine ethos in which milk has been replaced by blood'.[76] Again, this is a literal description of a process in the human body: as Chris Laoutaris writes, 'blood and vital spirits were, according to the anatomical theorists of the time, the primary agents of the female reproductive body, responsible for the production of breast-milk'.[77] In a 1636 medical manual, John Sadler theorizes that 'the milke is nothing but the menstruous bloud made white in the breasts'.[78] Tamora's feeding of her sons is framed as a patriarchal ritual like Volumnia's, one through which parental dominance is asserted and the children inherit the impulse to protect their family's position. Tamora demands that her sons avenge her upon Lavinia and Bassianus: 'Revenge it as you love your mother's life, / Or be ye not henceforth called my

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[74] Groves, 'The morality of milk', 143-44.
[75] Barbara Orland, 'Why Could Early Modern Men Lactate? Gender Identity and Metabolic Narrations in Humoral Medicine,' in *Medieval and Renaissance Lactations: Images, Rhetorics, Practices*, ed. Jutta Gisela Sperling (Oxford: Routledge, 2016), 38.
[76] Groves, 'The morality of milk', 153-54.
[77] Chris Laoutaris, *Shakespearean Maternities: Crises of Conception in Early Modern England* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 171.
[78] John Sadler, *The sick womans private looking-glasse wherein methodicaly are handled all uterine affects, or diseases arising from the womb. Enabling women to informe the physitian about the cause of their griefe. By John Sadler Dr in physick in the citie of Norwich.* (London: 1636), sig. B5v. Laoutaris, *Shakespearean Maternities*, 171.

children' (2.2.114-15). And the brothers have sucked such misogyny from their mother that they will gladly rape and maim a woman to prove their lineage, avenge their family, and earn their mother's love. They are soldiers in her ongoing war against the Romans, and cannibalism is first their training for violence by breastfeeding, and then the act of violence itself when they consume Lavinia.

The dialogue about Tamora nursing her sons starts a cycle of cannibalism within their family that her eventual consumption of the meat-pie completes. Chiron and Demetrius fed on their mother's milk, which was understood at the time to be transformed blood. As adults, they 'eat' of Lavinia to prove that they are their mother's sons. In the final act, when Tamora eats the meat-pie containing her children's flesh, we know that their blood is an ingredient in the pie. Titus describes to the brothers the recipe that he will follow when he cooks them: 'I will grind your bones to dust, / And with your blood and it I'll make a paste' (5.2.186-87). The gruesomeness of this act is compounded with a level of parental intimacy that is almost autocannibalistic.[79] This autocannibalism stems from the fact that Tamora gestated her children, as Titus points out to compound Tamora's horror: 'Eating the flesh that she herself hath bred' (5.3.61). Bate notes that there are Senecan elements to *Titus Andronicus*.[80] In Seneca's *Thyestes*, Atreus serves to his brother Thyestes a pie consisting of his own children.[81] By writing that it is a *mother* who engages in 'filial cannibalism', Shakespeare creates a cycle of consumption (I am borrowing the term 'filial cannibalism', which refers to the act of eating offspring, from the field of zoology).[82] Tamora's physical relationship to her sons is one of symmetrical eating taboos. Her nursing of Chiron and Demetrius was, in an early modern context, an ethical breach because it would have transmitted her moral corruption to them. The closing of Tamora's relationship with them is an inversion of this act, a perversion of an already pathological relationship. Her consumption of their flesh in a pie is the play's most literal fulfillment of the cannibalism taboo.[83]

Among the zoological images in the play such as the tiger and the doe, the cycle of vengeful and cannibalistic forces in the text is captured by two mentions of another animal: the snake. Shakespeare compares Titus and Tamora to a snake that is or is not satisfied. Tamora indicates her contentment with the progression

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[79] Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare', 14, 122, 125, 130-32.
[80] Jonathan Bate, Introduction to *Titus Andronicus*, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 1125.
[81] Seneca, *Thyestes*, in *Seneca: The Complete Tragedies, Volume 2*, trans. Shadi Bartsch, Susanna Braund, and David Konstan, ed. Shadi Bartsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 181-230.
[82] Clive D.L. Wynne and Monique A.R. Udell, *Animal Cognition: Evolution, Behavior and Cognition*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 5.
[83] Erdosy, 'This is Pie Body', 4.

of her and Aaron's plan against the Romans by saying, 'The snake lies rolled in the cheerful sun' (2.2.13). Marcus describes his despondent brother as a 'starved snake' (3.1.252), after the Goths have perpetrated another act of aggression by sending Titus the heads of two of his sons (Titus's baking of Chiron and Demetrius's 'shameful heads' [5.2.189] recalls this deed). The ophiological imagery of rolled up or hungry serpents is suggestive of the autocannibalistic 'ouroboros' (the snake that eats itself, starting at its tail) [redacted].

It also recalls the coiling and winding image of the entrails of Alarbus, the first character killed for revenge in this play. Unlike the tiger or the doe, the ouroboros manages to represent both predator and prey in one animal. Its possible evocation in this play implies that to eat others is in a sense to destroy oneself – is there any better description of the tragic effect of vengeance on the revenger? By the end

[redacted]

both Titus and Tamora die in their quests for revenge, and they have consumed many of their offspring. In Tamora's case, she literally devours them, but so too does Titus in symbolic fashion when he kills Mutius and Lavinia. Through the suggestion that both leads are like the ouroboros, vengeance is portrayed in *Titus Andronicus* as all-consuming and unending.

Chiron and Demetrius's Body and Blood

The language of *Titus Andronicus* has, thus far, dealt in figurative cannibalism and acts that are potentially cannibalistic. The earth is a metaphorical 'swallowing womb' (2.2.239) and 'blood-drinking pit' (2.2.224), but it cannot actually eat or drink.[85] Bassianus is not really a 'slaughtered lamb' (2.2.223) but he is remorselessly killed like one, and Lavinia's sex does not produce real 'honey' but Chiron and Demetrius may still consume part of her with their mouths.[86] Dialogue about oral sex and breastfeeding may or may not be suggestive of cannibalism. But when Titus bakes Chiron and Demetrius into a pie the cannibalistic theme of the play becomes inescapably literal.[87] As I discussed in the introduction, Frances Teague describes 'verbal image clusters' and 'presentational image clusters' in Shakespeare's plays. Employing her taxonomy, we can say that in this play the verbal image cluster of cannibalism prefigures the presentational image cluster of the meat-pie and the feast at which it is eaten.

Shakespeare creates a homology of the preparation of the flesh and blood of the brothers into a pie and the ritual of the Catholic Mass. The description of the blood features a particular overlap between *Titus Andronicus's* dialogue and liturgical language.[88] Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen explain the play's relationship to the words of the Mass:

> [T]he action is peppered with allusions to the ultimate sacrifice, the crucifixion of God's own son, and to the doctrinal differences consequent upon it…[W]hen [Lavinia] assists her father in the butchery of Chiron and Demetrius, she is asked to "receive the blood", a phrase that darkly parodies the language of the Eucharist, in which we are redeemed by the blood of Christ...[89]

While the blood may be the cue that the drama is about to take an ecclesiastical turn, it is the meat-pie that is the material focus of this convergence through its relationship to the Eucharist. The Communion wafer as a stage prop was already

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[85] Donaldson, 'Game Space/Tragic Space', 470.
[86] Erdosy, 'This is Pie Body', 4.
[87] Erdosy, 'This is Pie Body', 4.
[88] Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, 'Introduction', in *'Titus Andronicus' and 'Timon of Athens': Two Classical Plays*, by William Shakespeare, eds Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011), 3.
[89] Bate and Rasmussen, 'Introduction', in *'Titus Andronicus' and 'Timon of Athens'*, 3.

a familiar trope: Andrew Sofer describes its use in 'Easter liturgical drama', 'the great Corpus Christi processions', the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* (from the fifteenth century), and 'miracle plays that were designed to demonstrate transubstantiation'.[90] In theatrical terms, he explains why this use of the wafer as prop was discomfiting for both the audience and the Catholic church:

> The unconsecrated eucharistic wafer (oble) is the *ur-prop* of post-classical western European drama, but it became so in spite of itself. For the medieval participants in the Catholic mass, the *consecrated* wafer (Host) was not – *could not* have been – a prop, and it is the difference between the two objects, so outwardly similar, that drove a crucial wedge between the ritual action of the Mass and the theatrical representation of a play… "Hoc est corpus meum" (Matt. 26:26): Christ's words indicated that the Host was no sign, but the very substance of Christ's flesh.[91]

The staging of the Eucharist questioned the literalness of it as transubstantiated flesh, but so too did broader cultural forces.[92] When Shakespeare wrote *Titus Andronicus*, the substance of the Eucharist as the body of Christ was under scrutiny. Catholics and Protestants were in opposition, and so too were their literal and figurative views (respectively) of the Eucharist as the embodiment of Christ. Queen Mary had recently persecuted Protestants under her reign.[93] Under Queen Elizabeth the Reformation had brought Protestants back to tenuous power, yet the public was uncertain whether they could maintain this position in the face of the Catholic Reformation.[94] Shakespeare's play, incidentally, exhibits the influence of these contemporary English fears of the Catholic Church in this Roman play.[95] Although the play is set long before the Reformation, Bate and Rasmussen argue that '[f]or Shakespeare and his audience, Rome was evocative of the Roman Catholic Church'.[96] Furthermore, Nicholas R. Moschovakis claims that the play's 'representations of Roman paganism and human sacrifice would recall Protestants' denunciations of idolatry'.[97]

The Roman Catholic belief in transubstantiation was a point of contention that prompted Protestants to demonize Catholics as cannibals.[98] For example, in 1624 George Goodwin (in a translation by John Vicars) uses

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90 Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props*, 32.
91 Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props*, 31-32, first emphasis mine.
92 Erdosy, 'This is Pie Body', 3-4.
93 Louise Noble, *Medicinal Cannibalism in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 99-100.
94 Barbara L. Parker, *Plato's 'Republic' and Shakespeare's Rome: A Political Study of the Roman Works* (Cranbury: Rosemont, 2004), 111.
95 Erdosy, 'This is Pie Body', 2-3.
96 Bate and Rasmussen, 'Introduction', in *'Titus Andronicus' and 'Timon of Athens'*, 3.
97 Moschovakis, '"Irreligious Piety" and Christian History', 462.
98 Noble, *Medicinal Cannibalism in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, 98-100.

gruesome terms when describing what he deems the 'fiction of transubstantiation' in the Mass:

> Christs flesh (ith' Masse) this flesh-feeder eats up:
> And this blood-bibbing bishop, blood doth sup.
> With murther, stain'd is this Christ-killing hoste:
> Whilst hee Gods flesh with's fangs to teare doth boaste.
> Indeed, besides this popish caniball,
> Of men, not God-devourers, read wee shall.[99]

Shakespeare's play can evoke, under the guise of the meat-pie, the fears of the cannibalistic Catholic.[100] The appearance of a pie may have even borne similarities to that of a Communion wafer, an object so strongly associated with Catholicism that it was banned from the Protestant ritual during the Reformation. Noble notes that 'in an attempt to eliminate…Catholic superstitions, the 1552 Prayer Book specified that ordinary bread be used in the communion service, in contrast to the Catholic tradition of using unleavened wafers'.[101] Titus may even pun on the opposing materials of the transubstantiated flesh and untransubstantiated bread with the line: 'eating the *flesh* that she herself hath *bred*' (5.3.61; emphasis mine).[102] Communion wafers could be made with wafering irons that often imprinted them with intricate designs and borders [redacted].[103] According to Andrea Bayer, '[m]any irons from this period feature ecclesiastical inscriptions or imagery and were used to make communion wafers'.[104] A still life from Clara Peeters from around 1611 features a pie, and the dough that tops it is delicately crimped at the edges and carved in the center with a pattern that made for fashionable presentation [redacted]. The pie on stage might have looked like a bizarre enlargement of the Eucharist during *Titus Andronicus's* version of the Catholic Mass.

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[99] George Goodwin, *Babels balm: or The honey-combe of Romes religion. With a neate draining and straining-out of the rammish honey thereof. Sung in tenne most elegant elegies in Latine, by that most worthy Christian satyrist, Master George Good-winne. And translated into tenne English satyres, by the muses most unworthy eccho, John Vicars.*, trans. John Vicars (London: 1624), sig. K4v, L1r.
[100] Erdosy, 'This is Pie Body', 3-4.
[101] Noble, *Medicinal Cannibalism in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, 95, 97.
[102] Erdosy, 'This is Pie Body', 5.
[103] Andrea Bayer, ed., *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 116.
[104] Bayer, ed., *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, 116.

In much the same way that the dialogue preceding Lavinia's rape frames its meaning, Titus's speech about the preparation of Chiron's and Demetrius's bodies positions the pie as an allegory for the Eucharist. Noble writes that 'the

understanding of Christ's body as food is reinforced by the availability of recipes for the special preparation of the host'.[105] Titus describes the careful recipe he will follow to prepare for the drama's version of Communion:

> Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust,
> And with your blood and it I'll make a paste,
> And of the paste a coffin I will rear,
> And make two pasties of your shameful heads. (5.2.186-89)[106]

Shakespeare's choice of the word 'coffin' neatly conflates this container's contents as both human corpse and food; at the time, 'coffin' could mean both the box that held human remains and a 'mould of paste for a pie; the crust of a pie', according to the *OED*.[107] Even the word 'pie' carries with it a specifically Catholic meaning that compounds its distastefulness from the Protestant perspective.[108] This word is not mentioned until Tamora has already sampled the dish. Saturninus demands Chiron and Demetrius's presence, and Titus responds: 'Why, there they are, both baked in this pie' (5.3.59). The word's obvious denotation is the pasty, but its potential Catholic connotation is the Latin '*Ordinale* or *Directorium*' of the church service.[109] John Fielde maligned Catholics and their texts in the following manner in 1581: 'I wil omit the Psalmes as they are sung in the popish churches, & divers other places in sundry lessons moste absurd, in every popish pie and service booke of theirs yet extant'.[110] Noble notes that Protestants also insulted Catholics by belittling the language of the Church as 'gibberish'.[111] Thus, to a Protestant viewer of *Titus Andronicus*, the pie filled with human flesh could savor of the horrors of Catholicism's practices, but so too could the term that describes it.[112]

The meat-pie is a liminal prop. It refuses to be solely the offstage thing or the onstage sign. The play's meat-pie, when Titus describes how he will prepare it, at first seems as though it will be a sign distinct from the thing. It is a human-filled pie served in an act of vengeance, rather than the quotidian pie to which English culture was accustomed. According to Sally Templeman, '[p]ies were the epitome of English domestic life'.[113] But Shakespeare does not let the viewer place a comfortable distance between the human-pie on the stage and the meat-pie on their table, any more than miracle plays distinguish the oble in these performances

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[105] Noble, *Medicinal Cannibalism in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, 97.
[106] Erdosy, 'This is Pie Body', 6.
[107] 'coffin, *n.*', 4.a., *OED Online*. Erdosy, 'This is Pie Body', 6.
[108] Erdosy, 'This is Pie Body', 7. 'pie, *n.3.*', 1., *OED Online.*
[109] 'pie, *n.2.*', I.1.a., *OED Online*. 'pie, *n.3.*', 1., *OED Online.*
[110] John Fielde, *A caveat for Parsons Howlet, concerning his untimely flighte, and seriching in the cleare day lighte of the Gospell, necessarie for him and all the rest of that darke broode, and uncleane cage of papistes, who with their untimely bookes, seeke the discredite of the trueth, and the disquiet of this Church of England.* (London: 1581), sig. C6r. 'pie, *n.3.*', 1., *OED Online.*
[111] Noble, *Medicinal Cannibalism in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, 104.
[112] Erdosy, 'This is Pie Body', 7.
[113] Templeman, 'What's this? Mutton?', 87.

from the Eucharist at the altar.[114] Templeman claims that the early plays of *Titus Andronicus* and *The Taming of the Shrew* were probably performed in inn-yards. In this environment, there was likely crossover between patrons of the play and customers of the kitchen. She argues that pies were 'traditional fare in inns', and 'it is quite likely that Tamora's pie had been baked in the inn's own kitchen, and its appearance would have been identical to the suppertime pies that playgoers were salivating for'.[115] *Titus Andronicus's* pie was a *fake* cannibalistic pie, but it was probably still a *real* pie. Teague writes of the conventions of a prop: 'A *property* is an object…that occurs onstage, where it functions differently from the way it functions offstage. At the moment when the audience notes its entry into the dramatic action a property has meaning'.[116] One problem that an early modern viewer might have had with this pie, then, was that it was not different *enough*. This sameness was in part due to the fact that the line between the performance space ('onstage') and the inn space ('offstage') was not clearly defined.[117]

Communion is a commemoration and reenactment of the Last Supper. During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the altar stands in for the table at which Jesus and his apostles supped; in a sense, the serving of the pie at the banquet table in *Titus Andronicus* is a circling back to the roots of the ritual. The Last Supper was the meal at which Jesus said that he was sacrificing his body as food, foreshadowing his own sacrifice and his father's sacrifice of his son for humanity during the Passion – the most famous child sacrifice. In *Titus Andronicus*, when Titus kills, bakes, and serves Tamora's two sons, the Liturgy of the Eucharist is evoked and *profaned*. Titus's description of the food preparation – 'make two pasties of your shameful heads' – might have a double-entendre of a sexual nature. During the period, 'head' could already refer to the tip of the penis.[118] A translation of Ovid from 1603 describes the loss of an erection during foreplay: 'she sooth'd me up, and call'd me fire…Yet…[i]t mocked me, hung downe the head and sunke'.[119] In Titus's speech, the 'heads' might be parts of Chiron's and Demetrius's phalluses, rendered shameful because they were marshalled in rape. If their genitals are baked into the pie that Tamora eats, then her ingestion of them is not only cannibalistic, but a morbid version of oral sex.

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[114] Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props*, 31-34.
[115] Templeman, 'What's this? Mutton?', 81, 84-85, 87, 89.
[116] Teague, *Shakespeare's Speaking Properties*, 16, emphasis in source.
[117] Templeman, 'What's this? Mutton?', 83-85.
[118] 'head, *n.1*', I.19.d., *OED Online*.
[119] *Ovids elegies: three bookes. By C.M. Epigrames by I.D.* (1603), sig. E4r. 'head, *n.1*', I.19.d., *OED Online*.

Conclusion

Titus Andronicus's theme of cannibalism creates an associated motif: the mouth as the site of transgression, consumption, and vengeance. During and after Lavinia's rape, the orifice as a charged space looms large in the form of the anthropomorphized pit, which Shakespeare describes as a 'swallowing womb' and 'blood-drinking pit'.[120] The characters that fall into this 'mouth' (2.2.199) are dehumanized as its food.[121] In it, Bassianus is killed and hidden, Lavinia is assaulted, and two of the Andronici are framed for murder. If the pit also has a vaginal aspect, then it creates a *mise-en-abyme* of feminine openings.[122] The pit is the destructive woman while Lavinia is the violated woman inside it.[123] Lisa S. Starks relates the pit to the 'archaic mother': a destructive rather than a generative force, which annihilates the contents of its womb.[124] In *King Lear* (1605-1606), the protagonist explicitly conflates the pit and the vagina in his denigration of the hungry female body and its dangerous sexuality, which, rather than reproducing, consumes:

> The fitchew, nor the soiled horse, goes to't with a more riotous *appetite*. Down from the waist they are centaurs, though women all above. But to the girdle do the gods inherit, beneath is all the fiend's: there's hell, there's darkness, there is the sulphurous pit, burning, scalding, stench, *consumption*! (4.6.120-25; emphasis mine) [125]

On the stage of *Titus Andronicus*, Shakespeare uses the trap-door as a literal pit, suggesting a symbolic vagina and womb that destroys rather than produces life.

Perhaps the human-like earth shares our ambivalence, our fascination and disgust for the violent figures in this play. The earth is the site of rape and murder. It is also a site of justice where the villainous Aaron is buried up to his neck (in a pit of his own) and left to starve. But in the end, the main villain of the play is denied a resting place in the ground. Bate observes that *Titus Andronicus* closes with 'the refusal of proper burial rites for Tamora', as Lucius decrees 'throw her forth to beasts and birds to prey' (5.3.197).[126] Tamora, formerly the apex predator of the tiger, is now food for scavengers. The last religious ritual that a person's body undergoes is flouted. After five acts, the earth can only abide so much, and by the

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[120] Donaldson, 'Game Space/Tragic Space', 470. Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare', 126-27.
[121] Sanburn Behre, 'Renaissance Fare', 126-27.
[122] Bate, 'Introduction', in *Titus Andronicus*, 7-9.
[123] Lisa S. Starks, 'Cinema of Cruelty: Powers of Horror in Julie Taymor's *Titus*', in *The Reel Shakespeare: Alternative Cinema and Theory*, eds Lisa S. Starks and Courtney Lehmann (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002), 126.
[124] Starks, 'Cinema of Cruelty', 126.
[125] William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. R.A. Foakes, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 634-69.
[126] Bate, 'Introduction', in *Titus Andronicus*, 15.

play's end it is as overfull of violence – and the vicious characters who perpetrate it – as we are.

As I have argued, the pie is the firm realization of the questionably cannibalistic aspects of the play. The language and imagery of four acts whets our appetite for the viewing of the literal consumption of characters as food. Therefore, seeing Tamora eat the pie satiates not only Titus's quest for vengeance, but also the audience's desire to view the grotesque and macabre. The pie is the overlap of body and prop. But I would like to suggest that the desire for violence that the pie fulfills is related to the image of this gluttonous pit. They are both theatrical elements that transform characters into things through consumption, but the pie is a prop whereas the pit is a space. The former is consumed human flesh, while the latter consumes human flesh. This opening is both a play-space and a stage-space. That is, it is both a pit in the earth and a trap-door in the playhouse. As such, when bodies are thrown into it they satisfy not only the earth in the play's plot, but also *the hungry medium of the theatre*. The stage of *Titus Andronicus* has consumed tears, blood, and bodies. In this play, it becomes a hungry mouth: the representative of the voracious audience that comes to the theatre yearning for bloodshed and sacrifice. In this way, cannibalism becomes a metaphor not only for the actions of characters as they consume each other, but for the voyeurism of audience members as they consume characters and players like food through the medium that serves them.

Chapter 2
The Merchant of Venice: The Body as Currency

[redacted]

Introduction

This chapter explores the treatment of the body as currency within the early modern economic milieu of *The Merchant of Venice*. Written shortly after *Titus Andronicus*, *The Merchant of Venice* has much in common with that earlier play: a cycle of vengeance, the objectified female body, homologies of violence and religious ritual, and a figurative dehumanization that threatens to literalize across five acts. In *Titus Andronicus*, Shakespeare gives that figurative dehumanization literal expression. *Titus Andronicus's* transformation of the body into a comestible moves from verbal to physical with the cannibalistic meal served in Act 5: men become pie. By contrast, while *The Merchant of Venice* verges on making the body fungible, it ultimately maintains its comic structure with a climax that stops short of Shylock claiming a 'pound of flesh' from Antonio's body.[3] In doing so, the play resists palpably manifesting the motif of character-as-money: man does not quite become currency as is threatened. Yet by this point, problems of social structure and economic practice – including the devaluing of human life and loss of bodily autonomy in a mercantile society – have already been exposed. The eleventh-hour prevention of Antonio's dismemberment cannot shut our eyes to a problem that we have already witnessed in the play: the monetization of humanity. I explore the play's process of dehumanization through market forces in the bond between Antonio and Shylock, the choosing of the caskets to win Portia at Belmont, and Jessica's flight and marriage. Even though this process does not end with Antonio's body being parceled into human currency, it does reveal that Shylock's *prima facie* unreasonable demand of the pound of flesh squares with the acculturated reasoning of the play.

In the other three plays in this study, the body is turned into an object; in *The Merchant of Venice*, on the other hand, the pound of flesh is never actually excised from Antonio. Yet this chapter will explore how bodies could be assigned the meaning of money in early modern England, as well as in *The Merchant of Venice*, which is a dramatic fiction that captures an ugly truth about contemporary society. The economic notion that things can be assigned the meaning of money and the theatrical notion that bodies can be assigned meaning by the language, reactions, and treatment of others intersects in Antonio's propertied body. By the wording of the contract, his body is able to dispense a pound of money; just because the wealth of his body stays intact through a fortuitous turn of events does

[3] For information about *The Merchant of Venice's* fulfillment of comic generic conventions, see: John Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, by William Shakespeare, 3rd ed., ed. John Drakakis (London: Arden, 2010), 48-51.

not change the fact that his body has become wealth. If in the playhouse a match-box that is called a gun becomes a gun (as per Frances Teague,) or a stage that Rosalind calls the forest floor becomes the forest floor (as per Erika T. Lin), Antonio's flesh can become money because Shylock and the contract say it is. This process reflects the fluid meaning of not only the player's body but also the character's body. As I noted in the introduction, there is a tendency in scholarship to read Shakespeare as a cultural touchstone of humanity and to analyze the ways that his writing cultivates this image. Yet Stephen Herbrechter points out that ambivalent moments in Shakespeare's works challenge and even deconstruct this position, destabilizing the humanity that they seek to affirm. While Herbrechter goes on to consider whether or not Shylock himself is dehumanized in *The Merchant of Venice*, this chapter of my study also explores how Shylock seeks to strip others of their humanity and how contemporary mercantile mores allow for and even encourage this practice.[4] This reading concludes by discussing Antonio and his pound of flesh that Shylock covets. But I also show that this covetousness is only one example in a play about a mercantile economy that can make physical incursions on characters and leaves many participants in this perilous game – including Bassanio, Portia, and Jessica – feeling that their bodies are devalued as human and only appraised in economic terms.

In *The Complete English Tradesman* (1726), Daniel Defoe writes of the pressures to escalate one's spending and investment, or else find oneself damned by inaction:

> [T]here is a fate upon a Tradesman, either he must yield to the snare of the times, or be the jest of the times; the young Tradesman cannot resist it; he must live as others do, or lose the credit of living, and be run down as if he was broke: In a word, he must spend more than he can afford to spend, and so be undone, or not spend it, and so be undone. If he lives as others do he breaks, because he spends more than he gets; if he does not, he breaks too, because he loses his credit, and that is to lose his trade; what must he do?[5]

Defoe was born in 1660 and this work was published in the following century. Mark Netzloff, in a collection on *Money and the Age of Shakespeare*, finds that *The Merchant of Venice* demonstrates aspects of the beginning of capitalist practice and is therefore at the early part of economic modernity; the economic conditions that squeezed the seventeenth-century merchant evolved into those that did the same

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[4] Herbrechter, 'a passion so strange, outrageous, and so variable', 46-55.
[5] Daniel Defoe, *The complete English tradesman, in familiar letters; directing him in all the several parts and progressions of trade* (London: 1726), viii.

to the eighteenth-century tradesman.[6] Commenting on the shifting status of money, John Drakakis writes that '[m]oney ceases to have a purely instrumental value as a *means* to an end', and therefore becomes the end in itself.[7] A corollary to this observation is that currency, as the stuff of money, became an object of fetishization. In England, the Renaissance was a time of financial tension during which, due to a national shortage of coins, anyone who handled money had to become accustomed to a system of credit in which they were perennially owing, or owed, or both.[8] In this context, Polonius's fatuous advice of 'Neither a borrower nor a lender be' (*Ham* 1.3.75) was increasingly difficult to follow. Hence, people sought money for money's sake, but also *coin* for *coin's* sake.

To become a merchant or tradesman is to center one's identity on terms of monetary practice, and unstable ones at that. The next phase of this trend, as Shakespeare figures it, is a dehumanization in which people could become merchandise or currency. After all, the word 'merchant' could mean a dealer of that which is not conventionally thought of as wares.[9] Of Judas, who betrays Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, one account of the Passion from 1450 reads: 'Now was Judas marchaunt unwys / To selle that lord for so lytel pris' (393-94).[10] In this passage, a person's greed can lead them to treat even Christ like merchandise. Amanda Bailey points out that in this emergent credit system, flesh was already monetized by 'a juridical context in which flesh and money were regarded as comparable forms of property', as well as 'a culture of credit in which forfeiture and the practice of using human beings as collateral were all too common'.[11] The setting of this play is one in which merchants are seen as dealers in the human body, and the courts recognize the fungibility of the body in transactions. This philosophy of proto-capitalism was hardly accepted without question; in 1523, Martin Luther warned of the dangers of people acting as surety:

> [L]et him beware of becoming surety for any man, but let him far rather give what he can…Now if there were no such thing in the world as becoming surety, and the free lending of the Gospel were in practice and only cash money or ready wares were exchanged in trade, then the

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[6] Mark Netzloff, 'The Lead Casket: Capital, Mercantilism, and *The Merchant of Venice*', in *Money and the Age of Shakespeare: Essays in New Economic Criticism*, ed. Linda Woodbridge (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 161.
[7] Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 11, emphasis in source.
[8] Theodore B. Leinwand, *Theatre, Finance, and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 13. Ceri Sullivan, *The Rhetoric of Credit: Merchants in Early Modern Writing* (London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002), 23.
[9] 'merchant, *n.* and *adj.*', A.*n.*1.b., *OED Online*.
[10] *Meditations on the Life and Passion of Christ*, British Museum Add. MS. 11307, Early English Text Society, Original Series 158, Charlotte D'Evelyn (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1971). 'merchant, *n.* and *adj.*', A.*n.*1.b., *OED Online*.
[11] Amanda Bailey, 'Shylock and the Slaves: Owing and Owning in *The Merchant of Venice*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 62.1 (2011): 2.

> greatest and most harmful dangers and faults and failings in merchandising would be well out of the way.[12]

But this world of Luther's imagination – without credit, debt, and consequent burdens on the populace – was not the world that sixteenth-century England was and was becoming.

Shakespeare capitalizes on the prevalence of money existing conceptually as '"imaginary" money': money that existed not in amounts of coins but in an abstract system of accounting.[13] This potentially dangerous tendency to see money as imaginary also manifested in the increasing reliance on credit and debt.[14] Archaeologist and numismatist Barry Crump explains that currency is that which is assigned the meaning of money.[15] He observes: 'Coins are objects. Money is an idea…Money is an idea that we *attach* to an object'.[16] Coins and money therefore have a slippery relationship to each other because it is possible for one to exist without the other and this status is context dependent. A coin can cease to be currency if it is taken out of circulation, or if its bearer takes it into a country that does not accept it as tender. And, as Crump writes, 'money does not necessarily mean coinage. As well as the obvious potential for barter, there are systems of credit, bills of exchange, and cheques that can fulfil the same role'.[17] The assignment of monetary value to objects in the real world is an analogous process to assignment of meaning to bodies and props on stage. Both of these possibilities are brought to bear in this play's trial scene. For both humanity and currency, physicality is a paradox in that it creates opportunities for value but also vulnerability. This chapter explores the ways that both of these objects' constitutions and worth are threatened.

The lexicon of the play draws on Venetian and English coins: ducat, noble, crown, angel, and pound. Shakespeare's inclusion of English currency suggests that the play's concerns about financial practices are as applicable to England as to Italy. His extended focus on ducats also establishes the sphere of the

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[12] Martin Luther, 'On Trading and Usury 1524', in *Works of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: A.J. Holman Company, 1915), vol. 4, *Luther Dansk*, accessed on 5 Oct. 2018, http://www.lutherdansk.dk/Martin%20Luther%20-%20On%20trading%20and%20usury%201524/ON%20TRADING%20AND%20USURY%20-%20backup%20020306.htm, section 'Cash payment'. Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 10.

[13] Stephen Deng, '"So Pale, So Lame, So Lean, So Ruinous": The Circulation of Foreign Coins in Early Modern England', in *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, ed. Jyotsna G. Singh (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 264.

[14] Leinwand, *Theatre, Finance, and Society in Early Modern England*, 13.

[15] Barry Crump, 'Coinage and Identity in Roman Britain', MA dissertation, University of York, 2014, accessed on 19 Apr. 2019, http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/10173/1/Barry%20Crump%20-%20Coinage%20and%20Identity%20in%20Roman%20Britain.pdf, 39-40. While this source focuses on Roman Britain, much of the theory underpinning it is applicable to the general study of coins and money, regardless of time and place.

[16] Barry Crump, 'Coins: Exploring the Unexpected', University of York, York Festival of Ideas, 9 June 2018, emphasis mine.

[17] Crump, 'Coinage and Identity in Roman Britain', 39-40. Crump, 'Coins: Exploring the Unexpected'.

play as not solely Venice or Italy, but in the continental market of international trade, for '[b]y the 1480's the Crusader Knights of Rhodes were also minting Ducats…and this helped establish the coin type as a pan-European staple for trade and commerce'.[18] The curatorial information of the British Museum's exhibit 'Crowns and ducats: Shakespeare's money and medals' observes of Shakespeare's mentions of coins and their implications for characterization:

> Shakespeare's plays are full of coins, from the English crowns to the Venetian ducat, and references and metaphors were constantly related to money and coins as a way of indicating identity, legitimacy, and reputation. More specifically they were used as a means of plot development, as audiences were expected to recognise the coins that were featured and pick up on messages about value, wealth and character.[19]

Nowhere is this practice more developed than in *The Merchant of Venice*, in which Shakespeare refers to coins explicitly while talking about money ('My daughter! O, my ducats' [2.8.15] and 'A coin that bears the figure of an angel' [2.7.56]) and implicitly when making puns ('such a noble rate' [1.1.127] and 'a new-crowned monarch' [3.2.50]). As I explore throughout this chapter, these references extend into knowledge of coins' nations of origin, the images stamped on them, and the denominations in which they are used.

By no means are these readings necessary to a grasping of the play's plot, but they enrich a comprehension of the symbolic world of the play and the monetary points of reference that fill the characters' thoughts and speeches. As I discussed in my introduction, Sherry Turkle claims: 'We think with…objects'. In *The Merchant of Venice,* characters think with coins. These references compound a close relationship between the appraisal of coin and the assessment of character, and further furnish a play-world in which people and their bodies are read not just qualitatively but *quantitatively*. This relationship is epitomized by the play's focus on the notion of credit, for Theodore B. Leinwand describes an 'interplay of two related meanings of credit: trustworthiness (one's worth in the realm of belief) and solvency (one's worth in the realm of finance)'.[20] In Richard Knolles's history of the Turks from 1603, he alternates his usage of the word between these two meanings, thereby tinging each connotation with the other: 'he…lived the rest of

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[18] 'Monetary Crisis (1460), as Henry VI fixes exchange rates for foreign coins in Ireland', *The Old Currency Exchange*, 30 Jan. 2018, accessed on 31 May 2018, https://oldcurrencyexchange.com/2018/01/30/monetary-crisis-1460-as-henry-vi-fixes-exchange-rates-for-foreign-coins-in-ireland/.

[19] 'Crowns and ducats: Shakespeare's money and medals', *The British Museum*, exhibit from 19 Apr.-21 Oct. 2012, accessed on 31 May 2018, http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/news_and_press/press_releases/2012/crowns_and_ducats.aspx.

[20] Leinwand, *Theatre, Finance, and Society in Early Modern England*, 13.

his raigne in great honour and credit with him', and 'his whole wealth and credit, with all the treasure of his house'.[21]

In *The Merchant of Venice*, the characters' discussions of currency and money touch on fundamental questions of the play, such as: What are the values of objects (and people treated as objects)? Who gets to assign value? And what problems arise if there is no such thing as intrinsic value? Anxiety about the instability of value was prevalent in the period. Recall Thomas More's *Utopia* in which two metals that are potential specie could become devalued based on their function and context: '[T]heir chamber pots and all their humblest vessels…are made of gold and silver. The chains and heavy fetters of slaves are also made of these metals. Finally, criminals who are to bear the mark of some disgraceful act are forced to wear golden rings…Thus they hold gold and silver up to scorn'.[22] The worth of coins shifted wildly in the *non*-fictional context of the English economy under Henry VIII. He debased his country's coinage by minting a preponderance of coins with low percentages of precious metals to fill his coffers quickly in the short term, with no consideration of the long-term impact on the English economy and the reputation of its money abroad.[23] As a result, '[w]hen Queen Elizabeth I came to power, she inherited one of the most debased coinages in history, which damaged trade relations and the reputation of the monarchy'.[24] The worth of coin and the worth of the crown were dependent on each other. Elizabeth successfully countered the problem of debasement, and so a renewed international trust in English money contributed to the country's increasing participation in foreign markets under her reign.[25] Whether for the queen and her state's standing abroad or the solvency of one merchant in Venice's marketplace, the worth of currency starts to relate to the worth of people. This dehumanizing relationship progresses through *The Merchant of Venice* until the moment when the character might become currency: when part of Antonio's flesh might become a 'pound'.

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[21] Richard Knolles, *The generall historie of the Turkes, from the first beginning of that nation to the rising of the Othoman familie: with all the notable expeditions of the Christian princes against them. Together with the lives and conquests of the Othoman kings and emperours faithfullie collected out of the - best histories, both auntient and moderne, and digested into one continuat historie untill this present yeare 1603: by Richard Knolles* (London: 1603), fol. F5r, L1v.

[22] Thomas More, *Utopia*, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature Vol. B*, 9th ed., eds Stephen Greenblatt, George Logan, Katharine Eisaman Maus, et al. (New York: Norton, 2012), 611-12.

[23] Martin Allen, *Mints and Money in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), xv. 'Restoring England's currency: How did Queen Elizabeth I tackle the problem of debased Tudor coins?', *Royal Museums Greenwich*, accessed on 27 June 2018, https://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/explore/restoring-englands-currency.

[24] 'Restoring England's currency'.

[25] 'Restoring England's currency'.

'My purse, my person'

In *The Merchant of Venice*, the theme of dehumanization begins with an exposition of characters that deconstructs the wholeness and autonomy of Antonio and Portia. Shakespeare represents this deconstruction through figurative dismemberment. Lawrence Normand writes of the verbal body and the physical body as sometimes distinct and sometimes intersecting figures in *The Merchant of Venice*.[26] In Act 1, these two modes of representation coalesce in vivid and emotive speeches that furnish the listener's mind with possible fates of the body when under the pressure of market forces. The prompts that I discuss here are solely literary (rather than narration of or comment on events onstage), but they stimulate the audience to imagine the literal body being dismembered, as might actually occur in Act 4.

Antonio is strained by his investments, both in Bassanio and in ships at sea. In Scene 1, Salarino points out that Antonio and his ships are already linked: 'Your mind is tossing on the ocean' (1.1.7). This connection is strengthened by a particular word that Shakespeare uses for both Antonio and the ships. Antonio is potentially the titular 'merchant'. To call him 'merchant' is already to center his identity around his occupation of trade and his source of income. During the late sixteenth century, the word 'merchant' could also mean a 'trading vessel' or '[o]f a ship or ships: used for the transport of merchandise by sea'.[27] Christopher Marlowe's greedy Tamburlaine (1590) uses the term in this fashion in his power fantasy:

> And Christian *merchants*, that with Russian stems
> Plow up huge furrows in the Caspian Sea,
> Shall vail to us as lords of all the lake. (Part 1, 1.2.194-96; emphasis mine)[28]

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare takes advantage of this ambiguity when Bassanio describes one of the vessels as being dashed against 'merchant-marring rocks' (3.2.270). Here, the rocks mar two kinds of merchant: the ship and the trader whose fortunes are sunk with it. The confusion of the two dehumanizes Antonio, reducing his identity to the inanimate conveyors of his wealth. For him, at first, being spread thin amongst these merchants seems financially sound. He describes his sense of security in this position:

> I thank my fortune for it,
> My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,

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[26] Lawrence Normand, 'Reading the Body in *The Merchant of Venice*', *Textual Practice*, 5.1 (1991): 55-56.
[27] 'merchant, *n.* and *adj.*', A.*n.*4., B.*adj.*3.a., *OED Online*.
[28] Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine: Parts One and Two*, 2nd. ed., ed. Anthony B. Dawson (New York: New Mermaids, 1997). 'merchant, *n.* and *adj.*', A.*n.*4., *OED Online*.

> Nor to one place… (1.1.40-42)

But Antonio's enigmatic sadness at the play's opening belies his faith in the safe return of these vessels and the prudence of his diversified investments. He protests too much when Salarino concludes, 'I know Antonio / Is sad to think upon his merchandise' (1.1.39). He replies, 'Believe me, no' (1.1.40), and readily launches into the aforementioned justification of his choices, as though he has just been rationalizing his decisions to himself and is now voicing these rationalizations to someone else.

The conversation between Antonio and Salarino captures this vacillation between the possibilities of success and failure in these ventures. Salarino initially describes Antonio's ships as 'Like signiors or rich burghers on the flood' (1.1.9), masculine figures of rank and authority. Yet he soon describes the ignominious end of his own bark:

> [M]y wealthy *Andrew* docked in sand,
> Vailing her high top lower than her ribs
> To kiss her burial. (1.1.26-28; italics in source)

As Salarino's riches run aground, he anthropomorphizes the ship that carries them, imagining that its hull is a ribcage and that the ship is capable of kissing. 'Andrew' gains a human identity as Salarino is made an unstable, lesser merchant through financial loss. The ship and Salarino's slippage between human and non-human prefigures the sinking of both forms of 'merchant' when Antonio's barks are lost. Shakespeare's figurative language here extends and reworks the traditionally humanizing descriptors of vessels: giving them names and assigning them feminine pronouns. In this case, secure ships are figured as masculine and constant, while those that are lost are feminine and fickle. This distinction draws on the early modern binaries of male/fixed and female/mutable. In *The Merchant of Venice*, a man's ships losing their masculinity through financial disgrace sets up a pattern of economic decisions that result in emasculation or crises of masculinity and male sexuality.[29] From this point onward, the play's threat of emasculating Antonio grows until the moment when Shylock might take his flesh. The shift of his ships into feminine fickleness could directly cause Antonio's own emasculation at the hands of Shylock, for as I explore later in this chapter, the potential collection of Antonio's flesh is imbued with sexual threat.

Antonio mires himself in monetary trouble and also masculine crisis by continually lending money to Bassanio, and then offering him credit, and

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[29] Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 51-62.

ultimately wagering his body. As Simon Critchley and Tom McCarthy note, Antonio has 'overextended himself', acknowledging 'all my fortunes are at sea' (1.1.177).[30] He continues to do so by lending to Bassanio again even though his previous investments have not paid off. His next investment in Bassanio carries the risk of a 'hazard' (1.1.151), but he commits to it nonetheless in an attempt to chase his losses, motivated by his sentiment for his friend. Punning on the word 'noble' in this scene links Bassanio's characterization and Antonio's money. A noble was one form of currency in the Renaissance, and though the coin itself was no longer in production after 1544, it continued to be mentioned well into Shakespeare's time.[31] If the punning on 'noble' brings to mind the image stamped on the obverse ('head') of the coin, it is an apposite symbol of a central concern of Act 1: a man and his ship [redacted].

When Salanio says to Antonio, 'Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman' (1.1.57), this otherwise common phrasing for a friend or relation could be a pointed reminder of how much money has changed hands from one man to the

[30] Simon Critchley and Tom McCarthy, 'Universal Shylockery: Money and Morality in *The Merchant of Venice*', *diacritics*, 34.1 (2004): 6.

[31] 'Gold Noble', *Coin and Bullion Pages*, accessed on 10 Apr. 2019, http://www.coinandbullionpages.com/english-gold-coins/gold-noble.html. 'noble, *adj.* and *n.1*', B.*n.*2.a., *OED Online*.

other. Bassanio is in a sense 'most noble' to Antonio because Antonio has 'ennobled' Bassanio out of his own pocket. The high worth of characters continues to be described through nobility as both virtue and currency throughout the remainder of the play: 'noble prince' (2.7.2, 2.9.4) and 'noble judge' (4.1.242, 4.1.249). Sandra K. Fischer notes that '[t]he name "noble" derives from the purity of the gold, noble in having only half a grain of alloy', and that in Renaissance drama it '[o]ften appears in a pun on the coin and a person's value, i.e., character, social rank, birth'.[32] As an example, she provides a reading of the king's use of the word in Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1599): '3.1.29-30: ["]there is none of you so mean and base, / That hath not noble lustre in your eyes["] [indicates]…character, coin, greed'.[33] In *The Merchant of Venice*, Bassanio picks up on Salanio's use of the word 'noble' in the same scene, relishing the advantage he has received through lending at a 'noble rate' (1.1.127): a rate that is fair and judicious, but also one that profits him as the recipient of coin.[34]

Antonio's feelings toward his noble kinsman blind him to the fact that Bassanio is operating under the '"gambler's fallacy": expecting outcomes in random sequences to exhibit systematic reversals'.[35] When persuading Antonio to invest more deeply, Bassanio argues:

> That which I owe is lost; but if you please
> To shoot another arrow that self way
> Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
> As I will watch the aim, or to find both,
> Or bring your latter hazard back again
> And thankfully rest debtor for the first. (1.1.147-52)

Having squandered Antonio's money previously, Bassanio feels sure of winning this time, for as economic theorists point out, '[w]hen observing flips of a fair coin…people believe that a streak of heads makes it more likely that the next flip will be a tail'.[36] Antonio allows himself to be convinced by a combination of faulty reasoning and fraternal affection. Mixing business with pleasure turns nearly tragic in this relationship. Antonio's friendship with Bassanio is part gambling addiction and part homosocial brotherhood that moves into homoerotic obsession. Harry Berger argues that Antonio's melancholy stems not only from Antonio's concern about the fate of his ships, but also his jealousy because he already knows that Bassanio woos another, even though he is uncertain of the

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[32] Sandra K. Fischer, *Econolingua: A Glossary of Coins and Economic Language in Renaissance Drama* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985), 98.
[33] Fischer, *Econolingua*, 99.
[34] Fischer, *Econolingua*, 98.
[35] Matthew Rabin and Dimitri Vayanos, 'The Gambler's and Hot-Hand Fallacies: Theories and Applications', *Review of Economic Studies*, 77 (2009): 730.
[36] Rabin and Vayanos, 'The Gambler's and Hot-Hand Fallacies', 730.

outcome of this pursuit. Berger claims: 'If Antonio is sad, uneasy, apprehensive, it must be because he's waiting to hear about the courtship venture Bassanio had "promis'd to tell me of" (1.1.119-21) – waiting to hear about the "lady" who is Antonio's next rival'.[37] Part of Antonio's gambling addiction is his love-hate relationship with uncertainty (in its economic and romantic forms) as both thrilling and distressing, an aspect of his character linked to what Berger classifies as a 'fondness for the pleasures of victimization'.[38]

Love of gambling and of Bassanio causes Antonio to continually give of himself in terms of his money and his body. He pledges: 'My purse, my person, my extremest means / Lie all unlocked to your occasions' (1.1.138-39). Here, he elides his fortune and his body, but these lines also hint at this being a specifically sexualized body. Drakakis notes that 'Antonio's "purse" is, of course, the receptacle for his money, but it is also an Elizabethan term for the scrotum'.[39] But the differing ways that men and women wore their purses on their persons supports different gendered interpretations. Fischer writes: 'Since purses were often hung from the belt, a purse is…metaphorically a scrotum. Because women sometimes hung purses between their under- and outer-garments, a purse also is related to their sexual parts'.[40] While Drakakis's scrotal interpretation does seem applicable, Antonio's description of opening his purse so that Bassanio can plunder it is inflected with the vaginal as well. This meaning of the word, which switches Antonio's sex in this scenario such that he becomes like a maid yielding his prized virginity, emphasizes the vulnerable state in which lending to Bassanio has placed him.

Antonio's conversation with Bassanio only increases his burgeoning doubts about his financial position, as he is forced to confront the fact that he has few or no liquid assets: 'Neither have I money, nor commodity / To raise a present sum' (1.1.178-79). At first, he proposes using his credit, but the bond will ultimately be his body. In a sense, the play escalates Antonio's possible payment from the imaginary money of credit to the physical currency of his body; I will explore how his body might serve as a kind of currency later in this chapter. The first scene of the play plants the seed of Antonio's bodily harm. Antonio says to his friend:

> Try what my credit can in Venice do,
> That shall be racked even to the uttermost

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[37] Harry Berger, 'Antonio's Blues', in *A Fury in the Words: Love and Embarrassment in Shakespeare's Venice* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 24.
[38] Berger, 'Antonio's Blues', 24.
[39] Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 55.
[40] Fischer, *Econolingua*, 110.

To furnish thee to Belmont to fair Portia. (1.1.180-82)

This mention of racking a debtor draws on contemporary practices of punishing the insolvent by inflicting pain or restriction on the body, which included imprisonment and a loss of rights that created a status approaching slavery.[41] It also draws on figurative meanings of 'rack', born in the sixteenth century, that relate to abuse of power and financial strain: the *OED* lists 'To oppress (a person) by illegal or excessive demands', 'to stretch (a person's means)', and 'to practise extortion'.[42] In 1603, Henry Crosse advises in his guide to virtue: 'it is good to get that may serve the turn, in an equall and just courte: but it is neither right, nor honest, to racke, extort, and purloyne from other'.[43] Bassanio later mentions that he too is 'upon the rack' (3.2.25) in a plea to Portia to finally let him try his hand at the hazard. Lauren Garrett argues that '[i]n his alternative penalty of a pound of flesh, Shylock's bond gestures metonymically to the practice of imprisoning the debtor's body when interest could not be collected'.[44] This suggestion is bolstered by the repetition of the word 'bond' (first used at 1.3.25), which, while primarily referring to legal commitment in the context of this play, also brings to mind the auxiliary meanings of '[c]onfinement, imprisonment, custody', as listed in the *OED*.[45] And in early modern drama, the word 'pound' can simultaneously refer to money and threaten the body, for according to Fischer, '[i]n addition to indicating the value of an individual, the term pound also appears in a three-level pun: an amount/an enclosure/to beat'.[46]

'Fair Portia's counterfeit'

Antonio and Portia both describe what the treatment of them in transactions could mean for their constitutions. Shakespeare comments upon both of their situations with a similar numeracy.[47] Hopeful of Antonio's potential losses, Shylock names four of the destinations that Antonio's ships have traveled to: 'his means are in supposition. He hath an argosy bound to Tripoli, another to the Indies; I understand moreover upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath squandered abroad' (1.3.16-20).

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41 Bailey, 'Shylock and the Slaves', 4, 12-13.
42 rack, *v.1.*, 4.c.,d., *OED Online*. Fischer, *Econolingua*, 112.
43 Henry Crosse, *Vertues common-wealth: or the highway to honour. Wherein is discovered, that although by the disguised craft of this age, vice and hypocrisie may be concealed: yet by tyme (the triall of truth) it is most plainly revealed. Necessary for age to move diligence, profitable for youth to shun wantonnesse: and bringing to both at last desired happinesse.* (London: 1603), sig. H3v. rack, *v.1.*, 4.d., *OED Online*.
44 Lauren Garrett, 'True Interest and the Affections: The Dangers of Lawful Lending in *The Merchant of Venice*', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 14.1 (2014): 32 (abstract).
45 'bond, *n.1*', I.1.b, III.9.a, *OED Online*. Drakakis, ed., *The Merchant of Venice*, 202.
46 Fischer, *Econolingua*, 107.
47 Phyllis Natalie Braxton, 'Magnetism in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*', *CLA Journal*, 34.3 (1991): 370.

While Antonio imagines his overextended credit resulting in the authorities racking his body (that is, stretching him by his four limbs), Shylock lists four places where his investments have been drawn to the ends of the earth. The fate of Antonio's body and his ships are entwined by this numerical and directional motif. The imagery of four directions continues in the representation of Portia (as I will explore shortly), implying that she and Antonio are caught in comparable economic traps.[48] In its more literal aspect, being pulled apart in four directions could bring to mind the sentence of drawing and quartering. Many audience members would have witnessed this nigh-theatrical public punishment in the city streets; in sixteenth-century England, the prescribed sentence for treason included the convict being dragged from the Tower to a site of execution, where they would be quartered, and their body parts would be propped up on the four gates of London.[49] Thomas Middleton's *Michaelmas Term* (1604) compares the drawing up of a contract to a 'quart'ring out' (2.3.367), thereby relating legal commitment to this torture that pulls a person apart.[50]

Portia's first line is: 'By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world' (1.2.1-2). Her lamentation of her miniscule body's oppression in a majuscule world picks up on Bassanio's earlier description of her relationship to her suitors. He says to Antonio of Portia's international renown:

> In Belmont is a lady richly left,
> And she is fair and, fairer than that word,
> Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes from her eyes
> I did receive fair speechless messages.
> Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued
> To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia.
> Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
> For *the four winds* blow in from every coast
> Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
> Hang on her temples like a golden fleece,
> Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchis' strand,
> And many Jasons come in quest of her. (1.1.167-72; emphasis mine)

Like Antonio, Portia is pulled in four directions by economic forces: would-be husbands from 'the four winds' seek to win her and her fortune and bring both back to their homelands like trophies.[51] The figurative dismemberment of Portia by multiple suitors might call to mind Lavinia's literal dismemberment of her hands and tongue by her two rapists in *Titus Andronicus*. Whether figurative or

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[48] Braxton, 'Magnetism in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*', 370.
[49] Karen Cunningham, 'Renaissance Execution and Marlovian Elocution: The Drama of Death', *PMLA*, 105.2 (1990): 220.
[50] Thomas Middleton, *Michaelmas Term*, ed. Gail Kern Paster (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000). Bailey, 'Shylock and the Slaves', 16.
[51] Braxton, 'Magnetism in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*', 370.

literal, this rending by men strips women of security and self-determination. Multiple critics have noted that Portia's 'little body' is at odds with the grand economic status that her father and suitors project onto it: Anita L. Allen and Michael R. Seidl write that she is turned into 'an object of international commerce', and Simon Critchley and Tom McCarthy link her to property, saying 'Portia is a body and an estate'.[52]

As a name for a character plagued by the sense of a divided self, 'Portia' sounds fittingly akin to 'portion', which already meant '[a] part of any whole' and 'a fraction'.[53] Shakespeare's diction strengthens the connection to this word. The first two times we hear Portia's name it is followed by a word starting with 'n', creating a play on these two words at the very moments when her wealth (her portion of her father's bequeathal) is discussed. Bassanio says, '*Portia, n*othing undervalued' (1.1.165; emphasis mine) and '*Portia. / N*or is the wide world ignorant of her worth' (1.1.166-67; emphasis mine). The word 'portion' has a rich polysemy, with many potential meanings activated in this speech and Portia's role in the play: the *OED* lists 'a dowry', 'part or share of an estate given or passing by law to an heir or other beneficiary', and even '[a] person's lot, destiny, or fate'.[54] Hence, to those who listen closely, Portia's name itself (especially combined with the carefully chosen words that follow it) can succinctly convey her divided position and her economic functions before she has even appeared onstage. In the earlier play *The Taming of the Shrew*, Petruchio lusts for Katherina's money before he sees her in person. Hortensio vows that, due to Katherina's repellant character, he 'would not wed her for a mine of gold' (1.2.91). Yet Petruchio replies:

> Hortensio, peace. Thou know'st not gold's effect.
> Tell me her father's name and 'tis enough.
> For I will board her… (1.2.92-94)

Knowing no other virtue but her money, Petruchio is already seduced by the idea of this rich wife – as Bassanio is by the idea of Portia. This is not to say that Bassanio, seeking Portia's money, is not attracted to her. Rather, the fact that she is moneyed is *part* of the attraction. As I will explore, he will be saved by the fact that he notices other aspects of her as well.

A reminder of four narrow escapes from unworthy men who failed the hazard haunts Portia. The servingman reports: 'The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their leave' (1.2.118-19). She replies a few lines later, 'If I could

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[52] Anita L. Allen and Michael R. Seidl, 'Cross-Cultural Commerce in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*', *American University International Law Review*, 10.2 (1995): 845. Critchley and McCarthy, 'Universal Shylockery', 9.
[53] 'portion, *n.*', 3.a., *OED Online*.
[54] 'portion, *n.*', 1.c., 1.d., 2., *OED Online*. Marc Shell, 'Portia's Portrait: Representation as Exchange', *Common Knowledge*, 7.1 (1998): 95-96, 120.

bid the fifth welcome with so good heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach' (1.2.122-24). In the cases of both Antonio and Portia, something outside of themselves and beyond their control will determine their fates: that is, Fortune. In Antonio's case, Fortune's caprice manifests in the security (or insecurity) of the ships; in Portia's, the choices of the suitors. As both characters are pulled in multiple directions and toward varied outcomes, it seems that uncertainty itself is tearing them apart.[55]

The 'lottery' (1.2.29) at Belmont is a game about accurately (or, in most cases, *in*accurately) assessing worth: the suitors try to win Portia and her wealth by choosing the correct casket from gold, silver, and lead, and it turns out that the lead casket holds the prize. The worth of container and contents are *inversely* rather than *directly* correlated.[56] Critchley and McCarthy read the whole play as a larger version of this shell game that is reliant on economic misdirection:

> In short, Bassanio is both leading a lavish lifestyle and skint. This bad economic practice is what lies behind his self-projections; it both constitutes and ruins him. The sliding gap that opens up within what we could call his subjectivity, a schism or chasm founded on an economic gap between expense and means, anticipates the many faults that will open up within the play's tectonics: between inside and outside, appearance and reality, word and deed, and so on.[57]

We can further understand Bassanio as an antecedent to Defoe's tradesman: one who realizes that increased opportunity also means increased risk, but also that inaction due to caution can leave one as financially unstable as action due to recklessness. At Belmont, Bassanio tries to pretend that he is wealthy by taking the money borrowed on Antonio's credit and bearing '[g]ifts of rich value' (2.9.90) for Portia. Arragon is conscientious about matching outer and inner worth, wishing that 'clear honour / Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!' (2.9.41-42). He even uses the phrase 'stamp of merit' (2.9.38) to describe worthiness, as though people are akin to coins that can be made valid tender by being marked accordingly. Portia's metaphorical representative of the golden fleece brings to mind the notion of gilding – of appearing to be worth more than what something is.[58] Indeed, the gold casket functions like something gilded in that it does not contain the wealth that Morocco expects to match its expensive exterior. As the proverb on the scroll reads, '*All that glisters is not gold*' (2.7.65). Nor does the silver

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[55] Braxton, 'Magnetism in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*', 370.
[56] Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 70.
[57] Critchley and McCarthy, 'Universal Shylockery', 6.
[58] Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 82.

casket contain the winning portrait. It is the least valuable metal that holds the prize.

These points of cognitive dissonance prey upon a real anxiety in the early modern zeitgeist that was sown during 'the Great Debasement'.[59] The specie of gold and silver used to produce coins was often highly diluted when alloyed, leaving varying levels of the precious metal behind; or sometimes, the coins that were produced were simply lighter.[60] This destabilizing process, known as 'debasement', was a European trend that reached England in the 15th century.[61] As previously mentioned, it was a favorite get-rich-quick scheme employed by Henry VIII. William Fulbeck, writing on English law in 1601, points out a potential problem arising from debasement when he queries: 'Suppose that a man lend money to an other, and the other woulde repay it in some kinde of coine is debased, whether is the lender bound to take it?'[62] This debasement of gold and silver may relate to the gold, silver, and lead caskets and the inability of the observer to determine their real worth (that is, the wealth that they may gain by choosing it). Arragon speaks of them as 'gold, silver, and *base* lead' (2.9.20; emphasis mine), but the irony of this line (and the hazard wholesale) may be that gold and silver as indicators of value in this era are all 'debased'. The hazard preys on people's uneasy relationship to specie of wanting to trust it but not being sure if they can. The topic of debasement may also relate to the inability to judge human value and the problem of devaluing human life in *The Merchant of Venice*, for loss of money and loss of status are related in the play's logic.

After multiple suitors fail the challenge, how is it that Bassanio succeeds? The distinction between Bassanio and the others is how they assign value and how they attempt to increase their chances of winning. Both of these distinctions relate to how these men perceive Portia. Like Bassanio, the other suitors see Portia as a source of profit through the fortune that she would secure for them and the valuable trophy that she represents as a golden fleece. Morocco, like *The Taming of the Shrew's* Petruchio, is seduced by gold. He ultimately chooses the gold casket, and in his speech that determines and explains his choice, he fetishizes gold as specie. He concludes:

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[59] Angela Redish, *Bimetallism: An Economic and Historical Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 114.

[60] John Munro, 'Money and Coinage in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe', University of Toronto, accessed on 11 June 2017, https://www.economics.utoronto.ca/munro5/MONEYLEC.pdf. Fischer, *Econolingua*, 66.

[61] Munro, 'Money and Coinage in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe'.

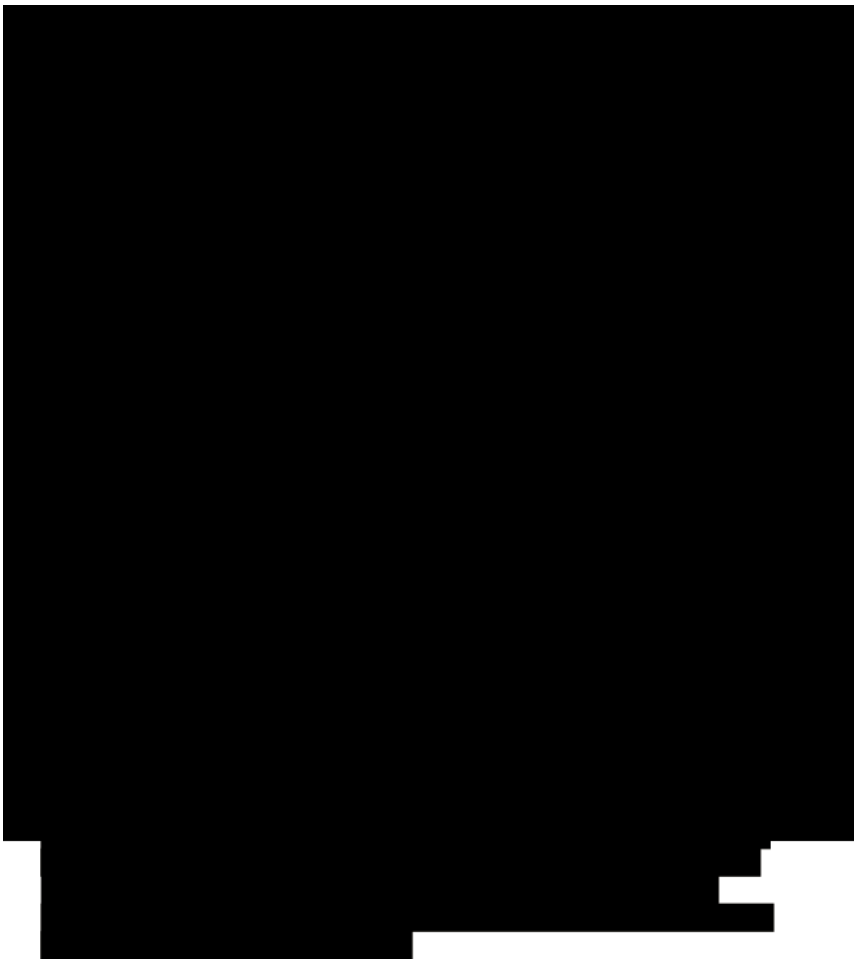
[62] William Fulbeck, *A parallele or conference of the civill law, the canon law, and the common law of this realme of England. Wherein the agreement and disagreement of these three lawes, and the causes and reasons of the said agreement and disagreement, are opened and discussed. Digested in sundry dialogues by William Fulbecke. At the end of the dialogues is annexed a table of the sections or divisions of the principall points, matters, and questions, which are handled in every dialogue.* (London: 1601), sig. G7r.

> Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
> Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
> O, sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
> Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
> A coin that bears the figure of an angel
> Stamped in gold: but that's insculped upon.
> But here, an angel in a golden bed
> Lies all within. Deliver me the key.
> Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may. (2.7.52-60)

Part of what attracts Morocco to Portia is his fantastical figuration of her as the artwork of a gold coin come to life. This attraction perhaps foreshadows Leontes's fascination with Hermione's statue, for Morocco himself figures the relief of the angel as a kind of sculpture. The angel coin is an apt representation for Portia and the nature of Morocco's fixation on her. Morocco, compounding the image of quartered Portia, describes the source of her suitors, saying: 'From the four corners of the earth they come' (2.7.39). The angel was a currency available in half and quarter denominations; hence, to describe Portia as an angel is to reinforce the notion that she can be divided.[63] Morocco's description of turning away from evil and toward good ('O, sinful thought!' and 'Deliver me') frames the coin as a talisman. This is a familiar use of coins, and also relates in this case to the angel's depiction of St. Michael defeating Satan in the form of a dragon; angel coins in particular were often pierced, an action that demonetizes the coin and turns it into an apotropaic touch-piece for the purpose of warding off evil and illness [redacted].[64]

[63] Alex Newman and Alexander Leonhart, 'English Gold Coins', *Coin and Bullion Pages*, 2012, accessed on 29 June 2018, http://www.coinandbullionpages.com/english-gold-coins/english-gold-coins.html.

[64] Crump, 'Coins: Exploring the Unexpected'. Crump, 'Coinage and Identity', 24-25. Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, trans. J.E. Anderson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 182-83. Francis Young, 'The Golden Angel: legendary coin, enduring amulet', 21 Jan. 2016, accessed on 30 June 2018, https://drfrancisyoung.com/2016/01/21/the-gold-angel-legendary-coin-enduring-amulet/. Steve Millingham, 'Elizabeth I Angel (10/-)', *Pewter Replicas*, accessed on 30 June 2018, http://www.pewterreplicas.co.uk/Elizabeth%20I%20coins.htm. Newman and Leonhart, 'English Gold Coins'.



In a sense, this process of piercing is emblematic of what Morocco fantasizes about doing to Portia. For what would happen if he came to her golden bed? He would pierce her hymen and remove her body from circulation among other suitors. Rather than stamping or insculpting her, he would want to enter her like the key into the lock of the casket, as a man enters a woman. But having made his choice, he finds in the casket a skull, featuring a different 'empty eye' (2.7.63) (a euphemism for vagina) than he sought.

Only Bassanio sees Portia as more than her fortune, just as he sees that the contents of the lead casket are so much more than the trappings suggest. Consider his appraisal of the ring that Portia gave him: 'There's more depends on this than on the value' (4.1.430). This gift stands in for part of Portia's body, as 'ring' is a commonplace for the female genitalia.[65] During courtship, Bassanio has learned a lesson about the non-monetary wealth of Portia's character, one that he has remembered in the honeymoon phase of their marriage when he acknowledges the import of the ring. Portia is a clever, articulate, determined woman capable of exerting her will even within a patriarchal system that has

[65] Drakakis, ed., *The Merchant of Venice*, 306. Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 92.

attempted to package her as wares on the marriage market. Lynda E. Boose goes as far as to say that Portia is able to deftly negotiate some of the terms of the marriage contract with Bassanio.[66] The other suitors see the situation the wrong way around. They think that they must *win* the hazard to *wed* Portia. Bassanio's ability to appraise Portia differently helps him realize that he must *woo* her to *win* the hazard.

In terms of probability, it seems difficult to crack the hazard's 'Principle of Indifference': in the absence of discriminating information, each casket seems to have an equal chance of holding the token (a painting of Portia) with which the winner could claim their prize.[67] Hence, the fact that Nerissa calls it a 'lottery' (1.2.28) and Morocco posits that the success or failure of his choice is down to 'blind Fortune leading' (2.1.36). To break through the principle of indifference – to move from an uneducated guess to an educated one – the suitors try to read certain signifiers: the material of the caskets and the inscriptions upon them. All of these clues were designed not by Portia but by her father. Bassanio is the only suitor who sincerely courts Portia and therefore benefits from her power to bend the rules of the game by providing information.[68] She says, 'I could teach you / How to choose right, but then I am foresworn' (3.2.10-11). But she does defy her father by subtly hinting to Bassanio through song:

> PORTIA:
> Tell me where is fancy *bred*,
> Or in the heart, or in the *head*,
> How begot, how *nourished*?
> ALL:
> Reply, reply.
> PORTIA:
> It is engendered in the eye,
> With gazing *fed*, and fancy dies
> In the cradle where it lies.
> Let us all ring fancy's knell.
> I'll begin it. Ding, dong, bell. (3.2.63-71; emphasis mine)

Drakakis offers a potential interpretation of this song's clues: 'it has become a source of critical debate whether the end-rhymes "bred", "head", and "nourished" actually direct Bassanio to choose the "lead" casket (3.2.63-5)' (the internal rhyme of 'fed' would add a similar clue).[69] He also observes: 'Those who believe that the song and its allegedly tendentious rhymes are designed to steer Bassanio to the correct casket need only consider its effect upon him; it provokes a

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[66] Lynda E. Boose, 'The Comic Contract and Portia's Golden Ring', *Shakespeare Studies*, 20 (1988): 247-48.
[67] Greg Novack, 'A Defense of the Principle of Indifference', *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 39.6 (2010): 656.
[68] Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 71.
[69] Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 71.

meditation upon the precarious nature of worldly surfaces'.[70] Bassanio's choice of the lead casket is also a reflection of his relationship with Portia: he allows himself to be 'led' by her.

The hazard itself is a network of symbols that displace Portia's significance.[71] Mark Netzloff finds a nascent capitalism in the play: 'The formation of capital is thus accomplished not only through a process of materialization, in terms of the commodification of the money-form, but also based upon an underlying abstraction, the disappearance of material goods through exchange, which may reappear in the form of profit'.[72] He describes capitalism's destabilization of the value of things and displacement of the object in *The Merchant of Venice*, especially at Belmont.[73] In the minds of the suitors (save Bassanio) Portia the living, breathing subject is effaced by markers of worth. The suitors are distracted by the materials of specie – gold and silver – in their choices of the caskets, implying that they are too caught up in anticipation of Portia's fortune to choose correctly. Only Bassanio is able to turn away from those indications of the fortune that was his initial object.[74]

The artistic element of the hazard threatens to distance Portia from the equation that will determine her future.[75] The terms are that the winning suitor will find a painting of Portia in the correct casket. *The Merchant of Venice* coincides with what Patricia Fumerton deems the 'miniature craze' of the late sixteenth century.[76] These portable portraits often depicted romantic interests and were typically housed in intimate locations for select audiences, such as lockets (frequently referred to as 'picture boxes'), 'ivory boxes', bedrooms, and closets.[77] This small portrait of Portia enclosed in the tight space of the casket and accessible only to the one who chooses correctly operates within these romantic conventions of the miniature. The relationship of Portia not only to art but to *miniature* specifically reinforces the notion that she is diminished in size and power. It is in seeking this love token that Portia's suitors create a false equivalency between Portia and her representation, thinking that to find *her image* is tantamount to winning *her*.[78] Shakespeare plays with the homophonic resonance of 'portrait' and

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[70] Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 82.
[71] Shell, 'Portia's Portrait', 95-97, 106-108, 126-42.
[72] Netzloff, 'The Lead Casket', 161.
[73] Netzloff, 'The Lead Casket', 162-72. Shell, 'Portia's Portrait', 97.
[74] Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 84.
[75] Shell, 'Portia's Portrait', 95-97.
[76] Patricia Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 104.
[77] Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics*, 70-72.
[78] Shell, 'Portia's Portrait', 95-97.

'Portia' through the words' proximity when Arragon describes what he has discovered in the silver casket:

> What's here? A *portrait* of a blinking idiot
> Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.
> How much unlike art thou to *Portia*! (2.9.53-55; emphasis mine)

The irony here is that *any* portrait of Portia would be unlike Portia. Morocco made the same mistake. He knows that Portia is not actually an angel coin, but he seems to desire the picture of Portia in the 'golden bed' of the casket more than the real Portia who observes him in the hazard. If Arragon, like Bassanio, had not fixated on finding the portrait but on earning Portia's affection, he would have stood a better chance of winning her by discovering her likeness (or, rather, '*un*likeness'), which he thinks automatically entitles him to the reality. Arragon is akin to Pablo Picasso's detractor in this story that Erich Harth uses to illustrate the distinction between artistic signifier and signified (this is also, not coincidentally, an anecdote about how men perceive women):

> The complexity of the interaction between images and symbols is pointed up in the following story about a man who approached Picasso complaining about his painting *Demoiselles d'Avignon*. "Why don't you paint women the way they really look?", he wanted to know. "And how do they *really* look?", Picasso asked. At that, the man pulled a photograph of his wife from his wallet. "Like *this*", he answered. Picasso studied the picture for a while and then handed it back to the man. "She's small, isn't she", he said. "And flat".[79]

In his attitude toward the portrait, Bassanio again distinguishes himself from the other suitors. His first words upon opening the lead casket and finding Portia's portrait are: 'What find I here? / Fair Portia's counterfeit!' (3.2.114-15). Drakakis's gloss limits the scope of the word 'counterfeit' to artistic representation: 'picture or image rather than the modern gloss of false image'.[80] But the word also has more underhanded connotations that fit into the play's landscape of economic malfeasance: the *OED* lists 'spurious, sham, base (*esp.* of coin)'.[81] In translating Cicero in 1556, Nicholas Grimalde uses the word to denote forged legal tender, drawing a distinction between 'counterfet money in stede of good'.[82] In *Henry IV, Part 1*, Shakespeare himself uses the term to describe fake gold when Falstaff says: 'Never call a true piece of gold a counterfeit' (2.4.485-86).[83] Marc Shell argues

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[79] Erich Harth, 'The Emergence of Art and Language in the Human Brain', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 6.6-7 (1999): 101, emphasis in source.
[80] Drakakis, ed., *The Merchant of Venice*, 301.
[81] 'counterfeit, *adj.* and *n.*', A.*adj.*II.5.a., *OED Online,* emphasis in source. Shell, 'Portia's Portrait', 96.
[82] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Marcus Tullius Ciceroes thre bokes of duties, to Marcus his sonne, turned out of Latine into English, by Nicolas Grimalde.*, trans. Nicholas Grimalde (1556), sig. R7v. 'counterfeit, *adj.* and *n.*', A.*adj.*II.5.a., *OED Online*.
[83] William Shakespeare, *King Henry IV, Part 1*, ed. A.R. Humphreys, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 362-92. 'counterfeit, *adj.* and *n.*', B.*n.*1.a., *OED Online*.

that the portrait is like currency that the suitors seek in order to purchase Portia.[84] The two are not mutually exclusive, for coins frequently feature portraits on their obverse. In England, Henry VII re-popularized the Roman British practice of putting royal portraits on coins, and this tradition is demonstrated in the Elizabethan crown [redacted].[85]

But it turns out that, by Bassanio's description, the portrait is a *fake* currency that cannot purchase Portia. Bassanio knows that it is his own worth that has secured her, and it is the real Portia that he has won. As he says of the portrait, 'this shadow / Doth limp behind the substance' (3.2.128-29).

A lover's difficulty in relating properly to person versus artwork will reemerge in *The Winter's Tale*: Leontes pines after his dead wife Hermione's 'statue' that seems to come to life. *The Merchant of Venice* presages some of the uneasy themes that surround Hermione's transformations, including patriarchal control and necrosis. Portia's portrait trapped in a box is suggestive of both imprisonment by her father and symbolic death. Dismissing the possibility of Portia's painting being hidden in the lead casket, Morocco reasons, 'it were too gross / To rib her

[84] Shell, 'Portia's Portrait', 95-96.
[85] Crump, 'Coins: Exploring the Unexpected'. Shell, 'Portia's Portrait', 139-40.

cerecloth in the obscure grave' (2.7.50-51). Fortunately for Portia, Bassanio as an archetypal comic lover is able to save her from this situation (and, as I have shown, she is able to assist in her own rescue). Her declaration of love to Bassanio indicates that she sees him as a means of reconstituting her divided parts:

> Beshrew your eyes,
> They have o'erlooked me and divided me:
> One half of me is yours, the other half yours.
> Mine own, I would say: but, if mine, then yours,
> And so, *all* yours. (3.2.14-18; emphasis mine)

This compromising speech reveals the steep cost of Portia's sense of a united self that is no longer torn apart by multiple men: the only way for her to feel complete is to be all Bassanio's. In her speech just before Bassanio makes his choice, Portia says:

> He may win,
> And what is music then? Then music is
> Even as the flourish, when true subjects bow
> To a new-*crowned* monarch. (3.2.47-50; emphasis mine)

In a pun on the English coin of the crown, Portia figures the potentially victorious Bassanio as a king acceding to the throne, but also 'new-crowned' for having acquired her wealth. Of course, royalty and money are mutually reinforcing sources of power. In *The Merchant of Venice*, while the loss of money can make someone less of a person, the acquisition of it can cause someone to become like one of the most transcendent forms of personage in English society: an anointed king. This metaphor would cast Portia as Bassanio's subject and queen, yet at least this king is of her own choosing, for it is she who has orchestrated his 'coronation'.

'My daughter! O, my ducats!'

I would like to explore Jessica's relationship to currency, and through this to tease out the connection of her experience to Portia's. I then want to investigate the impetus for Shylock's revenge; Marc Shell argues that Jessica's elopement is the action that sets Shylock on a path to vengeance, and so her role must be understood to elucidate his motivations.[86] But first, let us consider what Jessica and Portia's situations demonstrate together about the relationship between women and money in this play. Jessica's narrative is both comparable and complementary to Portia's. Both women's fathers seek to control their daughters, especially whom they will marry. Portia's father exerts his power from beyond the

[86] Marc Shell, *Money, Language, and Thought: Literary and Philosophical Economies from the Medieval to the Modern Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 61. Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 71-72.

grave through the terms of his estate and the rules of the hazard, and in so doing he tries to ensure that Portia will wed the kind of man he would have chosen for her. The unworthiness of the men who choose incorrectly is borne out by the notes in the losing caskets. When Arragon opens the silver casket, the note inside reads in part: '*There be fools alive iwis / Silvered o'er, and so was this'* (2.9.67-68). As Drakakis interprets these lines, Arragon is one of many who are 'coated in silver, with the implication that they lack substance', thereby appearing to be worth more than they are.[87] Nerissa explains to Portia the justification for the game in Act 1's exposition: 'Your father was ever virtuous, and holy men at their death have good inspirations. Therefore the lottery that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver and lead, whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you, will no doubt never be chosen by any rightly but one who you shall rightly love' (1.2.26-31). Shylock is the living equivalent of this archetype of the father figure. He also stands in a long Shakespearean line of controlling fathers to motherless daughters, one that includes: Baptista to Bianca and Katherina, Titus to Lavinia, Brabantio to Desdemona, Lear to Cordelia, and Prospero to Miranda. Before leaving his house to dine with gentiles, Shylock bids his daughter:

> What, are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica,
> Lock up my doors, and when you hear the drum
> And the vile squealing of the wry-necked fife,
> Clamber not you up to the casements then,
> Nor thrust your head into the public street
> To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces;
> But stop my house's ears – I mean my casements –
> Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
> My sober house. (2.5.27-35)

In his overbearing authority, Shylock seeks to keep Jessica from associating with the Christians of Venice and shield her from their revelry in the streets that might tempt her to debauchery. In *Reading the Jewish Woman on the Elizabethan Stage*, Michelle Ephraim notes that 'Jessica…represent[s] the Jewish father's fantasy of concealment and the Christian suitor's wish for penetration'.[88] Shylock's prevention of Jessica's socialization hints at his fear of miscegenation: the potential shame of his Jewish daughter marrying and/or reproducing with a gentile.

Both Portia and Jessica are in some sense locked up by their fathers. They are like fairytale princesses whose virtue must be protected by extreme measures, such as one who is locked in a tower (Jessica in her father's house) or placed under a sleeping spell only to be awakened by the right suitor (Portia whose image

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[87] Drakakis, ed., *The Merchant of Venice*, 277.
[88] Michelle Ephraim, *Reading the Jewish Woman on the Elizabethan Stage* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 120.

'slumbers' in the bed of the casket). Portia's imprisonment is symbolized by the hiding of her counterfeit in one of the caskets in a game that binds her choice of husband. Jessica's incarceration is more literal: Shylock leaves her locked in his estate, causing her to say in her despair: 'Our house is hell' (2.3.2). In both cases, much emphasis is placed on the keys (phallic symbols) that would release the women from their fathers. Portia's suitors use keys to open the casket that they choose. Shylock makes the mistake of leaving Jessica with the keys to his home. While Portia's bodily surrogate of the portrait is confined to the casket, it is Jessica's actual body that is housebound. The escalation of incursions on the body from symbolic to literal here is consistent with the abstract economic practices that will come very close to having palpable effects on Antonio's flesh.

Portia and Jessica begin the play single and end it married to Bassanio and Lorenzo, respectively. The courses of their courtships expose how the men in their lives value these women and their money almost inseparably. Portia's father bundles together the fates of both his money and his child by making them the combined prize of the hazard at Belmont. As he is dead, we do not get to see his reaction to Portia's unexpected influence on the game, or choice of whom she rigs it for. But when Jessica leaves Shylock's house to elope with Lorenzo, we hear her father's thoughts at length. His reaction is first reported by Salanio:

> I never heard a passion so confused,
> So strange, outrageous, and so variable
> As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
> "My daughter! O, my ducats! O, my daughter!
> Fled with a Christian! O, my Christian ducats!
> Justice, the law, my ducats and my daughter!
> A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
> Of double ducats, stol'n from me by my daughter!
> And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,
> Stol'n by my daughter! Justice! Find the girl;
> She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats". (2.8.12-22)

Salanio begins by commenting on the jumble of utterances that we are about to hear and the distraught mind which they reflect in their unvarnished spontaneity. As we listen, we find that the words are repetitive and meandering. But clear in this speech is an elision of people and money, especially Shylock's daughter and ducats. 'Daughter' and 'ducats' are kindred words. They feature the same trochaic meter. Their use of stop consonants is similar: 'd' as the first letter and 't' in the second syllable. These overlaps in Shylock's language accentuate the way that his mind conflates his progeny and his wealth, which in turn leads to the conflation of the categories of person and property, as well as the transgressions of robbery and rape. The theft of the jewel suggests the loss of Jessica's chastity. The image of the

'sealed bag' that Jessica and Lorenzo will open (which gestures back to Antonio's 'purse' that he offers to Bassanio) is also symbolic of her hymen that will be broken.[89] Shylock even had a premonition of this kind of loss – monetary loss bound up with sexual activity – when he said: 'There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest, / For I did dream of money-bags tonight' (2.5.17-18). His fear is realized in the loss of Jessica's sealed bag. In *Othello*, this loss in a father-daughter dynamic repeats: when Desdemona has fled Brabantio's home, Iago raises the alarm by yelling, 'thieves, thieves, thieves! / Look to your house, your daughter and your bags!' (1.1.78-79).

From Shylock's perspective, the sexual threat posed by Jessica's flight shames not only the daughter of the family but also the father. His mourning of the loss of 'two rich and precious stones' (testicles) indicates that he is unmanned by Jessica's betrayal, rather like a cuckolded husband, even though Shylock is Jessica's father.[90] In this description of his castration, his body, too, is a fortune that can be lost with a change of fate. The form and content of Shylock's speech about his child and his coin has a clear source in *The Jew of Malta*.[91] In the case of Barabas and Abigail (Marlowe's antecedents to Shakespeare's Shylock and Jessica) Abigail saves the fortune, prompting Barabas to exclaim: 'My gold, my fortune, my felicity' (2.1.49) and 'Oh girl, oh gold, oh beauty, oh my bliss!' (2.1.55).[92] Shakespeare adapts the consonance of girl/gold to daughter/ducats, and alters the circumstances so that Jessica absconds with her father's fortune. Both of these passages inflect how Shakespeare later writes Othello's speech in the face of potentially losing the handkerchief and Desdemona at the same time, in much the same way that Shylock loses his daughter and ducats. Othello's lexical breakdown also overlaps the woman and the object she carries, and in broader terms the animate and the inanimate: 'Lie with her? lie on her? We say lie on her when they belie her! Lie with her, zounds, that's fulsome! – Handkerchief! confessions! handkerchief!' (4.1.35-37). Othello's short words and phrases mimic Shylock's, and the first letters of 'her' and 'handkerchief', as well as the internal 'er' sounds in both words, recalls *The Merchant of Venice's* alliterative daughter and ducats.

I want to explore more fully the significance of ducats in *The Merchant of Venice* and contextualize it within the play's concerns with money and currency. While Portia is the golden angel to Morocco and the golden fleece to all of the

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[89] Fischer, *Econolingua*, 43-44.
[90] Drakakis, ed., *The Merchant of Venice*, 270.
[91] Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 22.
[92] Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, 3rd ed., ed. James R. Siemon (London: New Mermaids, 2009). Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 22.

Argonaut-like suitors, Jessica becomes a golden figure in her own way. When she wears her father's ducats, she becomes gilded: 'I will make fast the doors and gild myself / With some moe ducats, and be with you straight' (2.6.50-51). Like Portia as the angel, the association of Jessica with ducats is meant to be indexical of her caliber: 'ducat gold' is a phrase indicating high gold content (that is, gold that is not, as was a dreaded possibility, debased).[93] Edward Hall writes of Henry VIII's accoutrement in 1548: 'the upper part of the garmentes were powdered with casiels, & shefes of arrowes of fyne doket gold'.[94] Here, the finery of the gold is meant to reflect the quality of its royal wearer. In *The Merchant of Venice*, the image of Jessica as brilliant like a precious metal emphasizes the pale luster of her skin, which Lorenzo finds to be part of her appeal (in contrast to the darkness of her father's complexion).[95] Lorenzo says of a letter from his love:

> I know the hand; in faith, 'tis a fair hand,
> And whiter than the paper it writ on
> Is the fair hand that writ. (2.4.13-15)

Yet in ornamentation, 'ducat gold' can also refer to gold that is used to gild an object through the application of gold leaf.[96] Hence, in a play about slippery economic status and the difficulty of appraisal, being covered in ducats could be an ambiguous signifier that does not clarify if a woman is true or false, worthy or worthless. As ducat gold is used as a means of covering in gold, Jessica's sartorial ducats are a visual pun on this process: she is coated in ducat gold through the use of *actual* ducats. This circular representation of person and object through linguistic play is similar to the intimacy of relationship between Antonio and his ships, the 'merchant's merchants'.

This visual conversion of Jessica to money coincides with a sign of religious conversion. St. Mark the Evangelist is the patron saint of Venice.[97] The obverse of the ducat depicts the doge receiving the Venetian flag from this saint, demonstrating that it is God who endows him with authority.[98] The reverse often portrays Jesus Christ with a Bible [redacted].[99]

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93 'ducat, *n.*', Compounds, 'ducat gold *n.*', *OED Online*.
94 Edward Hall, *The union of the two noble and illustre famelies of Lancastre & Yorke, beeyng long in continual discension for the croune of this noble realme with all the actes done in bothe the tymes of the princes, bothe of the one linage and of the other, beginnyng at the tyme of kyng Henry the foweth, the first aucthor of this devision, and so successively proceadyng to the reigne of the high and prudent prince kyng Henry the eight, the undubitate flower and very heire of both the sayd linages.*, (1548), fol. BBb1r. 'ducat, *n.*', Compounds, 'ducat gold *n.*', *OED Online*.
95 Drakakis, ed., *The Merchant of Venice*, 288.
96 'ducat, *n.*', Compounds, 'ducat gold *n.*', *OED Online*.
97 David Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 47.
98 'Medieval Currencies', *Money Museum*, accessed on 23 Apr. 2019, https://moneymuseum.com/pdf/yesterday/04_Middle_Ages/19%20Medieval%20Currencies.pdf, 11. Fischer, *Econolingua*, 69.
99 Luca Einaudi, 'Florins and ducats: the return of gold to Europe in the late Middle Ages', Joint Centre for History and Economics: Magdalene College and King's College, University of Cambridge, accessed on 9 Mar. 2019, http://www.histecon.magd.cam.ac.uk/coins_april2013.html. Fischer, *Econolingua*, 69.

Ben Jonson's *Volpone, or The Fox* (1606) is a money comedy like *The Merchant of Venice*. In his first lines, the titular character worships his wealth, saying: 'Good morning to the day; and next, my gold! / Open the shrine that I may see my saint' (1.1.1-2).[100] He extends this religious language as he fawns over 'every relic / Of sacred treasure in this blessèd room' (1.1.12-13). This hagiographical figuring of fortune combined with the play's Venetian setting perhaps suggests, to a viewer in the know, that Volpone's gold hoard actually includes ducats that he sees as canonized because they feature St. Mark. Volpone twice mentions the currency explicitly later in the play (2.2.95, 2.2.215). And St. Mark is mentioned multiple times; two characters ask for his intercession, a fitting recipient of prayer in a play about fortunes lost and won in Venice (3.2.17, 3.4.14). In the decade preceding *Volpone*, *The Merchant of Venice* also gestures at the significance of the imagery on this currency. When Shakespeare's Jessica adorns herself in the ducats, she is enrobing her body in a kind of ceremonial attire of her own evangelization to Christ. Shylock emphasizes the relationship between this Venetian currency and Christianity when he mourns the loss of what he calls 'my Christian ducats' (2.8.16).[101]

The dynamic between Lorenzo, Jessica, and Shylock is fraught with anxiety over conversion. And it is a microcosm of the push-pull of attempted conversion between the groups of Christians and Jews within the play. As

[100] Ben Jonson, *Volpone, or The Fox*, ed. Brian Parker (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).
[101] Fischer, *Econolingua*, 32.

previously mentioned, Shylock is concerned about Jessica associating with gentiles, and his fears are realized when Jessica elopes with Lorenzo and converts to Christianity. Shakespeare overlays monetary conversion onto religious conversion, in a conflation of the economic and theological that was recognizable from contemporary Puritan sermonizing. David Zaret describes a didactic trend of using financial concepts to explain the terms of salvation through Christ:

> Puritan casuistry relied on lay knowledge of economic contracts in order to teach parishioners how to look for evidence of election…This theology…showed that the pursuit of one's ultimate religious interest had the same dimensions of accumulation, exchange, and ownership as the pursuit of one's economic self-interest.[102]

In other words, preachers used the schema of one's economic *contract* with another person as a homology for one's *covenant* with God. *The Merchant of Venice* draws on this homology. Shakespeare uses the language of conversion with regards to both Jessica and Portia. He explores marriage as a catalyst of conversion in Portia and Bassanio's relationship when she says to him: 'Myself, and what is mine, to you and yours / Is now converted' (3.2.166-67). In this transactionally-framed union, Portia's money becomes Bassanio's, but her entire self also becomes fungible as a currency that can be converted for his usage. Jessica discusses her own spiritual change with Lancelet, and she summarizes this discussion for her husband: 'He says you are no good member of the commonwealth, for, in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork' (3.5.30-33). This joke directly links religious conversion to shifts in the economy, succinctly capturing how marriage and markets are interconnected in this play and how women form part of this connection. When Jessica wears the Christian ducats, she is dressed for the occasion of her financial and religious conversion in her marriage to Lorenzo.

Salanio repeats Shylock's first reaction to Jessica's flight. Later, we hear Shylock's sentiments from his own lips. Having had time to recover from the initial shock of the news of his multiple losses, he now speaks in prose that is more coherent:

> A diamond gone cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfurt. The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now. Two thousand ducats in that, and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear; would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin. (3.1.76-82)

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[102] David Zaret, *The Heavenly Contract: Ideology and Organization in Pre-Revolutionary Puritanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 200-201.

His draconian attitude toward Jessica can be summarized as 'better dead than disobedient', in that he would have preferred his daughter's passing to her elopement, conversion, and theft of his fortune. Shell argues that Shylock experiences the loss of her to marriage to a gentile husband and conversion to Christianity as a kind of spiritual death, one that is so morally grievous that he would rather she died physically.[103] The imagery with which Shylock describes this feeling reveals the controlling impulse behind it. He wishes to see Jessica not only dead but already in a box with his jewels and money. He kept her locked in his house in life and would want her 'hearsed at [his] foot' in death. Jessica in a coffin would be the embodied version of Portia's effigy entombed in a casket. Fischer points out that Shylock plays on the meanings of 'coffin' as both 'casket' and 'coffer', implying that the corpse inside this container (and not just the ducats) are coin.[104] The burial of money is, from an economic perspective, a problematic tradition because it removes money from circulation.[105] As I previously observed, Portia is like the angel coin that would be taken out of circulation if pierced. Likewise, Ephraim argues that Shylock's 'image of an earring-adorned Jessica at his feet conveys his fear that the Christians have…punctured his daughter'.[106] Shylock would rather his daughter Jessica was dead than still 'circulating' among the men of Venice.

'Pound of flesh'

The climax of *The Merchant of Venice* is the trial scene in which Antonio is almost compelled to forfeit a pound of his flesh for defaulting on a loan of 3,000 ducats. This scene is also a climax of the monetary concerns of the play, and more specifically the theme of person-as-money. Across the previous acts, the play has accrued a vocabulary of currency – noble, angel, crown, and ducat – that primes us to hear the phrase 'pound of flesh' and think of it in the sense of the monetary pound. Fischer describes the pound in the period: 'The pound sterling, [was an] English money of account, originally equal to a pound weight of silver, from which two hundred and forty pennies of approximately equal weight were coined…[and it was] [a]lso equal to twenty shillings…[N]o single coin consistently represented an English pound value'.[107] The pound differs from the other

[103] Shell, *Money, Language, and Thought*, 61. Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 71-72.
[104] Fischer, *Econolingua*, 56.
[105] Crump, 'Coins: Exploring the Unexpected'.
[106] Ephraim, *Reading the Jewish Woman on the Elizabethan Stage*, 138.
[107] Fischer, *Econolingua*, 107.

currency that I have discussed in the play because it had never existed in the form of coins when *The Merchant of Venice* was written.[108]

The pound's function in this play is unique in another crucial way. While other characters are related to coins and specie, in the moment when Shylock demands that Antonio forfeit a pound of flesh, Antonio does not need to be *related* to a form of currency. He is not like Portia who is coveted like an angel, or Jessica elided with ducats, or Bassanio symbolically made king by a crown, or authority figures described as noble. Antonio can stand *as* currency in his own right, in his own body. The fact that it is specifically English money hits close to home: Shylock's 'reasonable' demand is part of Shakespeare's reflection on – and indictment of – domestic economic practices. This ascribing of meaning is a familiar process, both in terms of the way that coins are imbued by a social contract with value, and the way that props are imbued with significance on stage. Currency is what a society agrees that it is, while a prop develops meaning through the suggestion of the players and the belief of the audience.[109] Antonio's body becomes propertied when it is assigned the meaning of something non-human – when, like Frances Teague's description of props, it is made to '*mean differently*'. In this case the meaning of the body is money. Currency, too, is a taxonomy born of mutual action between two parties: if it is *offered* as currency and *accepted* as currency, then it *is* currency. Of course, in the case of currency this process occurs within the authoritative sphere of the law that allows this kind of utility.[110] This utility was agreed between Antonio and Shylock in their contract, which is a legal document.

This legal sanctioning and its soundness are both borne out by the fact that Shylock's case would have been unimpeachable save for a technicality. The court does rule in Shylock's favor. Hence the fact that the Duke asks for mercy on Antonio's behalf: 'then 'tis thought / Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse' (4.1.18-19) and 'We all expect a gentle answer, Jew!' (4.1.33). Had Shylock been in the wrong, the Duke would not be reliant on him changing his mind. When Portia (standing in for Bellario) is called before the court for her expertise, she also attests to the validity of the contract, saying, 'there is no power in Venice / Can alter a

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[108] More than one source claims that the pound evolved from money of account to coin in 1583. Sources that make this claim include: Fumita Ojima, 'Money in Shakespeare', 2004, accessed on 26 May 2019, http://kyoolee.homestead.com/Money_in_Shakespeare.pdf, 114; Terry Breverton, *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About the Tudors But Were Afraid to Ask* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2015), 234-44. But I have found no detailed written evidence to substantiate this claim, nor have I encountered documentation of any artifact determined to be a pound coin from that time. I must conclude that the pound remained exclusively a money of account when Shakespeare wrote *The Merchant of Venice*.

[109] Crump, 'Coins: Exploring the Unexpected'.

[110] Crump, 'Coins: Exploring the Unexpected'.

decree established' (4.1.214-15). She, too, is brought to the point of asking for mercy of the man whom she has decided has the right to part of Antonio's body: 'Then must the Jew be merciful' (4.1.178). The Duke and Portia leave it to Shylock's discretion as to whether or not he will forgive the debt. They concede that he is within his *legal rights* to demand the pound of flesh; they can only request that he not claim it because it would not be *morally right* to do so. Their pleas are ultimately ineffectual. Shylock sticks to seeking what he knows is owed him: 'I crave the law, / The penalty and forfeit of my bond' (4.1.202-203).

It is only through a 'verbal quibble' that Antonio escapes bodily forfeiture and death: Shylock cannot find a way to take a pound of flesh without accidentally taking more or also removing blood.[111] While earlier in the play, there were linguistic cues that indicated that Antonio felt pulled apart by financial strain, physical dismemberment through the removal of a pound of flesh proves difficult to perform under the exact terms of the contract. Therefore, Shylock must abandon the entire business. One of the unnerving aspects of the trial, then, is that if the contract had been more precisely worded nothing would have stopped Shylock from claiming the pound of flesh. Antonio's escape is too close for comfort: the case may not have laid bare Antonio's flesh for removal, but it has exposed the dehumanization of a person's body, whether that body remains intact or not.

Alongside the process of dehumanizing the debtor runs another in which money becomes strangely animate. In discussing Shylock's ability to grow his capital through interest, he and Antonio have the following exchange:

> ANTONIO:
> [I]s your gold and silver ewes and rams?
> JEW:
> I cannot tell, I make it breed as fast. (1.3.91-92)

By framing Shylock's multiplication of money as akin to animal husbandry, Shakespeare explores the way that money takes on the attributes of a living organism capable of increase.[112] This figurative language also draws on an aspect of antisemitism: 'Canon law forbade the taking of interest. The taking of interest, according to Thomas Aquinas, was impossible, for money, not being alive, could not reproduce. Jews, in taking money, treated money as if it were alive, as if it were a sexualized object'.[113] In demonstrating that Shylock treats money as

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[111] Quentin Skinner, 'Why Shylocke Loses His Case: Judicial Rhetoric in *The Merchant of Venice*', in *The Oxford Handbook of English Law and Literature: 1500-1700*, ed. Lorna Hutson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 112.
[112] Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 74.
[113] Sander L. Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 124.

though it is living, Shakespeare sets up a context in which Shylock may view the pound of flesh that he removes from Antonio's body as alive, while the rest of Antonio has died.

Before the trial, Antonio writes Bassanio to inform him that the forfeiture of the bond is imminent. This letter stokes Bassanio's and the audience's detailed fear of what is about to happen to its author. Bassanio imagines that the letter has open wounds, figuring the paper as Antonio's skin, and the ink as his blood:

> Here is a letter, lady,
> The paper as the body of my friend,
> And every word in it a gaping wound
> Issuing life-blood. (3.2.262-65)

Bassanio sees the letter as a symbol of the fate that will befall Antonio's actual body when the debt that it describes is paid. The figuring of paper as skin evokes the contemporary practice of using animal skins to make vellum and other parchment, contributing to the play's motif of human exploitation described in terms of the treatment of livestock.[114] Patricia Parker traces a kind of 'blood flow' in the play by reading moments that suggest incision, lancing, and bloodletting, including: 'If you prick us do we not bleed?' (3.1.58)[115] She focuses on the clown Lancelet (or, as per her interpretation, 'lancet') as the personified surgeon's instrument, and Shylock as the surgeon who seeks to remove a part of Antonio.[116] In conjuring the image of the bloodletter, Shakespeare preys on a visceral fear of a medical practice that may do more harm than good by taking too much from the body that it treats: as will later be revealed, Shylock himself cannot determine how to take flesh without blood, or how to avoid taking an excess of blood.[117] While Parker discusses the figure of the bloodletter as evoked in *The Merchant of Venice*, she does not quite home in on the fact that Antonio's letter to Bassanio is a 'blood letter' in two senses: a missive metaphorically written in this bodily fluid, and a descriptor of the bond that will cause Antonio's blood to be let.

The document written in the blood of the debtor recalls Marlowe's eponymous Doctor Faustus (1592), who cuts his arm to sign the contract with Lucifer in his own blood.[118] This connection to Faustus contributes to Shakespeare's more general reworking of the familiar 'deal with the devil' plot device. Lancelet gestures toward this plot device when he says: 'Certainly the Jew

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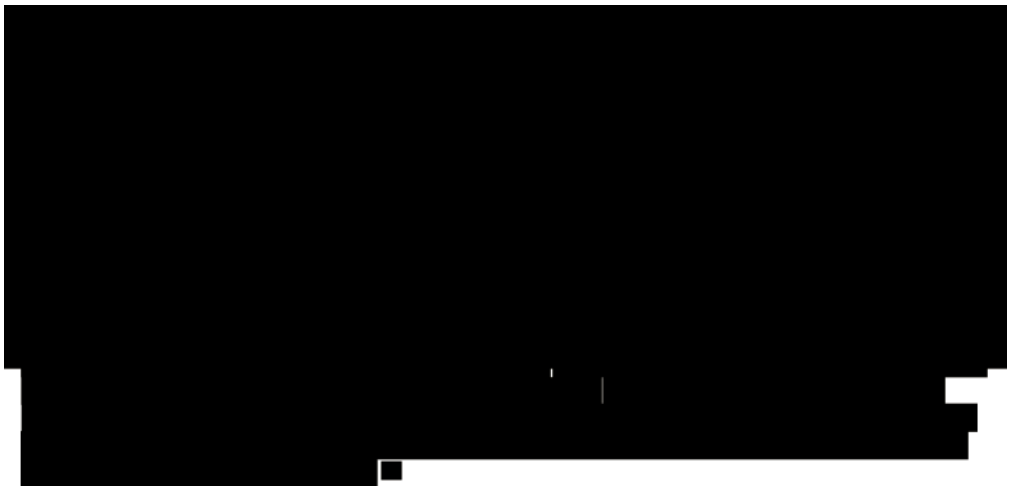
[114] Suzanne Penuel, 'Castrating the Creditor in *The Merchant of Venice*', *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 44.2 (2004): 261.
[115] Patricia Parker, 'Cutting Both Ways: Bloodletting, Castration/Circumcision, and the "Lancelet" of *The Merchant of Venice*', in *Alternative Shakespeares 3*, ed. Diana E. Henderson (London: Routledge, 2008), 97.
[116] Patricia Parker, 'Cutting Both Ways', 96-98.
[117] Patricia Parker, 'Cutting Both Ways', 99.
[118] Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, ed. Paul Menzer (London: New Mermaids, 2019).

is the very devil incarnation' (2.2.24). In describing the letter about the bond as bloody and thereby recalling *Doctor Faustus*, Bassanio might imply that Shylock is the devil to whom Antonio may lose his soul, in addition to his body and his life. In contrast to Faustus's situation, Antonio will not cut himself. If his body is to be cut, that task will be performed by Shylock. Some bloodletters' guides link the acts and implements of cutting and writing.[119] In a 1585 surgical treatise in translation, Johann Jacob Wecker's expertise on treating 'an inflamation with tumor' advises 'pricking it with a lancet point, or quill'.[120] Hence, a quill can be used to cut or write. Lancets are distinct from quills, but they are similar in appearance: both are slender, handheld tools that narrow to a point to provide precision against the surfaces of skin or paper, respectively [redacted]. Through the comparisons of moneylender to bloodletter, debtor to document, skin to paper, Shylock's potential act of cutting into Antonio becomes a process of writing meaning onto his body.



[119] Patricia Parker, 'Cutting Both Ways', 109.
[120] Johann Jacob Wecker, *A compendious chyrurgerie: gathered, & translated (especially) out of Wecker, at the request of certaine, but encreased and enlightened with certaine annotations, resolutions & supplyes, not impertinent to this treatise, nor unprofitable to the reader: published for the benefite of all his countreymen, by Ihon Banester maister in chyrurgerie.* (London: 1585), sig. G4v-G5r. Patricia Parker, 'Cutting Both Ways', 97.
[redacted]

During the trial, the body becomes currency in the sense that it becomes an object that can be assigned the meaning of money. The writing on the bond can write the meaning of money onto Antonio's flesh. The possibility of weighing to determine value reinforces this function of flesh as currency. For Morocco, weighing is a process of self-assessment that he engages in during the hazard when testing his worth against that of the silver casket, saying to himself: 'Pause there, Morocco, / And weigh thy value with an even hand' (2.7.24-25). But to Bassanio, who comments on makeup's ability to alter true appearance, weight does not equate with worth: 'Look on beauty, / And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight' (3.2.88-89). Drakakis here notes that 'cosmetics…could be purchased by the ounce', but Bassanio, who has eyes for the real Portia, is not interested in the kind of beauty that can be measured and bought as merchandise.[122] In the early modern period, weighing was used to determine the worth not only of merchandise but of coins. Merchants used scales (sometimes in sets with a balance and coin weights) to determine if coins weighed as much as they were supposed to, for they could be clipped of some of their precious metal [redacted].[123] In the sixteenth century, the association between merchants and scales was so strong that Hans Holbein the Younger used scales in his portrait *The Merchant Georg Gisze* (1532) as one of his subject's representative 'props' [redacted].[124]

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[122] Drakakis, ed., *The Merchant of Venice*, 299.
[123] '17th-century scales and coin weights', *Discovering Literature: Shakespeare & Renaissance*, British Library, accessed on 26 Apr. 2019, https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/17th-century-scales-and-coin-weights.
[124] Kim W. Woods, 'Holbein and the reform of images', in *Viewing Renaissance Art*, eds Kim W. Woods, Carol M. Richardson, and Angeliki Lymberopoulou (London: Yale University Press, 2007), 278-79.

In an exchange between Portia and Shylock, the implication may be that Shylock has brought his own tools:

> PORTIA:
> It is so. Are there balance here to weigh
> The flesh?
> JEW:
> I have them ready. (4.1.251-52)

The potential use of the scales suggests that, rather than accepting flesh as a substitute for money, Shylock is accepting flesh *as* money, for he will determine its worth with the same method. The weighing of human flesh like coin both results from and reinforces an atmosphere in which the worth of neither a person nor currency is trusted. It relates to concerns about shifting value and the ability to

judge value by appearance, much like the question of whether a certain casket 'holds' value or not.

By bringing the merchant's scales into the courtroom, Shakespeare symbolically draws on the mythology of the goddess Justice. He has previously invoked her and her standard hand prop in *Henry VI, Part 2*, for example, when the king refers to 'Justice' equal scales, / Whose beam stands sure, whose rightful cause prevails' (2.1.195-96).[126] Yet by using the scales as a functional measure of currency as well as a symbol of the court's fairness in *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare creates an uneasy connection between commerce and justice. Shylock, responsible for cutting and weighing the flesh, seems to be in some sense the arbiter of justice through an economic form of measurement. Commerce and justice are linked not only in this prop but also in the language of the court: both the Duke and Portia ask for mercy, but this scene puns 'mercy' and 'merchant' in a manner that trades in their shared etymology.[127] Portia argues that 'the quality of mercy is not strained' (4.1.180), but it is at the very least tainted by the lexicon of the market. In that speech, too, she repeats the punning on 'crown' that she employed with Bassanio, saying that mercy 'becomes / The throned monarch better than his crown' (4.1.184-85). The play's slippage once more into the language of coinage suggests that any argument about law or morality is also inescapably commercial.

The trial's focus on mercy reflects the religious overtones of the play, some of which I started to explore in my discussion of Jessica and her conversion. The anti-Semitic abuse that the Christians of the play perpetrate, the conversion of Shylock's daughter, and the attempted assimilation of Shylock himself lead to a framing of Antonio's bodily forfeit as a religious ritual. Christian characters dehumanize Shylock because of his Jewish faith and ethnicity, saying 'the Jew is the very devil' (2.2.24) and calling him 'the dog Jew' (2.8.14). Shylock is shown to be a practicing and observant Jew who abstains from eating pork, raises his daughter in the faith, and has a strong sense of community with other Jews such as Tubal. He frustrates attempts at cultural and religious assimilation in a manner that was much denigrated in early modern Europe.[128] In response to Shylock's Jewish identity, the Christians try to convert him with the word 'gentle', which

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[126] William Shakespeare, *King Henry VI, Part 2*, ed. Ronald Knowles, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 496-530.
[127] Frederick Turner, *Shakespeare's Twenty-first Century Economics: The Morality of Love and Money* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 88. Steven Doloff, 'The Qualitas of Mercy: Etymological Conversion in *The Merchant of Venice*', *Shakespeare Newsletter*, 59.3 (2009): 99.
[128] Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 27-28.

puns on 'gentile', according to Sigurd Burckhardt.[129] Antonio says to Shylock: 'Hie thee, gentle Jew. / The Hebrew will turn Christian, he grows kind' (1.3.173-74). The Duke later cautions him: 'We all expect a gentle answer, Jew' (4.1.33). 'Gentile Jew' is an oxymoron that attempts not only to convert but also to *erase* an aspect of the person it describes.

While the word 'gentle' does reinforce the dichotomy of Christian/Jew that sets Shylock as the 'other', I would add that it also contributes to the figuring of him as bestial. 'Gentle' can be used to describe a tamed animal.[130] In 1532, Gentian Hervet's translation of Xenophon contrasts gentleness and tameness: 'For we call all these beastis gentyll / the whiche be goodly, great, and profitable, and be nat fierce but tame amonge men'.[131] The application of the term 'gentle' to Shylock implies that he is like a wild beast domesticated by Christianity. This theme of the taming of livestock recurs in the play's discussion of animal castration. Suzanne Penuel describes '[t]he castration references surrounding Antonio – his own "wether" (castrated sheep) label (IV.i.114), the threatened removal of flesh, the final location outside the band of men who boast of their potency'.[132] If we recall the images of dismemberment that create a sense of threat at the start of the play, we can perceive that these images now narrow into the specific fear of the removal of male genitalia.

In a play that has already featured one religious conversion, it is possible to read the potential cutting of Antonio's flesh not only as figurative *castration* (or perhaps even literal castration, depending on where Shylock decides to cut the flesh from) but also *circumcision*.[133] The salience of circumcision in this play stems from a historical context in which Jewishness is understood as a faith, an ethnicity, a culture, and also an embodied identity. Sander L. Gilman writes of the way that the connection between Jewish men and circumcision has been perceived: 'It is the practice of circumcision which defines the body of the male Jew…The Jewish male is not quite a "whole" male, [*sic*] he is different and his difference is what marks the entire category of the Jew'.[134] Shakespeare's characters draw on the stereotype of the Jewish body as incomplete by disparaging Jewishness as a more general absence or lack. Lorenzo calls Shylock a 'faithless Jew' (2.4.38); this phrase is another oxymoron, as Judaism is a faith. And Shakespeare also hints at the

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[129] Sigurd Burckhardt, '*The Merchant of Venice*: The Gentle Bond', *English Literary History*, 29.3 (1962): 244, 257-58.
[130] 'gentle, *adj.* and *n.*', A.*adj.*4.b., *OED Online*.
[131] Xenophon, *Xenophons treatise of householde.*, trans. Gentian Hervet (1532), sig. F7r. 'gentle, *adj.* and *n.*', A.*adj.*4.b., *OED Online*.
[132] Penuel, 'Castrating the Creditor in *The Merchant of Venice*', 261.
[133] Patricia Parker, 'Cutting Both Ways', 95-96.
[134] Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, 155.

stereotype of the feminized male Jew (that is, one who lacks male genitalia) by implying that Shylock menstruates.[135]

In a predominantly Christian society, such as early modern Venice or England, the circumcised body is not just different from the gentile body; it represents its very antithesis. The Christian body, in contrast to the Jewish, is marked by its foreskin – its non-circumcised state. James A. Boon writes of this distinction: '(Un)circumcision involves signs separating an "us" from a "them" entangled in various discourses of identity and distancing'.[136] In *The Merchant of Venice*, this dichotomy of circumcised/uncircumcised renders the body a site onto which religious identity is written, as well as a battleground on which forced conversions are attempted. As soon as Shylock has heard of Jessica's elopement and related conversion, he becomes obsessed with claiming a pound of Antonio's flesh.[137] The other characters realize that one follows the other. In this conversation, Salanio suspects that Shylock will seek his revenge upon Antonio, a revenge that, in the financial language of the play, is framed as remuneration:

> SALARINO:
> Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
> Crying "His stones, his daughter and his ducats!"
> SALANIO:
> Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
> Or he shall *pay* for this (2.8.23-26; emphasis mine)

I suggest that Shylock views – whether consciously or unconsciously – the claiming of Antonio's flesh as a homology for taking of the foreskin and conversion to Judaism, a counter-conversion to Jessica's conversion to Christianity. Just as the violent end of *Titus Andronicus* is a corruption of the ritual of the liturgy, the end of *The Merchant of Venice* threatens to become a corruption of circumcision. After Shylock has learned of his daughter's departure, he declares to Tubal his intent to take a specific part of Antonio's body: 'I will have the heart of him if he forfeit' (3.1.114-15). During the trial, we learn that the location of the flesh to be removed is stipulated in the contract. Shylock says to Portia:

> Ay, his breast.
> So says the bond, doth it not, noble judge?
> "Nearest his heart": Those are the very words. (4.1.248-50)

The taking of the heart displaces the circumcision of the penis, for Romans indicates that circumcision occurs spiritually in the heart:

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[135] Drakakis, ed., *The Merchant of Venice*, 212.
[136] James A. Boon, 'Circumscribing circumcision/uncircumcision: An essay amid the history of difficult description', in *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 556.
[137] Shell, *Money, Language, and Thought*, 61. Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 71-72.

> For he is not a Jew which is one outward: neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew which is one within, and the circumcision *is* of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God. (Rom. 2:28-29)[138]

This passage, with its distinction between the spirit and the letter, gestures toward a legal or contractual aspect of circumcision. Other books of the Bible clarify these aspects of the ritual: 'a man on the Sabbath receive circumcision, that the Law of Moses should not be broken' (Jn. 7:23), and 'He gave him also the covenant of circumcision' (Acts 7:8). In *The Merchant of Venice's* ritual, the bond has taken on aspects of a covenant. Circumcision is an act that forms a commitment between God and humanity. Through the removal of flesh, the change to Antonio that is sought is not only a financial but also a religious conversion, much like that of Jessica whom Shylock seeks to avenge.

In the end, it is not Antonio who is converted to Judaism but Shylock who is converted to Christianity. The court punishes Shylock through seizures on many fronts: his capital, his business, and his faith. These compound the earlier loss of his daughter. Shylock experiences these losses in a bodily fashion, for describing his daughter's disobedience he exclaims: 'My own flesh and blood to rebel!' (3.1.31). And he expresses that penury could lead to his death: 'You take my life / When you do take the means whereby I live' (4.1.372-73). Antonio is not stripped of his pound of flesh, his heart. But Shylock is stripped of the meaning of his circumcised flesh, the spiritual circumcision in his heart that binds him to God through his Jewish faith. Romans elucidates this process in which circumcision can be undone through transgression, for in the eyes of the court Shylock has transgressed against Antonio by seeking his death: 'For circumcision verily is profitable, if thou do the Law: but if thou be a transgressor of the Law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision' (Rom. 2:25). If circumcision is profitable, Shylock conversely finds uncircumcision to be an aspect of his unprofitable future.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude with an analysis of Shylock's most famous monologue, one that relies on the rhetoric of embodiment:

> SALARINO:
> Why, I am sure if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh. What's that good for?
> JEW:

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[138] All Biblical references are from the 1599 Geneva Bible unless otherwise stated. 'The 1599 Geneva Bible', *Bible Gateway*, Tolle Lege Press, https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/1599-Geneva-Bible-GNV/. James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, Twentieth Anniversary Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 126-28. Drakakis, 'Introduction', in *The Merchant of Venice*, 35-36.

> To bait fish withal; if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me and hindered me half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies, and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die? And if you wrong us shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge! If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge! The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction. (3.1.46-66)

This heady speech comes at the play's fulcrum in Act 3, uniquely positioned to comment on the events that have come before and those that will follow, as well as how these events reflect attitudes toward the human body and its value. It begins with the claim, which glances backward at *Titus Andronicus*, that revenge is a hungry impulse that feeds on the pain, death, and even bodies of others. Justifying his vindictiveness, Shylock argues against Antonio's prejudice and specifically his antisemitism. This argument hinges on his and the Jewish people's embodiment in an appeal for both characters and audience to recognize and empathize with him through their shared humanity. The monologue's ontological argument approaches the following tautology: I am human because I am human; that is, I am a member of humanity because I am within a human body. I am a human in the *philosophical* sense because I am a human in the *physical* sense. From the framing of the body in this speech comes not monetary worth, but the worth of personhood, dignity, and a proposed equality under the law.

But, as Herbrechter has observed as a habit of Shakespeare's writing, the play deconstructs its attitude toward the human. For though embodiment allows for a recognition of shared humanity, embodiment is also a state that can be debased. Despite the fact that Shylock will need to plead his case in a court of law backed by religious tenets, his argument claims for him neither legal standing nor moral rectitude.[139] Instead, his rationale is that he is human because he shares the experience of embodiment universal to humanity, and because he has the capacity not to be good, but to be as flawed as the Christian examples around him. But Shylock's focus on the body as the source of valued humanity is a point of irony (for Shakespeare, if not for Shylock, who is sincere). The irony of this speech is its incongruity with Shylock's overarching attitude toward the human body, as well

[139] Bailey, 'Shylock and the Slaves', 11.

as the process of physical dehumanization that permeates the play. The speech builds toward a claim of similarity (physiological, experiential, and behavioral) that stems from embodiment. Yet when Shylock claims the need for revenge, it is an act of dehumanization through maltreatment of the body, and the viewing of it as potential currency.[140]

[140] Ryan, 'Shakespeare's Inhumanity', 224.

Chapter 3
***Othello*: The Body as Textile**

[redacted]

Introduction

This chapter considers textiles as they interact with the human body and characterization in *Othello*. I focus on the handkerchief, the most pivotal and most studied prop in the play. The handkerchief literally overlaps with the human body: 'it was dyed in mummy, which the skillful / Conserved of maidens' hearts' (3.4.76-77). It is a bodily object that stands in for Desdemona in a symbolic manner. I analyze how the handkerchief becomes a part of Desdemona's misogynist representation in a way that dehumanizes her, making her a victim of objectification, utility, and ultimately disposability to the men in this play. In contrast to the bodily objects of *Titus Andronicus* and *The Merchant of Venice* (the cannibalistic meat-pie and the pound of human flesh that is not quite carved out), *Othello's* handkerchief enters into a sustained mutuality of representation with a character in which the two mirror aspects of each other. Desdemona takes on the handkerchief's soft, comforting, inanimate representation, while the handkerchief becomes a litmus test of Desdemona's chastity or lack thereof. While focusing on the handkerchief, this chapter also analyzes other fabrics in the play. In 'Staging Women's Relations to Textiles in Shakespeare's *Othello* and *Cymbeline*', Susan Frye discusses a nexus of the purse, bedsheets, Desdemona's handkerchief, and the duplicate handkerchief that Bianca fails to make.[3] My chapter on *Othello* also considers Desdemona's clothing when Emilia undresses her, the curtains that occlude Desdemona's body after her murder, and Othello's black body as rendered through black fabric.[4] In doing so, it analyzes the broad web of textiles that condemn, conceal, or substitute for bodies and facilitate the dehumanization of various characters.

In his study of materiality and gender in the period, Will Fisher argues that the handkerchief's function *vis-à-vis* Desdemona moves beyond the categories of clothing, costuming, and accessory and into that of 'auxiliary organ'.[5] The handkerchief is not just *on* her body or *carried by* her body, but *part of* her body to the degree that we begin to see her hand in the latter acts as '*a-hand-without-a-handkerchief*'.[6] On one level, we can understand the strength of the relationship between the handkerchief and Desdemona by considering the real-world function of clothing in the Renaissance. The accuracy of clothing's representation of rank

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[3] Susan Frye, 'Staging Women's Relations to Textiles in Shakespeare's *Othello* and *Cymbeline*', in *Early Modern Visual Culture: Representation, Race, and Empire in Renaissance England*, eds Peter Erickson and Clark Hulse (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 222-31.
[4] Ian Smith, '*Othello's* Black Handkerchief', in *Othello: The State of Play*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 110.
[5] Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, 53.
[6] Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, 53, emphasis in source.

was paramount to the point of being legally protected through the various permutations of sumptuary law.[7] For example, a 1597 proclamation from Queen Elizabeth seeking to curb 'inordinate excess in apparel' states:

> For women's apparel her majesty doth straightly charge and command that: none shall wear in her apparel cloth of gold or silver tissued, silk of color purple, under the degree of a countess, except viscountesses to wear cloth of gold or silver tissued in their kirtles only…[8]

Such decrees were precise in both the textiles described and the titles of the personages allowed to wear them. They attest to how specifically textiles could articulate information about the people who wore them, and how ready people were to read clothing as a marker of status and identity. Yet the playhouses upended this system in which fabric was meant to communicate the truth about the wearer. Tanya Pollard observes: 'Low-born actors could flout sumptuary laws – Elizabethan regulations that stipulated who could wear certain colors, materials, and styles of clothing – by wearing robes intended only for kings or other nobles'.[9]

In these conflicting ways of making meaning, clothes and accessories on stage are a kind of text attendant to the body that can be true or false, read and potentially misread. Linda Woodbridge explains the relationship between text and textile: '[t]he Western imagination links storytelling with crafts and technologies of cloth. "Text" and "textile" come from Latin *textus*, that which is woven'.[10] Frye's historicist analysis of women's relationship to fabric in the period claims that women were conscious of cloth as a form of communication. Through the domestic production of fabric and objects made of fabric, women worked to express a legible identity and sense of community. But Frye also notes that on stage, in *Othello* for example, the task of reading these textile texts is often carried out by men, who tend to sexualize both the female characters and their work.[11] In history, then, women had the opportunity to frame their own representation in textile. Yet through the dramatization of this history, playwrights added a patriarchal frame to this tradition when it was performed on stage. In analyzing *The Merchant of Venice*, we can ask: 'Who gets to assign value to people as if they are currency?' In *Othello*: 'Who gets to read (and misread) people through the textiles

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[7] Rachel Shulman, 'Sumptuary Legislation and the Fabric Construction of National Identity in Early Modern England', *Constructing the Past*, 8.1 (2007): 73-74.
[8] 'Enforcing Statutes and Proclamations of Apparel', in *The Royal Proclamations: Volume 3: The Later Tudors (1588-1603)*, eds Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 174,178.
[9] Tanya Pollard, *Shakespeare's Theater: A Sourcebook* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), xiii. For information on the sources of clothing on the Renaissance stage, see: Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 175-206.
[10] Linda Woodbridge, 'Patchwork: Piecing the Early Modern Mind in England's First Century of Print Culture', *English Literary Renaissance*, 23.1 (1993): 34. Frye, 'Staging Women's Relations to Textiles', 218.
[11] Susan Frye, *Pens and Needles: Women's Textualities in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 2, 6, 162-63. Frye, 'Staging Women's Relations to Textiles in Shakespeare's *Othello* and *Cymbeline*', 221.

associated with them?' Contextualizing *Othello's* handkerchief, Andrew Sofer notes that 'blood-stained clothes recur in Shakespeare as signs of death and wounding that are open to *misreading*: Posthumus's bloody handkerchief in *Cymbeline*, like Thisbe's bloody mantle, misleadingly betokens the death of the heroine'.[12] By writing of the handkerchief dyed in blood, in all the intertextuality that it evokes, Shakespeare locates it within a class of object, one that is notoriously inscrutable. In Desdemona's case, the misreading of the bodily prop of the handkerchief – and through it the misreading of her body – has tragic consequences. *Othello's* handkerchief and other of its textiles – operating within the norms of English fashion, sumptuary law, the provocative costuming of the theatre, and Shakespeare's own corpus – are poised to represent characters in powerful, intimate, sometimes honest and sometimes dishonest, but always complexly layered ways.

'Delicate creature'

I would like to begin by thinking about how Desdemona and the handkerchief's representation become entangled in *Othello*. Paul Yachnin argues that over the course of the play Desdemona takes the place of the handkerchief.[13] But an analysis of Shakespeare's language attendant to Desdemona shows that the reverse could be true: Desdemona is likened to fabric to such a degree that when the handkerchief finally appears in Act 3, *it* reminds us of *her*. Before the handkerchief or the bedclothes ever enter the physical world of the play, the linguistic world is already furnished with textural – and especially textile – language. In only the twelfth line, Iago describes Othello's persuasive oratory as 'bombast circumstance' (1.1.12). Here, E.A.J. Honigmann reads 'bombast' as 'cotton or cotton wool, used as stuffing for clothes' and links it to the word 'bombastic' as a descriptor of language.[14] According to the *OED* on the noun 'bombast', the first usage is as the object in 1568, and its later usage is the descriptor of a style of speech in 1589.[15] In 1568, a poetry anthology from Thomas Howell uses this word to contrast the hardness of metals with the softness of woolens:

> From heavie things, as lead and tinne,
> with brasse and yron aye.
> From all meate soft, as wooll and flaxe

[12] Andrew Sofer, 'Felt Absences: The Stage Properties of *Othello*'s Handkerchief', *Comparative Drama*, 31.3 (1997): 373, emphasis mine.
[13] Paul Yachnin, 'Wonder-effects: *Othello's* handkerchief', in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, eds Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 329.
[14] Honigmann, ed., *Othello,* 116.
[15] 'bombast, *n.*', 1.a, 3.a, *OED Online*.

bombaste and winds that bloe…[16]

Defining the figurative sense, the *OED* lists for the adjectival form of 'bombast': 'Of language: Turgid, grandiloquent'.[17] John Marston relies on this definition in *Jacke Drums Entertainment* (1601) when Planet complains: 'I do hate these bumbaste wits, / That are puft up with arrogant conceit'.[18] In *Othello*, the obvious denotation of Iago's word choice of 'bombast' is what he perceives to be the strength (and even overconfidence) of Othello's speech; yet the connotation that he might also convey is a softness that emasculates Othello. As I will explore in more detail, one of the play's motifs is a correlation of softness with femininity. The one word 'bombast', through the disparate portraits it paints of Othello, is a microcosmic example of Iago's penchant for doublespeak.

This conflation of the linguistic and textile can prepare us to understand *Othello's* language and the experiences that it describes *as textile*. This play places primacy on the sense of sight through the protagonist's obsession with 'ocular proof' (3.3.353). But through Shakespeare's word choice our sensory awareness might become tactile, as well as visual. Indeed, touch and sight may have been perceived as vying senses during the period. In *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture*, Elizabeth D. Harvey notes that '[touch] is crucial to the history of medicine, anatomy, and science, especially as the instruments of knowing shift from a humoral theory that reads the body through all its senses to an epistemology that grants increasing primacy to the ocular'.[19] At the center of repeated textural adjectives sits Desdemona, a character lauded for her softness before she enters the stage in the third scene of the play. Maureen Quilligan argues, of Desdemona's identity: 'Desdemona is perfect. But what does that perfection mean? The wife is nobody, what she does is nobodiness. Her very self consists in not being a self, not being even a body, but a bodiless obedient silence'.[20] I want to demonstrate how Desdemona's bodiliness is subsumed by the physical traits of the handkerchief, traits that the men around her find to be the feminine ideal. As Edward A. Snow observes of this play, '[r]epression pervades the entire world of *Othello*'.[21] What Quilligan describes as Desdmona's 'bodiless

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[16] Thomas Howell, *The arbor of amitie, wherin is comprised pleasant poems and pretie poesies, set foorth by Thomas Howell Gentleman.* (London: 1568), sig. D6r. 'bombast, *n.*', 1.a, *OED Online*.
[17] 'bombast, *adj.*', 2., *OED Online*.
[18] John Marston, *Jacke Drums Entertainment*, in *The Plays of John Marston: In Three Volumes: Volume Three*, ed. H. Harvey Wood (St. Clair Shores: Scholarly Press, 1979), 22. This edition has no line numbers. 'bombast, *adj.*', 2., *OED Online*.
[19] Elizabeth D. Harvey, 'Introduction: The "Sense of All Senses"', in *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Elizabeth D. Harvey (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 2.
[20] Maureen Quilligan, 'Staging Gender: William Shakespeare and Elizabeth Cary', in *Ashgate Critical Essays on Women Writers in England, 1550-1700: Volume 6: Elizabeth Cary*, ed. Karen Raber (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 548.
[21] Edward A. Snow, 'Sexual Anxiety and the Male Order of Things in *Othello*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 10.3 (1980): 384.

obedient silence' is the ultimately unfulfillable compulsion to erase her body and her speech due to masculine discomfort with her obvious desires and sexual potential. Such bodilessness and silence is alarmingly reminiscent of the twisted ideal that Shakespeare presents of Lavinia after she is attacked in *Titus Andronicus*, for Lavinia is bodily reduced by dismemberment and has difficulty communicating due to the loss of her tongue and hands. But I contend that 'bodiless obedient silence' captures only half of Desdemona's representation. As I explore throughout this chapter, she is a figure torn between bodiliness and bodilessness, sexual innocence and carnal desire, silence and speech, men's perceptions of her and her knowledge of herself.

Like Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Desdemona is first conjured as a fantasy through the words of men who sing her praises before the flesh-and-blood character ever appears. In *Othello*, this fantasy is a particularly haptic one. The first thing Othello says of his wife is: 'I love the gentle Desdemona' (1.2.25). 'Gentle' could mean, at that time, '[n]ot harsh or irritating to the touch; soft, tender; yielding to pressure, pliant, supple'.[22] A study of African and Asian culture from 1555 uses the word to describe clothing: 'Their garmentes by the reason of the finesse of the wolle of their shiepe specially above other, are verye softe and gentle clothe'.[23] With this word, Othello characterizes Desdemona as a biddable wife while also anticipating the pleasing texture of her body. Her father Brabantio also calls her 'gentle mistress' (1.3.78), as well as 'a maid so tender, fair and happy' (1.2.66). 'Tender' and 'fair' can be both figurative and literal, for 'tender' can mean '[s]oft or delicate in texture and consistence' in addition to sensitive in feeling, and fair can mean just in action or pale in appearance.[24] Shakespeare allows both aspects of these words to contribute to Scene One's exposition of Desdemona's character. Brabantio also describes 'her delicate youth' (1.2.74); Iago, her 'delicate tenderness' (2.1.229-30); Cassio, a 'delicate creature' (2.3.20). 'Delicate', in addition to meaning 'charming' and 'nice', can also mean 'fine in texture' and 'exquisitely soft', and even the more suggestive '[c]haracterized by pleasure or sensuous delight'.[25] Barnabe Googe, translating Conrad Heresbach's work on animal husbandry (1577), writes: 'the playne and the champion feeldes

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[22] 'gentle, *adj.* and *n.*', A.*adj*.5., *OED Online*.
[23] Joannes, *The fardle of facions conteining the aunciente maners, customes, and lawes, of the peoples enhabiting the two partes of the earth, called Affrike and Asie.* (London: 1556), sig. H2v. 'gentle, *adj.* and *n.*', A.*adj*.5., *OED Online*.
[24] 'tender, *adj.* (and *adv.*) and *n.3*', A.*adj*.(and *adv.*)I.1.a., A.*adj*.(and *adv.*)II.8.a., *OED Online*. 'fair, *adj.* and *n.1.*, A.*adj*.III.14.a.(a)., A.*adj*.IV.17., *OED Online.*
[25] 'delicate, *adj.* and *n.*', A.*adj*.I.1., A.*adj*.I.2.a., A.*adj*.II.6.a., *OED Online*.

and downes, are best for the delicatest and sonest woolled sheepe'.[26] Susan Frye writes that *Othello* and *Cymbeline* 'conflate women with cloth until they are perceived *as* cloth – cloth that is simultaneously metaphor and stage property'.[27] In *Othello*, men co-create this textile aspect of Desdemona's representation through their shared language.

'Gentle', 'tender', and 'delicate' are stock characterizing adjectives. These words are so prosaic that one might forget that they can work to create imagery, and that at the beginning of the seventeenth century they had established uses on sensory, tactile levels. They are descriptors of the yielding texture of concrete objects which, in metaphorical language, can be used to describe a person's abstract traits and temperament. The overlap of the literal and figurative in this case depends on an early modern understanding of touching: Harvey points out that '[a]lthough touch is usually associated with the surface of the body, it becomes a metaphor for conveyance into the interior of the subject'.[28] While these words describe Desdemona's character as a compliant woman, they also figure her body as a haptic object and even imply that many men in the play know from experience what her flesh feels like. Harvey singles out 'touch as a more diffuse sense, a world of sensation that incorporates the body, particularly the feminine body, into its operations'; the female body of Desdemona in this play is described, understood, and valued through touch and the language of touch.[29]

Desdemona first captures Othello's heart by sympathizing with him as she listens to his tales of suffering. He says:

> I did consent,
> And often did beguile her of her tears
> When I did speak of some distressful stroke. (1.3.156-58)

He continues in the same fashion, saying: 'She gave me for my pains a world of sighs' (1.3.160), and 'She loved me for the dangers I had passed / And I loved her that she did pity them' (1.3.168-69). Desdemona provides succor, and eases Othello's way as he adapts to the change from war to peacetime, and military to domestic life. This dynamic is not relegated to the past. In Act 2, Othello finds tranquility in his wife, saying to her: 'If after every tempest come such calms / May the winds blow till they have wakened death' (2.1.183-84). Desdemona's softness of character comforts Othello, for while he had described his wife as

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[26] Conrad Heresbach, *Foure bookes of husbandry, collected by M. Conradus Heresbachius, counseller to the hygh and mighty prince, the Duke of Cleve: conteyning the whole arte and trade of husbandry, with the antiquitie, and commendation thereof. Newely Englished, and increased, by Barnabe Googe, Esquire.*, trans. Barnabe Googe (London: 1577), fol. S4r. 'delicate, *adj.* and *n.*', A.II.6.a., *OED Online*.

[27] Frye, 'Staging Women's Relations to Textiles', 221, emphasis in source.

[28] Harvey, 'Introduction: The "Sense of All Senses"', 2.

[29] Harvey, 'Introduction: The "Sense of All Senses"', 2.

'gentle' he casts his troubles in hard and coarse textural terms that contrast with their tender cure:

> Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,
> Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven
> It was my hint to speak. (1.3.141-43)

Othello, according to Dympna Callaghan's discussion of linens in the play, 'disparages the cushioned existence of effeminate men' and 'insists that the female realm is a thing apart'.[30] Yet he also yearns for the comfort of that upholstered life even as he rails against it, as explained by his choice of soft wife before he antagonizes her.[31] Before returning to the battlefield, Othello swears to all present – *including Desdemona* – that he will not allow sexual congress to sap his vitality or deter him from his wartime responsibilities. He says:

> And heaven defend your good souls that you think,
> I will your serious and great business scant
> When she is with me. No, when light-winged toys
> Of feathered Cupid seel with wanton dullness
> My speculative and officed instrument,
> That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
> Let housewives make a skillet of my helm
> And all indign and base adversities
> Make head against my estimation. (1.3.267-75)

In Othello's fear we can hear echoes of Shakespeare's Tarquin who berates himself: 'A martial man to be soft fancy's slave!' (*Lucrece*, 200). Only a few lines later, Desdemona is taken aback at the thought that she and Othello will not be able to consummate their marriage straight away. When one of the senators indicates that Othello must leave that evening, she replies, in a line that is only in the Quarto, 'Tonight, my lord?' (1.3.279) (that is, 'their wedding night').[32] War is categorized in hard terms and sex in soft. Callaghan explains that the 'light-winged toys / Of feathered Cupid' refers to the featherbed, and that 'featherbeds, linens, and other household stuff were the primary form of property owned by women'.[33] These textiles construct a feminine setting where Othello fears he will be unmanned.

After suspicions of infidelity take hold of him, Othello narrows the *tactile* imagery that has attended Desdemona to a more explicitly *textile* focus. Iago spins a yarn about Cassio dreaming of Desdemona and making romantic overtures in his sleep, to which Othello responds: 'I'll tear her all to pieces!' (3.3.434). The act

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[30] Dympna Callaghan, 'Looking well to linens: women and cultural production in *Othello* and Shakespeare's England', in *Marxist Shakespeares*, eds Jean E. Howard and Scott Cutler Shershow (London: Routledge, 2001), 59.
[31] Callaghan, 'Looking well to linens', 59.
[32] Honigmann, ed., *Othello*, 153.
[33] Callaghan, 'Looking well to linens', 59.

of tearing perpetrated by a man against a woman is suggestive of the breaking of the hymen. It is possible that Othello and Desdemona never have sex: their evenings in the bedchamber are continually interrupted, and on the night of her death, Desdemona wants the wedding sheets put on their bed in anticipation that the marriage might finally be consummated.[34] As Othello is swearing vengeance upon Desdemona for adultery, his words suggest the regret that another has taken her virginity before he could, as well as an intention to now tear her entire body limb from limb. This image of Othello ripping Desdemona apart (possibly like a piece of fabric) reminds Iago to next enter into evidence a cloth that could condemn Desdemona. He responds to Othello's threat:

> Nay, yet be wise, yet we see nothing done,
> She may be honest yet. Tell me but this,
> Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief
> Spotted with strawberries, in your wife's hand? (3.3.435-38)

By the next act, Iago's poisonous power of suggestion has taken effect. Othello, insensible with paranoia, offers the most explicit elision of Desdemona and the handkerchief in the play: 'Lie with her? lie on her? We say lie on her when they belie her! Lie with her, zounds, that's fulsome! – Handkerchief! confessions! handkerchief!'. The repetitive, tripartite construction of 'Handkerchief! confessions! handkerchief!' echoes Shylock's exclamation of 'My daughter! O, my ducats! O, my daughter!' in *The Merchant of Venice*. Shakespeare rhymes the word 'her' and the middle syllable of 'hand-ker-chief', sounding, through Othello's lines, Desdemona's entrapment within this textile's symbolism.

Desdemona herself realizes that she must negotiate her identity and her status in relation to this object which, as John A. Hodgson argues, is 'an emblem of reputation' in *Othello*:

> Desdemona knows that she has in no way trespassed against Othello's love, "Either in discourse of thought or actual deed" (IV.ii.155), but still she worries when she thinks of it, that the loss of the handkerchief might seem incriminating to a mind that judges by appearances:
>
> > Where should I lose that handkerchief Emilia?...
> > Believe me I had rather lose my purse
> > Full of crusadoes: and but my noble Moor
> > Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness
> > As jealous creatures are, it were enough
> > To put him to ill thinking. (III.iv.19-25)[35]

Of Othello calling her a 'whore' (4.2.91), Desdemona later states plainly to Emilia and Iago: 'I am sure I am none such' (4.2.125). Yet she also knows that she must

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[34] Sofer, 'Felt Absences', 380.
[35] John A. Hodgson, 'Desdemona's Handkerchief as an Emblem of Her Reputation', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 19.3 (1977): 317.

be watchful in a society where the meaning that a man reads into the handkerchief carries more weight than the truth that she knows about her own heart and body, as well as her testimony to that truth.[36] Desdemona's mention of her valuable purse is reminiscent of Antonio's offer of 'My purse, my person'. Both handkerchiefs and purses are fabric accessories that can be kept or offered as sexual symbols. Frye notes that, like the handkerchief, 'the purse…[is] a frequently woven or embroidered gift from women wishing to mark alliance and connection', one that she argues represents Desdemona's genitalia in *Othello*.[37] The purse's contents of crusadoes emphasize that Desdemona's sexual profligacy would be the moral lapse of a Christian woman: this Portuguese coin takes its name from the cross on its reverse.[38] Shortly before Othello kills Desdemona, they have the following exchange about the handkerchief:

> DESDEMONA:
> And have you mercy too. I never did
> Offend you in my life, never loved Cassio
> But with such general warranty of heaven
> As I might love: I never gave him token.
> OTHELLO:
> By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in's hand!
> O perjured woman… (5.2.58-63)

Desdemona claims that she has given Cassio neither her romantic love nor the handkerchief, but Othello refutes her. In his mind, the handkerchief that he saw in Cassio's hand is enough evidence to disprove Desdemona's claims and expose her as a liar. To Othello, Desdemona is false and the handkerchief is true.

Farah Karim-Cooper notes that the handkerchief represents the early modern ideal of the feminine body, one that Desdemona is supposed to fulfill, in two ways. It mirrors the perfect complexion of a red blush over white skin, and the safeguarding of it is taken to signify Desdemona's chastity.[39] In particular, the textile dyed in virgins' mummy is aptly used as a test of Desdemona's own virginity, in a manner that strangely gives the dead body authority over the living. The red spotting renders the handkerchief a handheld version of wedding sheets, which are expected to be stained by the breaking of the hymen by the following morning.[40] Threatening Cassio, Othello himself alludes to the image of sullied sheets when he imagines Cassio and Desdemona marking their bed with sexual

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[36] Frye, 'Staging Women's Relations to Textiles', 221.
[37] Frye, 'Staging Women's Relations to Textiles', 228.
[38] Fischer, *Econolingua*, 64.
[39] Farah Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 170-71.
[40] Lynda E. Boose, '*Othello's* Handkerchief': "The Recognizance and Pledge of Love"', *English Literary Renaissance*, 5.3 (1975): 370.

fluids, and then the violent vengeance he will enact on Cassio for this transgression: 'Thy bed, lust-stained, shall with lust's blood be / spotted (5.1.36-37).[41] I would add that blood on fabric is an indicator of more than one rite of passage for a woman: while it clearly evokes loss of the maidenhead, it also recalls the earlier blood of the menarche that signals passage into fertility. Hence, it can be a signifier of the shifting statuses of the female body more generally.

Elsewhere in Shakespeare's corpus, the bloody handkerchief proves what has happened to its owner's body. In *As You Like It* (1599), Oliver presents Orlando's token to Rosalind:

> Orlando doth commend him to you both,
> And to that youth he calls his Rosalind
> He sends this bloody napkin. (4.3.91-93)[42]

This textile is offered as proof of Orlando's story that accounts for his inability to meet Rosalind as promised: he entered into a battle with a lioness in which '[t]his handkerchief was stained' (4.3.97). The cloth can serve as both evidence of Orlando's injury and a surrogate for him in his absence, in part because it is marked by his bodily fluid. But in *Othello*, a tragedy rather than a comedy, the handkerchief plays a more problematic role. We can read *Othello's* bloody, white material, which has the power to indict and condemn someone to execution, as a literal version of the letter that is imagined to be written in blood in *The Merchant of Venice*. These inanimate objects of bloody cloth and bloody paper can create life and death outcomes for the living characters they represent, characters who are powerless to defy their judgment. Sofer writes of the relationship between *Othello* and Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* from the late sixteenth century: '*Othello's* mysterious strawberry-spotted handkerchief, dyed (we are told) in fluid lovingly extracted from maidens' hearts and possessed of magical powers, is a direct descendant of Hieronimo's bloody napkin'.[43] Hieronimo ascribes to the handkerchief a vengeful significance:

> Seest thou this handkerchief besmeared with blood?
> It shall not from me till I take revenge.
> Seest thou those wounds that yet are bleeding fresh?
> I'll not entomb them till I have revenge. (2.5.51-54)[44]

The repetitive construction of question and answer that describes the bloody cloth and the wounded body elides the two, much like Shakespeare conflates the spotted

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[41] Boose, '*Othello's* Handkerchief', 370.
[42] William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, ed. Agnes Latham, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*., eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 162-89.
[43] Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props*, 62.
[44] Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, eds Clara Calvo and Jesús Tronch (London: Arden, 2013).

handkerchief and Desdemona's potentially pierced hymen. In Kyd's play, the handkerchief connects Hieronimo to his son Horatio and serves as a symbol of his vendetta against Horatio's killer. But in Shakespeare's, the person that the handkerchief connects Othello to and the person against whom it prompts revenge are one and the same: Desdemona. In writing *The Spanish Tragedy*, Kyd creates a network of objects that seal characters' fates in blood: this play features both a bloody handkerchief and a letter written in blood (which opens with, '*For want of ink receive this bloody writ*' [3.2.26]). In *Othello*, Desdemona's body is imagined to be paper. Othello's dialogue metaphorically writes his suspicions and condemnations onto her. Having already arrived at an answer, he asks her this rhetorical question: 'Was this fair paper, this most goodly book, / Made to write "whore" upon?' (4.2.72-73). Because the ornamentation of books in the period often included elaborately embroidered bindings, Desdemona's figuring as textile and paper creates some overlapping imagery [redacted]. In Shakespeare's work, fabrics like Thisbe's mantel and Desdemona's handkerchief are open to misreading, but so too is Desdemona's paper-like body.

The handkerchief's pattern of strawberries was a widely used symbol in the medieval and early modern periods.[46] Within Shakespeare's work, this fruit on *Othello*'s handkerchief recalls *Richard III*: Richard bids the Bishop of Ely to obtain 'good strawberries' (3.4.32) from his garden, and with the next breath he turns on Hastings. In both of these plays, Shakespeare draws on the Renaissance tradition that 'the fruit [was] sometimes used in emblem books to signal treachery, because serpents hide beneath the attractive leaves to poison any unwary person who picks the sweet berries'.[47] This plant can also be an ambiguous signifier through color, with its pure white flowers and seductive red fruit; Walter S. Gibson observes, '[i]f the strawberry was the fruit of the Virgin, it was also the fruit of Venus'.[48] Strawberries were indeed associated with Mary, as they are in the painting *Madonna of the Strawberries* (c.1420), for instance [redacted]. But in Hieronymus Bosch's triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, numerous strawberries feature in the aftermath of the fall of Adam and Eve (who are depicted in the painting's left

[redacted]

[46] Walter S. Gibson, 'The Strawberries of Hieronymus Bosch', *Cleveland Studies in the History of Art*, 8 (2003): 24.
[47] Teague, *Shakespeare's Speaking Properties*, 26.
[48] Gibson, 'The Strawberries of Hieronymus Bosch', 27.

panel), which is shown to consist of sin, hedonism, and sexual excess [redacted].[49] According to Mia Cinotti, the artwork was 'first described by Brother José de Sigüenza (1605), as the "strawberry painting"'.[50] Both Bosch's painting and Othello's central prop are, as Iago describes the handkerchief, '[s]potted with strawberries'.[51] Cinotti explains, with regards to Bosch's painting, '[t]he prevailing interpretation is a moralistic-didactic one'.[52] As I explore in the next section of this chapter, the handkerchief's backstory serves as a cautionary tale. As a symbol that can invoke the Christian feminine archetypes of Mary or Eve in the period, the strawberry is an appropriate design on a handkerchief that can be used to test the woman who carries it and reveal her to be pure or perverse.

[redacted]

[49] Gibson, 'The Strawberries of Hieronymus Bosch', 26-33.
[50] Mia Cinotti, *The complete paintings of Bosch* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), 99.
[51] Gibson, 'The Strawberries of Hieronymus Bosch', 28-29.
[52] Cinotti, *The complete paintings of Bosch*, 99.

'A device that reveals unfaithful ladies'

Othello's handkerchief can invoke an entire narrative tradition that is fixated on a woman's purity and whether it is kept or lost: the medieval chastity test. The handkerchief's function as a special object that can indicate a woman's virginity is reminiscent of this plot device. Kathleen Coyne Kelly writes of this trope:

> In vernacular romance and the *lai*, the chastity ordeal typically depends upon a fetishized magical object – a drinking horn, a cloak, or other common article…On first impression, the ordeal seems to function as a didactic lesson, if not a warning, for women; however, the ordeal as it appears in these texts has a curious habit of boomeranging on the men who have insisted upon it in the first place.[53]

[53] Kathleen Coyne Kelly, *Performing Virginity and Testing Chastity in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2000), 13-14.

Othello's handkerchief is one such 'common article' – or, in the language of the play, a 'trifle' (5.2.226) – that fits into this category of 'fetishized magical object'. Desdemona is the one being instructed: 'a child to chiding' (4.2.116), as she describes herself. But, as Coyne Kelly notes tends to happen with chastity testing objects, the handkerchief teaches the husband a hard lesson about himself. While Othello thinks the handkerchief indicts Desdemona, in the end he is accountable for doubting and murdering her, and his guilt drives him to suicide – acts that proceed from him mistakenly viewing the handkerchief as an accurate chastity test.

Michael L. Hays argues that *Othello* fulfills the conventions of the chivalric romance:

> *Othello* is a romance from first to last. It contains most of what we associate with the genre: a chivalric knight, a disdainful lady, a false steward, an infidel foe; reports of heroic adventures and dangerous travels in far-away places; hints of battle, sieges, and single combat; and courtly love.[54]

Hays observes that *Othello's* handkerchief operates within this genre as a 'love token'.[55] Such a gift does draw on the broader culture of courtly love in which a primary concern is adultery, most famously that of Guinevere when she betrays Arthur by having sex with Lancelot. But I want to suggest, with the support of an illustrative comparison, that the handkerchief is a chastity testing object as well.

The magical object in *The Lay of the Mantel* (from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century) in particular has much in common with *Othello's* handkerchief. The following is a description of the mantel, which is also made of 'costly silk' (256):

> No one has ever seen one so fine,
> For a fairy had made it.
> No one could describe it
> Or account for the workmanship of the cloth…
> The fairy incorporated into the cloth a device
> That reveals unfaithful ladies. (194-202)[56]

The unknown author goes on to explain the mantel's mechanism: if a woman has been unchaste this garment will not fit her properly. The remainder of the tale demonstrates the mantel in practice, as many women of Arthur's court, including his queen, try it on and fail. Only one woman passes the test. Compare the mantel's tale to Othello's account of the handkerchief's history and function,

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[54] Michael L. Hays, *Shakespearean Tragedy as Chivalric Romance: Rethinking 'Macbeth', 'Hamlet', 'Othello', and 'King Lear'* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), 155.
[55] Hays, *Shakespearean Tragedy as Chivalric Romance*, 180.
[56] *The Lay of the Mantel*, eds and trans. Glyn S. Burgess and Leslie C. Brook, *French Arthurian Literature*, Vol. 5 (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013).

which he provides after Desdemona says that she does not have the object on her person:

> OTHELLO:
> That's a fault. That handkerchief
> Did an Egyptian to my mother give,
> She was a charmer and could almost read
> The thoughts of people. She told her, while she kept it
> 'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father
> Entirely to her love; but if she lost it
> Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
> Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt
> After new fancies. She dying gave it me
> And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,
> To give it her. I did so, and – take heed on't!
> Make it a darling, like your precious eye! –
> To lose't or give't away were such perdition
> As nothing else could match.
> DESDEMONA:
> Is't possible?
> OTHELLO:
> 'Tis true, there's magic in the web of it.
> A sibyl that had numbered in the world
> The sun to course two hundred compasses,
> In her prophetic fury sewed the work;
> The worms were hallowed that did breed the silk,
> And it was dyed in mummy, which the skilful
> Conserved of maidens' hearts. (3.4.57-77)

In the mantel's fine material, its mystical weaver (a fairy rather than a sibyl), and its ability to test a wife's loyalty, we find one antecedent of *Othello's* handkerchief. While the Egyptian charmer relates the handkerchief to a husband's fidelity, Othello relates it to his wife's. With the command 'Make it a darling, like your precious eye', Othello suggests that he thinks of the handkerchief as that which Desdemona should keep like her chastity, for 'eye' is a commonplace for the female genitalia. The generic similarity to the *lai* demonstrates a connection to a literary history of a magical object that reveals women's sexual history to the men that they have betrayed. I do not mean to suggest that Shakespeare draws explicitly and deliberately from the *Lay of the Mantel*; rather, the role of the handkerchief in *Othello* is suggestive of the genre of chastity test narratives and their focus on magical objects as tools of testing. *The Lay of the Mantel* is an example of this genre that, like *Othello*, links cloth to chastity.

M.D. Faber classifies Othello's tale of the handkerchief as a 'mythology' and it certainly does have magical and moralizing aspects that align it with myth.[57]

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[57] M.D. Faber, '*Othello*: Symbolic Action, Ritual and Myth', *American Imago: A Psychoanalytic Journal for Culture, Science, and the Arts*, 31 (1974): 180.

The mystique of chastity test objects is related to their *a priori* nature. The handkerchief exists before the narrative and plays a role in the marriage of Othello's parents, it enters the present narrative and wreaks havoc on the lives of the characters, and it is not destroyed by the time the narrative ends and is therefore free to test others. Jonathan Gil Harris calls such historically-loaded things in the Renaissance 'polytemporal objects', the use of which is always marked by accrued meaning over time, such as 'medieval monastic garments that, post-Reformation, were recycled for display in the public playhouses'.[58] The myth of the handkerchief also has a deeply chastising, authoritative, and melodramatic tone that might suggest a relationship to the cautionary tale or fairytale. Already having been informed that the handkerchief is lost, Othello pretends that he is unaware of this fact and suddenly and conveniently draws on a long, previously undisclosed backstory about its familial import. He is like a parent trying to elicit an acknowledgment of wrongdoing from a child who has lost a toy, and his stepping into this role is one element of the power imbalance between this husband and wife.

If the handkerchief's story is one that Othello heard in his youth, as he tells it he casts himself as parent and Desdemona as child. Desdemona the ingénue reacts accordingly with fear, awe, and begrudging belief in the power of the thing she has lost: 'Is't possible?' (3.4.70); 'I'faith, is't true?' (3.4.78); and 'Then would to God that I had never seen't' (3.4.79). From the beginning of the play, Othello is cast in a parental role, having replaced Desdemona's father as the authority in her life. Brabantio equates himself and Desdemona's husband, saying to Othello: 'She has deceived her father, and may thee' (1.3.294). Shakespeare emphasizes Othello and Desdemona's age difference. Othello calls Desdemona a 'young and rose-lipped cherubin' (4.2.64). Yet he says of himself and his passions: 'Nor to comply with heat, the young affects / In me defunct' (1.3.264-65). The handkerchief story's didactic thrust is reflected in the way that one critic views the play *Othello* as a whole. In *A short view of tragedy* (1693), Thomas Rymer lists simplistic lessons from the 'fable', as he classifies it, including one about the relationship between women and domestic textiles: 'First, this may be a caution to all maidens of quality how, without their parents consent, they run away with blackamoors…Secondly, this may be a warning to all good wives, that they look well to their linnen'.[59]

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[58] Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare*, 3.

[59] Thomas Rymer, *A short view of tragedy; it's original, excellency, and corruption. With some reflections on Shakespear, and other practitioners for the stage.* (London: 1693), sig. G4v,G5r. Callaghan, 'Looking well to linens', 56-57.

Silk, Fur, and Leather

Desdemona is not the only character in *Othello* to be dehumanized by a relationship to textile. Othello and Desdemona are represented by textiles in complementary ways. Their relationship is set within many binaries: masculine/feminine, black/white, older/younger, hard/soft. In performance, their different skin tones – and therefore the difference in their races – would have been emphasized by cosmetics.[60] Desdemona would have been performed in white makeup, as was the standard for a boy player in a female role.[61] This portrayal would also have been consistent with the play's Venetian setting: in *Anthropometamorphosis* (1653), Johannes Bulwer notes that '[t]he ladies of Italy (not to speak of the curtezans) to seeme fairer than the rest, take a pride to besmeare and paint themselves'.[62] Othello, meanwhile, would have been played by a white player whose face was painted to look black.[63] The language of the play hyperbolizes the lightness of her complexion ('that whiter skin of hers than snow' [5.2.4]) and the darkness of his ('And you the blacker devil! [5.2.129]). This hyperbole is matched by their makeup.

The difference in their skin color is compounded by the textiles used to represent them. Indeed, when Iago says, 'an old black ram / Is tupping your white ewe' (1.1.87-88), this metaphor figures both characters as sheep: sources of wool that match the skin color of the characters. In Desdemona's case, the pallor and blush of the handkerchief's palette is meant to represent her fulfillment of the feminine ideal to the contemporary, local viewer.[64] Farah Karim-Cooper notes: 'The beauty standard in early modern England was, as we all know, a racially privileging standard: fair skin (fair meaning white, a glistening glow or shine), rosy cheeks, dark eyes, and coral lips'.[65] Viola compliments Olivia within this paradigm in *Twelfth Night*: ''Tis beauty truly blent, whose *red* and *white* / Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on' (1.5.233-34; emphasis mine). While Desdemona's complexion is matched and emphasized by the handkerchief, Othello's blackness would also have been communicated through textiles, including black fabric on

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[60] Dympna Callaghan, '"Othello was a white man": properties of race on Shakespeare's stage', in *Alternative Shakespeares Volume 2*, ed. Terence Hawkes (London: Routledge, 1996), 195.
[61] Farah Karim-Cooper, '"This alters not thy beauty": Face-paint, Gender and Race in Richard Brome's *The English Moor*', *Early Theatre: A Journal Associated with the Records of Early English Drama*, 10.2 (2007): 146.
[62] Johannes Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis: man transform'd: or, the artificiall changling historically presented, in the mad and cruell gallantry, foolish bravery, ridiculous beauty, filthy finenesse, and loathsome loveliness of most nations, fashioning and altering their bodies from the mould intended by nature; with figures of those transfigurations. To which artificiall and affected deformations are added, all the native and nationall monstrosities that have appeared to disfigure the humane fabrick. With a vindication of the regular beauty and honesty of nature. And an appendix of the pedigree of the English gallant.* (London: 1653), sig. Mm3v. Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama*, 170.
[63] Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama*, 168.
[64] Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama*, 170-71.
[65] Karim-Cooper, 'This alters not thy beauty', 142.

the player's arms and legs.[66] Inventorying costumes for the Lord Admiral's Men in 1598, Philip Henslowe lists 'The Mores lymes' under the category of 'Clownes Sewtes and Hermetes Sewtes, with dievers other sewtes', demonstrating beyond the text of any one play the early modern attitude that the black body could be costume and stage property.[67]

While Desdemona's representation dehumanizes her by holding her to an unattainable ideal, Othello's dehumanizes him by framing him as bestial. The silk that represents Desdemona idealizes not just her virginity but also her wealth and social status, as indicated by the privileging of silk clothing in the sumptuary law. Her connection to an expensive and animally-sourced textile is akin to Portia's framing as the golden fleece in *The Merchant of Venice*. In his discussion of *Othello*, Ian Smith argues that on the early modern stage 'the fabrication of blackness [came] from textiles and leathers that, while less naturalistic [than cosmetics], were more ideologically expressive as a representation of the black body in its stark materiality and tangible objecthood'.[68] And Dympna Callaghan notes that 'stiff lambskin fur…served for African hair'.[69] The material of the handkerchief, too, is sourced from an animal byproduct: 'the worms were hallowed that did breed the silk' (3.4.75). Iago's ovine metaphor for the couple's copulation implies that when Othello tups Desdemona, he renders her bestial as well. Both Desdemona and Othello, then, are dehumanized as texture, textile, color, and bodily object: Desdemona as the white silk marked by virgins' fluids, and Othello as the animal's black leather and fur.

Working in animal studies, Erica Fudge argues that in the Renaissance animally-sourced things often resisted attempts to erase their bestial and previously alive aspects, and could occupy a liminal space between subject and object.[70] Of animal parts that were worn, for example, Fudge claims: 'Wearing skin alters the wearer: the animal-made object becomes a thing asserting itself in the world and the human becomes just a mouldable body'.[71] If a player wears leather and fur to portray Othello, those materials do not completely disappear into the imagined dark skin and black hair of a Moor; rather, on some level these objects still signify their animal sources and therefore dehumanize the character that they costume. Othello's bestial costuming reinforces Iago's racist comparisons

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66 Ian Smith, '*Othello's* Black Handkerchief', 110.
67 Philip Henslowe, *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. R.A. Foakes, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 318. Ian Smith, '*Othello's* Black Handkerchief', 108-109.
68 Ian Smith, '*Othello's* Black Handkerchief', 108.
69 Callaghan, 'Othello was a white man', 195. Ian Smith, '*Othello's* Black Handkerchief', 107.
70 Erica Fudge, 'Renaissance Animal Things', *New Formations*, 76 (2012): 86-87.
71 Fudge, 'Renaissance Animal Things', 93.

of him to an animal: 'Barbary horse' (1.1.110) and 'black ram' (1.1.87). Within Shakespeare's work, a character who is portrayed as part man and part beast might recall Bottom from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, whose head is transformed into that of an ass. In this state, he has sex with the queen of the fairies, Titania. Both Othello and Bottom would have been perceived, by an early modern audience, as punching above their weight: a black man with a white woman, and a mortal with a goddess. If Othello does recall Bottom, then this recollection makes him a figure of comedy.[72]

Through Othello's own words, Shakespeare indicates that the character has become like a non-human, furred creature of spectacle for the audience's entertainment. Othello says of Desdemona, 'she will sing the savageness out of a bear!' (4.1.186). Andreas Höfele claims 'that the notions of humanity embodied in Shakespeare's dramatis personae rely just as much on inclusion as on exclusion of the animal'.[73] Othello looks to the figure of the bear to explain his own experience of exclusion: his framing by others as non-human. Like *Titus Andronicus's* Lavinia who internalizes others' view of her as comestible when she drinks her tears, Othello internalizes others' view of him as bestial when he compares himself to a bear. His ursine analogy suggests that he understands himself – and that the viewer can understand him – as similar to a bear being baited in the type of acts that took place in London, or even the figure of a bear as featured on stage (whether an actual bear or a player in costume). Barbara Ravelhofer explores the confluence of theatrical performance and bear-baiting in early modern England:

> [T]he Bear Garden area formed the center of an entrepreneurial nexus of theater, prostitution, and baiting, set in the amusement district of London…Henslowe and Alleyn had obtained the lucrative Mastership and Serjeantship of the Bears by the King's privilege…People identified the animals as protagonists in a drama and personified them. They gave their favorite bears individual names, often linking them with plays.[74]

She points out that there were real bears in Jacobean court masques and describes the scholarly debate of whether or not bears were used on stage in the period, a debate that I do not seek to settle here. But bears are frequently called for in play-texts starting in the late sixteenth century, including George Peele's *The Old Wive's Tale* (before 1595) and *Cox of Collumpton* (1600). Whether they were portrayed by real bears or players in bear costumes, their stage presence in other plays (to

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[72] For an exploration of the potentially comic aspects of the tragedy of *Othello*, see: Michael D. Bristol, 'Charivari and the Comedy of Abjection in *Othello*', in *True Rites and Maimed Rites: Ritual and Anti-Ritual in Shakespeare and His Age*, eds Linda Woodbridge and Edward Berry (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 75-97.

[73] Höfele, *Stage, Stake, and Scaffold*, 39.

[74] Barbara Ravelhofer, '"Beasts of Recreacion": Henslowe's White Bears', *English Literary Renaissance*, 32.2 (2002): 288, 297-98.

whatever degree they *were* present) would frame Othello's bestial costuming as both a theatrical experience and a familiar zoological experience for Shakespeare's audience.[75]

The Blank Handkerchief

If the handkerchief is able to convey the status of Desdemona's body, can it do the same for another woman who encounters it in *Othello*? Like *The Lay of the Mantel's* textile, perhaps it can serve as a chastity test for more than one woman. I would like to consider Bianca's handling of the handkerchief and the play's entertainment of the possibility that she will make a copy of it for Michael Cassio. In doing so, I want to understand what Bianca and Cassio can further expose about the handkerchief's properties. In terms of its relationship to Bianca, this textile draws not only on the medieval chastity test, but also on the Veronica myth. In this story, set within the larger narrative of the Passion, Veronica offers a cloth to Jesus Christ while he carries the cross. When he wipes away his blood and sweat, he leaves behind an image of his face on the fabric (while this story originates in the New Testament it gained more popularity and detail in the middle ages) [redacted].[76]

[75] Ravelhofer, 'Beasts of Recreacion', 297-98.
[76] Richard C. McCoy, '"The Tragedy of the Handkerchief": Objects Sacred and Profane in Shakespeare's *Othello*', in *Medieval and Early Modern Devotional Objects in Global Perspective*, eds Elizabeth Robertson and Jennifer Jahner (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2010), 157. S.E. Banks, ed., *'Otia Imperialia': Recreation for an Emperor*, by Gervase of Tilbury, trans. J.W. Binns, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 605-606.

Richard C. McCoy contends that *Othello* relies on the Veronica's tradition of textile as 'ocular proof' through the handkerchief, which exhibits the 'powers of a relic': 'Veronica's cloth – Christianity's original relic – could be said, in Rymer's terms, to belong to a lady who looked to her linen'.[77]

The first moment in *Othello* that recalls the Veronica legend is Desdemona's offer of the handkerchief for Othello's use:

> OTHELLO:
> I have a pain upon my forehead, here.
> DESDEMONA:
> Faith, that's with watching, 'twill away again.
> Let me but bind it hard, within this hour
> It will be well.
> OTHELLO:
> Your napkin is too little. (3.3.288-91)

This dynamic of a woman offering a cloth to alleviate a man's suffering invokes St. Veronica's hagiography. But Othello stops this reenactment from continuing

[77] McCoy, 'The Tragedy of the Handkerchief', 155, 157.

when he pushes his wife away and causes her to drop the handkerchief. After Emilia picks it up, she muses, 'I am glad I have found this napkin, / This was her first remembrance from the Moor' (3.3.294-95). Emilia's comment extends the religious implications of this cloth, for she figures it as Desdemona's relic of Othello. We can, indeed, further understand the separation of the handkerchief from Desdemona as the displacement of a relic from its reliquary. The repeated use of the term 'napkin' for the handkerchief in this scene also relates the cloth to a parable from the Gospel. In Luke 19, Jesus tells the story of a master who gives his servants coins and returns to find that they have invested and earned him more money. Yet one man did not invest his coin, saying: 'Lord, behold thy piece, which I have laid up in a napkin' (Lk. 19:20). His master chastises him and takes his money away to give it to another servant. In *Othello*, we can perceive an analogous hiding away of that which is precious: Desdemona's virginity is in a symbolic sense tucked away in the folds of the napkin. This possible relating of the female character and money is akin to Shylock's eliding of his daughter and his ducats in *The Merchant of Venice*; Portia, too, demonstrates that wealth can consist of her body or her fortune, and access to both is hidden in the lead casket.

In *Othello*, Cassio asks his lover Bianca to copy the handkerchief. Like Othello, he describes his troubles in hard and unyielding vocabulary: 'I have this while with *leaden* thoughts been pressed' (3.4.177; emphasis mine). The Quarto reads 'laden', which emphasizes his feeling of being encumbered.[78] And like Othello, Cassio seeks solace in the handkerchief. In this state of suffering, he shows Bianca the cloth and asks her to make a copy:

> I like the work well: ere it be demanded,
> As like enough it will, I'd have it copied.
> Take it, and do't, and leave me for this time. (3.4.189-91)

'Work' most obviously refers to the pattern of the handkerchief, as the *OED* notes that 'to work' can mean to embroider a fabric with 'a particular design', yet it also notes that the phrase 'to work one's will' means to engage in sexual activity.[79] For example, a bawdy ballad from 1610 reads: 'In which time an other did worke his will, / and tickled his wives hei nonnie nonnie'.[80] When Iago says, 'You rise to play, and go to bed to work' (2.1.115), Shakespeare uses the language of weaving for the act of sexual congress (and possible reproduction).[81] Cassio's *staccato*

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[78] Honigmann, ed., *Othello*, 252.
[79] 'work, *v.*', IV.25.b, P2.b., *OED Online*. Callaghan, 'Looking well to linens', 64. Boose, '*Othello's* Handkerchief', 369.
[80] *A proper new ballad, shewing a merrie jest of one Ieamie of Woodicock Hill, and his wife, how he espied through a doore, one making of him cuckold, and how that for lucre of money, he was well contented therewith. To be sung to a new tune, called Woodicocks Hill*. (London: 1610), single sheet. 'work, *v.*', P2.b., *OED Online*.
[81] Boose, '*Othello's* Handkerchief', 369.

instructions of 'Take it, and do't, and leave me for this time' are inflected with sexual efficiency and post-coital dismissiveness. Later in the play, Iago and Emilia call Bianca a 'strumpet' (Iago at 4.1.97; Emilia at 5.1.121): one for whom sex *is* work.[82]

Ultimately, Bianca does not copy the handkerchief. John A. Hodgson summarizes and interprets Lynda E. Boose's discussion of Bianca, writing: 'Bianca is actually unable to copy the handkerchief because it symbolizes a valid marriage'.[83] The handkerchief first symbolized the marriage of Othello's mother and father, and now it symbolizes that of Othello and Desdemona. Bianca's inability to replicate the handkerchief is indexical of her sexual status (having sex with a man while unmarried and working as a prostitute), just as Desdemona's ability to hold onto the handkerchief (or not) is indexical of her own. In a collection of essays on *Marxist Shakespeares*, Dympna Callaghan observes that 'Bianca is associated with production'.[84] In thinking of Bianca as a producer, it is also helpful to think of her association with potential *re*production when Cassio requests that she copy the design. In each aspect of its labor and use, the handkerchief is involved in chastity: the virgin's mummy that dyes it, the faithful Desdemona who carries it, Othello who uses it as a chastity test. But Bianca cannot reproduce the handkerchief, for she demonstrably lacks chastity.

While Veronica is able to capture the appearance of Christ's face, Bianca is unable to reproduce the design of the handkerchief. We can further understand Bianca's inability to copy through the taxonomy of the relic. The Veronica's fibers bear Christ's image and presumably his sweat and blood. Desdemona's *sui generis* handkerchief is similarly marked by bodily fluid, and therefore cannot be copied, else it would only be a fake relic. Although featuring Christ's image, the Veronica is also one of the most famous overlaps of woman and textile, for the relic bears the name of its original owner. Joanna Tokarska-Bakir writes: 'Worth noting is the fact that…the saint's name bears a reflexive relation to the compound *vero-icon*, *vero-iconia*…eponymised to the name of the "veronica"'.[85] The name shared by this saint and this relic means 'true image'.[86] Veronica's name indicates an icon captured faithfully. By contrast, Bianca's name means 'white', as Phyllis Natalie Braxton notes.[87] And it also conveys blankness due to the name's similarity to

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[82] Callaghan, 'Looking well to linens', 64-65.
[83] Hodgson, 'Desdemona's Handkerchief as an Emblem of Her Reputation', 321. Boose, '*Othello's* Handkerchief', 368.
[84] Callaghan, 'Looking well to linens', 64.
[85] Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, 'Why is the holy image "true"?: The ontological concept of truth as a principle of self-authentication of folk devotional effigies in the 18th and 19th century', *Numen*, 49.3 (2002): 264.
[86] McCoy, 'The Tragedy of the Handkerchief', 157.
[87] Phyllis Natalie Braxton, '*Othello*: The Moor and the Metaphor', *South Atlantic Review*, 55.4 (1990): 11.

'blanc', which is a sixteenth and seventeenth-century spelling of 'blank' ('*blanc*' is also white in French).[88] Callaghan points out that 'the rigors of embroidery [are] commonly known as "colours"'.[89] Yet Bianca who cannot copy the handkerchief is likened to white cloth and blank canvas: the handkerchief without its design.

Clothing and Bedclothes

Othello's conclusion foregrounds two sets of textiles that function in opposing ways: Desdemona's clothing and the bedclothes in the couple's bedchamber. While the former reveals the shape of Desdemona's body as Emilia undresses her, the latter conceals it from Othello's and the audience's view as he draws the bed's curtains around her. The juxtaposition of these two actions demonstrates Desdemona as a character caught between being seen and unseen, free and stifled. Carol Chillington Rutter offers a detailed and astute analysis of 'the unpinning scene':

> Beginning with the constructed, decorated social body of the female elite – the Desdemona who has just emerged from a state occasion, "supper" with those "great messengers of Venice" – the scene reduces the body, peeling off layer after layer…It makes Desdemona smaller (removing her farthingale reduces the space she occupies on stage by half); vulnerable (the smock troping nudity); perhaps sacrificial (women did penance in their smocks); certainly common, removing signs of difference ("smock" being a cant word for both "woman" and "prostitute"). This undressing plays off the domestically routine ("give me my nightly wearing") against the erotically charged.[90]

Rutter further explains that the 37 lines of the Folio (versus the 13 lines of the Quarto) provide just enough time for the massive undertaking that is the undressing of Desdemona on stage.[91] The time is crucial not only for practical purposes of performance and stage business, but for the unfolding of complex audience responses to all that is being revealed about Desdemona, both of her body and her character. The delivery of 37 lines lets these moments of narrative and visual revelation land with the audience.

Othello has ordered Desdemona to their bedchamber, with:

> Get you to bed
> On th'instant, I will be returned forthwith.
> Dismiss your attendant there. (4.3.5-7)

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[88] 'blank, *adj.* and *adv.*', Forms, Etymology, *OED Online*.
[89] Callaghan, 'Looking well to linens', 68.
[90] Carol Chillington Rutter, 'Unpinning Desdemona (Again) or "Who would be toll'd with Wenches in a shew?"', *Shakespeare Bulletin,* 28.1 (2010): 115, 117.
[91] Rutter, 'Unpinning Desdemona (Again)', 127.

Considering his recent violent behavior of striking her in *public*, she has no idea what abuse to expect once they are in *private*. She retreats to the bedroom and the comforting company of her maid. Rutter points out that Desdemona now cuts a smaller figure on stage than she ever has before, but unlike the diminishing of Lavinia through dismemberment or Portia as a miniature, Desdemona's silhouette is being reduced to be closer to the size that her body actually *is*. The change in shape and size is a moment of recognition – or, in fact, cognition for the first time – of how much Desdemona has been framed by fabric. It draws on a fascination with the contrast between the shape of the dressed and undressed female form, a fascination that is also apparent in the *Presumed Portrait of Gabrielle d'Estrées and her sister the Duchess of Villars* (c.1594), in which two nude women stand in the foreground and a fully dressed woman sits in the background [redacted].

As Will Fisher explains, early modern feminine dress was an expression of the ideal shape of a woman, rather than a reflection of the shape of actual women.[92] We see more of Desdemona's natural shape when she is no longer in full dress.

[92] Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, 19-22.

Suddenly her silhouette would look less controlled, encumbered, framed, and more like a *body*. The wifely ideal of bodilessness that Maureen Quilligan describes of Desdemona's characterization falls away with the outer layers of Desdemona's clothing.[93]

From the formal accoutrement of the affair of state, Desdemona is stripped to her smock. This freeing and relaxing ritual of removal marks the shift from public persona to private self. The simplistic ideal is removed layer by layer, exposing a complex character. As Desdemona's body becomes clearer to us, her characterization is made rounder, and these parallel processes reinforce each other. This scene features acts of feminine unveiling that occur in exclusively feminine company. It offers the audience an experience of Desdemona's openness to a degree that in unprecedented in this play. Emily C. Bartels writes of the dying Desdemona as she says her last words, 'Desdemona has both voice and body here'.[94] But Desdemona also asserts her combined power of voice and body during the unpinning. She says to Emilia:

> My mother had a maid called Barbary,
> She was in love, and he she loved proved mad
> And did forsake her. She had a song of "willow",
> An old thing 'twas, but it expressed her fortune
> And she died singing it. That song tonight
> Will not go from my mind. I have much to do
> But to go hang my head all at one side
> And sing it like poor Barbary. (4.3.24-31)

This story of a maid betrayed by a man is the symmetrical structure to Othello's story of his mother having to keep the handkerchief for her husband. It prepares us to face the narrative upending that soon occurs: that in Othello's fear that his wife has betrayed him through adultery, it is he who will betray her through doubt, and his doubts will have fatal consequences. We know that Othello is a storyteller, but this is the first time we have heard Desdemona tell stories from her own past: that of Barbary and that of the maid in the song who loses her love. Through these tales, we glimpse a backstory about Desdemona's childhood: her mother, her maid, traditions, vulnerability, fear, mourning. In this safe space with another woman she recalls the women who cared for her in her youth. Shortly after this recollection, we understand why these woeful stories of romance and this song are stuck in her head. She expresses her frustration to Emilia:

> O, these men, these men!
> Dost thou in conscience think – tell me, Emilia –

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[93] Quilligan, 'Staging Gender', 548.
[94] Emily C. Bartels, 'Strategies of Submission: Desdemona, the Duchess, and the Assertion of Desire', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 36.2 (1996): 430.

> That there be women do abuse their husbands
> In such gross kind? (4.3.59-62)

She feels anger not just at Othello but also at an unequal and hurtful gender dynamic of which their relationship has become exemplary.

Desdemona can shed her reserve enough to confide in Emilia about her innermost thoughts because there are no men present. Yet the very absence of men that makes her feel secure enough to share these aspects of herself means that they do not hear her thoughts and feelings. They have never wanted to. Othello has spent their relationship telling her about himself, but never wants to know anything about her – aside from whether or not she is chaste. He sees in her a void to be filled with his stories rather than a person with a story of her own, as though she actually is the 'nobodiness' that Quilligan describes. Quilligan discusses Desdemona's 'bodiless obedient silence', but this phrase describes only the part of her that is Othello's ideal, rather than Shakespeare's full characterization of her. Desdemona is not this ideal at all times and with all people.[95] In the unpinning scene, we grasp just how mistaken Othello has been.

Desdemona is much bolder than Othello wants to acknowledge, and it is peculiar that he willfully denies her spirited nature when this is the trait that compelled her to leave her father's household and elope. As Bartels points out, it is hard to square 'bodiless obedient silence' with a Desdemona who is defiant of Brabantio, sexually curious toward Othello, tenacious in her advocacy of Cassio's reinstatement, and outspoken in her own defense against her husband's public violence when she says 'I have not deserved this' (4.1.240).[96] Even the texts of Othello exhibit an uncertainty as to who Desdemona is and how forward she should be. The line in which she questions the plan to travel on their wedding night appears only in the Quarto and not in the later Folio.[97] In the final scene, she is still a divided Desdemona. Breathing her last, she has this conversation with Emilia:

> DESDEMONA:
> A guiltless death I die.
> EMILIA:
> O, who hath done
> This deed?
> DESDEMONA:
> Nobody. I myself. (5.2.121-22)

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[95] Bartels, 'Strategies of Submission', 418-19, 423-24.
[96] Bartels, 'Strategies of Submission', 423-26.
[97] Honigmann, ed., *Othello*, 153.

In her own estimation, Desdemona is guiltless, yet also responsible for her own death that is a punishment for a transgression. And she is a nobody, yet also a self. There are two Desdemonas in this play: one fabricated in male fantasy as reflected in the language that makes her soft and pliant, and one that is deemed unseemly and so unfit for male consumption.[98] Both the men of this play and the play-text exhibit an impulse to smother certain aspects of Desdemona. In this unpinning scene, she is paradoxically known and unknown. Shakespeare shows us more of her complex character than we have observed and shows more of her body than has been revealed. Yet she remains unknown to Othello. He arrives after this scene of feminine expression, and his actions toward his wife will consist of misogynist repression and execution. Just after Shakespeare has brought Desdemona more fully to life, she will face her death.

In addition to assistance with unpinning, Desdemona makes another request of her maid regarding textiles: that she put the wedding sheets on the bed. Though the handkerchief is not actually there, Desdemona's request for the wedding sheets reaches for something akin to it, for these sheets could soon look like the handkerchief. Boose points out that wedding sheets and the handkerchief mutually represent each other, the red strawberries and stains of virginal blood mirroring each other on their respective white backgrounds.[99] As previously discussed, Desdemona may not have lost her virginity yet, but she might anticipate that she and Othello will consummate their marriage shortly. In her discussion of these sheets we can also detect her trepidation. She is afraid for her life this night: 'If I do die before thee, prithee shroud me / In one of these same sheets' (4.3.22-23). Sasha Roberts observes that the bed was the domestic site of life's 'major rites of passage' during the period: 'marriage, birth, and death'.[100] The bedsheets also evoke layers of events: as Honigmann notes, they are 'ominous, as wives were sometimes buried in their wedding sheets'.[101] Desdemona perceives that the bed could be the site of sex or death, and she prepares herself for either possibility. Indeed, Roberts points out that death is framed *as* sex in this play and elsewhere in Shakespeare's work: 'The metaphorical trope of Death-as-Bridegroom in *Romeo and Juliet* is dramatically realized in *Othello*'.[102]

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[98] Bartels, 'Strategies of Submission', 423.
[99] Boose, '*Othello's* Handkerchief', 362-63, 368.
[100] Sasha Roberts, '"Let me the curtains draw": the dramatic and symbolic properties of the bed in Shakespearean tragedy', in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, eds Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 155.
[101] Honigmann, ed., *Othello*, 280.
[102] Roberts, 'Let me the curtains draw', 163.

While approaching the climax of their relationship, Othello and Desdemona once again play out the contrast of feminine softness and masculine hardness. Desdemona prepares for her encounter with Othello by reaching for the wedding sheets. Othello and Iago, after discussing Cassio, turn to Desdemona's fate:

> OTHELLO:
> I would have him nine years a-killing. A *fine* woman, a *fair* woman, a sweet woman!
> IAGO:
> Nay, you must forget that.
> OTHELLO:
> Ay, let her rot and perish and be damned tonight, for she shall not live. No, my heart is turned to *stone*: I strike it and it hurts my hand. O, the world hath not a sweeter creature: she might lie by an emperor's side and command him tasks.
> IAGO:
> Nay, that's not your way.
> OTHELLO:
> Hang her, I do but say what she is: so *delicate*… (4.1.175-85; emphasis mine)

Othello still admires Desdemona in ways that mark a comparison to textile ('fine' and 'delicate'), and even the handkerchief specifically ('fair'). Yet he balks at the thought of being reined in by her like the imagined emperor who loses his authority. Amidst these descriptions of Desdemona's gentle temperament and texture is Othello's disavowal of softness: 'No, my heart is turned to stone'. Once he has entered the feminine setting of the bedchamber, he uses the same imagery when he says to his wife, 'thou dost stone my heart' (5.2.63). Analyzing this stoniness in *Othello*, Nigel Smith writes: 'From a doctrinal perspective, the stony heart was one of the most familiar bodily corollaries for a state of reprobation…Othello loses religious faith at the point at which he believes (mistakenly) that Desdemona has manifested lack of conjugal faith'.[103] In another religious reading of this imagery, Boose argues that Othello's figuring of his heart as stone relates to the biblical punishment of stoning for loss of chastity.[104] Deuteronomy states: 'But if this thing be true, that the maid be not found a virgin, Then shall they bring forth the maid to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones to death' (Deut. 22:20-21). In this case, the implication of Othello's figuring of his heart as a stone is that this organ that loves and now hates could be pulled from his body to serve as the very weapon of scorned revenge against the unchaste woman.

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[103] Nigel Smith, 'Literature and Church Discipline in Early Modern England', *Studies in Church History*, 43 (2007): 318.
[104] Boose, '*Othello's* Handkerchief', 372-73.

Othello does not literally stone Desdemona to death. Discussing the means of her murder, Iago suggests: 'strangle her in her bed – / even the bed she hath contaminated' (4.1.204-205). It is unclear whether Othello does strangle Desdemona with his bare hands or if he suffocates her with the bedclothes (the stage directions in the Quarto state 'he stifles her', and the Folio 'Smothers her' [5.2.83]).[105] But we can be certain that he does employ the bedclothes in at least one way with regards to her end. After he has killed her but before he lets Emilia into the bedroom, he says: 'Let me the curtains draw' (5.2.103). With this line, he indicates that he pulls the bedcurtains closed to conceal the corpse from view. This concealment is an act of obscuring by fabric that serves as a counterpoint to Desdemona's earlier unpinning. An understanding of the function of the bed and curtains on stage further explains Othello's covering of Desdemona's body in their bedchamber, in addition to the obvious motivation of wanting to hide the evidence of his crime. Roberts argues that in *Othello* (as well as in *Romeo and Juliet*) 'the stage property of the bed becomes like a stage-within-a-stage, an intense and compelling visual and symbolic arena for acting out powerful passions and transgressions, and for mapping the disruptions and collisions of private and public space'.[106] This function of the bed is aided by the visual similarities of the curtained bed and the early modern stage: the bed is a raised platform like a stage situated above a yard; the surface is visible from multiple angles; the posts of the bedframe are analogous to the columns of a playhouse, such as the two at the Globe; and entry and exit to the stage was also mediated by curtains. Describing the layout of the Globe stage, Andrew Gurr writes:

> This central space was necessary for bringing on large stage properties such as the chair of state or throne required for all court scenes, and the curtained bed for Juliet and Desdemona in *Othello*. Its cover of hangings was the cloth of arras that Hamlet stabs through to kill Polonius. It was used for regal entries and for the clowns, who usually made their presence known first by sticking their heads through the hangings…[107]

If the prop bed was pushed through the opening at the rear of the stage, then this stage business created a palimpsestic performance: the curtained space of the bed was pushed through the curtained space of the tiring house.

Roberts is right to point out that the bed becomes a stage of passion, transgression, disruption, and collision, but I would argue that for Othello it also becomes a site of *imagination*. As he stands outside the bed, he directs the

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[105] Honigmann, ed., *Othello*, 312.
[106] Roberts, 'Let me the curtains draw', 153-54.
[107] Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage: 1574-1642*, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 150-51, 180-81, 187.

performance with the demarcating aid of the curtains to makes Desdemona's body mean one more time what he would like it to mean. When he considers why Emilia seeks entry to the bedroom, Othello says:

> If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife.
> My wife, my wife! what wife? I have no wife.
> O insupportable, O heavy hour!
> Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
> Of sun and moon, and that th'affrighted globe
> Should yawn at alteration. (5.2.95-100)

As he is processing the reality that he has just killed his wife, part of him is in denial about her death. Pulling the curtains over her corpse is a way of pretending for a few brief moments that she is still alive and that he is not a murderer. His mentioning of the eclipse elides his killing and his covering of her. It recalls the diminishing of light that he has caused in snuffing out Desdemona, for he prepared himself to murder her by saying: 'Put out the light, and then put out the light!'. Now it refers to him obscuring her from view with the curtains. He directs the drama in which she features by hiding the bed's contents from the other characters in the bedchamber and the play's audience: 'th'affrighted globe' that is shocked by Desdemona's death can refer to the reaction of the viewers at the Globe playhouse, one location in which *Othello* was likely performed.[108]

Nathalie Rivere de Carles analyzes how curtains focused attention on the Renaissance stage: 'when a scene is brought to a standstill, the physical frame of the drawn curtains turns the stage into a three-dimensional tableau…They single out a scene within the scene'.[109] In Rembrandt van Rijn's *Le lit à la française* (1646), the artist employs a similar technique in two dimensions: parted bed-curtains draw the eye to a scene of lovemaking [redacted].

[108] E.A.J. Honigmann, Introduction to *Othello*, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*., eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 941.
[109] Nathalie Rivere de Carles, 'Performing Materiality: Curtains on the Early Modern Stage', in *Shakespeare's Theatres and the Effects of Performance*, eds Farah Karim-Cooper and Tiffany Stern (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 60.

In early modern performances of *Othello*, the bed was probably placed at the front and/or center of the stage, and the sight of Desdemona's form upon it when the curtains were pulled aside certainly would have fit into this tradition of emphatic framing through textile that Rivere de Carles describes.[110] Rivere de Carles does not mention *Othello* in her study, but she does analyze *Hamlet* and concludes of Polonius's death and discovery behind the arras:

> Through the "performing" curtain in this scene Polonius is transformed into an object in a *vanitas* painting, a lesson about the transience of life learned and to be learned. Curtains, with their physical and abstract meanings, are not simply ornaments; they are instruments turning the playwright's language into performance.[111]

The curtains in *Othello*, too, frame a scene as a kind of work at the very end of the play. After Desdemona has spoken her last words, Othello stabs himself and dies beside her. The activity of the bed comes to stillness. The curtains make the scene upon the bed a static art object. Marked by the bodies of husband and wife, the wedding sheets become, as Sofer observes, 'the handkerchief writ large'.[112] The original handkerchief is dyed with virgins' mummy: part of the body, from women who are not characters in the play. In the last tableau, Othello and Desdemona's entire bodies become propertied as they now constitute the design on this scaled up iteration of the handkerchief. Desdemona, perpetually described like a textile,

[110] Roberts, 'Let me the curtains draw', 164-65.
[111] Rivere de Carles, 'Performing Materiality', 69.
[112] Sofer, 'Felt Absences', 385.

is finally absorbed by the wedding sheets in the last representation of the handkerchief in the play.

Conclusion

One confounding aspect of Othello's fixation on the handkerchief is his delusion about its restorative capacity. He is convinced that if only he can confirm that Desdemona has it his jealousy will abate. Hence, his combination of frustration, desperation, but also *hope* when he repeatedly demands that she produce it: 'Lend me thy handkerchief' (3.4.52); 'Speak, is't out o'the way? (3.4.82); and, 'Fetch't, let me see't' (3.4.87). But do we really believe that the clock can be turned back on Othello's suspicions? Though claiming to want 'ocular proof', Othello condemns Desdemona before the evidence is set before him. Cinthio's 1566 *Gli Hecatommithi* is Shakespeare's source for the storyline of *Othello* and the involvement of a handkerchief in the tale. Julie Hankey points out that Shakespeare changed the timing of the plot points from Cinthio's so that Othello's doubts about his wife gain much ground before there are facts to support them. Indeed, players must confront the conundrum of how to make the knee-jerk nature of his judgments seem believable.[113]

The handkerchief becomes a flimsy pre-text for Othello's doubts of Desdemona and his decision to voice and act on them.[114] Before he ever asks her to produce the handkerchief as proof of her fidelity, he says: 'She's gone, I am abused, and my relief / Must be to loathe her' (3.3.271-72). He also mourns his 'tranquil mind' (3.3.351), 'content' (3.3.351), and 'occupation' (3.3.360), all of which he sees as lost through his wife's betrayal. He even swears vengeance prematurely: 'I'll tear her all to pieces!' (3.3.434). Of Othello's weighty slander against his soft and delicate wife, Emilia says that he has '[t]hrown such despite and heavy terms upon her / That true hearts cannot bear it' (4.2.118-19). Just as Desdemona is made, in a figurative manner, the play's primary 'textile' before the handkerchief appears, so too is she the primary 'text' that is misread.

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[113] Julie Hankey, 'Introduction', in *Othello*, by William Shakespeare, Shakespeare in Production, 2nd. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 7-8.
[114] Faber, '*Othello*: Symbolic Action, Ritual and Myth', 181.

Chapter 4
***The Winter's Tale*: The Body as Artwork**

[redacted]

Introduction

In previous chapters this study has considered how, in Shakespeare's plays, the body is made comestible (*Titus Andronicus*), fungible (*The Merchant of Venice*), and textile (*Othello*). In this chapter, it considers, in *The Winter's Tale*, the body as plasticine – by which I mean, rendered in the plastic arts – and, more specifically, the body as sculptural. In this play, the entire character/player whom we have watched in previous acts becomes displayed as a 'statue', a prop in a play-within-a-play.[3] When Hermione presents herself as this artwork, with Paulina's help, they take advantage of the magic that a prop represents to bring about the impossible. A prop is that which allows the impossible to become possible in the play-world. Through the alchemical power of words and gestures as they act on objects in drama, a statue can become a human. In this process the dead character of Hermione comes back to life. Ironically, it is through Hermione's capture in typically fixed, implacable marble that the prop makes her representation flexible enough to allow her re-animation. When she becomes a prop, Paulina and Hermione can write whatever meaning they desire onto the propertied body. According to Teague, props are objects that '*mean differently*' on stage. At the end of *The Winter's Tale*, this statue must accrue the most elusive meanings that a stage property can possess: those of player and character.

Facilitating this function of the statue in this play is a changing early modern understanding of the relationship of art to time, which Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood describe in *Anachronic Renaissance*. They write that '[t]o fix an image or temple in time is to reduce it', yet they also note that '[t]he work that manages to retain its identity despite alteration, repair, renovation, and even outright replacement was a sustaining myth of art in premodern Europe'.[4] As premodern sensibilities evolved into early modern, these attitudes toward art and time evolved as well, as Nagel and Wood describe:

> [T]he sensation…[is] familiar to everyone, of time folding over on itself, the doubling of the fabric of experience that creates continuity and flow; creates meaning where there was none; creates and encourages the desire to start over, to renew, to reform, to recover. No device more effectively generates the effect of a doubling or bending of time than the work of art, a strange kind of event whose relation to time is plural. The artwork is made or designed by an individual or by a group of individuals at some moment, but it also points away from that moment, backward to a remote ancestral origin, perhaps, or to a prior artifact, or to an origin outside of time, in divinity. At the same time it points forward to all its future

[3] Justin Kolb, '"What fine chisel could ever yet cut breath?": The Technology of Character in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (1611)', paper presented at SLSA, 2007, accessed on 23 Oct. 2016, http://litsciarts.org/slsa07/slsa07-34.pdf,1-2.

[4] Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2010), 8-9.

> recipients who will activate and reactivate it as a meaningful event. The work of art is a message whose sender and destination are constantly shifting. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it became increasingly common, in the West, to attend closely, perhaps more closely than ever before, to what it is that artworks *do*.[5]

In Renaissance interpretations, then, artwork changed from static to dynamic, from being to doing, from finite to infinite, from meaning that is fixed to meaning that is remade at different points in the work's history – and we might even say, in figurative terms, from dead to living. I read the course of Hermione's statue – and the play of *The Winter's Tale* for which it is a metonym – as a fantastical manifestation and exploration of this nascent power of art.

Hermione is not the only character in *The Winter's Tale* to negotiate a relationship to time. The power to transform over time is held by some figures in the play and withheld from others. The statue of Act 5 is a climax of characters' material representations in *The Winter's Tale*. In this play, props become concrete mechanisms through which abstract time and its effects on characters' life cycles are presented on stage. In this chapter, I consider the treasures that surround the infant Perdita, the bear that kills Antigonus, Time and his hourglass, and Hermione's statue. Across the play and its portrayal of these figures, we perceive that time brings immense changes to pass. These changes affect men and women differently. Susan Snyder has explicated how the play demarcates space along gender lines. Furthermore, she has analyzed those moments when the space of the opposite gender is trespassed, leading to outbursts of violent language fueled by territoriality; such is the case with Paulina's presence in Leontes's court after Hermione stands accused of adultery.[6] Related to that study, this chapter argues that time is similarly divided along gender lines. Frederick Kiefer claims that, '*The Winter's Tale*, then, dramatizes the double dimension of time, its capacity to chastise and destroy as well as reveal and restore'.[7] But in this play destruction and restoration do not fall to men and women in equal measure or in directly comparable ways. I would like to suggest that the play posits another bifurcation of time and its effects: between the masculine and feminine. It distinguishes between teleological time that affects men and generative time that affects women.

Bernard Beckerman describes how classical and religious influences engendered different concepts of time in the period:

> [A]lternate images of time…go back to concepts in Greek and Judeo-Christian thought…[H]istorians…identify the notion of *cyclical* time with

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[5] Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*, 9, emphasis mine.
[6] Susan Snyder, 'Mamillius and Gender Polarization in *The Winter's Tale*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 50.1 (1999), 6-7.
[7] Frederick Kiefer, 'The Iconography of Time in *The Winter's Tale*', *Renaissance and Reformation*, 35.3 (1999), 59.

> Plato while they trace the general idea of *linear* time to Biblical tradition…The medieval Christians were aware of both images of time, as mutability and as eternity. But whereas they chose to fix their eyes on the latter, the men of the Renaissance shifted their gaze to the ebb and flow of daily existence. It is this change of attitude that Florence experienced in the fourteenth century and England in the sixteenth. And whether by cause or chance, it is this change that coincides with the emergence of the great age of Elizabethan drama.[8]

What Beckerman observes as a shift toward a classical view of time as cyclical is consistent with Nagel and Wood's argument that artworks were increasingly approached with an understanding of time as folding over, doubling, and renewing. In this chapter, I explore the way that, in *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare weaves the linear and cyclical dimensions of time into his play by associating the linear with the masculine and the cyclical with the feminine. Carol Thomas Neely observes that the women of this play are able to work with time and make time work for them: 'Hermione, Paulina, and Perdita are in league with time, nature, and the play's pagan gods by virtue of their acceptance of "issue" and of all that this central idea implies – sexuality and childbirth, separation and change, growth and decay'.[9]

Time, which is abstract in the real world, remains unseen when the audience is outside of the playhouse. But it is made concrete in *The Winter's Tale* through choric Time's intervention at the beginning of Act 4. This materializing of time pervades the play in more subtle ways through other characters. It can be perceived through its effects on characters' fates, as well as palpable manifestations in their bodies (for example, through Hermione's wrinkles). Gender, too, is abstract and relies on writing, gesture, makeup, costuming, and props to be conveyed on stage (plainly evidenced when a male player must portray a female character). Throughout the play, Shakespeare renders both time and gender tangible and visual, and even 'propertied' through materiality. We can see in these characters and associated properties two matrices through which time itself becomes a dichotomous, gendered construct. In the play's relation of women to properties, two forces are being set in conflict. The generative ability of women is set against the patriarchal desire to suppress female power, in these instances by encasing it in the non-human. Valerie Traub describes this phenomenon as exemplified in this play's statue, as well as other properties that imprison feminine

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[8] Bernard Beckerman, 'Historic and Iconic Time in Late Tudor Drama', in *Shakespeare, Man of the Theater: Proceedings of the Second Congress of the International Shakespeare Association* (Newark: University of Delaware Press), 1983, 48, emphasis mine.

[9] Carol Thomas Neely, 'Women and Issue in *The Winter's Tale*', *Philological Quarterly*, 57 (1978), 181.

sexuality in Shakespeare's work.[10] I analyze the statue as the climax of this trend as it develops in *The Winter's Tale*. In a play that encapsulates fears of infidelity and bastardy, the statue represents a dehumanizing attempt to create a controlled version of the female body that can neither have sex nor give birth. The statue, though the most memorable 'object' in the play, follows up on a host of others that frames its meaning. The play's abstract and concrete planes find a final expression in Hermione's statue, a total overlap of female character and artwork, player and the prop into which the play has transformed her.[11] Its animation (or Hermione's reemergence from her dissembling deanimation) and the scene surrounding it represent the final exercise and triumph of feminine time in the play.[12]

The Doll

In the first half of *The Winter's Tale*, Leontes and Hermione's infant daughter Perdita is made present on stage by a prop – likely, a 'baby doll'.[13] The shepherd discovers her with 'The mantle of Queen Hermione's; her jewel about the neck of it; the letters of Antigonus' (5.2.32-34) and 'gold' (3.3.119).[14] Exploring the '[t]echnology of [c]haracter' in the play, Justin Kolb notes that both Hermione and Perdita are, at different points, transformed from props into flesh and blood.[15] I analyze Hermione's animation at the end of this chapter, but I first want to consider her daughter's. Of Perdita's properties and their function, Kolb writes:

> Doll, scroll, and chest jewels lay arranged on the beach, and the prop-infant, earlier described as a printed text, is homologous to the artifacts on either side of it. These three items are the initial and essential material components of "what to her adheres" (4.1.28) in the Shepherd's household, of the assembly that will come into being as Perdita. The props will become the person.[16]

Perdita's portrayal by a doll is not, in and of itself, unique (in *Titus Andronicus*, Aaron and Tamora's infant is also represented by a doll).[17] But Shakespeare compounds this otherwise unremarkable 'casting' of a prop to 'play' Perdita by

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[10] Valerie Traub, 'Jewels, Statues, and Corpses: Containment of Female Erotic Power in Shakespeare's Plays', *Shakespeare Studies*, 20 (1988): 216, 230.
[11] Kolb, 'What fine chisel could ever yet cut breath?', 1-2.
[12] It is neither a purpose nor an interest of this chapter to argue either that Hermione has been dead for 16 years and only lives again once the artwork is transformed, or that she has been in hiding for that time and makes a strategic reappearance through the legerdemain of the statue. I consider both possibilities in my discussion because both possibilities are presented in the play; indeed, committing solely to one of them amounts to only telling half of Hermione's story. Chloe Porter, *Making and unmaking in early modern English drama: Spectators, aesthetics and incompletion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 64-65. Jennifer Waldron, 'Of Stones and Stony Hearts: Desdemona, Hermione, and Post-Reformation Theater', in *The Indistinct Human in Renaissance Literature*, eds Jean E. Feerick and Vin Nardizzi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 211-12.
[13] Teague, *Shakespeare's Speaking Properties*, 192.
[14] William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, 3rd ed., ed. John Pitcher (London: Arden, 2010). All references to *The Winter's Tale* will be from this edition unless otherwise stated.
[15] Kolb, 'What fine chisel could ever yet cut breath?', 1-2.
[16] Kolb, 'What fine chisel could ever yet cut breath?', 7.
[17] Teague, *Shakespeare's Speaking Properties*, 180.

adding a horde of other stage properties to her representation. As I described in the introduction, Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes that encountering an object can make us confront the realization that the body is 'a thing among things'. Kolb writes that the props will become the character Perdita. But at first, the Perdita in this tableau is one such 'thing among things', like Lavinia 'growing' tree limbs, or Jessica as her father imagines her surrounded by his jewels and ducats in death, or Portia whose portrait is somewhere among the caskets, or Desdemona holding her handkerchief. For these female characters, 'thingness' becomes a kind of contagion: being thing-adjacent is a risk to humanity in which one might easily become a thing too. In Perdita's case, there is not even the human body of a player present to encounter the inanimate things, merely a doll.

Surrounding the doll with precious possessions could have reminded the audience of the tradition of burying dead children with talismans: in a study of late medieval burial sites, Roberta Gilchrist writes that children were often buried with objects, especially those ascribed 'apotropaic or healing' qualities, such as jewelry, coins, beads, and certain kinds of stones.[18] She explains such practices by pointing out that '[p]eople regarded infants and young children as needing special protection against malign forces'.[19] Perdita is placed with valuable objects such as her mother's jewel and gold. As we have seen in *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock says of his grown child Jessica: 'I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear; would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin'. He imagines her buried with jewels and coins, perhaps wishing that these objects could ward off the Christian influence that, to his mind, corrupted her. Sophie Duncan, in a section titled 'Character or Prop?', writes that 'prop babies and corpses challenge the typologies of theatrical object'.[20] Perdita's doll surrounded by apotropaic props can signify both of these categories; hence, when Perdita appears in the flesh, she may have seemed not only to be transformed from object to subject, but dead to living. Both of these prefigure her mother Hermione's eventual transformations.

In the exploration of Perdita's development, I want to ask a question that Kolb does not fully address: *why* must Perdita start out so insistently as non-human and only later become human? In response to this question, Traub's analysis of Hermione's arc is also germane to the discussion of her daughter's; this connection is not coincidental, given that mother and daughter go on parallel journeys that

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[18] Roberta Gilchrist, 'Magic for the Dead? The Archaeology of Magic in Later Medieval Burials', *Medieval Archaeology*, 52.1 (2008), 148-52.
[19] Gilchrist, 'Magic for the Dead?', 148.
[20] Duncan, *Shakespeare's Props,* 173.

are staggered by 16 years.[21] Traub writes that in certain of Shakespeare's works, 'male anxiety toward female erotic power is channeled into a strategy of containment. Through this strategy, the threat of female erotic power is psychically contained by means of a metaphoric and dramatic transformation of women into jewels, statues, and corpses'.[22] Traub chooses three objects with varying degrees of relationship to a living woman's body: a jewel that a woman can wear, a statue that memorializes her appearance, and a corpse that is her animate form turned object through death. She points to Hermione's statue as an iteration of this trend of containment (and the jewel and the mantle that are passed from Hermione to her daughter are also prime examples). But I contend that there is a female power beyond the erotic that is also tenuously tamed by many of the objects in *The Winter's Tale*, including Perdita's bricolage: reproduction and regeneration.

As the alleged product of Hermione's supposed affair with Polixenes (in Leontes's mind), Perdita is the living embodiment of that dangerous power. Alison Findlay writes that in Renaissance drama the archetypal figure of '[t]he bastard, with no father, represented something "other"…[b]orn of a female sexuality unsanctioned by patriarchal authority'.[23] Perdita, as herself the product of it, can only represent aberrant and uncontrollable female sexuality and fertility. Thus, Perdita is abhorrent to Leontes, who wants to be rid both of the transgressive mother and the daughter who is the 'evidence' of the transgression. Findlay explains that rumors and fears of bastardy in the royal family pervaded Elizabethan and Jacobean England:

> Queen Elizabeth had been declared a bastard by the 1536 Succession Act and was still technically illegitimate when she ascended the throne. Catholic supporters even suggested that she was the child of one of Anne Boleyn's lovers and not the King's daughter at all…Even when Elizabeth and the Tudor line died, the spectre of illegitimacy remained. It was rumoured that James I was the bastard of his mother's secretary, Rizzio, rather than the son of Darnley, Mary Queen of Scots's husband.[24]

The Winter's Tale's questioning of Perdita's paternity would have been salient for the play's audience, and it was perhaps politically prudent for Shakespeare to show that the mother of the heir to the throne had been faithful all along.

Leontes says of Perdita, when he believes her to be a bastard:

> This brat is none of mine.
> It is the *issue* of Polixenes.

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[21] Ricardo J. Quinones, *The Renaissance Discovery of Time* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 437.
[22] Traub, 'Jewels, Statues, and Corpses', 216.
[23] Alison Findlay, *Illegitimate Power: Bastards in Renaissance Drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 3.
[24] Findlay, *Illegitimate Power,* 2.

> Hence with it, and together with the *dam*
> Commit them to the fire. (2.3.91-94; emphasis mine)

'Issue', in addition to being progeny, can refer to 'outflow', '(a quantity of) something which flows', a 'sewer', and 'a place where a body of water flows out'.[25] These are relevant definitions considering this play's metaphor of the movement of waterways for sexual activity and reproduction.[26] Leontes sees Hermione as representative of many adulterous women, whom he figures as ponds open to the exploration of men who are not their husbands:

> And many a man there is even at this present,
> Now, while I speak this, holds his wife by th'arm,
> That little thinks she has been sluiced in's absence,
> And his pond fished by his next neighbour… (1.2.191-94)

As 'the issue of Polixenes', Perdita is imagined as first issued from Polixenes's body to Hermione's during sex, and then issued from Hermione's body during childbirth. Of course, 'issue' can also be a 'central area of disagreement'.[27] To Leontes, Perdita is the result of Polixenes's entry into Hermione's open channel, and therefore the embodiment of the contention between Hermione's cuckold husband and alleged lover. The obvious meaning of 'dam' in the next line is the female parent of an animal, and this zoological framing could suggest a connection to the bear that appears later in the play.[28] But another meaning of 'dam' picks up on the liquid aspect of 'issue': in this period, 'dam' could mean the structure that blocks a waterway, or it could be the body of water that is held back by such a structure.[29] Robert Burton writes in a 1621 study of melancholy: 'As a damme of water stopt in one place, breakes out in another; so doth superstition'.[30] In the imagery that Leontes employs, Hermione is either a faulty structure or leaky body of water that allows the troublesome 'issue' through. This imagery also brings to mind the breaking of water that signals the beginning of labor. According to Gail Kern Paster, early modern 'discourse inscribes women as leaky vessels by isolating one element of the female body's material expressiveness – its production of fluids – as excessive, hence either disturbing or shameful'.[31] In Leontes's figuring of Hermione and Perdita, his wife is the despised leaky vessel

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[25] 'issue, *n.*', I.1., I.2.b., I.2.c., II.5.a., *OED Online*.
[26] Pitcher, ed., *The Winter's Tale*, 167.
[27] 'issue, *n.*', IV.13.b., *OED Online*.
[28] 'dam, *n.2*', 2.a., *OED Online*.
[29] 'dam, *n.1*', 1.a., 2.a., *OED Online*.
[30] Robert Burton, *The anatomy of melancholy, what it is. With all the kindes, causes, symptomes, prognostickes, and severall cures of it. In three maine partitions with their severall sections, members, and subsections. Philosophically, medicinally, historically, opened and cut up. By Democritus Junior. With a satyricall preface, conducing to the following discourse.* (Oxford: 1621), sig. Yy8r. 'dam, *n.1*', 2.a., *OED Online*.
[31] Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 24-25.

and her baby girl is despised as that which is leaked. His choice of punishment and execution for mother and daughter is the element of fire that would 'dry' them both.

In the geography of *The Winter's Tale*, Perdita emerges from within what Snyder points out is an exclusively female space: 'The prison grouping, with the women focused on Hermione and her newborn infant (and easily marginalizing the ill-at-ease jailer), replicates the actual social custom of women gathering around a new mother at and after the birth, excluding men'.[32] This focus on the feminine birthing space draws on the male anxiety surrounding the feminine realm of childbirth in the period, which Lana Joy Wahlquist describes: 'To men of early modern England, few things mattered more than inheritance, and necessary to inheritance was, of course, the birth of children. Childbirth, however, was the business of women, and it was an area where they held complete autonomy, authority, power, and secrecy'.[33] This prison setting of the birth reflects in exaggerated form the sequestering that Renaissance childbirth to some extent always brought with it.

For the first half of the play, Perdita is under the control of her resentful father, who, believing that he could not exert his agency over her conception and birth, aims to exert it in her life (and possible death) in all the ways available to him. Perdita's animation away from her father and his court revives the cycle of feminine power. Kolb's reading of the binary that Perdita moves through over time – from non-human to human – is complicated by the fact that on Shakespeare's stage the same boy player would have filled the roles of both Mamillius and Perdita (at least in some cases).[34] While Kolb describes a linear incorporation of Perdita's body over the course of the play, I contend that the acting body undergoes a cycle of reanimation. Mamillius dies in the first half of the play. Perdita is introduced as a combination of a doll and the constituent items that are left with her. In the second half of the play, her live form is introduced through the same body as Mamillius's. Through this player – a kind of animate prop that can be made to mean male or female and stand for either one of Hermione and Leontes's offspring on stage – Perdita's body is shown to be a regenerative force. Yet like Gil Harris's polytemporal objects or Wood and Nagel's anachronic artworks, for the rest of the play Perdita is still marked by the

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[32] Snyder, 'Mamillius and Gender Polarization', 6.
[33] Lana Joy Wahlquist, 'Birthing Conflict: Childbirth and the Battle of the Sexes in Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama', MA thesis, California State University, Northridge, 2011, accessed on 19 Apr. 2019, http://scholarworks.csun.edu/bitstream/handle/10211.2/821/WahlquistThesis_BirthingConflict.pdf;se, v.
[34] Snyder, 'Mamillius and Gender Polarization', 2. T.J. King, *Casting Shakespeare's plays: London actors and their roles, 1590-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 244.

figures that precede her and from which she has been formed: her mother's jewel and mantle, and her older brother's body. Shakespeare structures *The Winter's Tale* to create symmetry around Time's intervention: the first and second halves of the play exhibit similarities and also reversals.[35] The restoration – but also *alterity* – of the body that plays Perdita exemplifies this structure. The early elements of the play might return, but in some cases they will be transformed. The only regeneration possible for Mamillius is the player's change into a female role.

This substitution of Perdita for Mamillius is emblematic of the shifting gender dynamics in the play. The king prizes his son as his heir and a living extension of himself, especially his body.[36] As Leontes searches Mamillius's physiognomy for signs of bastardy, he reports that the two of them are '[a]lmost as like as eggs' (1.2.130) and that the boy's nose is a 'copy' (1.2.122) of his. In this discussion of father and son's likeness, the imagery of animal eggs expresses a sense of wonder but also trepidation about how offspring come into being. It does so through a possible suggestion of classical research on reproduction: Hippocrates thought the study of chicken eggs could yield insight into human development, and Aristotle opened eggs to trace their growth.[37] While Mamillius resembles his father, Perdita resembles her mother. Leontes says, after seeing his daughter: 'I thought of her / Even in these looks I made' (5.1.226-27; 'her' refers to Hermione). The life-restoring potential of time has worked its magic over 16 years, but it has worked for the matrilineal rather than the patrilineal side of the family.

The Bear

After Hermione's mock-death, Perdita acts as her heiress in the play, taking up the mantle of the problematic female family member that must be contained. But Hermione continues to affect Perdita's life from afar by changing the circumstances of her exile from court. Hermione exerts her influence through her visitation of Antigonus and perhaps even through the non-human figure that fulfills her prophecy of death: the bear. Andrew Gurr argues that the bear and Hermione (as the statue) are thematically and functionally linked: 'The bear and the statue are precisely matching counterparts in the two halves of *The Winter's Tale*. The bear brings the tragic half to an abrupt conclusion using the same

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[35] Kiefer, 'The Iconography of Time in *The Winter's Tale*', 53-54. John Pitcher, 'Introduction', in *The Winter's Tale*, by William Shakespeare, 3rd ed., ed. John Pitcher (London: Arden, 2010), 76-78.
[36] Simon Reynolds, 'Pregnancy and Imagination in *The Winter's Tale* and Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*', *English Studies*, 84.5 (2003): 444. Quinones, *The Renaissance Discovery of Time*, 435.
[37] Clara Pinto-Correia, *The Ovary of Eve: Egg and Sperm and Preformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 38-39.

theatrical device, the double-take, that Hermione's statue provides when it comes to life to conclude the play's second half'.[38] The bear is either real or, like the statue, the bear is actually a player pretending to be something non-human, in this case by wearing a bear costume.[39] I would like to suggest that the bear's presence offers Hermione a kind of psychic life after death. Through the symbolic resonances of the bear in early modern English culture and even Shakespeare's own work, we can see the bear as an agent of Hermione, one which suggests that she has not faced a final death to a linear life. Rather, she continues to cycle through the play in an influential manner until she is reanimated physically in the statue's transformation.

The bear appears just after Hermione has found one means of return after death. She appears to Antigonus in what could be a vision (if she is psychically visiting him after death) or a dream (if she is alive and Antigonus is simply imagining her). While it is possible to read the appearance as a mere dream, this is an oversimplification that ignores Hermione's power; in light of the prescient, outside information imparted by the vision, it is hard to dismiss it as a product of Antigonus's imagination.[40] She bids Antigonus to name her daughter 'Perdita', and predicts that he will not survive this journey away from the court of Sicilia. The next day, the bear appears to fulfill Hermione's prophecy by killing Antigonus. In contrast to Perdita, who consists of props that will be incorporated into a character, Antigonus in his encounter with the bear is torn into parts that will never again form a whole. Kolb describes 'the bear tearing out [Antigonus's] bones and disassembling him into limbs[,] his "letters […] which they know to be his character" (5.2.34-35), just enough to confirm his fate in Sicilia sixteen years later'.[41] While Perdita is granted animation on her cyclical feminine timeline, Antigonus suffers only permanent dehumanization and death, even as he brings Perdita to the place where she will become living flesh. The means of his death is the bear, which is a possible extension of Hermione's life and power at the end of Act 3.

Hermione is Russian, at least on the paternal side of her family, for as she says: 'The emperor of Russia was my father' (3.2.117). In the seventeenth-century European imaginary, bears were already associated with Russia, as evident in a 1640 map from Willem Blaeu in which three bears act as the representative animal of Russia [redacted]. The cartographer has placed these animals north of the

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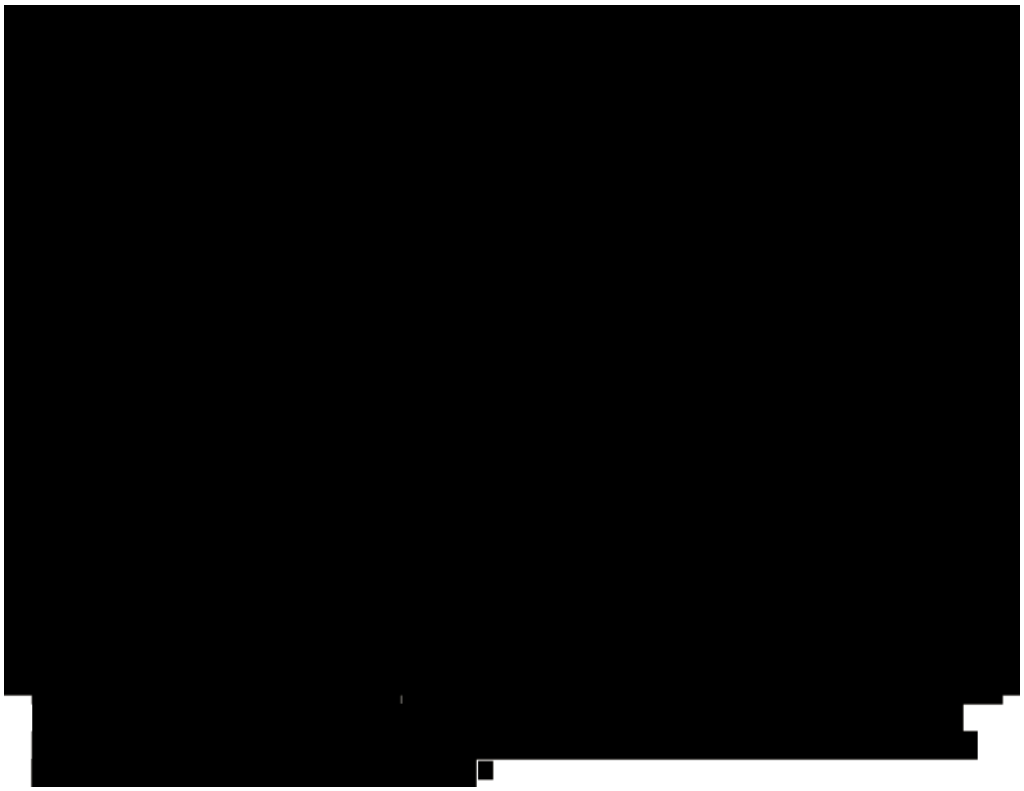
[38] Andrew Gurr, 'The Bear, the Statue, and Hysteria in *The Winter's Tale*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 34.4 (1983), 420.
[39] Gurr, 'The Bear, the Statue, and Hysteria', 423.
[40] Kolb, 'What fine chisel could ever yet cut breath?', 7.
[41] Kolb, 'What fine chisel could ever yet cut breath?', 8.

lush greenery of the map's tree line, away from the named locations, and near the map's upper edge, implying that they thrive in a frigid, desolate, and mysterious environment.[42]



In *Macbeth* (1606) Shakespeare uses the Russian bear as a symbol of the feared and the unknown.[44] Macbeth speaks to Banquo's ghost (and to himself as he tries to muster his bravery): 'What man dare, I dare: / Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear' (3.4.98-99).[45] Macbeth's choice of simile is an apt one: akin to the bear that sleeps for a season only to waken once more, Banquo has died and returned as a spirit. The bear in *The Winter's Tale* is not figurative but real, at least in the diegetic world. It fulfills the words of Hermione's vision even as she is temporarily dead (or, we might say, in 'hibernation').

In the purpose that the bear serves for Perdita of removing Antigonus, who is the last vestige of the court's masculine reach, this animal can be read as a motherly figure who influences Perdita's future. This duality of the bear as not

[42] Anne M. Platoff, 'The "Forward Russia" Flag: Examining the Changing Use of the Bear as a Symbol of Russia', *Raven: A Journal of Vexillology*, 19 (2012), 104-106.

[44] Platoff, 'The "Forward Russia" Flag', 104-105.

[45] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Kenneth Muir, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 774-99. Platoff, 'The "Forward Russia" Flag', 104-105.

only violent but also generative reflects early modern views of this creature, as Gurr describes them:

> [F]or the artful, bears were not merely an emblem of destructive nature. The familiar cliché about licking things into shape, usually applied to the idea of beating children for the good of their education, originally came from bears. The phrase derives from the pleasant conceit that a bear cub is born a shapeless lump of fur and is literally licked into its proper shape by its mother. By this maternal act a bear becomes a natural sculptor, the exact converse of Giulio Romano, an emblem of creating nature.[46]

The following lines from Alerzo in Thomas Rawlins's play *The Rebellion* (1640) are consistent with this notion, for they demonstrate that it is the female bear that is thought to shape her young:

> Beget a lumpe how e're deform'd, that may at length
> Like to a cub lick'd by the carefull dam,
> Become like to my wishes…[47]

In *The Winter's Tale*, Giulio Romano supposedly chisels a sculpture but cannot breathe life into it; Hermione gestates and births Perdita, and continues to 'sculpt' her future life even from a distance and possibly from the grave. Romano is aligned with the artificial and static; Hermione with the natural and dynamic – that is, capable of change over time.

Hermione's power, exerted in part through the bear, magnifies the fear of witchcraft's influence in the play. Leontes calls Paulina a 'mankind witch' (2.3.66). Polixenes accuses Perdita, who has charmed his son Florizel, of being a 'fresh piece / Of excellent witchcraft' (4.4.427-28). According to M. Lindsay Kaplan and Katherine Eggert, the examination of Hermione at court would have exhibited discernible similarities to the accusations of witchcraft that took place a century before in England, especially the rumors of witchcraft surrounding Henry VIII's queen Anne Boleyn.[48] If the bear does fulfill the role of a witch's familiar by acting as Hermione's bestial agent, then this relationship strengthens the image of her as a potential witch. This familiar is an enforcer of feminine time that completely removes the influence of the patriarchal court. It allows Perdita to be found by the nurturing shepherd, taken into the freedom of the forest, and transformed from inert, fractured parts into a fertile young woman who embodies the spring festival as 'mistress o'th' feast' (4.4.68). The bear also provides another opportunity for feminine time by killing Paulina's husband: Antigonus's death

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[46] Gurr, 'The Bear, the Statue, and Hysteria', 423.
[47] Thomas Rawlins, *The rebellion: a tragedy: as it was acted nine dayes together, and divers times since with good applause, by his Majesties Company of Revells.* (London: 1640), sig. B2v.
[48] M. Lindsay Kaplan and Katherine Eggert, '"Good queen, my lord, good queen": Sexual Slander and the Trials of Female Authority in *The Winter's Tale*', *Renaissance Drama*, 25 (1994): 98-100.

makes it possible for Paulina and Hermione to live in the now exclusively feminine space of Paulina's house while they plan Hermione's return through the ruse of the statue.

The Hourglass

Just after the bear chases Antigonus off the stage, Time serves as the chorus that introduces Act 4. He is Shakespeare's most overt method of turning abstract time into a concrete thing, in this case through the dramatic tradition of presenting the character of Father Time. In *The Winter's Tale*, Time is represented as a patriarchal force. Frederick Kiefer mentions that Time in this play appears aged, and probably bearded and winged ('symbolizing the swift passage of time'), and that he has an hourglass.[49] Will Fisher argues that the beard (regardless of whether it is real or a prop) is a symbol of patriarchy on stage.[50] Time's elderly appearance suggests that he is a harbinger of time's linear and teleological thrust. This view of time is familiar from Shakespeare's sonnets. In Sonnet 12 ('When I do count the clock that tells the time'), time is male, hirsute, and destructive: 'And summer's green all girded up in sheaves, / Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard' (7-8) and 'And nothing 'gainst time's scythe can make defence / Save breed to brave him, when he takes thee hence' (13-14).[51]

In this play, the manner of Time's speech reinforces the symbols of his masculine authority. Kiefer notes that 'Time's is not a supple blank verse, like that of other characters in *The Winter's Tale*, but a stiffer poetry spoken in rhyme'.[52] For example, of his skipping of 16 years, Time says:

> Now take upon me, in the name of Time,
> To use my wings. Impute it not a crime
> To me or my swift passage that I slide
> O'er sixteen years, and leave the growth untried… (4.1.3-6)

This rigidity of speech in both its rhyme and meter aligns with the strict and unyielding nature of masculine time and its passage in the play. Furthermore, the regular rhythm can suggest not only the temporal but also the specifically horological: it is reminiscent of the steady motion of a clock.

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[49] Kiefer, 'The Iconography of Time in *The Winter's Tale*', 49, 52.
[50] Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, 87.
[51] William Shakespeare, 'Shakespeare's Sonnets and *A Lover's Complaint*', in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 18-47. All references to Shakespeare's sonnets will be from this source unless otherwise stated.
[52] Kiefer, 'The Iconography of Time in *The Winter's Tale*', 53.

But Time also carries an hourglass, a potentially feminine symbol in the real world that becomes representative of the course of feminine time in *The Winter's Tale*.[53] Kiefer writes:

> In assessing Time's purpose, let us consider the one prop we are certain he carries – an hourglass…By upending the device, Father Time marks the chief division of the dramatic action: we are about to move from a world of anxiety, suffering, and death to one of exuberance, joy, and new life. Paradoxically, this sharp transition masks an underlying similarity between the two halves of the play…[T]he two halves of Time's hourglass look identical.[54]

The ability of time to eschew a finite end and instead begin again is at odds with choric Time as the aged figure near death. It relates to the cyclical, feminine time of the play. The character of Time says, when turning the hourglass: 'Your patience this allowing, / I turn my glass' (4.1.15-16). The sonnets' ongoing fixation with time can again elucidate Shakespeare's portrayal of it in this play. In Sonnet 126 ('O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power'), Shakespeare describes 'Time's fickle glass' (2), maligning the hourglass with that Renaissance stereotype of women's inconstancy.

The hourglass was an object associated with women in early modern England. Elizabeth A. Hallam writes that in Canterbury it was women's duty to turn the hourglass when they kept vigil at the bedside of the dying.[55] And time itself is linked to the feminine through the personification of Temperance [redacted]. Kiefer notes 'that the cardinal virtue of temperance was associated with devices for timekeeping in the late Middle Ages and in the Renaissance…The very word temperance seems to derive, ultimately, from the Latin *tempus*'.[56] In an engraving of *Temperancia* (c.1550), we can see that she and her hourglass are mutually representative. The 'hourglass shape' of her physique, formed by the curves of her breasts and hips, mirrors the actual hourglass that she holds. The 'V' through which the sand passes in an hourglass is similar in appearance to a mons veneris and/or womb. In this brief Chorus that bisects the play, then, we can see on the surface the figure of masculine Time as a patriarchal presence, yet the symbol that he carries suggests more covertly the feminine time that he attempts to control as a prop in his hand.

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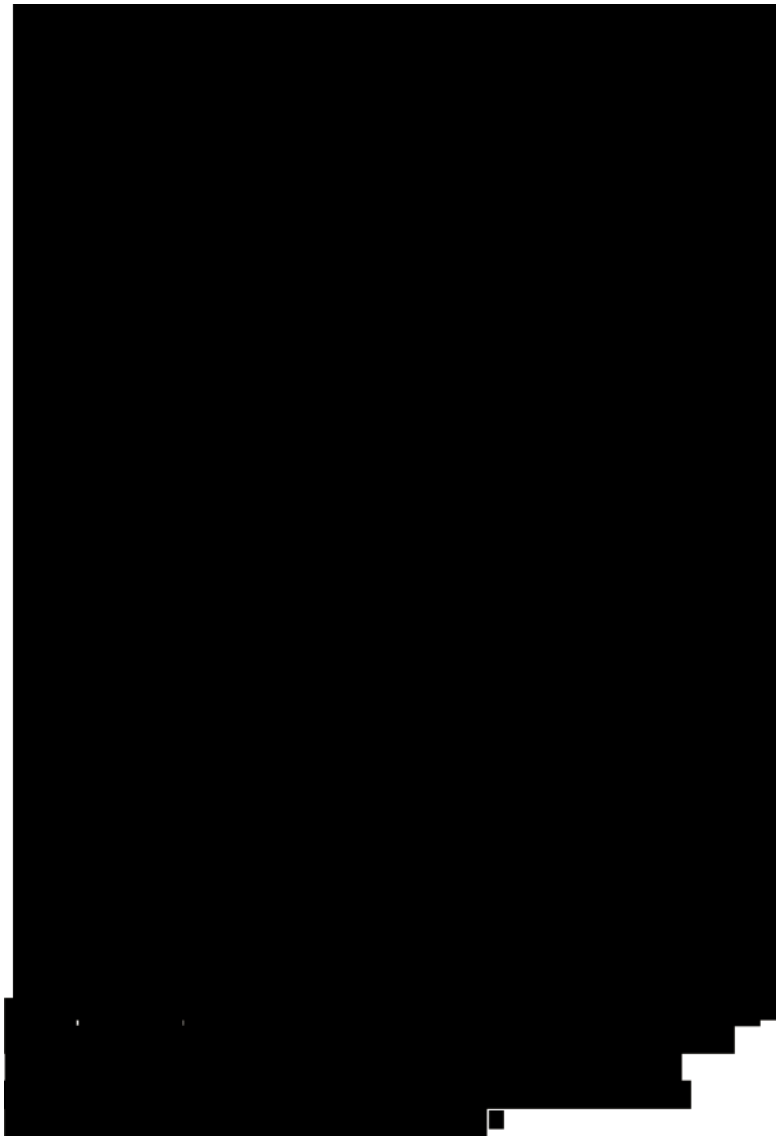
[53] Elizabeth A. Hallam, 'Turning the hourglass: Gender relations at the deathbed in early modern Canterbury', *Mortality*, 1.1 (1996): 81.
[54] Kiefer, 'The Iconography of Time in *The Winter's Tale*', 53-54.
[55] Hallam, 'Turning the hourglass', 81.
[56] Kiefer, 'The Iconography of Time in *The Winter's Tale*', 54-55.



The Statue

In discussing Perdita's birth, I pointed out that she is framed as 'issue' flowing from the open 'dam' of Hermione's body, and that Gail Kern Paster argues that Renaissance women were often framed as uncontrollable objects of disgust: 'leaky vessels'. I would like to further explore this perceived problem of feminine fluidity in the play and argue that the statue represents an attempt to contain this fluidity by making it solid. While a textural motif of *Othello* is soft/hard, we can pinpoint a similar binary in *The Winter's Tale* of liquid/solid. But whereas *Othello* portrays the female character as soft and the male character as hard, in *The Winter's Tale* the feminine character is shown to be naturally fluid, and solidity is an artificial state that a male character would seek to impose on her. Hermione says she has no tears that would be typical of women: 'I am not prone

to weeping, as our sex / Commonly are' (2.1.108-109). Shakespeare's presentation of her fluidity has less to do with expressing emotion and more with sexuality, fertility, and speech. Leontes finds Hermione's body to be legible in its leakiness. Already suspecting adultery, he asks Camillo to agree with him that Hermione is 'slippery' (1.2.271), as though she has let other men slide into her pond. Her offspring – in Leontes's mind, the possible products of infidelity – are linked to her in a fluid fashion. Leontes calls Perdita 'issue', and the mammary name 'Mamillius' links the boy to his mother's breasts and their milk.[58] Though Leontes says that Hermione did not breastfeed Mamillius, he nonetheless perceives her fluid connection to him in another way, saying to his wife: 'you / Have too much blood in him' (2.1.57-58). Hermione has not influenced Mamillius's character by nursing the way that Tamora has influenced Chiron and Demetrius in *Titus Andronicus*. Yet Leontes's concern about Hermione's blood transferring to Mamillius might be inflected with the theory that breastmilk is transformed blood. Tamora engendered depravity in her sons through breastmilk. Leontes is worried that his allegedly adulterous wife has passed depravity onto their son through a related bodily fluid.

The orifice of Hermione's mouth becomes one focal point of the liquefaction of her body. Kern Paster writes that the early modern theory of women's out-of-control bodies 'also characteristically links this liquid expressiveness to excessive verbal fluency'.[59] Consider the first words that Leontes speaks to Hermione. Enlisting his wife in his attempt to keep Polixenes in Sicilia, Leontes commands her: 'Tongue-tied, our queen? Speak you' (1.2.27). 'Tongue-tied' had figurative meanings of 'speechless' or 'reticent' that were available in the Renaissance and persist today.[60] For instance, in 1533, Thomas More writes: 'he is not so tong tayed, but that he is at lybertye to speke'.[61] But it is imperative to understand the literal meaning of this phrase as it encapsulates Leontes's early bid for bodily control over his wife. Ankyloglossia ('tongue tie') is a congenital condition in which the frenulum connected to the tongue is too short, causing speech problems because the 'tongue…cannot move freely'.[62] Jacques Guillemeau describes the treatment for this condition in a 1598 surgery manual in translation: 'When as we would cut the tunge tyednes…we must…cutt of the membrane

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[58] Snyder, 'Mamillius and Gender Polarization', 4. Amy Burnette, 'Bearing Death in *The Winter's Tale*', in *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., ed. Dympna Callaghan (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 445.
[59] Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed*, 25.
[60] 'tongue-tied, *adj.*', 2., *OED Online*.
[61] Thomas More, *The apologye of syr Thomas More knyght*. (1533), sig. L2r.
[62] 'Background: What is tongue tie?', *Tongue Tie*, accessed on 24 Nov. 2016, http://tonguetie.net/background/. 'Tongue Tie: information for parents and practitioners', *Tongue Tie*, accessed on 24 Nov. 2016, http://tonguetie.net/.

which is situated under the tunge'.[63] In her analysis of rhetoric in *The Winter's Tale*, Lynn Enterline notes the importance of this first line from king to queen in centering their relationship on speech.[64] But she does not explicitly discuss the physicality of the condition of tongue tie, which adds another layer to this line. Leontes, in his demand for Hermione to free her tongue, is commanding a physical alteration – a correction of something inherently aberrant in her body.

In the early modern period, the tongue was perceived as a sexual organ and a loose tongue was associated with sexual availability.[65] Looking back to *Titus Andronicus* from this perspective, we can understand that Chiron and Demetrius's removal of Lavinia's tongue is both a prevention of her disclosure of rape and a continuation of their sexual brutalizing of her body by dismembering this sex organ. In *The Winter's Tale*, the tongue tie can be read as a short leash on Hermione's sexuality, one that is loosened when she speaks to Polixenes. Leontes demonstrates knowledge of the tongue as a tool of feminine dissent and sexual liberation, especially in his dealings with Paulina, whom he castigates as 'A callat / of boundless tongue' (2.3.89-90) and Antigonus's 'lewd-tongued wife' (2.3.170). Hermione's liberal speech and its ability to persuade Polixenes is, according to Leontes's warped perception, a clue that she may be liberal with Polixenes in more intimate ways – as Enterline observes, 'Leontes's suspicions may reduce Hermione's tongue to her body'.[66] According to Carla Mazzio, the Renaissance saw a strengthening of 'the imagined relationship between rhetorical and sexual performance', a slippage that Leontes suspects in his wife's interactions with Polixenes.[67] The irony, of course, is that Leontes implored Hermione to help him convince Polixenes to stay, only to later punish her for accomplishing the task. It is Leontes who wanted to release the organ of Hermione's speech. Later, when she has turned into a statue, her tongue is safely guarded behind closed, stony lips. Like Pygmalion's statue-turned-lover for whom Ovid writes no dialogue in his *Metamorphoses*, Hermione does not speak to her husband in Act 5, either as a statue or as a person.[68] Characters describe the appearance of Hermione's mouth, emphasizing that it is to be seen and not heard. But in the end, neither feminine

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[63] Jacques Guillemeau, *The Frenche chirurgerye, or all the manualle operations of chirurgerye, with divers, & sundrye figures, and amongst the rest, certayne nuefownde instrumentes, verye necessarye to all the operationes of chirurgerye. Through Jaques Guillemeau, of Orleans ordinarye chirurgiane to the kinge, and sworen in the citye of Paris. And now truelye translated out of Dutch into Englishe by A.M.* (Dort: 1598), fol. F4r. 'tongue-tied, *adj.*', Derivatives, 'tongue-tiedness *n.*', *OED Online*.

[64] Lynn Enterline, '"You Speak a Language that I Understand Not": The Rhetoric of Animation in *The Winter's Tale*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 48.1 (1997): 17-18, 27-28.

[65] Carla Mazzio, 'Sins of the Tongue in Early Modern England', *Modern Language Studies*, 28.3/4 (1998): 101.

[66] Enterline, 'You Speak a Language that I Understand Not', 29, 38.

[67] Mazzio, 'Sins of the Tongue in Early Modern England', 101.

[68] For analysis of the relationship between *The Winter's Tale* and the Pygmalion myth, see: Pitcher, 'Introduction', in *The Winter's Tale*, 9-10, 93.

speech nor feminine time will be bound. Hermione will speak once more, and when she does it will be in an act of reconnection between women.

As Leontes discusses the appearance of the statue, his descriptions are caught between fluidity and solidity. Jennifer Waldron claims that '[a] number of Shakespeare's writings position stones and stoniness as boundary markers of the terrain of the human'.[69] In the case of *The Winter's Tale*, it is a patriarchal boundary that Leontes would enjoy, for he seems to like having his wife dehumanized in stone. He addresses it as 'dear stone' (5.3.24), apparently enamored not only by the image of her but also by the material in which it is set. For Leontes, the medium of this Hermione makes her an ideal. Enterline argues that the idealized female statue 'criticizes even as it perpetuates a mysterious tie between love of art and hatred for women'.[70] The statue of Leontes's wife is literally impenetrable and impregnable: it cannot be entered by a lover such as Polixenes, and it cannot carry and birth a child such as Perdita. The oneiric statue in *Julius Caesar* (1599) also reflects fears of bodily ingress and egress. Caesar says of his wife Calphurnia's warning that he should not go to the Senate:

> She dreamt tonight she saw my statue,
> Which like a fountain with an hundred spouts
> Did run pure blood… (2.2.76-78)[71]

The statue of an emperor would typically be a symbol of masculine imperviousness and immortality, akin to Nagel and Wood's premodern art that was supposed to have one meaning over time. But this statue in Calphurnia's nightmare becomes vulnerable and mortal when it becomes a permeable membrane: it can be wounded by weapons opening its flesh and blood can issue from its veins.

The statue in *Julius Caesar* ultimately signifies fear of a man's destruction, while the statue in *The Winter's Tale* signifies the fear of what a woman can create. Mary Stripling observes, 'the maternal body, a growing body, transgressing limits and expanding beyond boundaries, was viewed as especially grotesque'.[72] Leontes says to himself when his wife is still pregnant:

> Should all despair
> That have revolted wives, the tenth of mankind
> Would hang themselves. Physic for't there's none:
> It is a bawdy planet, that will strike
> Where 'tis predominant; and 'tis powerful, think it,

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[69] Waldron, 'Of Stones and Stony Hearts', 205.
[70] Enterline, 'You Speak a Language that I Understand Not', 18-19.
[71] William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, ed. David Daniell, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 334-60.
[72] Mary Stripling, 'Tamburlaine's Domestic Threat', in *Performing Maternity in Early Modern England*, eds Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn R. McPherson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 213.

> From east, west, north and south; be it concluded,
> No barricado for a belly. (1.2.197-203)

John Pitcher's reading of the imagery in this passage is a sexual one: he interprets the 'bawdy planet' in astrological terms as lustful Venus, and 'No barricado for a belly' as Leontes's lament that he cannot prevent other men from entering his wife.[73] But there is another related reading that reveals Leontes's anxieties about Hermione's pregnant body. When Leontes discusses the planet that augurs badly for him, the figure of immense roundness that looms in his psyche is not only a celestial body but also the flesh and blood body of his pregnant wife. The fullness of Hermione's abdomen over time is a point of fascination in the play.[74] One of Hermione's ladies says to Mamillius, 'The queen, your mother, rounds apace' (2.1.16). Leontes's own preoccupation becomes more explicit as he becomes increasingly convinced that his friend has impregnated his wife:

> Away with him, and let her sport herself
> With that she's big with, [*to Hermione*] for 'tis Polixenes
> Has made thee swell thus. (2.1.60-62)

In this play, the pregnant body becomes dehumanized because it has the dangerous power to make (and be made larger by) *another body* inside it.

Simon Reynolds argues that in *The Winter's Tale* the concept of pregnancy extends beyond physical creation such that Leontes undergoes a psychic pregnancy in which he gestates paranoid delusions. Reynolds claims that these 'phantasms are children of the imagination' born of 'Leontes' powers of conception', and of course his 'original misconception' of the nature of the relationship between his wife and his friend.[75] During Hermione's trial, the king and queen have this exchange:

> HERMIONE:
> Sir,
> You speak a language that I understand not.
> My life stands in the level of your dreams,
> Which I'll lay down.
> LEONTES:
> Your actions are my dreams.
> You had a bastard by Polixenes,
> And I but dreamed it. (3.277-82)

Leontes's statement of 'Your actions are my dreams' is pure solipsism. Hermione cautions her husband not to mistake his imaginings for an accurate representation

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[73] Pitcher, ed., *The Winter's Tale*, 167.
[74] Kathryn M. Moncrief, '"Show me a child begotten of thy body that I am father to": Pregnancy, Paternity and the Problem of Evidence in *All's Well That Ends Well*', in *Performing Maternity in Early Modern England*, eds Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn R. McPherson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 35.
[75] Reynolds, 'Pregnancy and Imagination in *The Winter's Tale* and Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*', 441-44.

of her actions, but he stubbornly conflates the two. He even says that he dreamed the bastard child into being. The idea that Leontes carries another figure within him is in some sense reflective of this play's position as a descendent and variation of *Othello*. As Anne Barton notes, Leontes is a successor to Othello as a husband who is convinced that he is a cuckold, but he is also like the conniving Iago who sows this suspicion. Whereas Othello's mind is poisoned by the outside force of Iago, Leontes is poisoned by his own doubts. It is as though he carries with him the voice of an internalized Iago, the vestigial villain.[76] While Hermione's physical pregnancy is generative, Leontes's psychic pregnancy is destructive, as it would bring about the destruction of Hermione the creator and Perdita the creation.

A typical statue would not be able to expand, produce life, or go through the changes over time that mark the performance of feminine embodiment in this play. The transformation of Hermione's body into an artwork could make her an artificial, unchanging, controllable body and therefore Leontes's version of an ideal wife. But this statue challenges this fixed ideal with reality, as Robert C. Ketterer observes:

> [T]he putative statue of Hermione is…initially for the "suppression of time" in the sense that it seems to erase time's effects. It appears to Leontes and the others to have arrested Hermione perpetually in a condition of youth and beauty…But…[t]hough the statue represents Hermione in her previous state of beauty, it also connotes the effects of Time's passage.[77]

The Winter's Tale's statue is a fantastical version of the anachronic art that Nagel and Wood describe as an emergent feature of the Renaissance. Chloe Porter perceives this statue as an artwork in flux: 'Shakespeare suggests that we understand the statue as not just "aged", but "ageing". The statue is not complete, never a fixed, static "stone"'.[78] Hermione's statue resists stasis and is capable of metamorphosis, first by demonstrating the effects of time, and then by coming to life. It captures 'her natural posture' (5.3.23), rather than a more artful composition. Its skin is altered: 'Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing / So aged as this seems' (5.3.28-29). Its eyes move: 'The fixture of her eye has motion in't, / As we are mock'd with art' (5.3.67-68). It breathes: 'There is an air comes from her: what fine chisel / Could ever yet cut breath?' (5.3.78-80). Regarding the play's fluid/solid binary, the statue presents aspects of the fluid alongside the solid, for Paulina warns: 'The statue is but newly fixed; the colour's

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[76] Anne Barton, 'Leontes and the Spider: Language and Speaker in Shakespeare's Last Plays', in *Shakespeare: The Last Plays*, ed. Kiernan Ryan (London: Routledge, 2013), 25.
[77] Robert C. Ketterer, 'Machines for the Suppression of Time: Statues in *Suor Angelica*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Alcestis*', *Comparative Drama*, 24.1 (1990), 11-12.
[78] Porter, *Making and unmaking in early modern English drama*, 78.

/ Not dry' (5.3.47-48). Leontes queries whether 'those veins / Did verily bear blood?' (5.3.64-65). And the mouth that Leontes found to be too slippery in its speech is literally and defiantly moist. When Leontes moves to kiss Hermione, Paulina stops him, saying, 'The ruddiness upon her lip is wet' (5.3.81). After Hermione comes fully alive, speech will issue from her mouth once more. In a play concerned with the changing of the seasons, we can also perceive that Hermione's leaky femininity was frozen and therefore controlled in the form of the statue. In this final scene, it undergoes a spring thaw, for Leontes's observations change from 'now it coldly stands' (5.3.36) to 'O, she's warm!' (5.3.109).

I would like to situate Hermione's transformation within a nexus of women and feminine time, consisting of Hermione, Paulina, and Perdita. Perdita as the doll was laid with apotropaic objects like a buried child. Hermione's statue looks like it could be atop her own tomb, for Bruce R. Smith argues that the most familiar statues to the Jacobean audience would have been those at burial sites:

> Not only were there no classical statues to be seen in Shakespeare's England; there were lamentably few medieval statues either. The systemic destruction of England's religious art that had started during the Reformation slowed during Shakespeare's lifetime but never completely stopped, despite Elizabeth's official decrees. What experience of statues, then, *would* Shakespeare's audiences have had in mind when they watched Hermione's image come to life on the stage of the Blackfriars Theatre? The sculptor's art in Elizabethan England was almost exclusively the tomb-maker's art.[79]

Hence, both mother and daughter come alive from that which could be symbolic of the dead. As Porter notes, Hermione's statue is 'an image that disrupts the solidity of the monumentalised form'.[80] While Perdita seems to come to life from among the mementos around her, Hermione resurrects from her very memorial.

In her analysis of the end of *The Winter's Tale*, Judith Buchanan describes the statue's transformation as 'the play's closing *coup de théâtre*'.[81] But whose *coup de théâtre* is it? Critics have described Paulina as a 'dramatist', 'playwright', and 'director'.[82] The final scene is a play-within-a-play complete with onstage audience, and Paulina's usurpation of Shakespeare's own role in it imbues her

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[79] Bruce R. Smith, 'Sermons in Stones: Shakespeare and Renaissance Sculpture', *Shakespeare Studies*, 17 (1985): 1-2, emphasis in source.
[80] Porter, *Making and unmaking in early modern English drama*, 77.
[81] Judith Buchanan, '*The Winter's Tale's* Spectral Endings: Death, Dance and Doubling', in *Shakespeare on Screen: 'The Tempest' and Late Romances*, eds Sarah Hatchuel and Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 111.
[82] Kolb, 'What fine chisel could ever yet cut breath?', 9. Burnette, 'Bearing Death in *The Winter's Tale*', 536. Jörg Hasler, 'Romance in the Theater: The Stagecraft of the "Statue Scene" in *The Winter's Tale*', in *Shakespeare, Man of the Theater: Proceedings of the Second Congress of the International Shakespeare Association* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983), 205.

with a power usually reserved for men.[83] The triumph of the statue is not only Shakespeare's, but Paulina's and Hermione's as well. Paulina also replaces a male character found in one of the play's sources. *The Winter's Tale* draws its story in part from Euripides's *Alcestis*.[84] In that classical play, Hercules is the master of ceremonies behind the resurrection of the dead queen. It is not only a male character but a known, hyper-masculine hero who restores her life. Yet in Shakespeare's own play, he replaces Hercules with Paulina: an older woman who is outspoken, defiant, resourceful, and loyal to her queen. In the statue scene, her control is signified by a prop aside from the statue itself. In *Alcestis*, Hercules lifts the queen's veil to reveal her identity. Shakespeare adapts this technique when Hero reveals herself at the end of *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598), another play that adapts *Alcestis* but in a more comic framework.[85] In *The Winter's Tale*, the veil is adapted into a curtain that gives Paulina the power to conceal and reveal the show (according to the *OED*, in this period, 'curtain' could be a synonym for 'veil').[86] While Othello closes a curtain to conceal Desdemona's dead body, Paulina opens a curtain to reveal Hermione's resurrection.

As Paulina initiates Hermione's return, she controls not only the show but time itself.[87] She says, 'Music, awake her; strike!' (5.3.98). Ricardo J. Quinones writes of Shakespeare's work: 'In the world of the histories, the metaphor of music was occasionally used to express the concord of properly managed time, and the discord of disordered time'.[88] In *King Lear*, a gentleman says 'louder the music there' (4.7.25) to awaken the king from his sickly slumber so that he can reunite with his daughter Cordelia. In *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare creates a similar relationship between music and time in the statue scene, one in which mother is reunited with daughter. Music marks the shift in time that is about to occur when the statue comes alive, and it is even the agent of time's course correction. Paulina enlists music to revive Hermione and restore her to a feminine timeline of regeneration. Her next line shows her awareness of her role as director of time: she says to Hermione, ''Tis time' (5.3.99).[89] Paulina takes the place of Hercules and also Shakespeare himself as a conqueror of time. In the sonnets, it is often Shakespeare's writing that is employed to stave off time's destructive power. For

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[83] Lamb, 'Engendering the Narrative Act', 26. Hasler, 'Romance in the Theater', 205-206.
[84] Pitcher, 'Introduction', in *The Winter's Tale*, 13-14. Euripides, *Alcestis*, trans. Ted Hughes (London: Faber and Faber, 1999).
[85] William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, ed. A.R. Humphreys, in *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan (London: Arden, 2011), 914-40. Pitcher, 'Introduction', in *The Winter's Tale*, 13-14.
[86] Hasler, 'Romance in the Theater', 208. 'curtain, *n.1*', 1.d., *OED Online*.
[87] Kiefer, 'The Iconography of Time in *The Winter's Tale*', 57.
[88] Quinones, *The Renaissance Discovery of Time*, 420.
[89] Kiefer, 'The Iconography of Time in *The Winter's Tale*', 57.

example, in Sonnet 19 ('Devouring time, blunt thou the lion's paws,'), the final couplet reads: 'Yet do thy worst, old Time, despite thy wrong, / My love shall in my verse ever live young' (13-14). The male voice stops time and enshrines ephemeral female beauty for the ages in the poem. But in this play, women work with time not so that they can be enshrined, but so that they can live. *The Winter's Tale* is still Shakespeare's play just like the sonnets are his poems, but within it, Hermione and Paulina carve out a play of their own in which, rather than stopping time, they start it again.

Why is *this* juncture the proper moment for Hermione to return? Traub captures the apparent arbitrariness of Paulina's timing, and offers one possible explanation:

> Leontes quickly…repents…Why then, is Hermione whisked off to seclusion? Why the sixteen-year delay in reconciliation? Why the seemingly superfluous, albeit spectacular, transformation of Hermione into a statue?…[M]ost importantly…Hermione's "unmanageable" sexuality must be metaphorically contained and psychically disarmed.[90]

But this reasoning is unsatisfactory: it explains why many years had to pass but it does not explain what has recently changed to cause Hermione to come back to life or come out of hiding at this moment. The answer does not involve Hermione's husband so much as it involves her daughter. Perdita has only just arrived back in Sicilia. Her return is the precipitating event that makes it worthwhile for Hermione to reconcile with her husband, to relinquish the feminine camaraderie of living with Paulina (with both of their husbands absent), and to return to the masculine domain of court. For 16 years, she anticipated her daughter's return:

> Knowing by Paulina that the oracle
> Gave hope thou wast in being, have preserved
> Myself to see the issue. (5.3.126-28)

Hermione makes no mention of looking forward to reconciliation with her husband. In fact, she does not address him at all. Her predecessor in *Alcestis* does not speak for the remainder of the play, as it takes her three days to recover her voice. By contrast, Hermione regains her voice immediately and her choice not to speak to her husband therefore becomes a political act of selective exclusion. Her regained speech is reserved for her daughter and the rejuvenation of their matrilineal relationship. When Hermione asks Perdita to explain all that has happened in the past several years, she is attempting to reestablish their bond and

[90] Traub, 'Jewels, Statues, and Corpses', 230.

reclaim some part of Perdita's formative years. In her curiosity, she asks this series of questions:

> Tell me, mine own,
> Where hast thou been preserved? Where lived? How found
> Thy father's court? (5.3.123-25)

As Quinones writes of the women of the late plays, 'In the powers of endurance shown by the older woman, in the natural grace, innocence, and courage of the young girls, a human stability persists which is at the basis of civilization'.[91]

Leontes's tale is one of masculine losses that cannot be recuperated: the lapse of his innocent, homosocial bond with Polixenes in their youth due to their adolescent interest in women; the death of his male heir through his own fault; the diminishing of his court's respect for him because he acted rashly in banishing their beloved queen; the death of his advisor Antigonus. Hermione's tale is one of feminine change: loss, transformation, and reemergence. Her homosocial bond with Paulina is an adult relationship that is not dissolved due to Leontes's interference, but strengthened over 16 years as they live together. She loses Mamillius, but gains a female heir in Perdita, who is possibly played by a transformed version of her son. Hermione's daughter, Perdita, changes from object to subject when away from her father's authority. Amy Burnette claims that Hermione is menopausal – or, as Burnette phrases it, 'biologically "wintered"' – after the passage of so many years.[92] Hermione may have lost the ability to reproduce, but she reconnects with her daughter who will carry on their line as the symbol of fertility in the play. Hermione loses her ability to speak, but when it returns she speaks to the person who is most precious to her to reestablish their relationship.

The objects of this play are emblematic of these two types of tales and these two types of time, the masculine and the feminine. And the prop that Hermione becomes affords her transformation, rather than dehumanization. With Paulina's sororal support, the statue becomes Hermione's tool of self-fashioning that allows her to dictate the moment and purpose of her 'reanimation'. In *Titus Andronicus*, Chiron and Demetrius render Lavinia prop-like through the violence of both language and action that cuts her down like a tree. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia's father locks her likeness in a casket, thereby sealing her fate in a game played by many suitors. Othello dehumanizes Desdemona by making her character and integrity dependent on her possession of an inanimate object. But in

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[91] Quinones, *The Renaissance Discovery of Time*, 432.
[92] Burnette, 'Bearing Death in *The Winter's Tale*', 450.

The Winter's Tale, Hermione's *choice* to make herself into a prop in Paulina's play increases her power and agency. Part of the miracle of the statue, then, is the paradoxical function that it can perform: turning Hermione into an object *without* objectifying her. In his analysis of multiple, related works, Ketterer writes: 'The Virgin in *Suor Angelica* and Hermione in *The Winter's Tale* both begin as scenery, but as they come to life they transform from object to subject, and their presence dominates and controls the stage'.[93] It is by becoming the object that Hermione *as subject* can reenter the timeline of the play. In taking control of the representation of her body, Hermione becomes not only an artwork but also, alongside Paulina, one of the artists. As Burnette argues, 'Hermione becomes…the bearer of art, emblematic of art's generative powers'.[94] In the first half of the play, Hermione was jailed by her husband. In the second half, her rendering in the statue is an analogue for this captivity. She goes from being imprisoned in stone walls to propertied as a marble statue. Whereas in jail she was surrounded by women and gave birth to her daughter, here in this gallery, with Paulina as 'midwife', Hermione is involved in another act of reproduction when she emerges as a living woman. She undertakes an act of radical and reflexive creation, and as the climax of a play that is preoccupied with Hermione's powers of fertility, *this is the moment when she gives birth to herself*.

Of course, the end of *The Winter's Tale* is not without its problems. Hermione does what she can only insofar as her actions do not completely rupture the patriarchal structure. Her reunion with Perdita comes at a cost. She steps back into a life in which she is still married to a volatile and abusive husband. She is still under his authority in court. Her son is still dead because of Leontes's actions. She has missed years of her daughter's life. The end of the play is a scene of narrow escape in which some casualties cannot be recovered. But for the women of this play, there is always hope because cyclical time is on their side, and with it the forces of renewal and transformation. Hermione can look to the future of her daughter – the extension of herself – and hope that her marriage with Florizel is a happy one, that things will work out this time.

Conclusion

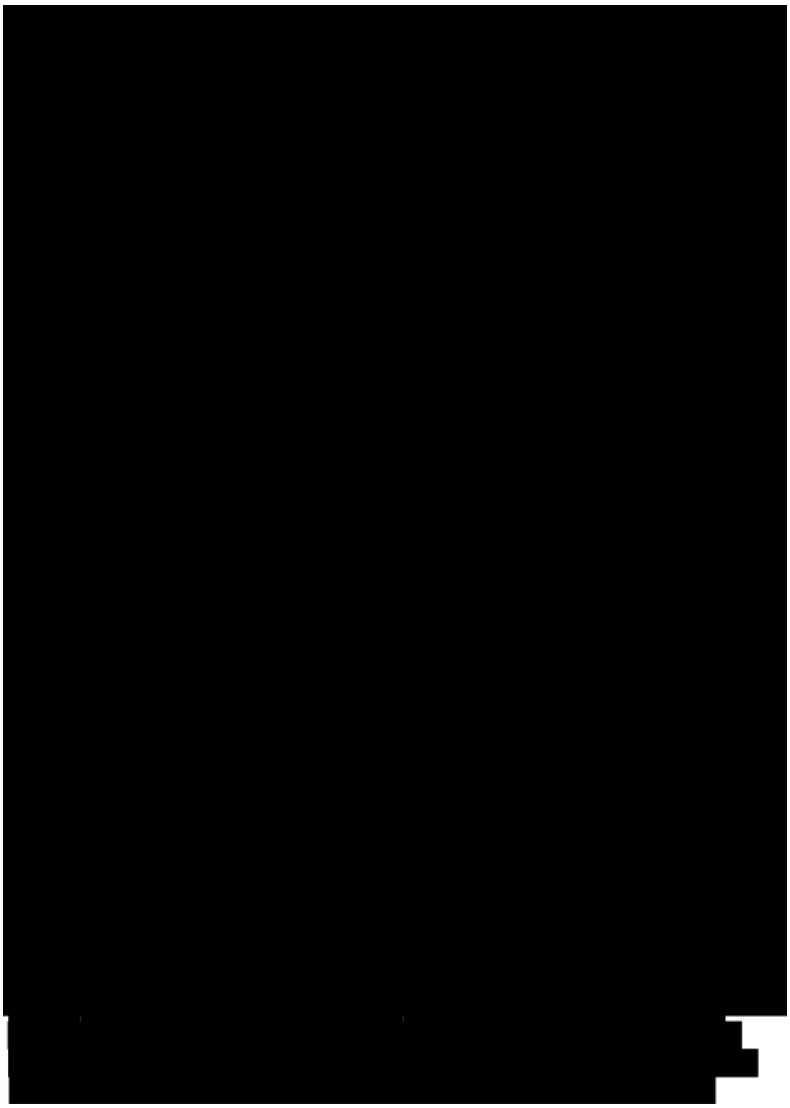
In being dehumanized as objects to be *seen* and *touched* – objects that are not of their own choosing – the women of *Titus Andronicus*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Othello* struggle for their voices to be *heard*. Lavinia, trimmed like a tree by her

[93] Ketterer, 'Machines for the Suppression of Time', 19.
[94] Burnette, 'Bearing Death in *The Winter's Tale*', 450.

rapists, no longer has the extensions of her body that would allow her to express herself: she cannot speak without her tongue, nor can she write without her hands, at least initially. She finds a way to tell her story, using a combination of a few words that she can manage to write and reference to the story of another female victim of rape, Philomel. Portia cannot simply choose whom she wants to marry from among her suitors. Rather, in a hazard designed by her father, she must guide her beloved Bassanio into choosing her portrait, an art object that seems to have more power than its original. Desdemona attempts to testify to her own body's experience: what she has done and, crucially, what she has *not* done. But the handkerchief is seen as a more credible witness.

In *The Winter's Tale*, the statue is a bodily object, but it is chosen and revealed by women. For Hermione, becoming the statue affords her self-representation – the power to step back into her life and be heard. For the sake of comparison, we can look to a work of feminine self-representation in a different plastic art in the Renaissance. Consider Artemisia Gentileschi's *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting* (1638-39) [redacted]. In a meta-artistic way, the painting prompts the viewer to imagine Gentileschi toiling away in just this fashion when she produced this work. She does allow the viewer to admire her voluptuous form, but she also demands that they acknowledge her facility at painting, staking a claim in this medium by *embodying* this medium. She is an artwork. She is the artist. And, as Painting, she is art itself.[95]

[95] '*Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting* (*La Pittura*) c.1638-9', *Royal Collection Trust*, accessed on 28 June 2019, https://www.rct.uk/collection/405551/self-portrait-as-the-allegory-of-painting-la-pittura.



Conclusion:
Metonymy, Synecdoche, and the Propertied Body

In this study, I have explored how four of Shakespeare's plays deal in dehumanization, in particular by turning human bodies into props: the meat-pie, 'pound of flesh', handkerchief, and statue. Across the four centuries since Shakespeare's death, dehumanization and the inequality, injustice, and inhumane treatment that proceed from it have not gone away. In the epigraphs of these chapters, I have gestured at the ways that the representation of the human body in relation to objects – including food, currency, textile, and artwork – remains relevant as a means of affirming or denying humanity, agency, and subjectivity. The sense that the immaterial practice of dehumanization can be made tangible in the treatment of the material body perhaps accounts for our enduring fascination with the Shakespearean objects that I have analyzed, as well as their metonymy in relation to the works in which they feature. In the ongoing fixation on Shakespeare's propertied bodies, there is an instinctual awareness and acknowledgment of their relevance, both to Shakespeare's interests as a playwright and to contemporary practices of dehumanization.

Breaking down drama into its essentials, Peter Brook writes: 'I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged'.[1] Certainly, the human body typically makes the action of a play. But the propertied body can readily be the metonym of a play, and frequently is in Shakespeare's work. The objects I have discussed in this study are evocative because they symbolize what happens to the human body – and by extension, humanity – in these plays, especially how various forces strip characters of their power. The pie evokes Chiron and Demetrius's bodies that have been consumed by violence and vengeance. By synecdoche, the 'pound of flesh' stands for Antonio's entire fungible body, the body that would die if the pound were removed. The handkerchief, marked by virgins' bodies, stands for the anxiety about whether or not Desdemona's body is still chaste. The statue at first seems to memorialize Hermione in an art object that captures her and freezes the past, but through the power of feminine regeneration it becomes a subject that has a future. These props might be inanimate bodies or they might consist only of body parts, but they are *still bodily*. They make present an absence of the living body, the character, the human.

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[1] Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (London: Granada Publishing, 1977), 9.

To think of these bodily objects as representative of the plays through metonymy or synecdoche is to once again turn the body into something else. The propertied body becomes an emblem for the play of which it is a part, as well as a locus of some of the confounding contradictions of the stuff of Shakespearean performance: subject and object, body and prop. These objects also capture the complex relationship between Shakespeare's work and the construction and deconstruction of humanity, and how drama can reflect and comment on these processes. While these props retain the specificity of comestible, fungible, textile, and plasticine, they also function as signs of Shakespeare's medium of early modern drama, his contributions to it, and his attitudes toward it. They become performative.

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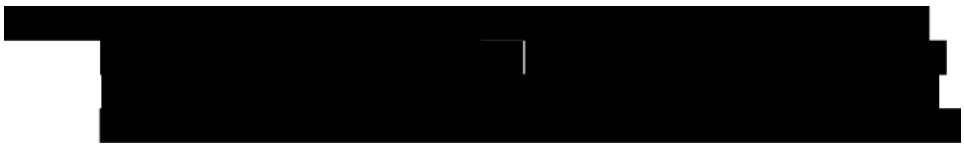

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