Violence and Liminality:
Spenser's and Shakespeare's Contested Thresholds

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I, Kaye McLelland, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed:..

Abstract

This thesis uses a bi theoretical perspective, historical frameworks, and textual analysis to examine interactions between violence and liminality in the work of Spenser and Shakespeare and in post-Reformation literature and culture more generally. Liminality in this context is defined as the state arising at the centre of ritual, or a threshold state, often one existing between two things more usually considered as binary oppositions. Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and the plays of Shakespeare provide the primary focus for this research owing to these writers' fascination with the types of metamorphosis and transformation that can happen in liminal space. Other literary and cultural texts are also analysed, most notably the sermons of the Calvinist preacher Thomas Adams. Adams' theological concerns provide useful comparisons with Spenser's and Shakespeare's work.

Instances of liminality are considered under the headings of adolescence, gender, sexuality, mental state, and physical disability. The application of a bi theoretical perspective facilitates a re-evaluation of the issues of gender and sexuality raised in the first three chapters, whilst the final two chapters offer a significant contribution to the emerging field of early modern disability studies. Each of the threshold states examined was perceived as threatening violence, owing to fear and distrust of the ritualistic or the unknown. They also attracted violence as an expression of fear or as a ritualistic attempt to control the liminal space, closing down the threshold in ways that ensured the resulting individual was an acceptable member of early modern society. Furthermore, the texts examined repeatedly depict the perpetuation of the paradox between binaries as a means of producing spaces of immense power, creativity, and potential. This thesis looks at how these responses to liminality reflect the social and religious thresholds being faced in this period, and how they are connected in the Renaissance cultural landscape to the ultimate liminal space between life and death.

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<u>Note on the Text</u>

Unless otherwise stated, references to *The Faerie Queene* are to Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton et al. (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2007) and references to Shakespeare's plays are to William Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Jay Greenblatt et al. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997). References to Shakespeare's sonnets are to William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones, Arden Third Series (London: Methuen, 2010). Biblical references are to Lloyd E. Berry (ed.)'s facsimile edition of the Geneva Bible unless otherwise stated (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969). *Oxford English Dictionary* is shortened to OED throughout and *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* is shortened to ODNB.

Early modern terminology such as hermaphrodite, madness, lunatic, and cripple is used where appropriate, with explanations to mitigate the potential offensiveness of such terms to modern readers. In general, when quoting from early modern texts, i/j and u/v remain unchanged whereas I have updated VV to W. Updated spelling is taken from later scholarly editions where these are used. The place of publication for pre-1800 texts is London unless otherwise stated.

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Introduction

Every threshold creates a binary, between inside and outside, before and after. Between each of the binaries created by socially imposed thresholds between life-stage, genders, sexualities, and between human and non-human, or life and death lies the possibility for transgression. Some individuals do not fully transition through the liminal space between categories that society deems part of a natural progression, and some seek to traverse categories deemed immutable. Early modern society was subject to immense change and was, perhaps partly as a result, acutely concerned with scientific, religious, and social categorisation exemplified in phenomena such as the study of anatomy, the identification of Catholics, and the class stratification expressed in the sumptuary laws. Spenser and Shakespeare demonstrate a corresponding early modern preoccupation with fluidity, ambiguity, and metamorphosis. I therefore set out to explore the historical context for Spenser's and Shakespeare's depictions of these mutable thresholds and liminal spaces, asking why these depictions are so often permeated with violence.

This thesis focuses on Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and a selection of Shakespeare's plays including *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard III*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Hamlet, Twelfth Night, Macbeth, The Tempest,* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. It uses bi theory as a critical lens, as set out later in this introduction, through which to conduct an historical investigation of early modern cultural conditions and their impacts on Spenser's and Shakespeare's depiction of violence as it relates to liminal spaces and states.

'Liminality' is defined as 'a transitional or indeterminate state' of transformation in progress, occurring between stages of a person's life; especially

where such a state is 'occupied during a ritual or rite of passage'.[1] Work on defining liminality within a Social Sciences framework was spearheaded by Arnold Van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage* (1909) and greatly developed by Victor Turner in the 1960s. 'Liminal' also has a more general, but related, sense of something that pertains to a 'limen' or 'threshold', something that exists between two states that are usually considered to be binary, for example, outside and inside, or child and adult.[2] For the purposes of this thesis I am concerned with liminality as a threshold state whether ritualistically generated or otherwise. In a society where rituals of religion, instruction, and punishment were often violent in nature, do these liminal states result from violence or cause it? Do they invite violence or threaten it?

Violence in early modern culture was pervasive and commonplace. In her 1995 article on the social meanings of early modern violence, Susan Amussen identifies the problems with using murder rates and other statistical analysis of criminal behaviour as the only metric for measuring the violence of society, a method that has been widely used by critics in the past. Instead, she says, we must look at legitimised forms of violence. We must also examine whether violent acts, legal or otherwise, were contested and what power hierarchies were at work when violence was used.[3] As well as the obvious case of warfare, violence took forms including pedagogic correction, violent sport (including fencing), punishment within the home, and treatment of medical conditions including mental illness, as well as less socially sanctioned forms including duelling, robbery, rape, and murder. Many medical procedures, including amputations and childbirth, were more overtly and

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[1] 'liminality, n.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2015 (accessed 19 March 2015).
[2] 'liminal, adj.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2015 (accessed 19 March 2015).
[3] Susan Dwyer Amussen, 'Punishment, Discipline, and Power: The Social Meanings of Violence in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 34.1 (1995), 1-34 (pp.1-2).

unmitigatedly violent than they are today. The legitimised violence of judicial punishment was also significant and very visible. As Foucault describes in *Discipline and Punish*, before the emergence of the prison as the primary method of imparting justice, the spectacle, ritual (or ceremony), and the torture of legal sentences made the human body the 'major target of penal repression'.[4] 'Every penalty of a certain seriousness', says Foucault, 'had to involve an element of torture'.[5]

This was a period of changing attitudes towards violence though, as Jennifer Feather and Catherine Thomas outline: 'As early modern humanism took hold, the place of violence in everyday life became a barometer of civility' they say, suggesting that violence was seen as evidence of a less sophisticated, less civilised time.[6] At the same time, post-Reformation society, despite its violent punishment of Catholic traitors, was attempting to distance itself from ritual violence such as self-flagellation, which was seen as superstitious and papist. In this way violence is connected to liminality and the transformative power of ritual, even where those rituals were becoming feared and rejected.

Liminal Power and Potential: Spenser, Shakespeare, and Ovid

As well as sharing with much early modern writing a foregrounding of violence, Spenser and Shakespeare both also display a particularly marked interest in transformations and transformative spaces of the type that arise from the liminal space at the centre of ritual. Victor Turner includes Shakespeare in his list of famous

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[4] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1978), pp.8-9.
[5] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* p.33.
[6] *Violent Masculinities: Male Aggression in Early Modern Texts and Culture*, ed. Jennifer Feather and Catherine E. Thomas (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p.2.

individuals characterised by 'the behaviour of an innovative, liminal creature'.[7] A key reason for this interest in transformativity is that Spenser and Shakespeare were both strongly influenced by Ovid's *Metamorphoses.* In this text transformations are frequent; Daphne is transformed into a tree to preserve her chastity, Io becomes a cow, and Syrinx becomes a marsh reed, and then a pan-pipe, all within a very few pages.[8] When Tiresias violently interrupts the mating ritual of two huge snakes, he is transformed into a woman (pp.60-61). Narcissus's transformation occurs when he is in the liminal state between childhood and adulthood and between being the object of homosexual and heterosexual desire: 'Narcissus now had reached his sixteenth year/ And seemed both man and boy; and many a youth/ And many a girl desired him' (p.61). Ovid is also concerned with boundaries and their crossing; when Minerva 'the virgin queen of war' cannot cross Envy's threshold she responds with violence, and strikes the door with 'her spear's point' (p.47); when Aglauros sits outside her sister's door to bar Mercury's access, he forces open the door 'With his wand/ His magic wand' (p.49).

Ovid and other classical writers were revered and echoed in much early modern literature, due in no small part to the fascination with classical writing that was a feature of Renaissance humanist education, as I shall discuss further in chapter 1 of this thesis. In Spenser's and Shakespeare's writing these influences can be clearly seen and much criticism and popular association exists concerning the links between Ovid and both of these writers. Clark Hulse called Spenser the 'quintessential Ovidian poet of Elizabethan England'.[9] These associations are

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[7] Victor W. Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* (London: Cornell University Press, 1974), p.18. The others listed are Homer, Dante, Galileo, Newton, and Einstein: all canonical male icons.

[8] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. E.J. Kenney, trans. A.D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.17-22. All further references are to this edition.

[9] Clark Hulse, *Metamorphic Verse: The Elizabethan Minor Epic* (Guildford: Princeton University

longstanding; in 1598 Francis Meres wrote that 'the sweete wittie soule of Ouid liues in mellifluous & hony tongued Shakespeare'.[10] Nearly four hundred years later, Jonathan Bate wrote that Shakespeare's most 'profound and characteristic thinking' on matters of myth, metamorphosis, and sexuality were derived from Ovid and that his career was marked by 'a vast repertory of metamorphic Ovidian manoeuvres'.[11] Perhaps more has been written on the Ovidian influences in Spenser's and Shakespeare's works than those of Lyly, or even Jonson (who goes as far as to have Ovid as the principal character in his play *Poetaster*), precisely because of the canonical status of these authors. This does not negate the strength of the association.

Many critical works on Ovidianism support its importance in the early modern period and focus on versions that would have been available to Spenser and Shakespeare. M. L. Stapleton's 2009 *Spenser's Ovidian Poetics* charts the historiography of the perceived links between Ovid and Spenser and undertakes an analysis of Ovid's influence on the *The Shepheardes Calender* and the 1590 *Faerie Queene*, with chapters 3 and 4 concerning influences from *The Metamorphoses* specifically. Chapter 3 relates in particular to Golding's 1567 translation into English, which Stapleton speculates both Spenser and Shakespeare may have used to supplement the understanding of the Latin versions that they gained from their humanist education.[12] Raphael Lyne's *Ovid's Changing Worlds: English Metamorphoses 1567-1632* also focuses very much on *The Faerie Queene;* as well

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Press, 1981), p.243. Zitner suggests Spenser is parodying Ovid, for example when 'helpless Actaeon becomes foolish Faunus' (S.P. Zitner, *The Mutabilitie Cantos* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1968), p.31.

[10] Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia* (1598), p.282. Meres seems to associate Spenser more with other classical influences or more generally with Ovid as part of lists of classical writers, and Spenser as part of lists of early modern writers.

[11] Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp.2; 270.

[12] Michael L. Stapleton, *Spenser's Ovidian Poetics* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009), pp.15-40; 104-5. Humanist education, and its importance to Spenser and Shakespeare, is discussed in chapter 1 of this thesis.

as Golding's and the later George Sandys's (1632) translations of *Metamorphoses*.[13]

The Ovidian influences in Spenser and Shakespeare have often been linked to matters of gender and sexuality, for example in Cora Fox's essay 'Spenser's Grieving Adicia and the Gender Politics of Renaissance Ovidianism'.[14] The transformations and metamorphoses in Shakespeare and Spenser are therefore relevant not only to a study of liminality and its transformative properties, but also to one that adopts a vantage point originating with a sexuality that falls between the usual binary categories.

Rituals that Restrain or Release: Weddings and Water in Spenser and Shakespeare

I present here, as an introductory case study, a ritual that I do not extensively address in the body of this thesis: the ritual of marriage, and specifically its associations with water.

Ovid's depiction of the flood in Book I of *Metamorphoses* is one of irresistible destruction: 'The need is great! 'Unbar your doors!' he says, 'Away with dykes and dams and give your floods free reign!' (p.9). This account of streams and fountains that break down thresholds and roll 'unbridled to the sea' has evident echoes, owing to its focus on water as an emblem for power and endlessness, in Spenser's most iconic account of marriage, that of the Thames and Medway (IV.xi-xii), a passage which, because of the poet's allusion to his 'endlesse worke'

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[13] Raphael Lyne, *Ovid's Changing Worlds: English Metamorphoses, 1567 - 1632* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Other works regarding Spenser's and Shakespeare's debts to Ovidianism include those by Colin Burrow, most recently *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). More general books on Ovidianism that include or focus on the early modern period include Leonard Barkan, *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis & the Pursuit of Paganism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

[14] Cora Fox, 'Spenser's Grieving Adicia and the Gender Politics of Renaissance Ovidianism', *ELH*, 69 (2002), 385-412.

(IV.xii.1), is often held up as evidence of the fluidity and boundlessness of Spenser's vision.[15] Spenser himself describes the task of cataloguing the 'seas abundant progeny', meaning the rivers and other attendees at the wedding, as an 'endlesse work' (IV.xii.1). This phrase has been taken by critics to imply a wider commentary by Spenser on the project of writing *Faerie Queene*. Goldberg, for example, says 'Spenser's poem is not a world, complete, closed, and referential, but a process demanding endless doing and "endlesse work", because it relentlessly undoes itself, denying closure'.[16]

However, on closer examination the writers' approaches are quite different. Ovid focuses not on a careful catalogue of rivers, but on a list of the violent destruction and the things that are swept away: 'crops, orchards, vineyards, cattle, houses, men, temples and shrines with all their holy things' (p.9). Ovid's account breaks down the binaries of 'land and sea' and also of 'High towers' and something low enough to 'sink from sight' (p.9); usual categories are discarded, fish and dolphins take to the trees and clumsy seals replace graceful goats in the fields (p.10); all things become fluid and unbounded, 'a sea without a shore' (p.9). In contrast, when Spenser, like Ovid 'summons all the rivers to attend' (Ovid, p.9) this is a 'pastoral symbol of order and concord'.[17] According to Rosenberg, the 'disorder and epic struggle' of the real life historical and geographical places that Spenser mentions are 'merged with the continual flow and concord of nature, becoming part of the succession of lovely, peaceful, pastoral landscapes'.[18]

Despite Spenser's assertion of endlessness, he does finish the job of naming

[16] Jonathan Goldberg, *Endlesse Worke* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991), p.26.

[17] D.M. Rosenberg, *Oaten Reeds and Trumpets: Pastoral and Epic in Virgil, Spenser, and Milton* (London: Associated University Press, 1981), p.115.

[18] Rosenberg, *Oaten Reeds,* p.115.

the attendees at the wedding and he does so with characteristic cataloguing and classification. Fowler suggests that Spenser's level of organisation leaves 'no room for a single additional stanza or an extra river'. [19] Each god, ocean, river, and nymph is meticulously and hierarchically catalogued 'in order as they came' (IV.xi.9). The rivers are carefully arranged by tributary and geography and the feast they are attending is one that follows a period of decorum and restraint on the part of the Medway, who 'would for no worldly meed,/ Nor no entreatie to his loue be led;/ Till now at last relenting, she to him was wed' (IV.xi.8). The language of order, of marching and 'lineall descent' (IV.xi.12) is more than enough to encompass and neutralise instances of disorder such as Ino the 'mad mother' or Astraeus's 'incest' (IV.xi.13). Floods of the Ovidian type do threaten, but the 'excrement' of the Wellend can be forbidden by God (IV.xi.35) and the floods of the Sture are merely a 'pleasant' threshold between Essex and Suffolk (IV.xi.33).

There is an inescapable proximity of containment to fluidity that is connected to the fertile 'flouds in generation' suggested by the marriage bed's paradoxical union of social formality and sexual potential (IV.xii.1). Rivers, like desires, may threaten to break their banks, but they are ultimately contained within a classification system whereby Spenser repeatedly stresses social rules. Spenser questions whether his subjects can 'in this so narrow verse/ Contayned be, and in small compass hild?' (IV.xi.17) but this represents doubt, real or rhetorical, of himself as a poet, what Goldberg terms 'the narrator's excuses about his inadequacy', or of poetry as a medium, rather than a wider commentary on the ritual as it plays out. [20] Despite Goldberg's assertion of endlessness and 'infinite postponement', for Spenser all

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[19] Alistair Fowler, *Spenser and The Numbers of Time* (London: Routledge, 1964), p.191.
[20] Goldberg, *Endlesse Work*, p.71.

these things *must* be finite, albeit that they 'endlesse seeme' (IV.xii.1), because only

God is infinite.[21]

Even within human marriages, Spenser's representations are heteronormative

and constrained by patriarchy. In stanza 12 of *Epithalamion* the bride is invited to

cross the threshold of the wide open 'temple gates' in order to be married (lines 1-

2).[22] This threshold state promises 'endlesse matrimony' but the endlessness relates

to the eternity of the divine inherent in the liminal ritual space of the 'sacred

ceremonies' (lines 216-217); the bride herself shows 'humble reuerence' and the

appropriate shamefastness of an early modern woman who can exemplify obedience

to virgins (lines 210-212). Although the relationship between Britomart and Artegall

in *Faerie Queene* displays fluctuations of gender presentation, as discussed in

chapter 2 of this thesis, Britomart ultimately displays similar closure when she

repeals women's liberty in favour of subjugation to men (V.vii.42).[23] The marriage

does not take place within the *Faerie Queene* as we have it, but again this is an

example of Spenser's inability to complete the work and not an indication of a lack

of completion as a feature of it.[24]

Shakespeare's representations of marriage are much less neat. The cross-

dressed Viola, herself a boy actor, remains in male attire for the betrothal to Orsino,

while the anti-festive Malvolio breaks the boundaries of the comedy genre and its

marital ending, and skulks away with threats of revenge (*Twelfth Night* 5.1.365-

375).[25] Shakespeare, like Spenser, recognises water as an emblem of the breaking of

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[21] Goldberg, *Endlesse Work*, p.42.

[22] Edmund Spenser, *The Shorter Poems*, ed. Richard A. McCabe (London: Penguin Books, 1999), p.442.

[23] Spenser is careful to exempt queens from this subjugation.

[24] Even if we assume that the impossibility of completion is built into Spenser's design for *Faerie Queene*, he nevertheless positions that impossibility in terms of his own limitations, either in terms of intellect or mortality.

[25] There is debate, begun in the 1950s, as to whether the Act of Uniformity prevented Shakespeare

boundaries and the endlessness of possibility afforded by the liminal space.

However, rather than associating it solely with the wedding ritual, his depictions are

far more violently akin to Ovid's, and they cover many different types of liminality.

In *Hamlet* Shakespeare again associates water with transformation, with the

liminal spaces of madness, and with the afterlife as represented by the ghost of

Hamlet's father, a symbol of crossing the ultimate boundary:

> Horatio:
> What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
> Or to that dreadful summit of the cliff
> That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
> And there assume some other, horrible form
> Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
> And draw you into madness? Think of it.
> The very place puts toys of desperation,
> Without more motive, into every brain
> That looks so may fathoms to the sea
> And hears it roar beneath.
> (*Hamlet* 1.4.50-55.4)

In *Henry IV Part II*, the flood is associated with a breakdown of binaries and

hierarchies so significant that heaven will kiss earth. If Nature's hand does not 'keep

the wild flood confin'd' then order will die (1.1.153-154). Here Northumberland is

making time for war in the liminal space created by delaying the rites of mourning,

and this liminal power unleashes a metaphorical flood of violence deserving of the

'spirit of first-born Cain' (1.1.157). Repeatedly for Shakespeare the flood is

dangerous and violent, the melancholy domain of the 'sour ferryman' who transports

people between life and death (*Richard III,* 1.4.45-46). It is a flood which might keep

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and his contemporaries from portraying the detailed wording of the marriage ceremony on stage. Susanne L. Wofford suggests that this idea 'makes nonsense of the reality that so many parts of the wedding ceremony are represented on stage in Act IV, scene 1' of *As You Like It* 'not to mention the direct echoes of that ceremony in the final scene'. Susanne L. Wofford, 'Hymen and the Gods on Stage', in *Transnational Mobilities in Early Modern Theater*, ed. Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp.69-92 (p.73).

your soul and not 'let it forth' (1.4.37-38).[26] The Thames is not 'louely' or 'noble' (*Faerie Queene*, IV.xi.24), or the 'sweet Thames' that runs softly through the refrains of Spenser's *Prothalamion*, but it is rather a place of muddy ditches where you might throw unwanted puppies, waste offal, or Falstaff himself (*Merry Wives of Windsor* 3.5.4-9).[27] It is more like the river into which Munera's body is thrown and she is drowned in 'durty mud' (*Faerie Queene* V.ii.27), in an account that uses similar imagery to Shakespeare's Cleopatra describing her possible end on 'Nilus' mud', the 'ditch in Egypt' where the waterflies will blow her into abhorring (*Antony and Cleopatra* 5.2.56-59).[28]

Fluid Fascinations: Shakespeare's Sonnets and Spenser's Mutabilitie Cantos

As mentioned above, existing work on Shakespeare and bisexuality has tended to focus on the Sonnets. A sonnet sequence written to a male 'youth' and a so-called 'dark lady' attracts bi readings, especially in response to sonnets like 144, 'Two Loves I Have'.[29] For the purposes of this thesis I have chosen to take my readings beyond the sonnets, focusing on plays which I feel exemplify the types of transformative experience or state under discussion for each chapter. However, the poems can provide an introduction to Shakespeare's affinity with the non-binary, the liminal, and the things that may inhabit the parentheses between sonnets 126 and 127. In turn, *The Faerie Queene* constitutes the Spenserian work that I feel most

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[26] Part of Clarence's gruesome dream about death by drowning.

[27] Spenser, *Shorter Poems,* pp.492-497.

[28] It was a widespread early modern belief that animal matter could be spontaneously generated. In the case of the Nile, this derived from Classical beliefs about the generative possibilities of the river's mud, as can be seen in Lepidus's line 'Your serpent of Egypt is bred, now, of your mud by the operation of your sun' (2.7.25-26). Cleopatra's lines about her regeneration into maggots on Nilus' mud seem, in their foreshadowing of her death as Antony's 'serpent of old Nile' (1.5.25) by means of the asp or 'worm' (5.2.270), to combine this model of generation with the cyclical, self-feeding regeneration of Bakhtinian grotesque.

[29] My definition and understanding of bi reading will be discussion in more detail later in this Introduction.

clearly demonstrates his Ovidian tendencies. In particular, I have focused on books III, IV, V and the *Mutabilitie Cantos* as relevant to the topics of my chapters, as outlined later in this introduction. S.P. Zitner says of the *Mutabilitie Cantos* that, although we should guard against attributing to Ovidian influence what might have been merely a pervasive knowledge of classical myth, the Ovidian antecedent is 'pervasive' and 'probably the particular literary model Spenser intended to outdo in his Legend of Constancie'.[30] I would like to focus briefly on these cantos as an introductory exploration of Spenser's fascination with change and transformation.

Shakespeare's sonnets are full of paradoxes and juxtapositions of binary categories. In the very first sonnet 'Famine where abundance lies' and in Sonnet 2 procreation promises to make the patron 'new made when thou art old,/ And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold'. These appeals to balance and paradox, indicative of a humanist education that prized rhetorical skill and taught students to assume both sides of an argument, arguably reach their zenith in the praise of temperance in sonnet 18 and the 'master-mistress' of sonnet 20. The poems place reproduction and immortality in the liminal realm of paradox and binary contrast that echo Spenser's depiction of Adonis, the 'father of all formes' engaged in endless procreation whilst perpetually poised between life and death (*Faerie Queene* III.vi.47).

I focus here in more detail on sonnet 66. The poet opens and closes this poem with a wish for death expressed in terms of 'tiredness', perhaps an anticipation of the sleep that rounds the 'little life' mentioned by Prospero in *The Tempest* (4.1.157-158). Within the space created by this tiredness, between sleeping and waking or between life and death, lies a poem constructed almost entirely of binary oppositions

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[30] Zitner, *Mutabilitie Cantos,* p.31.

used to describe the unsatisfactory nature of the poet's mortal existence.

Many of the binary pairs in this sonnet relate to distinctions discussed in this thesis. Matters of faith, discussed throughout the thesis but especially in the conclusion, are mentioned in 'purest faith unhappily forsworn' (line 4), a line which can also be read as relating to the bonds of friendship and intimacy as discussed in chapters 2 and 3 on gender and sexuality. The 'maiden virtue rudely strumpeted' (line 6) also relates to the issues of gender and sexuality, and also the femininity and shamefastness prescribed in conduct manuals and other works on chastity, discussed in chapter 1 on education. The use of the word 'strumpeted', suggests Katherine Duncan-Jones (p.66), is intended to make the reader think of 'trumpeted', a declaration of public shame and humiliation quite opposed to the enclosed nature of feminine modesty. A crossing of the boundary between 'maiden' and 'strumpet' is also a crossing of the boundary between inside and outside, or private and public.[31]

Education is also alluded to in line 10, where folly is being 'doctor-like', that is, acting as a teacher.[32] However, as well as folly being ignorance and the doctor representing knowledge and education, folly could also relate to madness and the doctor as the physician to that mental state. This hint of a secondary meaning is restated more explicitly in the next line where 'simple truth' is mistaken for 'simplicity', or stupidity. This binary opposition of folly (madness or ignorance) with knowledge, or 'simplicity' (being 'simple', or having an intellectual disability) with truth takes a very different stance on madness than that of Erasmus discussed in chapter 4. Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* suggests that madness, or folly, especially that occurring at the threshold with death, is very closely aligned to truth and allows

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[31] The use of public humiliation as an act of punishment is also discussed later in this thesis.
[32] See Katherine Duncan-Jones (ed.), p.66.

access to spiritual wisdom not usually accessible.[33] Here Shakespeare positions

madness and folly as something negative, a stance that seems somewhat mitigated

elsewhere in his work, notably in 'the lunatic, the lover, and the poet' speech

(*Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1.7-17) where he suggests, albeit through the cynical

voice of Theseus, that lovers and madmen can 'apprehend more than cool reason

ever comprehends' (5.1.5-6), a view far more in keeping with Erasmus's as I discuss

in more detail later in this thesis.

The presence of the word 'doctor' hints not only at the foolish, who need a

teacher, and the mad, who need a physician, but also at the association of medicine

with physical disability. This poem contains one of very few uses by Shakespeare of

the words 'disabled' or 'disability'. As discussed in chapter 5 of this thesis, the early

modern definition of 'disabled' does not map exactly onto our own and often had an

implication of removal from one's role in life. In sonnet 66 Shakespeare uses the

word in a remarkably modern, if pejorative, way: 'strength by limping sway

disabled' (line 8).[34] Disability here is a loss of strength and function, and represents

a state existing in the space between life and death. The preceding line, 'And right

perfection wrongfully disgraced', hints at another aspect of the early modern

understanding of disability, explored more fully in chapter 5; in his 1598 English-

Italian dictionary *A Worlde of Wordes*, John Florio translates 'disabled' as

'sgratiato', meaning 'disgraced'.[35] This translation has implications of gracelessness

of movement as well as a sense of being 'ill-favoured' or even lacking in access to

Christian grace. Shakespeare's use of 'disgraced' as the overturning of 'right

perfection' is usually read as a reference to slander (see Duncan-Jones, p.66) but

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[33] Desiderius Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*, trans. Betty Radice (London: Penguin Books, 1993).
[34] 'tongue-tied' could also be read as a disability
[35] John Florio, *A World of Wordes* (1598).

'perfection' could equally relate to the perfection of the anatomical drawing in comparison with the 'disgrace' of more realistically varied, flawed, and mortal individuals.

Shakespeare's sonnet 66 presents a darker side to the paradoxes of reproduction, memorialisation, and immortality than do many of the sonnets, a side that concerns decay and the transformations of death. Each negatively positioned half of a pair (disabled, strumpet, folly and so on) simultaneously, but potentially temporarily, also occupies a space between a desirable state of affairs (virtue, strength, skill) and the alternative beyond the grave. Held in suspension between the oblivion of the sleep suggested by tiredness at the beginning and the end of the poem, each binary pairing or paradox sets up a threshold, and thereby a liminal space from which the poet contemplates death.

Shakespeare appears to favour the temperance of Sonnet 18, a balance between binaries or the inhabiting of both sides simultaneously, as exemplified in his yoking together of paradoxical pairings throughout the sonnets. However, his repeated depictions of messy, unpredictable, asymmetric, and unresolved binaries and boundaries, including those of sonnet 66 that explicitly concern death, suggests that his fascination lies with a more dangerous and potentially disruptive liminality. Spenser similarly focuses on mutability and the chaotic potential and power emanating from the threshold between binaries, but his treatment of it, like his treatment of the wedding of the Thames and Medway, demonstrates an underlying appeal to order, categorisation, and hierarchy that suggests a prioritisation of reintegration over liminality.

Mutabilitie changes, threatens, and 'perverts' 'good estate' and 'meet order' (VII.vi.5). She is a hybrid of Titan and human positioned between the 'hellish

dungeons' of the Titans (stanza 27) and the spaces of the gods she wants to overthrow. She troubles binary categories and makes 'wrong of right, and bad of good', even crossing the threshold between life and death as though they could be 'exchanged' (VII.vi.6). These paradoxes and liminalities bring violence. Mutabilitie 'Threatened to strike her [Cynthia] if she did with-stand' (VII.vi.13). The creation of a court to try Mutabilitie, first mentioned in stanza 17, transforms the liminality and fluidity that she has created into a much more formal ritual space. In stanza 29 Jove appeals to order and hierarchy. The ritual is shored up by legal terms, 'tride' (VII.vi.34), 'appellation seale' (VII.vi.35), and 'titles and best rights' (VII.vi.36) acting as the liturgy of the space and attempting to contain Mutabilitie and bring her back towards regulation and, ultimately, reintegration.

Spenser does acknowledge the attraction of fluidity and chaotic power; Mutabilitie has a 'louely face' (VII.vi.31). This is not the case with many other non-binary or chimeric creatures in *The Faerie Queene*, for example the Blatant Beast (V.12.37-41) although it is true of the hermaphroditic Venus described in reverent tones as 'both kinds in one,/ Both male and female, both vnder one name' (IV.x.41). Nature herself is also described in terms of gender ambiguity: 'Whether she man or worman inly were,/ That could not any creature well descry' (VII.vii.5). Here again though, it is not a case of anomaly or abomination emanating from a dangerous or violent liminal space, but an emblem of the ordered encompassing of binary categories into a synthesis. Nature is 'Euer yong yet full of eld,/ Still moouing, yet unmooued from her sted;/ Vnseene of any, yet of all beheld' (VII.vii.13).

The description of the gathering of types and offices of people for Mutabilitie's trial (VII.vii.3) also depicts Spenser's appeal to the authority and safety of order, and is similar to the Wedding of the Thames and Medway in its

cataloguing. The attendees and participants can 'scarsly' be contained, the threat of a bank-breaking liminal flood is there, but Nature's sergeant (Order) arranges them all to avoid 'confusion and disorder' (VII.vii.4). There is a tertiary model in the arrangement, which is relevant to the discussions of models of the afterlife that permeate this thesis. 'Those that are sprung of heauenly seed'; are contrasted with hell, represented by Pluto and Prosperina; and 'the other world', which is further divided into sea and land. Spenser depicts these categories as definitive and all-encompassing, therefore being a symbol of stability and order. However, he has deliberately chosen to exclude anything he feels is unacceptable, namely the 'infernall Powers' that might cause horror and fear (VII.vii.3).

In contrast, the alternative tertiary model, of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory, rather than Heaven, Hell, and Earth, can be readily seen in Shakespeare's writing.[36] The breakdown of order in *Macbeth*, for example, between Macbeth's 'you know your own degrees; sit down' (3.4.1) and Lady Macbeth's 'Stand not upon the order of your going,/ But go at once' (3.4.118-119) accompanies the breakthrough of Banquo's ghost, presumably from Purgatory.[37] Here the liminal space threatens the terrifying supernatural creatures that 'might appal the devil' (*Macbeth* 3.4.59) and which Spenser neatly shuts out because of the 'horror of their count'naunce ill' (Vii.vii.3).

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book XV describes the flux of life and death in the following terms:

Everything changes, nothing dies; the soul

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[36] For a description of the transition from an tertiary to a binary model of the afterlife, see *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.130.

[37] For a comprehensive discussion of early modern stage ghosts and their relationship to the doctrine of purgatory, see Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

> Roams to and fro, now here, now there, and takes
> What frame it will, passing from beast to man,
> From our own form to beast and never dies.
> As yielding wax is stamped with new designs
> And changes shape and seems not still the same,
> Yet is indeed the same, even so our souls
> Are still the same for ever, but adopt
> In their migrations ever-varying forms.[38]

Spenser's Mutabilitie, influenced by Ovid's account, argues that everything changes, but even her description of death and decay and its attendant creatures is also a reference to eternity and regeneration that has echoes of the Garden of Adonis and, for all its mention of decay and slime, is far less harrowing than the life-cycle of decay described in Cleopatra's fly-ridden Nilus' mud or even the 'vermiculation' of Donne's descriptions of dying and putrefaction.[39]

> Yet see we soone decay; and, being dead,
> To turne again vnto their earthly slime:
> Yet, out of their decay and mortall crime,
> We daily see new creatures to arize;
> And of their Winter spring another Prime,
> Vnlike in forme, and chang'd by strange disguise:
> So turne they still about, and change in restlesse wise.
> (VII.vii.18)

Even Mutabilitie's lengthy description of change (VII.vii.20-53) is categorised and classified, restrained and contained into neat stanzas. Spenser cannot resist order and organisation, even when he purports to be describing the exact opposite. Even within the stanzas there is order, with the descriptions of the months (stanzas 32-43) being particularly formulaic in their structure, detailing in turn each

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[38] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, p.357. This passage can also be seen echoed in Shakespeare's sonnet 59 'If there be nothing new, but that which is/ Hath been before' and in sonnet 60 with its references to the waves on the pebbled shore of time 'each changing place with that which goes before'. Bate suggests that Book XV gave Shakespeare, and others who had undergone a humanist education, a welcome alternative to the idea that human nature was unchanging. Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, p.6.

[39] John Donne, *Devotions on Emergent Occasions, Together with Death's Duell* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), p.176.

month's name, zodiacal affiliation, and accessories. What Spenser is describing is a progression through time, much like the seven ages of man described by Shakespeare (*As You Like It*, 2.7.138-165) and forming part of a general cultural tendency, following a Classical tradition, of dividing life into numbered sections, whether three (Aristotle), four (Pythagoras, Horace, Ovid), seven (Ptolemy and Hippocrates) or any number 'from three to twelve'.[40] Between each category and the next is a threshold, and therefore a potentially dangerous transition. Similarly between each binary Spenser presents, night and day, young and old, male and female, there is the possibility of those who, either temporarily or permanently, fit neither group. Spenser presents such individuals as either monstrous, like Mutabilitie herself, or as sacred arbiters of synthesis, like Nature who, in true humanist rhetorical style, considers arguments 'to and fro' before reaching her verdict (VII.vii.57).

That verdict exemplifies Spenser's fascination with liminal transition, and change more generally, but also his ultimate drive to contain and reintegrate it. He makes a religious appeal to eternity and the Almighty to return changed human souls to their original prelapsarian, or even pre-birth state:

> They are not changed from their first estate;
> But by their change their being doe dilate:
> And turning to themselues at length againe,
> Doe worke their owne perfection so by fate:
> Then ouer them Change doth not rule and raigne;
> But they raigne ouer change, and doe their states maintain.
> (VII.vii.58)

Here all of human life is a liminal space, with birth and death the thresholds that begin and end it. Eternity, the 'world without end' of the *Book of Common Prayer*,

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[40] Marjorie B. Garber, *Coming of Age in Shakespeare* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p.1.

becomes not just that which has no end but also that which exists beyond the end, just as the same space occurring before birth can be described as the 'without beginning'.[41] That these two spaces, the without end and the without beginning, are seen by Spenser as the same space, is the ultimate reintegration. It is a space analogous to Shakespeare's little life 'rounded by a sleep', although Shakespeare's vision seems to suggest oblivion rather than heavenly eternity. In the more personal voice of the two-verse fragment of Canto viii, Spenser does seem to mitigate his statement about Nature's judgement, at least as it concerns earthly matters. Mutabilitie is unworthy to rule Heaven, but she 'beares the greatest sway' on Earth (VII.viii.1). Here though still is Spenser's distinction between the 'short time' of mortals who will be 'cut down with his consuming sickle' and the 'time when no more change shall be' (VII.viii.1-2).[42] Any mutability or flux that takes place on Earth, however much it 'endlesse seeme' (IV.xii.1) is only boundless within the confines that eternity places upon it. In comparison with eternity the 'dilations' of earthly change that Nature describes are as subsumed and insignificant as a shape-changing water droplet joining the ocean.

Transformative Liminal Spaces: Festivity, Carnival, and Ritual Violence

The temporary dilations of fluid transformation, boundlessness, and boundary crossing discussed above are features of liminal space. The work of Victor Turner, building on that of Arnold van Gennep, emphasises the quality of the liminal space

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[41] The concept of the 'without beginning' as well as the 'without end' was explored in medieval religious writing. Julian of Norwich writes several times about it, for example 'his suffering was a deed performed at one time through the working of love, but love was without beginning, and is and ever shall be without end'. Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, trans. Barry Windeatt (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), p.17.

[42] For a discussion of the ambiguity of these two verses in regard to whether Spenser loathes his changeable earthly life, or loathes to leave it, see Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen : Elizabeth I and the Cult of The Virgin Mary* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp.191-192.

as one which is between two phases of life or two states of being.[43] 'Liminal entities' says Turner in *The Ritual Process* (1969), 'are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial'.[44]

The transformative power of ritual and rites of passage is therefore closely linked to concepts of festivity. In *The Future of Ritual,* Schechner writes of ritual in terms of 'repetition, rhythmicity, exaggeration, condensation, and simplification', things that are also features of festivity as well as of the multiple points where the two intersect. The ritual process, says Schechner 'opens up a time/space of antistructural playfulness', which again is strongly associated with carnival and festivity as particular manifestations of ritual.[45] Like the festival or the carnival, ritual is a temporary, constituent-created space with a self-contained system of rules and norms, deriving its power from its removal from the everyday, as well as from the rhythm of repetition and recurrence, as detailed in C. L. Barber's seminal 1959 book *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*.[46]

As discussed earlier in this introduction, ritual, whether religious, festive, educational, or judicial, frequently incorporates elements of violence. Michael D. Bristol, in his 1985 *Carnival and Theatre*, stresses the reality of violence and its integral role in festive practices, saying that 'the violence of festive misrule is not always symbolic and, whether symbolic or not, it is certainly not an incidental feature'. He stresses the liminal, ritual nature of carnival, discussing it in terms of

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[43] Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (London: Routledge, 1960). This is a translation from the original 1909 work in French, *Les Rites de Passage*.

[44] Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York: Aldine, 1969), p.95.

[45] Richard Schechner, *The Future of Ritual: Writings on Culture and Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.233.

[46] C.L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton University Press, 1959).

'catharsis and reintegration' and also acknowledges that 'in the violence of festive misconduct, real and sometimes irreparable damage will be done'.[47] Festivity is not always merely an escape from violence, it can also bring violence of its own and the resulting transformations can be irreversible.

Stallybrass and White say that it is 'striking how frequently violent social clashes apparently "coincided" with carnival' and link this to carnival being politically utilised for social revolt.[48] Stallybrass and White's book is a response to *Rabelais and his World* by Mikhail Bakhtin, which combines early modern scholarship with philosophy.[49] Stallybrass and White sought to build on Bakhtin, positioning what they see as his useful but old-fashioned and overly optimistic views about carnival within a wider framework of ideas around transgression and power relations across society.[50] Nevertheless, Bakhtin's work is unashamed in its acknowledgement of the grotesque, unpleasant, and often violent aspects of carnival, as an integral part of its role as 'the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal'.[51]

Writing in 2003, R.A. Foakes says that violence in Shakespeare more generally has received little attention and that what criticism there is has mostly focused on violence as social control and as a mirror of the violent times in which Shakespeare was writing.[52] Foakes says that Barber is horrified by the violence of Shakespeare's time, specifically the hangings (370 a year); this is typical of the

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[47] Michael D. Bristol, *Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and The Structure of Authority in Renaissance England* (New York: Routledge, 1985), p.33.
[48] Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London: Methuen, 1986), p.15.
[49] Michail Michajlovic Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).
[50] Stallybrass and White, p.10.
[51] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p.109.
[52] R.A. Foakes, *Shakespeare and Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.15.

debate about violence in Shakespeare which seems somewhat polarised between those like Barber who believe that the prevalence of violence in Shakespeare's work is an attempt to occlude the horror of real-life violence, and those, like Foakes, who dismiss such ideas as 'modern sensibility'.[53]

Foakes believes that Shakespeare became interested in the 'underlying problem of violence, and his plays provide an increasingly complex exploration of issues relating to it'.[54] Violence, including sexual or gender-based violence, can often be escaped by means of an Ovidian transformation, Foakes suggests: 'Metamorphosis of a sufferer into a tree, a flight of birds, a nightingale, a rock, or into a god, provides a release from some act of terrible violence'.[55] Bate also states that *The Metamorphoses* provides a 'vast repertory of tales in which extremity of suffering or desire brings about transformation'.[56] Shakespeare's more evidently Ovidian transformations of, for example, Bottom or Ariel into an ass or a tree, are few and far between in comparison to playwrights such as Lyly, and are more imposed *as* violence than an escape *from* it. Many of Shakespeare's transformations occur more naturally in terms of a change of attire or location, or they happen psychologically. Both these types of transformation have links to festivity and carnival. Often a transition to a festive space is triggered by an escape from violence or the threat of violence. Hermia's flight to the woods in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is an escape from threats of forced marriage or death (1.1.42-51).

Elsewhere in early modern society lay the long-standing presence of

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[53] Foakes, *Shakespeare and Violence*, p.16. See also Huston Diehl, 'The Iconography of Violence in English Renaissance Tragedy', *Renaissance Drama*, 11 (1980), 27-44 and Richard Marienstras, *New Perspectives on the Shakespearean World*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

[54] Foakes, *Shakespeare and Violence,* p.16.

[55] Foakes, *Shakespeare and Violence,* p.23.

[56] Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, p.181.

voluntary self-scourging in religious practice, vilified as it had become in the post-Reformation era. For Largier 'flogging in all its spiritual, punitive, and erotic contexts' is, even when not an explicitly religious activity, 'a sort of ritual' because it is 'performed in a formalized manner that assumes a public character'.[57] In the case of voluntary mortification of the flesh, the object was, at least in large part, to create a liminal mental state of closeness to God. In post-Reformation England self-scourging became less acceptable, although other types of punishments, in educational settings as well as in judicial punishments and elsewhere, remained very visible. For John R. Decker, medieval and early modern violence can be divided into 'holy violence' and 'social violence', although images of one inevitably permeate the other.

For Largier *all* flagellation creates an altered mental state and bypasses such mundane things as language; it 'aims at a very special effect' and crosses the 'boundary of what is utterable' to achieve through performance 'something that words cannot reach'.[58] As Elaine Scarry suggests, the application of the human mind in the form of imagination creates a reciprocal arrangement between bodily pain and mental processing, which transforms pain 'from a wholly passive and helpless occurrence into a self-modifying and, when most successful, self-eliminating one'.[59]

In *The Future of Ritual*, Richard Schechner claims that 'even a cursory look at Christian iconography and painting as it developed through the Middle Ages into the Renaissance reveals the orgasmic, not to say orgiastic, qualities of martyrdom as

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[57] Niklaus Largier, *In Praise of the Whip: A Cultural History of Arousal*, trans. Graham Harman (New York: Zone Books, 2007), p.14.

[58] Largier, *In Praise of the Whip,* p.14.

[59] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p.164.

imagined and depicted'.[60] Schechner makes a case for ritual as a way to deal with pain and violence, as well as something that includes pain and violence in its process. He links ritual explicitly with altered mental states, stating that human ritual can 'short circuit thinking' and yield 'a surfeit of pleasure'.[61]

Pain then, is a liminal state of becoming, one which removes the individual from their everyday existence and can transform them into something else. It follows that violence, especially as a means of creating pain, has a role in ritual and can also be imposed from outside the ritual space as an attempt to ensure the transformative outcome desired by the perpetrator.

Cultural Context and Thomas Adams

I have chosen to situate my analyses of Spenser's and Shakespeare's works within extensive cultural and literary contextualisation, the detailed exploration of which forms the opening section of each chapter. Texts examined as part of this contextualisation include ballads, pamphlets, censuses, letters, petitions, medical treatises, conduct and education manuals, and paintings, as well as poems and plays by other authors.

Printed sermons feature prominently in these examinations of literary context, as is fitting for a thesis that examines religious rituals and upheavals. Sermons have not always enjoyed the critical attention they deserve. Poetry and drama have been described by Arnold Hunt as the 'ugly sisters' to the sermon with its previous 'Cinderella' status within literary criticism. He stretches the fairy-tale

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[60] Schechner, *Future of Ritual,* p.231. Iconographies of the ritualistic physicality of martyrdom by no means disappeared after the Reformation, as *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* shows (John Foxe, ed. John N. King (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)).
[61] Schechner, *Future of Ritual,* p.233.

analogy to state that sermons were the 'sleeping beauty' awaiting her 'scholar-prince' but that the study of sermons has become much more acceptable in recent years.[62] The inclusion of sermons in this thesis, alongside other types of historical and literary context, not only provides a balance to the poetry and plays of Spenser and Shakespeare but also reflects the religious concerns inherent in a study of liminality in a post-Reformation era, a time of great spiritual and cultural upheaval and transition. I have used a wide range of sermons, by writers as diverse as Lancelot Andrewes, Thomas Bell, John Donne, Joseph Hall, and William Perkins. I have also used other religious writing by Erasmus, Samuel Harsnett, Thomas More, and Timothy Rogers.

Within the references to sermons and other religious work, I have chosen Thomas Adams as the primary religious writer for this thesis. Adams was a Calvinist who began preaching in Bedfordshire and by 1619 had moved to London, where he became chaplain for Henry Montagu, first earl of Manchester. His parish was situated at St. Benet, Paul's Wharf, just across the river from the Bankside playhouses and very close to St. Paul's, where he frequently preached in the outdoor pulpit, and where John Donne soon became Dean. It must have seemed a troubling world for a Calvinist and anti-theatricalist like Adams, positioned so tightly between crypto-Catholic Donne and the 'innumerable swarmes of … men and women, whose whole imployment is, to goe from their beds to the Tap-house, then to the Play-house'.[63] Nevertheless, Adams dedicated at least one sermon to Donne. He also dedicated sermons in affectionate terms to his patron, Thomas Egerton, Baron

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[62] Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.2; 4. Hunt develops this fairy-tale analogy from *Irish Preaching, 700-1700*, ed. Raymond Gillespie and Alan J. Fletcher (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), p.ii.

[63] Thomas Adams, *The Barren Tree* (1623), p.48.

Ellesmere, and other influential men including William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke. He had a relatively keen following in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when he was frequently described, erroneously on both counts, as the 'puritan Shakespeare'.[64] Unfortunately, although Adams' unique voice results in work that I feel should be considered as worthy of critical attention in its own right, this has been largely absent in more recent times.

Adams' writing shows a distinctive personal preoccupation with issues relevant to this thesis. He is troubled by Catholicism and paints vivid verbal pictures of supposed Catholic ritual and the dangerous power that he fears may emerge from its centre. He also writes extensively about issues surrounding sexual transgression and gender variance. Furthermore, he writes about madness, most notably in *Mystical Bedlam*, one of his more well-known sermons, as well as about disability, and especially lameness. All of these issues are sites of liminality that are explored in this thesis, as outlined towards the end of this introduction.

Adams also has links to Ovidianism that are relevant to a study of Spenser and Shakespeare, but atypical of a cleric of the period. Noam Reisner lists the 'thundering' Adams as one of the minority of early modern preachers who referred to the classics in ways that demonstrated 'a more sophisticated use of profane learning' than was the case for the majority of sermonisers. In fact, Adams quotes Ovid in numerous sermons, despite the apparently unsuitable nature of writings by a figure whom Reisner describes as 'the most radically profane of all classical poets'.[65]

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[64] See *The Sermons of Thomas Adams, The Shakespeare of Puritan Theologians*, ed. John Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909) and William Mulder, 'Style and the Man: Thomas Adams, Prose Shakespeare of Puritan Divines', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 48 (1955), 129-52. The origin of this epithet is usually attributed to Robert Southey (J. Sears McGee, 'Thomas Adams' (Oxford University Press, 2012) http://www.oxforddnb.com (accessed 2 September 2014)). See also J. Sears McGee, 'On Misidentifying Puritans: The Case of Thomas Adams', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 30 (1998), 401-18.

[65] Noam Reisner, 'The Preacher and Profane Learning', in *The Oxford Handbook of The Early*

Adams acknowledges and criticises this profanity, whilst also recognising and condemning its popular appeal: 'Ouid's amatories have bright and trite couers,' he says, 'when the book of God lyes in a dusty corner'.[66] Yet Ovid's works, including *Metamorphoses,* seem to hold a fascination for Adams that is in keeping with his interest in transformation and the dangers of changeability and of trusting appearances.

Terminology

This thesis engages extensively with concepts pertaining to gender and sexuality. The language surrounding these topics is complex, nuanced, and constantly evolving. In general I have tried to avoid the rigid and dated distinctions of 'gender' to denote performativity and identity and 'sex' to denote anatomy and biology. Anatomy does not define 'sex' any more than it defines 'gender'. Where clarity and sense allow, I have used 'feminine' and 'masculine' to denote performativity or conformity to the more socially imposed or narrowly mainstream manifestations of gender. So, Amoret is more feminine than Britomart, but she is not more female. The assumptions made, both in the early modern period and our own, about how anatomy maps onto gender, mean this delineation of terms is almost impossible to maintain when discussing certain texts and episodes. I have also predominantly referred to 'gender' rather than 'sex', except in some senses that are enshrined in idiom, such as 'same-sex'. Even in these instances I have used 'different-sex' or 'different-gender' rather than 'opposite-sex' or 'opposite-gender' in order to avoid implying a discrete binary where I do not believe one exists.

Modern Sermon, ed. Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington, and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp.72-86 (pp.80-81).
[66] Thomas Adams, *The Deuills Banket. Described in Foure Sermons* (1614), p.62.

I use the verb 'feminise' as a negatively coded word meaning the forcible imposition of traditionally feminine traits onto supposedly masculine people. I also use the verb 'emasculate' as a negatively coded word meaning the forcible removal of traditionally masculine traits from masculine people. In doing this I recognise that there are no real equivalents for the forcible removal of traditionally feminine traits from feminine people and this demonstrates the low esteem in which femininity is already held. Early modern English makes more use than modern day English of the word 'mannish' as a possible counterpart to 'effeminate', although even this lacks the force and sense of attack or humiliation that is caused by using a verb and does already have the antonym 'womanish'.[67]

I use the word 'queer' in several of its more modern usages, which are evident from context. I use it as an umbrella term for LGBT; to denote the field of queer theory; and more broadly, including as a verb, to describe something that questions underlying assumptions and cultural norms and seeks to subvert them.

The Bi Perspective

The critical perspective for this thesis comes from bi theory. The concept of liminality is of particular interest when studying bisexuality as the latter is frequently positioned as a liminal state, one associated with the transition from child to adult (as a phase to be grown out of) or with the transition from heterosexual to homosexual (or, less commonly, vice versa). The persistence of bisexual identities creates a fixed

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[67] The concept of effeminacy itself is complex and has changed over time. As Alan Sinfield describes in *The Wilde Century* 'in the mid twentieth century, effeminacy and queerness became virtually synonymous' under the influence of cultural memories of Wilde, but 'in Shakespeare and Marlowe it meant giving too much attention to women' (London: Cassell, 1994), p.vii. As I discuss later in this thesis, effeminacy and passive homoerotic desire were not synonymous in the early modern period, but could have overlapping imagery in certain scenarios.

liminality. Arpad Szakolczai refers to such fixed states, ones which defy reintegration, as 'spinning wheels' which must be stopped, forcibly if necessary, or 'permanent liminality' will lead dangerously to ever more desperate attempts to find entertainment in a 'mad search after experience'.[68] In the main, bisexuality research remains within the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, and psychology, leaving a lot of scope for fresh work in literary studies to address the silence that has previously existed in this field. This is the gap in which I will situate my thesis, using the liminal, non-binary perspective of bi theory to examine the contested thresholds in the work of Spenser and Shakespeare, two literary and cultural icons preoccupied with violence and with Ovidian issues of transformation and fluidity.

Bi theory provides a vantage point that is both subsumed by and critiques queer theory. Landmark publications of queer theory include Michel Foucault's *The Will to Knowledge* (1976), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Between Men* (1985)*,* and Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990)*,* although several of these works were published before the term was coined in around 1990.[69] Queer theory arose at approximately the same time that the bisexual activist movement began to emerge from the misguided accusations and vilifications arising from the AIDS crisis. Perhaps as a result of this timing, queer theory often fails to acknowledge the existence of those already inhabiting the liminal spaces between the binaries of gay and straight, male and female, normative and transgressive, that it seeks to deconstruct.[70] In the 1990 volume *The Epistemology of The Closet,* for example,

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[68] Arpad Szakolczai, *Reflexive Historical Sociology* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp.117-8.

[69] Teresa de Laurentis is usually credited with coining the term at a conference in 1990, although she stopped using it within a few years. See Annamarie Jagose, *Queer Theory: An Introduction* (Washington Square, N.Y.: New York University Press, 1996), p.127.

[70] For more on the elision of bisexuality by queer theory, see April S. Callis, 'Playing with Butler and Foucault: Bisexuality and Queer Theory', in 'Bisexuality and Queer Theory: Intersections, Diversions, and Connections [Special Issue]', *Journal of Bisexuality*, ed. Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio and Jonathan Alexander, 9 (2009) pp.213-233.

Sedgwick identifies as problematic the idea that the gender or genital configuration of the sexual object choice should be the primary means for identifying 'sexual orientation'; she laments the division of humanity into the Foucauldian 'species' of the homosexual and the heterosexual; and she discusses the notion of binaries and specifically binaries of sexuality.[71] She does everything *but* name bisexuality as something which already inhabits the liminal space she wishes to develop. Bisexuality seems to be a dirty word. In her earlier work *Between Men* Sedgwick also excludes and erases bisexuality. When discussing *The Sonnets* she makes a case for the poems to the fair youth as heterosexual, because they exist within a paradigm that revolves around the courtship of women, and even if the love between the poet and the fair youth has been 'genitally acted out' it is not at odds with that institutionalised social system.[72] Sedgwick popularized the term 'homosocial' in this work, a word intended to account for the nature of male friendship in the early modern period. This term has since been frequently used to explain away or neutralise apparent homoeroticism or homosexual desire. Sedgwick admits to treading a peculiar and precarious path with her argument, where homosexuality is 'anachronistic' but heterosexuality is merely 'risking anachronism'.[73] For an argument that plays with the possibilities of anachronism nevertheless to ignore the word bisexuality seems a deliberate, or at best a careless, act of omission for a writer who states that 'gender bearings are, far from neutral, but wildly and, as it turns out, dangerously scattered' or where love and desire are a matter for 'ambisexual

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[71] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, revised (London: University of California Press, 2008), pp.8-12.
[72] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, revised (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1985), p.35.
[73] Sedgwick, *Between Men*, p.38.

genitals'.[74]

Some engagement with concepts of bisexuality does exist within scholarship on the early modern period. Katherine Duncan-Jones's introduction to the Arden Third Series edition of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1997), despite having attracted considerable criticism, explores both same-sex and other-sex attraction, following on from Joseph Pequigney's much cited 1986 book on the subject, *Such is My Love*.[75] Pequigney presents a homoerotic reading of the sonnets and explores the previous critical resistance to such an interpretation. Pequigney addresses the problem of the homosocial being used as a tool to discredit homoerotic readings, although he does so by means of a search for evidence of sexual consummation in what he denotes as the middle phase of the relationship between the poet and the young man (sonnets 20-99). Evelyn Gajowski lists Pequigney's book as one of a number focused on gender and sexuality that 'opened up new meanings in Shakespeare's texts and culture that had been repressed for nearly four centuries'.[76] Kate Chedgzoy discusses the impossibility of identifying Shakespeare as 'bisexual' because of the differences in culture and identity between his time and ours, but also recognises the importance for bisexual communities of finding readings of Shakespeare that reflect their experience. Chedgzoy makes specific reference to Pequigney's chapter on 'The Bisexual Soul' in *Such is My Love,* and emphasises his Freudian readings.[77] She also engages comprehensively with Marjorie Garber's 1995 book *Vice Versa* (since

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[74] Sedgwick, *Between Men*, pp.38-39. The word 'bisexual' receives only one mention in this book, and that in a quote from a third party (p.47).

[75] Joseph Pequigney, *Such is My Love* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1986). For criticism of Katherine Duncan-Jones's approach, see in particular Colin Burrow, 'Editing Shakespeare's Sonnets', *The Cambridge Quarterly*, 29 (2000), 61-74.

[76] *Presentism, Gender, and Sexuality in Shakespeare*, ed. Evelyn Gajowski (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp.2-3.

[77] Kate Chedgzoy, '"Two Loves I Have": Shakespeare and Bisexuality', in *The Bisexual Imaginary: Representation, Identity, and Desire,* ed. Phoebe Davidson and Bi Academic Intervention (Organization) (London: Cassell, 1997), 106-119, pp.113-114.

republished in 2000 as *Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life*), although she

takes issue with Garber's direct identification of Shakespeare with the narrator

character of *The Sonnets,* an assumption of which Pequigney is also guilty.[78]

Inclusion of bisexuality, however, does not always imply a shift in focus, or

even acceptance. In his 2009 book *Soul of the Age*, Jonathan Bate says the court of

James I 'might be described' as 'bisexualized'. He distances himself from actual

bisexuality not only by using the word 'bisexualized' rather than 'bisexual' but also

by describing the court rather than its people or their behaviour. Furthermore, the

concept of a bisexualized court is only brought into service in order to refute the idea

of 'some urgent personal homosexual desire' on the part of Shakespeare when

writing the sonnets.[79] It would seem that Garber's claim that 'a bisexual

Shakespeare fits no one's erotic agenda' frequently still holds.[80]

I consciously use the term 'bi theory' rather than 'bisexual theory', although

they are synonymous, specifically to prevent this critical vantage point being seen,

for reasons of etymology or otherwise, as limited to issues of sexual desire and

identity. This distancing, or 'stripping away of the overtly sexual markers' is credited

with having 'helped to rapidly propel queer theory through the academic orbit',

resulting in a critical approach that exceeds its origins within Lesbian and Gay

Studies and taken on a far wider meaning and application.[81] In the same way bi

theory has applications beyond the issues of gender and sexuality addressed in

chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis and can also be used to examine the bi-experiential

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[78] Chedgzoy, 'Two Loves I Have', p.107. Marjorie B. Garber, *Bisexuality and The Eroticism of Everyday Life* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

[79] Jonathan Bate, *Soul of the Age* (New York: Random House, 2009), p.235.

[80] Garber, *Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life*, p.515.

[81] Maria Gurevich, Helen Bailey and Jo Bower, 'Querying Theory and Politics: The Epistemic (Dis)location of Bisexuality Within Queer Theory', *Journal of Bisexuality*, 9. Special Issue: Bisexuality and Queer Theory: Intersections, Diversions, and Connections (2009), 235-57 (p.242).

and the bi-focused subjective awareness of inhabiting, visiting, and revisiting the liminal spaces and thresholds between categories that are usually considered discrete and binary.

Thus I employ bi theory not merely as associated with sexuality but as 'a key epistemological register from which to dissemble' not just 'the polarized axes of gender and sexuality' but also the polarized axes of thresholds more generally.[82] Bisexuality is recognised as 'the portal to […] the middle ground that deconstructs the binarisms that the project of queer theory sought at least to blur' but the experiential and theoretical examination of the liminal exceeds matters of sexuality.[83] 'A bisexual perspective' says Hemmings, 'is a way of looking, rather than a thing to be looked at'.[84] This is as true beyond gender and sexuality studies as within in. Bi theory then, in this thesis, forms my critical perspective, my 'way of looking', something that can be 'thought together' with queer theory.[85] Bi theory encompasses the fluidity and unfixedness of queer theory but also acknowledges the experience of inhabiting spaces between categories that queer theory would seek to destroy. It examines the dual viewpoints of 'neither' and 'both'. It acknowledges the violence, physical and otherwise, directed at those inhabiting those spaces and thus examines the power structures inherent in binary systems from an internal rather than an external perspective.

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[82] Gurevich, Bailey and Bower, p.237. Scholars who have made a similar call include Steven Angelides (*A History of Bisexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp.5-6 and 'Historicizing (Bi)sexuality: A Rejoinder for Gay/ Lesbian Studies, Feminism, and Queer Theory', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 52, (2006) 125-58 (pp.128-129)) and M.A. Gammon and K.L. Isgro ('Troubling the Canon: Bisexuality and Queer Theory', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 52, (2006) 159-84).

[83] Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio and Jonathan Alexander, 'Introduction', *Journal of Bisexuality*, 9. Special Issue: Bisexuality And Queer Theory: Intersections, Diversions, and Connections (2009), 197-212 (p.199).

[84] Clare Hemmings, 'Bisexual Theoretical Perspectives: Emergent and Contingent', in *The Bisexual Imaginary: Representation, Identity and Desire*, ed. Bi Academic Intervention and Phoebe Davidson (London: Cassell, 1997), pp.14-37 (p.14).

[85] Anderlini-D'Onofrio and Alexander, 'Introduction', p.202.

The reported lived experience of bisexual people informs the application of bi theory to historical and literary matters. The reasons why bisexual people are fetishized, criticised, feared, and attacked, either physically or otherwise, has to do with cultural anxieties that themselves have a far wider significance than sexuality itself. Myths surrounding bisexuality and bisexual people include promiscuity, indecision, unfaithfulness, immaturity, and the spread of disease. As examined by Shiri Eisner the defence against these stereotypes and myths has traditionally been either to reject them, thus creating a benign 'agent of normativity' that is the mirror image of the accusations, or to attempt to debunk them as being no more true than they are for other groups, thus still risking ostracising those who do happen to fit the stereotype for the benefit of those who can appear 'normal', 'good', or 'harmless'.[86] However, says Eisner, the real question is why do these myths exist and how do they reflect cultural anxieties that have been projected onto bisexual people?[87] The myths about bisexuality predominantly relate to threshold or liminal states. Adolescence is the archetypal liminal state. Promiscuity, sexual licence, fluidity, and immaturity are indicative of the mid-ritual state associated with rites of passage across thresholds from one life-stage to another. Even contagion is something that occurs in 'the space in between, the space of transmission', a liminal space that rather than being empty is an inhabited 'lively, animated interim'.[88]

The uncertainty of liminality, combined with its power and unharnessed potential, causes societal anxiety that frequently results in a violent response directed at those seen as inhabiting non-binary space, who are positioned as personifying the

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[86] Shiri Eisner, *Bi: Notes for a Bisexual Revolution* (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2013), p.42.
[87] Eisner, *Bi*, pp.44-48.
[88] Eric Langley, 'Plagued by Kindness: Contagious Sympathy in Shakespearean Drama', *Medical Humanities*, 37.2 (2011), 103-109 (p.103).

feared characteristics of liminality itself. To take a bi-theoretical and bi-experiential viewpoint with regard to this thesis, the question becomes: What anxieties and violence were directed at early modern liminal space, and how were these manifest in the works of Spenser and Shakespeare?

<u>Themes and Explorations</u>

The liminal spaces identified for investigation in this thesis are adolescence, gender, sexuality, madness, and physical disability. Of these, madness and disability relate to the space between human and non-human, and also the ultimate liminal space between life and death, which pervades the imagery used to describe other non-binary states in the period. These sites for liminality are investigated thematically in five chapters, as follows:

Chapter 1, 'Liminality of Life-Stage: Education, Adolescence, and Corporal Punishment', concerns the transition of life-stage through the rituals of education, including the ritual violence of corporal punishment, in particular in the light of humanist influences. It primarily concerns the role that physical chastisement played in ensuring progression through mistrusted, fluid, unpredictable adolescence into socially approved, normative adulthood. It further examines the instruction of women as a lifelong process regulated by men and policed by violence, and inextricably linked to the provision or denial of their formal education. This examination of women's instruction and education focuses around the transitions from child to maiden; maiden to mother; and wife to widow, and looks at the idea that women occupied a perpetually liminal status owing to their infantilisation. The principal humanist works examined are Erasmus' *The Education of a Christian Prince* and *The Education of Children;* and Vives' *The Instruction of a Christen*

Woman. This contextual analysis is developed into readings of Book V of *The Faerie Queene; A Midsummer Night's Dream;* and *The Tempest;* examining evidence of humanist educational theories being emulated or rejected by Spenser and Shakespeare.

Chapter 2, '"Hell's Pantomimicks": Violence and Liminal Gender in the Festive and Everyday Worlds', is an examination of the Renaissance fascination with, and fear of, those who were perceived to inhabit the space between established genders, or who crossed gender boundaries. This gender variance both threatened violence, as in the case of the Amazon, and invited violence as a method of imposing gender norms. I look at Spenser's and Shakespeare's treatment of eunuchs, Amazons, androgynes, and hermaphrodites and site them in a cultural landscape that includes works by Sidney, Lyly, Jonson, Barnabe Riche, and others. The chapter adds to the wealth of criticism already in existence on this topic by looking at the ways in which the space between genders in the period is linked both to ritual and to violence.

Chapter 3, '"I wooed thee with my Sword": Violence and Liminal Sexuality in Renaissance Literature and Culture', considers the hyper-masculine martial model of egalitarian same-sex male sexuality as an alternative to the classical, hierarchical, inter-generational (or pederastic) model.[89] The chapter looks at Books III and IV of *The Faerie Queene;* and Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen;* as well as other texts including John Lyly's *Gallathea*. It investigates love between predominantly masculine men, and love between predominantly feminine women, as well as women's chaste communities. It looks at

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[89]   Being the convention in ancient Greece for an older, influential man to take an adolescent male lover who would in time become an adult man of sufficiently high status to take a similar lover of his own.

the role that ritual plays in creating a liminal space where indeterminacy of sexual attraction can thrive.

Chapter 4, 'Lovers, Lunatics, and Poets: Violence and Altered Mental States in Renaissance Life and Literature', looks at early modern connections between madness and violence, drawing on spiritual descriptions of madness in Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* (1509) and the role of early modern madness as a state between life and death; human and non-human; demonic and divine. The early modern use of the word 'madness' incorporated altered mental states that we now more usually call mental illness or intellectual disability. It also included religious ecstasy and other ritually-induced mental states, as well as concepts such as 'amazement': a mental processing state necessary for psychological progress. This chapter focuses on Books III and IV of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* as well as Shakespeare's plays, most notably *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Hamlet, Twelfth Night*, and *Macbeth*.

The final chapter, 'Halting to the Grave: Liminal Narratives and the Disabled Body', examines how disability in the early modern period is linked to violence by the acquisition of disabilities through illness and injury, as well as through the violence surrounding birth. It considers the disabled individual as perpetually poised at the threshold of a personal narrative accounting for their disability, and as occupying a category between human and non-human or between life and death. Disabled people in this period were distrusted and often feared. Advances in anatomy and dissection served to reinforce the idea that there was a standard body that was preferable to a deviant one. This chapter engages with disability theory, and looks at the early modern use of the term 'disabled' to denote that someone has been removed from their role in life or society. The chapter focuses on extracts from *The Faerie Queene* as well as Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Titus Andronicus*, most

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notably engaging with the existing feminist academic debate concerning Lavinia. I believe that this chapter forms a particularly original part of the thesis as it addresses an under-researched area and participates in the emerging and dynamic field of early modern disability studies.

The ordering of these chapters commences with childhood and moves through life, examining the gendering and sexuality of adulthood and then the psychological and physical states associated with an awareness of mortality and approaching death. In this, the order of the chapters charts what Adams describes as the 'franticke flight' of life from stumbling at the threshold of birth, through madness, to the 'journeyes end' of death.[90] The life/death threshold is the ultimate binary that underlines all the liminal states examined in this thesis. This inescapable connection is discussed in the thesis conclusion.

As described above, the division of life into stages was a common early modern technique and one which van Gennep recognises as significant to the study of liminality:

> Transitions from group to group and from one social situation to the next are looked on as implicit in the very fact of existence, so that a man's life comes to be made up of a succession of stages with similar ends and beginnings; birth, social puberty, marriage, fatherhood, advancement to a higher class, occupational specialization and death. For every one of these events there are ceremonies whose essential purpose is to enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another which is equally well defined.[91]

In its investigations, this thesis is concerned with those who, however temporarily or permanently, occupy positions that do not display the definition that van Gennep describes, who resist transformation between one socially sanctioned category and the next, or who traverse or inhabit thresholds considered barred. It

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[90] Thomas Adams, *Mystical Bedlam*, 1615, p.2.
[91] Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, p.3.

investigates the forces brought to bear on these threshold transgressions by those seeking to impose that definition, even to the point of violence.

Chapter 1
Liminality of Life Stage: Education, Adolescence, and Corporal Punishment

> Verily, these children who haue had their instruction by the publicke schoole-masters, may lawfully among the young men passe their youth forward: But such as haue not bin so taught, may not once come amongst them.[1]

The education that Spenser received at the Merchant Taylor's school and that provided at The King's New School in Stratford, where Shakespeare was almost certainly a pupil, represent part of an education system that had undergone vast changes in the early modern period. This chapter looks for echoes in Spenser and Shakespeare's work of Erasmus and Vives' contributions to early modern debates about humanist education, the education of women, and the physical punishment of students. I examine two sixteenth-century works: Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* (c.1596) and Book V of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, the Book of Justice (1596). For comparison, I also look at *The Tempest* (c.1611), a later Shakespeare play. I examine the connections between violent chastisement and the liminal nature of an education that sought to move students from childhood to adulthood. I look at the belief in violence as a means of imparting knowledge as well as behaviour modification, and consider the implications of this for the ongoing punishment of adults, particularly women. I seek to go beyond Alan Stewart's influential book *Close Readers: Humanism and Sodomy in Early Modern England* (1997), which focuses on male same-sex attraction as a feature of adolescence and education, but

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[1] Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, trans. Philemon Holland (1632), p.6. This quotation demonstrates the threshold status of education as something that enables the passage from 'children' to 'young men'.

which operates largely on the assumption of a binary division between same- and other-sex attraction and also has very little to say about female same-sex attraction.

I look at Erasmus' *The Education of a Christian Prince* (1516) and *The Education of Children* (published 1529 but compiled earlier); and Vives' *Instruction of a Christen Woman* (1523).[2] Erasmus and Vives have close links with English humanism through Sir Thomas More. Erasmus met More during a visit to England in 1499, stayed with him between 1505 and 1506, and supervised the printing of More's *Utopia* between 1514 and 1516.[3] As Alan Stewart and others state, humanism arguably created the need for itself through self-publicity.[4] Erasmus is a good example of this; *The Education of A Christian Prince* forms part of a 'mirror for princes' genre that was largely an exercise in securing a wealthy patron.[5] The panegyric is addressed to Prince Charles (later Charles V) as the finished product of the education process. Letters to other rulers also accompanied the work, including one to Henry VIII of England, with whom Erasmus had aspirations of employment.[6] The English translator of Vives' *Instruction* from the Latin, probably working via the 1524 edition, was Richard Hyrde, a member of More's household, possibly a tutor or

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[2] Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, ed. Lisa Jardine, trans. Neil M. Cheshire and Michael J. Heath (1997: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Desiderius Erasmus, *The Education of Children*, trans. Richard Sherry (1550); Juan Luis Vives, *The Instruction of A Christen Woman*, ed. Virginia Walcott Beauchamp, Elizabeth H. Hageman and Margaret Mikesell (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002). All future references to these works will be to these editions.

[3] Erasmus, *Christian Prince,* ed. Jardine, pp.xxv-xxvi.

[4] Alan Stewart, *Close Readers: Humanism and Sodomy in Early Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997)*,* p.xxv. See also Rebecca W. Bushnell in *A Culture of Teaching: Early Modern Humanism in Theory and Practice* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp.12-14. Bushnell cites Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine's *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Artsin Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London: Duckworth, 1986) as well as C.S. Lewis's *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century: Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973, pp.20-21) for a discussion of whether humanist education was liberating or elitist (p.14).

[5] For an account of Erasmus' self-publicity see Lisa Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters: The Construction of Charisma in Print* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp.3-5.

[6] Erasmus, *Christian Prince*, ed. Jardine, pp.xviii-xix and xxiii-iv.

physician, who died in 1528. He described More as 'my syngular good mayster and brynger uppe'.[7]

The advent of humanism had brought study of what would now be termed 'arts' or 'arts and humanities' subjects, in addition to older subjects like theology and law, and largely superseding earlier education practices that centred on practical skills including horsemanship and falconry. Humanist education sought to break away from the immediate past, focusing instead on the literature of ancient Greece and Rome, especially of significant figures such as Cicero and Plutarch.[8] Some deference to medieval figures did remain, especially where they supported humanist values; in *The Education of Children in Learning* (1588), William Kempe reports favourably that King Alfred educated 'all his children, sonnes and daughters, in the liberall Artes'.[9]

Although it reached its zenith in the early modern period, the change to humanism was not sudden in England or in the rest of Europe; from Charlemagne in the eighth century to Petrarch, Boccaccio, and neo-platonism in the fourteenth, schooling and literacy had spread beyond the monastery walls, and by the sixteenth century the teaching of Latin and Greek became a necessary part of the education of lawyers, doctors, and civil servants. As well as producing skilled professionals,

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[7] Vives, *Christen Woman*, ed. Beauchamp et al., pp.lxvi-lxviii. Valerie Wayne writes that Hyrde is often cited as an advocate of women's education and he includes a defence of women's education in his dedication to Margaret More Roper's translation of Erasmus' *Precation Dominica* (1523), 'Some Sad Sentence: Vives' Instruction of a Christian Woman', in *Silent but for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works*, ed. Margaret Patterson Hannay (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1985), pp.15-29 (pp.15-16).

[8] Nicholas Mann, 'The Origins of Humanism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*, ed. Jill Kraye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.1-19 (pp.1-2).

[9] Kempe also emphasises the liminal, threshold opportunities that education brought, stating that Alfred 'shut the dore of climbing to any dignitie in the court against such as wanted the furniture of learning' (William Kempe, *The Education of Children in Learning* (1588), sig.D3ʳ). William Kempe (c.1560 - 1601) was a Calvinist and a follower of Ramus, not to be confused with the comic actor of the same name. See Stephen Wright, 'Kemp , William (c.1560-1601)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15333, accessed 20 April 2014]

humanism also emphasised the value of education for its own sake and lauded the study of literature, philosophy, and rhetoric. Humanist education became sufficiently well regarded that it was also employed for the sons of nobility, who in earlier centuries would have undergone an apprenticeship-based education, being sent away as adolescents to be mentored by the head of another noble family, and learning chivalry and other skills required of an adult man, echoing the earlier pedagogic structure of the knight and squire.[10] The switch between educational modes was gradual, especially for the nobility. Traditional priorities for instruction co-existed with the new and were, under the influence of works such as Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (1528), combined into an overall vision of the effortlessly accomplished, learned, gentleman. Antony Wotton's 1626 introductory epistle to Ramus' *The Art of Logick* is addressed to the young grandson of Edward, Lord Denny, and demonstrates the melding of both types of instruction, stressing the ongoing importance of:

> Rules and instructions in all matters, both great and small: even in the managing of your horse, in the use of your weapon, piece, and bow, yea, in the very comely carriage of your body. As for the knowledge of Arts, reading of Histories, for Navigation, for Military affaires, for matters of State, it is not possible for any man to know of what use it is, but for him, that hath the use of it.[11]

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[10] Mann, 'Origins of Humanism', pp.3-16.

[11] Petrus Ramus, *The Art of Logick Gathered out of Aristotle*, trans. Antony Wotton (1626), sig.A2ᵛ-A3ʳ. Given that Wotton is championing Ramus's work as something that the young man may need to set aside until he is older, the phrase 'but for him, that hath the use of it' seems to imply that the usefulness of the humanities for state matters is indescribable and cannot be understood by those who have not yet experienced them first hand. Ramus had a reputation for violence towards students. See Walter J. Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp.34-35.

Early Modern Pedagogic Violence

The Reformation saw a move away from monasteries as seats of learning (although they remained important educational establishments in mainland Europe, including for Catholic exiles from England). The early modern period in England also saw an increase in the state's involvement in education. There was also a surge in 'educational philanthropy' with many charity schools being founded.[12] This increase in education, and its spread beyond the monasteries, allowed for humanist educational practices to take hold.[13] It also resulted in documented sources for the study of education being more comprehensive and easily available from the second half of the sixteenth century, owing to increased legislation and record-keeping, in the form of licensing, accounts of school visits, and matriculation records.[14]

As mentioned, prior to the mid sixteenth century the nobility had a tradition of education for its sons whereby they were individually apprenticed to older noblemen rather than attending a school. With the advent of humanist education and the restructuring of the Tudor state in England, other matters became important, including record-keeping, letter-writing, and diplomacy. The traditional nobleman's skills of hunting, fighting, and hawking became replaced by humanist skills in literature, reading, and imitation: skills of language.[15] This new educational focus applied to the nobility but also to those families whose sons might enter merchant trades, become craftsmen, or join the priesthood.[16] Education spread through the social hierarchy, although despite the existence of petty schools for the education of

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[12] David Cressy, *Education in Tudor and Stuart England* (Southampton: Camelot, 1975), p.8.
[13] Stewart, *Close Readers*, p.84.
[14] Cressy, *Education in Tudor and Stuart England*, p.8.
[15] Lorna Hutson, *The Usurer's Daughter: Male Friendship and Fictions of Women in Sixteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp.68-9.
[16] Cressy, *Education in Tudor and Stuart England,* pp.4-5.

young children, many poorer people remained illiterate.[17] Through this spread and increased interest, teaching and education became matters for debate, and those debates often centred on the role of punishment.

In theory, humanism rejected physical violence being used to educate or punish children. Montaigne, writing in the 1570s, would rather see schoolhouses 'strewed with greene boughes and flowers, then with bloodie burchen twigges' and calls beating a 'wicked and pernicious manner of teaching'.[18] Instead he, in common with other humanists, advocates instruction by encouragement and, where necessary, 'Those meates ought to be sugred-over, that are healthfull for childrens stomakes, and those made bitter that are hurtfull for them'.[19] In reality though, violent chastisement of children became more widespread during this period.[20]

Erasmus writes that beating is against Christ's teaching as well as being an ineffectual method of education that discourages learning (*Children,* p.10). However, he seems obsessed with graphic descriptions of the type of punishments he abhors, including scatological, humiliating, and extremely violent treatment of children. He writes of a seven-year-old forced to swallow 'mans donge' before being hoisted up naked by the arms at which point 'they all to beat hym wyth roddes, almoste euen tyll deathe' (*Children,* p.9). I agree with Alan Stewart that there is a morbid fascination with punishment in this period, not only in the works of Erasmus, but also in the frequent mention of physical chastisement in the 'vulgaria' text books of

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[17] Petty schools functioned for children aged between 4 and 7, teaching predominantly reading and scripture, usually in the home of the teacher, an educated local person, often a woman. Andrew Hadfield speculates about the possibility that Spenser attended such a school in *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.28.

[18] Michel de Montaigne, *The Essayes or Morall, Politicke and Millitarie Discourses of Lord Michaell de Montaigne*, trans. John Florio (1603), p.80.

[19] Montaigne, *Essayes,* p.80.

[20] Stewart, *Close Readers,* p.85.

the time.[21] As Stewart points out, there are linguistic links between studying and punishment in many cultures and languages, including Latin, and the image of the beating school-master is much older than humanism.[22] St. Augustine writes of his own boyhood experiences; one particularly poignant passage reads 'if ever I was indolent in learning, I was beaten. This method was approved by adults', and later in the same passage 'adult people, including my parents, who wished no evil to come upon me, used to laugh at my stripes, which were at that time a great and painful evil to me'.[23] Beating and its associated humiliations were something that was delivered across a generational divide. It was a form of violence specifically visited on children by adults and was socially approved.

There was, despite the objections of Erasmus and others, a prevailing view, a hangover from earlier times, that saw physical violence not just as a method of discipline, but also as a method of imparting learning. In his 1959 article, Walter J. Ong points to classical and medieval views of flogging as analogous to learning.[24] A. F. Leach's *Schools of Medieval England* reports boys being asked, 'Are you willing to be flogged while learning?' and replying they would prefer flogging to ignorance.[25] These traditions were difficult to shake off. In his book *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance*, Jeff Dolven, in common with Stewart and others, cites Whittington's *Vulgaria* as coining the phrase 'teach you a lesson' meaning a threat of physical punishment.[26] Reformers were attempting to address a

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[21] These were collections of passages designed to be translated into and out of Latin by schoolboys. Each schoolmaster probably compiled his own version.

[22] Stewart, *Close Readers,* pp.92-5.

[23] Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.11.

[24] Walter J. Ong, 'Latin Language Study as a Renaissance Puberty Rite', *Studies in Philology*, 56 (1959), 103-124 (p.111).

[25] A.F. Leach, *Schools of Medieval England* (London: Methuen, 1915), p.89.

[26] Stewart, *Close Readers,* p.96; Jeffrey Andrew Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p.207; see also the Oxford English Dictionary definition of 'teach' v. (6d) 'Used by way of threat: To let one know the cost or penalty

long tradition of beatings as an integral part of education. Erasmus responds by claiming classical authority for his views about the role of non-violent instruction. He stresses that 'The future prince's educator must, as Seneca elegantly puts it, be a man who knows how to reprimand without giving way to abuse' (*Prince*, p.8).

Erasmus' criticism of physical punishment is not limited to the education of princes. In *The Education of Children* he describes grammar school as 'a tormentynge place' and claims 'nothynge is hearde there beside the flappynge vpon the hande, beside yorkynge of roddes, beside howlynge and sobbinge and cruell threatnynges'.[27] He blames the 'chydyng and beatynge' on a lack of teaching ability (p.9). Fellow educator Roger Ascham acknowledges the polarisation of contemporary opinion on this topic when he describes a dinner-party debate between Nicholas Wotton, who believed that 'the schoolhouse should be indeed … the house of play and pleasure, and not of fear and bondage', and Walter Haddon, who believed that the best schoolmaster of their time was the greatest beater.[28]

The extent to which teachers adhered to humanist principles varied and attitudes towards teachers were equally diverse. Some of the disparity between teaching styles was dependent on social status. Whilst humanist educational theorists were in general (but not universally) opposed to corporal punishment, the reality of run-of-the-mill educators was very different.[29] Erasmus links this contrast to a wider

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of something', earliest citation 1575. 'teach, v.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2014 (accessed 7 July 2014).

[27] Most secondary sources leave the word 'yorkynge' un-glossed. Beert C. Verstraete translates this phrase as 'the swishing of the rod' (Erasmus 'On Education for Children/ De Pueris Instituendis' in *The Erasmus Reader*, ed. Erika Rummel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p.90). It is almost certainly the same word as 'jerk', or its historical variant 'yerk', which is specifically associated with whipping, 'yerk / yark, n.' 'A smart blow or stroke, as of a whip or rod, or of a heavy body falling; a lash; also, the sound of such a blow; the crack of a whip; a thud'. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, September 2013, (accessed 16 September 2013).

[28] Roger Ascham, *The Schoolmaster* (1570), ed. Lawrence V. Ryan (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974), p.6.

[29] Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction*, p.218.

concern that the spread of education brought with it a decline in quality of teaching and teachers. 'There is none so vyle, so naughte, so wretched', he says 'whome the common people thynketh not sufficiente ynoughe to teache a grammer schole' (*Children,* p.9).[30] Others had a more reverent view of the teaching profession that was closely linked to religious changes throughout Europe at the time. It was believed that 'next to preaching the Gospel as a pastor of the whole congregation, the noblest calling was that of teachers to the young'.[31] Kempe seemingly associates preaching with teaching, mentioning both in the same passage:

> In every parish […] not only learned men are ordained to preach the gospel, and have several stipends publickly allowed for their maintenance: but also schooles, colledges, universities, and other places of studie, are every where erected for the increasing and nourishing of learned men to furnish their vocations.[32]

The ideal of the devoted educator following a God-given vocation contrasts starkly with the vision of the money-motivated slapdash teacher. It is therefore easy to support Spitz's assertion that there was a vast gulf between the 'highest idealistic vision of what could be accomplished through church reform and education' and the mundane reality of their 'disappointed expectations'.[33] These extreme visions form the opposing ends of a continuum wherein teaching professionals occupied a multitude of social positions, were subjected to multiple attitudes, and performed a complex social role. Bushnell says that 'humanist teachers themselves constituted a

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[30] Francis Bacon also bemoans the 'meanness of the salary' paid to educators (specifically to lecturers) and recommends higher wages to secure 'the most able and sufficient men'. He says that in order for the sciences to flourish, education must 'observe David's military law, which was "That those which stayed with the carriage should have equal part with those which were in the action" else will the carriages be ill attended' (Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* in *Francis Bacon: The Major Works,* ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) pp.120-299 (pp.171-172).

[31] L. Spitz, 'Humanism and the Protestant Reformation', in *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms and Legacy*, ed. Albert Rabil Jnr (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), pp.380-411 (p.392).

[32] Kempe, *Children in Learning*, sig.D2ᵛ.

[33] Spitz, 'Humanism and the Protestant Reformation', p.392.

paradox in their social and political roles: at once high and low, marginal and at the center of political life' and that the early English humanist classroom was subject to 'persistently unstable political, social, and emotional dynamics'.[34] In this way humanist educators occupied a liminal space of their own. Indeed, in the social role reversal whereby a relatively low-status educator was in charge of the instruction and discipline of a member of the nobility, such education can be seen, especially owing to its temporary nature, as a festive ritual leading the child across the threshold into the eventual return to an everyday life where his socially sanctioned authority will be reinstated.[35]

The King's New School in Stratford, where Shakespeare was almost certainly a pupil, certainly aspired to humanist values; the Latin charter stated 'we bring up the youths of our kingdom in the aforesaid county of Warwick so that the coming generation shall derive from a childhood more cultured and imbued of letters than was accustomed in our times'.[36] However, the unwilling every-schoolboy of *As You Like It* shows that, if not a reluctant scholar himself, Shakespeare had observed them in sufficient numbers to consider it a default or universal state (2.7.144-146). Corporal punishment may well have been a contributing factor in his opinion. Falstaff, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, confesses to having been beaten as a child, when he 'plucked geese, played truant, and whipped top' but hasn't been beaten since until lately (5.1.22-23).[37] René Weis suggests, however, that whilst 'some masters may have enthusiastically "breeched" (flogged) their charges', this perhaps did not happen at King's New School. He cites the instance of the commuted

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[34] Bushnell, *Culture of Teaching,* pp.17-18.

[35] Contrast Bushnell's use of 'misrule' to refer to chaotic classroom behaviour (*Culture of Teaching,* p.25).

[36] Quoted in René Weis, *Shakespeare Revealed* (London: John Murray, 2007), p.24.

[37] In fact the beating in *Merry Wives* is predominantly aimed at adult men, often at the hands of women, such is the festive misrule at work in the play.

flogging threat towards William Page in *Merry Wives* as evidence for a lack of physical chastisement in Shakespeare's childhood.[38] Yet, even though William Page is not beaten in this instance, the threat still exists, and makes the point that boy scholars, in common with all girls and women, did not have agency over their own bodies, and their safety from corporal punishment lay in the hands of adult men in their many instructive roles.

Spenser's education seems to have been of a higher social standing than Shakespeare's. He attended the well regarded Merchant Taylor's School in London, which had statutes and guidelines denoting its claims to good quality, including the use of more expensive wax candles in the classrooms, rather than cheap tallow ones. The school catered for the middle classes, including the sons of merchants, traders, and craftsmen, and ran a carefully managed system of scholarships. It is likely that Spenser's father was John Spenser, 'a 'free journeyman' or another man of similar social standing, so Spenser's childhood was not in itself significantly more privileged than Shakespeare's, although his schooling was arguably of better quality and reputation.[39] Spenser studied under the headmastership of Richard Mulcaster, a renowned disciplinarian who considered the rod to be an integral part of the teacher's equipment.[40] 'The rod', writes Mulcaster, 'may no more be spared in schools, then the sworde may in the Princes hand'.[41] However, Spenser seems to have been a star pupil, close to his headmaster, and made many influential connections amongst the older man's friends.[42] It could be then that Spenser escaped

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[38] After the impromptu, and comical, Latin lesson in Act 4, Evans first tells William that he must be 'preeches' (flogged) but then sends him away instead (4.1.67-68).

[39] Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser*, pp.22-29.

[40] Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser,* p.31.

[41] Richard Mulcaster, *Positions Concerning the Training up of Children (1581)*, ed. William Barker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994) p.277.

[42] Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser,* p.33

Mulcaster's enthusiasm for beating although, again, the underlying culture of physical punishment would have been impossible to ignore.

Erasmus criticises 'wayeward, dronken, cruel' teachers who 'wyl beate for their pleasure' (*Children,* p.9).[43] Alan Stewart associates this pleasure with a connection between corporal punishment and what was perceived (by himself and historically) as homoerotic.[44] John Chandos in *Boys Together* cites Nicholas Udall, the Head of Eton from 1534 to 1541 and dubbed 'The Eton Flogger', as an example of a teacher whose 'paederastic offences' served as no impediment to his career progression.[45] This may be overstating the case: after his dismissal from Eton amidst accusations of buggery there was a short period of imprisonment followed by a stint of obscurity in the north of England and his career was dogged with lawsuits pertaining to money troubles. Udall did subsequently occupy various positions in the church and at court, but did not return to teaching, with the exception of tutoring Edward Courtenay in the Tower of London, until 1555.[46] Stewart suggests Udall was not alone in his behaviour, that other violent Tudor schoolmasters had similarly sexual motives, and that Udall was the scapegoat of later scholarship.[47] He further illustrates the widespread nature of the association between education and sodomy with a quote from Thomas Nashe's *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1592, published 1600), which, fifty years after Erasmus, also stresses the lowly status and economic necessities of grammar school teaching: 'Nownes and pronounes, I

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[43] For a discussion of Erasmus' awareness of the eroticism implicit in both teaching and punishment, see Bushnell, *Culture of Teaching,* p.30

[44] Stewart, *Close Readers,* p.88.

[45] John Chandos, *Boys Together: English Public Schools, 1800-1864* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p.230.

[46] Matthew Steggle, 'Udall, Nicholas (1504-1556)', *ODNB* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [accessed 10 February 2015].

[47] Stewart, *Close Readers*, pp.116-121.

pronounce you as traitors to boyes buttockes: syntaxis and Prosodia, you are nothing

but to get a schoolemaster two pence a weeke'.[48]

During the Reformation, monastic education became associated with both

'voluntary pollution' (masturbation) and with bed sharing associated with same-sex

erotic activity.[49] Bringing education away from monastery control seems not to have

broken these connections in people's minds; rather the associations developed and

grew, through and beyond the period when Spenser and Shakespeare were writing.

By 1669 a children's petition, seeking finally to convert protest against corporal

punishment into legislative change, was brought before parliament. This document

claims to be written by 'we the children of the land' but is clearly the work of adults.

It campaigns not just against the 'carnage' of physical chastisement but also the

'horror' of the sexually sadistic teacher. The text clearly links punishment and sex:

> Our sufferings are of that nature as makes our Schools to be not meerly
> houses of Correction, but of Prostitution, in this vile way of castigation in
> use, wherin our secret parts, which are by nature shameful, and not to be
> uncovered, must be the Anvil exposed to the immodest eyes and filthy blows
> of the smiter.[50]

This text implies sacrificial innocence. The anvil metaphor is used elsewhere in

connection with the Passion of Christ, including in Lancelot Andrewes' Good Friday

sermon of 1604 where he describes 'His blessed body given to bee beaten upon, with

the violent hands of those barbarous miscreants'.[51] Furthermore, the sexual nature of

the shame and exposure adds trauma that is not present in a mere punishment, even a

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[48] Thomas Nashe, *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1600). First performed 1592.
[49] Stewart, *Close Readers*, pp.44-52.
[50] Anon, *The Children's Petition: Or, a Modest Remonstrance of That Intolerable Grievance Our Youth Lie Under, in the Accustomed Severities of the School-discipline of This Nation* (1669), p.7. There is no evidence for the identity of the actual author(s). It was initially circulated informally amongst members of parliament but by 1698 at the latest seems to have been dealt with more officially. See C.B. Freeman, 'The Children's Petition of 1669 and its Sequel', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 14 (1966), 216-23 (pp.216-8).
[51] Lancelot Andrewes, *Lancelot Andrewes Sermons*, ed. G.M. Story (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p.150.

violent one. Such scenarios are contrary to Erasmus' recommendations, not only in their use of violence, but also their public humiliation. Erasmus says:

> The teacher should give his praise in the presence of others, but with sincerity and on valid grounds. His rebukes should be delivered in private and in such a way that the severity of his admonition is toned down by a touch of pleasantness in manner. (*Prince,* p.13).

Although Stewart cites evidence for the widespread bedsharing between students and teachers in schools and universities as well as monasteries, he acknowledges that this was in no way unique to educational establishments and does not explain why accusations against educational institutions was 'specifically anti-sodomitical'.[52] In spite of this, Lynn Enterline, in her 2012 book *Shakespeare's Schoolroom* claims that 'the connection between sex and flogging was, at best, an open secret'.[53] It certainly seems that sex, violence, and education were inextricably linked in this period.

Education and Masculinity

Stewart expresses surprise that the tutor and noble-student relationship caused more anxiety than the Lord and gentleman-to-be relationship (and I would add the monastic setting as an alternative) that it replaced. One possible reason is increased emphasis on education as a means of policing gender. Even Montaigne, advocate of non-violent education, says the education of a boy should acclimatise him to extremes of heat and cold and produce 'a lusty and vigorous boy'.[54] Although sometimes called into service for women, as I will discuss later, the primary role of

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[52] Stewart, *Close Readers,* p.91.

[53] Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p.52. Enterline's sources for this claim James Smith's 'The Loves of Hero and Leander' (published 1653), a humorous or 'mock' poem; and John Redford's *Wit and Science* (c.1530-1550), a manuscript note book containing the 'Lamentation of Boys Learning Prick Song', to which I return later in this chapter.

[54] Montaigne, *Essayes,* p.80.

humanist education was not the knowledge itself but the production of properly gendered men in the service of lineage and inheritance. It seems reasonable to accept Stewart's analogy that it was the male equivalent of needlepoint and other accomplishments, although it was considered a much more serious business.[55]

What occurred during the education of an adolescent boy had its results in the emerging man. The liminal period between childhood and manhood makes education, and its association with sodomy, a site of anxiety. There are instances in literature of the period of same-sex affection as a stage that can be passed through on the path to heteronormative adulthood; Sebastian's attachment to Antonio in *Twelfth Night* is a possible example of this, as are the relationships between Bassanio and Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice,* and between Arcite and Palamon in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. The resolutions or reintegrations available for the men in these relationships are heterosexual marriage, death, or dismissal into solitary old age and narrative oblivion overshadowed by the stories of the men who marry. There are also numerous cases in early modern literature of female same-sex adolescent attachments including Hermia and Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or Emilia and Flavina in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. These attractions or affections are only seen as problematic when they interfere with the successful outcome of the liminal adolescent period, as when Emilia refuses to marry because of her love for the dead Flavina. A rite of passage may not have the outcome that the older generation desires. The spectre of sodomy disrupts, corrupts, and misappropriates the normative rituals of education by entering into the liminal state at the centre of the ritual and potentially blocking the path to heteronormative adulthood.

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[55] Stewart, *Close Readers,* p.xv.

Adult masculinity implies virility and fatherhood. The 1636 'memorials' of Father Augustine Baker (1575-1641), in fact written by a series of young men who lived with him in his retirement, argue that an education overshadowed by sodomy could cause sterility:

> [P]arents, especially gentlemen of livelyhood and worth, should take heed how they send their sons (especially their eldest, whom they intend for their inheritours) to either of those two universityes of England … namely, were it but for this, that is of infinite mischiefe, that the youth is in danger to become so far corrupted that he will never be able to get a child. Whereby, becoming afterwards married, either the wife bringeth forth no children, or seeketh to have children by some other, as more likely will frequently be the case.[56]

As Baker was a Benedictine, this text has no grounds on which to object to all-male institutions per se. However, it does make a case for the universities as a source of the 'most odious vice'.[57] This is distinct from the vices of fornication and drinking, which are mentioned separately. Baker's text also shows a poor opinion of grammar school teachers who have been educated at the universities, citing an instance of one that was 'privately accused to the master and mistresse, *uti de crimine pessimo* [of committing the worst crime]'.[58] In Baker's paradigm sodomy at a critical stage in a boy's life, causes a state of sterility, or possibly impotence, that prevents the adult from fulfilling the duty to produce an heir and thereby positions him outside of normative heterosexual life and open to being cuckolded or abandoned, unable to continue the family name or ensure the safety of its assets. Failure to perform sexually as an adult man necessitates a perpetuated in-between state that is no longer liminal, as it lacks possibility, and whereby reintegration into adult masculinity and social standing is closed off.

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[56] Father Augustine Baker, *Memorials of Father Augustine Baker and Other Documents Relating to The English Benedictines*, ed. Dom Justin McCann and Dom Hugh Connolly (London: Catholic Record Society, 1933), p.35. See also Stewart, *Close Readers*, p.104.

[57] This could be interpreted as retaliation for earlier Reformation accusations of sodomy made against the monasteries.

[58] Baker, *Memorials,* p.34.

This anxiety that the masculinising education process can fail in producing an adequate man is a natural progression from the association of corporal punishment with both learning and penetration. Enterline views the birch as 'inseminating the boy with knowledge', echoing early modern imagery that places beaten students in a complicated and often feminine role in a pseudo-reproductive relationship.[59] The breaking of the skin in many of the passages describing beating implies an element of physical penetration and aligns these beatings with depictions of feminising wounding in many early modern descriptions of combat, as I will explore in later chapters.[60] John Redford's 'Lamentation of Boys Learning Prick-Song' (c.1530-1550), written from his pupils' point of view about punishments that Redford himself inflicted, takes a mocking, comic tone on the matter:

> We have so manye lasshes to lerne thys peelde songe,
> That I wyll not lye to you now and then among;
> Out of our buttokes we may plucke the stumpes thus longe!
> That we poore sylye boyes abyde much woe.[61]

In addition to the physical act of penetration of the buttocks, the beating of boys also has strong psychological and symbolic ways in which it positions adolescent boys in gender-fluid roles. The phrase 'marrying the master's daughter' was a euphemism for being beaten, ostensibly placing the student in a masculine

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[59] Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom,* p.53.

[60] Extracts like the one from Thomas Ingelend's *The Disobedient Child (1570?)* where the son refuses to go to school where students' 'tender bodyes both nyght and daye/ Are whypped and scourged, and beate lyke a stone/ That from toppe to toe the skyn is away' also evoke imagery of martyrdom like that of St. Bartholomew or of Marsyas, both frequently depicted in Renaissance art. (Thomas Ingelend, *A Pretie and Mery New Enterlude: Called the Disobedient Child* (1570), sig.A4ʳ.) As Bushnell points out, the lack of corporal punishment in this boy's education is depicted as resulting in his being subjected to more violence, being hen-pecked and beaten by his wife (*Culture of Teaching,* p.28).

[61] John Redford, 'Lamentation of Boys Learning Prick-Song'. *The Moral Play of Wit and Science*, London, British Library, additional MS 15233 p.34, verse 4. The OED has 'peelde' as 'beggarly or wretched' as an extension of the usual meaning of 'peeled' as being 'without its usual covering' ('peeled, adj.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, September 2013, (accessed 18 September 2013), sense 3). The word could equally be applied to the buttocks as to the song; either by virtue of exposure or injury.

bridegroom role expected of a young man emerging from adolescence.[62] There is a much repeated anecdote about Mulcaster saying as he is about to punish a student: 'I aske the banes of matrymony between this boy his buttockes, of such a parish, on the one side, and Lady Burch, of this parish on the other side'.[63] An almost identical story is told about Dr Richard Busby (1606-1695) of Westminster school.[64] In all these versions the student escapes the beating because he rejects the banns on the grounds that both parties do not consent, and the teacher is taken with the wit of the student and excuses him. But the repetition of the story in multiple contexts suggests that the metaphor of beating as analogous to marriage had become well known either in the early modern period, or in subsequent retellings, or both.

Enterline's interpretation of this association is insightful and emphasises the liminal, mid-ritual nature of pedagogic beatings: 'punishment was theatrical: the "marriage banes" are not merely a parody of a marriage ritual; they also become a ritual of their own, enacted before spectators who become actors in the scene they are required to witness'.[65] Stewart claims that these pseudo-marriage-rituals place punishment within an 'erotic economy'.[66] It is however an economy much more complex than the corresponding homosocial exchange of women that Stewart refers to. Either the boy and the phallic rod are both male; or the penetrated boy and the rod

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[62] For a discussion of allusions to this euphemism in the Vulgaria of John Stanbridge (*Vulgaria Stanbryge,* sig.B6ʳ), Whittinton (*Vulgaria,* sig.G2ᵛ), and elsewhere, see Stewart, *Close Readers,* pp.97-98. See also Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom,* p.49. Enterline uses *The Vulgaria of John Stanbridge and The Vulgaria of Robert Whittinton*, ed. Beatrice White (London: Early English Text Society, 1932).

[63] Michael F.J. McDonnell, *A History of St Paul's School* (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd, 1909), p.151 (claiming to be 'related by an old writer') and Foster Watson, *Richard Mulcaster and His 'Elementarie'* (London: C.F. Hodgson & Son, 1893), p.5 (claiming to be 'slightly altered' from 'a law-student's commonplace book, probably belonging to one Thomas Wateridge, of the (Middle) Temple, in the time of James I (Notes and Queries, Series I, Vol XI, p.260)').

[64] See William M. Cooper, *History of The Rod (1869)* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), pp.430-431.

[65] Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom,* p.49. Mulcaster also refers to 'Ladie birchely' needing to be a 'gest' in parents' homes and is very critical of parents who do not think their children should be beaten (*Positions,* p.277-278)

[66] Stewart, *Close Readers,* pp.97-98.

(or daughter) are both female; or, possibly, the daughter is simultaneously phallic and female, and the boy is simultaneously a boy and a woman. There is no easy mapping of gender onto the phrase 'marrying the master's daughter', but rather a wealth of possibility, a liminal state lying at the centre of a forced and violent marriage ritual.

The 'unbreeching' of the male child for a beating is a feminising act that reverses the rite of passage of 'breeching' that marked the distinguishing of male from female children at approximately age 7.[67] Sir Thomas Elyot also suggests 7 as the age boys should be taken from the company of women to be educated.[68] Although this is before puberty, breeching marked a life-stage change that codified gender. Whether un-breeching reverses the masculinising process, or merely returns it to the undetermined state at the centre of the ritual, is a matter of interpretation. The categories of feminised male and androgynised or emasculated male are complex and multifaceted and vary from encounter to encounter.

One of the other things that marked the transition to adult manhood was the acquisition of Latin.[69] During the fifteenth century in Europe more sophisticated teaching emerged as a means of producing young men with the required level of Latin to enter into public life.[70] However, this meant Latin learning became, by association with formal education, linked to violence, feminisation, and sodomy. Enterline and others stress the number of passages from vulgaria that concern

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[67] Stewart, *Close Readers,* pp.101-102.
[68] Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named The Governour* (1537), Book I, Chapter vi, p.19. Sentences about being 7 years old also appear at various points in Stanbridge's *Vulgaria.*
[69] See Kate Chedgzoy's 'Make Me a Poet, and I'll Quickly Be a Man: Masculinity, Pedagogy and Poetry in the English Renaissance', *Renaissance Studies* (published online 17 September 2012), for an alternative view emphasising the importance in this period (as illustrated by the poetry of William Paget and George Berkeley and their education by Henry Stanford) of learning proficient composition in English as well as Latin, especially when intended for female recipients.
[70] Kristian Jenson, 'The Humanist Reform of Latin and Latin Teaching', in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*, ed. Jill Kraye (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.63-81 (pp.63-66).

penetrative physical punishment: phrases like 'my buttockes deth [sic] swete a blody swete', were ones that boys were required to translate from English into Latin and back again.[71] As with the image of the anvil, these descriptions describe not merely physical punishment but also the ritual sacrifice of the martyr, echoing the Crucifixion. Lancelot Andrewes' 1604 Good Friday sermon includes a lengthy description of Christ's bloody sweat, a common image based on Luke's account of the Garden of Gethsemane.[72] Again in a depiction of pedagogic violence, boys' buttocks are directly substituted for the tortured body of Christ. In the petition discussed above, this foregrounds the torture of the innocent in an appeal against corporal punishment. Here, it indicates not only the wrong-doing, or sin, of the child, but also the self-improvement inherent in physical chastisement, harking back to pre-Humanist ideas about violent punishment.

As discussed, high humanist ideals were often diluted by the realities of everyday teaching, resulting in the retention of old ways in many lower status establishments and hybridisation of teaching styles in others. For pragmatic, economic reasons, many printers continued to print out-of-date Latin text books, based in medieval rather than humanist Latin. The latter attempted to return to authentic classical sources, such as Cicero, despite criticisms of their pagan influence. The more traditional books were therefore favoured by conservative schools, fuelled by teachers' instincts to teach what they had been taught and parents' expectations of the same.[73] Erasmus links this reluctance to change with physical punishment as well as more general educational practices:

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[71] Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom,* p.49.
[72] Andrewes, *Sermons,* p.151. See Luke 22.44 'But being in an agonie, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweate was like droppes of blood, trickling downe to the grounde'.
[73] Jenson, 'Humanist Reform', pp.70-71.

> if you shewe them a better waye, they answere they were brought vp after thys fashion, and wyll not suffer that anye chyldren shulde be in better case, then they them selues were when they were chyldren. (*Children,* p.10)

The idea that each generation of adolescents must be taught in the same manner as their forebears goes against the ethos of humanist education and directly contradicts the charter of Shakespeare's school mentioned above. However, it does add to the sense that education, especially in language (Latin in particular), is a rite of passage. Ong emphasises the significance of the removal of boys from the familial home, causing a break with the past, in order that they can be taught Latin in schools by men, rather than being taught the vernacular at home, by women. He uses the term 'marginal environment' to describe the school, standing between the non-Latin world of early childhood, and the Latin speaking world of adulthood, but we might equally accurately term it a liminal space.[74] The fact that Latin formed a secret insider language for a group that did not admit everyone, and did not readily admit women, emphasises its learning as an entry requirement to an international, but closed, community of adult men of scholarship and good standing. Latin, as in the poems of Milton, could therefore also be used to give an air of respectability to writings of a sexual nature, to exclude those (women and uneducated people) whose minds might be corrupted by it.[75]

Ong stresses the nature of Latin learning as an example of 'ceremonial inductions or initiations of the youth into extra-familial life' and suggests that these rites are in themselves a didactic tool. He links this with violence, claiming the association of Latin learning with punishment grew more pronounced under the

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[74] Ong, 'Latin Language Study', pp.106-108.
[75] *Milton's Latin Poems*, ed. Gordon Teskey, trans. David R. Slavitt (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2011). See especially the first and sixth elegies (pp.3-5 and 20-23). Both are written to Milton's friend Charles Diodati. The former poem is a description of pretty women and the latter concerns Diodati's Bacchanalian Christmas celebrations.

influence of humanist educators as Latin grew more revered and more separate from everyday life.[76] More recently, Enterline writes that 'three slips into English would result in punishment'.[77] Ong indicates that adults expected young men to 'assimilate their lessons the hard way' and that there would be a degree of 'chastisement under the direction of elders for didactic purposes'.[78] The consensus is that learning, especially of Latin, was achieved through violence and necessitated a fluid, submissive gender position, eventually resulting in the emergence of an adult manly enough to sire children. He would then, through the proxy of the beating schoolmaster, repeat the pattern with his own sons.

Education and Femininity

Ong assumes that beatings are more prevalent for boys. 'The fact that school pupils were all boys *of course* encouraged rule by the rod', he writes (emphasis added).[79] Alan Stewart maintains that educated women, already in the minority, were exempt from beatings and in any case made ideal scholars as the subjugating effects of feminisation had already happened, or were innate.[80] Over and above the dubiousness of such gender essentialism, there is historical evidence that female scholars were subjected to violence in learning as well as the more generalised violence perpetrated towards women in the period. Lady Jane Grey reports cruel and violent punishments:

> He [God] sent me so sharp and severe parents . . . I am so sharply taunted, so cruelly threatened, yea, presently sometimes, with pinches, nips, and bobs, and other ways which I will not name for the honour I bear them . . . that I think myself in hell. [81]

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[76] Ong, 'Latin Language Study', pp.112-113.
[77] Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom,* p.35.
[78] Ong, 'Latin Language Study', pp.106-108.
[79] Ong, 'Latin Language Study', p.111.
[80] Stewart, *Close Readers,* pp.114-115.
[81] Ascham, *The Schoolmaster,* p.36.

During Elizabeth's visit to Westminster School, she is said to have asked a pupil how often he was whipped, and received a potentially flirtatious response in the form of a quotation from Virgil's account of Dido and Aeneas, when Dido seeks to extract tales of past combat from Aeneas: 'infandum, Regina, jubes renovare dolorem' or 'Most gracious Queen you do desire to know, A grief unspeakable and full of woe'.[82] This may be merely an anecdote about a witty child, rather than being based on actual events. However, it does demonstrate, as mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, that corporal punishment was commonplace in this period and was seen as a suitable topic for humour.

The level of education afforded to Jane, Elizabeth, and other royal young women would not have been typical for girls, and seems not to have filtered down through the social ranks to as great a degree as the education of princes did. Vives, as well as other writers of conduct manuals, claims Ruth Kelso, generally used small words and wrote in the vernacular when writing for women, fearing that long words or Latin text would be detrimental to 'feminine fragility' and not able to be widely read and understood by women.[83] There is a definite division between the instruction of women in appropriate conduct and their possible scholarship. Wayne suggests that Vives' *Instruction* is an educational work only if we 'consider the broadest meanings of that term and their implications'.[84] Kelso suggests there is little to distinguish women of higher or lower rank in terms of their 'generally recommended training', but perhaps there is with their humanist scholarly education.[85] Catherine of Aragon

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[82] Stewart, *Close Readers,* p.87.
[83] Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p.39.
[84] Wayne, 'Some Sad Sentence', p.16.
[85] Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady*, p.57.

commissioned Vives' work for her daughter Mary, assuming her to be a future monarch, or at least regent. It seems she intended it to be an educational work, a counterpart to Erasmus' *Christian Prince*. However, Vives instead produced what was essentially a conduct manual and Catherine approached him again the following year to write an academic curriculum of study.[86]

Where girls were educated in more formal, learned ways rather than merely taught conduct, there were various possible motivations. For Diane Purkiss education, including in Latin and Greek, was employed for young women as an accomplishment and a show of wealth.[87] Jane Stevenson agrees that women's humanist education came to be seen as 'redounding to the glory of the family' and goes even further, saying that women would 'write letters, compose verses, or deliver public speeches expressing the family's stance on political developments' and that such educated women were 'a useful adjunct to more official forms of diplomatic activity'.[88]

Outside of the highest levels of early modern society though, it seems reasonable to accept, at least partially, Stewart's view that women were not included in the economy of knowledge-exchange on the same terms as men and that even if they were not, as he claims, outside of the violence and eroticism that formed part of that economy, they at least had a very different experience of it.[89] That difference had

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[86] Anna Whitelock, *Mary Tudor: England's First Queen* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), pp.25-26.

[87] Diane Purkiss (ed.), *Three Tragedies by Renaissance Women* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998), pp.xiv-xix. See also Suzanne Trill, Kate Chedgzoy, and Melanie Osborne (eds), *Lay by Your Needles Ladies, Take the Pen* (London: Arnold, 1997), pp.1-4 for a discussion on the tension between writing and needlework as appropriate activities for young women.

[88] Jane Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender and Authority from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.152. In contrast Mary Ellen Lamb claims humanist values were perverted when women were educated because rather than benefitting the state by influencing rulers to the good, it was merely used as a way of keeping them busy. See 'The Cooke Sisters: Attitudes toward Learned Women in the Renaissance' in Margaret Patterson Hannay (ed.), *Silent but for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1985), pp.107-125. (p.124).

[89] Stewart, *Close Readers,* p.116.

much to do with ideas that saw the intellectual education of women in traditionally

male subject areas as potentially interfering with their 'natural' feminine roles as

wives and mothers. For Juan Huarte in *The Examination of Mens Wits*, the hot

dryness required for intellect was incompatible with the cold wetness required for

conception. '[S]he was by God created cold and moist' he says 'which temperature,

is necessarie to make a woman fruitfull, and apt for childbirth, but enemy to

knowledge'.[90] If punishment could be seen as impregnating boys with knowledge,

the impregnation of girls with knowledge rather than children was the site of much

more anxiety. Vives says about women's secular learning 'thy bealy hath no cause to

swell: whan thy mynde is swollen, nat with mannes sede, but with devylles' (p.29).

This condemnation of the wrong type of reading associates unsuitable, unmonitored,

or unrestrained female learning with a failure to perform the expected duties of

childbearing, described in terms of demonic possession that apes and mocks socially

approved maternity.

Whereas the education of boys was very much focused on their

transformation from boys to men (who were then at liberty to continue with the

freedoms of adult life), the education of girls and women was seen as a continual

process, overseen by men. In her 2013 book *Learning and Literacy in Female

Hands*, Elizabeth Mazzola claims that education involved 'remaking a young girl's

reading habits, physical appearance, marriageability, and clothing so as to remove

what Juan Luis Vives calls "the residue of her infancy"'.[91] Yet it is hard to determine

what Mazzola (or Vives) consider to be the differences between infancy and

adulthood for women. If what distinguished an adult woman from a girl was merely

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[90] Juan Huarte, *The Examination of Mens Wits*, trans. R[ichard] C[arew] (1594), p.274.
[91] Elizabeth Mazzola, *Learning and Literacy in Female Hands, 1520-1698* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), p.22.

what they read, combined with their appearance, clothing, and sexual availability for marriage, that does not leave much room for the self-determination usually associated with adult life. Such definitions of adulthood merely concern the mechanisms for containment of the female body and mind (clothing, appearance, rules about reading) and the ways in which those bodies and minds can be allowably accessed (by teaching and by socially sanctioned sex). Mazzola writes 'perhaps the most important feature of early modern women's education […] is its persistence into adulthood and, often, its real flowering within and after marriage'.[92] I would suggest that this 'flowering' was in fact an infantilising process and that the 'perplexity' that Mazzola identifies in humanist and religious attitudes towards the education of women frequently led to women downplaying their learning.[93]

The learned and assertive Portia in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* makes ironic reference to these norms when she offers up her continuing education to her future husband. She describes herself as 'an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised' but promises further learning is possible because of her youth and breeding. She commits herself to Bassanio to be 'directed' (3.2.159-164).[94] In fact her performance as a lawyer shows her, in the eyes of the audience, to be very learned and the ring trick shows that she is able to control Bassanio. Yet the conventions Portia's infantilising speech plays with would have been unremarkable.

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[92] Mazzola, *Female Hands,* p.33. She cites Katherine Brandon (step-mother of Lady Jane Grey's mother Frances) and Katherine Parr in particular. In her essay, 'A Renaissance for Children?', Kate Chedgzoy points out that in the case of her subject, Rachel Fane, marriage did not allow her to exchange a feminised 'household academy' of childhood for a 'household salon', which would have been characterized by intellectual collaboration between husband and wife'. (*Newcastle University ePrints*, 2013, p.20 <http://eprint.ncl.ac.uk/pub_details2.aspx?pub_id=196398> [accessed 5 December 2015]).

[93] Mazzola, *Female Hands,* p. 18.

[94] Mazzola points out that even Katherine Parr, who oversaw much of the education of Tudor royal girls, referred to herself as 'unlearned' (*Female Hands,* p.31).

Ruth Kelso emphasises the childlike position in which Renaissance women's learning was intended to keep them, saying:

> Among the important lessons that the girl must learn, obedience held a high place. It must indeed underwrite all the other virtues, and it belonged as much to the wife as to the little child. Woman's whole life was a lesson in submission to the will of another.[95]

The association of education or instruction with moments of threshold is as true for women as for men, but women were perceived as having more thresholds to cross. Vives in particular focuses on the need for education at moments of transformation in women's lives, dividing his work, and thereby the women it concerns, into maids, married women, and widowed women, all stages which would begin and end with ritual and with an accompanying liminal or threshold moment.[96] The first of these thresholds was considered to signify the 'terminus of childhood'.[97] Coppelia Kahn relates the importance of such thresholds to Shakespeare's Ophelia and states that 'In the conventionally patriarchal court of Elsinore, as an adolescent girl, Ophelia stands at the liminal moment of passage from father to husband, girl to women, a passage of which her father is the intended supervisor'.[98]

Vives himself emphasises the threshold nature of marriage particularly by using biblical imagery of locks and keys: 'no man ought to open that thyng, whiche is shutte with the key of David' (p.88). The key of David is mentioned only twice in

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[95] Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady*, p.44.

[96] Vives, *Christen Woman,* p.33. Erika Rummel divides her book *Erasmus on Women* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1996) along similar lines, explaining that this structural choice 'reflects the conventions of Erasmus' age'. She continues 'the division is patristic in origin and was well established in medieval and Renaissance thought. It was customary to define women by sexual activity, which in turn determined their legal status and place in the social hierarchy. At the same time these divisions reflect the natural sequence of events in a woman's life', (p.11).

[97] Chedgzoy, 'A Renaissance for Children?' p.11.

[98] Coppelia Kahn, 'Afterword: Ophelia Then, Now, Hereafter' in *The Afterlife of Ophelia,* ed. Kaara L. Peterson and Deanne Williams (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp.231-244 (p.232). The patriarchal objectification of women, and the impending violence inherent in this liminality are further emphasised when Kahn states that virginity is 'the liminal moment of girlhood when the rose is still a bud, when the blossoms have not yet been broken […] a daughter's loss of her virginity makes her an unexchangeable object' (p.239).

the Bible, at Isaiah 22:21-22 and Revelation 3:7-8.[99] It concerns jurisdiction over

thresholds; if something has been closed or opened with the key of David then no-

one can reverse that action. By using this phrase Vives is making a case for marriage

as something of divine authority, with which man should not interfere. Other biblical

passages discuss marriage in similar terms. Matthew 19:6 says 'Let not man

therefore put asunder that which God hath coupled together'. Rather than reproduce

these verses which speak specifically about marriage, Vives takes a phrase from

elsewhere in the Bible that specifically concerns thresholds, and employs it to

discuss marriage, strengthening the view of marriage as a threshold. It is a

transitional ritual that must be regulated by patriarchal authority to ensure a socially

and morally acceptable outcome. *The Instruction* is intended to see women

irrevocably through these life-stage thresholds in ways that minimise the possibility

of liminal disruption. Vives also mentions the key of David with regard to the

shutting up of women's bodies and minds to keep both chaste (p.29). The keeper of

the key in this case is the woman's husband. The idea that the wrong type of learning

could interfere with a liminal moment like conception or childbirth is entirely in

keeping with this male policing of women's bodies.

Based on popularity and repeated print runs, *The Instruction* was arguably the

most popular conduct book of the period, influencing later works like Philip

Stubbes's *Anatomie of Abuses*, which looks to *The Instruction* for many of its

proscriptions against dancing, fashion, and cosmetics, and its opinions on reading

material, and sexual continence.[100] *The Instruction* is often praised as progressive

because it advocates literacy for women, but it also focuses on chastity,

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[99] It is also used as one of the names of Christ, for example in the Advent Antiphons used in some branches of Western Christianity.

[100] Beauchamp et al., 'Introduction', in Vives, *Instruction,* ed. Beauchamp et al., p.lxxxi.

shamefastness, and patriarchal control of female sexuality. Popularity does not

guarantee that Vives' ideas were widely adhered to. However, its influence can be

discerned in Renaissance fiction that reproduces the discourses of female shame and

chastity. Spenser praises the authentic femininity of the true Florimel by describing

her 'bashfull shamefastnesse' (V.iii.23). Barnabe Riche sees the requirement of

shamefastness as being a method of controlling women. Three times in *The*

Excellencie of Good Women, a text advising men how to find a good wife and

women how to be one, he describes shamefastness as a 'bridle' and once as a

'restraint'.[101] He also lays the responsibility for the woman's shamefastness and

loyalty directly with the education and instruction provided by her father.[102] Riche

praises the parenting of Laban, as exemplified in the shamefastness and modesty of

his daughters Leah and Rachel.[103] He criticises Jacob's parenting abilities, and cites

the incident of his daughter Dinah being raped during an 'idle journey' as an

outcome of this lack of proper instruction and control.[104] As seen above with male

children, the absence of proper instruction for female children is portrayed as

resulting in greater violence (in this case sexual violence) than any used in the

delivery of that instruction.

The Faerie Queene: Pedagogy, Punishment, and Protestantism

Shame and humiliation were not exclusively the preserve of women and were

widely considered an inherent part of the education of boys as well as the legal

correction of adults.[105] Erasmus describes pupils being 'made lowe' and gives

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[101] Barnabe Riche, *The Excellencie of Good Women* (1613), pp.21, 22, 23, 27.
[102] Riche, *Good Women,* pp.24-25.
[103] See *Genesis* Chapters 29-30.
[104] See *Genesis* Chapter 34.
[105] Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction,* p.226.

graphic descriptions of degrading punishments or initiation rituals prior to admittance into education (*Children,* pp.9-10). Dolven refers to shame as the 'final fate of instruction', but suggests that, in romance, it is a destructive rather than an instructive force and is associated not with education but with original sin.[106] I would suggest however that many of the instances of shame and humiliation in *The Faerie Queene* are depicted as instructive, or at least as having parallels with early modern educational norms.

As an English Protestant, Spenser was writing within a paradigm where religious practices such as flagellation, either by oneself or by one's religious superiors in a monastic setting, were increasingly distrusted owing to their papistical associations.[107] However, the cultural resonance of such practices ensures they provide important context for his work, possibly in connection with ideas about instructive or pedagogic violence. Dolven sees 'brutality' in the scenes of instruction in Book V of *The Faerie Queene* and claims these leave us longing for an older style of instruction free from 'punitive violence'.[108] Dolven considers Spenser to have a 'pedagogical nostalgia' for the pre-humanist mode of noble education, for knights and squires, for a chivalric model rejected by humanist educators.[109] Examples of this type of apprenticeship can indeed be found throughout *The Faerie Queene*, for instance when Sir Burbon describes his being initially armed by the Redcrosse Knight (V.xi.53). However, I would argue that Spenser is drawing on multiple models for instructive violence in this work. Sangliere is shamed by carrying the

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[106] Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction,* pp.225-227.

[107] Niklaus Largier's, *In Praise of the Whip*, discusses how Catholic Europe (and particularly Spain, France, and Italy) saw a resurgence of religious self-flagellation in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, heavily influenced by Jesuits and resistant to attempts by religious authority, from the Pope down, to minimise it. A similar resurgence in Germany was met with strong opposition from Protestants, describing flagellation practices in terms of 'abomination' and 'butchery' (pp.175-184).

[108] Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction,* p.230.

[109] Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction,* p.216.

decapitated head of his victim, an instance of a violent punishment fitting a violent crime, suggesting Old-Testament style retributive justice with a strong visual element that would instruct or deter others (V.i.28).[110] Munera's hands and feet are cut off and displayed, thus providing an example to others (V.ii.26). There is a list of punishments at V.ix.25, displaying the perceived fairness of violence in the name of justice. These instances relate to judicial punishment, the iconography of martyrdom, and the execution of traitors and Catholics, but they also have strong instructive elements.[111] Punishment is not merely intended to be retributive but also pedagogically rehabilitative, providing increased knowledge and understanding. There are other episodes of violence and humiliation in *The Faerie Queene* that even more closely echo humanist educational concerns. These are frequently episodes where gender is rendered fluid.

Artegall's upbringing and education, as described in Book V, is unusual. He is removed, or arguably stolen or seduced, from his domestic surroundings for the purposes of education and being 'vpbrought' in justice (V.i.5). But he is neither sent to a school nor apprenticed to a knight. Instead, and going against humanist principles, he is educated by a woman (albeit a goddess, Astraea) 'til yeares he raught', that is, until he reached adulthood (V.i.6). The mention of 'all the discipline of justice' being taught is ambiguous as to whether it relates only to the discipline and justice that he will be meting out; the concept of discipline and justice as an academic study; or whether it also means that he has been disciplined (V.i.6). However, the fact that he is being educated in justice, on 'equall ballance with due

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[110] Early modern examples of such 'fitting' punishments include the removal of an ear for seditious talk or the removal of a hand for dangerous writing. See Sarah Covington, 'Cutting, Branding, Whipping, Burning: The Performance of Judicial Wounding in Early Modern England', in *Staging Pain, 1580-1800: Violence and Trauma in British Theater*, ed. James Robert Allard and Mathew R. Martin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.91-110 (p.99).
[111] Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction*, pp.211-15.

recompence', suggests both punishment and also Ong's concept of the 'marginal' educational environment; neither home nor away, neither childhood nor adulthood (and neither humanist nor chivalric), but both sides of those binary oppositions held in balance. He is also taught 'to weigh both right and wrong', a symbol of the scales of justice but also of the Humanist instructions in rhetoric that required students to learn to reason from both sides of an argument, something that may account for the liminal spaces Spenser and Shakespeare create whilst looking for synthesis.

Artegall's gender can be read as fluid or indeterminate because he has been raised and taught exclusively by a woman. However, there are many episodes of threatened masculinity that are much more aggressive than this. The emasculation of Brigadore in Canto ii goes beyond the shame that Guyon later claims is sufficient punishment even in place of death (V.iii.36). His sword and armour, symbols of his masculinity, are broken (V.iii.37). Moreover, his secondary sex characteristics are removed by his being forcibly shaved. This calls to mind one of the more extreme instances of humiliation and initiation in Erasmus' writings:

> Fyrst they rub his chyn, as though they wolde shaue his bearde: hereunto thei vse pisse, or if ther be any fouler thyng. This liquour is dashed into his mouth, & he may not spit it out (*Children,* p.10).[112]

For Brigadore humiliation is not a ritual preceding the gateway to adult maleness through education. Instead it is a commuted execution ritual, replacing the death by sword that Guyon persuades Artegall is dishonourable. It does place Brigadore in a liminal space, whereby his identity, represented by the blazon on his shield, is obliterated, but it is a space between life and death rather than between childhood and adulthood.

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[112] The 'they' in the passage could be tutors or older students. The passage could be read as some form of 'hazing'. It is presented as a wicked initiation ritual into the university study of the liberal arts that is widespread and escapes judgment in the name of custom.

This suspended space between life and death frequently reappears in association with literary depictions of liminality and, even given the sense of youth and vitality surrounding the transition from child to adult, this threshold state is no exception. The more explicit references to schooling in Book V of *The Faerie Queene* also concern the threat of death. The reference to the sphinx's 'schoole' is glossed in the Longman edition as being a reference to the Inquisitors 'to whom a false answer meant death' (p.587). In her 2010 book *Popular Ghosts,* Pam Thurschwell includes a chapter entitled 'The Ghost Worlds of Adolescence'.[113] Thurschwell is predominantly concerned with adolescence as it is conceptualised from the end of the nineteenth century but her ideas are also relevant for this investigation of Renaissance education as a threshold to adulthood. Ghosts resemble adolescents, she says, in that:

> They are defined by their liminality, caught between timeframes. If ghosts exist uneasily between the worlds of the living and the dead, then adolescents exist uneasily between childhood and maturity. For both adolescents and ghosts, one might argue, 'time is out of joint'. Growing up, of course, always means growing up towards death.[114]

Brigadore's experience shares with adolescent rites of passage the sense of suspended or transitional gender, and both are associated with the life/death liminal state through the use of violence. The role of violence and punishment in policing societal gender norms is further explored when Talus uses his iron flail to disperse the 'incontinent' Amazon women and rescue their 'womanish' captive who has yielded to 'womens powre, that boast of mens subiection' (V.iv.24-26). This leads to the most marked instance of gender humiliation in Book V, when Artegall is imprisoned by Radigund, who emasculates men by despoiling their masculine

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[113] Pam Thurschwell, 'The Ghost Worlds of Adolescence', in *Popular Ghosts: The Haunted Spaces of Everyday Culture* (London: Continuum, 2010), pp.239-250.
[114] Thurschwell, 'Ghost Worlds'*,* p.240.

weaponry, making them wear 'womens weedes' and forcing them 'to spin, to card, to sew, to wash, to wring' (V.iv.31). The treatment that Radigund metes out in the re-training of men has parallels with recommendations for punishments in the education of children. The combination of physical violence, imprisonment, and forced domestic chores follows the pattern for punishment listed by Kempe (*Children in Learning*) when he says that punishment (only to be administered when encouragement and reward have both failed) might consist of chastisement with the rod, which would make the child 'wise and learned'; or 'restraining that libertie of recreation, which otherwise should have bin graunted'; or lastly 'service of drudgerie, as may be the sweeping of the schoole'.[115] The elements of humiliation inherent in much Renaissance educational punishment are often administered along gendered lines or temporarily change the gender of the recipient. It is possible that this is a paradigm that Spenser seeks to emulate or reconstruct in this passage.

The status of effeminisation as a form of living death is emphasised by the description of those with a 'manly mind' choosing to die rather than live a shameful life, although Sir Terpin cannot escape the shame of having been captured at all (V.iv.27-32). Both the threat of feminisation and the threat of death are therefore represented in the liminality of the 'deathes dore' from which Sir Terpin has been rescued (V.iv.35). Later when Artegall is forced into women's clothes his imprisonment is also described as a 'long death' (V.v.36). The humiliation of Artegall's treatment, his regression to an unbreeched state by virtue of his feminine attire, and the performance of domestic duties similar to the 'sweeping of the school' mentioned by Kempe, also mark this living death as an interlude of instruction in Radigund's curriculum of gender roles.

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[115] Kempe, *Children in Learning,* sig.H2ʳ.

Radigund and the Amazons are frequently described in terms of 'pride', the opposite of the shamefastness generally recommended for women (see V.iv.38). In contrast, Artegall is dressed in 'womans weedes, that is to manhood shame', and brought from the open field and roaming quest to an indoor, feminine domain. Radigund hangs his armour up high to further his humiliation and ceremonially castrates him by breaking his sword (V.v.20-21). Artegall is further humiliated not only by being rescued by Britomart, a woman in man's attire, but also by the fact that she cannot bear to look at him: she is 'abasht with secret shame' and cannot celebrate his safety until he is dressed again like a man (V.v.37-41). Until he is returned to masculinity Artegall, at least for Britomart, is not yet fully rescued, not yet safe from the pull of the liminal life-death state.

These instances of shaming and humiliation are instructive, in that they are intended to alter behaviour if not to impart knowledge. Their function is not merely to provide a gateway from boyhood to manhood, but to impart transformative training to adults by means of punishment. Artegall's experience is part of the acquisition of wisdom inherent in the pursuit of a quest and is a necessary part of the maturing process that he must go through before he can marry Britomart. The learning and training he achieves is beneficial not just in childhood, but at any age. It is therefore in line with the declared purpose of *The Faerie Queene*, as outlined in Spenser's letter to Ralegh, to 'fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline'.[116]

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[116] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton et al. (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2007), p.714.

Education and Liminality in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

The popularity of debate about the proper upbringing of daughters, coupled with Vives' ideas being cited in antitheatrical tracts of the period, may have inspired Shakespeare, a father of two daughters, to address these theories in his plays.[117] Ursula Potter highlights *Much Ado About Nothing* as a site for Shakespeare's engagement with these issues, but *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and much later *The Tempest,* also offer insights.

For Potter, Hero, and to a larger extent *Hamlet*'s Ophelia, are destroyed because their old-fashioned fathers advocate the kind of conduct favoured by Vives, whereas Beatrice is more able to survive because she has assets that Vives would deny women: 'eloquence, independent judgement, and above all any occasion to learn by experience'.[118] Potter includes Prospero in her list of elderly Shakespearean fathers who 'disparage their daughters' ability to self-determination and impose their paternal wills', and claims that Shakespeare, whose profession made him exactly the type of father that Vives disapproved of, was much more interested in writing strong women like Rosalind or Beatrice, whose fathers are absent.[119]

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Hermia's father is overbearing and didactic, and the play concerns femininity and the transition from maid to wife. Violence is often employed to effect this life lesson. The threats of violence towards Hermia are akin to Vives' accounts of what we might now term honour killings; the fathers who 'have cut the throtes of their doughters' or the father who shut up his 'defoyled' daughter to be torn apart and eaten by a starving horse (p.32). To further the culture

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[117] See Ursula Potter, 'Elizabethan Drama and *The Instruction of a Christian Woman* by Juan Luis Vives', in *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods*, ed. Juanita Feros Ruys (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008) pp.265-285 (pp.263 and 268).

[118] Potter, 'Elizabethan Drama', p.266.

[119] Potter, 'Elizabethan Drama', pp.283-284.

of violence towards women in the play, Hippolyta has been wooed with a sword and her love has been won through injuries, resulting in marriage (1.1.16-19). Threats of violence towards Hermia are also linked to marriage. If she does not comply with her father's plan for her marriage then she will be killed or imprisoned (in a nunnery). The imagery of Hermia as wax to be imprinted has educational overtones, but also hints at violence if he were to 'disfigure' her (1.1.49-51). Hermia's going against her training in modesty to make 'bold' has no effect (1.1.59).

The association of patriarchal power with education is applied to male-male relations when Theseus tells Egeus and Demetrius that he has 'some private schooling for you both' (1.1.116). The privacy of this exchange, and the removal of the two men to achieve it, suggests a male-only secret society of the educated. Erasmus' ideas of removing male children from female company are also echoed in Oberon's wish to remove the changeling boy from Titania's sphere of influence, and from the all-female secret society of the 'order' that Titania and the boy's mother belonged to, into his own (2.1.120-137). This is similar to Leontes' removal of Mamillius from Hermione and her women in *The Winter's Tale*; he is taken away from the nurturing story-telling realm of his mother in order to be made into a copy of his father and erase his mother's influence. This influence was believed in the early modern period to be imbibed via the mother's or nurse's milk, as implied in the name 'Mamillius', which derives from the Latin for breast. Hermione is imprisoned (2.1.58-60, 105) and the 'torment' that Oberon plans for Titania, for refusing to allow the boy to be taken into the masculine realm, is designed to modify her behaviour and bring her back in line with patriarchal norms regarding the upbringing of children (2.1.147).

Not all references to teaching in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* fit with Renaissance ideals about roles for women within education, and certainly not with Vives' ideals of demure femininity. Helena requests that Hermia teach her 'how you look, and with what art' and says 'your frowns would teach my smiles such skill' (1.1.192 and 195). The skill she wants to learn is how to obtain the man of her choice. Hermia doubly cuts off her route to this learning by saying that she does not have the required knowledge to teach, and that it cannot be learned. Her escape to the forest with Lysander represents just as much of a rite of passage as if she had obeyed her father and married Demetrius. In bidding 'farewell sweet playfellow' (1.1.220) she is saying goodbye to childhood and beginning the transition from maid to married woman. By refusing to teach, she is leaving Helena behind, as much as she would love to follow.

Helena acknowledges the significance of childhood schooling, but seems to interpret it in different ways as the play progresses. Later, notably against a backdrop of threats of violence towards her and then towards Hermia, she invokes the strength of the shared school experience in an effort to appeal to Hermia, again suggesting that Hermia is leaving these things behind. 'Is all quite forgot?' she asks, 'All schooldays' friendship, childhood innocence?' (3.2.201-202). The education she describes is a traditionally feminine one of needlework and music (3.2.204-206). The reference to 'school' and 'schooldays' is ambiguous. The nature of the activities described suggests home-schooling in accomplishments. Yet there were some schools or academies for girls in this period.[120] There is also evidence for girls'

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[120] In 1617 the young gentlewomen of 'the Ladies Hall in Deptford' (a private academy for girls of noble families) performed Robert White's *Cupid's Banishment* for Queen Anne (See Helen Hackett, *A Short History of English Renaissance Drama* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), p.177 and Alison Findlay, Stephanie Hodgson-Wright and Gweno Williams (eds), *Women and Dramatic Production, 1550-1700* (Harlow, England; New York: Longman, 2000), p.47.).

boarding schools or 'fashionable seminaries' in England, including one at Windsor, as early as the mid-sixteenth century, perhaps founded to replace the educational services of convents. However, such schools remained scarce until the mid-seventeenth century.[121] Shakespeare could regard Helena and Hermia's 'schooling' in general terms to mean their instruction, or he may have envisioned them attending some kind of school outside the home.[122]

The exchanges and name-calling between Helena and Hermia later in this scene evoke childhood, but it is Helena, not Hermia, who appeals in terms of adult feminine standards: 'Have you no modesty, no maiden shame, /No touch of bashfulness?' (3.2.286-287). Perhaps it is Hermia who is being left on the wrong side of the gateway between childhood and adulthood. Modesty and maiden shame are central to Vives' vision for the education of women, including women calling other women to account, as Helena does with Hermia. He calls for the 'honeste wyves' to 'hate and blame the noughty wyves' and advocates shamefastness for all women (p.85).

Helena's views of education start with a wish to be taught skills that will ease her transition to adulthood via marriage; they move through sentimentalised visions of conventional feminine education, appeal to the need for women to be taught shame, and eventually arrive at a hostile vision of childhood education wherein Hermia is a 'vixen' (3.2.325). In turn, Puck mocks the education of boys and associates childhood with violence: 'come, thou child,/ I'll whip thee with a rod' (3.2.410-411). He unsettles the gateway to manhood by moving around: 'Follow my

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[121] Jacqueline Eales, *Women in Early Modern England 1500-1700* (London: UCL Press, 1998), pp.37-8.

[122] The OED uses Helena's line about 'schooldays friendship' as a citation for the meaning of 'schooldays' as 'the period of a person's life during which he or she attends school', 'schoolday, n.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2014, (accessed 10 July 2014).

voice; we'll try no manhood here' (3.2.413. He is playing Lysander at his own

adolescent game rather than taking on an adult pedagogic role.[123] Once the passage

into (heteronormative) adulthood has been achieved, the four lovers, still dazed from

their liminal experience, look back through the gateway to a childhood dotage that

seems a distant remembrance (4.1.162-168). They have come to socially acceptable

adulthood, not through conventional, externally imposed, violent instruction in

masculine and feminine roles, but by virtue of their liminal and festive interlude in

the woods. They have learned through self-created play, albeit very unpleasant and

violent games. Oberon is cast as the manipulative schoolmaster, but his instruction of

the youths is much more benign than the humiliating instruction to which he subjects

his wife.

Teaching and Learning in _The Tempest_

If Egeus is the type of father who violently imposes Vives' style of modesty,

is Prospero, as Potter suggests, similarly patriarchal? Does Shakespeare's view of

fatherhood and his portrayal of education change in the intervening decades between

the two plays? In her 2008 article, 'Single Parenting, Homeschooling: Prospero,

Caliban, Miranda', Hiewon Shin begins with the assumption that views of Prospero

as a good humanist educator have given way, as critical opinion has shifted, to his

being viewed as oppressive.[124] However, she cites Vives' comparison of secular

books to 'serpents or snakes,' and his advice that fathers keep their daughters from

'all [secular] redyinge', recommending instead 'the gospelles and the actes, and the

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[123] Puck's role as a trickster figure places him perpetually between childhood and adulthood. On stage
he is sometimes played as a child and sometimes as an adult. This trickster status also positions
him as simultaneously requiring discipline from Oberon, and also meting it out, as he does with
the gossips and aunts at 2.1.42-57.

[124] Hiewon Shin, 'Single Parenting, Homeschooling: Prospero, Caliban, Miranda', _Studies in English
Literature, 1500-1900_, 48 (2008), 373-393 (p.373).

epistoles of thapostles' (p.27). Shin states that the 'single fathers' of characters such as Helena (*All's Well That Ends Well*), Portia (*Merchant of Venice*), and Kate (*Taming of the Shrew*), as well as Miranda, 'support their daughters' reading of nonreligious texts, and their secular education', demonstrating that Shakespeare valued women's learning.[125] However, learning may well have happened regardless of the fathers' support. Learned female characters such as Helena, Portia, Kate, and to an extent Miranda are in many ways as troubling, unruly, and ungovernable as Lisa Jardine suggests.[126] Prospero's books are the only books on the island, and, as Shin admits, he does attempt to keep them from his daughter.[127] Whatever the parental and educational motivations, scenes of learning, and in particular the pedagogic father figure, are central to *The Tempest*.

Prospero describes himself as his daughter's schoolmaster (1.2.172). Miranda remembers being in the company of women as a small child and having 'Four or five women once, that tended me' (1.2.47).[128] But she has been removed from that female realm and educated more like a boy, albeit with assumptions from her father of quietness, listening, and obedience.[129] Certainly she has not been educated in 'the presence either of her mother or her nurse or some other honest woman of sad sage' as Vives thinks a maiden should be (p.14).

Miranda's education goes beyond that of Thomas More's daughters, who were renowned for their learning and praised by Erasmus. Even educated women such as More's daughters, or later, Jane Seymour's nieces and others, were expected

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[125] Shin, 'Single Parenting, Homeschooling', p.383.
[126] Lisa Jardine, 'Cultural Confusion and Shakespeare's Learned Heroines: "These Are Old Paradoxes"', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 38 (1987), 1-18 (pp.4, 16).
[127] Shin, 'Single Parenting, Homeschooling', p.389.
[128] See also Shin, 'Single Parenting, Homeschooling', p.389.
[129] See for example 'silence' and 'hush' (1.2.479 and 481) regarding quietness; 'ope thine ear', 'Dost thou attend me?', 'thou attend'st not!', and 'I pray thee mark me', regarding listening (1.2.37,78, 87, and 88); and 'obey' (1.2.38).

to limit their Latin learning to predominantly sacred works and certainly to translation rather than original composition.[130] Mary Ellen Lamb suggests that Anne Cooke, and others, justified learning languages by translating sacred works, in Anne's case sermons for her mother to read.[131] Even this type of work was not free from controversy though, and did not pass unquestioned.[132] Valerie Wayne notes that Vives does not address the subject of women's writing *or* translation, having seemingly not recognised it as a possibility and being more concerned with presentation and handwriting than content.[133] She also notes that whilst both boys and girls were encouraged to keep large notebooks of notable or inspirational sayings (known as sententiae or sentences), the assumption for boys was that they would eventually incorporate these into their own compositions, whereas no such suggestion was made for girls.[134] This gave girls' learning less agency than that of grammar school boys who were taught rhetoric, taking figures of speech and examples from classical texts and incorporating them in their own work in order to produce persuasive speeches.[135] Women limited to translation were denied what Lamb calls an 'original voice'.[136] More recent scholarship does recognise, to a

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[130] See John Coke, *The debate betweene the heraldes of englande and france* (1550), sig.K1ʳ: 'Also we haue dyvers gentylwomen in Englande, which be not onely well estudied in holy scripture, but also in the Greke and Latyn tonges as maystres More, maystres Anne Coke, Maystres Clement, and others beynge an estraunge thing to you and other nations'.

[131] Lamb, 'The Cooke Sisters', p.112.

[132] Trill et al. (eds), *Lay by your Needles,* p.5

[133] Mary could write a letter in Latin by age nine and translated the prayer of Thomas Aquinas when she was twelve. She worked on Katherine Parr's 1544 project to translate Erasmus's *Paraphrases on the Four Gospels*, edited by Nicholas Udall, but ill health prevented her from completing the project. See Whitelock, *Mary Tudor,* pp.27; 110. For more information on Catherine's own humanist education, see Timothy G. Elston, 'Transformation or Continuity? Sixteenth-Century Education and the Legacy of Catherine of Aragon, Mary I, and Juan Luis Vives', in *'High and Mighty Queens' of Early Modern England*, ed. Carole Levin et. al (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp.11-26.

[134] Wayne, 'Some Sad Sentence', pp.21-22

[135] Two books by Peter Mack explore in detail the teaching of rhetoric to grammar school students: *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, see especially pp.11-75) and *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric 1380-1620* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011).

[136] Lamb, 'The Cooke Sisters', p.125.

greater degree than does Lamb, the extent to which women could achieve autonomy and self-expression from translation work.[137] However, whatever fulfilment the women managed to derive from the task, the fact remains that keeping adult women at tasks from which male children were expected to graduate is an infantilising restriction.

When Prospero dies, and this is arguably a play that has the theme of ageing fatherhood at its core, there is a real possibility, until the opportunity arises for Prospero to engineer a return to Italy, that Miranda will become sole ruler, just as Caliban is 'all the subjects' (1.2.344). Stevenson states that 'A serious reason for noblewomen to demonstrate humanistic Latin is that they thereby demonstrated fitness for rule', especially important as 'some Renaissance Italian courts were ruled by women for months or years at a time, either as subalterns during husbands' prolonged absences, or as regents for minor sons'.[138] In England, Catherine of Aragon acted as regent for Henry VIII during his absences, as did Katherine Parr in 1544.[139] Barbara J. Harris suggests this type of political engagement by high status women demonstrates that the boundaries between the private and the public spheres 'either did not exist or were extraordinarily permeable in the early Tudor period'.[140] However, she cautions against 'exaggerating the flexibility of gender boundaries in the period', saying that politically effective women were praised for being like men, and that this language 'simultaneously labelled them as atypical and reaffirmed the

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[137] See Margaret P. Hannay, *Philip's Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); *This Double Voice: Gendered Writing in Early Modern England*, ed. Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke, Early Modern Literature in History (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Deborah Uman, *Women as Translators in Early Modern England* (Newark : University of Delaware Press, 2012).

[138] Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets,* p.152-153.

[139] Sharon L. Jansen lists these and many other instances of female regency in *Debating Women, Politics, and Power in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.5.

[140] Barbara J. Harris, 'Women and Politics in Early Tudor England', *The Historical Journal*, 33 (1990), 259-281 (pp.260, 268).

masculinity of the political realm'.[141] Moreover, Harris's assertion that politically engaged women were acting as 'wives, mothers, and widows' and that the majority were heiresses, widows, or wives in second and third marriages, implicitly indicates that the roles of these women, as determined by their life-stage and relationship to men, were still boundaries that governed the extent of their influence and activity.[142]

As an educated heiress, and in the absence of a likely husband, a future period of rule by a woman, not in a regency capacity but in her own right, would have been envisaged for Miranda by her father. Her learning is therefore more like that of Mary, Elizabeth, Lady Jane Grey, or Arbella Stuart, than More's daughters.[143] This may in part explain her being allowed access to texts that may have been deemed damaging to supposedly more frail female readers, although the play is tantalisingly vague about the exact nature of these texts.

Stevenson suggests that educated women may have served as walking advertisements for the skills of pedagogical fathers.[144] Whilst education is important to Prospero, however, it is his lost status as a ruler and not his reputation as an educator that is paramount. Miranda can be seen then as a woman being educated as a prince, just as Elizabeth referred to herself as 'prince'.[145] Shin describes Miranda as having a 'well-balanced personality, which encompasses traditionally feminine and masculine virtues at once'.[146] The 'mirror for princes' genre is appropriate here then, despite

[141] Harris, 'Women and Politics', p.281.

[142] Harris, 'Women and Politics', p.260, 280.

[143] Arbella Stuart was groomed to be queen by her grandmother, Bess of Hardwick, she was taught classical and modern languages as befitted a royal education and her 11 year-old male cousin Will was bribed 'a rapier, dagger, embroidered girdle and spurs' by his father if he would speak Latin with her (Sarah Gristwood, *Arbella: England's Lost Queen* (London: Bantam Press, 2004), p.157).

[144] Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets,* p.154

[145] The word 'prince' in this period denoted status and responsibilities rather than gender. The OED has citations from 1560 to 1734 of the term 'prince' being used of a female ruler. 'prince, n.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2014, (accessed 10 July 2014).

[146] Shin, 'Single Parenting, Homeschooling', p.389

the gender-neutral 'prince' title sitting uncomfortably with Renaissance views on the proper restrictions on the education of women.

Miranda faces two possible thresholds in the play. The initial assumption is that she will in due course become a ruler, and therefore requires a masculine education. The other possibility, which seems unlikely and unimagined by her at the beginning of the play, is that marriage will form the first of many womanly thresholds throughout her life, as espoused by Erasmus and discussed above. Her education would not be useless in this context. Intellectual companionship was increasingly seen as desirable in a wife. Also, as a queen consort, her learning would be of use in the role of regent should the need arise, or in the education of royal children, as undertaken by Katherine Parr.[147] There is also however, a third argument: that education, with its associations with masculinity (within patriarchally approved limits) and with religious virtue, protected women from sexual violence by positioning them between genders, or at least on a continuum of femininity where sexual attractiveness was seen as less pressing than intellectual companionship.[148]

Shin sees Miranda's proposal to Ferdinand as forthright fruition of her masculine education (3.1.83-84). However, Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan consider that 'despite occasional disobedience and outspokenness, Miranda

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[147] *Women Latin Poets,* p.153. Stevenson also mentions (p.257) that Erasmus praised More's daughters as examples of companionable marriage where the spouses shared intellectual interests. Perhaps Miranda and Ferdinand's chess game in Act 5 scene 1 can be seen as an example of this, its role as a pre-marital distraction activity to prolong chastity prefiguring a married life devoted to humanistic concerns where sex is of lesser importance than studiousness. Erika Rummel, in *Erasmus on Women* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1996) points out that Erasmus saw women's education as useful both for keeping a woman out of trouble before marriage and for making her a more entertaining companion afterwards (pp.9-10). She cites Erasmus writing 'One can really enjoy their society. I differ profoundly from those who keep a wife for no purpose except physical satisfaction, for which half-witted females are better fitted' (Ep 1233:149-152). See also Desiderius Erasmus, *The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 1122-1251 (1520-1521),* ed. Peter G. Bietenholz and R.A.B. Mynors (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), VIII, p.298.and Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady,* p.62

[148] Androgyny as a means of protecting honour and chastity, including pre-marital chastity, is discussed further in chapter 2 of this thesis.

remains the chaste ideal of early modern womanhood'.[149] Miranda's role as teacher

is perhaps more subversive. She teaches Caliban 'each hour one thing or another',

and Ferdinand also initially seeks 'some good instruction' from her (1.2.356-358;

428-429). Yet when she tries to tell her father what to do about Ferdinand he sharply

rebukes her attempt to teach him with 'What, I say,/ My foot my tutor?' (1.2.473).

Chedgzoy maintains that there is little room within the text for Miranda to show any

subversion or rebellion, seeing Miranda as 'disadvantaged by her gender' and

Caliban as 'empowered by his masculinity'.[150] Miranda's gender is troubling in so

far as Caliban is attracted to her, but also in a wider sense that has implications for

her sexual autonomy and her education. Prospero is deeply concerned not only with

protecting her from Caliban's advances, but also in policing and controlling the

timing and potential consummation of her courtship with Ferdinand. Prospero's

vision of Miranda as a potential heir is complicated by his vision of her as the

mother of future heirs, a dynasty that must not include the offspring of Caliban or be

compromised by an unwise marriage or untimely liaison with Ferdinand. So, for

Prospero, the role of his daughter as woman and her role as heir are in complex

tension. Miranda herself has met too few people of any gender to make comparisons

or contrasts, or find her own identity.

Caliban's masculinity is most evident in his sex (or procreative) drive and his

acquisition of Prospero's language. The latter is an analogy for the learning of Latin

by adolescent boys, as it facilitates his joining of an elite group. When he first

appears the audience is quickly shown that he is a subservient character, doing

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[149] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Arden Third Series, ed. Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan, (London: Methuen, 2000), p.27.

[150] Kate Chedgzoy, *Shakespeare's Queer Children* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p.97.

menial chores, and being kept in his place by violent pinches.[151] As Jonathan Bate

points out, beating his charges is not the behaviour of a good humanist, whatever

Prospero's claims about treating Caliban with 'humane care'.[152] It is also quickly

explained by Caliban that this was not always the case. He was previously nurtured;

Shin claims that he was treated as an adopted son.[153] Significantly, he was taught.

Prospero instructed him on rudimentary astronomy, 'How/ To name the bigger light

and how the less,/ That burn by day and night' (1.2.337-339). In turn he taught

Prospero 'all the qualities o'th'isle' (line 340), perhaps an emphasis by Shakespeare

on the importance of 'natural' knowledge in balance with Prospero's more civilised

learnedness. Miranda has also been involved in Caliban's education and the three of

them have formed a learned society. This has been achieved because Miranda and

Prospero have taught him language (1.2.357 and 366-367).

    If the purpose of teaching Caliban language is to facilitate learning in other

disciplines such as astronomy, it is entirely possible that Prospero would have taught

him Latin rather than Italian. However, the question of whether Caliban had any

language at all prior to meeting Prospero and Miranda is an ambiguous one. Either

he had no language and would 'gabble like/ A thing most brutish' (1.2.359-360) or

he had a language of his own that the incomers designated as 'brutish' noise.[154] Here

I treat Caliban's language learning as analogous to the learning of Latin by children

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[151] 1.2.328-333. Pinches are often used in Shakespeare either as a punishment (especially when delivered by supernatural beings like fairies or sprites) to modify people's behaviour, or as an erotic practice, as in *Antony and Cleopatra*. They are also mentioned as instructional punishment in the quotation from Lady Jane Grey above.

[152] Bate, *Soul of the Age*, p.132.

[153] Shin, 'Single Parenting, Homeschooling', p.374. An alternative reading, based on the social inequality between Prospero's two pupils, and the violence directed towards Caliban, is that he is functioning as some kind of whipping-boy to spare Prospero from having to beat his female, royal child.

[154] For a discussion of Caliban in connection to the sixteenth-century arguments over whether the indigenous peoples of the new world had language see Stephen Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse : Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp.25-26 and 34-36.

already fluent in their vernacular, rather than making any more of a case for its being intended as Latin in the play itself.

The communion of Prospero, Miranda, and Caliban is not an adult society of equals. It is the liminal, adolescent time of Caliban's awakening to sexual maturity that causes the system to break down. Caliban attempts to rape Miranda (or so the audience is told) and is demoted from family member to slave or servant (1.2.350-351). He is excluded from the family home and from the society of learning. As a servant, his instruction, and therefore his punishment, is still the responsibility of Prospero, as is that of an adult daughter. Only for boys, and not for boys of the servant class, does education end at puberty. The intersection of gender with other axes of power excludes Caliban from wooing Miranda as an equal either socially or intellectually and his masculine strength and threats of violent sexual conquest are his remaining weapons, if only in his head.

Even as a servant there were limits in early modern society as to how Caliban should be treated: 'It is beyond a masters power by any correction to impaire life, health, or strength of his seruant, or any way in his body to disable him from doing that which otherwise he might haue beene able to doe' writes William Gouge in 1622, although the fact that he needs to stipulate this implies that the practice was sufficiently commonplace to be a problem.[155] In *The Taming of The Shrew*, Petruccio physically chastises his servants, although he never beats Katherine despite his other varied and inventive abuses of her (1.2.17 and 4.1.125-148).[156]

By giving Caliban menial domestic chores in addition to physical punishment, Prospero feminises him.[157] This echoes the way that Artegall is

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[155] William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Dvties: Eight Treatises* (1622), p.556.
[156] As with Caliban and Miranda above, this could be a displacement activity whereby the servants are placed in the role of whipping boy to Katherine, who pleads in their favour (4.1.137).
[157] Shin, 'Single Parenting, Homeschooling', p.379.

emasculated by Radigund and is compounded by the physical punishments that, as we have seen, can be implicated in impotence. Once Caliban is no longer a family member his fertility, and therefore his masculinity, is of no value to Prospero; on the contrary they have become a source of anxiety, to be eliminated through feminisation and physical chastisement. He is trapped between masculinity and femininity, between childhood and adulthood, perpetually. The adult language that he has learned is now of no use to him, and he therefore uses it to curse.[158] Ferdinand, in contrast, emerges from his punishments with 'compensation' that not only 'makes amends' but also admits him to Prospero's family and intellectual society, and also to the promise of adult manhood through his marriage to Miranda (4.1.1-14). Ferdinand has passed the initiation but must see the ritual through at Prospero's pace and by Prospero's rules. It is not too late for the liminality to go wrong and for infertility to be the result, a marriage bed filled with barren hate and 'weeds so loathly/ That you shall hate it both' (4.1.19-22).

As an autodidactic playwright who had not attended university but worked alongside many writers who had, Shakespeare may have had ambivalent feelings about education. At times he seems openly to reject formal learning but these rejections do not necessarily stand up to scrutiny. Dedication to books is what gets Prospero banished but he is nevertheless represented as a better person than his brother, albeit a less effective ruler (1.2.73-78). His lost political power is replaced with magical power over the elements and spirits, and this power has been gained from books. Gonzalo's utopia requires that 'letters should not be known', but it is unclear how seriously or literally we should take these ideas from the source material

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[158] Assuming that Caliban has been taught Latin, this would be entirely in keeping with a language of learning that was also pressed into service for obscene subject matter, as Milton does in the elegies mentioned above.

in Montaigne's 'Of Cannibals', from Gonzalo, or from Shakespeare (2.1.150). The play points to laughable inconsistencies in Gonzalo's speech; there is to be no sovereignty on the island, but 'yet he would be king on't' (2.1.156). Prospero rejects his learning and drowns his book, but it is not the learning itself that he rejects but the 'rough magic' that is its subject matter (5.1.50-57). Shakespeare demonstrates keen understanding of the power of learning; Caliban tells Trinculo and Stephano to 'possess his books, for without them/ He's but a sot as I am' and to 'burn but his books' (3.2.86-88, 90). *The Tempest* strongly suggests that learning is something worth pursuing, including for women. The play also contrasts the concept of a learned society, to which children can be admitted by means of kindness and acceptance, with ideas of learning modified behaviour through discipline and violence, as Caliban does. It does not seem that Shakespeare sees the two as essentially linked.

Conclusion

The material conditions of education in the Renaissance linked learning to physical punishment and sodomy in people's minds. With the spread of education to lower strata of society it also became associated with the economics of jobbing schoolmasters whose teaching abilities were being called into question. This in turn facilitated a rise in the stereotype of the sadistic schoolmaster.

Women remain infantilised in this period, at least in the minds of the men charged with overseeing their development. Their education was seen as a perpetual process, which did not end with adulthood. However, judicial punishment practices for adults extended the idea of corporal punishment, or punishment by humiliation, beyond the sphere of childhood for men as well. These judicial punishments are in

themselves connected to the life/death state as they form part of a hierarchical continuum of penal violence that culminates in what Foucault calls 'death torture', the holding open of the space between life and death for the purposes of punishment, the 'art of maintaining life in pain' that seeks to imitate the punishment of the wicked in hell.[159] The Christian concept of humankind as the children of God, whom he is entitled to discipline as he sees fit, keeps open the gateway between childhood and adulthood, providing a series of liminal, ritual moments illustrating the relationship between a didactic God and his disobedient children.

This linking of education with visions of sodomy and violence rendered the gender status of those in education problematic, with the ritual nature of teaching and punishment combining with the thresholds of life-stage to produce liminal spaces of possibility and also anxiety. *The Faerie Queene, A Midsummer Night's Dream,* and *The Tempest* can be read in part as Spenser's and Shakespeare's explorations of violence and humiliation as tools for instruction associated with coming-of-age in a gendered society. Both writers were invested in these debates as male products of humanist education and as fathers of both sons and daughters.

I would also argue, as with Artegall being taught 'to weigh both right and wrong', that the focus of early modern education on producing 'minds that were accustomed to examine the many sides of a given theme, to entertain opposing ideals' was significant (V.i.7).[160] A grammar school education where 'young boys were confirmed in Christian ethics and at the same time taught to look for at least two sides of every question' did indeed leave 'its peculiar mark on much of the literature of the period'.[161] Shakespeare and Spenser were notable in this regard, as

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[159] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p.33.
[160] Joel B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind* (London: University of California Press, 1978), p.6.
[161] Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind,* p.43.

witnessed by their ability to conceptualise liminal, non-binary states arising out of an apparent paradox such as childhood/adulthood, masculine/feminine, or life/death.

Most importantly both writers create moments of liminality within their work where the binaries of male and female, child and adult, alive and dead are held in suspension by the rituals of violence. Linguistic liminality comes from the gateway of Latin learning as a rite of passage and from the temporal gap between sexual awakening and adult discourse. Psychological liminality occurs in punishment rituals by means of pain and humiliation. Physical liminality is represented by the body poised between masculine and feminine; or between childhood and adulthood. All three manifestations of the liminal state have violence at the centre of their ritual.

Chapter 2
'Hell's Pantomimicks':Violence and Liminal Gender in the Festive and Everyday Worlds

> The Deu'll laugh'd lately at the stinking stir,
> We had about *Hic Mulier,* and *Haec Vir*
> The Masculine apparel'd Feminine,
> And Feminine attired Masculine,
> The Woman-man, Man-woman, chuse you whether,
> The Female-male, Male-female both, yet neither;
> Hels *Pantomimicks* that themselues bedights,
> Like shamelesse double sex'd *Hermophradites,*
> *Virago* Roaring Girles, that to their middle,
> To know what sexe they were, was halfe a Riddle.[1]

From hermaphroditic Venus to the master-mistress sonnet patron, visions of ambiguous and fluid gender pervade Spenser and Shakespeare's work. The early modern period was a time of significant social anxiety surrounding the performance of gender roles. This anxiety resulted in a fascination with, and fear of, individuals who occupied the space between established genders, or who crossed gender lines. This subject has spawned a plethora of writing and criticism from the 1980s onwards, particularly on the subject of cross-dressing.[2] Stephen Greenblatt's 1988 essay 'Fiction and Friction' is one of the most famous examples of this, although Marjorie Garber criticises him and many others for simultaneously identifying a third or non-binary gender and subsuming it by positioning it at 'either the male or female pole of the hypothetical gender binarism: in either case, it disappears'.[3] As Garber points out, many attempts

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[1] John Taylor, *Superbiae Flagellum, or, The Whip of Pride* (1621), sig.C6ʳ.

[2] Notable examples include: Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989); Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-Theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Michael Shapiro, *Gender in Play on the Shakespearean Stage* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

[3] Stephen Greenblatt, 'Fiction and Friction' in *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), pp.66-93. Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), p.10.

have been made to name this 'third' space of gender but ultimately it remains un-named, or multiply named, because it is not one thing but many.[4] Leslie Feinberg identifies the liminal nature of this experience of gender as it lies in neither of the binary categories of masculine or feminine, writing of 'the pleasure of the weightless state between here and there'.[5]

This chapter investigates how non-standard gender presentations interact with violence and ritual. It looks at the ways liminal gender and liminal ritual space threaten, invite, or react to violence. The works of Shakespeare and Spenser not only share an Ovidian interest in metamorphosis that is key for the investigation of this topic, but Spenser's distinctively visual way of writing, like Shakespeare's writing for the visual medium of the stage, is ideal for examining the representation of gender presentations that defy verbal definition. As Feinberg says 'while there is as yet no language for who I have become, I articulate my gender – silent to the ear, but thunderous to the eye'.[6]

In this chapter I employ early modern terminologies, including 'hermaphrodite', which are no longer acceptable ways of referring to people who are trans, intersex, non-binary gendered, a-gendered, or genderqueer.[7] The

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[4] Garber, *Vested Interests,* p.11.

[5] Leslie Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues* (Ithaca: Firebrand, 1993) p.226. Leslie Feinberg is an author and trans activist and has also written *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman* (Boston: Beacon, 1996); *Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue* (Boston: Beacon, 1998); and *Drag King Dreams* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2006). Other works in the area of non-binary gender include Judith/ Jack Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998) and Kate Bornstein, *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and The Rest of Us* (New York: Vintage, 1995); *My Gender Workbook* (New York: Routledge, 1998); and (with S. Bear Bergman) *Gender Outlaws: The Next Generation* (Berkeley: Seal, 2010).

[6] Feinberg, *Trans Liberation*, p.33.

[7] Intersex : 'a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.' Definition taken from Intersex Society of North America, 'What Is Intersex?' <http://www.isna.org/faq/what_is_intersex> [accessed 10 April 2015]. Genderqueer: '*adj.* and *n. (a) adj.* designating a person who does not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions, but identifies with neither, both, or a combination of male and female genders; (also occas.) of or relating to such a person; *(b) n.* a genderqueer person'. 'gender, n.'. *OED Online*. Oxford

Intersex Society of North America states:

> The mythological term 'hermaphrodite' implies that a person is both fully male and fully female. This is a physiologic impossibility. The words "hermaphrodite" and "pseudo-hermaphrodite" are stigmatizing and misleading words. Unfortunately, some medical personnel still use them to refer to people with certain intersex conditions.[8]

The OED supports the idea that the use of 'hermaphrodite' is out of date, defining it as 'A person or animal (really or apparently) having both male and female sex organs'. The entry has not been fully updated since 1898. It adds 'Formerly supposed to occur normally in some races of men and beasts; but now regarded only as a monstrosity.'[9] I use this word where relevant, albeit with caution, as it was frequently used in the period and reflects early modern anxieties and the Renaissance conceptualization of gender as bound up with genital anatomy. Emphasis was placed on the binary nature of physical sex characteristics, dividing people into men and women, even though that binary was consistently challenged by reality and by the classical literary tradition inherited from lauded writers including Ovid. This classical tradition includes the story of Salmacis's rape of Hermaphroditus, who thereby becomes 'half woman and his limbs now week and soft' and appeals to his parents, Hermes and Aphrodite, as their 'bi-sexed son'.[10] Despite the supposed anatomical realism of classical hermaphroditic statues, these stories belong to myth and literary convention, rather than reflecting the everyday variety of individuals.

I also use the terms 'androgyne' and 'androgynous', which do not have

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University Press, March 2013 (accessed 10 April 2015).

[8] http://www.isna.org/faq/hermaphrodite (accessed 10 April 2015).

[9] 'hermaphrodite, n. and adj.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2013 (accessed 8 May 2013).

[10] Salmacis and Hermaphroditus appear in Book IV of *Metamorphosis*, lines 285-388 (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. E.J. Kenney, trans. A.D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.83-85).

the same pejorative connotations in modern usage. In general I use 'hermaphrodite' to mean exhibiting sexual markers, predominantly anatomical, considered to denote masculine and feminine within the same person or event, and 'androgynous' to mean an absence of sexual markers, or where gender is absent or unreadable.[11] In practice though these distinctions are often conflated or difficult to discern within the texts. These terms are not fully synonymous with non-binary gender in the Renaissance period but rather represent some manifestations of it and, as Garber points out, they are words that have 'culturally specific significance at certain historical moments'.[12]

Early modern anxiety about gender manifested itself in numerous ways. One of a multitude of inherited theories about anatomy in the period was the Galenic idea that physical sex could change by an imbalance of the humours, and that female genitals were an inverted form of male genitals and lacked the 'heat' to descend, meaning physical changes of sex in either direction were possible under the right circumstances.[13] There was also anxiety, seemingly increasing

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[11] The OED has 'hermaphrodite' and 'androgynous' as synonyms, defining 'androgynous' as 'uniting the (physical) characters of both sexes, at once male and female; hermaphrodite.' Again this definition is possibly at odds with modern-day usage, having not been updated since 1884. 'androgynous, adj.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2013 (accessed 8 May 2013).

[12] Garber, *Vested Interests*, p.11.

[13] See *Galen on the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*, ed. Margaret Tallmadge May (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968). For a discussion on the persistence of early modern beliefs about the structural homology between male and female genitals, including the supposed role of heat, even after science had provided evidence against it, see Greenblatt, 'Fiction and Friction', pp.79-83. Thomas Laqueur uses Galenic concepts to advance a universal 'one-sex model', asserting that early modern sex was 'still a sociological and not an ontological category' (*Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), p.8). Laqueur's ideas have been widely refuted, initially in Katherine Park and Robert A. Nye's 1991 review of the book, 'Destiny is Anatomy', *New Republic*, 204 (1991), 53-57 and also notably by Valerie Traub, in 'The Psychomorphology of the Clitoris', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 2 (1995), 81-113 (p.84). In her later essay 'The Rediscovery of the Clitoris' in David Hillman and Carla Mazzio, *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp.171-193, Katherine Park describes the 'impossibility of reducing contemporary ideas to a "one-sex body" […] or indeed to a single model of any kind' (p.174). H.L. Meakin describes Laqueur's theory as 'too neat' and stresses that the Galenic model was 'one of several competing theories

throughout the period, relating to the prevalence of cross-dressing. The famous pamphlet of 1620, *Hic Mulier* (or the mannish woman) was a product of this fear. Its wording demonstrates the violence that it was considered acceptable to direct towards gender-variant people in the early modern period. One passage says:

> Let …the powerful Statute of apparel but lift up his Battle-Axe, so as every one may bee knowne by the true badge of their bloud … and then these *Chymera's* of deformitie will bee sent backe to hell, and there burne to Cynders in the flames of their owne malice.[14]

The term 'Hic Mulier' uses the feminine noun for woman combined with the masculine form of the article 'this', thus denoting the type of 'chimera' or hybrid mentioned in the text. This was by no means the first occurrence of this type of writing. Expressions of concern about cross-dressing occur much earlier and modes of dress that crossed either gender or class lines were outlawed by the sumptuary laws (the specific example referred to in the text being the 'statute of apparel'). Neither is the use of the hybrid Latin term 'hic mulier' unique to this pamphlet. As well as Taylor's reference to the pamphlet in 1621 (above), Thomas Adams wrote in his 1615 sermon, *Mysticall Bedlam:*

> The *proud man?* or rather the *proud woman:* or rather *hac aquila,* both he and shee. For if they had no more euident distinction of sexe, then they haue of shape, they would be all man, or rather all woman: for the *Amazons* beare away the Bell: as one wittily, *Hic mulier* will shortly bee good latine, if this transmigration hold.[15]

This use of the term 'hic mulier' predates the pamphlet. It is unclear who the witty person is whom Adams claims coined the phrase, but its occurrences in Adams' sermon as well as in his supposed source and in the later pamphlet, suggest that the concept had widespread cultural resonance prior to being taken

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in the Renaissance'. (H.L. Meakin, *John Donne's Articulations of the Feminine* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), pp.10-11).

[14] Anon, *Hic Mulier: Or, The Man-Woman* (1620), sig.C1ᵛ.

[15] Adams, *Mystical Bedlam*, p.50.

up by Taylor (above) and Burton.[16] Adams further invokes Latin in 'hac aquila',

meaning eagle, which can take either the feminine or masculine form.[17] The use

of Latin conveys authority in legal and religious terms but also, as described in

my previous chapter, denotes the sphere of male learning. Here masculine Latin,

associated with the sphere of men, is used to prescribe women's actions,

specifically their dress. As Christine Varholy explains, in a society where women

had little money of their own and were therefore dependent on men for their

needs, including clothing, the prevalence of female cross-dressing suggests that

either women were breaking free from this dependency or that the men who

supplied their garments were colluding in their cross-dressing.[18] In *The Roaring*

Girl, Moll, who operates outside of social convention in many ways other than

her attire, has her own tailor to fit her for breeches.[19] It is difficult to imagine

which of these possibilities would have been more terrifying to a social

conservative like Adams. In any case, the response is to shut down the

possibilities of variant gender expression by positioning cross-dressed women as

monstrous, or in the case of Adams, as suffering a form of madness, and by

threatening them with the violence of burning for eternity.

Much of the anxiety in the *Hic Mulier* pamphlet concerns the fear of not

recognising someone as the 'right' sex when seeing them in the street. They may

not be 'knowne by the true badge of their bloude' and this was something the

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[16] Robert Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford, 1621), p.571.

[17] There are several words in Latin that do this, known as epicene nouns ('epicene, adj. and n.'
OED Online. Oxford University Press, March 2013 (accessed 15 May 2013). Adams'
commentary on *2 Peter,* wherein he talks about 'epicene and bastard phrases' is cited in the
OED entry.

[18] Christine M. Varholy, '"Rich Like a Lady": Cross-Class Dressing in the Brothels and Theaters
of Early Modern London', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 8 (2008), 4-34.

[19] Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton, 'The Roaring Girl', in *The Roaring Girl and Other*
City Comedies, ed. James Knowles (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), scene 4, 67-94.

sumptuary law sought to address both in terms of gender and class. It is also mentioned in *Haec-Vir* (or the womanish man), a proto-feminist riposte to *Hic Mulier* in which the mannish woman and womanish man mistake each other's gender in public at the opening of the text.[20] The worry extends to other genres of literature; Riche writes in the second dedicatory epistle to *His Farewell to Military Profession* about walking through the Strand towards Westminster and encountering someone whose apparel made it difficult to discern their gender. There is also concern in the story of Philotus and Emelia that Emelia has 'departed into the city in the habit of a man' and later that 'Phylotus would not carry his beloved through the streets in man's apparel'. Feminine clothes must be procured before Emelia (actually her brother Phylerno) can be seen to be taken from the street into the house of her husband to be.[21] The performativity of gendered dress in public makes the uncertainty seem more deliberate and the consequences of being deceived potentially more humiliating. In his sermons Adams shares this anxiety about gender ambiguity in the city streets, and therefore the public sphere, writing that:

> Such translations and borrowing of formes, that a silly countryman walking in the City, can scarce say, there goes a man, or there a woman. Woman, as shee was an humane creature, bore the image of God; as shee was woman, the image of man: now she beares the image of man indeed, but in a crosse and mad fashion.[22]

Some of these fears may stem from the rapid growth of the towns and cities, and especially of London, and the growing impossibility of knowing who was who. Perhaps such concerns were more potent for people like Adams or Shakespeare who, like many people in the period, had moved to London's bustling streets

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[20] Anon, *Haec-Vir; or The Womanish-Man* (1620).

[21] Barnabe Riche, *His Farewell to Military Profession*, ed. Donald Beecher (Ottawa: Dovehouse, 1992), pp.128-129; 298; 300.

[22] Adams, *Mystical Bedlam,* p.51.

from more rural locations.

It may be that people were afraid of (and potentially aroused by) the possibility of mistaking people's gender for the purposes of sexual encounters (and especially paid sex work) as well as for how they should treat and interact with them on a more ordinary social level. Certainly this seems to have been the case with dressing that crossed class boundaries, as outlined in Varholy's essay discussed above. For Michael Shapiro, however, the drive behind the type of cross-dressing described in *Hic Mulier* was not to be mistaken, or to 'pass' for the other gender, but rather to present a 'mingling of codes' representing the masculine and the feminine, and thereby challenge norms and be deliberately transgressive, as 'the hats and swords of male gallantry contrasted with the exposed breasts advertising female sexual identity'.[23] The voices of those claiming not to be able to tell the difference, then, between a man and a woman of the *Hic Mulier* type, may be expressing alarm either at the allure of these confusing and challenging individuals or at their possible freedoms. Their response was to accuse them of being not proper women, whilst still criticising them for the moral laxity and sexual temptation with which women were habitually charged.

Feminine attired Masculine

Cross-dressing had more leeway in literature than in everyday life. Whilst the cross-dressing undertaken by boy actors may have attracted its share of criticism and mistrust, within the worlds of the plays, as Shapiro points out, cross-dressing was not subject to aspersions about moral looseness or sexual

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[23] Shapiro, *Gender in Play,* pp.21-22.

immorality, not pursued through the courts, and its opponents are usually tyrannical parents or sexually predatory men.[24] In Shakespeare, cross-dressing women, played by boys or young men, often apply a disguise in order to escape from authoritative older men (such as a father or uncle) or from a threat to their virginity or chastity. The women who cross-dress along gender lines, like Rosalind/Ganymede in *As You Like It*, are generally more physically 'mannish', being often 'more than common tall' in comparison to their more traditionally feminine companions, like Celia/Aliena, who disguise themselves across class lines but remain within their own gender (*As You Like It* 1.3.105-116). The boy actors themselves were dressing in a manner that crossed boundaries of both class and gender.

The gender cross-dressing women generally display more outspoken, 'mannish' personalities, and drive the action more than their companions. The acceptance of this gender-transgressive behaviour within literature marks these plays as part of the festive tradition. They provide a release or escape from everyday life, where gender variance can have temporary expression, often for comic effect. As well as an escape from threatening or violent patriarchal male behaviour, cross-dressing is an escape from the gender essentialism that patriarchy enforces. Even where no actual cross-dressing happens the female characters who are more logical, and more outspoken (and therefore arguably more mannish) are the more engaging ones and have better, or at least more interesting, outcomes. Beatrice and Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing* are a good example of this type of pairing.[25]

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[24] Shapiro, *Gender in Play,* pp.23-24.
[25] There are exceptions to this. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Helena is taller and less traditionally feminine. However, she isn't articulate like Beatrice and doesn't have other

Spenser's Britomart provides a more direct link to the tradition of chaste and saintly warrior women that also lies behind the characters of Rosalind or Viola.[26] This cross-dressing trope can be seen in medieval and Renaissance works from England and across Europe, including medieval French tales such as *Roman de Silence, Estoire Merlin* and *Yde et Olive*. In *Yde et Olive,* Yde (who *is* escaping a threatening and potentially incestuous father) marries the princess and prays to the gods to give her male anatomy when she is in danger of being discovered by her wife's father.[27] More contemporary works of this type that had a direct influence on Shakespeare include the story of Apolonius and Silla in Riche's *Farewell to Military Profession* (1581) and Lodge's *Rosalynde: Euphues Golden Legacie* (1590). Spenser is engaging with an established literary tradition where gender variance is more significant than mere dressing-up, although he doesn't employ the miraculous change of anatomy as a device to resolve the plot.

Because Shakespeare's and Spenser's cross-dressing women share a common heritage, there is a great deal of overlap between the two. In both Shakespeare's plays and Spenser's poetry cross-dressed women are frequently known for, and wish to safeguard, their chastity and virtue. They place themselves between genders, assertively positioning themselves as unavailable for binary gendered courtship in a far more overt way than the passive, vulnerable chastity of their more feminine companions. However, for Britomart

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masculine characteristics. Instead she is non-human, like a spaniel, a bear, or a monster (2.1.203 and 2.2.100, 103).

[26] See Helen Hackett, 'Suffering Saints or Ladies Errant? Women Who Travel for Love in Renaissance Prose Fiction', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 41 (2011), 126-140.

[27] *Yde et Olive* was 'done into English' by John Bourchier in c.1525 (printed c.1534) and forms part of *Huon of Bordeux* (published by Thomas Purfoot). See also Willem P. Gerritsen and Anthony G. Van Melle, *A Dictionary of Medieval Heroes*, trans. Tanis Guest (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), p.150. Shakespeare seems to have been familiar with this work and takes from it the name Oberon, for the Fairy King in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The transformation is not tested, but is announced by an angel and Olive subsequently conceives a child.

cross-dressing is not something that is alien to her nature as it is for many cross-dressing heroines in Shakespeare and elsewhere. When she does so, the act is accompanied by a list of other strong martial women, appealing to the historical authenticity of her gender presentation (III.iii.53-54). The reader is told that Britomart learned to fight from childhood and loathes leading a ladylike life (III.ii.6). This gender liminality is more present in Spenser than in Shakespeare, and in ways that directly relate to the heroine's skills in using as well as avoiding violence. Britomart is skilled in combat, unlike Viola/Cesario, whose attempts at duelling in *Twelfth Night* are laughable in comparison to her brother, or Innogen/Fidele, who is sent away from the battlefield by Lucius in *Cymbeline*. Martial deeds were a 'proofe of manly might' and to begin with Britomart's strength and martial capability are explained away; she is fighting on behalf of truth and love and her arms and armour are symbolic of her pre-marital chastity (III.i.13&29). Her 'militant chastity' and 'wifely destiny' therefore mitigate against her masculine traits.[28] However, although Britomart will eventually return to the traditional feminine roles of wife and mother, she is still gender-variant in ways that are more significant than Shakespeare's Cesario or Ganymede.

Despite the background of female cross-dressing characters in folklore, literature, and religious traditions, Gabriele Bernhard Jackson claims that prior to the 1560s it was very rare to see female characters dressed in men's attire, let alone armour, on stage or in woodcuts, and that this was possibly taboo.[29] However, records for this period were reasonably scant as print was still

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[28] Hackett, 'Suffering Saints or Ladies Errant', p.127.

[29] Gabriele Bernhard Jackson, 'Topical Ideology: Witches, Amazons, and Shakespeare's Joan of Arc', in *Shakespeare and Gender: A History,* ed. Gabriele Bernhard Jackson and Ivo Kamps (London: Verso, 1995), pp.142-167 (p.142).

relatively new and commercial playhouses had not yet taken hold. Jackson goes

on to say that this started to change after the 1580s. If this is the case, it would

place Shakespeare's plays, along with those of Lyly and others, at the forefront

of the shift. Yet the cross-dressing woman is a device that Shakespeare employs

with great regularity from the start. There does seem to be a general progression

in the plays that employ the device though, perhaps charting the increasing

acceptability of portraying such things on stage. Michael Shapiro sees

Shakespeare as a having a pivotal role in the development of this device and sees

others as having taken it up in less original ways.[30] This in some ways challenges

Phyllis Rackin's 1987 charting of a perceived decline in the acceptability (if not

the prevalence) of cross-dressed heroines during the period from the 1580s to the

early seventeenth century, through a progression from Lyly's *Gallathea*, through

Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like it*, and *Twelfth Night*, to Jonson's

Epicoene.[31]

There is diversity within the depictions of cross-dressed women in

Shakespeare's plays. Or, as Shapiro frames it, evidence that he 'quarried' earlier

genres for source material.[32] The earliest instance within Shakespeare's work is

arguably that of Joan of Arc in *Henry VI part I*. Shakespeare's portrayal of this

armoured woman is a troubling, violent, even an extreme one in terms of

destabilising gender norms. However, it is, ostensibly, the portrayal of an

historical figure and therefore less directly attributable to the author.[33]

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[30] Shapiro, *Gender in Play,* p.200.

[31] Phyllis Rackin, 'Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Renaissance Stage', *PMLA*, 102 (1987), 29-41.

[32] Shapiro, *Gender in Play,* p.207.

[33] Middleton and Dekker's later fictionalised depiction of Mary Frith (aka Moll Cutpurse) in *The Roaring Girl* (c.1607) may be another example of additional licence being given to depictions of supposedly historical figures, even those with somewhat mythical status.

Furthermore, although she is subversive and troubling in many other ways, Joan of Arc does not attempt to pass for a man, apart from a brief episode in Act 3 when she disguises herself along both gender and class lines; she is merely a woman in men's clothes. She is however, referred to as an Amazon (1.3.83) and a witch (1.7.6), both of which descriptions of gender-variant women I shall discuss further later.

After Joan, portrayals pass through a more recognisable phase of festive cross-dressing; Women temporarily don male attire for a brief period away from everyday life, albeit often to escape real threats. Sebastian (*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 1594) and Ganymede (*As You Like It*, 1599) are this type of 'breeches' role. Portia (*Merchant of Venice*, 1596) briefly dresses as a male lawyer in order to use her logical skills to rescue Antonio. Through these plays there is a development of the wordy articulacy and intellect of the cross-dressing characters that emphasises their masculine, learned traits. Overlapping with this is a progression in the physicality and chivalry of the cross-dressed women, and thus their occasional attempts to associate themselves with violence. Portia has a name which is explicitly associated with Cato's daughter, who describes herself in the slightly later play *Julius Caesar* (1599) as someone who can overstep the bounds of gender, albeit only by reference to her male relatives. 'I grant I am a woman' she repeats, but 'Think you I am no stronger than my sex,/ Being so fathered and so husbanded?' (*Merchant* 1.1.166 and *Julius Caesar* 2.1.291, 293, 295-296).[34] In *Twelfth Night* (1599) Cesario makes an, admittedly laughable, attempt at duelling, and in *Cymbeline* (1609) the page Fidele, whilst not involved

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[34] For a more detailed exploration of Portia's unruliness and masculine position see Karen Newman, 'Portia's Ring: Unruly Women and Structures of Exchange in *The Merchant of Venice*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 38 (1987), 19-33.

in the fighting, is present on the battlefield and imprisoned with the other soldiers. This could be interpreted as Shakespeare writing characters who increasingly move towards the chivalric model. However, unlike Spenser's Britomart, or indeed Shakespeare's own Joan of Arc, the brief and botched encounters with the hypermasculine martial world serve to throw the underlying femininity of the female characters into sharp relief, perhaps reassuringly so for more conservative members of the audience. Whatever the motivation though, Shakespeare's cross-dressed women depict more complex genders than women in disguise, or even boys in double disguise.

Nor is Spenser's Britomart merely a woman in disguise. Books III and IV of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* are riddled with transformations and gradations of gender that are dependent on the relative power and roles being enacted. A fluid pool of possibilities exists from which gendered interactions momentarily arise and sink. Characters move between masculine, feminine, hermaphrodite and androgynous states, not only in terms of which gender(s) they are but also how gendered they are. The presence of Britomart disrupts both sexual and non-sexual gender norms. She is a woman disguised as a man and, unlike Viola, very adept at masculine fighting skills. In a text where swords are penetrating, phallic and masculine, and wounds are yielding, penetrated, and feminine, Britomart's chastity and deceptive armour fit neither the masculine or feminine role within the penetration paradigm.[35]

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[35] In her essay, 'Virtus, Vulnerability, and the Emblazoned Male Body in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*', in *Violent Masculinities*, ed. Jennifer Feather and Catherine E. Thomas (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp.85-108, Lisa S. Starks-Estes discusses wounding in the context of neo-stoicism and images of the wound in Christ's side. These images, she says, which often depicted the wound as a bodily orifice leading to a womb or anus, were 'associated with the plethora of images related to the belly, bowels, and digestion, Coriolanus' wounds may also suggest the anus, a secret place of male passivity, the hidden site where he as the closed male body can be penetrated' (p.92). I discuss Coriolanus in more detail in my next chapter. For further discussion on the intersecting imagery of the anus as Bakhtinian scatology

The donning or removal of Britomart's armoured disguise is one indicator of the gendered power-dynamic in a given episode. The link between putting on armour and assuming masculine strength can also be seen in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Two Noble Kinsmen.* Britomart has agency over her gender presentation and how she is treated, and judges when it is safe to remove her armour. She is unwilling to remove it in Castle Joyous in front of men and also in front of the predatory Malecasta. Here she is under threat as either gender. Her presence as a woman in the castle is a threat to her chastity owing to the lechery that occurs there, embodied by the six knights. As a young man she faces lecherous pursuit by Malecasta and ultimately the threat of discovery (III.i.31-61). However, she is later willing to remove her armour in the company of men whose gaze is distracted by the more conventionally feminine Hellenore (III.ix.20-25).

Spenser further complicates the issue of arming by having Britomart re-masculinise Scudamore by gathering up his armour and dressing him (III.xi.20).[36] This not only makes him more masculine, as Cleopatra makes Antony a 'man of steel' by arming him, it also (as with the *Antony and Cleopatra* arming scene) positions Britomart not as a woman, but as the lesser man in the role of page or squire. As Helen Hackett discusses, this page role was another established romance trope with roots in the narrative of the chaste and suffering female saint.[37] In this act of re-arming Scudamore, Britomart, like Viola in *Twelfth*

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and as a homoerotic site see Jonathan Goldberg's discussions of the interchangeability of womb, anus, and mouth in 'The Anus in Coriolanus', in *Shakespeare's Hand* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), pp.176-185.

[36] A further example of rearming following wounding comes when Satyrane's heart is penetrated (IV.iv.22). In the next stanza he gathers up his weapons (his masculinity) and remounts his horse; a masculine position.

[37] Hackett, 'Suffering Saints or Ladies Errant', pp.127-128.

Night who dresses as a page, is engaging in transgressive dressing with regards to class as well as gender, combining the two types of disguise described earlier in this chapter. Pages, and in the classical tradition male youths in general, are inherently feminised in comparison to their adult male counterparts. Perhaps cross-dressed Britomart resembles the comely page with a 'lovely face' in III.vii.46, or the wounded squire, with his flowing locks and budding red lips (III.iii.29).[38] In arming and disarming herself or others, Britomart functions as masculine, but as one who is feminised by youth and status and who can step out of that gender role when she chooses.

Britomart's armour positions her as gender-fluid in ways that go beyond the passive young man or the cross-dressed woman. As an outward sign of Britomart's chastity, armour represents more than a physical and metaphorical barrier to sexual advances; it serves to change Britomart's position on the gender continuum, placing her further away from the leaky, available femininity of Amoret and Florimell, and especially from hyper-sexual figures like Hellenore, and closer to masculinity or androgyny.[39] The periodic removal of her armour restates her feminine traits and creates a hermaphroditic image which ironically protects her from being portrayed as 'mannish'. This is important for her role as an allegorical persona for Queen Elizabeth, who similarly needed to display 'masculine virtues without being regarded as unnaturally mannish or Amazonian'.[40] As Louis Montrose states, Elizabeth, like Britomart, must be

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[38] Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, 4.4.33&4.4.14

[39] The description of the knights wanting Hellenore to 'do them delight' is a sexual innuendo (III.ix.25). Dowland uses the same euphemism 'do me due delight' in the madrigal 'Come Again Sweet Love' immediately prior to a passage of word painting that simulates orgasm. See John Dowland, *The Lute Songs of John Dowland*, transcribed by David Nadal (New York: Dover, 1997), pp.40-41

[40] Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen*, p164.

simultaneously an Amazon, or at least equal to an Amazon, and explicitly not one.[41] The masculinising effect of women's armour is reinforced by the portrayal of removal of armour as an emasculation for men too. In several incidents wounded (and therefore powerless) men have their armour removed by women. In IV.i.43 Paridell is wounded (penetrated) by Scudamore and then disarmed by the people rescuing him or ministering to his wounds. They 'doft his helmet, and vndid his mayle'. The removal of the helmet does not reveal the flowing hair of a beautiful woman, as it does when Britomart disarms, but neither does it reveal, at least at the point it happens, a paragon of masculinity.

In addition to disarming, wounding is also used to feminise Britomart, bringing her back towards her original place on the gender continuum in the same way as it takes male combatants away from theirs. The wounds incurred by Britomart, even when functioning as male, are linked to her virginity and gender. In III.i.65 virginity is mentioned in the same stanza as Britomart is wounded. This penetration is a threat both to her masculine persona and to her vowed chastity, and the avoidance of worse injury simultaneously focuses on her vulnerability and her prowess. Again in III.xii.32-33 Busirane pulls a 'murderous knife' to pierce Britomart but she dodges and is only slightly wounded, in her 'snowie chest'; the white and purple imagery suggests the red and white imagery of the subsequent description of Amoret. Britomart's wounds mark her as female, but their glancing nature means that she is not *as* female as Amoret.

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[41] Louis Adrian Montrose, '"Shaping Fantasies": Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture', in *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: University of California Press, 1988), pp.31-64, p.46. Perhaps the most striking example of an Amazon with whom it was acceptable to compare Elizabeth is Penthesilea, the Amazonian queen who assisted the Trojans (culturally identified with English royalty) in battle. See James Aske's *Elizabetha Triumphans* (1588) which uses the image of the Amazon queen and a summary of the story as a comparison for Elizabeth addressing the troops at Tilbury (pp.23-24).

Often Britomart's response to the threat of feminising wounding is to reach for her sword.[42] Just as it is for the men, the penetrating sword functions for Britomart as both a symbol of masculinity and a symbol of power.[43] She incorporates her phallic weaponry with her armour as part of the masculine costume that protects her feminine chastity: 'her welpointed weapons did about her dresse' (III.xi.52). When in possession of the enchanted spear, her masculine prowess is supreme and crushes masculinity in others: 'No power of man/ Could bide the force of that enchaunted speare,/ The which this famous Britomart did beare' (IV.iv.46). At other points her chastity, and implied asexuality, combine with her disguise to render her either a hermaphroditic combination of gender signifiers or an androgynous lack of them. These moments of revelation and confusion result in an ambiguous state whereby gender is held in abeyance and potential waits to be realised.

Masculine pronouns are used of Britomart during the period when Amoret doesn't yet know her companion's true gender: 'His will she feard' (IV.i.8).[44] This is an interesting comparison with other texts where a change of pronoun is consistently used for a cross-dressed character. In Sidney's *Arcadia* (1593), Pyrocles is referred to as 'she' while in female disguise.[45] Masculine pronouns are used of Britomart in other places, when talking of her outward

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[42] See III.i.62. Reaching for her sword is also Britomart's response when Malecasta discovers her lack of a 'member' (III.i.60). Member has meant penis since the 1300s, so the double entendre here with 'limb' and penis is inescapable. It also connects ideas of penetration (by dissection, or dismemberment) and emasculation (i.e. dismemberment meaning removal of the penis).

[43] And sexual inadequacy, because of youth or effeminacy, was a cause for humiliation. See *Henry VI Part I*, 4.7.35-38 concerning the pun on young Talbot's 'puny sword' when he is described by Joan as 'Thou maiden youth, be vanquished by a maid'.

[44] 'Will' could be a euphemism for penis, as well as for sexual drive, as has been suggested in some analyses of Shakespeare's Sonnets, although it does not here have the advantage of also being a pun on the author or character's name.

[45] Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, ed. Maurice Evans (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), commencing p.152.

appearance and other people's perceptions: 'Like knight aduenturous in outward view, with his faire paragon' (IV.i.33). Later, Scudamore is lead to believe that Amoret and Britomart are actually lovers:

> I saw him haue your Amoret at will,
> I saw him kisse, I saw him her embrace,
> I saw him sleepe with her all night his fill,
> All manie nights, and manie by in place. (IV.i.49)

This is deception or gossip but it does represent the role that Britomart is playing in Amoret's life at that time.

The Masculine Apparel'd Feminine

Cross-dressed men are far less common in the work of Spenser or Shakespeare. They occur in other texts of the period and are often considered beautiful when in feminine guise, or even don their disguise to gain access to the object of their affections.[46] Spenser's most notable instance of male to female cross-dressing, as previously discussed, is one of humiliation, when Artegall is imprisoned and forced into women's clothing by the Amazon Radigund. There are surprisingly only two explicit examples in Shakespeare. One is Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and the other is Bartholomew the page posing as Sly's wife in the opening of *Taming of the Shrew*. The page dressing as a woman is the more feasible episode (the reverse of the woman dressing as a page), but both are used for farcical, visual humour. Other references in Shakespeare to men dressed as women are less direct: Rosalind's male alter-ego Ganymede play-acts as her feminine self; Cleopatra verbally reminisces about having dressed a

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[46] See Sidney's Pyrocles again, or Rosicleer in *The Mirrour of Knighthood* (Diego Ortufiez de Calahorra, translated into English c.1578). In Riche's story of Phylotus and Emelia discussed above (*Farewell to Military Profession,* p.291) brother and sister both pursue love interests whilst in disguise as the other's gender.

drunken Antony in her 'tires and mantles' while she wore his sword; and Ariel, who is not human and has somewhat ambiguous gender, appears as a nymph.[47]

As discussed, Artegall has feminine attire forced on him as a form of violence against him, to humiliate and weaken him. This is possible because he has subjected himself to the rule of an Amazon, the ultimate mannish woman, and a concept I will discuss further later. More usually Radigund imposes this punishment on men she has already defeated in battle. Thus this mode of forced transvestitism is violence piled upon violence, and positions Artegall as un-gendered in a negative way. Even his future wife Britomart cannot bear to look at him while he is in women's 'weeds'. This contrasts both with Britomart's long-term cross-dressing and with Viola/Cesario, who is allowed to participate in the final scene of *Twelfth Night* still dressed as a boy. For Spenser, male to female cross-dressing is not suitable to be looked upon and is not portrayed as having positive connotations as are found with the chastity and bravery of female to male cross-dressing. Spenser depicts no erotic or admiring gaze directed at a cross-dressed man. This is in direct contrast to Olivia falling for Cesario or characters being transfixed by the un-helmeted Britomart. Unlike Sidney, or Mary Wroth, whose Leonius dresses as a woman to woo Veralinda, both Spenser and Shakespeare seem to see a man in women's clothes as laughable and harmless.[48] A woman dressed as a man is far more likely to be seen as subversive, dangerous, or attractive.

With Falstaff and Bartholomew the cross-dressing is for comic effect as far as the audience is concerned and is a disguise as far as the characters are

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[47] *As You Like it* (3.2.381-382, 4.1.34-171); *Antony and Cleopatra* (2.5.21-23); *The Tempest* (1.2.304, 320).
[48] Mary Wroth, *The Countesse of Mountgomeries Urania*, 1621, pp.369-372; 387-389.

concerned. The intent is to deceive and, in the case of Falstaff, to evade Mistress Ford's husband. However, unlike the disguises of characters like Ganymede or Cesario, the joke is on the character, rather than the situation. Ganymede and Cesario have humorous encounters because other characters assume them to be male when they are not: Ganymede attempting to cure Orlando of his love for his alter-ego Rosalind, or Olivia falling in love with Viola, believing her to be the young man Cesario. Falstaff on the other hand is funny and farcical merely because the audience sees him as an adult man (probably even bearded) wearing a dress.

Falstaff's cross-dressing and other escapades result in violent pinching at the centre of a fake ritual with local children dressed as fairies surrounding him. In contrast, the servant Bartholomew in *Shrew* is seen as sexually available as a result of being read as female. He is therefore vulnerable to sexual violence when Sly pushily suggests sending the servants away so that Bartholomew can undress for bed (Induction 2, line 112-113). This undressing would possibly result in a revelation of anatomy that might make sex less likely, but Sly's inebriated state, combined with his new status as one of the adult male ruling class, mean that the youthful and subservient Bartholomew is far from safe. Falstaff remains sexually unavailable because of his age, as, arguably, does Artegall because of his class. It is the servant, both younger and lower class, for whom cross-dressing places him in the intermediate gender associated with classical boys or with the boy actors, who antitheatricals assumed were morally lax and incited people to sodomy.[49]

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[49] Examples include Valerie Traub, *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (London: Routledge, 1992) pp.110; 119; Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing* (1994)*, p.22; or Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) p.148. Phillip Stubbes says following a visit to the playhouse everyone goes home to 'play sodomites or worse' (*The*

So for men, dressing as a woman can bring a sexless or genderless invulnerability as long as it is accompanied by the correct combination of age and class. Otherwise it brings the sexual vulnerability of the classical boy or the immoral performer. For women, dressing as a man brings a genderless protection and impenetrable intersex state, provided that is not countered by a corresponding lowering of class, as is the case with Viola/Cesario, who becomes the sexual target of Olivia and Orsino. Whilst it is necessary to acknowledge, as David Cressy's 1996 article does, that cross-dressing is not *always* about 'androgyny, the breakdown of gender bonds, or transgressive sexuality', these anxieties were sufficiently pervasive in the culture of the sixteenth, and perhaps especially the early seventeenth centuries that it is reasonable to assume that they inform literary depictions of cross-dressing even when the overt subject matter is something else.[50]

Bare-Chinned Eunuchs and Bearded Amazons

A key physical marker of adult masculinity in the early modern period was the beard. Eleanor Rycroft suggests the time of indeterminacy associated with the boy in the process of growing a beard was a source of cultural anxiety.[51] The presence or absence of beards is therefore an important element in discussing intersex, cross-dressed, or otherwise gender-variant individuals and

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Anatomie of Abuses, (1583), sig.L8ᵛ). It is possible that Shakespeare is being deliberately provocative in this scene and playing on these antitheatrical anxieties.

[50] David Cressy, 'Gender Trouble and Cross-Dressing in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 35 (1996), 438-465, p.441.

[51] Eleanor Rycroft, 'Facial Hair and the Performance of Adult Masculinity on the Early Modern English Stage', in *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583-1603*, ed. Helen Ostovich et al. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.217-228, p.223. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the supposed baldness, and by association 'barefaced' state or beardlessness of Frenchmen is linked to venereal disease (2.1.79-80), see *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Jay Greenblatt et al. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), p.821, note 3.

the societal attitudes they engendered. Will Fisher outlines how the growth of facial hair was considered to be definitively divided along gender lines.[52] You were a man and could grow a beard, or you were a woman and could not. He cites the poet Hugh Crompton, who states in *The Glory of Women* that 'in each man's face appears / A beard extending upward to his ears ... But every female beardless doth remaine, both old and young her face is still the same'.[53] Fisher demonstrates that this distinction was seen as decreed by God, and quotes Thomas Hall's treatise *The Loathsomeness of Long Hair*, which says 'a decent growth of the beard is a signe of manhood . . . given by God to distinguish the Male from the Female sex'.[54] The subject of beards also interacts with the gender anxiety about being able to recognise men and women on sight in the street. As seen in the previous chapter, the forcible removal of a beard could be used to humiliate an enemy, returning him to a younger or less masculine state.

Persistently negative attitudes to beardlessess can be seen in John Bulwer's *Anthropometamorphosis,* a work of seventeenth-century comparative anthropology detailing (and largely criticising) body modification throughout the world. According to Bulwer, men who shaved were aiming at 'nothing less than to become lesse man'.[55] The loss or absence of a beard had connotations for perceived gender and could render an individual less than a man, or even make him a woman. Cleopatra uses the slur 'scarce-bearded' against Caesar in *Antony and Cleopatra* (1.1.22). He is seen as a youth, and therefore insufficiently

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[52] Will Fisher, 'The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 54 (2001), 155-187 (p.166).

[53] Hugh Crompton, *The Glory of Women* (1652), p.14. There is also an implication here that there is no functional difference between a woman and a child (see previous chapter), whereas an adult man is different, and visibly identifiable as such.

[54] Thomas Hall, *The Loathsomeness of Longe Haire* (1653), p.48.

[55] John Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis* (1654), p.200. See also Fisher, 'Renaissance Beard', p.168.

masculine, because of his lack of beard growth. There are implications for his sexual potency and also his reputation as a warrior. As Fisher points out, being seen to be a man in early modern society wasn't just about physical attributes, be they beard growth or genital morphology, it was also about fulfilling the roles of father and soldier, and therefore required both sexual and martial capabilities.[56] Beard growth, believed to be caused by the testes beginning to make sperm at puberty, was key to both these things.[57] In the case of Coriolanus, his 'Amazonian chin' denotes warrior skills (likened to the warlike Amazons) but simultaneously foregrounds his lack of adult masculinity, as he is being compared to women and attention is being drawn to the absence of facial hair associated with adult manhood. In comparison to the 'bristles' of his opponents' facial hair, Coriolanus occupies a feminised gender status, owing to his young age at the time Cominius is describing (Coriolanus' battle debut at age 16). At such an early life-stage Coriolanus might well have been expected to 'act the woman' (2.2.83-92). Fisher describes how beards were often described with military imagery.[58] John Bulwer labels the beard an 'ensigne of manhood'.[59] It is not trivial in an age where physical sexual transformations were seen as a real possibility, that the presence or absence of something as relatively easily controlled (at least in one direction) as a beard was seen as something that could render an individual masculine or feminine.

Eunuchs like Mardian in *Antony and Cleopatra* were, in the same way as boys, seen as male but not 'men' in early modern society, and likewise formed an

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[56] Fisher, 'Renaissance Beard', p.172.
[57] See Thomas Hill, *The Contemplation of Mankinde, Contayning a Singuler Discourse of Physiognomie* (1571), pp.145-146.
[58] Fisher, 'Renaissance Beard', p.172.
[59] Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis,* p.193.

intersex gender group. In his 1556 physiognomy book, Bartholomew Cocles

maintains that after castration, a 'gelding' can no longer be considered a man:

'gealded parsones,' he writes, 'after they haue loste bothe theyr testycles, be very

much changed from the nature of menne into the nature of women'.[60] This is

borne out when Cleopatra says that she may as well play billiards with a eunuch

as with another woman (2.5.5-6). Mardian's lack of sexual capacity is also

alluded to in lines like 'good will is showed, though't come too short' (2.5.8).[61]

Earlier, after Cleopatra says she can 'take no pleasure/ In aught an eunuch has'

(1.5.9-10), it is established explicitly that Mardian is not able to display his

affections 'in deed' (1.5.15).[62] There was a belief that a eunuch's castration

resulted in a lack of beard. John Bulwer, for instance, claims that eunuchs 'are

smooth and produce not a Beard, the signe of virility ... [and are] therein not

men' and Cocles claims that the beards of eunuchs are 'yll fashioned'.[63] In fact if

a man is castrated after the onset of puberty, he will still grow facial hair. Fisher

identifies this as yet another instance in which 'physiological "facts" were

transformed – or at least idealized – in the service of producing a "coherent"

model of masculinity', that is to say a binary view of gender in which men were

bearded, virile, fertile, and martially skilled.[64]

　　　The lack of beard associated with the eunuch may be the reason why

Viola initially states that she is going to disguise herself as a eunuch, although

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[60] Bartolommeo Cocles, *A Brief and Most Pleasaunt Epitomye of the Whole Art of Phisiognomie* (1556), sig.D3^r.

[61] Again, this use of 'will' is possibly also a euphemism for penis as well as referring to sexual drive.

[62] The image of the eunuch's sexual drive is actually more complex. Under some circumstances they were considered lascivious. Cocles describes geldings as 'wanton' (sig.C1^r) and even Mardian declares himself to have 'fierce affections, and think/ What Venus did with Mars' (1.5.17-18).

[63] Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis*, p.98. Cocles, *Art of Phisiognomie,* sig.D3^r.

[64] Fisher, 'Renaissance Beard', p.178.

this is not mentioned subsequently (1.2.52). Winfried Schleiner discusses the likelihood that elsewhere in early modern literature cross-dressed men are frequently seen as beautiful women because there is an assumption that such a hero will be young and may not yet have a beard.[65] There is evidence that boys in companies of child players used prosthetic beards to play adult men, a form of 'age drag', and even the supposedly adult Bottom discusses which type of false beard he is going to wear to be Pyramus (2.1.73-78).[66] However, when boys played women pretending to be men, they did not use these props. The wearing of false beards would render these characters comic or grotesque and move them into the realm of play acting or deceit. This is part of the reason for female cross-dressed characters to assume the roles of adolescent men who would not have been expected to have beards, even where that also involves a loss of social status because the page or servant is of a lower class. This in turn makes them less troubling to the sensibilities of male theatre-goers and readers. A woman dressed as a young person lacking in social power causes much less anxiety than a counterfeit man.

Spenser's men are also emasculated by metaphorical transformation into animals. Scudamore is described as being wounded, like a stag struck (penetrated) with a dart (IV.i.49). Writing about the Bower of Bliss in Book II of *The Faerie Queene*, Patricia Parker identifies the story of Actaeon, transformed into a stag and torn apart by his hounds for viewing Diana bathing, as relating to 'castration anxiety'.[67] In an episode that echoes the Actaeon story, the only

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[65] Winfried Schleiner, 'Male Cross-Dressing and Tranvestism in Renaissance Romances', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 19 (1988), 605-619, p.608.

[66] See Fisher, 'Renaissance Beard', pp.163-164.

[67] Patricia Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (London: Methuen, 1987), p.62. See also Nancy J. Vickers, 'Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme', *Critical Enquiry*, 8 (1981), 265-279 for an important, influential discussion of these anxieties.

reason why Faunus (again a stag-like figure) in *The Mutabilitie Cantos* escapes gelding is through concern for his procreative duties to his race (VII.vi.50). Notably, they do pull his beard as part of their torture of him. Outright castration, however, would be at odds with the comic nature of the episode (VII.vi. 49). In the case of Marinell in Book IV, the expression of feminine pity and the failure to rescue Florimell suggest failed masculinity (IV.xii.12). Marinell's gender is so unstable that he is described not only as an animal but as a female animal. During his impotence over Florimell's captivity, he is described not as a stag, but a female deer fretting over its trapped fawn (IV.xii.17). He worries about disobeying his mother, which is infantilising as well as feminising, thereby rendering him emasculated both in terms of age and gender (IV.xii.18). He eventually falls prey to the feminine traits of pining, mourning, languishing and weeping, before his mother completes the rescue herself (IV.xii.19).

The description of effeminised or de-gendered men as animals is however less pejorative than the positioning of 'mannish' women as monsters. Burton describes feminine men as animals, but not as monsters (although he has no issue with describing men as monsters for other reasons elsewhere in the text), saying: 'men weare harlots colours and doe not walke, but iet and daunce, hic mulier, hac vir, more like Players, Butterflies, Baboones, Apes, Antickes then men'.[68] It is significant that these animal descriptions are worded as similes. These men are *like* deer, they are *like* butterflies, or apes, whereas the women are actually, in many cases, held to be monstrous or monsters. Where Spenser describes gender-variant women as animals rather than monsters it is in passages which are sympathetic, or at least show some admiration. Britomart and Radigund are

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[68] Burton, *Melancholy* (1621), p.571.

described as like a 'tygre and a Lionesse' and Adicia, who is deemed unwomanly because of her violence, is physically transformed into a tiger in an episode that Cora Fox describes as being treated with a 'confusion of gendered sympathy' (V.vii.30 and V.viii.49).[69]

Fox sees this sympathy as evidence that Adicia's Amazonian or unwomanly tendencies are being tempered by parallels with Hecuba's maternal revenge instinct (V.viii.46-47). However, the choice of the list of other violent mothers in stanza 47 does not seem to support this idea despite Fox's attempt to incorporate Ino, Agave, and Medea into an overarching comparison to Hecuba. The inclusion of infanticidal mothers does not present motherhood as a mitigating factor for violence, rather the opposite. It is perhaps more enlightening to look for maternal parallels with Adicia amongst other literary uses of the label 'tiger' for vengeful, grieving, or unwomanly mothers. Shakespeare uses the word of both Margaret and Tamora (*3 Henry VI*, 1.4.155-156, 3.2.39 and *Titus*, 5.3.194). Both women are portrayed as monstrous and witchlike, but there is still acknowledgement of the magnitude of their loss and strength of their maternal emotions.[70] In any case, Spenser's account of the tiger Adicia is sympathetic regardless of whether she is being cast in a pseudo-mother role. The use of the word 'bold' is generally positive and the pejorative, grotesque language used

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[69] Fox, 'Spenser's Grieving Adicia', pp.394-395.

[70] The effect of tiger motherhood on (male) offspring is addressed in *Titus* when Lavinia refers to Tamora's children as 'the tiger's young ones', saying 'the milk thou suckst from her did turn to marble' (Marble is also a repeated metaphor for unwomanliness or rejection of femininity) (*Titus* 2.1.142-144). It is also alluded to in *Coriolanus*, when Menenius describes Coriolanus as having 'no more mercy in him than there is milk in a male tiger' (5.4.22). The presence of this nursing based simile in a discussion about his relationship with Volumnia makes her by association a tiger mother. However, her success in appealing to Coriolanus suggests that she, unlike Tamora, has taught her son something better than tyranny by her suckling. These references to tiger motherhood likely all have their cultural roots in Dido accusing Aeneas of having been suckled by tigers (specifically Hyracanian tigers, which Shakespeare mentions repeatedly) and therefore being heartless (Virgil, *The Aeneid*, ed. Jasper Griffin, trans. C. Day Lewis (2008: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), Book IV, p.104).

about figures like Duessa is notably absent, suggesting a more sympathetic portrayal. The reader is given assurance that Adicia cannot become sufficiently mannish as to defile anyone with her 'lewd parts' (V.ix.2). Likewise, Britomart and Radigund, despite their supposedly animalistic fighting, have 'dainty' women's parts (V.vii.29). Radigund is to be reviled, but the necessity of presenting her as equal to Britomart results in a tigress and lioness comparison which, especially when compared with the depiction of Adicia, means these particular warrior women are to some extent distanced from the vision, found in Montaigne and elsewhere, of the man-crippling rapist Amazon.[71]

Where the monstrousness of mannish women is foregrounded, it is often closely connected to binary assumptions about women's facial hair. Bulwer states that 'Woman by Nature is smooth and delicate; and if she have many haires she is a monster, as Epictetus saith, and the Proverbe abominates her, Mulier barbata lapidibus eminus salutanda'.[72] The proverb broadly translates as 'A bearded woman must be greeted by throwing stones at her from a distance'. Fisher calls this is an act of violence, and I would add that an execution by stoning also constitutes a ritual being used to enforce gender norms. The use of stones may also be emblematic of testes.[73] The positioning of these women as 'monstrous', like the bearded witches in *Macbeth*, rather than masculine, is a refusal to afford them power. A man's gender can be taken away by making him feminine. A feminised, young, or castrated male is already less powerful. In contrast, a woman who has already overstepped gender boundaries is a threat and can be neutralised by making her a monster.

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[71] Montaigne, *Essayes*, p.616.
[72] Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis,* p.215.
[73] Fisher, 'Renaissance Beard', p.169.

Thomas Adams says Amazons 'bear away the bell', that is to say, they take first prize in gender confusion. The frequency with which Amazons appear in early modern literature supports this view of their significance. The variety of their treatment shows that there are more ways of neutralising their anxiety-inducing power than by casting them as monstrous.[74] Amazons could be portrayed in a positive light, as mythical beings who displayed courage and strength. It was acceptable for Amazonian characters to be claimed as the mothers or other ancestors of literary and real-life heroes and heroines, but not to be lauded in the present in their own right.[75] In *The Faerie Queene*, it was important for the allegorical characters representing Elizabeth I (Belphoebe for example) to be distanced and distinct from actual Amazons. The unmarried, childless status of the queen, fulfilling a male role that included acts of state and war, meant too close an association would risk being accused of calling the monarch a monster. The Amazon was an image of womanhood described by Jackson as 'inherently double'.[76]

For Jackson, 'Elizabethan stage Amazons are all either neutral or positive'.[77] This is certainly true of Hippolyta and Emilia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Two Noble Kinsmen*, who contrast starkly with Spenser's Radigund. Amazons, says Jackson, were frequently included in lists of the nine female worthies and were 'venerated both individually and as a race' but they were acknowledged as 'cruel tormentors of men'.[78] Radigund is certainly an

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[74] Adams, *Mystical Bedlam,* p.50.

[75] For this and other uses of Amazons, as exotic variety for combat or as a vehicle for displaying masculinity, in Spanish and Portuguese chivalric romances, see Helen Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.68-70.

[76] Jackson, 'Topical Ideology', p.151.

[77] Jackson, 'Topical Ideology', p.151.

[78] Jackson, 'Topical Ideology', p.151.

example of this type of cruelty. She imprisons men and ceremonially castrates them by removing their weapons, the same kind of weapons that Britomart uses for constructing her masculinity. As discussed in the previous chapter, these men are figuratively castrated and forcibly cross-dressed, kept in an ambiguous and intermediate state and refused adult masculine status. This rejection, or destruction, is connected to the Amazons supposedly killing or selling their male children, or, as Montaigne suggests, keeping men debilitated and make 'onely that vse of them, that we in our World make of our Women'.[79] Whether this means that men are used to obtain children or merely to perform domestic chores is ambiguous, although elsewhere he says of the all-but-synonymous 'Scythian women' that they make 'free and private use' of their blinded male prisoners, which implies sexual rather than domestic use.[80] Amazons are positioned as less female because of gender essentialist ideas about domesticity, maternity, and nurturing. In turn their prisoners are relegated, as Montaigne sees it, to being feminised, precisely because they are not female. Simon Shepherd describes Radigund and Britomart as questioning 'the simple antithetical labels of male and female' and as 'occupying the "middle ground" between genders'.[81] Radigund's victims have genders imposed on them that are equally ambiguous.

Another Spenserian female character who imprisons men is Poeana, the giantess. She takes sadistic pleasure, or 'glee', in the imprisonment of others and uses it for sexual purposes to secure a lover, displaying autonomy and demonstrative sexuality (IV.viii.51-52). Is this a fantasy of power for women readers? Or are male readers being invited to share in the voyeuristic thrill of

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[79] Montaigne, *Essayes*, p.616.
[80] Montaigne, *Essayes*, p.520.
[81] Simon Shepherd, *Amazons and Warrior Women: Varieties of Feminism in Seventeenth-Century Drama* (Brighton: Harvester, 1981), pp.8-9.

observing such a monstrously transgressive woman? The womb-like quality of the interior prison-space, and its emasculating capability, is accentuated by the presence of a female captor, even one acting mannishly. Poeana and Radigund are female characters licensed by Spenser to act outside gendered societal norms, but only in ways that ensure their threat can be neutralised by positioning them as monstrous. The giants and Amazons can act mannishly because they are monsters, but they are monstrous because they are mannish. This technique is seen throughout early modern literature. Women are described as monsters, Amazons, witches, or otherwise non-human, as a way of rendering their gender variance harmless. Coriolanus' 'Amazonian chin' perhaps doesn't relate to a totally hairless chin of a boy warrior then, but to the ambiguity of slight, soft hair growth that may belong to an adolescent or to a gender-transgressive monstrous woman like Macbeth's witches. Hidden beneath the comment on Coriolanus' facial hair is a comment that further links Amazons to witches.

Gender-variant literary women can also be neutralised by marriage. Hippolyta and her sister Emelia are portrayed favourably because they are (or will be) married. Before her marriage Emelia is troubling not just because she is an Amazon but because of her rejection of men and her past same-sex relationship. The ritual of marriage, and for Theseus and Hippolyta, the violence that accompanies it, renders the bride safe.[82] The portrayal of both women is very sympathetic. In *The Faerie Queene*, any residual Amazonian tendencies in the warrior Britomart are similarly neutralised. Eventually, although the point is never reached within the scope of the poem, Britomart will succumb to her

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[82] 'Hippolyta, I wooed thee with my sword,/ And won thy love doing thee injuries', *Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1.1.16-17)

'womb's burden' and, in Book V she is already returning to her sense of gender essentialism, rejecting the 'liberty of women' and restoring herself to what she (and arguably Spenser) sees as the natural state for women: 'men's subjection' (V.vii.42).

Yet the rising tide of metamorphic gender and clothing during the Renaissance could not be stemmed by something as nebulous and intangible as plays and poetry. In fact, literature provided *more* freedom for the expression of gender indeterminacy than did the everyday world, despite the apparent imperative of narrative norms to close down such freedoms. As Jackson says 'to neutralize onstage is not necessarily to neutralize in reality. In fact, it is possible that maintaining the illusion that an ideological tendency can be reliably neutralized may help to enable toleration of threatening ideas'.[83] The festive spaces of Shakespeare's Illyrian shore or Athenian forest function not only a temporary release from the reality of gender-essentialist society, but a reassuring idyll for conservative thinkers who need to believe such matters are trifling, playful, and can be resolved into a neat happy ending.

Hermaphrodites and Androgynes

Spenser and Shakespeare share a concern with cross-dressing albeit from slightly different perspectives. They are also both acutely aware of their society's preoccupation with the transgression of gender boundaries by eunuchs, Amazons, witches and other so called monstrosities. However, despite both writers being influenced by Ovid and his metamorphic tales, it is Spenser who is most concerned with the classically hermaphroditic and androgynous.

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[83] Jackson, 'Topical Ideology', p.160.

In the 1590 version of *The Faerie Queene* Amoret and Scudamore's embrace is described as like 'that faire hermaphrodite,/ Which that rich Romane of white marble wrought' (III.xii.46*). There was widespread Renaissance imagery of the hermaphrodite as a conjoined pair, one male, one female, described by Roche as a biblical metaphor, related to the concept of the married couple becoming 'one flesh'.[84] There is also a classical allusion, suggestive of the resolution of loss, in Plato's *Symposium*. Violently separated by the gods, previously hermaphroditic men and women search for their other half (although Plato portrays this as less desirable than the divided male finding his male mate).[85] The episode in *Faerie Queene* is not a queer representation of the hermaphrodite, but rather one that reinforces the validity of heteronormative pairings. Even within that paradigm, Spenser distances his characters from any suggestion of real hermaphroditism by the use of a simile and by the comparison not to an actual hermaphrodite but to a statue of one.[86]

Subtle hermaphroditic imagery is used of Britomart, juxtaposing her masculine 'heroike magnanimity' with her feminine 'bounteous brest'

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[84] Thomas P. Roche, *The Kindly Flame: A Study of the Third and Fourth Books of Spenser's Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p.135. See also James M. Saslow, *Ganymede in the Renaissance: Homosexuality in Art and Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), (pp.75-96) for examples of hermaphrodites depicted as conjoined male and female twins.

[85] Plato, *The Symposium*, trans. Christopher Gill (London: Penguin, 1999), pp.22-25

[86] Hamilton's edition of *Faerie Queene* states 'no such statue has been identified' (p.406). Classical statues of hermaphroditic figures, commonly sleeping or depicted with satyrs, were widespread, are mentioned by Pliny, and were well known in the early modern period. Various of these statues remain in existence today and examples of sleeping Hermaphroditus can be seen in the Louvre and the Uffizi, as well as elsewhere. See 'Sleeping Hermaphroditos, Louvre Museum, Paris' <http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/sleeping-hermaphroditos> [accessed 10 April 2015] and Gloria Fossi, *The Uffizi: The Official Guide, All of the Works* (Florence, Italy: Giunti, 1999), p.91. Martin Robertson considers the sleeping hermaphrodite to be 'a considered study of the dual nature' and 'a disturbing work' displaying 'exaggerated pliancy'. (Martin Robertson, *A Shorter History of Greek Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 202-203).

(III.xi.19).[87] Britomart's virginity/chastity and 'lack' of a sword (or 'member') make her also androgynous for large parts of the text, as well as varying degrees of feminine or masculine relative to the people she finds herself with. On seeing Scudamore and Amoret's embrace, Britomart 'to herself oft wisht like happinesse, / In vaine she wisht, that fate n'ould let her yet possesse' (III.xii.46*). Does she want her own (male) lover or does she want to be a man so she can be in a hermaphroditic embrace with Amoret? The answer is left unclear. She is essentially being cuckolded as she hands over the woman she has rescued. By the 1596 version this potential hermaphroditism between Britomart and Amoret is enacted. After Britomart reveals her true gender, they form a hermaphroditic pairing within their shared femaleness and reproductive potential (they are both specifically pre-marital emblems of chastity). Britomart's sword is juxtaposed with Amoret's wounds, and Britomart's chastity and containment are juxtaposed with Amoret's leaky bleeding.[88]

Matters of Life and Death

As well as being poised between masculine and feminine, male and female, hermaphrodites and androgynes are also positioned by early modern literature as existing between life and death. In this way hermaphroditism and androgyny are similar to other liminal states explored in this thesis. *Hic Mulier* describes such individuals as a 'living grave', referring throughout to their deformity, disease, and monstrosity.[89] John Taylor connects cross-dressers with

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[87] It is possible the emphasis on the breast distances Britomart from the image of the Amazon with a breast removed.

[88] As discussed above, where Britomart does bleed elsewhere in the text, her wounds are more glancing, or more contained, than those of Amoret.

[89] Anon, *Hic Mulier*, sig.B1ᵛ. Deformity and madness as liminal states are discussed in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

the newly deceased by suggesting they might wear wigs made from the hair of a 'diseased whore' or someone who 'recently at the gallowes made her will'.[90] Mutabilitie, the Titaness who embodies ambiguity and flux, and who wants to usurp both masculine Jove and feminine Cynthia, has 'death for life exchanged foolishlie', suggesting either that she has tampered with the boundary between life and death and allowed death to enter the world, or that she herself has crossed the threshold. Yet she still appears before Jove, as Richard Berleth describes her 'beautiful, impassioned, and bursting with energy', suggesting that this death is not of the usual sort or has not been satisfactorily completed (7.6.6).[91]

Death-in-life is explicitly linked to gender in Artegall's impotence and androgynised inability to fight on discovering Britomart's feminine identity: 'Die or liue for nought he would vpstand' (4.6.23). Similar revenant characters, trapped between life and death, are likened to ghosts. Timias' ungendered state in exile (when he has broken his phallic weapons) is described as being 'like ghost late risen from his graue' (IV.viii.12).[92] When Marinell hovers between life and death, pining for Florimell, and emasculated by his inability to rescue her, he is 'like a ruefull ghost' (IV.xii.20).

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[90] Taylor, *Whip of Pride*, sig.C6ʳ.

[91] Richard J. Berleth, 'Fraile Woman, Foolish Gerle: Misogyny in Spenser's "Mutabilitie Cantos"', *Modern Philology*, 93 (1995), 37-53, p.39.

[92] In the description of Timias' descent into wildness, it is not mentioned whether he leaves his beard (assuming he could grow one) unshaved. It is the locks on his head that grow sufficiently to hide his face (IV.vii.40). Long hair on a man was also widely criticised as effeminate. If we consider Timias to be an allegory for Raleigh, as Spenser says we should, then his emasculated deathly state has been caused at the hands of the female power of Elizabeth and her withdrawal of favour. This same sense of liminality is described in Raleigh's own poem about the situation, 'The Ocean to Cynthia' (1592?), which is written from the space between life and death: 'Do then by diing, what life cannot do' (line 496). The poem is full of symbolism of the shoreline, the space between sea and land, as well as the metaphor of death as night. The line 'deaths longe night drawes onn' (line 509) places the poet in a liminal life/death twilight state. *The Poems of Sir Walter Ralegh*, ed. Michael Rudick (Temple: Arizona State University, 1999), p.65.

The most striking depiction of this liminality comes in the Garden of Adonis, at the centre of *The Faerie Queene*, poised between masculine and feminine and between life and death as the place of ultimate fertility and potential. Adonis, who in classical myth was killed and transformed into a flower, is here reanimated and in his reanimated state is used as a source of life. Fahey goes so far as to claim that he has been 'embalmed by Venus' to keep him in this state indefinitely 'for her pleasure'.[93] Certainly Adonis's life/death liminality is being held in stasis, a perpetual suspended animation that, paradoxically, is a source of great life and creation in the form of hermaphroditic reproduction. Eggert sees Adonis and Venus' sexual act as 'more like her labial/clitoral rubbing of him than like his penile invasion of her'.[94] I am not sure that I recognise the motif of 'turning back' that she extrapolates from this, but rather the importance of holding things at a threshold, maintaining liminal space, of sex, sexuality, gender, and life itself, as a way of harnessing potential and power.

Melissa Sanchez convincingly argues for the merging of the Medway and the Thames as a replacement for the hermaphroditic embrace at the end of Book III of the 1590 version.[95] Certainly the references to the nourishing of mankind, combined with mention of tides (controlled by the moon) suggest femaleness; imagery of powerful surges suggests the male (IV.xi.52). The fertility and femininity of the sea is emphasised by its role in the birth of Venus, who is described in hermaphroditic terms herself, both elsewhere in the text and in

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[93] Mary Frances Fahey, 'Allegorical Dismemberment and Rescue in Book III of *The Faerie Queene*', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 35 (1998), 49-71 (p.91).

[94] Katherine Eggert, 'Spenser's Ravishment: Rape and Rapture in *The Faerie Queene*', *Representations*, 70 (2000), 1-26 (p.9).

[95] Melissa E. Sanchez, *Erotic Subjects: The Sexuality of Politics in Early Modern English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.75.

wider cultural references (IV.x.41). The sea is maternal and life-giving but also vigorous, penetrating , masculine, and can 'pearce the rockes', in this case the womb-like rocky prison where Florimell is kept (IV.xii.7).

Spenser's interest in violent sex and fluid gender is unsurprising. *The Faerie Queene* is ostensibly written for a female monarch whose public persona and propaganda were tied up in shifting ideas of chastity, unconventional gender roles, and the asexual parenting of her nation. Much has been written about how this may have affected Spenser's view of himself as a male poet and whether he felt any violent patriarchal drive towards bringing his queen into line. Parker describes poetry in this period in terms of impotence and says that it was 'scorned as a form of effeminacy'.[96] Susan Frye on the other hand sees Book III as 'Spenser's ongoing attempt to redefine and thus confine the queen's self-sufficient chastity within male control […] by masculinist poetics'.[97]

Spenser uses the River Wedding episode as an opportunity to refer to his own 'endlesse worke'. In doing so he draws attention to his role as the fertile creator of something boundless, whether or not he would rather it were more contained. This could be read as asexual or auto-erotic reproduction in which Spenser is neither effeminate nor masculinist, but as hermaphroditic as the rivers, or Venus herself. For David Lee Miller this is far from a loss of status for Spenser and represents instead his optimum sexual self: 'the ideal body has a plenitude of sexuality, for it embraces both genders, and it has none at all'.[98] I think Spenser's relationship to the androgynous and the hermaphroditic is more

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[96] Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies*, p.56

[97] Susan Frye, 'Of Chastity and Violence: Elizabeth I and Edmund Spenser in the House of Busirane', *Signs*, 20 (1994), 49-78 (p.60).

[98] David Lee Miller, *The Poem's Two Bodies* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1988), p.113.

nuanced and complex than that. He does have elements that he idealises and venerates but he also has aspects he vilifies, in line with popular opinion of the time. Spenser was devoted to the ideology of procreative marriage and the symbolism for this in the early modern period was often hermaphroditic, as I have discussed. Within that paradigm of heterosexual pairing, creativity and reproduction are extremely important to Spenser, as can be seen with his depictions of Venus and Adonis, or the Thames and Medway, or in the *Epithamamion* where he entreats Cynthia to bless his union with his bride and 'the chast wombe informe with timely seed'.[99]

Spenser seems to wrestle with his feelings towards the androgynous as simultaneously, in the words of Rackin, 'an image of transcendence' and 'an image of monstrous deformity'.[100] Broadly, he favours depictions that uphold gender binaries or have outcomes that, in line with hermaphroditic marriage imagery, are normative. More transgressive iterations he positions as monstrous, in ways that perpetuate the imagery they reflect. Within this distinction there are elements where a queerer, but still sympathetic, reading is possible. Spenser, probably more so than Shakespeare, was constrained by treading the fine line between lauding the acceptable face of hermaphroditism whilst still not being seen to cast the Queen in this role. Elizabeth could not be portrayed either as hermaphroditic Venus or as the wrong kind of Amazon. The complex value judgements and connotations surrounding these literary figures and the queen's own gender rendered such connections unthinkable, or at least un-writable.

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[99] Edmund Spenser, *The Shorter Poems*, ed. Richard A. McCabe (London: Penguin, 1999), p.448.

[100] Rackin, 'Androgyny', p.29. Rackin writes that the image of the androgyne as an emblem of prelapsarian, mystical perfection was fading in favour of the image of the monstrous or unnatural hermaphrodite, suggesting that Spenser was fighting somewhat of a losing battle in championing his own preference for the former.

Many critics describe the early modern period as one of unusually high incidences of gender fluidity in comparison with the periods that preceded and followed it; as Rackin says, 'a liminal moment when gender definitions were open to play'.[101] Whilst acknowledging that issues of gender have been extensively investigated in early modern scholarship, no discussion of liminality in the period would be complete without addressing the prevalence of images of those whose genders were, as Majorie Garber says of Moll Cutpurse, 'not either/or but both/and' (or even something else entirely).[102] It can be speculated that the cultural impact of a female monarch, simultaneously Amazon and not Amazon, explicitly feminine and yet with a masculine political role, was a strong influence on this cultural sense of liminality and possibility. Ambiguity was a key factor in early modern concepts of, and anxieties about, gender. Helen Hackett stresses the importance of ambiguity for the cross-dressed female traveller as both chaste and desiring; vulnerable and assertive; eroticized and shielded. This plethora of contradictions creates 'a maelstrom of multidirectional erotic forces' and out of that chaotic liminal maelstrom endless possibilities arise and fall.[103] Where there is ambiguity there must be two supposed opposites under question and, where that is the case, further possibilities exist for those inhabiting the spaces between the binaries. In this chapter I have sought to further this debate by explicitly linking issues of liminal or ambiguous gender to violence as an expression of societal anxieties.

Following the exploration in chapter 1 of the use of ritualistic violence

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[101] Rackin, 'Androgyny', p.38.

[102] Marjorie Garber, 'The Logic of the Transvestite', in *Staging The Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*, ed. David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (New York: Routledge, 1991), p.264.

[103] Hackett, 'Suffering Saints', pp.138-139.

towards adolescents in the service of gender norms, this chapter has explored other ways that violence was directed at, or expected from, those whose genders were seen as insufficiently, or problematically, fixed. The indeterminate gender of the Amazon or warrior woman exists in a world of violence. Others, like the cross-dressed page, assume an ambiguous gender position to escape violence, often finding themselves embroiled in it anyway. Other liminal figures, the eunuch or the prisoners of Radigund, are placed on the gender threshold as a result of an act of violence. In some texts gender ambiguity is a form of play, something that exists within literature as a release or festive interlude, ultimately reinforcing the binary-gendered norms of everyday life. In Spenser's *Mutabilitie Cantos* Nature claims Mutabilitie as her daughter and not the daughter of Chaos. She decrees that everything in flux will return to its original state (VII.vi.26, VII.vii.58-59). Such texts, where they were considered worthy of attention by conservative thinkers, which is more likely of Spenser than Shakespeare, may have provided an imaginary or idealised realm where indeterminacy of gender could be countered and resolved in ways that were not achievable in uncontrolled and chaotic everyday existence. Despite Spenser's restating of the status quo, his visions of boundlessness in the *Mutabilitie Cantos* as well as in the Garden of Adonis and the marriage of the Thames and Medway, as discussed in the introduction, suggest that he felt the unstoppable power of the liminal and indeterminate. Underlying these literary expressions of ambiguous or fluid gender is the fear of violence and the possibility of a violent response to that fear. This spectre of violence ensures these liminal figures are associated with the space between life and the grave.

Chapter 3
'I Wooed Thee With My Sword': Violence and Liminal Sexuality in Renaissance Literature and Culture

> It is reported of faire *Thetis* Sonne,
> *(Achilles* famous for his chiualry,
> His noble minde and magnanimity,)
> That when the Troian wars were new begun,
> Whos'euer was deepe-wounded with his speare,
> Could neuer be recured of his maime,
> Nor euer after be made whole againe:
> Except with that speares rust he holpen were.
> Euen so it fareth with my fortune now,
> Who being wounded with his piercing eie,
> Must either thereby finde a remedy,
> Or els to be releeu'd I know not how.
> Then if thou hast a minde stil to annoy me,
> Kill me with kisses, if thou wilt destroy me.[1]

In her 1997 essay 'Two Loves I Have', Kate Chedgzoy describes the relationship between gender ambiguity and bisexuality as 'complex and volatile' but also highly relevant to the discussion of (bi)sexuality in Renaissance culture.[2] More general links between gender and sexuality within that period are also both complex and volatile: they change, often violently or unpredictably, and provide drama and spectacle. In a landmark book, *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (1992), to which I seek to respond in this chapter, Valerie Traub warns against the assumption that the relationship between gender and sexuality is 'isomorphic and historically constant'.[3] As discussed in the previous chapter, in many instances gender is shown in literature as fluid and acts of penetration such as wounding serve to represent sexual

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[1] 'Sonnet V' in Richard Barnfield, *Cynthia with Certaine Sonnets* (1595), sig.B8ʳ.
[2] Chedgzoy, 'Two Loves I Have', p.112.
[3] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.95.

aggression or activity (rather than passivity) as something that affected the gender or perceived gender of the recipient. Where a woman shows desire for another woman, either knowingly or unknowingly, she is often depicted as an Amazon or as in some other way overstepping the boundaries of gender.

Modern-day readings of these gender transformations, whilst based on literature and historical documents, are inevitably coloured not only by the selection of what is considered canonical or worthy of study, but also by exposure to intervening pervasive theories, including Freud's explanation of homosexuality in terms of the invert.[4] Traub asks whether preoccupation with Freudian analysis suggests the conflation of sex and gender is 'a distinctly *modern* formulation', and questions the possibility of discerning whether such interconnectedness was also present in the early modern period.[5] She states gender and sexuality merely 'pose as synonyms' and assumption of inextricable connectedness 'not only despecifies our analyses but denies and delegitimates erotic difference'.[6] I believe that by reading all sexual encounters as requiring someone to be 'the man' (active, penetrating, aggressive) and someone to be 'the woman' (passive, receiving, and feminine/feminised) we risk reducing all instances of queer sex to the heteronormative: as Traub puts it, 'to posit all homoerotic desire as organised around poles of activity and passivity, and then to

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[4] Sigmund Freud, 'Inversion' in *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: A Case of Hysteria, Three Essays on Sexuality and Other Works. Volume Vii (1901-1905)* (London: Vintage, 2001), pp.136-147. Freud's theories conflate what we would now call gender essentialism, homosexuality, bisexuality, trans, genderqueer, and intersex, all under the heading of the 'invert'.

[5] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.108. Traub further investigates the Freudian conflation of sexuality and gender, as well as the role of femme same-sex desire, in her later book *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) and especially in the chapters 'The Psychomorphology of the Clitoris or the Reemergence of the Tribade in English Culture' (pp.188-228) and 'Chaste Femme Love, Mythological Pastoral, and the Perversion of Lesbian Desire' (pp.229-275).

[6] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.94.

conflate male-male interactions with male-female encounters reduces the complexity of homoerotic desires, styles, and roles – in Shakespeare's time and in ours'.[7]

Heterosexual desire in the early modern period was associated with a lack or loss of male sexual power, what Traub describes as 'detumescence', as associated with the triumph of Venus over Mars.[8] Excessive heterosexual lust in men was identified with feelings of, or accusations of, effeminacy, for example Romeo's being 'effeminate' and 'softened' by his feelings for Juliet and Antony being described as 'not more manlike than Cleopatra'.[9] Juliet's beauty has softened Romeo's 'valors' steel', suggesting through a combination of innuendo and military imagery that heterosexual love is the opposite not merely of masculinity (and sexual virility) but of martial competence (3.1.110). Similarly, Antony's eyes which once 'glowed like plated Mars' have been distracted by Cleopatra (1.1.2-6).

Fops, including Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night*, are perhaps the most effeminate male characters in Renaissance drama. They are not homosexual, but 'already effeminate by their heterosexual relation to desire'.[10] Sir Andrew's lack of masculine prowess, for example in sword-fighting, can be interpreted by modern-day directors as campness but it is in the performance of

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[7] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.94.

[8] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.134. H.L. Meakin summarises this concept neatly, saying 'an effeminate man was not a homosexual, as the modern use of the term often connotes, but a heterosexual who did not balance his social or sexual intercourse with women with appropriately masculine pursuits' (*John Donne's Articulations of the Feminine*, p.10).

[9] *Romeo and Juliet*, 3.1.105-110 and *Antony and Cleopatra* 1.4.5-6. Cleopatra in turn is described as not being 'more womanly than he' (1.4.7). Later she maintains that her position as president of her kingdom makes her appear like a man (3.7.17-18). Eventually she famously rejects womanhood all together: 'I have nothing/ Of woman in me. Now from head to foot/ I am marble-constant' (5.2.234-236).

[10] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.135.

his stated desire for Olivia that the comedy of his foppishness lies. Sexual attraction to women was effeminising for men. In contrast, many depictions of male same-sex affection feature combat, or take place within a combative mode where hyper-masculinity is prized. If Venus defeats, effeminises, and captivates Mars, as in Botticelli's painting, causing him to hang over her altars 'his lance/ His batter'd shield, his uncontrolled crest', then two Marses together would seem a more desirable bond.[11]

It also seems likely that the trope of the cross-dressing woman in plays including Lyly's *Galatea* as well as more famous examples like Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* was used as a veil for discussing or depicting homoerotic desire using deceit, misidentification, or narrative necessity, to provide an innocent scenario where it could occur.[12] Cross-dressing in these instances is exempted from allegations of gender-variant monstrosity that accompanied it in the texts and tracts discussed in the previous chapter. However, there are many instances where homoerotic desire between women does not have this veil and is a function of a conventionally feminine gender presentation.

Sex and gender *are* strongly linked in Renaissance texts and culture, but not inexorably so. This chapter looks at Books III and IV of *The Faerie Queene; A Midsummer Night's Dream;* and *Two Noble Kinsmen*, as well as other texts including John Lyly's *Galatea*. It investigates love between predominantly masculine men, and love between predominantly feminine women as well as

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[11] William Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis* in William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Poems*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones and H.R. Woudhuysen, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Thomson Learning, 2007), p.141-143 and especially lines 103-104.

[12] Lisa Jardine famously discusses this in her chapter on Female Roles and Elizabethan Eroticism in *Still Harping on Daughters*, pp.9-36.

women's chaste communities. I consider the benefits of adopting a bisexual

analysis, allowing for the literary and historical validity of attraction to and by

people of multiple and various genders. I investigate the role that ritual plays in

creating liminal spaces where indeterminacy of sexual attraction can thrive.

Love Between Men: Friend or Foe

In discourses that seek to explain away homoeroticism in early modern

texts, as discussed in the introduction, it is common to encounter the claim that

homosexuality 'did not exist' in the period. This is simultaneously true, and

wilfully disingenuous. The culturally defined category of 'homosexual' is widely

considered not to have been codified until the nineteenth century, in accordance

with Foucault's defining its 'date of birth' as 1870.[13] However, other terms:

cinaedus, sodomite, tribade, Ganymede, minion, and many others have been used

in different historical frameworks to describe individuals who had a preference

for, or a real or assumed behavioural history of, sexual or romantic encounters

with members of the same gender.[14] Even where such language does not exist,

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[13] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: 1 (The Will to Knowledge)*, trans. Robert Hurley
(London: Penguin, 1998), p.43.

[14] Foucault, however, famously considers the sodomite to have been a 'temporary aberration'
whereas 'the homosexual was now a species' (*Will to Knowledge,* p.43). For a
historiographical discussion of approaches and vocabulary used to discuss same-sex attractions
and behaviours by early modern scholars in light of Foucault, see Jonathan Crewe, 'Disorderly
Love: Sodomy Revisited in Marlowe's *Edward II'*, Criticism, 51 (2009), 385–399. Alan Bray
includes 'pathic', 'catamite', 'bugger', and 'ingle' in his list of archaic terms for
homosexuality (Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (New York: Columbia
University Press, 1995), pp.13-14). However, he goes on to attempt to distinguish many of
these terms from homosexuality and is very keen to delineate between consummated and
unconsummated love (see for example his discussion of Barnfield's *Affectionate Shepherd* on
pp.59-61). He also negates bi experience in discussing people exhibiting homosexual
behaviour who do not identify as homosexual, suggesting that this means their behaviour does
not match what they say (p.67) and dismisses female same-sex desire as 'best to be understood
as part of the developing recognition of a specifically female sexuality' (p.11), thus suggesting
that 'female' is an homogeneous category of sexuality, alien to male experience, and having

the behaviours and emotions are not rendered invisible or non-existent. As Traub explains 'what is culturally specific is not the fact or the presence of desire toward persons of the same gender, but the meanings that are attached to its expression'.[15]

One frequent explanation of seemingly homoerotic texts is that they do not form part of a paradigm of sexual or romantic attraction at all, but are part of a 'homosocial' society whereby friendship, and especially male friendship, was prized in ways that modern-day readers cannot understand and expressed in ways that those readers erroneously interpret as sexual. Other notable critics have seen homosociality as exemplifying or facilitating homoeroticism.[16] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick positions homosexuality and homosociality as occupying opposite ends of a continuum.[17] Traub disagrees with this approach, stating that 'Although homosociality and homosexuality appear to exist on a continuum, the former is constituted by a disavowal, indeed, a violent repudiation, of the latter'.[18] Both agree that homosociality in fact underscores patriarchal heterosexuality. Tracey Sedinger writes of these differing critical approaches that friendship is both 'central to the perpetuation and practice of early modern patriarchy' and also, according to other scholars, 'an institution central to the articulation of early modern sexualities'.[19] It is my interpretation that homosociality, as it describes intense and passionate friendships, is a useful way

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nothing to add to debates of same-sex attraction as a general (i.e. male by default) topic of study.

[15] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.95.

[16] Notably Jonathan Goldberg's *Sodometries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

[17] Most famously in her book *Between Men*.

[18] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.105.

[19] Tracey Sedinger, 'Women's Friendship and the Refusal of Lesbian Desire in *The Faerie Queene*', *Criticism*, 42 (2000), 91-113 (p.93).

of conceptualising a range of early modern attitudes to friendship that does not have an equivalent in current western culture, and especially not amongst men.[20] The imagery and values inherent in this concept of friendship are useful in examining the texts that make reference to it. However, to use that as a way of negating the possibility of same-sex romantic and sexual relationships in the period is short sighted. There were undoubtedly homosocial relationships that were not sexual or pseudo-sexual and there are documented accounts of male-male sexual relationships that did not fall under the category of homosocial.[21]

Classical influence on Renaissance culture resulted in literary and artistic references to what might be termed the pederastic or inter-generational model of male-male relationship: that is, an older, active, man and a younger, receptive, passive, male youth, prized for his looks, who will perhaps progress to the older, active role later in life. Classical influence also emphasised symmetry and balance in art, literature, and architecture. This appreciative focus on symmetry was carried over to models of male friendship (and, by association, homoeroticism) where sameness was lauded and prized. In *De Amicitia* Cicero describes a friend as a second self, and looking at a true friend as like seeing 'a reflection of himself'.[22] Montaigne takes up this motif in his essay 'of Friendship', extending the metaphor from doubling to joining, with the lines 'We were copartners in all things. All things were with vs at halfe' and 'I was so

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[20] The word 'bromance' perhaps comes closest but it is a colloquial word, the humour of which comes consciously from equating male same-sex attachments with heterosexual romantic pairings in a belittling way. It may conceal a latent sexual attraction.

[21] I use 'pseudo-sexual' here to mean a connection that imitates, or uses the language of, what would be assumed to be a sexual attraction or relationship if it were between differently gendered individuals. This would include connections where sexual desire is present but is supressed, subconscious, or otherwise unconsummated.

[22] Cicero, *Laelius, On Friendship*, trans. J.G.F. Powell (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1990), p.39.

accustomed to be ever two, and so enured to be never single, that me thinks I am but halfe my selfe'.[23]

Much like the modern critics who see homosociality as opposed to, rather than complementary to, homoeroticism, Montaigne and others reject any notion that these male friendships have any connection to the 'Greeke licence'.[24] Montaigne takes great pains to distance Renaissance same-sex friendship between equals from the classical pederastic model: in such cases 'a disparitie of ages, and difference of offices betweene lovers, did no more sufficiently answer the perfect vnion and agreement, which heere we require'.[25] This is an exercise in delineating acceptable and non-acceptable forms of male same-sex connection. This may or may not be the same as a split based on which relationships had a physical love-making element. However, terminology such as 'sodomite' plays to assumptions that this was precisely the criterion for the distinction. As Traub explains, King James I wrote vehemently against homosexual practices, classing witchcraft, murder, incest, sodomy, poisoning, and false coining as 'horrible crimes that ye are bound in conscience never to forgive'.[26] She states that his 'publicly expressed affection for Buckingham (among other things, he fondled him and called him his wife) held no necessary implication of sodomy'.[27] I agree with Traub, who is building on ideas by Foucault and Bray, that this is not just an attempt by the men concerned to keep a wilful blindness or distance between what they did and what they spoke out against, but also that 'sodomy itself was

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[23] Montaigne, *Essayes*, p.95.
[24] Montaigne, *Essayes*, p.92.
[25] Montaigne, *Essayes*, p.92.
[26] James I, *The True Law of Free Monarchies and Basilikon Doron*, ed. Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier (Toronto: CRRS, 1996), p.117.
[27] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.106.

an unstable, internally contradictory category'.[28] It is not necessary for James'

affections towards Buckingham to have been non-sexual for him to classify

himself as outside the category of 'sodomite'. As Bruce R. Smith says, 'in

discourse about sex, context is all'.[29]

In *Surpassing The Love of Men* (1985)*, Lillian Faderman writes that

'Renaissance writers usually avoided all discussion of a genital aspect in the

same-sex love relationship' but that they borrowed ideas and vocabulary from

Greek and Roman texts that were more frequently and explicitly 'genital'.[30] I

agree that language, and the borrowing of classical linguistic ideas, were possibly

used as a euphemistic screen for discussing same-sex sexual intimacy. It is also

probable that some self-delusion or self-justification was happening, or perhaps

the early modern and modern-day terminologies can just never neatly

correspond. Whatever the answer, I feel the preoccupation with what Faderman

terms 'genital realisation' of relationships misses the point of examining the

cultural and literary significance of references to same-sex love.

Homoeroticism and Combat

One arena in which male-male interaction can be examined is that of

combat. The masculinity of warfare shows that male friendship or male same-sex

desire was not thought to result in effeminacy. As discussed above, effeminacy

was rather associated with heterosexual love and, says Traub, 'extreme virility,

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[28] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.106.
[29] Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England*, p.14.
[30] Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between
    Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (London: Women's Press, 1985), p.67.

manifested in Spartan self-denial and military exploits, is not only depicted as consistent with erotic desire for other men; it also is expressed in it'.[31] As well as demonstrating masculinity, combat, and specifically one-to-one combat, also provides images of well-matched pairs of men.

Fighting was a contentious topic in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. One-to-one encounters between knights were being replaced with other types of combat. There was much interest in, and writing about, sword fighting, culminating in James I's 1613 prohibition against duelling.[32] Warfare was also changing, with pikes being replaced with muskets, facilitating the development of more agile units of fighting men.[33] These issues of combat appear regularly in Renaissance plays by Shakespeare and others, not least because a sword fight makes for good theatre: Nick De Somogyi's 1998 book *Shakespeare's Theatre of War* and Nina Taunton's 2001 book *1590s Drama and Militarism* examine the culture of warfare in the period, looking at military conduct books and war reports as well as other social context and using this to situate culturally the plays of the time, notably Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and Shakespeare's *Henry V*. For the purposes of this chapter however, I am more interested in combat-influenced literary depictions of homosociality and homoeroticism, whether in scenes of one-to-one combat or in portrayals of the bonds that develop between pairs of men who have seen military service together.

Laurie Shannon feels Shakespeare's depiction of male friendships based

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[31] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.134.

[32] James I, *A Pvblication of His Majesties Edict, and Severe Censvre Against Priuate Combats and Combatants* (1613).

[33] Nina Taunton, *1590s Drama and Militarism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p.4. See also Nick De Somogyi, *Shakespeare's Theatre of War* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), p.3.

on combat may vary in their levels of seriousness or ridicule, suggesting that Palamon and Arcite's friendship in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* 'deviates so markedly from Theseus and Pirithous's model friendship that it must be considered a parody of the highly rhetoricized period ideal'.[34] Whether or not Arcite and Palamon are a parody of Theseus and Pirithous, they are certainly a contrast to them in terms of age, experience, and the respect with which they are treated by the other characters and by the narrative itself. These contrasting male relationships fall within the mirroring or paired model and are both intimately connected with combat and, for Arcite and Palamon, specifically sword-fighting.[35] Sword-fighting is also ubiquitous in romance narratives including Spenser's *The Faerie Queene.* As Jennifer Forsyth describes, within this idealised vision of male pairing 'violence and friendship are not always viewed as opposites but are often seen as complementary elements of a single system governing the healthy male body'.[36]

As touched upon in the previous chapter, sword-fighting forms part of the paradigm whereby a penetrated or wounded man becomes effeminised because he is the lesser aggressor and the boundaries of his body have been compromised. Fencing manuals of the time also placed great importance on mirroring in sword-fighting, and mimicry was important in counterfeiting to gain

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[34] Laurie J. Shannon, 'Emilia's Argument: Friendship and "Human Title" in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*', *ELH*, 64 (1997), 657-682 (p.663).

[35] There are twenty-five mentions of swords in *Two Noble Kinsmen,* twenty-one of them by Arcite or Palamon. Theseus has also wooed Hippolyta with his sword (*A Midsummer Night's Dream,* 1.1.16-17) which has echoes of Britomart and Artegall's courtship battle that I discuss later in this chapter.

[36] Jennifer Forsyth, 'Cutting Words and Healing Wounds: Friendship and Violence in Early Modern Drama', in *Violent Masculinities: Male Aggression in Early Modern Texts and Culture*, ed. Jennifer Feather and Catherine E. Thomas (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp.67-84 (p.68). Forsyth sees this system as dangerously out of balance in the case of Arcite and Palamon, primarily because of their destabilising effect on each other's humours.

advantage over one's opponent.[37] The protection of the 'ward' (the area surrounding the fencer's body) from attack and penetration by the new-style 'thrusting' rapier was also symbolically significant in distinguishing the man's expansive stance and impenetrable nature from the self-contained, humble stance advocated for women through conduct manuals.[38] Fencing and sword-fighting therefore provide a rich focus for considering the interplay between masculinity, homoeroticism, and paired or mirrored homosociality.

Many long term relationships between men depicted in Renaissance literature, and particularly in Shakespeare, involve men who have seen military service together or even fought against one another. The relationships of veteran soldiers like Theseus and Pirithous can be viewed as chaste marriages that follow on from the initial passionate courtships of active soldiers in the field. Achilles and Patroclus' passion in *Troilus and Cressida* is so strong that it threatens to impede their fighting prowess, at least temporarily, leading to gender-based criticism of Patroclus; he is a 'masculine whore' (5.1.14-24). Theseus and Pirithous, who are still actively engaged in military campaigns, keep their relationship and their combat in perfect balance whereas Achilles and Patroclus, or Arcite and Palamon have an excess of each respectively.

The intrusion of peace and female concerns, when 'war-thoughts/ Have left their places vacant' and 'soft and delicate desires' take their place, combines with the loss of that passion (whether sexual, displaced sexual, or non-sexual) and may in some cases provide other characters with the motivation to interfere

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[37] For more discussion on this and the importance of fencing poses in enabling lower class actors to play noble roles, see Jennifer A. Low, *Manhood and The Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern Drama and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p.60.

[38] Low, *Manhood and the Duel,* pp.44-48.

(*Much Ado,* 1.1.248-51). In *Much Ado*, for example, Benedick's conventionally warlike activities are put aside in favour of a return to the 'merry war' and 'skirmish of wit' between himself and Beatrice, a seemingly frivolous state of peace that brings out the worst meddling in Don John (1.1.50-1). Othello too acknowledges the incompatibility of martial achievement in 'the tented field' and 'the soft phrase of peace' associated with courtship (*Othello,* 1.3.81-5). As with Don John, this tension between homosocial war and heterosexual love provides a catalyst for the evil actions of Iago.

Spenser likely gained considerable experience of fencing at school. His headmaster, Mulcaster, writes in praise of fencing in *Positions*. He must 'needs condemn' the kind of armed and violent combat that he feels constitutes

> that misuse of the weapon, which the Romane swordplayers used, to slash one an other yea even till they slew, the people and princes to looking on, and deliting in the butcherie.

This is perhaps a reference to duelling as he does support armed combat for those who 'entend to be warriers' or in order to come to the 'helpe of our countries'. For peaceful scholars however, he prefers unarmed or simulated combat against a post, an imaginary opponent, one's shadow (a very mirror-like opponent for which Mulcaster implies a Greek precedent) or against another individual. Mulcaster feels that fencing against a post:

> maketh way for execrementes, prouoketh sweat, abateth the abundance of flesh, strengtheneth his armes and shoulders, exerciseth his legges and feet marveilously. He that fighteth against a stake stirreth the bodie, plucketh the flesh downe, and straynes the iuyce awaye, a peculiar freind to the armes & handes: It refresheth the wearied sense, it setleth the roming humours, it redresseth the fainting and trembling of the sinewes, it delivereth the breast from his ordinarie diseases: it is good for the kidneys.

He feels that fighting against an imaginary opponent or shadow is slightly less

valiant than fighting against a physical object but that fighting a real opponent is the most preferable: 'the exercise against an adversarie is both most healthfull, and most naturall to aunswere all assaies'.[39]

Spenser's depictions of sword-fighting in *The Faerie Queene* are more deadly than Mulcaster's recommendations for scholars but, because of the emphasis on the well-matched nature of the combatants, still evocative of the shadow-play that Mulcaster favourably mentions. The difference between Mulcaster's combat for exercise and Spenser's chivalrous sword-fighting is the difference between fencing and duelling.[40] It is also the difference between life and death. The co-existence of combat and eroticism in the near-death space can be seen in Shakespeare's speech by Aufidius about his battlefield encounters with Coriolanus. It begins with a request to twine his arms around Coriolanus' body, which he describes as the 'anvil of my sword'. When Aufidius' thoughts move from reminiscences of past dangers to idealised dreams, the pair nevertheless end up orgasmically 'half dead with nothing' (*Coriolanus*, 4.5.105-125).

Even in dreams, poems, or plays the reality of the danger of actual combat, rather than pretence and schoolboy practice, brings an erotically charged recognition of the proximity of death. In *Two Noble Kinsmen* Arcite and Palamon are brought on stage on hearses. The surgeons must save them from death even in defeat: 'we would rather have 'em/ Prisoners to us, than death' (1.4.36-7). In *The Faerie Queene* Cambell's battle with Triamond and his

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[39] Mulcaster, *Positions*, pp.85-86.

[40] The festive pageantry, ritual, and performative masculinity of non-fatal combat were also prized in the tilts and tournaments of Elizabeth I's court, as discussed in Roy C. Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp.129-162.

brothers results in multiple resurrections (IV.iii). As elsewhere in this thesis, the liminal space between life and death is continually coexistent with other types of liminality. In this case the space between same-sex and other-sex attraction is inhabited by a relationship that is both desirous and combative, both mirroring and penetrative.

Sword-fighting, and especially duelling, have important ritual elements. As Traub describes when discussing *As You Like It*, 'ritual was still popularly believed to be imbued with sacred or magical power'. She goes on to claim that Orlando's eager participation in the precise words of the marriage ceremony, 'I take thee, Rosalind, for wife' (4.1.129), suggests the play is legitimizing the multiple, and I would add queer, desires that are depicted. 'The point is not that Orlando and Ganymede formalize a homosexual marriage', says Traub, 'but rather that as the distance between Rosalind and Ganymede collapses, distinctions between homoerotic and heterosexual collapse as well'.[41] Arcite and Palamon are described as each other's wife, and James I referred to Buckingham as his wife and wrote to him:

> I cannot content myself without sending you this present, praying God that I may have a joyful and comfortable meeting with you and that we may make at this Christmas a new marriage ever to be kept hereafter; for, God so love me, as I desire only to live in this world for your sake, and that I had rather live banished in any part of the earth with you than live a sorrowful widow's life without you. And so God bless you, my sweet child and wife, and grant that ye may ever be a comfort to your dear dad and husband.[42]

However, these are not ceremonies that we can necessarily understand or

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[41] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.127.

[42] *Letters of King James VI & I*, ed. G.P.V. Akrigg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p.431. For more on the rituals, preferments, language, and gift-giving, which formalised James's relationships with his succession of male favourites, see Alan Stewart, *The Cradle King: A Life of James VI and I* (London: Pimlico, 2004), pp.257-282.

conceptualise with our modern-day understandings. Much as twenty-first-century marriage-equality campaigners loved to seize upon the story of James I and Buckingham's 'marriage', this is not a same-sex marriage as we can understand it. Even allowing for differences in the understanding of friendship and eroticism, there is a tendency for modern-day readers to place simultaneously too much value on the homoerotic nature of these pairings, and not enough on the importance of their ritual elements, such is the magnitude of the shift in values and concepts in the intervening centuries. Traub says 'sodomy was not, as in modern terms, sexually immoral in and of itself; whatever immorality accrued to it was by virtue of its power of social disruption'.[43] That social disruption is tied to the demand for recognition and legitimacy that comes through ritual acknowledgment. There is an overlapping anxiety about non-procreative sex and the need to protect and continue family lineage, however much a particular liaison might resemble a marriage. It does not predominantly matter whether the central supposed act of sodomy is considered relevant or even whether it is present.

The word 'combat' in English originates in the sixteenth century.[44] It therefore pertains to a period when armed fighting was changing. Warfare was becoming more about the movement of armies than about an individual knight's prowess.[45] As discussed in chapter 1, the decline of the social role of the knight had implications for the education of young boys and their admittance into adult life, but it also had implications for how men proved themselves in adulthood

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[43] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.107.
[44] Jennifer Feather, *Writing Combat and the Self in Early Modern English Literature: The Pen and the Sword* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.2. 'combat, n.'. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, September 2013, (accessed 1 December 2013).
[45] Feather, *Writing Combat,* p.4.

and how they settled disputes. 'Combat' relates specifically to struggles between two people (usually men) in order to settle 'a cause or dispute'.[46] This ritualised fighting between two men may be seen as what was left of the old knight's way, but it became forbidden in any form that posed a real threat to life. At the same time, says Jennifer Feather, sixteenth-century writers strove to 'construct the medieval past as barbaric largely by associating it with violence'.[47]

The created world that Spenser presents, whilst certainly violent, does not intend to evoke barbarism, at least not on the part of its protagonists. It is rather one of honour, chivalry, and all-important male friendship. Depictions of combat against hideous and powerful enemies form part of a wider Christian iconography of striving towards truth and God, but there are also repeated incidents of more symmetrical combat between virtuous peers. It could be that literature, like fencing, provides a vehicle for the safe exploration of ritualised violence. Real life duelling was a life or death activity but its depiction in literature, as well-matched combat between equals, provides a way that masculine strength can be ritually tested and male camaraderie can be explored either with or without an erotic element, whilst maintaining the illusion of the liminal life-death space. The ritual nature of this type of combat and its historical and social importance provide another demand for legitimacy and recognition for male-male bonds, in the same way as the pseudo-marriage proposal does.

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[46] 'combat, n.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, September 2013, (accessed 1 December 2013), sense 1.a. The etymology is from the French 'combattre', ultimately from the Latin words for 'fight' and 'with'. 'Combat, v.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2015 (accessed 28 March 2015).

[47] Feather, *Writing Combat,* p.14.

Love Between Women: The Amazon in the Mirror

The notion that lesbianism did not exist or was not recognised prior to the twentieth century is erroneous. Whilst the word 'lesbian' did not come into common use until the nineteenth century, linguistic variations from the same root were known much earlier.[48] There were also other words, often variations on 'tribade' or 'Sappho', that were used in English to describe women who had sex with women (or were thought to do so), and words like 'mannish' or 'Amazon' could be made to have that connotation when discussing a woman who was disapproved of.[49] 'Lesbian' now has a fairly narrow meaning that is firmly associated with current concepts of sexuality as identity. Emma Donoghue points out that historians focusing on pre-modern women's relationships with women have tended to use the word 'lesbian' for political impact and ease of communication, despite concerns about anachronism.[50] Whilst I acknowledge the desire to reclaim a lesbian literary tradition I use the word sparingly, preferring less loaded terminology.

Sex or love between women, under whatever name, was well known and

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[48] 'Lesbian, adj. and n.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, September 2013 (accessed 1 December 2013). The earliest citation for the meaning of female homosexuality is 1890, that for the meaning of pertaining to the island of Lesbos is 1601. Francois De Maynard's 1646 French poem 'Tribades seu Lesbia' suggests the addressee's finger would be better placed through the opening in her breeches than in a glove and that if she could urinate with it she could pass it off as 'the thing we shouldn't mention'. The poet also asks how she keeps her hands so clean and white when she washes them in such a 'strange basin'. *Le Cabinet Secret Du Parnasse*, ed. Louis Perceau (Cabinet du Livre, 1932), p.183.

[49] In his poem 'An Epigram on the Court Pucell' (c.1609, published 1640), Ben Jonson uses 'tribade' to mean lesbian and combines it with 'epicene' which, as previously discussed, implies gender ambiguity: 'What though with Tribade lust she force a Muse,/ And in an Epicaene fury can write newes'. (*The Workes of Benjamin Jonson* (1641), p.220). The conflation of women's same-sex desire with gender ambiguity increases the likelihood of the appropriation of words like mannish and amazon to describe such desires, much like the modern stereotype of the butch dyke.

[50] Emma Donoghue, *Passions Between Women* (London: Scarlet, 1993), p.2.

documented in the early modern period, in erotica and other texts. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* lists amongst other sins including bestiality, homosexuality, and masturbation: 'wanton-loined womanlings, Tribadas, that fret each other by turns, and fulfil Venus, even among eunuchs, with their so artful secrets'.[51] Often these depictions were conflated with issues of gender, as with some portrayals of Amazons.[52] There are many stories, both real life and fictional accounts, of women who dressed as men and married women. Burton includes one, allegedly about a woman from Constantinople, perhaps the far-flung location serving to position the woman in an attractive, exotic light, or distance her from everyday occurrences as being foreign, non-Christian, and exempt from, or rejecting of, the usual moral rules.[53] Going further into the realms of gender confusion and anxiety, Saslow states 'male authorities viewed lesbianism itself as more grave the more it laid claim to active male prerogatives: in Spain, two women were merely whipped and sent to the galleys for sex "without and instrument", but the penalty for penetration with a dildo was burning at the stake'.[54] Power norms were being disrupted as well as sexuality. Either wilfully or subconsciously, people in the period were as prone to

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[51] This translation from the Latin is from Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, trans. F.D. Kessinger and P.J.S. Kessinger (Kila: Kessinger, 1991), p.653. It is cited by Valerie Traub in *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.168 as well as many other places. The phrase 'fret each other' is slightly euphemistic and 'rub against each other' would be a more literal translation. Although Burton wrote predominantly in English, this passage appears in Latin in the original 1621 text: 'Tribades illas mulierculas, quae se inuicem fricant, & praeter Eunuchos etiam ad venerem explendam, artificiosa illa veretra habent'; presumably the use of Latin is because of its sexually explicit content. The use of 'mulierculas' (translated here as 'womanlings') rather than 'mulieres' (women) is a gender slur based on these women's overstepping of the boundaries of acceptable femininity. Robert Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford, 1621), p.538. As discussed in the previous chapter, the use of non-standard Latin to criticise unconventional gender is common at this point in history, with *Hic Mulier* being published the same year.
[52] Although many of these were also closely linked with Diana and chastity as I discuss later.
[53] Burton, *Melancholy* (1621), p.538.
[54] See James M. Saslow, *Pictures and Passions* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1999), p.118.

conflating gender and sexuality as they are today, especially when it suited their desire to insult or criticise someone. This is more vehemently used against women than men, owing to anxieties over power and a tendency to discredit troublesome women as monstrous. Sedinger says 'Disguise, we might say, is the vanishing point at which the difference between gender and sexuality is rendered obscure'.[55] To treat them as interchangeable in this period though is to ignore other models and discount the complex motivations and multifaceted natures of the people writing about them.

Denise Walen writes that plays of this era locate female homoeroticism 'in the liminal space between gender and sex, which creates ambiguities between desire, attraction, love, and friendship'.[56] There is truth in this statement but I believe the conflation of gender and sexuality in the early modern period is often a veil to enable discussion of alternative sexualities. In the case of women it also brings together two social anxieties, deviant female gender expression and deviant female sexuality, that both raise the threat of women's independence from patriarchy. Subsequent nineteenth- and twentieth-century ideas surrounding the 'invert' have served further to muddy the waters between sexuality and gender presentation. I would not describe the intersections between sex and gender as 'liminal' as I do not believe there is a genuine threshold between them. The threshold is a result of a false association, albeit one that is too entrenched in social consciousness to be ignored. As Marjorie Garber says:

> The history of transvestism and the history of homosexuality constantly intersect and intertwine, both willingly and unwillingly. They cannot be simply disentangled. But what is also clear is that neither can simply be

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[55] Sedinger, 'Women's Friendship', p.109.
[56] Denise A. Walen, 'Constructions of Female Homoerotics in Early Modern Drama', *Theatre Journal*, 54 (2002), 411-430 (p.423).

transhistorically 'decoded' as a sign for the other.[57]

Walen suggests vilification of female cross-dressed same-sex attraction did not extend to the stage and that here cross-dressing provided a vehicle for same-sex attraction to be portrayed with impunity because the characters have the excuse of mistaken identity. However, she stresses that this could only work as a dramatic device if audiences already had an understanding of female same-sex erotics and could identify scenes where women had been 'positioned together in erotically coded situations'. Walen also suggests that the non-fictive (legal, religious, medical) sources that condemn female homosexual practices often contain graphic descriptions, whereas the literature that contains homoerotics has no such condemnation but also no graphic descriptions.[58] The idea that female same-sex eroticism was unheard of (or even uninteresting) makes no sense in the face of the sheer number of such scenes that exist in Renaissance literature. Even merely within Shakespeare's works *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* present female characters whose cross-dressed alter-egos Cesario and Ganymede attract homoerotic attention from female characters who believe them to be young men.[59] The cross-dressed character of Fidele in *Cymbeline* attracts confused (and, it turns out, incestuous) homoerotic attention from men. In *The Merchant of Venice* Portia's alter-ego of the lawyer is a more direct assumption of male power and influence, but still does not attract criticism or attack even when Bassanio gives 'him' a ring that is known to be a love token.

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[57] Garber, *Vested Interests*, p.131. Neither should cross-dressing, associated as it is with gender presentation, be universally assumed to have a bearing on gender identity or trans experience.

[58] Walen, 'Female Homoerotics', p.416.

[59] Ganymede was also Renaissance slang for a rent boy. For more on the representation of Ganymede in this period in England and elsewhere, see Saslow, *Ganymede in the Renaissance*.

Cross-dressing might be seen then as simultaneously the most obvious vehicle for writing about female same-sex love in the Renaissance and also the least significant because it deals least with how troubling that love may have been to Renaissance society. As Walen says, female homoerotic desire in these settings is 'constructed without the threat that it will be fulfilled since in the world of romantic comedy the characters are otherwise heterosexually encoded'.[60] It could be argued that romance fiction has the same heterosexual coding and consequent lack of threat, although the very act of defusing something that causes anxiety by encapsulating it in festive or comedic literary tropes is significant in itself.

Spenser and Shakespeare had a wealth of cultural influence to draw on for this type of female eroticism.[61] Stories from classical literature include Ovid's account of the story of Iphis and Ianthe, where Iphis, a woman who has been raised as a boy, falls in love with another woman, Ianthe, who loves her in return, and appeals to the gods for help.[62] Renaissance cross-dressing tales that precede Spenser and Shakespeare include *Yde and Olive* (a French adaptation of Iphis and Ianthe, as previously mentioned) from the 1534 translation into English of *Huon of Bordeaux*, and the story of Ariosto's female knight Bradamante. Many of these stories end in a suitable male partner being found or in one of the characters becoming male by divine intervention. However, such outcomes largely exist to bring the narrative back within acceptable genre norms and should not be used to trivialise or discount the attractions and interactions that

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[60] Walen, 'Female Homoerotics', p.419.
[61] Although there is evidence for a swift increase in the number of on-stage depictions of female cross-dressing after about 1590. See Christopher Wixson, 'Cross-Dressing and John Lyly's "Gallathea"', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 41 (2001), 241-256 (p.248).
[62] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, pp.220-224.

precede them in the story. Walen supports this, saying that English playwrights used the knowledge of female-female sexual acts but manipulated narrative strategies in their texts to construct acceptable representations of female homoerotic desire.[63] It is not necessary to dismiss homoerotic scenes and readings merely because the endings are normative.

In an attempt to separate these two elements of women's experience (gender presentation and sexual object choice) I would like to shift the focus to depictions of same-sex love concerning more traditionally feminine women. In Lyly's *Galatea* (1588, printed 1592), the most desirable virgins in the village, Galatea and Phillida, are disguised as men by their fathers in order to escape sacrifice to Neptune's monster. They are sent into the forest where they meet and are attracted to each other. However, Walen claims, their performance of gender is so bad that they must be attracted to each other as women; the love is 'reciprocal and not dependent on the disguise'.[64] This reading differs from, for example, *Twelfth Night,* where the desire is felt by the woman who has mistaken a woman for a man, and is not reciprocated by the disguised woman who is aware of the true genders. Even if you do not accept Walen's suggestion, *Galatea* is still more symmetrical and balanced, as the women mirror each other's secrets.

As well as accounts of liberating cross-dressing experiences for early modern heroines, there are also numerous accounts where it is portrayed as degrading. Such degradation may serve to protect femininity. Galatea and Phillida are protected from criticism as cross-dressed lesbians because they

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[63] Walen, 'Female Homoerotics', p.419.
[64] Walen, 'Female Homoerotics', p.423.

dislike their male clothes. Galatea describes the disguise as 'hateful', and likens it to beastliness.[65] Phillida distances herself from physical or psychological hermaphroditism, as well as lesbianism, by claiming men's clothes 'neither become my body nor my mind' (1.3.16).

Galatea and Phillida also escape the comedic narrative ending of having a suitable man found for them at the end of the play, saying:

> *Galatea:* I will never love any but Phillida. Her love is engraven in my heart with her eyes.
> *Phillida:* Nor I any but Galatea, whose faith is imprinted in my thoughts by her words.
> (5.3.135-8)

Walen maintains this moment is unique in early modern drama.[66] However, it has marked similarities with the ways in which Emilia talks about Flavina in terms of shared thoughts and sensory experience (albeit auditory rather than visual) and her subsequent refusal to 'love any that's called man' (1.3.54-86). Here potential social anxiety is mitigated because the object of Emilia's affections is dead, but the real threat to patriarchal norms is that her love for another girl is jeopardising her expected passage through the officially sanctioned life stages of maiden, wife, mother, widow, as she refuses to accept any other love, and refuses to get married.

Women at other life-stage transitions were also seen as susceptible to sexual arousal by other women. In the erotic work *Dialogues* by Aretino, a midwife tells a wet-nurse a story about being aroused by the naked body of a woman:

> My God, her neck! And her breasts, Nurse, those two tits would have corrupted virgins and made martyrs unfrock themselves. I lost my wits

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[65] John Lyly, *Galatea*, ed. George K. Hunter and David Bevington (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 1.1.95-100. All further references are to this edition.
[66] Walen, 'Female Homoerotics', p.425.

> when I saw that lovely body with its navel like a jewel at its center, and I lost myself in the beauty of that particular thing, thanks to which men do so many crazy deeds, acquire so many enemies, spend so much money and so many words. But her thighs, her legs, her feet, hands, and arms! May he who can praise them as they deserve do it for me. The front parts of her body drove me wild, but the wonder and marvel which really drove me wild were due to her shoulders, her loins, and her other charms. […] [A]s I looked at her, I put my hand on my you-know-what and rubbed it just the way a man does when he hasn't a place to put it.[67]

This is not a scene where the midwife is actually delivering a child but rather one where she is observing a man and woman having sex. However, there is still an implication that her status as a midwife makes this kind of sexuality possible. The midwife is associated with the liminality surrounding birth, she is traditionally distrusted as someone who can cross boundaries that others cannot, she operates in a realm of feminine power and has access to women's bodies at a vulnerable time. Nunneries were another site of women's potential autonomy, frequently distrusted by male outsiders. In the 'Lives of Nuns' section of Aretino's *Dialogues* equally graphic erotic scenes between women occur. In the following passage some nuns have discovered pornographic drawings in what they thought was a prayer book and decide to try some of the positions using a glass handle (or pestle) as an improvised dildo:

> My girl friend fitted it so neatly between her thighs that it looked just like a man's weapon pointed stiffly at his temptation. So I flung myself down on my back, […], and put my legs on her shoulders, and she, poking it now in the good way, now in the bad, soon made me do what I had to do.[68]

The purpose of such passages is to titillate male readers rather than reflect attitudes, or even physical possibilities. However, there remains an implication

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[67] *Aretino's Dialogues*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971), p.350.

[68] Aretino, *Dialogues*, p.52. Donald Thomas' translation has 'sometimes into my proper opening, sometimes into the smaller one' (Pietro Aretino, *The Ragionamenti* (London: Odyssey, 1970), p.49).

that women who were passing through the threshold from one life stage to another, as with the budding breasts of Emilia and Flavina, or who were associated with such transitions, like the midwife, or who were beyond or outside that life structure (nuns, widows, Amazons, and other similar figures), were more likely to succumb to same-sex activity. It is the transition from maiden to wife, or from girl to woman that seems to bring the most demand for patriarchal recognition through ritual, like the ritual placing of the paired flowers in Emilia and Flavina's bosoms, and for that it attracts criticism and anxiety.[69]

The mirroring and pairing imagery in some less erotic accounts of female-female love is similar to that employed for describing male-male loving friendship. Traub ask why we assume that the images of 'a double cherry' and of 'Juno's swans … coupled and inseparable' are qualitatively different, somehow less erotic, than the 'twin'd lambs' of Polixenes and Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*.[70] I do not think that there is such an assumption; Wixson suggests, rather than being attached to their cross-dressing, Galatea and Phillida's 'specter of lesbian eroticism and sexual activity' comes from the fact that they are 'undifferentiated'.[71] In his introduction to *Two Noble Kinsmen* Peter Swaab compares the pairing imagery between Emilia and Flavina to that between Hermia and Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He detects a comic element to the idealistic description of Hermia and Helena sharing their cushion that is not present in the later play.[72] Even if there is mild ridicule in the earlier

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[69] See Shakespeare, *Two Noble Kinsmen,* 1.3.65-71.
[70] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.107
[71] Wixson, 'Cross-Dressing', p.251.
[72] Peter Swaab, 'Introduction' in William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. N.W. Bawcutt (London: Penguin, 2005), pp.lx-lxi. The description of Helena and Hermia 'warbling' is given as part of the evidence for a comedic reading. However, warbling is mentioned elsewhere in Renaissance culture without any sense of irony or the modern sense

depiction, the use of pairing imagery in both modes indicates its pervasiveness in

describing female-female as well as male-male love in the period and suggests

the relationships between female, as well as male, homoeroticism and

homosociality should be explored.

Whether men of the period would have seen women's attachments to

each other as comparable to their own with other men is an entirely different

question. Faderman states:

> Many men might have regarded romantic friendship between women as
> an analog (somewhat diffused by women's weaker natures and therefore
> not as powerful) to their own male romantic friendships. It would not
> have troubled them, nor would they have seen anything 'abnormal' in it.
> If a man bothered to react to romantic friendship between women at all,
> he would have had no reason to discourage it, probably not even that of
> jealousy.[73]

This may understate the case. Whatever the overtly stated or tacitly accepting

feelings in everyday life towards women's passionate friendships, literature

suggests that jealousy could arise. Oberon's feelings about Titania's connection

to the votaress and her resulting pseudo-parenthood of the changeling boy look

very much like jealousy, possibly caused by suspicion of a homoerotic bond.

Sedinger also suggests that 'Spenser suppresses friendship between women

because of the possibility that such friendships might "devolve" into homoerotic

attachments'. Spenser does not seem to fear this as much in men, although his

placing them continually in life-threatening combat situations might be a sign

that he has anxieties about men's close friendships, as well as a desire to depict

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of shrill unpleasantness. Thomas Morley (1558-1603) for example wrote a madrigal beginning
with the lyric 'Though Philomela lost her love, fresh notes she warbleth, yes again'. See *The
Oxford Book of English Madrigals*, ed. Philip Ledger (Oxford: Oxford University Press,
1978), p.330. Milton used the term frequently to refer to harmonious and cultured singing
associated with the Italian musical trill, See James D. Brophy, 'Milton's "Warble": The Trill
as Metaphor of Concord', *Milton Quarterly*, 19 (1985), 105-109.

[73] Faderman, *Surpassing,* p.72.

well-matched young men fighting.[74]

Much writing about friendship, from Cicero to Montaigne, carries with it dismissive misogynistic assumptions that women were simply not as capable of the devoted same-sex connections that men found in their passionate friendships.[75] Male virtuous friendship was seen as the opposite not of women's friendship but of tyranny. The tyrant was seen as 'womanish' because he was ruled by his emotions. A woman was by this logic excluded from true friendship by association with the despots for whom her gender had been appropriated as a pejorative metaphor.[76] More credence and attention has been given to later female writers including Mary Wroth and Katherine Philips for the value they place on female relationships, not least because they are writing about their own realm of feminine experience. Yet Shakespeare and Fletcher do give Emilia a well voiced, if sometimes inconsistent, story to tell about female affection and passionate friendship (notwithstanding whatever arguments might be made about the death of one lover and the heteronormative ending for the other).[77]

Emilia makes the case for non-tyrannical rule when she advocates for the three queens in Act 1 (1.1.119-29). She is also young, and an Amazon, so could be argued not to be functioning in the role of woman in this play, or not for very

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[74] Sedinger, 'Women's Friendship', pp.92-93.

[75] This idea has classical precedents including Aristophanes' speech in Plato's *Symposium*, concerning the three doubled human genders (male/male, female/female, and androgynous (male/female)) being divided in half by Zeus and destined to seek out their matching halves. The men or boys who seek out men are the 'bravest' and 'best' examples of masculinity, whereas the group of men who seek out women (and vice versa) is described as containing many adulterers and adulteresses but as being necessary for the continuation of the human race. Plato, *Symposium*, pp.22-25.

[76] See Shannon, 'Emilia's Argument', p.657.

[77] For a discussion of the inconsistencies in Emilia's attitudes to love and sex, and to Arcite and Palamon, in scenes by the two authors, see Peter Swaab's introduction to William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. N.W. Bawcutt (London: Penguin, 2005), pp.xl-xli.

long. However, the way that she is spoken and written about evokes very

traditional femininity, as does her eventual marriage (she has far less masculinity

to give up for this end than Britomart). Is it true that her same-sex friendship, as

Shannon suggests, 'admits sexuality to the friendship script'?[78]

Shannon claims Emilia 'walks on stage to dramatize the most explicit

case for same-sex association in the period' except for 'Sappho to Philaenis', a

poem often attributed to John Donne.[79] Again, this poem, which is much more

explicitly homoerotic, relies on sameness and mirroring to describe the lovers:

> My two lips, eyes, thighs, differ from thy two
> But so, as thine from one another do,
> And, O, no more; the likeness being such,
> Why should they not alike in all parts touch?
> Hand to strange hand, lip to lip none denies;
> Why should they breast to breast, or thighs to thighs?
> Likeness begets such strange self-flattery,
> That touching myself all seems done to thee.
> Myself I embrace, and mine own hands I kiss,
> And amorously thank myself for this.
> Me, in my glass, I call thee; but alas,
> When I would kiss, tears dim mine eyes and glass.[80]

This poem complicates and challenges the idea that an early modern meeting of

like persons in devoted friendship by definition excludes any homoerotic

element. Rather the poet uses likeness and sameness to imply the sharing of

bodies as well as souls. This is justification for intimate touching that seems to

legitimise both same-sex activity and, almost by association, narcissism and

masturbation, with the pairing and mirroring being analogous to fencing either

with a partner or a shadow, as discussed above. Breasts and thighs are clearly

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[78] Shannon, 'Emilia's Argument', p.657.
[79] Shannon, 'Emilia's Argument', p.662.
[80] John Donne, 'Sappho to Philaenis', *The Complete Poems of John Donne*, ed. Robin Hugh A. Robbins (Harlow: Longman, 2010), p.929. Lines 45-57. The authorship of this poem is questionable and Robbins has placed it in the 'Dubia' section of the volume.

positioned as erotic and private in comparison with hands and lips and yet are still acceptable to touch. I do not agree with Shannon that Emilia is unique in her stance regarding female same-sex devotion. I see in Emilia and Flavina an amalgamation of the same-sex female relationships in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. They share with Helena and Hermia the adolescent nature of their relationship, with expectations of marriage ahead of them, as well as the language of sameness and pairing that marks the passionate friendship of men and women in Renaissance cultural depictions. With Titania and the Indian votaress they share, through their Amazonian past, the implications of membership of a closed order of women, which I shall discuss later. They also share the appropriation of the heterosexual rites and rituals of marriage and parenting, as well as the loss of one partner to death. Even allowing for the possibility of humorous intent in the depiction of Helena and Hermia's friendship, the combination of this with Titania's story suggests these women's relationships are all significant, albeit treated differently in different modes. The combinations of different tropes of female-female love in Emilia's story suggests a variety of early modern anxieties about or interest in female homosexuality. This supports Shannon's reading of Emilia as offering 'a rebuttal to Renaissance commonplaces about female friendship's impossibility' at the same time as she 'places homoerotics squarely within the scope of female friendship'.[81]

Female mirroring in *The Faerie Queene* works differently. The pairing of the cherries and other pairing images in Shakespeare suggest violent separation to come in the form of marriage or death tearing the women apart. The violence and death that threaten female same-sex pairings in Spenser are far more overt

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[81] Shannon, 'Emilia's Argument', p.675.

and immediate, owing to the presence of Britomart, the female knight. Distinct from Shakespeare's cross-dressed heroines in her martial proficiency, Britomart engages in combat scenarios which should be male-male homoerotic but are in fact heterosexual. Her relationships with other women are complicated not just because of her disguise but because of her lack of sameness.

The hermaphroditic embrace that concludes the 1590 version of *The Faerie Queene*, as discussed in chapter 2, presents the accepted image of union for the heterosexual coupling of Amoret and Scudamore, not two cherries joined and become one, but a cherry and some other fruit, representing the combining of opposites, or others, that heteronormativity demands. The proximity of the cross-dressed Britomart as observer, facilitator, or celebrant of this pairing provides a disquieting sense of what might have been as well as indicating the precarious nature of both Scudamore's masculinity (a woman rescued his beloved on his behalf) and Amoret's femininity (her chastity and virtue have been threatened in the House of Busirane). It is a truly liminal moment. This image of the hermaphrodite is postponed in the 1596 version from the embrace at the original end of Book III until the image of Venus at the end of Book IV.[82] This postponement prolongs the liminal space and allows an exploration of the relationship between Britomart and Amoret in the space immediately prior to their joining with their other-sex partners. Sedinger's reading is that Spenser is at pains to reassure the reader that Britomart and Amoret's relationship does not threaten the 'true love and faithful friendship' represented by heterosexual/hermaphroditic marriage and that 'Female friendship remains problematic because the erotic desire which it has replaced remains an active

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[82] Sedinger, 'Women's Friendship', p.102.

possibility, even if only in the mind of the beholder'.[83] In positioning Amoret

and Britomart's journey together as explicitly a pre-marriage interlude Spenser

assures the reader this relationship is temporary and will end in socially

sanctioned marriages to men; he also resolves Britomart's hermaphroditism from

the menacing onlooker at the heterosexual feast to an association with the

acceptable hermaphroditism of Venus. It is often Venus, for example in Lyly's

Galatea, who grants male anatomy to one member of a female partnership in

order to resolve a same-sex relationship puzzle. Burton's description of tribades

'fulfilling Venus', whilst it suggests hermaphroditism, combines the presence of

a deity with the mention of 'artful secrets' to suggest a closed women's order of

some kind.[84]

Positioning female friendship as something that only exists prior to

marriage differentiates it from the predominant view of male friendships in the

period and supports the idea that Spenser, like Montaigne, was 'unable to

imagine female friendship as a viable possibility'.[85] Sedinger attributes this to

Spenser's neo-platonism, the idea that love creates resemblance out of opposites,

either gendered opposites, as in the case of man and wife, or combatants, of

whom he writes 'being former foes, they wexed friends,/ And gan by little learne

to love each other'.[86] Sedinger uses this quote from 'Colin Clouts Come Home

Againe' to illustrate the joining of former enemies in matched, platonic, ideal

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[83] Sedinger, 'Women's Friendship', pp.104-105.

[84] Burton, *Melancholy* (1991), p.653. It is possible the phrase 'artful secrets' is a euphemism for dildos.

[85] Sedinger, 'Women's Friendship', p.108.

[86] Spenser, *The Shorter Poems*, pp.367-368, lines 802 and 851-854. Plato's fable of same-sex love in *The Symposium*, discussed above, emphasises sameness and symmetry as preferable to a joining of opposites or creating sameness from difference. Spenser's attitude here can be attributed to his role as champion of heterosexual marriage, as discussed in chapter 2.

friendship. The combatants involved represent the raw materials of creation: cold, heat, water, fire. They can also be read as Jove and Cupid and once they have been 'knit' together they go on to collaborate in bringing 'forth other kynds/ Out of the fruitfull wombe of their great mother', Venus, who is described earlier as 'Both male and female through commixture ioined'. The question of who is married to and reproducing with whom, and what their relative genders are, is therefore multiply obscured. Even Shakespeare's Helena and Hermia are described as opposites, tall and short, fair and dark, whilst still being two cherries on one stem. However, his male lovers are fairly interchangeable (in the plot and in audience's minds) as arguably are Palamon and Arcite for Emilia.

Spenser and Shakespeare both create male characters who fight before becoming friends, as well as closely bonded characters like Theseus and Pirithous who have a shared history of martial comradeship.[87] As mentioned above, Jove and Cupid fight and then unite and reproduce in 'Colin Clouts Come Home Againe' and Triamond and Cambell fight prior to becoming friends in Book IV of *The Faerie Queene*. In *Coriolanus* the violent history between Coriolanus and Aufidius is transformed, as discussed above, into Aufidius' wish to twine his arms around Coriolanus' body and 'contest/ As hotly and nobly with thy love/As ever in ambitious strength I did/ Contend against thy valour' (4.5.105-6 and 109-12). He compares inviting Coriolanus into his home with seeing his wife cross their threshold on his wedding night (4.5.112-7). As two

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[87] In the 1579 English translation of Plutarch's account, when the pair first meet they stop short of fighting each other as planned, because they 'wondered at each other's beawtie and corage'. Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans Englished by Sir Thomas North Anno 1579*, ed. W.E. Henley, trans. Thomas North (London: David Nutt, 1895), Vol. I, p.60. For further discussion on the cultural precedents for their relationship, see Peter Swaab's Introduction to Shakespeare and Fletcher, *Kinsmen*, p.lxii.

women with similar goals, Amoret and Britomart are *too* alike to be seen by Spenser as the viable result of post-battle or post-marriage neo-platonic joining and balancing. But, as a traditionally feminine women and a martial maid, they are not alike *enough* to form the type of bond that comrade knights can share, even allowing for their supposed inferior female friendship capabilities. Shakespeare treats these ideas slightly differently but with similarly gendered differences. In *The Two Noble Kinsmen* the relationship between Emilia and Flavina has too much femininity and sameness to be viable; it is positioned as a pre-marriage liminal interlude. The relationships that are likened to marriage are between the two men who have fought alongside each other (Theseus and Pirithous) and those who have cemented their union by fighting against each other. Arcite and Palamon's union, like the longer-standing one of Theseus and Pirithous, develops into a 'knot of love,/ Tied, weaved, entangled' that cannot be undone (1.3.41-4). This marriage has been achieved because they have 'fought out together where death's self was lodged' (1.3.40). It is hard to imagine how combat, either on the same or opposite sides, is neither displacement activity nor code for erotic attachment.

Amoret and Britomart are not mirrors of each other but Spenser does present two distinct figures who serve as mirrors to Britomart and with whom she comes to share a history of combat. The first is Artegall, whom Britomart literally sees in a mirror and who falls in love with her after they engage in well-matched sword-fighting (III.ii.22-4 and iv.6.). If fighting stands in place of homoerotic attraction then Britomart's disguise eventually (re)solves that in a similar way to several of Shakespeare's cross-dressing plays. The difference is that she is a more convincing man than Cesario, Ganymede or even, at times,

Artegall.

The other mirror for Britomart is Radigund; her Amazon status is a clear comparison for the gender anxiety that Spenser hints at in Britomart's disguise as a man. They are both 'martial maids' and they both fight with, and are attracted to, Artegall. When Britomart and Radigund fight however, they do not spare their 'dainty parts', suggesting either that they are violently eradicating any suggestion of sexuality or that they are fighting to displace or repress sexual feelings (V.vii.29).[88] Spenser is clear as to which type of sameness and which kind of same-sex affections he considers acceptable.

Chastity and Women's Closed Communities

As explored in this and previous chapters, the image of the Amazon is a complex one. Spenser's Radigund is a monstrous tyrant opposed to everything Renaissance friendship stands for, and must be violently defeated. In contrast, Shakespeare's Emilia and Hippolyta embody friendship ideals and support Theseus in continuing his friendship with Pirithous after marriage. One way that an Amazonian or otherwise masculine female character can be made less monstrous in a Renaissance text is by associations with Diana and with chastity. This is a slippery concept though. Diana is often portrayed as the opposite of Venus. In *The Faerie Queene* they each raise one of the twins Amoret and Belphoebe, representing contrasting halves of female experience, love and

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[88] Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, p.558 (note to V.vii.29) suggests the meaning of 'dainty parts' means 'primarily' breasts (but may elsewhere mean parts that 'modesty usually forbids naming'). Sedinger suggests a more genital interpretation, with 'dainty parts' being a 'synecdoche for femininity itself' ('Women's Friendship', p.93).

chastity (III.vi.4-29). In Lyly's *Galatea* a nymph of Diana compares Venus unfavourably with Diana after Cupid tries to tell her that Diana's devotees are cold and bitter in comparison with those of Venus. She says 'This difference is betweene my Mistris Diana, and your Mother (as I gesse) Venus, that all her Nimphes are amiable and wise in theyr kinde, the other amorous and too kinde for their sexe' (1.2.29-32). Both Diana and Venus are associated with acceptable gender variance for women in the Renaissance. Diana is associated with hunting, Amazons, and the rejection of marriage. Spenser's depiction of Venus shows her as a sacred hermaphrodite. However, Venus also hints at the potential incontinence and overflow of desire which can accompany the homoerotic, as seen from Burton's description of tribades 'fulfilling Venus'. It is Diana who provides the more acceptable form of female community.[89]

In Lyly's *Galatea* the women, dressed as young shepherd boys, are enlisted to join Diana's hunt (2.1.62-3). This combination of assumed masculinity with Diana associates them with chastity. Hunting places them in a realm where women engage in 'male' pursuits, although in a less troubling or transgressive guise than that of the Amazon. The presence of Diana's nymphs suggests a female community. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the woman with whom Titania is arguably a co-parent (or at least a foster-mother or guardian of her child) was a votaress in her order. The image of the closed order of women calls forth multiple aspects of women's interaction, especially when imagined from the outside by male authors. It also had associations with Roman Catholic religious orders that would have seemed foreign and suspect to English

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[89] In the Aprill Eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calendar*, Spenser relates the episode from Virgil's *Aeneid* where Aeneas recognises his mother Venus, even when she is disguised as a nymph of Diana. Spenser, *Shorter Poems*, p.71. See also Virgil, *The Aeneid*, p.18.

Protestant readers.

For Shannon, chastity as a bond between women is analogous to ideal male friendship but also 'complicates an already vibrant scholarship considering early-modern sexuality'. What she terms 'Same-sex associational primacy' becomes 'something one might profess or choose, as an espousal of a "faith" or as a "way of life"'.[90] A chaste community of women combines ritual recognition of the bonds of attachment with the indeterminacy and anxiety engendered by women functioning outside patriarchally imposed life-stage progression. The association with the Amazon places the group of chaste women further outside the realms of normal everyday female experience. In the previous chapter I discussed chastity as a form of gender variance, but it is simultaneously a space of indeterminate sexuality. 'Chastity' is a term as slippery as 'sodomy' in this period.

Shannon distinguishes chastity as a synonym (or conflation) for celibacy, from the Renaissance idea of marital chastity. She also suggests a third 'morally ambiguous chastity, a pursuit of integrity and autonomy, which operates like masculine "virtue" and embodies a similar power'.[91] Certainly chastity is not asexual for Spenser. He advocates desire in women but it should be 'chaste desire' that resists action (see III.i.49 and III.v.52). Britomart perfectly encapsulates this ideal. Venus, perhaps because she is a goddess, is allowed more freedom in her desire for Adonis, with the result that she 'when euer that she will,/ Possesseth him, and of his sweetnesse takes her fill' (III.vi.46). This

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[90] Shannon, 'Emilia's Argument', p.658.

[91] Shannon, 'Emilia's Argument', p.659. Shannon illustrates this with a quote from Ben Jonson's 'To Penshurst' which says 'Thy lady's noble, fruitfull, chast withall,/ His children they great lord may call his own'. The same concept is outlined in Spenser's line from *Epithalamion* 'the chast wombe informe with timely seed', as discussed in chapter 2 (*Shorter Poems,* p.448)

episode stretches the limits of Spenser's tolerance for female sexuality and it does so for the greater purpose of allowing the fertility and procreation needed for Spenser's vision of the Garden of Adonis.[92] Located outside everyday existence, in an eternal and supernatural realm, Venus is not abiding by the rules of mortals. Even so, her assertive desires and passions lie on the border of behaviour that could (and arguably, in the more mundane setting of Shakespeare's poem, does) mark her out as unchaste and even unruly.

Chastity for men, such as the desire of the chaste knight for the lady, often includes close proximity to the object of constrained desire. Donne describes such restraint when he writes about being brave enough to see 'the virtue attired in woman' and 'forget the "he" and "she"', or when he and his love perform the 'miracle' of kissing without doing anything further to break 'the seals,/ Which nature, injured by late law, sets free'.[93] For women however, chastity often involves an active decision to withdraw to the company of women and form a community there.

Like male friendship models, chaste female communities may take their authority from classical texts, thereby avoiding associations with Catholic convents. The Diana of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is surrounded by the company of her attendant nymphs in a sacred space set apart from male company.[94] The idea is taken up by Spenser in his description of Diana in the *Mutabilitie Cantos*

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[92] Compare the approval implied by the natural flower imagery of the 'bridale bowers' and the pre-wedding 'fresh lusty hed' of the sisters sent to awaken the bride in the *Epithalamion* (*Shorter Poems*, pp.436-450) with Spenser's depiction of the grotesque decay caused by the wanton, excessive, and non-procreative lust of Acrasia in the Bower of Bliss (II.xii.42-87).

[93] John Donne, 'Platonic Love (The Undertaking)' and 'the Relic', *Complete Poems,* pp.234; 239. Donne's ideas on the spiritual comingling of souls in further explored in poems like 'The ecstasy' and he tries to find loopholes in technical chastity in poems like 'The Flea'.

[94] See especially Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, pp.55-58 for the account of Actaeon spying on Diana being bathed by her nymphs and also Vickers, 'Diana Described' (p.268).

(Vii.vi.49-51). The Aprill Eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender* explicitly

names Virgil as a source for Diana's 'damosells' and praises the company of the

Muses, another exclusively female grouping, as 'ladies of learning'.[95] However,

perhaps everything in the chastity garden is not as rosy as Spenser would like.

Born originally out of a desire to keep women separate within the home because

of patriarchal fear of their instability and power, the enclosed room, house, or

garden was by the early modern period both a location *for* and an emblem *of*

female chastity.[96] Regardless of the classical precedent, the choice of women

voluntarily to take themselves to a space where they do not require patriarchal

instruction would be unsettling to some. The intention was that the woman would

admit to her literal and metaphorical private space only the men who were

sanctioned by her father.[97] If the space in fact admits no men, and no male

authority, the patriarchs are left outside wondering what the women can be

getting up to without a man to tell them how or with whom. In this way the

withdrawal of women from the public sphere ceases to be an imposed position of

powerlessness and becomes one of autonomy and power, power which provokes

mistrust and intense curiosity from men, often to their downfall.

　　Chastity, says Sedinger, 'offers a way of representing female friendship

because it removes women from an economy of heterosexual desire; it offers a

potential restriction of circulation which allows women to experience that

sublimation of sexual desire which seems so central to male friendship'.[98]

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[95] Spenser, *Shorter Poems*, pp.67; 71. Spenser's use of Virgil here cites relates specifically to
　　Venus being disguised as a nymph of Diana.
[96] See Georgianna Ziegler, 'My Lady's Chamber: Female Space, Female Chastity in
　　Shakespeare', *Textual Practice*, 4 (1990), 73-90 (pp.74; 76).
[97] Ziegler, 'My Lady's Chamber', p.77.
[98] Sedinger, 'Women's Friendship', p.95.

Removing men from the picture would also remove the imposing threshold of marriage that threatens to render all female friendship lesser and transitory. But what of the sublimation of desire? Desire for whom? If the space afforded is, as Traub says, one of 'chaste' erotic play without phallic penetration then what is our definition of chastity? Certainly not celibacy.[99] If the only thing that defines chastity is the absence of phallic penetration then almost all female same-sex erotic practice falls within its walls, the same walls that aim to exclude men.[100] The distinction between chaste female friendship and same-sex eroticism then becomes meaningless. Furthermore Britomart's chastity happens after her body has already been described as penetrated and permeable after 'love's wound' has been inflicted (III.ii.36). For Sedinger 'sixteenth-century discourses on chastity are riven by contradictions which render impossible any notion of chastity as positive'.[101] I would contend however that there is nothing in the sixteenth-century view of chastity, even with its contradictions, that necessarily excludes a positive reading in all cases. There are many views of chastity that present a miserable and restrictive state, especially for women, but it is impossible to ignore the more positive portrayals, least of all the extensive and lavish iconography of Elizabeth I as the Virgin Queen. The very contradictory and indeterminate nature of early modern chastity allows for multiplicity in interpretation which can allow for enriching, affirming, and fulfilling outcomes.

Caution is necessary however; the concept of a removed community of

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[99] Valerie Traub, 'The Perversion of "Lesbian" Desire', *History Workshop Journal*, 1996, 23-49 (pp.28-29).

[100] For a discussion of the debate about whether pre-modern women considered non penetrative activity to be sexual, see Elaine Hobby's response to Lillian Faderman in 'Katherine Philips: Seventeenth-Century Lesbian Poet', in *What Lesbians Do In Books,* ed. Elaine Hobby and Chris White (London: The Women's Press, 1991 pp.183-204), pp.186-187.

[101] Sedinger, 'Women's Friendship', p.108.

women is enticing for historians and critics, as it suggests ways in which it might be possible to suggest women who loved women in this period were able to perceive themselves, and be perceived, as 'a distinct sexual and social group'.[102] I think this would be going too far. Chastity, including orders or cults of chastity, among women was not exclusive of same-sex love, but neither were they synonymous.

There is also a class element to the rejection of the mechanics of lovemaking in favour of 'chaste desire' either for men or women. Traub states 'elite marriages' served the purposes of breeding, lineage, and property but the prevailing discourses of this shied away from acknowledgement of sex as the means for procreation. In this case, says Traub 'hetero*sexuality* would be that which the upper classes displaced onto the labouring classes, as landed gentry and aristocrats indulged in a patriarchal fantasy of marriage that secured lineage and property without sexual intercourse'.[103] In this case, Traub says, it is heterosexual, not homosexual, desire for people other than one's spouse that is 'in excess of marriage, even at odds with it', because sex cannot be ignored if it poses a threat to lineage.[104] Desire that might produce illegitimate offspring was a threat but the sexual activity that produced legitimate heirs was not necessarily an acknowledged or discussed part of an emotional or romantic relationship even though it involved the same combination of genders. If your marriage is a monetary or political arrangement then it is necessary to keep any external emotional relationships within the confines of 'chastity', even if your definition

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[102] Donoghue, *Passions,* p.2.
[103] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.112. Italics original. I interpret heterosexuality in this context to mean sexuality distinct from or not necessarily including eroticism.
[104] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.112.

of chastity does not exclude same-sex activity.

It is possible to make the case that chastity could be maintained within mirrored friendships by displacing any hint of actual sexual activity not onto other-sex relationships or onto cross-generational relationships (as with the classical pederastic model) but onto cross-class relationships. This has been scrutinised extensively by academics studying the relationships between patron and poet, most notably in the case of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, but it can also be identified elsewhere in Shakespeare's work. Shannon identifies flirtation and sexual meaning in Emilia's interactions with her woman (or 'wench') (2.2.118-153).[105] The Penguin edition relates the words 'laugh' (from Emilia) and 'lie down' (from the woman) to a card game called 'laugh and lie down' and says it is used 'with a bawdy double meaning'.[106] Shannon reasons that the familiar forms of language ('thou' and 'wench') combine with the merry flirtatious tone and the established lack of interest of Emilia in forming her 'bargain' with men, to make a reading of sexual relations between her and the woman probable.[107] The word 'wench' is used elsewhere when women are in each other's company, especially where that company is itself under discussion. In *Women Beware Women*, for example, Livia repeatedly addresses Leantio's mother as 'wench' to foster a sense of camaraderie and friendship and to persuade her to stay and play

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[105] Like the Jailer's Daughter, this lower class character does not have a name but only a designation. Many of the designations of the lower class people in this play, the Jailer, the Jailer's Daughter, the wooer, relate to some combination of their jobs, their gender, or their role in sexual rituals.

[106] Shakespeare and Fletcher, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, p.154.

[107] Shannon, 'Emilia's Argument', p.675. Peter Swaab, in contrast, sees a same-sex liaison here as implausible ('Introduction', *Kinsmen,* p.xli). Certainly it does seem to be one of the sites of inconsistency between Shakespeare and Fletcher's characterisations, in comparison with her earlier protestations of celibacy.

chess.[108] For Shannon this familiar language is part of the interior space and domestic realm of women and suggests chaste community, possibly or probably including sex, but most importantly separated from the political (and, one might add, sexual) tyranny of men.[109] It is also important to consider whether the woman is more available for sex because of her lower social class. Does her class exempt her from the chaste and asexual, or more accurately, pseudo-sexless, paradigm of the female sacred friendship? As well as providing a convenient repository for sexual feelings (either vicarious or by means of engaging in cross-class relationships) class differences also brought anxiety for upper class people for whom same-sex (and other-sex) relationships had to be between paired equals. The joining of two individuals as a pair required a ritual, either assumed or actually performed. In Marlowe's *Edward II* it is the King's demand for recognition and reward for Gaveston, making him an earl and insisting on his being seated next to the King's throne, that invites aggression and violence towards the favourite based both on his class, as he 'hardly art a gentleman by birth', and on the sodomitical nature of his status as Edward's 'minion'.[110]

The Bisexual and the Biromantic

Is the distinction between sexual and pseudo-sexual or non-sexual relationships even a valid one? Male same-sex friendships, female same-sex friendships, and chastity have all been used by academics looking to reconstruct

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[108] Thomas Middleton, *Women Beware Women* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981) 2.2.157-393.

[109] Shannon, 'Emilia's Argument', p.676.

[110] Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II*, in *Four Plays*, New Mermaids (London: Methuen, 2011), 1.4.8-33.

a homosexual literary past and by those seeking to deny it or explain it away. The search for the location of the sexual act or what Faderman calls 'genital realization' is problematic in itself.

Faderman essentially charges neo-platonism with obscuring early modern sexuality by assuring 'romantic friends that what they loved so passionately in each other was the soul'.[111] She uses this to suggest that there may often not have been 'a realized genital component' to these relationships and that any eroticism that did exist must have been acceptable or it would not have been written about. This argument ignores the capacity for self-delusion and multiple meaning in what early modern individuals said and did, as discussed earlier. It also sets genital expression as the standard by which homoeroticism is measured. By looking for 'real' lesbianism or 'real' homosexuality in these texts, scholars are applying a standard to literature about same-sex love that is not applied to other-sex encounters. Donne, for example, is not considered to be less of a heterosexual because the author of erotically charged poems like 'The Flea', 'The Sun Rising', and 'The Canonisation' also wrote of being ravished by God in order to achieve chastity.[112] Likewise, Sir Philip Sidney is not considered less of a heterosexual because, in his sonnet sequence, the desire of his poetic persona Astrophil for Stella is seemingly not consummated.[113]

For those who wish to read explicit material about same-sex activity in the early modern period, such texts exist just as they do for other-sex encounters.[114] However, these texts represent different genres of writing from

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[111] Faderman, *Surpassing,* p.72.
[112] Donne, *Complete Poems*, p.554.
[113] Philip Sidney, *Major Works*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.153-211.
[114] Aretino is a good example, as discussed earlier.

those usually discussed by historians and academics. In looking at mainstream works by canonical writers such as Spenser and Shakespeare, same-sex and other-sex encounters or nuances can only be comparable if the same standards are applied to both. Speculation about 'genital realization' or 'consummation' cannot be the standard by which we measure the validity of a homoerotic reading. Rather the impact of a text has to be measured by its language and the ways in which it evokes passionate emotion. It is also necessary to pay attention to the ways that relationships interact with the society in which they occur, including how they use rites and rituals to create space for themselves and how they are received, respected, and treated. If sex and relationships in the early modern period are sufficiently separated that marriage does not necessarily indicate sex (either for a same-sex or an other-sex couple) and chastity does not necessarily exclude sex for a married couple, a king, or a community of Diana's followers, and if erotic language for spiritual friendship is indistinguishable from that of sexual encounter, then physical sex acts, however we define them, cease to be meaningful in the understanding of the love literature produced. If we do not interrogate mixed-sex texts about love and passion for hints of penetration and we do not discredit them if they were not consummated, then we need not do so for same-sex encounters.

Analysing texts from a bi theoretical perspective provides scope for differing relationships and interactions between male, female, and other genders. It also challenges the categories of what does and does not constitute a relationship. Applying a bi theoretical lens to the past allows for more freedom and fluidity of attraction as well as for multiple attractions within one individual. Thus it is possible to avoid restricting a character to heterosexuality or

homosexuality or claiming them historically for one camp or the other.

However, bisexuality seems to be either ignored or vilified by many critics. This omission is perhaps because of a misunderstanding of the origins of the word, as discussed in the introduction. It could also be because of a lack of understanding of its current usage, or the breadth of experience that it covers. Valerie Traub, for example, resists describing characters who 'temporarily inhabit a homoerotic position of desire' as bisexual.[115] She cites Phyllis Rackin saying that 'bisexuality implicitly defines the desiring subject as divided (*bi*sexual) in order to maintain the ideologically motivated gender categories as inviolate'.[116] Quite why bisexuals would want to maintain the borders of categories that aggressively exclude and invisibilise them is a mystery. Equally mysterious are the lengths to which critics will go to avoid using the word 'bisexual' when describing the space between the two predominant categories of sexuality (and the permeable borders thereof). It seems they want a queerer or more liminal word than the one which already exists. As discussed in my introduction, it appears Marjorie Garber is correct that 'a bisexual Shakespeare fits no one's erotic agenda', and that a bisexual approach to early modern literature in general is difficult to find.[117] Where bisexuality is not outright rejected it is erased or elided. This erasure can be the result of the dismissal of

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[115] Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, p.128.

[116] Phyllis Rackin, 'Foreign Country: The Place of Women and Sexuality in Shakespeare's Historical World', in *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property, and Culture in Early Modern England* (London: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp.68-95 (p.73). The description of bisexuals as 'divided' seems pejorative. The 'desiring subject' may be non-binary gendered or fluidly move between genders (as can the sexual object choice) but that does not mean they are 'divided'. This essay was previously published as 'Historical Difference/ Sexual Difference' in *Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies*, ed. Jean R. Brink, XXIII (1993), 37-64. Traub cites this earlier version, which uses 'of homo- and hetero' instead of 'gender'. These are very different charges to lay at bisexuality's door but I believe they are both false.

[117] Garber, *Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life*, p.515.

other-sex attraction as merely a conformance to social necessity. Equally dangerous is the dismissal of same-sex attraction as 'merely' homosocial, as though that is a term that excludes eroticism or is not culturally significant for its own ritual, social, and literary purposes.

For men in Renaissance texts the continuance of a same-sex relationship whilst also being in a heterosexual marriage provides an ideal model for the biromantic or even bierotic.[118] This is demonstrated by the relationship between Theseus and Pirithous, which contrasts starkly with the tragedy in Palamon's words about Arcite 'That naught could buy/ Dear love, but loss of dear love!' (5.6.111-112). The implication is perhaps that the latter pair are tragically unable to have a lifestyle like that attributed to Fletcher and Beaumont who were alleged, albeit by the anecdotal and somewhat unreliable Aubrey, to live 'together on the Bankside, not far from the playhouse, both bachelors; lay together ... had one wench in the house between them, which they did so admire' and engaged in the marriage-like activity of collaborative writing.[119]

However, female bisexual attraction and relationships do not seem to be afforded the same respect or portrayed as capable of the same longevity. In fact, early modern bisexual attraction seems to attract, in its own time and from twentieth-century critics, many of the same prejudices that continue to be levelled at bisexual women in the twenty-first century. Faderman writes about 'transvestites, who made lesbianism not just a sexual act but a whole life-style',

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[118] 'Biromantic' is a term used on internet sexuality discussion forums and other spaces where such discussions take place. 'Bierotic' is a neologism following the same construction as homoerotic and heteroerotic. I have chosen not to hyphenate these words because of an ongoing movement by bisexual activists to resist the hyphenating of the word bisexual. See 'The Bisexual Index | What Is Bisexuality?' <http://www.bisexualindex.org.uk/index.php/bisexuality#hyphen> [accessed 10 April 2015].

[119] John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. Richard Barber (2009: Bury St Edmonds: The Boydell Press, 1982), p.37.

almost distinguishing her own self-defined early modern lesbians (and butch lesbians at that) from what she sees as less radical women who love women (including bisexuals) who play by patriarchy's rules and hold out the 'tacit promise of change' that they will be malleable and come round to the idea of marriage in the long run.[120]

Faderman writes that the 'ephemerality of lesbian relationships was a notion cherished by male writers throughout the centuries' and uses the term 'lesbian transitoriness'.[121] This notion of ephemerality is similar to accusations of 'going through a phase' to which bisexual people are still subjected, or the assumption that women will experiment or put on a show of bisexuality to titillate men but will ultimately settle for a conventional heterosexual relationship. Early modern prejudices may be related to the assumption that women were less capable of the loyalty required for true spiritual and platonic friendship. They also imply that the male-female relationship (and also possibly the male-male one) is more important than the female-female relationship and that the latter will be set aside when marriage comes along. This pattern is certainly the case in *The Faerie Queene* for both Britomart and Amoret but there are hints in Shakespeare, with Emilia and Titania for example, that this may not be a foregone conclusion. Here the rituals of chastity (as well as of adolescence and motherhood) provide a liminal space where the significance of female same-sex relationships can, at least temporarily, be maintained in the face of male-female marriage, either in spite of, or allowed by, the death of one of the participants. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Shakespeare explicitly contrasts

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[120] Faderman, *Surpassing,* p.47.
[121] Faderman*, Surpassing,* p.47.

this with the case of Helena and Hermia where a female relationship is being abandoned because of impending heterosexual marriage. The biromantic ideal for two living women, however, is not allowed for as it is for men.[122] When seeking to produce specifically bisexual readings it is important to look at the trajectory of a story and at the desires, possibilities, and behaviours of a character along their whole narrative thread rather than at one moment.

Love and eroticism in the early modern period assume many guises, some of which now seem incomprehensible. This chapter has specifically examined how those relational modes are explored in the literature of the period by means of accounts of ritual and violence in the forms of sword-fighting, mirroring, and closed orders of female warriors or huntresses. Whatever the focus of an exploration of early modern sexuality it is important not to divide love, desire, and behaviour along hierarchical lines. Seeing either sexual or non-sexual relationships as more important over-simplifies the multiplicity of interactions at work in the period and ignores the impossibility, and perhaps irrelevance, of determining who was doing what with whom. Historical concerns and attitudes may mean male same-sex relationships are privileged in some contexts over those between women or between men and women, or any other configuration. However, they were far from being the only relationships being written about or alluded to, and self-aware readings of early modern texts for other sexualities are enlightening and valuable. Furthermore, the assumption that either sexual or non-sexual (or romantic or non-romantic) connections are more or less likely for any given gender combination closes down possible readings. Allowing for

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[122] Examples where it does would include sonnet 144 and the passage at the beginning of Book IV of *The Faerie Queene* where Britomart lays claim both to Amoret and to the young knight who fought for her (IV.i.9-15).

indeterminacy and the coexistence of any or all of these possibilities, often

within the same individual, provides a far richer scope for the study of early

modern sexuality.

Chapter 4
Lovers, Lunatics, and Poets: Violence and Altered Mental States in Renaissance Life and Literature

The vngodly are so madde, as to mocke at sinne,
to play at the brinks of the infernall pitte.[1]

Duncan Salkeld suggests 'madness, like violence, at once troubles the "safety" of the cosmic resolution and the ideal of social order'.[2] This chapter looks at the spiritual and secular connections between early modern violence and madness as a desirable or undesirable state, focusing on madness as it relates to the contested boundaries and thresholds of gender, desire, personhood, and faith. It examines how Shakespeare, Spenser, and other early modern writers, position madness as a liminal state between life and death, human and non-human, blessed and damned.

I focus on Books III and IV of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* as well as Shakespeare's plays, notably *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Twelfth Night, Hamlet,* and *Macbeth.* Important historical context is also found in Erasmus's earlier influential work *In Praise of Folly* (1509).[3] Other texts discussed originate predominantly from the early seventeenth century and include pamphlets by Thomas Dekker and sermons by Thomas Adams. I also engage critically with secondary works on the subject, notably those by Carol Thomas Neely, seeking to develop a fresh understanding of the status of madness in early modern texts, especially as it relates to violence and to liminal times and spaces.

I use contemporaneous early modern terminology where applicable,

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[1] Adams, *Mystical Bedlam,* p.40.
[2] Duncan Salkeld, *Madness and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare.* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p.67.
[3] Desiderius Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*, trans. Betty Radice (London: Penguin Books, 1993). Unless otherwise stated, all further references are to this edition.

including words that are now largely rejected as pejorative, such as 'mad', 'lunatic', and 'fool'. Despite Neely's criticism of Foucault's *Madness and Civilisation* for placing too much emphasis on institutions, I use Bethlehem Hospital as a case study. Debates around the institutional treatment of the mad in this period are significant in their effects on the literature that emerges from that culture, especially in connection to violence and imprisonment.[4] Foucault is also criticised by Elaine Showalter for not taking sexual difference into account.[5] This gendered difference in portrayals of madness is something that has attracted more critical attention in recent years and something I also acknowledge and examine here.

The early modern use of the word 'madness' had vast scope. It incorporated altered mental states including what we now more usually call mental illness or mental disability. In its wider definition it included demonic possession and enchantment by witches, as well as religious ecstasy and other ritually induced mental states.[6] Furthermore, it encompassed the concept of 'amazement', a mental processing space necessary to psychological progress. Some early modern medical theories saw sanity as the responsibility of spirits

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[4] Carol Thomas Neely, 'Recent Work in Renaissance Studies: Psychology Did Madness Have a Renaissance?', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 44.4 (1991), 776-791 (p.779).

[5] Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady* (London: Virago, 1987), p.6.

[6] For further discussions on complex, nuanced, and changing interactions between religious, superstitious, and medical explanations of madness, particularly women's madness, in this period see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971: London: Penguin, 1991); Michael MacDonald's 'Introduction' in *Witchcraft and Hysteria in Elizabethan London*, ed. Michael MacDonald (London: Routledge, 1991); and H.C. Erik Midelfort, *A History of Madness in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2000). James Sharp writes that 'possession presented challenges to the medical knowledge of the period' and 'scepticism over the reality of possession helped change the medical view of matters relating to witchcraft' (J.A. Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), p.209). Moshe Sluhovsky points out that women's religious mysticism was often attributed to 'feminine vain self-importance and ignorance, a lack of reason and even madness'. (Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, & Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p.135.).

that occupied a liminal space between the body and the soul. *Batman Upon Bartholome* (1582) clearly includes amazement in a list of mental incapacities caused by the failure or incompetence of these spirits, stating that

> if these spirites bee diminished, or lette of theyr working in anye worke, the accord of the bodie and soule is resolued, the reasonable spirit is let of all his works in the bodye. As it is seene in them that be amazed, and madde men and franticke, and in other that oft leese the vse of reason.[7]

Love in this period, especially in conjunction with youth, existed somewhere between the metaphorical use of madness and its physical, medical definitions. In Sonnet 147 Shakespeare writes of love in explicitly medical terms: 'My reason, the physician to my love,/ Angry that his prescriptions are not kept,/ Hath left me' (lines 5-7). This love is a malady that is aligned with madness and opposed to reason: 'Past cure I am, now reason is past care,/ And frantic mad with ever more unrest;/ My thoughts and my discourse as madmen's are' (lines 9-11). Love produced altered mental states that were both *like* madness and could be a form of, or result in, madness itself. The 1597 translation into English of the Greek romance *Clitiphon and Leucippe* shows how permeable the threshold between love and madness was seen as being, assuming it was considered to exist at all: when Gorgias attempts to give Leucippe a love potion he 'made the Potion stronger then he should; and in stead to make her loue, he made her madde'.[8] Hamlet's first appearance in his 'antic disposition' is initially dismissed by Polonius as his being 'mad' for Ophelia's love (2.1.86). Melancholy of this type was believed to be due to a humoral imbalance (an

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[7] Stephen Batman, *Batman Vppon Bartholome* (1582), sig.C4ʳ. This work is an interpretation by Batman of the medieval work O*n the Properties of Soul and Body* by Bartholomaeus Anglicus.

[8] Achilles Tatius, *The Most Delectable and Pleasaunt History of Clitiphon and Leucippe*, trans. William Burton (1597), p.77. I have used Burton's early modern translation; a modern translation is available from OUP: Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, ed. Helen Morales, trans. Tim Whitmarsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Clitiphon is more usually spelled 'Clitophon'. I have used Burton's spelling.

excess of black bile), but was gendered male, and often associated with

creativity, as I discuss later in this chapter. These ideas about male melancholy

were heavily influenced by the fifteenth-century writings of the Italian priest and

humanist, Marsilio Ficino.[9]

Some early modern works distinguish between the fool and the madman,

approximately along the lines of the modern-day distinction between intellectual

disability and mental illness. However, the vast differences in medical

knowledge between the early modern period and our own mean there is no direct

correlation of terms and individuals in these categories were treated very

similarly. In *The Changeling* the fools and madmen are allocated different areas

of the madhouse, but both types are described as 'brainsick' and both are

apparently treated by being 'under the whip'.[10] There is also no uniformity in

word usage between different writers, meaning that, regardless of the early

modern passion for taxonomy and classification, these terms show more

conflation than they do distinction. Here I am predominantly concerned with

temporary or acquired mental states, rather than congenital ones, but there is

considerable overlap in terminology and concepts.

In her 1991 article 'Did Madness Have a Renaissance?' Neely writes

'historians of madness elide the Renaissance; Renaissance literary critics occlude

madness'.[11] This elision, the sense of belonging in two places and being ignored

by both, makes this topic an ideal one for bi theoretical analysis. I focus

predominantly on early modern representations of madness and other altered

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[9] Katherine Park, 'The Organic Soul', in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. Charles B. Schmitt and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.164-184 (p.469).

[10] Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, *The Changeling*, ed. Michael Neill (London: A.&C. Black, 2006), 1.2.42-63.

[11] Neely, 'Did Madness Have a Renaissance?' p.787.

mental states, investigating the ways that various types of madness are connected to violence and to other situations that invite liminality including gender and sexuality. In response to Neely's charting of the lack of research into madness (and especially women's madness) in the early modern period, it is necessary to acknowledge that much has been done to redress that balance in the intervening years since her book was written. Much of this subsequent work includes psychoanalytical readings and attempts to map modern-day mental health diagnoses onto incidents of madness within early modern texts. In the introduction to the Arden third series edition of *Hamlet,* for example, Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor include a whole section on Hamlet and Freud.[12]

Bedlam and Early Modern Attitudes to Madness

For modern readers and audiences of Renaissance texts, including those encountering them through school curricula or cultural osmosis, the images of madness or mental distress presented are overwhelmingly negative.[13] Traditional medieval treatments for the mentally ill included beating and restraint, often intended to counter the demonic possession or moral failings thought to engender madness.[14] Neely suggests that in fact the insane were more usually accommodated in the community and had hired keepers (usually family

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[12] 'Introduction', in William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006), pp.26-32. In calling for more of this type of work, James Sharp writes 'the sense that modern psychiatry might throw light on these cases [of possession] is a strong one' (Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, p.209).

[13] By 'cultural osmosis' I mean here the process whereby people absorb cultural references, literary tropes, memes, or quotations, by exposure to their reproduction in the discourses of the dominant culture in which they are living. This can occur without direct experience of the original source, or even without being aware of the origins of the reference, or that it is a reference at all. For example, people using and being influenced by the phrase 'If music be the food of love' and other Shakespeare quotes without realising where they come from or, if they do realise, without having read or seen the relevant play.

[14] Catharine Arnold, *Bedlam: London and Its Mad* (2008; London: Simon & Schuster, 2009), pp.23-26.

members) to care for them and that restraint was only seen as a last resort during particularly bad episodes.[15] However, the image of the imprisoned, restrained, beaten lunatic is a powerful one in Renaissance literature and culture and has its roots in classical texts. *Clitiphon and Leucippe*, a story from approximately the second century and translated into English in the sixteenth by William Burton, demonstrates images of the violent restraint of the mad that had been inherited from earlier times (in this case the madness was the result of an act of violence in the form of Leucippe being drugged by Gorgias, her would-be rapist):

> *Leucippe,* the cords being brought, was bound vpon her bed: which when I sawe her tender handes were tyed with such hard ropes, most of them being gone forth, I turned mée to *Menelaus*, saying: Loose, I pray thee loose, for her tender hands cannot abide to be tyed thus roughly: let me alone with her, I will hold her downe in stéede of a cord, lette her rage vpon me if she will.[16]

Ideas about the effectiveness of physical violence towards the insane persisted from medieval times into the early modern period. Sir Thomas More in his *Apology* tells a story of a Protestant man whose 'frantic heresy' gave way to actual frenzy, or madness. He was admitted to Bedlam and 'by betynge and correccyon gathered hys remembraunce to hym, and beganne to come agayne to hym selfe'. However, he was later caught in church disrupting the rituals there with his 'madde [mad] toyes & tryfles', including trying to lift a woman's skirt over her head while she was praying.[17] More was enlisted to help and arranged

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[15] Carol Thomas Neely, *Distracted Subjects* (London: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp.161-162.

[16] Tatius, *Clitiphon and Leucippe,* p.72.

[17] Thomas More, *The Apologye of Syr Thomas More Knyght* (1533), pp.197-198. A further example of the supposed sexual indiscretion and violent strength of the mad can be seen in *Clitiphon and Leucippe*: 'she rising vp came towards me, & looking vpon me with sower countenance, strooke me vpon the chéeke with her fist, & spurned *Menelaus* with her féete, who went about to hold her, wherefore we perceiuing she had fallen sicke, & the impatience of the gréefe forced her to a fit of madnesse: we went about to hold her, but she withstood vs, and wrastled with vs a great while, hauing no regard to couer her hidden parts: wherfore a great tumult arose in our lodging' (p.72).

for the constables to tie the man to a tree, where they 'stryped hym with roddys therfore tyl he waxed wery and somwhat lenger. And it appered well that hys remembraunce was good inough'.[18]

These attitudes find their way into Renaissance literary portrayals. In *Twelfth Night* Malvolio is subjected to a horrific battery of mental and physical violence in the forms of imprisonment, restraint, gaslighting, humiliation, and assaults on his psyche designed to discredit him by making him appear mad but which would be likely to cause mental distress in anyone.[19] Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew* is also the victim of a barrage of psychological tricks and abuses. To employ the tactic described above, of retrospectively diagnosing Renaissance characters with modern-day mental illnesses, it is possible to make a case for her final submission as Stockholm syndrome, wherein a captive or victim develops an emotional bond with their captor or abuser.[20]

As well as madness resulting from physical or mental violence, there are also numerous examples of the abuse of people already considered mad. The Jailer's Daughter in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* has her madness used as an excuse to dupe her into sex with the wooer, not just once but also in the capacity of his

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[18] More, *Apologye,* p.198

[19] The term 'gaslighting' originates from Patrick Hamilton's 1938 play *Gas Light* and refers to psychological abuse whereby a victim is presented with information or assertions which cause them to doubt their own perceptions and sanity. In *Separate Theaters: Bethlem ("Bedlam") Hospital and the Shakespearean Stage* Ken Jackson says 'in placing Malvolio in the dark room, Shakespeare reveals the relationship of the stage to the show of Bethlem'(Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), p.71.

[20] 'First used in 1973 in connection with the response of a group of employees held hostage in a robbery at a Stockholm bank, the use of the term "Stockholm syndrome" used to be restricted largely to kidnaps and hostage-taking incidents. However, since the 1970s, the term has been used in a much broader range of cases. The power imbalance argued to be an essential dimension of the syndrome and the false emotional bonds these imbalances are said to create have led some claims-makers to suggest that Stockholm syndrome occurs not only in abduction or hostage-taking cases but in a whole host of situations and conditions not immediately recognizable as manifestations of the syndrome'. The examples given include domestic abuse. (Michasel Adorjan et al., 'Stockholm Syndrome as Vernacular Resource', *The Sociological Quarterly*, 53 (2012), 454-474.(p.454))

rights over her in their subsequent marriage. Such practices were considered a cure for emotional and psychological disorders in women, as I discuss later in this chapter. In *King Lear* Edgar evokes images of the treatment and imprisonment of people with mental health conditions when he assumes the alter-ego of 'Poor Tom'. The cultural significance of this familiar Jacobean figure of the Bedlam beggar is evident from its inclusion on the title page from the 1608 quarto edition of the play. Bedlam was a nickname for the hospital of St Mary of Bethlem, founded in London in 1247 and caring for 'madmen' by 1403 at the latest.[21]

Bedlam was originally a priory but had almost certainly abandoned the role of religious institution in all but name by the fifteenth century. In 1538 Sir Richard Gresham, who was Mayor of London and would go on to make considerable money from ex-monastic real estate, petitioned the king to intervene to spare the religious institutions of London that were in fact hospitals and similar institutions (although originally omitting Bethlehem, which was assumed to be the sovereign's private property). His argument was that these institutions existed 'for the relief and comfort of poor and impotent people unable to help themselves' rather than for 'the maintenance of canons, priests and monks to live in pleasure'.[22] This was refused and there followed years of negotiation and lobbying until eventually in 1547 a deed of covenant was ratified, handing over control (but it seems not freehold) of the St Bartholomew's and Bethlehem

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[21] Jonathan Andrews et al., *The History of Bethlem* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.82. The 'Bethlehem' in the hospital's title seems to have been rendered both as 'Bethlem' and 'Bedlam' in the early modern period, before 'Bedlam' was settled on. Both abbreviations stem from Middle English. See 'bedlam, n.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2013 (accessed 14 March 2013).

[22] Sir Richard Gresham, 'Petition to Henry VIII', London, British Library, Cotton MS Cleo. E.4, fol.22[r].

Hospitals to the city.[23]

Because of the nature of its patients, the name of Bedlam became shorthand for referring to the insane. Thomas Dekker's *The Honest Whore Part Two* (1630) has Bedlam as its insane asylum, even though the play is set in Spain.[24] Bedlam evoked images of maltreatment and abuse but actual evidence of the forms of treatment in the early modern period is scant. The 1403 visitation reports six mentally ill men being cared for at Bedlam and the inventory also lists 6 iron chains with locks and keys, 4 sets of manacles, 6 other iron chains, and 2 pairs of stocks. This visitation was ordered as part of the investigation into 'Peter the Porter' who was convicted of mistreating the inmates, extracting money from them, selling off their belongings, and stealing from the hospital.[25] However, there is no firm proof of a connection between these items of restraint and torture and the treatment of the madmen. The chains could have been used to secure the trunks that are also inventoried, and the restraints and stocks could have been in general use for local law enforcement in the surrounding area. In 1567 the mayor and aldermen of London arranged for coal-sacks to be washed and stuffed with straw because the inmates were lying on bare boards and in 1598 a governors' inspection report said that Bedlam was 'so loathsomily and so filthely kept [that it was] not fitt for anye man to come into'.[26] However, the degree of openness inherent in the hospital's control by the city may mean these were early interventions following a drop in standards, rather than attempts to address usual

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[23] Rev. E.G. O'Donoghue, *The Story of Bethlehem Hospital from its Foundation in 1247* (London: T. Fischer Unwin, 1914) pp.110-111 and The Committee of the Court of Common Council, *Memoranda, References, and Documents Relating to The Royal Hospitals of the City of London* (London, 1836).

[24] Thomas Dekker, *The Second Part of the Honest Whore* (1630), sig.I2^v and K2^v.

[25] Arnold, *Bedlam,* pp.33-35.

[26] Andrews et al., *History of Bethlem,* pp.113-115.

practice.

Inmates from Bedlam were erroneously believed to be released with a licence to beg, hence Edgar's alter ego in *King Lear*. It appears to have been a common practice for bogus Bedlam Beggars, also known as Abraham Men, to pretend to be mad in order to obtain money.[27] Thomas Dekker's 1608 pamphlet *The Belman of London* includes an episode set at a dinner for the 'ragged regiment', a collection of villains and con-men that includes:

> Tome of Bedlams band of mad caps, otherwise called Poore Toms flocke of Wilde geese (whom heere thoe seest by his black and blew naked arms to be a man beaten to the world) and those wilde geese or hairebraines are called Abraham-men.[28]

As well as this reference to bruised arms, Dekker elsewhere describes the Abraham men sticking pins through their skin to convince people of their madness.[29] Self-harm is widely associated with madness in early modern literature. In *Richard III* Richmond says 'England hath long been mad, and scarred herself' (5.8.23). In *King Lear* Tom speaks in similar terms to Dekker, of Bedlam Beggars who 'Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms/ Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary' (conflated text 2.3.14-16). The use of rosemary is also mentioned by Shakespeare in *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Winter's Tale*, either as an aid to memory and the mind (memory is also used as a synonym for sanity by Sir Thomas More, as discussed above), or as associated with death. Rosemary can be seen as a herb associated with liminality because of

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[27] This term may derive from 'Abraham Ward', the name of the infirmary in which patients were housed after Bethlem was moved in around 1377 from its original site in the 'Stone House' at Charing Cross to its new home at Bishopsgate. Arnold (p.33) mentions that the name of the ward is used of Bedlam beggars, but does not mention its association with bogus beggars, as described in the OED definition. 'Abraham man, n.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, September 2013, (accessed 16 October 2013).

[28] Thomas Dekker, *The Belman of London* (1608), p.12. This extract also demonstrates the widely held belief that mad people were impervious to heat, cold, and pain, thus making their mistreatment acceptable. (see Arnold, *Bedlam,* p.24.)

[29] Dekker, *Belman of London,* p.17.

its use in weddings and funerals.[30]

The self-inflicted violence and 'mortification' of the flesh that occurs in early modern depictions of madness is reminiscent of rituals which formed part of pre- and Counter-Reformation Catholic practices; the mention of nails is particularly evocative of the crucifixion. Self-harm also features in the biblical story of 'Legion' in Mark 5:2-15. This story of Christ casting out a 'legion' of demons from a man who had not been in his 'right minde' became a mainstay of Christian teaching about mental illness. The man could not be bound, even with chains (v.3), and lived in the graveyard and 'stroke him self with stones' (v.5). These associations of violence, great strength, resistance to restraint, and imperviousness to pain, form the core of the Renaissance public impression of the madman. The biblical associations, combined with images of the beaten lunatic, such as the Thomas More case, or Dekker's depiction in *The Honest Whore Part 2* of madmen being threatened with whipping, suggest a violent existence marked by deprivation, incarceration, and mistrust from a public who doubted their legitimacy and motives.

Dekker's Coney Catcher pamphlet *Lanthorne and Candlelight* (1608) links madness with conmen and extortion, in this case by association with gypsies, who Dekker calls 'Moone Men': 'A Moone-man signifies in English, a mad-man, because the Moone hath greatest domination (aboue any other Planet) ouer the bodies of Frantick persons'. He identifies the moon with the changeability of what he sees as slippery and changeable opportunists and hustlers.[31] The association of the moon with madness is ancient and widespread,

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[30] See 'rosemary, n.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2013, (accessed 20 March 2013).

[31] Thomas Dekker, *Lanthorne and Candlelight* (1609), sig.H1ᵛ.

as is evident from the Latin word 'lunatic'. In the Italian text *Orlando Furioso* when Orlando becomes mad, Astolfo goes to the moon, where all lost wits are kept, and retrieves his friend's sanity.[32] The moon is also associated with femininity, through connotations of fluidity and changeability, and through perceived connections with the menstrual cycle. This links madness and the feminine, as they share a common lunar emblem. When Pandora chooses to stay with Cynthia in Lyly's *Woman In The Moon* (1601), she says women are 'idle, mutable,/ Forgetful, foolish, fickle, frantic, mad'.[33] Nature charges her to 'make the moon inconstant like yourself' and to reign over nuptials and birth.[34] It is the gendering of madness that I will examine next.

Gendered Madness and the Case of Lady Macbeth

Neely outlines a history of literary analysis wherein critics have been 'led by their preoccupation with melancholy and Bedlamites to gender madness male, although they acknowledge the presence of madwomen in the drama'.[35] Other critics disagree; Showalter maintains 'madness is a female malady because it is experienced by more women than men'.[36] She cites the seventeenth-century doctor Richard Napier, saying he documented 'nearly twice as many cases of mental disorder among his women patients as among men'.[37] Neely maintains

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[32] Lodovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso (The Frenzy of Orlando): A Romantic Epic. Part 2*, trans. Barbara Reynolds (London: Penguin, 1977), Canto XXXIV, verses 68-83, pp.329-332.

[33] John Lyly, *The Woman in the Moon*, ed. Leah Scragg (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 5.1.313-314.

[34] Lyly, *Woman in the Moon,* 5.1.327-328.

[35] Neely, 'Did Madness Have a Renaissance?' p.784.

[36] Showalter, *Female Malady,* p.3.

[37] Showalter, *Female Malady,* p.3.. Richard Napier (1559-1634) was a Church of England clergyman who gave up public preaching early in his career, possibly owing to an anxiety

that although the overall patient numbers showed far more women than men, the

numbers for more extreme forms of mental disturbance were fairly equal for both

genders.[38] Katherine Hodgkin argues that although women's and men's madness

was seen to be generated differently, and certain types of madness

(greensickness, hysteria) were women's diseases, there was not the

preoccupation with the 'female malady' that was to follow in the nineteenth

century.[39] I believe this is an oversimplification though. Women were believed

to be more prey to their imaginations and less able to apply reason.[40] The

situating of types of madness within early modern understandings of female

anatomy, or within concepts of the nature of women's humours as compared to

those of men, means madness was seen as a default state for women and an

exceptional one for men.[41] The female distress reported by Napier related more

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disorder. He devoted the rest of his life to medicine, often in combination with astronomical and spiritualist practises, for which he seems to have largely evaded persecution by virtue of his status as a priest. Although only a minority of Napier's patients presented with psychological disorders, his meticulous records make him a valuable and much cited source for the treatment of psychological illnesses in this period. See Jonathan Andrews, 'Richard Napier' (Oxford University Press, 2009) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19763> [accessed 9 October 2013]. Other astronomer physicians who specialised in treating women include Simon Forman. See Lauren Kassell, *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan London: Simon Forman, Astrologer, Alchemist, and Physician* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), pp.160-170.

[38] Carol Thomas Neely, '"Documents in Madness": Reading Madness and Gender in Shakespeare's Tragedies and Early Modern Culture', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 42 (1991), 315-338 (p.329).

[39] Katharine Hodgkin, 'Introduction', in Dionys Fitzherbert, *Women, Madness and Sin in Early Modern England: The Autobiographical Writings of Dionys Fitzherbert*, ed. Katharine Hodgkin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp.67-73. Dionys Fitzherbert's writings form a first person account by a woman in the seventeenth century of a prolonged period of mental collapse. This book comprises a lengthy introduction analysing the text, followed by a transcript. Hodgkin does acknowledge the role that gender and anatomy played in early modern diagnoses of madness and writes that Fitzherbert's interpretation of her mental state as a spiritual trial rather than a mental illness was an attempt to transcend the female body (p.73). Fitzherbert defined herself largely by her celibacy and love of books, says Hodgkin, 'she would hardly have welcomed the notion that she was suffering from a disease which could be cured by giving up books and getting married' (pp.72-3)

[40] Imagination and reason were often portrayed as located in anatomically different parts of the brain, see for example Spenser's allegory in the episode concerning Alma's castle, of the brain divided into imagination, reason, and memory (*Faerie Queene* II.ix.47-58).

[41] In her book on medieval possession, Nancy Caciola, writes 'demons can manipulate humors so as to produce the effects of madness, frenzy, or melancholy' (*Discerning Spirits: Divine*

to domestic situations and daily life, consistent both with an historical view that madness was merely part of a woman's lot in life and with a more modern view that mental distress has a higher prevalence in women as a result of patriarchal oppression.

Neely claims this period saw an increase in the treatment of the mad in medical institutions, which corresponded with a move away from seeing madness as synonymous with witchcraft or possession.[42] I would suggest rather that the closure of the monasteries resulted in more, rather than fewer, mentally ill people being cared for 'in the community' and therefore being more visible on a daily basis. This may have coincided with a slow move towards a more secular, medical view rather than a spiritual one, although rational or medical views coincided with spiritual and superstitious ones for some considerable time. This slow shift may in turn have resulted in more approval for incarceration in secular institutions such as Bedlam, as Neely suggests, even if locking up mad people was already a phenomenon that existed in the general consciousness.

Regardless of these shifts, madness in this period remained tied to notions of witchcraft and possession. However, the rise of Protestantism meant that the witchcraft associations became, slowly over time, more of a metaphorical connection and that the associations with possession came, equally slowly, more to focus on sin and moral failing and on medicalised explanations than on actual belief in demons and witches.[43] This move away from the supernatural was not

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and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003), p.214). See also Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p.351.

[42] Neely, 'Did Madness Have a Renaissance?' p.788. Keith Thomas points out that 'In seventeenth-century England, the epithets "possessed" and "bewitched" came very near to being synonymous' (*Religion and the Decline of Magic,* p.570).

[43] Neely does point out that both Catholics *and* Puritans were coming up against 'the established church's coordinated campaign' against exorcisms, so this was not a straightforward divide between Catholic and Protestant ('Documents in Madness', p.321). For a discussion of the rejection of exorcism as treatment for such cases, and the Freudian and later diagnoses of

necessarily a positive one, especially for women: Joanna Levin's 2002 article 'Lady Macbeth and the Daemonologie of Hysteria' details the complex and contested relationship between the image of the witch or the possessed woman, and the image of the hysterical or pathologised madwoman.[44] She likens the medicalization of narratives of possession to Spenser's depictions of the ugly hag lurking beneath women's beautiful exterior: 'the corrupt vapors emanating from the womb represented the underlying Duessa (or wicked witch) that lurked within every Fidessa'.[45] This period remains rife with texts demonstrating the ingrained nature of associations between madness, possession, and witchcraft. Differing developments and changes in these thoughts coexisted for a long time and ideas were treated more or less literally depending on who was writing or reading them. Catholic exorcism, for example, which could be seen as an attempt to treat mental illness believed to be possession, was still being illegally practiced in the 1580s and was later written about in Samuel Harsnett's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603) which claimed that all those supposed to be possessed had been counterfeiting.[46] Shakespeare uses Harsnett's account of this counterfeiting as a source for Edgar's feigned madness in *King Lear*.

Residual cultural parallels between madness and witchcraft or possession served to perpetuate the image of women as inherently closer to madness than men. Mental distress was strongly gendered as female because women were seen as innately weak and unable to withstand infiltration by demons (in the case of

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possession as mental illness including neurosis, unconscious homosexual desire, or schizophrenia, see Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp.569-573.

[44] Joanna Levin, 'Lady Macbeth and the Daemonologie of Hysteria', *ELH*, 69 (2002), 21-55.

[45] Levin, 'Lady Macbeth', p.36.

[46] Samuel Harsnett, *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603).

possession) or seduction by the devil (in the case of witches). Where medical explanations were preferred, there was widespread belief in the capacity of the woman's body itself to send her mad, as was considered the case with green-sickness and hysteria. The womb 'communicates unto the braine, by the nerves and membranes of the backe; hence will arise Epilepsies, Apoplexies, Frensies, melancholy passions'.[47]

Far from the preserve of the masculine then, madness is very much associated with the feminine in this period, to the extent that mental instability was almost considered a default state for women. As Neely says, this is reflected in the very different causes and manifestations of madness that are depicted in early modern literary texts for men and women.[48] However, I am not entirely in agreement that that this was a new development caused by the secularization and medicalization of madness. As I outline above, there may have been increased secularization and medicalization of madness in this period (and certainly there was a secularization of the institutions that were available for the treatment of the mad), but I believe the differently gendered nature of writing about men and women's madness is a much older phenomenon, albeit particularly evident at this time. Thompson and Taylor write in their introduction to *Hamlet* that 'Men may go mad for a number of reasons, including mental and spiritual stress, but women's madness is relentlessly associated with their bodies and their erotic desires'.[49]

In his 1615 sermon *Mysticall Bedlam,* Thomas Adams discusses parallels between madness and pride, positioning them very firmly as predominantly

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[47] John Sadler, *The Sicke Womans Private Looking-Glasse* (1636), p.21.
[48] Neely, 'Did Madness Have a Renaissance?' p.788.
[49] Taylor & Thompson (eds), *Hamlet,* p.28.

female conditions. 'Pride and madnesse are of the feminine gender', he says, 'They haue reason for it. Man was made but of earth; Woman of refined earth; being taken out of man, who was taken out of the earth: therefore shee arrogates the costlier ornaments, as the purer dust'.[50] In contrast, men's madness or melancholy was associated with creativity, as described in George Chapman's *The Shadow of the Night* (1594), which sees the night and its terrors as a pure goddess taking men away from the delusions of the day.[51] Chapman sees melancholy and its associated obscurity as a means of obtaining truth. The positioning of male melancholy as a force for intellectual inspiration can make even the cultural association between madness and possession seem like a positive metaphor. Michael Drayton said of Marlowe 'that fine madnes still he did retaine, / Which rightly should possesse a poet's braine'.[52]

Links between madness and women in this period mean male characters, even those displaying artistic, traditionally male-gendered, forms of madness, feigned or otherwise, can become associated with effeminacy.[53] These characters are distanced from masculine power, as a result of, or resulting in, their madness. Malvolio is imprisoned in a womb-like, and tomb-like, internal space and Hamlet and Lear are distanced from their patrilineal crowns and

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[50] Adams, *Mysticall Bedlam*, p.51. Further references in this chapter are to this edition.

[51] George Chapman, *The Shadow of Night* (1594), sig.A3ʳ. Chapman advocated an obscurity in poetic writing that required the reader to expend effort in determining meaning, something he believed would be rewarded with higher intellectual truths. See Margaret Bottrall, 'George Chapman's Defence of Difficulty in Poetry', *Criterion*, 16 (1937), 638-654 and T.W. Herzing, 'George Chapman: The Doctrine of Functional Obscurity', *English Notes*, 3 (1969), 15-32. Gerald Snare's *The Mystification of George Chapman* opens with a useful historiography of criticism and reception of Chapman and beliefs that have been held about his style and methods (London: Duke University Press, 1989).

[52] Michael Drayton, 'To My Most Dearely Loued Friend Henery Reynolds Esquire, Of Poets and Poesie'', in *The Battaile of Agincourt* (1627), pp.204-208 (p.206).

[53] Showalter applies this idea to a broader historical context, stating 'While the name of the symbolic female disorder may change from one historical period to the next, the gender asymmetry of the representational tradition remains constant. Thus madness, even when experienced by men, is metaphorically and symbolically represented as feminine' (*Female Malady,* p.4)

depicted in relatively private settings associated with the female domestic sphere.

Lear even diagnoses himself with hysteria, an early modern diagnosis of female

madness that differed from the Freudian definition, as I shall discuss later, in his

lines 'O, how this mother swells up toward my heart!/ *Hysterica passio,* down,

thou climbing sorrow' (2.4.54-5).[54]

The very maleness of these characters may protect them against the worst

consequences of female madness even where their own madness serves to move

them towards the feminine end of the gender scale. Juliana Schiesari states in *The*

Gendering of Melancholia that 'myths of the "sensitive" male have co-opted or

re-appropriated a certain femininity for the benefit of men and to the detriment of

women' and that, whilst melancholia was associated with great men like Hamlet,

women's mental distress was dismissed as depression or mourning.[55] This is

seen in the contrast between Hamlet's controlled, strategic, self-preservative

'antic disposition' and the uncontrolled, self-destructive madness of Ophelia.

Schiesari claims women's mourning was ritualistic, associated with dress

(widow's weeds) and weeping.[56] Such associations with mourning and ritual

associate madness with liminality, but dismissing women's mental distress in this

way suggests women would not be expected to obtain insight or benefit from the

process.

In spite of Shakespeare's famous examples of male madness in the form

of characters like Lear, he also engages extensively in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *The*

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[54] Titus feigns madness in his dealings with Tamora to trick her into thinking he is duped by her disguise and into leaving her sons with him to be executed (5.2.1-148). Feigned madness in a man is seen as a means to an end, a way of combating wrongdoing and discovering plots, rather than evidence of innate deceitfulness as it is with women.

[55] Juliana Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholia* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp.5-6.

[56] Schiesari, *Melancholia,* p.12.

Two Noble Kinsmen, and elsewhere, with women's madness and the ways in which it is connected to bodily experience. I want to look at Lady Macbeth's embodied madness in particular. The idea that madness could be medically induced by the body, especially the female body, and could therefore be healed by a physician, was widespread in this period and originated far earlier. In *Clitiphon and Leucippe* Menelaus reassures Clitiphon that Leucippe's

> troubles were too violent to last long, and that this frensie of hers was ingendred by a hotte bloud, and dispersed abroade through the veynes, striking vp into the head, sought to distract the minde by confounding all the senses: wherfore the Phisitions were sent for, to trie if they by their art could help her.[57]

As Duncan Salkeld writes convincingly in *Madness and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare*, 'Madness and mentality in Renaissance medicine were explained largely in physiological terms' and 'The body represented a kind of text for the physician in which the signs of madness could be read'.[58]

One form of madness thought to be medically induced was hysteria, a female madness believed to be brought about by the womb wandering around inside the woman's body and interfering with other organs or even suffocating her. The section on 'The Suffocation of the Mother' in John Sadler's *The Sicke Womans Private Looking-Glasse* says:

> This affect which simply considered is none, but the cause of an affect, is called in English the Suffocation of the Mother, not because the wombe is strangled, but for that it causeth the woman to bee choked. It is a retraction of the wombe towards the Diaphragme and stomacke, which presseth and crusheth up the same.[59]

One cure was patriarchally approved sexual intercourse (and ideally ensuing pregnancy) of the type imposed on the jailer's daughter.[60] Greensickness was

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[57] Tatius, *Clitiphon and Leucippe*, p.73.
[58] Salkeld, *Madness and Drama*, p.61.
[59] Sadler, *Private Looking-Glasse*, p.61.
[60] William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. N.W. Bawcutt (London:

another female malady (probably a type of anaemia) and was associated with irrational mood and behaviour, thought to occur because of improper flow of menstrual and other fluids within the female body, especially that of an unmarried virgin.[61] It was primarily associated with young women and was also thought to be cured by 'the benefit of marriage'.[62] For other women, absence from one's husband (and therefore from regular marital sex) or an Amazonian man-free existence, could result in absent or scant 'termes' or 'fluxions' (menstrual periods) with potentially serious consequences.[63] Sadler calls on classical authority to support his theories, saying *Hippocrates* 'writes of *Phaetusa*, who being exiled by her husband *Pythea*, her termes were supprest, her voyce changed, and had a beard, with a countenance like a man'.[64] The absence of a socially approved sexual outlet was seen to result not only in biologically based madness, but also in problematically ambiguous female gender.

The association of female madness with issues of menstruation, reproduction, and sex also links it to the liminal thresholds between maidenhood (and the menarche), marriage, motherhood, and menopause. These were

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Penguin, 2005) , p.lxxx

[61] Culpeper writes about amenorrhea in young women: 'blood stopt in virgins, goes to and fro, changeth the colour, and brings feavers, especially the white feaver or Green-sickness' (Nicholas Culpeper, *Culpeper's Directory for Midwives: Or, A Guide for Women. The Second Part* (1662), p.71). Thomas Adams associates greensickness with those who are 'lust-sicke'. It is also frequently associated with pica, the craving to eat non-foods. Culpeper mentions the symptom by name (p.101) and Adams writes of those who 'thinke chalke, and salt, and rubbish sauourie' (*The Deuills Banket* (1614), p.71). Eating coal and ash is also mentioned in numerous texts.

[62] Edward Jorden, *A Briefe Discourse of a Disease Called the Suffocation of the Mother* (1603), p.16. This is a euphemism for sex. The sex is the important curing factor, not the marriage (although only socially sanctioned sex within marriage was advocated). Sexless marriage is no cure: Nicholas Breton writes that 'Shee that is married to an Eunuch muste goe to phisick for the greene sicknes' (*Choice, Chance, and Change: or, Conceites in Their Colours* (1606), p.9).

[63] Sadler, *Private Looking-Glasse,* p.15.

[64] Sadler, *Private Looking-Glasse,* pp.16-17.

moments when the thresholds of the woman's physical body were vulnerable.[65]
This association with the flow or otherwise of fluids and their role in female
experience is evident in Lady Macbeth's call to the evil 'spirits' to 'make thick
my blood' (*Macbeth* 1.5.40). The speech continues to talk about disrupted
lactation ('take my milk for gall', line 45) and arguably also disrupted
menstruation in the phrase 'compunctious visitings of Nature' (line 42).[66] Such a
disruption to menstruation, the 'want of due and monethly euacuation' would be
expected to affect Lady Macbeth's psychological state, causing 'an alienation of
the minde'.[67] It also complicates her gender, arguably placing her in a liminal
state between male and female, similar to that of the witches, as Phaetusa's
amenorrhea-induced beard would attest.

Multiple liminalities are at work in Lady Macbeth's invocation speech.
The menstrual passage, the threshold between Lady Macbeth's body and the
world, intended for copulation and the issue of heirs, has become unnaturally
blocked. The borders between masculine and feminine have been disrupted by
the ritual incantation to the evil spirits, asking them to remove femininity. This
ritual creates a disturbed mental state that facilitates violence towards Duncan
and towards many real and theoretical children within the text, further distancing
Lady Macbeth from her role as feminine mother and welcoming hostess. It also
demonstrates the continuing coexistence in this period, as discussed earlier, of
medical and supernatural explanations of madness, especially regarding women.
The bodily imagery of menstruation and childbirth combines with imagery of

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[65] See Chris Laoutaris, *Shakespearean Maternities: Crises of Conception in Early Modern England* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2008), pp.186-187.
[66] For further discussion of Lady Macbeth's cessation of menstruation and its effects on her mental health, see Jenijoy La Belle, '"A Strange Infirmity": Lady Macbeth's Amenorrhea', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 31 (1980), 381-386.
[67] Jorden, *Suffocation of the Mother*, pp.16 and 14.

witchcraft and incantations. Also evident are issues of guilt and horror that might arise from the events of Duncan's murder or possibly even from the earlier loss of a child to whom she had 'given suck' (1.7.54).[68]

The confusion of these multiple possibilities for the origin of Lady Macbeth's madness is expressed in the line 'more needs she the divine than the physician' (5.1.64). Not only does this show the extent to which madness was still seen as something that could be spiritual in origin rather than psychological, and therefore not as secularized as Neely claims, it also implies that in Lady Macbeth's case the balance is tipped towards a cause that is more spiritual than bodily.[69] Lady Macbeth's madness is bound to violent rituals of execution and witchcraft. It passes through the ritualistic (or obsessive-compulsive, depending on your reading) hand washing, and ultimately results in Lady Macbeth's death at her own 'violent hands', the ultimate ritual and the crossing of the final threshold (5.11.36).

In *The Two Noble Kinsmen,* another madwoman, the Jailer's Daughter, as well as sharing the flower rituals and hypersexuality associated with Shakespeare's famous tragic madwoman Ophelia, also shares with Lady Macbeth the male gaze of relatives and doctors. This gaze is directed at her psychological state and makes assumptions and prescriptions about her sexual behaviour, linking it to malfunctions in the body and specifically the

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[68] A modern-day psychological reading and retrospective diagnosis might suggest 'post-traumatic stress disorder *n. Psychol.* a condition which can develop following exposure to an extremely stressful situation or series of events outside the usual range of human experience, which may manifest itself in recurrent nightmares or intrusive vivid memories and flashbacks of the traumatic event, and in withdrawal, sleep disturbance, and other symptoms associated with prolonged stress or anxiety. Abbreviated *PTSD'*. 'post-traumatic, adj.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, September 2013, (accessed 9 October 2013).
[69] Neely, 'Documents in Madness', p.328.

reproductive system.[70] Unruly sexual behaviour *can* also be seen in male

madness, as with More's madman attempting to expose the praying woman,

although how much this incident is portrayed as sexually motivated and how

much merely an example of misrule or sacrilege is debatable. But it is

predominantly women who are subject to patriarchal control of what is seen as

their problematic sexuality and their madness in ways that are specifically linked

to gender. When Leucippe is mad it is herself that she exposes rather than others,

'hauing no regard to couer her hidden parts'.[71] Peter Swaab says the jailer's

daughter is not subjected to a 'malign version of patriarchal power' and that the

'sexual deception (…) brings her back from a threatening natural world into a

social community'.[72] My own reading is that the literary control of unruly

women has moved away from death, in the case of Lady Macbeth or Ophelia, to

forced sexual intercourse and maternity in the case of the Jailer's Daughter. This

can be seen as a lightened mood consistent with the comparatively festive nature

of the play, or its place within the general shift from tragedy towards

tragicomedy both within Shakespeare's writing and wider Jacobean dramatic

fashions. Alternatively, it can be read as a shift along the slow societal path from

focusing on possession to focusing on bodies, albeit by appealing to much older

medical ideas dating from classical times.

The demonic and medical models both associate female madness with

sexuality in ways that are disempowering and bring threats of violence. There is

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[70] For a discussion of links between the The Jailer's Daughter and Ophelia as well as other early modern mad women including the She Fool in Fletcher's *The Pilgrim* (1621) and Isabella in Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling* (1622), see Douglas Bruster, 'The Jailer's Daughter and the Politics of Madwomen's Language', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 46 (1995), 277-300.

[71] Tatius, *Clitiphon and Leucippe,* p.72.

[72] Peter Swaab, 'Introduction', in William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. N. W. Bawcutt (London: Penguin, 2005), p.lxxxi.

also often an assumption of deceit. In the early modern period the mad person, and especially the mad woman, was considered to be deceptive or feigning, and the woman who claimed to be possessed may have been counterfeiting as a result of 'some disease wherewith they haue beene troubled'. So the psychological illness or mental 'trouble' is seen as being genuine (even if induced by a more physical 'disease'), but the possession is not.[73]

The combination of sexual indiscretion with improper functioning of the female bodily system of menstruation and childbirth means madness is not associated with a positive view of femininity but with a femininity that is incontinent, masculinised, androgynised, possessed, demonic, or otherwise malfunctioning. It is a form of femininity violently cut off from the socially sanctioned norms and accepted women's roles within home and family and met with equally violent cures. Mad women are simultaneously defined by and excluded from their gender.

Thomas Adams and Spiritual Madness

To investigate further the complex relationship between spirituality and psychology in this period, I turn to Thomas Adams, who wrote extensively on madness, especially as a metaphor for immorality or spiritual failing. His work *Mystical Bedlam* is a collection of sermons based on Ecclesiastes chapter 9, verse 3, which Adams renders as 'The heart of the Sonnes of men is full of euill, and madness is in their heart while they liue: and after that, they goe to the dead' (p.1). Adams' writing shows a definite link between madness and liminal or threshold states. He positions the entirety of life as the flight of an arrow 'wilde,

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[73] Jorden, *Suffocation of the Mother*, p.13.

and full of madnesse' between the thresholds of the 'wombe' and the 'graue'(p.2). 'The beginning of Mans race [from birth to death] is full of euill' he says, 'as if hee stumbled at the thresshold' (p.2).

In the second sermon on the same text Adams uses categories of 'corporall' madness, or what we would term mental illness, as a starting point from which to illustrate corresponding types of what he considers to be 'spirituall' madness, including lack of faith and Catholicism:

> There is a double madnesse, corporall and spirituall, The obiect of the former is Reason: of the latter, Religion. That obsesseth the braine, this the Heart. That expects the helpe of the naturall Physitian, this of the Mysticall. (p.34)

Here Adams' writing demonstrates the interconnectedness of physiology and psychology in the early modern understanding of mental illness. His primary division is not between the physical and the mental but between the 'corporall', that is to say the corporal (which I define here as things pertaining to the body) or even the corporeal (which I define here as things pertaining to the physical world), and the spiritual.[74] Yet the more he attempts to force these terms into parallel and separate categories, the more his distinctions between mental and spiritual illness collapse in on themselves.[75]

Adams recreates the perceived treatment and incarceration of real life madmen in his description of God's final treatment of the spiritually mad:

> If this gentle Physicke make thee madder, hee [God] hath a darke chamber to put thee in, a dungeon is more lightsome and delightsome, the Graue; bands of darkenesse to restraine thy outrages, and potions of

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[74] Compare the OED definitions for 'corporal, adj. and n.3.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2014, (accessed 25 February 2015), Senses 1.a, 1.c and 2, and 'corporeal, adj. and n.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2014, (accessed 25 February 2015), Sense 1 and 2. Until approximately 1610 it seems both senses came under the word 'corporal' and that there remains considerable overlap between the terms for some time afterwards.

[75] Timothy Bright's, *A Treatise of Melancholie* (1586) attempts to make similar distinctions with similar results. As Neely says of it: 'the careful distinctions between spiritual and physiological melancholy repeatedly collapse' ('Documents in Madness', p.319).

brimstone to tame and weaken thy peruersenesse. (p.42)

He categorises mad people as not properly human: 'He is not a man, that is a mad-man. The foole is but imago hominis, the shadow or resemblance of a man' (p.47). This is in contrast with Neely's claims about beliefs at the time. She states 'the mad could be recuperated because they were not seen as inhuman'.[76] At first glance Adams' opinion is confusing. If he is implying that someone who is mad has no soul (or is a reprobate pre-destined to hell), this is inconsistent with his wish to save them.   It seems more likely that he is implying that the mad are not properly alive. A shadow could imply a ghost. This is not the only place where madmen are compared to shadows. John Davies, for example, in *Wits Bedlam* (1617) asks of the fictitious madmen who frame and present his collection of epigrams, 'Are these the Folke I foole with, which I see? Or shadowes? Shadowes? No. What else? Madmen'.[77] A belief in ghosts is not one that is compatible with Adams' Calvinist values, but the image of the mad person as someone held between life and death is one that refuses to go away.[78] Legion in his graveyard, or Leucippe 'turning vp her eies as if she were dead' and then 'rising vp' and coming towards her lover both exemplify this image.[79] The status of madness as a liminal near-death state is one I will return to later; here it is merely useful to note that whilst, because of their un-dead status, Adams sees the mad as not really people, he sees this liminal state as reversible and, more

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[76] Neely, 'Documents in Madness', p.337.
[77] John Davies, *Wits Bedlam* (1617), p.5.
[78] Stephen Greenblatt says that the ghosts themselves, who have been 'reassigned to Hell in the writings of the triumphant Protestants' owing to proscriptions against belief in Purgatory, do not fully disappear either, but 'turn up on stage'. Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory*, p.151.
[79] Tatius, *Clitiphon and Leucippe*, p.72.

importantly, redeemable.[80] So whereas his stated opinion is contrary to Neely's, she does seem right that early modern opinions about mad people suggested that they 'might be coaxed back, through their own delusions, into the rituals of everyday life'.[81] That madness is a reversible state, or rather an escapable and re-visitable place, is an important aspect of the early modern conception of mental health.

Adams' most extreme descriptions and preconceptions come when his preoccupation with spiritual madness causes him to turn his attention to comparisons between mad-men and Catholics, reminiscent of More describing the Protestant man as displaying 'frantic heresy'. He employs a similar polemical tone to Harsnett, who saw Catholic exorcists as trying to trick weak people into converting.[82] Adams' descriptions are only marginally more theological and less satirical than Harsnett's, but he still fears the potential of ritual to spread Catholicism, positioning both madness and Catholic practices as dangerously contagious and potentially hurtful:

> [T]he *Papists* are certainly *madmen,* dangerous *mad-men; madde* in themselues, dangerous to vs: and would happily be confined to some locall *Bedlam,* lest their *spirituall lunacy* doe vs some hurt. (p.69)

His descriptions continue:

> Thinke how that inchanting cup of *fornications* preuailes ouer their besotted soules; and you will say they are not lesse then *madde.* Come you into their Temples, and behold their Pageants, and histrionicall gestures, bowings, mowings, windings, and turnings; together with their seruice in an vnknowne *language,* and (like a deafe man, that sees men dancing, when hee heares no musicke) you would iudge them *madde.* Behold the masse-Priest with his baked god, towzing tossing, and

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[80] Compare C.F. Goodey's discussion of intellectual disability in the early modern period being seen as evidence of reprobation (and therefore that an individual was irredeemable), *A History of Intelligence and 'Intellectual Disability': The Shaping of Psychology in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp.169-170.

[81] Neely, 'Documents in Madness', p.337.

[82] For a discussion of how Harsnett manipulates genre, including satire, see Gillian Woods, *Shakespeare's Unreformed Fictions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp.139-140.

dandling it, to and fro, vpward and downward, forward and backward, till at last, the iest turning into earnest, he choppes it into his mouth at one bitte; whiles all stand gaping with admiration; *Spectatum admissi, risum tencatis amici?* would you not thinke them ridiculously *madde?* (p.70).[83]

There is a Calvinist or Puritan mistrust of festivity and performance in these words, with their deliberate association of Catholicism with paganism in words like 'temple' and 'pageant', even though Adams quotes the pagan Horace to support his argument. The word 'pageant' is also used by Thomas More to describe the disruption of the ritual of Catholic mass by a Protestant madman.[84] Harsnett uses 'pageant' to describe Catholic rituals as opposed to the 'blessed sacraments, the rites & ceremonies of [Protestant] religion'.[85] Implications of Paganism, as well as madness, were used on both sides of the denominational fence to distinguish unacceptable rituals from acceptable ones.

Fear of the reanimated or undead madman is less evident in More's account, but there is a fear, expressed throughout early modern culture, of the unpredictable, fluid behaviour or violent 'frenzie' of the mad. In Adams' writing the behaviour is observed at the centre of a distrusted ritual. Fear of the impossibility of controlling vast numbers of madmen or Catholics results in the

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[83] The Latin quote is taken from Horace *Ars Poetica* 1.5 and translates 'you would laugh, my friends, when you were let in to see it'. The quote is out of context as the passage in Horace concerns poor writing and other art that combines disparate elements for popular appeal, describing such work as a Scylla-like monster comprised of multiple parts from different creatures. Adams' use of the term 'baked god' shows further commonalities with Harsnett, using metaphors of mundane and secular domestic implements and activities to discredit Catholic ritualistic practices. Adams refers to Catholics having a 'baked-god' in order to trivialise Catholic mass and belief in the transubstantiation (rejected by Martin Luther) and accuse them of idolatry whilst simultaneously making them sound 'ridiculously madde'(*Mystical Bedlam*, p.70). Harsnett calls exorcism 'chaire-work' (referring to the practice of tying the subject to a chair) (*Popish Impostures*, p.27). Adams may well have taken the term 'baked-god' from Thomas Bell's *The Catholique Triumph* (1610), which contains numerous instances of the similarly belittling term 'bread-god'.

[84] More, *Apologye*, pp.197-198. Pageant also referred to mystery plays and to actions or performances intended to trick or deceive. See 'pageant, n. and adj.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2013, (accessed 21 March 2013).

[85] Harsnett, *Popish Impostures* (1603), sig.A2ᵛ. For a discussion of how Harsnett describes Catholic ritual in terms of the pretence of theatre, see Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, pp.94-96.

threat of reciprocal, pre-emptive, or therapeutic violence, similar to John Davies writing of whipping 'but One, and fearing Ten'.[86] The ritual, like the undead state, brings fear because it is liminal, unpredictable, and transformative and because it has the capacity to exceed its threshold in order to convert (or infect) others.

Thomas Adams' views on madness suggest a marked change in attitudes in the century since Erasmus was writing on the subject in his 1509 work *Praise of Folly*. Erasmus's influence was far greater, more widespread, and longer lasting than that of the more obscure Adams, but the latter man was well known in London in his time. How far this change in representation may have been the result of more mentally ill people being evident in the community after the dissolution of the monasteries can only be speculated. The Protestant imagery of Catholics as insane coincides with Catholics in England becoming a persecuted and feared minority in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. Ritual was seen as something that brought about change by repetition, transforming something from a spoken or enacted performance to a belief; it was inherently deceitful in the same way that theatre was deceitful, and went against the values of Protestantism, especially at Puritan end of the spectrum.[87] The fear of the transformative potential of ritual is key to its association with madness.

There are some similarities between Erasmus and Adams' depictions though. Like Erasmus, Adams identifies movements between life stages as potential sites of madness and therefore liminality:

> Wee haue beene all once *madde,* is too true a saying: some in youth, others in age. The first is more obuious and common: *wildnesse* is incident to youth: the latter more perilous, and of lesse hope to bee

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[86] Davies, *Wits Bedlam,* p.5.
[87] See Alison Shell, *Shakespeare and Religion* (London: Methuen/A&C Black , 2010), p.51.

reclaymed. If we must be *madde,* better young then olde: but better not be borne then be *madde* at all, if the mercy of God and grace of *Iesus Christ* recollect vs not. (p.47)[88]

Praise of Folly also associates liminal life stages with madness, in childhood and adolescence, both times of change and flux, and also with people on the verge of death, or who have otherwise experienced a transcendental mental state between the mortal and spiritual realms, of whom he says:

> [T]hose who are granted a foretaste of this [heaven] – and few have the good fortune – experience something which is very like madness. They speak incoherently and unnaturally, utter sound without sense, and their faces suddenly change expression. One moment they are excited, the next depressed, they weep and laugh and sigh by turns; in fact they truly are quite beside themselves. (p.133)

Erasmus associates madness with a rejection of the body, writing that 'so long as the mind makes proper use of the organs of the body it is called sane and healthy, but once it begins to break its bonds and tries to win freedom, as if it were planning an escape from prison, men call it insane' (p.128). As Erasmus says, the perceived rejection of the body by the person experiencing madness of any kind is reflected in phrases like 'he is beside himself', 'he has come to', and 'he is himself again' (p.132). Protestant rejection of the physical in favour of the spiritual, as exemplified in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, that positions physical pain and suffering as a means of freeing the soul, suggests madness of this positive, laudable, Erasmian kind. These stories are so similar to pre-Reformation martyrdom narratives in works like *The Golden Legend* that distinctions between Catholic and Protestant break down, and later writers and preachers seeking to reinforce those distinctions had to look elsewhere for their illustrations.

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[88] Note the use of the word 'recollect' (re+collect), a synonym for memory but also for sanity, specifically as an opposition to words for madness that imply scattering, pulling apart, or disjointedness (for example 'distraught' or 'distracted')

Adams, in contrast to Erasmus, does not associate madness with an admirable eschewing of corporeal concerns, instead seeing the spiritual as just another area where dangerous madness can infiltrate. He doubts that insanity is akin to heavenliness. 'Let the Papists call *Ignorance* by neuer so tolerable and gentle names, it is *Ignorance* still, still cause of *madnes.* If *madnes* may bring to heauen, there is hope for these wilfully ignorant' (*Mysticall Bedlam,* p.40). Neither does he see folly as a desirable trait. '[W]ickednesse is folly' he says 'and ignorance of celestiall things is eyther madnesse or the efficient cause (or rather deficient) whereupon madnesse ensueth' (p.38). I do not suggest an irreversible, linear progression of views on madness between Erasmus's vision of divine folly and the views on dangerous Catholic-tinged madness espoused by Adams and his religious contemporaries. But the polarisation of these views does point towards the vastness and variety of views on madness and altered mental states that were held before, during, and immediately after the creation of the literary texts under examination.

Literary and Festive Madness in Spenser and Shakespeare

So it was against a shifting multiplicity of views on madness that Spenser and Shakespeare, like Adams, were producing their work. Both reproduce contemporary ideas about the violent treatment of the mentally ill. In *As You Like It* the spectre of violence and whipping hangs over the question of sanity when Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede), says to Orlando that 'Love is merely a madness, and I tell you, deserves as well a dark room and a whip as madmen do'.[89]

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[89] Ganymede says this madness is so widespread that 'the whippers are in love too' (3.2.360).

Spenser and Shakespeare's portrayals of madness are not always negative. A striking instance of the influence on Shakespeare of Erasmus's ideas about madness, as identified and discussed by Helen Hackett, is the moment at which Bottom awakes from his dream and says:[90]

> I have had a dream past the wit of man to say what dream it was. Man is but an ass if he go about t'expound this dream. Methought I was – there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had – but man is but a patched fool if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report what my dream was (4.1.200-207).

This is usually taken as a reference to I Corinthians 2: 9 'The things which eye hathe not sene, neither eare hathe heard, neither came into mans heart, are, which God hathe prepared for them that loue him'. Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* also contains a significant reference to this passage, saying:

> So much does the spiritual surpass the physical, the invisible the visible. This is surely what the prophet promises: 'eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor have there entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those that love him' (p.133).

He goes on to write an account of the holy fool awaking from religious ecstasy in ways that seem to be mirrored in Bottom's awakening:

> Then when they come to, they say they don't know where they have been, in the body or outside it, awake or asleep. They cannot remember what they have heard or seen or said or done, except in a mist, like a dream. All they know is that they were happiest when they were out of their senses in this way, and they lament their return to reason, for all they want is to be mad for ever with this kind of madness. And this is only the merest taste of the happiness to come (pp.133-134).

The striking resemblance between these passages suggests Shakespeare is not merely making reference to the biblical passage, but is employing the reference

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[90] Helen Hackett, 'Introduction', in William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Stanley Wells (London: Penguin Classics, 2005), pp.lvii-lviii.

mediated through Erasmus' ideas about positive spiritual madness.

Early modern literature also associates madness with the altered mental state of dreaming, including mystical or prophetic dreaming. This association occurs in both Bottom's speech and the extract from Erasmus and often coincides with emergence from a mad state without remembering what has happened. Clitiphon links dreaming to prophecy and amnesia in his explanation to Leucippe when she recovers: 'being awake thou didst fall into madnesse, but the dreames of sléepers doo pretend things to come'.[91] He continues:

> *Leucippe* awaking called me by my name, but I comming nearer vnto her, enquired of her health: but shée séemed to me not to know any thing that shée did: but séeing her selfe bounde shée fell into a great admiration, and demaunded of mée of whome shée was bound: then séeing her restored to her wittes againe, leaping for very ioy, I vnloosed her, and I declared all things which were doone: which when she heard, shée blushed, and vnderstood how that she had béene mad.

The imagery of dreaming is consistent with Erasmus' concept of positive madness as a state that, as well as being redeemable as Adams believes, is somewhere it might be desirable to recreate and revisit. The idea that madness, like dreaming, is a participant-created temporary space invites parallels between madness and festivity. If madness is a metaphor for the temporary releases and reversals of norms that are characteristic of carnival and misrule, then the fluidity of gender and sexual object choice that accompanies both states can be a positive rather than a negative (provided you were not a Puritan). This is particularly interesting with regard to Neely's words about lovesickness:

> [B]ecause it can strike anyone and fasten on anything, it has the effect of making gender roles and erotic choices fluid and the relation between them unstable. Privileging satisfaction, the discourse of lovesickness licenses wayward desires, especially for women.[92]

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[91] Tatius, *Clitiphon and Leucippe,* p.79.
[92] Neely, *Distracted Subjects*, pp.99-100.

Festive madness is at work both in Shakespeare's plays and in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Festivity and madness share many features: they are spaces that are available to be revisited; they can involve the reversal of normal order; both states are usually temporary; both can provide sexual freedom; and the rituals involved in both can provide a space of liminal possibility. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* plays on interactions between festivity and sexual permissiveness in 'the green wood'. It plays on the word 'wood' as a synonym for 'mad', for example when Demetrius, despairing of finding Hermia, describes himself as 'wood within this wood' (2.1.192). When the festivity of the woods is invoked it brings imagery of pagan ritual and a temporary world where normal rules are suspended. Although not without its own dangers and threats, it ultimately results in a more positive connection between madness and sexual licence than exists with tragic figures like Ophelia or the Jailer's daughter, a connection which brings more hope of a happy outcome. This form of madness is not merely a straightforward escape from an intolerable reality. It is not 'another world, and a better' as the Jailer's Daughter dreams of, where she can have the man she desires and not get left alone and cold in the forest (*Kinsmen*, 4.3.5). It is not akin to Lady Constance's escapist line in *King John*, 'if I were mad, I should forget my son', part of a speech bemoaning being sane and having to suffer emotions, and wishing to be mad instead.[93] Violence is not a desirable treatment for festive madness, even if violence, or the threat of violence, played a part in bringing it about, as is the case with Hermia's flight to the woods. Richard's threat, when lost in the woods in *3 Henry VI*, to hew his way out with a 'bloody axe' is the

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[93] 3.4.44-60. For a discussion of this passage in relation to madness, see Jackson, *Separate Theaters*, pp.76-77.

wrong approach and therefore a foretaste of failure and tragedy to come.[94]

Although C.L. Barber's book *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* was first published in 1959, it continues to be a widely respected and cited work, and offers insight into how festive and holiday practices provide a path 'through release to clarification'.[95] That is, festivity and holiday give a temporary release from everyday norms and rules, resulting in clarification (deeper understanding) in the form of 'a heightened awareness of the relationship between man and nature'.[96] However, where festivity is also associated with madness, an additional form of clarification becomes available, arising from the concept of amazement.

Amazement and Liminality

The altered mental state of being 'in a maze' occurs frequently in early modern literature as a response to something overwhelming that requires time out from everyday life in order to be processed through thought. It has parallels with festive spaces as it forms a temporary retreat that may provide transformative experiences and insights that are useful for dealing with everyday life, but are not available from it. Amazement is also closely linked with the Aristotelean concept of wonder, described by Denise Schaeffer as 'a particular kind of *not* knowing' and 'a matter of knowing what you don't know'.[97] Angus Fletcher describes wonder as a 'suspension of the heart' and claims sixteenth-century poetics favoured a text so richly decorated with images and allusions that

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[94] 3.2.174-81. See also Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.2.
[95] Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, p.6.
[96] Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy,* p.8.
[97] Denise Schaeffer, 'Wisdom and Wonder in "Metaphysics" A: 1-2', *The Review of Metaphysics*, 52 (1999), 641-656 (pp.643 and 653).

it created a suspension in itself, forcing the reader to pause, thus dilating time and mimicking wonder.[98] This approach is exemplified by George Chapman, as discussed earlier, who believed poetry should be sufficiently obscure that its creation and 'the reader's or spectator's recreative response demand great effort but promise great rewards'. In this way highly elaborate literature can be seen to create a form of amazement.[99]

It is also useful to consider amazement with reference to Giulio Pertile's 2014 article '"And All His Sences Sound": The Physiology of Stupefaction in Spenser's *Faerie Queene'*. Pertile locates Spenser's concept of the 'stound' primarily in Books I and II and associates this stupefied, suspended state with an overwhelming horror rather than with wonder or more positive associated terms.[100] He does not explicitly explore the concept of amazement, although it is mentioned in OED sense 2 for 'stound', 'a state of stupefaction or amazement', which he cites.[101] However, he does describe the stound as a 'thoroughgoing state, an affect which arrests, possesses, and transforms its subject's entire being', thus placing it in the same category of psychological experience as amazement.[102] Pertile also remarks on the use of 'stound' exclusively as a noun rather than a verb as something employed by Spenser in order to 'turn an intense

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[98] Angus Fletcher, 'Marvelous Progression: The Paradoxical Defense of Women in Spenser's "Mutabilitie Cantos"', *Modern Philology*, 100 (2002), 5-23 (p.15). Fletcher maintains the defences put forward in the Mutabilitie cantos are modelled on a convention of ironic, misogynistic, defences of women, especially for inconstancy, that were used by writers at the time, including John Donne, and were utilised for training potential lawyers in dealing with paradox, so that they might 'progress through a state of wondering suspension and arrive at a moment of marvellous comprehension' (p.8). He therefore suggests a 'deep connection between wonder and philosophical affirmation' that leads to resolution (p.7).

[99] A.R. Braunmuller, *Natural Fictions: George Chapman's Major Tragedies* (London: Associated University Press, 1992), p.18.

[100] Giulio Pertile, '"And All His Sences Stound": The Physiology of Stupefaction in Spenser's *Faerie Queene'*, *English Literary Renaissance*, 44 (2014), 420-451 (p.421).

[101] 'stound, n.2' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2014, (accessed 27 February 2015).

[102] Pertile, 'All His Sences', p.422.

but passing response into a permanent state'.[103] If this is the case then it suggests that Spenser's use of both 'in amaze' (noun) and 'amazed' (verb) conveys a temporary state, or something lying on the border between a state and a reaction, the threshold between being and thought. For Pertile the stound explores bodily needs that wonder ignores, and concerns the spirits, which early modern medicine believed to be involved in swooning and the stound, occupying the border between the body and the soul. The maze perhaps leaves the character (and the reader) exploring the boundaries and possibilities that lie between wonder and stupor as Pertile conceptualises it.

Frequently amazement occurs in response to a threat of violence, or in response to great beauty, or at a point when gender fluidity or ambiguity is present. In Shakespeare's 'Sonnet 20' the 'master-mistress' of the poet's passion 'steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth'. In Spenser's Mutabilitie Cantos, when Mutabilitie oversteps her gender boundaries and embraces violence by threatening to strike Cynthia, the moon and stars are 'amazed' (VII.vi.13) Barnabe Barnes' Sonnet LXXXIII, part of the unusual and disturbing sonnet sequence *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*, uses violent pain metaphors in association with love-madness and with the beauty of his love object. It also concerns the threshold between the binary states of night and day, with amazement being the positive way that the poet's senses are arrested during the day (quite unlike George Chapman discussed above), in contrast with the far more sinister mental torment that comes with the night that is not associated with amazement:

> Darke night blacke image of my foule dispare,
> With greeuous fancies cease to vexe my soule,

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[103] Pertile, 'All His Sences', p.423.

With payne, sore smart, hot fires, cold feares, long care:
Too much (alas) this ceaselesse stone to roule.

My dayes be spent in penning thy sweet prayses,
In pleading to thy bewtie neuer matched,
In looking on thy face, whose sight amazes
My sence, and thus my long dayes be dispatched.

But night fourth from the mistie region rising
Fancies with feare, and sad dispayer doth send,
Mine hart with horrour, and vayne thoughtes agrizing:

And thus the fearefull tedious nightes I spend:
Wishing the noone to me were silent night,
And shades nocturnall, turned to daylight.[104]

Even when opinion varies on the details of the positive, creative state of

madness, it is widely considered to exist and to be closely linked to pain and

violence, and to other liminal states.

In Robert Greene's *Pandosto*, the extreme beauty of Fawnia causes

amazement for the people she lives amongst, and later Dorastus stands 'in a

maze' at her beauty.[105] These instances of amazement occur at transitional

points during Fawnia's life: her puberty at age 16, and her meeting with Dorastus

shortly after he has been discussing his wish to marry.[106] Other instances of

amazement in *Pandosto* even more strikingly bring together liminality and

amazement. At the transitional site of the seashore the shepherd stands 'a good

while in a maze' before retrieving the infant Fawnia from the water and thereby

birthing her into her new life (and retrieving her from death).[107] Later, at the

close of the play her second rebirth, back into her father's family, is heralded by

the King's passion, or lack of control, which drives everyone 'into a maze'.[108]

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[104] Barnabe Barnes, *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* (1593).
[105] Robert Greene, *Pandosto* (1588), sig.C4ᵛ, D3ʳ.
[106] Greene, *Pandosto,* sig.O3ᵛ.
[107] Greene, *Pandosto,* sig.C4ʳ.
[108] Greene, *Pandosto,* sig.O3ᵛ. Another coincidence of mazes, madness, and multiple layers of
liminality comes in Webster's *The White Devil* (1612). After Flamineo confesses to a 'maze

Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale*, for which *Pandosto* is a source, similarly associates amazement with liminal moments. When Florizel and Perdita return, a Lord says that he speaks 'amazedly' as if to excuse his confused and inarticulate relating of the news (5.1.186). Later the ritual telling of the shepherd's story results in a hiatus for 'a little amazedness' as it is too much to take in (5.2.3-4). Paulina's revelation of Hermione further consolidates the association between amazement, ritual, and liminality that was started in Greene's text:

> Quit presently the chapel or resolve you
> For more amazement. If you can behold it,
> I'll make the statue move indeed, descend
> And take you by the hand; but then you'll think –
> Which I protest against – I am assisted
> By wicked powers.
> (5.3.86-91)

This double ritual of rebirth and marriage, whereby the statue will come to life and take her husband by the hand, takes place in a chapel, a ritual space. Even here though there is an anxiety, a fear of witchcraft or 'wicked powers' at the centre of the ritual. Amazement is a positive transformative process, but not one without fear or danger. There is a path that can be found, by way of a temporarily introspective mental state, to a deeper understanding and wisdom by having found one's way out of the maze, more so than if one had not become lost at all. But this altered mental state comes through ritual and ritual, as well as or perhaps because of its association with Catholicism and idolatry, has at its heart the potential for infiltration by evil due to the mind being disordered, unruly, or having failed in the proper protection of its thresholds. For many Protestants,

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of conscience' in his breast, the ghost of Brachiano appears, collapsing his indeterminate state and guiding him out of the maze to the conclusion of the tragedy. Ghosts are in themselves liminal figures, and Brachiano has himself been subject to a liminal period of madness and feigned death rites between his poisoning and his eventual death. John Webster, *The White Devil*, ed. Christina Luckyj (London: Methuen Drama, 2008), 5.3.81-173; 5.5.115-143.

ritual was something that could seduce and deceive its participants, playing on their human failing and weak-willed desire for visual spectacle and other sensory input. Liminality at the centre of ritual was a time of unguarded openness and possibility, and therefore vulnerability.

In spite of these fears, the festive madness and amazement that occurs in literature provides a more positive picture of altered mental states than the madman in chains or the Bedlam beggar, even though both madness and amazement bring confusion and a temporary inability to continue with normal life. Amazement provides a temporary form of altered psyche that is part of a broad spectrum of madness that includes other transformative and transient states, including festive rituals or falling in love.

Shakespeare links amazement, or being 'in a maze' specifically with festive experience when Titania speaks of the seasons being ruined and 'the quaint mazes in the wanton green' being abandoned and indistinguishable (2.1.99-100). Neither the festival nor the maze can fulfil their restorative or clarifying purpose. Later in the same speech, she describes the world as 'mazed', that is, held in suspension until the puzzle of her conflict with Oberon has been solved, foreshadowing the twists and turns of plot that are to come in the woods (2.1.113). *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is of course already inextricably linked with temporary and festive madness as it concerns the transient and transformative insanity states of youth and love.

In *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser's mentions of amazement are often accompanied by metamorphoses related to gender, most commonly some kind of impotence or emasculation. In Book IV Scudamour 'senseless stood, like to a mazed steare' (vi.37). The OED defines 'steer' as a young ox, especially one that

has been castrated, and cites its use in *Faerie Queene* Book III (canto ix).[109] The

superficial reading is that Spenser is gendering madness as female, and

femaleness as merely a lack of maleness. However, as discussed in chapter 2,

there is more to early modern expressions of gender and desire than male and

female binaries, although there are some types of androgyny or hermaphroditic

gender expression that Spenser finds unacceptable, including some instances of

emasculated knights as well as overly masculine women like the Amazon

Radigund. Other passages seem to indicate the existence of an ideal harmony or

synthesis between masculine and feminine, such as Scudamour and Amoret's

embrace at the end of Book III of the 1590 version (III.xii.46*) hermaphroditic

Venus in the Temple of Venus and Nature in the *Mutabilitie Cantos*. The

androgynous presentations of Scudamour and others, transcending the gendered

body whilst in a madness state, seem consistent with these neo-platonist models.

If Spenser is attracted to, or at least admires, certain types of androgyny, even if

that is arguably limited to the more symbolic or at least the more

heteronormative forms (ones that support the ultimate goals of marriage and

childbearing), then a step away from masculinity is a positive one in this context,

and casts the experience of amazement in a positive light similar to Erasmus'

depictions of folly.

    At moments of amazement in Spenser multifaceted, or otherwise complex

gender and sexuality result in the mind being transported or suspended. This

suspension results in incapacity to fulfil one's role, something which lies at the

heart of the early modern use of the term 'disabled' as I shall discuss further in

my next chapter. Duncan Salkeld states that 'madness signified terrible loss since

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[109] 'steer, n.1' *OED Online.* Oxford University Press, March 2013, (accessed 20 March 2013).

it rendered the body useless'.[110] This can definitely be seen with women's madness, as their bodies' capacity for their perceived reproductive role was inextricably caught up with sexuality and mental state, unless their bodies were violently brought back into use by forced intercourse. Early modern women's madness was a state that invited violence against the body as the perceived source of the madness. This madness also represented a liminal, undefined, state signified by loss of status and purpose. Madness for literary female figures in the period is marginally less bleak, with flashes of festive escape.

Amazement however is largely the preserve of male characters. It is more usually a reaction to women than something experienced by them. Amazement can also render characters 'disabled' by their mental state. They become incapable, albeit temporarily, of continuing with their role in life, usually the role of the knight. In Book IV the battling knights find their masculine phallic swords are useless, when 'in a maze they both did long remaine'. Their 'troncheons' are idle (IV.iv.18). Later, again in the midst of sexually charged combat, when Artegall discovers that the knight he is fighting is in fact Britomart, his weaponry becomes similarly impotent, his 'cruell sword out of his fingers slacke/ Fell downe to ground, as if the steele had sence' (IV.vi.21). The imagery of sentient or sensuous steel strengthens the phallic association and there is a correlation between this and his mental state: the traumatic experience 'did his sense assayle', says the text. When Britomart recognises Artegall, her masculine, martial persona also becomes impotent, and she can no longer hold her 'wrathfull weapon' (IV. vi. 27).

Amazement in Spenser occurs in the liminal space where gender rules do

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[110] Salkeld, *Madness and Drama,* p.80.

not apply and where attraction can happen to any gender, multiple genders, or no gender. However, he does seem to have a preference for depicting it as the experience of characters who have some claim to male or androgynous status within the narrative. Shakespeare also seems to allow for this altered mental state in the face of gender revelations or multiple desires. In *Twelfth Night*, when Cesario's gender is revealed, Sebastian tells Olivia that she is 'betrothed to a maid and a man' and Orsino immediately reassures her saying 'be not amazed', suggesting amazement would be an expected reaction in such a situation, but not a desirable state (5.1.259-260). Certainly amazement, even when it also provides transcendental wonder and enlightenment, can be an unpleasant experience marked by shock and distress. In this case Olivia's status as a woman is already at risk owing to her role as a ruler and her inadvertent courting of a woman. Shakespeare seems to share Spenser's gender bias to a certain extent. It could be argued, for example, that Edgar and Hamlet take control of the behaviours and rituals that invoke the transformative space of madness, and as such their feigning is merely an autonomy that female characters do not have access to. In a rare instance of a woman feigning madness, Isabella in *The Changeling* disguises herself as a mad women in a way that has as much to do with the trope of women dressing up to further a love plot, as it has to do with feigned madness as a means of self-discovery or to uncover truth. Furthermore, she is only copying something that two male characters have already done.

The escape or passage through the physical and psychological woods and mazes in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and other festive comedies positions

amazement as a positive process.[111] However, even in its most favourable

incarnations, the maze perhaps provides an overly simplistic view of the possible

positive outcomes for madness, one where a way out is the ultimate goal to be

striven towards at all costs. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example, the

resolution of the mad interlude in the woods can only be maintained because

Demetrius remains permanently drugged, and as such is able to fit into a neat

heteronormative happy ending.

A Local Habitation and a Name: Madness as a Legitimate State

The psychological issues explored by Spenser and Shakespeare are more

complex than the model of curing madness, or finding one's way out of a maze.

Throughout Books III and IV of *The Faerie Queene* Spenser represents

psychological or physical violence, in the forms of combat, sexual threat, or

captivity, as resulting in liminal states. These spaces occur between hetero- and

homo-eroticism, between masculine and feminine, and, perhaps most

significantly, between life and death. It is in these spaces that amazement, or

positive festive madness, take place, growing out of trauma.

During Artegall's amazement following the revelation of Britomart's

gender, he is held between male and female by his figurative castration on

dropping his sword, but also between life and death. Britomart stands over him

'Threatening to strike, unless he would upstand:/ And bade him rise, or surely he

should die./ But die or live for nought he would upstand' (IV.vi.23). In

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[111] The presence of Theseus strengthens the link with mazes as it was Theseus and Ariadne in Greek mythology who defeated the Minotaur and rescuing the prisoners from the labyrinth.

Shakespeare too, festivity is often a response to a life-threatening situation such as a shipwreck or banishment, or a flight from a threat of violence resulting from one's sexual choices.[112] In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Theseus ominously reminds Hermia that her father has the right under Athenian law to kill or disfigure his daughter if her choice of a mate goes against his wishes, and this threat is the violent catalyst for her forest retreat (1.1.42-51).[113] Festive spaces are, at least for some, a festive reaction to oppression, invisibility, and traumatic events. As such, liminality becomes somewhere to stay and revisit rather than something to be passed through as part of a process.

Madness is positioned by Erasmus as a legitimate state, a foretaste of heaven to which people would wish to return. The concept of madness as a legitimate state is also explored in the famous passage from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* about lovers, madmen, and poets:

> Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
> Such shaping fancies, that apprehend
> More than cool reason ever comprehends.
> The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
> Are of imagination all compact.
> One sees more devils than vast hell can hold:
> That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic,
> Sees Helen's beauty in the brow of Egypt.
> The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
> And as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name. (5.1.4-17)

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[112] This can be seen in Hermia's flight from her father's threat of forced marriage in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in Ferdinand's experience on the island following the shipwreck in *The Tempest*, In Rosalind's flight to join her violently exiled father in the forest in *As You Like It*, and in Perdita's festive or pastoral upbringing after being banished for her mother's supposed infidelity in *The Winter's Tale*.

[113] St Dymphna, patron saint of nervous disorders, escaped the marriage plans of her incestuous father, only to be murdered by him. Legend says the shock of the murder cured several lunatics who witnessed it (See Arnold, *Bedlam*, p.31).

The character of Theseus speaks these words out of scepticism or perhaps even contempt but, Shakespeare's self-deprecation aside, the alignment of lunatics and lovers with poets, including the poet of this passage, suggests that none of the three should be dismissed out of hand.[114] This passage strengthens the link between madness and the spiritual realms of heaven and hell. It also connects madness with the shifting perception and fluidity that surrounds sexual and romantic love. Shakespeare, as the poet, is also depicting himself as mad and therefore aligning himself with these other aspects of insanity. Spenser's work seems in many places to distrust the physical or visual world. Shakespeare in contrast seeks to bring something out of the metaphorical or psychological world and make it a physical, concrete entity. His giving shape to airy nothing goes beyond the seemingly grudging return to the body of Donne's lovers in 'The Ecstasy', who see the body as a platonic metaphorical prison for the princely soul.[115] This is something that sees a definite advantage to making an imaginary or 'mad' space into a real-life space. For marginalised groups forging their temporary, festive spaces in the gaps between heterosexual and homosexual, or between masculine and feminine, this is particularly important. Something which has a habitation, or a home, has legitimacy. Something which has a name is recognised and valid. Something that is mentioned in canonical literature like Shakespeare gains additional validity and cultural currency. It is the lovers,

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[114] Shakespeare's writing about poets elsewhere is less than complimentary, for example in *As You Like It* where Orlando is seen pinning terrible verses to trees in the forest. However, whereas the scene in *As You Like It* might be seen as an indictment against the Elizabethan fashion for (poor quality) sonneteering, this speech from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* suggests 'the poet' as a generic concept as well as *the* poet (the one who wrote this passage). In the middle poems of *The Sonnets* the poet compares himself unfavourably to a rival, identified by some critics as George Chapman. See Snare, *Mystification of George Chapman*, pp.21-24.

[115] Donne, 'The Ecstasy', in *Complete Poems*, pp.180-181. Lines 65-72. It would be foolish, however, to ignore the possibility that the whole poem is merely utilising these ideas in an elaborate seduction ruse.

especially the transgressive ones, and the lunatics who make this possible. These spaces of festive love and madness, although temporary, are then available to be revisited. Theseus and Hippolyta's world in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is revisited in *Two Noble Kinsmen.* The details of the two plays are very different but, whilst written twenty years apart and probably for different playhouses and audiences, they are set in the same space within days of each other and the same expectations of festivity and licence apply.

To sum up, the treatment and representation of madness or psychological variance in the early modern period was largely negative, especially with relation to women. Historical records do suggest that this treatment was not as violent or horrific as might have been culturally assumed. However, this cultural assumption of violence informed the literature of the period, and metaphorical and allegorical depictions of madness were formed in reaction to and against it. There are also alternative, perhaps more subversive, discourses of madness available in the texts of Spenser, Shakespeare, and others. As can be readily seen in cases like *Orlando Furioso*, madness, like sexuality or gender, was something fluid that anyone, even heroes and heroines, could move in and out of. Neely suggests madness was 'likely viewed as discrete, widely varied (and potentially transient) behaviours rather than as a permanent condition of an individual'.[116] I would qualify this by saying that 'mad' *could* be something that you were, in so much as we can possibly hope to understand early modern concepts of self-identity, but madness could also be a passing phase, revisited or otherwise, or alternatively a behaviour or set of behaviours, including those ritual behaviours intended to allow passage into a liminal state of discovery. Madness coincided

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[116] Neely, 'Did Madness Have a Renaissance?' p.778.

with other forms of liminality or between-ness, including sexuality, gender, and life stage. Despite slow movement towards more secular views of madness, it retained the medieval status that Neely describes as 'the point of intersection between the human, the divine, and the demonic' that 'confirmed the inseparability of the human and transcendent'.[117] Whether dark and disturbing, or fickle and foolish, madness in early modern literature and culture could be a transformative force enabling the emergence from a threshold into a new state of understanding or existence, but it could alternatively be a space of great power formed by holding open the liminal space. Madness could be a space of becoming, but also a legitimate space of being.

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[117] Neely, 'Documents in Madness', p.318.

Chapter 5
Halting to the Grave: Liminal Narratives and the Disabled Body

The strongest may take a fall, and become weak as a child;
as a lustie man with a bruise by a fall may goe halting to his grave.[1]

This chapter presents an overview of, and historical context for, early modern attitudes to physical disability, including an analysis of Thomas Adams' use of disability to illustrate his sermons and an account of Montaigne's writings on disabled bodies and sex. I use this contextual background to examine Spenser's accounts of Munera and Adonis in *The Faerie Queene* and to look at Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Titus Andronicus*, most notably engaging with the existing feminist academic debate concerning the ability or disability of Lavinia.

The disabled, or impaired, bodies of Shakespearean characters including Richard III and Lavinia are familiar to both audiences and critics. However, disability studies is a relatively new discipline and especially so within early modern scholarship. It has been spearheaded by figures including Rosemarie Garland Thomson, Lennard Davis, David T. Mitchell, and Sharon Snyder. Ellen Samuels calls disability analysis a 'radical endeavor', saying that, unlike other identity categories, '(dis)ability is not yet widely recognized as a legitimate or relevant position from which to address such broad subjects as literature, philosophy, and the arts'.[2] This new approach has gained an increasing amount of ground within literary scholarship in recent decades and has now begun to be applied to early modern studies in works including the 2013 *Recovering Disability in Early Modern England*, which includes two essays on *The Faerie*

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[1] Timothy Rogers, *Saving Beliefe* (1644), p.168.
[2] Ellen Samuels, 'Critical Divides: Judith Butler's Body Theory and the Question of Disability', *NWSA Journal*, 14 (2002), 58-76 (p.58).

Queene and one on *Richard III*.[3]

Lennard Davis says of the advent of disability studies that 'disability is beginning to provide a new lens through which perceptions can be refracted in a different light', although he expresses concern that 'most scholars still consider disability an anamorphic lens displaying distorted or grotesque subjects who are rather more "them" than "us"'.[4] The literature and art of the early modern period certainly has its fair share of grotesque figures, many of which depict individuals who would now be considered disabled. However, this chapter seeks to move beyond the early modern disabled person's role as spectacle, and looks at the social model of disability, which suggests that it is not an impairment that disables a person, but rather society's inability to make adjustments for that impairment.[5] The chapter uses the framework of disability theory to investigate how disability was conceptualised and categorised, and how it informed Renaissance literature and ideas.

Disability in the early modern period is linked to violence through the acquisition of impairments due to illness and injury. In addition, the violence of childbirth, combined with the unruly and seemingly mysterious behaviour of the female imagination at conception and during pregnancy, were associated with the possibly of producing a deformed or 'monstrous' infant.[6]

Disability is also linked with liminality and liminal spaces. Bakhtin

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[3] Allison P. Hobgood and David Houston Wood, eds, *Recovering Disability in Early Modern England* (Columbus: Ohio State University, 2013).

[4] Lennard T. Davis, 'Crips Strike Back: The Rise of Disability Studies', *American Literary History*, 11 (1999), 500-512 (p.509).

[5] See Michael Oliver, *The Politics of Disablement* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), pp.10-11 and Jane Campbell and Michael Oliver, *Disability Politics: Understanding Our Past, Changing Our Future* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.20.

[6] Marie-Hélène Huet, *Monstrous Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p.13.

associates grotesque representations of deformed human bodies with carnival, a liminal space associated with religious calendars and rituals, existing outside everyday life where alternative rules apply.[7] Yet disability and deformity are perhaps even more strongly associated with rituals surrounding death; Stiker, for example, writes of lepers being 'obliged to rites of mourning' and 'excluded from the world of the living'.[8] Stephen Pender writes of the products of anatomy and dissection, the 'skin, bones, and organs of notorious criminals and anomalous medical cases', being 'tinged with the colours of memento mori'.[9]

The early modern female body was often seen as a 'deformed male' in the Aristotelian model, thus both pathologising women into disability by their mere existence, and feminising disabled men out of their masculinity.[10] Women are 'crooked by nature' according to Swetnam (1615), because they were made from Adam's rib and a rib is a 'crooked thing'.[11] But non-standard bodies can be subversive; Lennard Davis suggests discourses and critiques of sexuality and gender are peopled with 'alternative bodies', including some that were discussed in chapter 2. But, he says 'lurking behind these images of transgression and

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[7] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, pp.303-367. It is again necessary to note subsequent criticism which asks questions around whether these temporary releases in fact served to re-assert social control in the everyday realm. However, Stallybrass and White maintain that 'it actually makes little sense to fight out the issue of whether or not carnivals are *intrinsically* radical or conservative'. *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London: Methuen, 1986), p.14.

[8] Henri-Jacques Stiker, *History of Disability* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1999), p.25. Stiker conceptualises 'rites of mourning' as pertaining to the ritualistic use of bells, specific costume, and to the positioning of lepers outside of the boundaries of the town.

[9] Stephen Pender, 'In the Bodyshop: Human Exhibition in Early Modern England', in *Defects: Engendering the Modern Body*, ed. Helen Deutsch and Felicity Nussbaum (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp.95-126 (p.103).

[10] Samuels, 'Critical Divides', p.65. The use of ableist language by those writing about intersecting concerns (sexuality, gender, etc) is something that (rightly) attracts criticism from disability theorists. Samuels critiques this in Butler's writing and Siebers criticises Sedgwick for it in her writings about shame, suggesting her analogy of the raving and urinating figure in the lecture room demonstrates the idea that only some people are significant enough or have enough status to feel shame or to be worthy of shaming (Tobin Siebers, *Disability Theory* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2008), pp. 160-163).

[11] Joseph Swetnam, *The Araignment of Leud, Idle, Froward, and Vnconstant Women* (1615), p.1.

deviance is a much more transgressive and deviant figure: the disabled body'.[12]

The word 'disabled' was not frequently used in the early modern period, but it does occur. Shakespeare uses it in sonnet 66, 'strength by limping sway disabled', and in the 1622 play *Herod and Antipater*, when Adda is brought before Herod after injuries sustained when jumping from her house, Herod's first question is 'by what meanes comes she thus disabled?'.[13] Where the term *is* used in early modern English it does not map directly onto a modern definition. The implication is a removal from one's function or role in life. The closest modern-day sense is 'rendered incapable of action or use; incapacitated; taken out of service', as given by the OED, a definition that predominantly refers to objects rather than people.[14] The first citation in the OED for this usage is from John Florio's 1598 *Worlde of Wordes*, an Italian/English dictionary. Florio's translation makes the word 'disabled' synonymous with 'graceles' and 'disgraced' as a translation of the Italian 'sgratiato'.[15] The direct translation of 'sgratiato' is 'disgraced', although the usage may have been more akin to 'ill-favoured'. The term ill-favoured in this period is often synonymous with ugly, but the notion that disabled people in the early modern period might have been considered literally ill favoured, that is, not favoured, including by God, is not hard to imagine. When considering the relationship between disability and sin, the implication that dis-ability might also mean dis-grace, a lack of grace in the Christian sense, is an intriguing parallel. The idea that some individuals had the 'ability' to access grace and be saved, and others did not, was particularly

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[12] Davis, *Crips Strike Back,* p.5.

[13] Markham and Sampson, *Herod and Antipater,* sig.I2ᵛ.

[14] 'disabled, adj. and n.' *OED Online.* Oxford University Press, December 2013 (accessed 7 March 2014), Sense 1.

[15] With thanks to Roberta Klimt for help with the Italian.

relevant to Calvinist doctrines of predestination and reprobation, suggesting the possibility of damning assumptions about those deemed 'unable' or 'disabled' in more general contexts.[16]

In the absence of a commonplace early modern use of the word 'disabled', other terms including 'deformed', 'lame', 'crippled', and 'crooked' were used to describe the appearance of bodies that were injured or otherwise unusual or 'unnatural'. As well as form, these terms described some of the issues of function that are discussed under the modern-day conception of disability, that is, an impairment or long-term medical condition that adversely affects everyday life or, to take the social model, for which the inability of society to make adequate adjustments has a negative impact on everyday life. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson makes a distinction between historical discussions of disabled people under the categories of 'invalidity' and 'monstrosity'.[17] This is also distinction between form and function, and cultural reactions to each category can vary. The concept of being 'in-valid' corresponds with the early modern concept of being dis-abled (unable), whilst the discourses of the time seem often fixated on monstrosity, and the visible element.[18] The two do have close links in the cultural consciousness in the period though, with visible differences often taken as signs of what a person was or was not capable of, as well as what their character may have been. Here I address both function and form, although I am

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[16] For further discussion see Goodey, *A History of Intelligence and 'Intellectual Disability'*, pp.169-170.

[17] Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, 'Redrawing the Boundaries of Feminist Disability Studies', *Feminist Studies*, 20 (1994), 582-595.

[18] The word 'invalid' is somewhat anachronistic for this chapter (although not the book that Rosemarie Garland-Thomson was reviewing) as it appears in English as a noun sometime in the second half of the seventeenth century. See 'invalid, adj.2 and n.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2013, (accessed 7 March 2014). Both 'disabled'(in its early modern sense) and 'invalid' have implications of worthlessness or uselessness and are more sweeping labels than the modern usage of 'disabled' or the word 'impaired'.

primarily concerned with physical deformity and impairment rather than mental illness, cognitive impairment, or sensory disability such as deafness or blindness.[19]

Early Modern Contexts for Disability

This was a time of huge advances in the field of dissection and human anatomy, resulting in new ideas as to how the human body should look and function.[20] Terminology like 'normal' was still to come, but the question of what was 'natural' or ideal had an impact on how people viewed those with disabilities. The medical dissection of ideal or standard bodies existed alongside grotesque artistic representations of deformed bodies, often for satirical or didactic purposes. Bakhtin writes that Rabelais himself performed at least one dissection and remained concerned with 'extraordinary human beings', 'fanciful anatomy' and 'grotesque dismemberment'.[21]

Questions of what made someone an acceptable human were working in parallel with older ideas about the role of sin and judgment in the existence of individuals who did not meet the criteria for what Valerie Traub terms the 'universal corporeal standard'.[22] In the 1990s Rosemarie Garland-Thomson coined the term 'normate' to describe 'the veiled subject position of cultural self,

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[19] Deafness is a special case when considering early modern spoken sermons in particular, and lies outside the scope of this thesis. See Hunt, *The Art of Hearing*, pp.24-25; 55.

[20] For a comprehensive account of the effects of advances in dissection on Renaissance culture see Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995).

[21] Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, pp.345-347.

[22] Valerie Traub, 'The Nature of Norms in Early Modern England: Anatomy, Cartography, King Lear', *South Central Review*, 26 (2009), 42-81 (p.49). Page 45 of this article gives a fuller discussion of the relationship between the medieval concept of nature and the modern concept of norms.

the figure outlined by the array of deviant others whose marked bodies shore up the normate's boundaries'; the normate is 'the constructed identity of those who, by way of the bodily configurations and cultural capital they assume, can step into a position of authority and wield the power it grants them'.[23] These ideas are also relevant to the ideas and attitudes being developed and codified in the early modern period.

> Andreas Vesalius wrote in *De Humani Corporis Fabrica:*
>
> Corpus itaque publicae sectioni adhiberi convenit, in suo sexu quam temperatissimum, et aetatis mediae, ut ad hoc tanquam ad Policleti statua alia corpora possis coferre.[24]

Traub's rendering of this, slightly emended from her source, is 'It is desirable that the body employed for public dissection be as intermediate in nature as possible according to its sex and of medium age, so that you may compare other bodies to it, as if to the statue of Policleus'.[25] Is the anatomical standard then the normate 'shored up' by the infinite variety of the grotesque?

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[23] Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p.8.

[24] Andreas Vesalius, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica Libri Septem* (Basel, 1543).

[25] Traub, 'The Nature of Norms', p.53. Traub's footnote to her citation of this quotation reads: 'The translation is taken from the excerpts published as an appendix to C.D. O'Malley, *Andreas Vesalius of Brussels, 1514-1564* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 317 ff., 343, with my modification of the translation of "quam temperatissimum" from *normal* to the less anachronistic *intermediate in nature*. I wish to thank Cathy Sanok and Basil Duffalo for help with the Latin'. Vesalius is here presumably referring to Greek sculptor Polykleitos, renowned for the mathematical balance in the proportions of his sculptures of beautiful and heroic young men. The nude figure of sleeping Hermaphroditus discussed in chapter 2, displaying a different sort of balance, was sculpted by Polykles and both are mentioned by Pliny. (See Robertson, *A Shorter History of Greek Art*, pp.202-203).
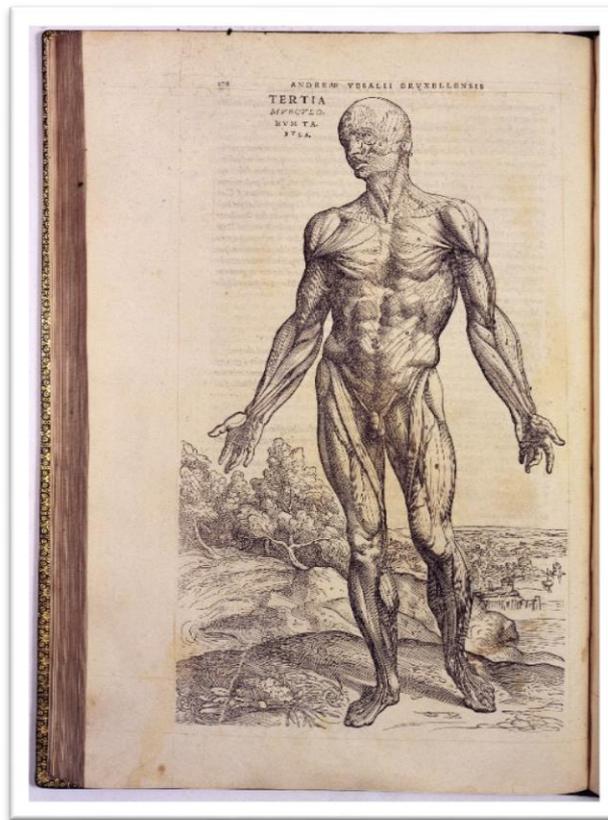
Figure 1: Anatomy diagram set in a landscape. Andreas Vesalius, 'Tertia musculatorum', *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (1543). Wellcome Images.

This reduction of the 'natural' human body to merely the median specimens reverses reality. The idealised body, associated with statuary and the dissection of the dead, is held up as natural, even being placed by artists in the natural, or pseudo-natural, living landscape. In contrast the different, the deformed, and the disabled, despite being representative of the everyday diversity of human life, are forced to the fringes of that life, exiled by the circumstances of their births and their associations with death.

Inherited disabilities, or 'birth defects' were the subject of much debate in the early modern period. Many believed deformities could be caused by the parents' excessive lust, by having a child (a mole, or mooncalf) conceived during menstruation, or by things that were seen or experienced by the mother during

conception and pregnancy.[26] Monstrous births, both human and animal, were also seen as messages, or more literally demonstrations, indicating God's judgements.[27] As Helen Hackett discusses in an essay on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the fairies' blessing to the three mortal couples at the end of the play offers reassurance that this will not happen.[28] These marriages will produce 'fortunate' children and not 'blots of nature's hand'. There will be no 'mole, harelip, nor scar,/ Nor mark prodigious' (5.2.35-42). Beliefs about the causes and meanings of 'monstrous births' were still dependent on medieval thinking and the public display of such individuals (usually deceased infants) was commonplace. This was not accepted unquestioningly though; in 1635 Thomas Bedford, the father of stillborn conjoined twins, asked:

> Whether monsters and misshapen births may lawfully be carried up and downe the country for sights to make a gaine by them? Whether the Births being once dead, may be kept from the grave for the former ends? Whether the parents of such births may sel them to another.[29]

Although Bedford refers in a rather detached way to 'births' rather than people or children, the anxiety about keeping these infants from their graves emphasises the liminal nature of both birth and death, the assumptions that both states would be moved through to reach the next stage, and the importance of the proper rites and rituals being observed to ensure the smooth transition. In the case of a 'two-headed monster' born in Exeter in 1682, the children were even

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[26] Huet, *Monstrous Imagination,* pp.13-35; 136.

[27] A full discussion of this concept can be found in Julie Crawford, *Marvelous Protestantism: Monstrous Births in Post-Reformation England* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1968).

[28] Helen Hackett, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', in *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works: Comedies*, ed. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp.349-350. This passage also discusses the possibility that the blessing is a reassurance to Thomas and Elizabeth Berkeley that Thomas' acquired disabilities, following an injury in his teens, would not be passed on to their children.

[29] Thomas Bedford, *A True and Certaine Relation of a Strange-Birth* (1635), pp.12-13.

buried and then disinterred and put on display, raising questions about the extent

to which the usual transition rites surrounding life and death were seen as

relevant to disabled individuals.[30] Stephen Pender identifies a shift in public

opinion between the 1560s and the 1700s, from interest and anxiety in such

exhibits as omens of the end of days, to questioning the human nature of people

who wanted to view them.[31]

For those who survived the birth and neonatal period, the dissolution of

religious institutions during the Reformation resulted in a lack of provision for

the sick and disabled. As discussed in the previous chapter, some institutions,

including Bedlam, survived by virtue of having become more secular by the time

the Reformation happened. In general though there was a loss of hospital

provision at this time, whether in the sense of a place for caring for the sick or

any other residential provision for the poor which would have been included

under the word 'hospital'. Between 1530 and 1559, 291 of the English alms

houses, identified by Marjorie Keniston McIntosh in her study of poor relief,

were closed down, amounting to 47% of the total.[32] The perceived increase in the

numbers of beggars on the streets caused public anxiety. Prior to the dissolution

of the monasteries Simon Fish's *The Supplication for the Beggars* (c.1529)

blames this increase on a corrupt clergy; states that money given by the crown to

monasteries was not used to help the poor and sick as it was intended; and asks

the King to build instead 'a sure hospital that neuer shal faile to releue vs'.[33] By

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[30] Pender, 'In The Bodyshop', p.100.

[31] Pender, 'In The Bodyshop', p.104.

[32] Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England 1350-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.125. Appendix C (p.303) of the book displays a huge spike in the number of closures during these years.

[33] Simon Fish, *A Supplication for the Beggars* (Antwerp, 1529), pp.15-16. The text is a polemic calling for the abolishment of religious orders. The word 'storue' here could mean 'starve',

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1546 however, *A Supplication of the Poore Commons*, probably by Henry

Brinkelow and published with Fish's text as an appendix, admonishes the king

for the loss of religious institutions, saying 'sturdy' beggars are extorting alms

from charitable people while 'pore impotent creatures' who used to have

'hospitals, and almeshouses to be lodged in' now 'lye and storue in the stretes'.[34]

So, much early modern understanding of what would today be termed

disability focused on birth and death: the monstrous birth kept from the grave;

the impotent creature dying in the street; or the anatomised and dissected dead

serving as a symbol of physical ideals that few embodied. Little attention was

paid to the lived experience of disabled people other than as waiting between one

state and the other. Disabled people were often not differentiated from the

general poor, either for the provision of aid or as the focus of judgment. Bryan

Breed asserts that fear of disabled people was fundamental to their treatment

during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and resulted in their being kept in

alms houses and put to work. They were though, he says 'not perceived as a

group distinct from the poor'.[35] With alms houses closing, the social anxiety

engendered by the disabled poor was set to increase or at least to become more

evident.

During the latter half of the sixteenth century a large number of poor laws

were introduced to counter public concern about the issues of begging, vagrancy,

and poor relief.[36] William Harrison's 1570s account of the 'prouision made for

with the same meaning as the modern usage, or it could be the earlier meaning 'die'. See
'starve, v.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2014, (accessed 19 April 2014).

[34] Henry Brinkelow (attr.), *A Supplication of the Poore Commons* (1546), p.291.

[35] Bryan Breed, *From Scorn to Dignity: A Brief History of Disability* (London: New European
Publications, 2008), p.5.

[36] For a comprehensive account of the multiple and varied poor laws introduced in the Tudor
period, see McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England* 1350-1600.

the poore' was divided into three categories, each with subcategories. It is little challenge to discern where the writer's opinions lie with regards to the deserving and undeserving poor:

1 The poor by impotence
  1.1   the fatherless child
  1.2   the aged, blind, and lame
  1.3   the diseased person that is iudged to be incurable
2 The poor by casualty
  2.1   the wounded soldier
  2.2   the decaied householder
  2.3   the sicke persone visited with grieuous and painefull diseases
3 The poor thriftless
  3.1   the riotour that hath consumed all
  3.2   the vagabond that will abide no where
  3.3   the rog[u]e and strumpet[37]

A. L. Beier writes that Tudor statutes did distinguish between the disabled and the able-bodied poor but that the relationships between the two were complex. The main divide, he says, was between the settled and the vagrant poor (each containing both able and disabled people), which were seen as 'contrasting groups receiving different treatment'.[38] Beier maintains 70% of settled paupers were able bodied but often unemployed and that the rationale behind the poor laws was consistently 'to punish the "wilfully idle" and to relieve the disabled'.[39]

As in the case of madness discussed in the previous chapter, the idea that people would mimic, or even induce, physical disability in order to obtain alms fraudulently was a pervasive one. William Langland's highly influential fourteenth-century text *Piers Plowman* (first available in print in 1550)

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[37] William Harrison in Raphaell Holinshed, *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles*, 1587, p.182. The passage dates from approximately 1577 and is also included in William Harrison's text as published by F.J. Furnivall as *Description of England in Shakespeare's Youth*, Shakespeare Library (London, 1908), p.213.

[38] A.L. Beier, *The Problem of the Poor in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (London: Methuen, 1983), p.5.

[39] Beier, *The Problem of the Poor,* pp.5-6; 13.

comments on the prevalence of 'misshapen people' amongst the ranks of the

beggars and claims that many of these deformities were as a result of bastardy.

As mentioned above, there was an assumption that a disabled child could be the

result of the parents' sexual sins. The linking of disability to bastardy also occurs

in Ben Jonson's *Volpone* (1605), where Mosca tells Corvino that the dwarf, the

fool, and the eunuch are all Volpone's children, begotten, as were a dozen or

more bastards, during drunken liaisons with 'beggars, Gipsies, and Jews, and

blackmoors'.[40]

Langland suggests a horrifically pragmatic explanation as well though,

that some beggars break their own children's bones in order to disable them and

make them more effective at begging.[41] Ambrose Paré (1573) similarly warned

against those seeking alms who

> have stollen children, have broken or dislocated their armes and legges,
> have cut out their tongues, have depressed the chest, or whole breast, that
> with these, as their owne children, begging up and downe the country,
> they may get the more reliefe.[42]

The poor laws sought to bring begging under control, and with it the fear

of the fraudulent and potentially violent beggar. However, anxiety about feigned

illness or injury did nothing for the cause of disabled people living in poverty. In

response to the new laws some towns undertook censuses of the poor in order to

enable them better to comply with the statutes and to make the provision of alms

more consistent. Several places, including Warwick as well as smaller parochial

areas, undertook such research.[43] The most comprehensive surviving example is

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[40] Ben Jonson, *Volpone*, in *Five Plays*, ed. G.A. Wilkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 1.5.43-8.
[41] William Langland, *Piers Plowman* (1550), p.xxxviii.
[42] Ambroise Paré, *The Workes of That Famous Chirurgion Ambrose Parey* (1634), p.994.
[43] In 1586 Rev. Thomas Cartwright conducted a survey of the poor in Warwick. (McIntosh, p.146). For examples of poor relief in the Bedfordshire region familiar to Thomas Adams, see

the Norwich census of the poor from 1570. The survey discovered that just under a quarter of the town's population, 1433 adults (860 of them women) and 926 children under 16 years of age, could be designated poor. That is, they were probably poor enough not to have been included in the assessment for taxation in 1524-5. However, 66% of the adult male poor and 85% of the women were in employment and fewer than 25% received any financial support.[44]

In 1570 Norwich's mayor, John Aldrich, launched a campaign against vagrancy and vilified the poor, claiming that affluent citizens were dismayed by their numbers, and blaming the mercantile classes for being too generous and grandiose in their giving, thereby encouraging begging.[45] This is consistent with the idea that begging was a major problem in the period and one that was causing social anxiety. However, Aldrich's claims do not reflect court figures, which show fewer than one itinerant beggar a fortnight and no cases of affluent residents complaining.[46] Following the census the poor rate actually trebled, over 290 cases were assessed for the first time, and 'the city made itself responsible initially for 146 families who had previously received no support'.[47] So, although the census itself is very judgmental and its language pejorative, the net result was a positive one for poor people in Norwich.

The census gives the name, address, occupation, and family situation (including the presence of bastard children) of every poor person living in

also: *Elizabethan Churchwardens' Accounts*, ed. J.E. Farmiloe and R. Nixseaman (Bedford: Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 1953). Many examples of Churchwardens' records survive but are less comprehensive than the rarer surveys and censuses, only generally including those who were receiving alms.

[44] John F. Pound (ed.), *The Norwich Census of the Poor 1570* (Norwich: Norfolk Record Society, 1971), p.7.

[45] Pound, *Census of the Poor*, p.7.

[46] Pound, *Census of the Poor*, p.8.

[47] Pound, *Census of the Poor*, p.19. All further references are to this edition.

Norwich including whether or not they receive any alms. It also lists disabilities

including deafness, blindness, and lameness. Every entry is designated

'indeferent', 'pore', or 'veri pore' (and in at least one case 'miserable pore'). For

example:

> Thomas Barthlett of 50 yeris, with one hande, that worke nott, & Jane, his
> wyfe, of that age, that use to go abrode & peddle; & 3 children of 8, 6, 3
> yer, and a deaf wench that begge, and have dwelt here 7 yer, & cam from
> the northe (no alms, very poor) (p.55).[48]

Many of the people listed have what would now be considered a

disability. In some cases these result in them being given alms, in others they are

supported by relatives, sometimes they are listed as begging but very many are

working, for example Jone Bell:

> William Bell of 50 yeris, laborer, in worke, & Jone, his wyfe, of that age
> that spyn white warpe & is lame of one arme; & 3 [sic] chyldren of 8, 6
> yer & go to skole, & hav dwelt here 45 yere. [hable] (no alms,
> indifferent) (p.59).

The term 'hable' occurs frequently within the census, either in the margin

or after the details of a particular family or individual. It denotes that the person

is 'fit for work'. If Jone is working and has married and had children then she

does not fit the early modern usage of the word 'disabled' as she is fulfilling her

designated social role. The alms are directed to combat the poverty rather than to

allow the disabled person to cease work, and industriousness is expected,

regardless of physical difficulty.

The very old are occasionally not required to work, especially if there is

also an impairment. However, the same was not necessarily true of children.

Some entries describe a very young child or children 'that play' or that 'sucketh',

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[48] Note on the text: As with Pound's edition, text in square brackets represents later additions, sometimes in a different hand, text in triangular brackets represents crossings out, and marginalia are in italics.

suggesting everyone needed a role. This expectation would be significant for anyone rendered incapable of performing an accepted role because of injury, illness, or congenital issue. It is the role that is significant rather than the difficulties faced. Children as young as 6, for example, are described as 'idle' if they neither work nor go to school:

> Richard Cavard of 80 yer, haberdasher nott hable to work, & is lame of lyms, & Chrystian, his wyfe, of 50 years, that spyn & carde, & hav dwelt her 19 yers: & a child of 10 yere that is ydle & work not. (p.87)

> Thomas Damet of 67 yeris, cobler that work not for that he se not, & Betris, his wyf of 46 yeris, that spin white warpe; & 5 children, <2> 1 son<s> of 6 yer that is ydle, & 3 daughters of 15, 12, 11 yeris, & do all spyn white warpe, & hav dwelt here ever. (pp.34-35)

Sometimes, as with Richard Cavard above and Robert Garrod below, a disabled person's previous employment is given, further signifying that this is important to their identity and legitimacy:

> Robert Garrod of 90 yeris, glover not hable to work, & Jane, his wyfe, of 92 yeris, that lyeth bethred, & have dwelt here 40 yer. (p.90)[49]

Begging, especially by anyone not disabled, was heavily judged, although occasional alternative views were put forward. John Taylor's 1621 *The Praise, Antiquity, and Commodity of Beggery, Beggers, and Begging,* although satirical and tongue-in-cheek, paints a picture of the beggar as a romanticised, pastoral figure. However, the vagrancy of the beggar is overshadowed by violence through cultural associations with Cain, who, in the book of Genesis, commits the first murder and is banished to walk the Earth as 'a vagabonde and a rennegate' bearing a physical mark (a disfigurement) from God, albeit one that was meant to protect him from violence (4.8-15). 'It from the Elder

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[49] 'Bethred' here means 'bedridden'.

brother *(Caine)* began', says Taylor's text, 'The first that wandring o're the earth did passe', and the margin note says: 'Beggery descended from Caine, who was the first man that euer was borne, & heire apparant to the whole world'.[50]

Taylor also takes the opportunity to critique supposedly charitable noblemen whose dealings as landlords were anything but:

> This Noble Lord, Ignobly did oppresse
> His Tenants, raising Rents to such excesse:
> That they their states not able to maintaine,
> They turn'd starke beggers in a yeare or twaine.
> Yet though this Lord were too too miserable,
> He in his House kept a well furnish'd Table:
> Great store of Beggers dayly at his Gate,
> Which he did feed, and much Compassionate.
> (For 'tis within the power of mighty men
> To make fiue hundred Beggers, and feed Ten.[51]

He goes on to describe all mankind as penitent beggars before God, both on a daily basis within life, and when we are judged after death.

However, despite these occasionally indulgent and romanticised literary portrayals, early modern judgement of real-life 'sturdy' beggars was almost exclusively negative. In *The Norwich Poor Census*, even beggars who are viewed more sympathetically are still dehumanised and described as things rather than people:

> Jone Hawne of 40 yeris, wedowe, a bodger; & 2 children of 8, 4 yer that ar ydle, & have dwelt here 12 yer, & is a rank beger (p.81).[52]

> Maude House of 60 yere, a wedowe that is a desolete thinge & beggethe & hath dwelt here ever. [hable] (p.50)

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[50] John Taylor, *The Praise, Antiquity, and Commodity, of Beggery, Beggers, and Begging* (1621), sig.C3ʳ. There does seem to have been a rise in stage depictions of romanticised beggars in the early part of the seventeenth century, culminating in plays like Richard Brome's pastoral comedy *A Joviall Crew, Or, The Merry Beggars* (1652).

[51] Taylor, *The Praise,* sig.C2ʳ.

[52] Bodger: a mender of clothes

Individuals designated in the census as lame, crippled, or similar, are not necessarily 'disabled' in the early modern sense, and maybe not according to the modern social model, because they are working and marrying and having children. However, the role one might be disabled from fulfilling, be that marriage, child raising, a profession, education, or merely the expectation of children to feed and play, seems to have been felt very important to document and bestows a sense of legitimacy that was threatened by poverty and negated by begging.

In addition to those present from birth, acquired disabilities were also seen as potentially suspect: a lost limb for example could imply a judicial amputation. This would identify a disabled person as a possible criminal, although they could just as easily have lost a limb in a heroic act of war. Despite the implication that disability provides information or a story about an individual, there was no reliable way of knowing what that story was. Judicial amputations are usually associated more with medieval society but they were still occurring in the sixteenth century. In 1579 for example John Stubbs and his publisher both lost a hand for the publication of *The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf*, it being judged seditious for opposing the proposed marriage of Elizabeth to Francis Duke of Anjou.[53]

The implications of a judicial or state sanctioned amputation are explored in the anonymous play *Edmund Ironside* (c.1588). When King Canutus chops off the hands and noses of the sons of Leofric and Turkillus, who have been left with him as pledges of loyalty, he describes the punishment he is about to deliver as

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[53] Katherine A. Rowe, 'Dismembering and Forgetting in Titus Andronicus', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 45 (1994), 279-303 (p.284).

'worse than loss of life'.[54] He emphasises the necessity of 'daily use' of the parts to be removed, explaining:

> Again, it giveth others daily cause
> To think how traitors should be handled,
> Whereas the memory of present death
> Is quickly buried in oblivion,
> Doing no good but whilst it is in doing.
> (2.3.601-5)

The disabled or disfigured individual functions as a memento mori, a more powerful reminder of death than death itself.[55] A judicial disfigurement is both a warning to others and a spiritual lesson to the victim, more so than execution. Crime and wrongdoing are displayed on the body:[56]

> But plague them with the loss of needful members
> As eyes, nose, hands, ears, feet or any such;
> Oh these are cutting cards unto their souls,
> Earmark to know a traitorous villain by,
> Even as brand is to descry a thief
> (2.3.614-8)

The pledged prisoners plead to be executed rather than disfigured after Canutus again emphasises the powerful longevity of disfigurement in contrast to death. 'Prepare your visages' he says 'to bear the tokens of eternity' (2.3.651-2).

Thomas Adams and the Lameness of Evil

As Traub discusses, the figure of the 'abstract, universal, representative

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[54] Anonymous, *Edmund Ironside*, 2.3.596. For ease of reference, line numbers are taken from Eric Sams, ed., *Shakespeare's Lost Play: Edmund Ironside* (London: Fourth Estate, 1985), with no adherence to Sams' opinion as to the authorship of the play. All further references are to this edition.

[55] Naomi Baker's 2010 book *Plain Ugly: The Unattractive Body in Early Modern Culture,* also sees this 'death in life' aspect to non-standard faces and bodies. 'Often depicted as a living corpse', she writes, 'the unattractive older female body repeatedly evokes physical decrepitude, sexual transgression and moral turpitude' (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp.44-45.

[56] See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp.8-9; 33-35.

human' is the product of art as well as science. As well as anatomical studies and rudimentary Renaissance social data collection, it is enlightening, especially given the longstanding existence of grotesque tropes, to consider how issues of disability and disfigurement were being discussed in literature and other writings, either literally or figuratively.

The relief of the disabled provides Adams with a metaphor for the Christ-like nature of ministers of God. In *The Wolfe Worrying the Lambes*, ministers are described as 'eyes to the blinde, and feete to the lame', associating them with instances of Christ healing the sick and disabled. This description of ministers suggests metaphorical and spiritual assistance as well as more practical help.[57]

Yet Adams sees disability as a fault and an emblem of sin that needs to be purified. In *The Spiritual Navigator* he says 'God beholds vs through this Chrystall, Iesus Christ; and sees nothing in vs leane, lame, polluted, or ill-fauour'd'.[58] Without Christ's redemption then, human beings are inherently polluted, and lameness is a manifestation of that pollution. In *The White Devil* (1613) Adams uses lameness to illustrate the evil of the Usurer who is 'lame of the gout, and can but halt; yet hee will be at hell, as soone as the best runner of them all'.[59] Later, in *Englands Sickness* (1615) he uses the image of the Devil's cloven hooves as evidence that he is disabled: 'But he [Satan] that hath two infirmities, nay enormities that betray him: a stinking breath, and a halting foot'.[60] The idea that evil is a disability in itself, whether or not it results in

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[57] Thomas Adams, *Lycanthropy. Or The Wolfe Worrying The Lambes* (1615), p.22. Published (with separate page numbering system) as an appendix to Thomas Adams, *Blacke Devil* (1615).

[58] Thomas Adams, *The Spiritual Navigator* (1615), p.7. Published (with separate page numbering system) as an appendix to Adams, *Blacke Devil*.

[59] Thomas Adams, *The White Devil (1612)* (1613), p.44.

[60] Thomas Adams, *Englands Sicknes* (1615), p.16.

outward manifestations, is also tackled in *Edmund Ironside*. Following the

intriguing line where Stitch requests that the evil Edricus does not halt in front of

Alfric because of the proverb ''tis ill halting before a cripple', Edricus responds

that even if Alfric had as many eyes as Juno's bird (the peacock) he would not be

able to spot his halting because he halts 'not in the thigh but in the mind', a

reference not to mental health disability but to his evil motivations (5.1.1630-

1639).

In *The Spiritual Navigator* Adams uses the Old Testament story of

Mephibosheth, the grandson of Saul and son of Jonathan, who is injured when

his nurse drops him on hearing of Saul and Jonathan's defeat and death in battle

against King David. Mephibosheth lives in exile as a disabled person but is

eventually summoned back and is financially supported and protected by

David.[61] Adams uses this story to emphasise the liminal nature of the disabled

figure, balanced perpetually between birth (or infancy) and death:

> The World is lame, and euery member, as it were out of ioynt. It caught a
> fall in the Cradle, as Mephibosheth by falling from his Nurse; and the
> older it waxeth, the more maimedly it halteth. Sinne entred presently after
> the worlds birth, and gaue it a mortall wound. It hath labour'd euer since
> of an incurable consumption; The noblest part of it, Man, first felt the
> smart, and in his curse both beasts and plants receiued theirs. It fell sicke
> early in the morning; and hath now languished in a lingring lethargy, till
> the euening of dissolution is at hand.[62]

Adams' use of the phrase 'out of joynt' indicates his association of

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[61] 2 Samuel 4 v 4 and 2 Samuel 9 v 1-13. David's acceptance of Mephibosheth is significant
because he has previously banished the blind and the lame from Jerusalem, incited people to
smite them and said that his soul hated them (2 Samuel 5 v 6-8). More recent translations
imply that the 'blind and the lame' is a response to a taunt from David's opponents about how
weak he is that even their blind and lame could stop him from taking Jerusalem. However this
is far from obvious in the Geneva translation.

[62] Adams, *Spiritual Navigator,* p.49. Adams seems particularly fond of this story and uses it in at
least 4 other sermons. The imagery of the lame and crippled world is common in Adams'
writing and is very similar to that employed in Donne's 'The First Anniversary: An Anatomy
of the World' (lines 237-246) (See John Donne, *The Major Works*, ed. John Carey, Oxford
World Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp.212-213).

disability with struggling against, or being at odds with, God. The phrase 'out of joint' recurs in early modern literature to indicate metaphorical as well as physical dislocation. Shakespeare uses it in *Hamlet* 'the time is out of joint', to describe the sense of disorder following the ghost's visit (1.5.189). Earlier in this scene Hamlet also cries out 'you, my sinews, grow not instant old,/ But bear me stiffly up' (1.5.94-95). The idea of sinews being unable to support the skeleton or keep joints together also occurs in Donne's description of 'slack and dissolved sinews' as a symptom of underlying sin and the 'tyranny of a lustful heart, of licentious eyes'.[63] These metaphors of the vulnerability and lack of integrity of the human musculoskeletal structure, of things being 'out of joint' and the body being 'distraught', un-made, or pulled apart are connected with disability and injury. They also call to mind violent torture, for example on the rack, as well as the dismantling of the body for anatomical dissection. The increase in understanding that dissection brought, of the workings of joints and connective tissues, almost certainly influenced the use of these particular types of metaphor.

In *Plaine-Dealing* (1616), Adams writes on the passage from Genesis where Jacob wrestles with an angel (or God) and receives a dislocated hip. He claims that we must attain the Kingdom of Heaven through violence and holy force and that Jacob had to wrestle before he obtained a blessing, even though it sent him 'halting to his grave'.[64] The phrase 'halting to his grave' occurs elsewhere in discussions about this passage, although it does not originate with the biblical account. William Perkins writes in 1590 that Jacob 'is faine to goe halting to his graue, and trale one of his loines after him continually' and Joseph

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[63] John Donne, *The Works of John Donne: Sermons*, ed. Henry Alford (London: John W. Parker, 1839), pp.130-131.

[64] Thomas Adams, *Plaine-Dealing* (1616), p.10. Published (with separate page numbering system) as an appendix to *The Sacrifice of Thankefulnesse* (1616).

Hall writes in 1612, 'he lost a joynt by the Angell, and was sent halting to his graue'.[65] Jacob's injuries do not result in death in the short term. However, the focus on the grave suggests that, following his rebirth as 'Israel' (he who wrestles with God), Jacob acquired a persisting disability which marked him for death even in life.

'Oh happy losse of Jacob', says Hall, 'hee lost a joint and won a blessing: It is a fauour to halt from God'.[66] The attempt to frame disability in a positive light as God's work can also be found in the story of Jesus healing a blind man (John 9, 1-3). The disciples ask Jesus whether it was the man or his parents who had sinned to cause him to be born blind and Jesus answers that it was neither and that the reason was so that God's works could be demonstrated by healing him. However, the notes on the text in the Geneva Bible are careful to remind readers that sometimes God chooses not to punish people for their sin, implying that more usually disability is a punishment. Certainly Thomas Adams firmly believed that disease and disability were the marks of sin. He expands these ideas in *The Devil's Banket* where he again sees disability as something that can be 'caught':

> All sicknesse orignally [sic] proceeds from sinne, all weaknesse from wickednesse. As Mephibosheth caught his lamenesse by falling from his Nurse; so all men their diseasednes by falling from their Christ. The euill disposition of the soule, marres the good composition of the body. There is no disaster to the members, but for disorder in the manners. All diseases are Gods reall sermons from heauen, whereby hee accuseth and punisheth man for his sins.[67]

In *The Education of Children in Learning* (1588) William Kempe

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[65] William Perkins, *A Treatise Tending Vnto a Declaration Whether a Man Be in the Estate of Damnation or in the Estate of Grace* (1590), p.39; Joseph Hall, *Comtemplations Vpon the Principall Passages of the Holy Storie* (1612), p.196.

[66] Hall, *Contemplations,* p.196.

[67] Thomas Adams, *The Deuills Banket. Described in Foure Sermons.* (1614), p.157.

similarly suggests an element of contagion to lameness, when using it as an analogy for the damaging presence of incorrigible students in a school. 'He that dwelleth with a criple', says Kempe, 'will learne to halt, and doubtlesse, many have perished with this poison'.[68] Breed writes about the belief that disability could be transferred by touching a dead person or a particular object. In the case of an object there was a ritual response mirroring the death ritual, whereby the 'stone, cloth, or even another animal, which came into contact with the disability would be buried'.[69] Disease was widely believed to be transmitted by smells and 'stench' was a word commonly used to describe both disease and sin.[70] Its association with disability can be seen above in Adams' description of the devil's infirmities as 'a stinking breath, and a halting foot'.[71] Several communicable diseases in this period could have caused lameness but it seems these references relate more to fear of the spread of disability, through increased numbers of the visibly disabled following the closure of the monasteries, through a fear of people mimicking disability for the purpose of fraud, or through cultural anxiety about the fluidity and instability of life, health, and death.

Early Modern Disability and Sex

One aspect of early modern attitudes to disabled people that is perhaps unexpected is the question of sexual attraction. It had been common for centuries for mistrusted or vilified outsiders (for example along lines of race, religion, or

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[68] Kempe, *Children in Learning*, sig.H2ᵛ.
[69] Breed, *Brief History*, p.6. Cleansing rituals are also mentioned, specifically in relation to sexual transmitted diseases, in Margaret Healy, *Fictions of Disease in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001). Healy states that the cleaning practices were primarily symbolic rather than hygienic and were based on biblical examples (pp131-132). She also says some cures were as likely to cause disability as the diseases themselves (p.129).
[70] Healy, *Fictions of Disease,* p.21; 129.
[71] Adams, *Englands Sicknes*, p.16.

gender) to be assumed to be lecherous and this was certainly no different in the case of disabled people.[72] However, there is a deeper way in which disabled individuals were seen as desirable, albeit in an objectifying and dehumanising way.

Montaigne's essay on cripples describes Amazons laming their male children in infancy: maiming 'armes and legges and other limmes, that might anyway advantage their strength over them, and made onely that vse of them, that we in our World make of Women'.[73] The idea of women using (disabled) men for sex (procreation), and domestic chores, is consistent with disability as something that feminises or emasculates men. It also positions men, like Artegal, who are captured and disarmed by Amazons, as feminised sex objects as well as humiliated prisoners. With their role as martial aggressor disabled, men's role, like that of women in non-Amazonian society, becomes one of submission and procreation.

Montaigne's fetishisation of cripples goes further. He, like Erasmus, has heard the adage that 'the lame man makes the best lecher'.[74] He decides to test this with women and writes of deliberately seeking out a lame sexual partner in order to determine whether what he has heard about them is true:

> I would have saide, that the loose or disjointed motion of a limping or crooke-backt Woman, might adde some new kinde of pleasure vnto that businesse or sweet sinne, and some vn-assaid sensuall sweetnesse, to such as make trial of it: but I have lately learnt, that even ancient Philosophie hath decided the matter: Who saith, that the legs and thighs of the crooked-backt or halting-lame, by reason of their imperfection, not receiving the nourishment, due vnto them, it followeth that the Genitall

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[72] Jeffrey Richards, *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation: Minority Groups in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1991), p.151 describes how in the middle ages the 'horrible leer of the satyr' was considered an indicator of leprosy.

[73] Montaigne, *Essayes*, p.616.

[74] 'Claudus optime virum agit', adage II ix 49, Desiderius Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus: Adages II vii 1 to III iii 100*, trans. R.A.B. Mynors, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p.439.

partes, that are above them, are more full, better nourished and more vigorous. Or else, that such a defect having the exercise, such as are therewith possessed, do lesse waste their strength and consume their virtue, and so much the stronger and fuller, they come to Uenus sportes.[75]

He concludes that crippled women do make more pleasurable partners, saying 'I have heretofore perswaded my selfe, to have received more pleasure of a Woman, in that she was not straight, and have accompted hir crookednesse in the number of hir graces'.[76]

Montaigne's writing refers predominantly to lameness affecting the legs but, as above, he also uses 'lame' to refer to arms and, as can be seen with the poor census, the term was used to refer to any limb disability. When considering the disabled status of characters like Shakespeare's Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* this fetishistic attitude horrifically draws attention to the acquired lameness that proclaims her loss of chastity, and places her even more firmly within the judgemental and lascivious male gaze.

In his 2007 article 'Honeyed Toads: The Sinister Aesthetics of *Richard III*', Joel Elliott Slotkin discusses *Richard III* and the interplay between evil, ugliness, and deformity in Richard's seductive capabilities. Richard, he says, is attractive *because* he is evil and even because he is ugly; the play treats deformity and evil as things that are 'capable of arousing erotic desire'.[77] The

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[75] Montaigne, *Essayes* pp.616-617. Aristotle's *Problemata* states lame men are lustful 'for little nourishment in them passes downward owing to the deformity of their legs, whereas a great deal goes to the upper region and is condensed into seed' Aristotle, *Problems Books 1-19*, trans. Robert Mayhew, Loeb Classical Library, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), p.301.

[76] Montaigne, *Essayes,* p.617. Sarah Bakewell reads this passage as pointing out to the reader that people's perceptions may be influenced by their beliefs and expectations, Sarah Bakewell, *How to Live, or A Life of Montaigne in One Question and Twenty Attempts at an Answer* (London: Vintage, 2011), p.35. It is also possible Montaigne is being deliberately provocative, or believes he is being forward thinking and challenging people's perceptions about desirability.

[77] Joel Elliott Slotkin, 'Honeyed Toads: Sinister Aesthetics in Shakespeare's *Richard III*', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 7 (2007), 5-32 (p.7).

devil, usually depicted as ugly and often as deformed, was capable of seducing women into having sex with him and becoming witches. If evil can be seductive and, as discussed above, deformity is potentially a sexual advantage, then it is logical, if counter-intuitive, that ugliness as the manifestation of both evil and deformity could be similarly seductive. Slotkin cites John Manningham's 1602 anecdote about a female audience member so taken with *Richard III* that she asked Burbage to 'come that night vnto hir by the name of Richard the Third'. He cites this as evidence, even assuming the anecdote to be probably untrue, that attraction to the character was an acceptable response at the time.[78] Yet Richard himself speaks disparagingly about peace time, the time for wooing, which he links to 'piping', something that elsewhere in Shakespeare is associated with effeminacy and with women dressed as men.[79] Richard initially says he 'cannot prove a lover' because of his deformity, but he proves himself to be one, functionally and somewhat cunningly, if not romantically (1.1.27-8).

Much of the discourse of Richard's deformity and evilness positions him in a liminal space. He is described by Margaret as 'abortive' and his mother says his birth was a grievous burden to her. She describes all his transitions between life stages (birth, infancy, schooldays, manhood, age) with a torrent of negative adjectives: tetchy, wayward, frightful, desperate, wild, furious, proud, sly, and bloody (1.3.225 and 4.4.166-172). She speaks to Elizabeth of smothering her

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[78] Slotkin, 'Honeyed Toads', p.21. Mannigham's diary entry reads: 'Vpon a tyme when Burbidge played Richard III. there was a citizen grone soe farr in liking with him, that before shee went from the play shee appointed him to come that night vnto hir by the name of Richard the Third. Shakespeare ouerhearing their conclusion went before, was intertained and at his game ere Burbidge came. Then message being brought that Richard the Third was at the dore, Shakespeare caused returne to be made that William the Conqueror was before Richard the Third' John Manningham, *Diary of John Manningham* (1602-3), ed. John Bruce (London: J.B. Nicholls and Sons, 1868), p.39.

[79] *Richard III* 1.1.24. See for example *Coriolanus* 'a pipe/ Small as an eunuch, or the virgin voice/ That babies lulls asleep!' (3.2.113-5) or *Twelfth Night* 'thy small pipe/ Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,/ And all is semblative a woman's part' (1.4.31-3).

'damned' son, a violent end that may have been the fate of many neonate (and therefore liminal) deformed children at this time. The pervasive imagery of wombs and tombs throughout the play supports this view. Richard is caught between a birth that went wrong, or was unnatural, and a death that has failed to happen yet, failed to complete the monstrous birth narrative. The failure to complete that narrative places him in a space of contradiction and paradox:

> Dead life, blind sight, poor mortal living ghost,
> Woe's scene, world's shame, grave's due by life usurped.
> (4.4.26-7)

The death/life oxymoron is directly compared to the disabled/able binary of the words 'blind sight' following on from the earlier mention of the duchess's 'woe-wearied tongue' being 'still and mute' (line 18). At the same time Elizabeth wishes to keep her dead sons 'hovering' about her, liminal and not 'fixed in doom perpetual' (4.4.11-14). Margaret's aside about 'infant morn and aged night' emphasises the 'betwixt and between' quality of this moment (4.4.16). Richard's mother wishes for death, feels she should by rights have died already and is living as a ghost. All of this mourning is as a result of the evil, disfigured Richard, who should, according to early-modern understanding, perhaps not have lived beyond birth. Having survived his own birth, he violently sends many (including the young princes) to their graves too early. Richard's oxymoronic, liminal status is evident when he seduces Anne over the coffin of Henry, and when he vows to bury Elizabeth's sons in her daughter's womb. All of this is fitting behaviour for someone who is themselves perpetually trapped between life and death (1.2.49-212 and 4.4.354-6).

The Role of Prosthetics

Other than declaring a preference for war over love, Richard makes little adjustment for his disabilities and disfigurements. They are seen as his motivation but not something to be accounted for or worked around in everyday life.[80] In contrast, the injuries sustained by Titus and Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* have an enormous impact on how they perform their duties and live their lives. In order to communicate Lavinia eventually uses a stick held in her mouth and supported by the stumps of her severed hands. The stick is therefore used as a prosthetic. In the 1999 film *Titus,* Julie Taymor adds a scene where Lavinia's nephew goes to a puppet maker to buy prosthetic wooden hands to replace the branches and twigs that Lavinia has attached to her wrists.[81]

The concept of prosthesis is ever present when discussing disability. The interconnectedness of the concepts is seen in Mitchell and Snyder's coining of the term 'narrative prosthesis' to describe the presence of a disabled character for the purposes of providing the direction and focus for a plot, or as a metaphor for moral failures inherent in the setting or the other characters. The disabled character acts as a prosthesis by giving the impression of wholeness and shoring up the depiction of normalcy elsewhere in the text.[82]

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[80] There had long been a consensus of opinion, owing in part to the progression in severity of depictions of Richard in successive Tudor plays about him, that his disabilities were vastly exaggerated to malign him and provide an outward signifier of his inner evil. Following the recent discovery of his skeleton in Leicester however, which shows a significant curvature of the spine, these opinions have had to be at least partially rethought. See Richard Buckley et al., '"The King in the Car Park": New Light on the Death and Burial of Richard III in the Grey Friars Church, Leicester, in 1485', *Antiquity*, 87 (2013), 519-538. Details and photographs of the spine can also be found on the University of Leicester website 'Richard III - Osteology - Curved Spine - Scoliosis - University of Leicester' https://www.le.ac.uk/richardiii/science/spine.html [accessed 21 April 2014] and 'Richard III - Osteology - What the Bones Can and Can't Tell Us - University of Leicester' https://www.le.ac.uk/richardiii/science/whatthebonesdontsay.html [accessed 21 April 2014].

[81] Julie Taymor (dir.), *Titus*, 1999.

[82] See David T. Mitchell, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependences of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001). For more on narrative prosthesis in relation

The status of the prosthetic, and especially the prosthetic hand, is significant to the concept of liminality. The hand itself serves a liminal purpose: it occupies the space between the body and the world. The role of hands within *Titus Andronicus* has been examined by many critics. For Katherine Rowe (1994) the hand is both 'object and body', and Lavinia 'blurs the boundaries between instrument and principal, actor and prop'.[83] Caroline Lamb (2010) sees the missing hands in the play as a sign that an amputated body can be capable; the body part most associated with functionality has been removed but the narrative imperative of revenge can still be achieved.[84] For Packard (2010) the 'blessing of Titus' hand' bestowed on Lavinia indicates her liminal status as represented by the inherently liminal hands that become a synecdoche, signifying her in their absence.[85] The association with hands, the severing of her hands and the carrying of her father's hand further Lavinia's connection to spaces and functions that are liminal in nature (3.2.281). At different points during the play the severed hand and the disabled girl are interdependent or even interchangeable. The hand, or its absence, becomes a metonym for the fate of the whole person, making Lavinia indistinguishable from her injuries, however functional she may be as a revenger.

In addition to her association with hands, Lavinia is more generally rendered liminal by virtue of her disabled and disgraced status. The near death

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to *Richard III* in particular, see David Houston Wood, 'New Directions: "Some Tardy Cripple": Timing Disability in *Richard III*', in *Richard III: A Critical Reader*, ed. Annaliese Connolly (London: Bloomsbury Arden, 2013), pp.129-154. I use the word 'normalcy' not merely as a synonym for 'normality', but to suggest the type of assumed or required normality that comes with the idea of the 'normate'.

[83] Rowe, 'Dismembering and Forgetting', pp.282 and 287.

[84] Caroline Lamb, 'Physical Trauma and (Adapt)ability in *Titus Andronicus*', *Critical Survey*, 22 (2010), 41-57 (p.53).

[85] Bethany Packard, 'Lavinia as Coauthor of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 50 (2010), 281-300 (p.286). Packard refers to the line 'bless me here with thy victorious hand' spoken by Lavinia to her father (1.1.163)

nature of that disability is emphasised by the violence of the crime that caused it and the assumption that death by suicide is something that the impairments prevent her from doing. 'What violent hands can she lay on her life?' asks Titus after a wistfully grotesque fantasy about how she might pierce her chest with a knife held in her teeth and drown her heart with tears (3.2.15-20, 25).

Prosthetics are even more liminal than flesh and blood hands. Hands occupy the threshold between the body and the world. Prosthetics fulfil that same function but also have the ambiguous status of being neither natural flesh nor truly artificial tool. Will Fisher writes that prostheses (by which he means predominantly stage props and costume items such as handkerchiefs, codpieces, hair, and beards) are 'both integral to the subject's sense of identity or self, and at the same time resolutely detachable or "auxiliary"'.[86] Nicola M. Imbracsio maintains 'While it might be argued that a prosthetic highlights disability, theatrical prosthetics—because they are stage properties—do not operate in the same way as offstage prosthetics'.[87] This is true, but I would argue that stage prosthetics, as well as those intended as disability aids, do occupy the same liminal space between limb and tool, or between body and world.

Just as writing her accusation with a stick was a communication method only open to a woman who could write, so prosthetics and aids of any crafted kind were really only the preserve of the rich. Poor people could be denied alms because of amputations if they were unable to prove how they came by them. In contrast, Rowe makes a case for dismemberment as a trope for power in the rich,

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[86] Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.26.

[87] Nicola M. Imbracsio, 'Stage Hands: Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and the Agency of the Disabled Body in Text and Performance', *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*, 6 (2012), 291-306 (p.298).

citing the frequent use of severed arms in heraldry and seeing no explicit disability in the representations, but rather a complex and ambiguous relationship between dismemberment and demonstrations of martial power, with the hand and tool, or weapon, being inextricably linked or even interchangeable (see fig. 2).[88]

Fig. 2: Hand and weapon as interchangeable: A heraldic hand emerges from clouds, holding a sword which itself ends in a hand holding a sword. '*Non sine causa*', Claude Paradin, Devises, 29, by permission of University of Glasgow Library, Special Collections.

Arguably dismemberment and other impairments had less impact on the rich than the poor; with the exception of warfare their work was less physical and they had the means to pay for ways of mitigating disability. The hunched back

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[88] Rowe, 'Dismembering and Forgetting', p.288. Disembodied hands and arms in emblem books were often also intended to represent the hand of God. They also appear in depictions of the Arma Christi (the weapons of the passion) as the hand which struck Jesus.

and splayed legs of Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury, for example, did not prevent him from rising to the highest ranks of Elizabethan and Jacobean government.[89] However, even allowing for complex heraldic tropes of dismemberment, if an injury or impairment was deemed to affect the capacity of a person to perform their role as ruler, especially in the light of what Lamb calls the 'ubiquitous body politic trope', then the temptation was to conceal that impairment.[90] Henry VIII sustained a serious leg injury in a jousting accident in 1536, after which he suffered increasing disability and ill health for the rest of his life. Following the accident Henry was frequently painted, most famously by Holbein, in hyper masculine poses supported by seemingly sturdy and muscular legs. In fact he had significant disabilities and went to great lengths to mitigate or disguise them. He had a 'tramme' constructed, a padded velvet throne on wheels that was simultaneously a symbol of power and a disability aid. He also used a 'stool of whatnot', a device designed to allow him to ride a horse, a skill that was key to his image as vigorous and able.[91]

The Munera episode in Book V of *The Faerie Queene* suggests an artificial limb, whatever it cost, is not an adequate replacement for a natural one. Munera represents evil because of her blasphemy, her monetary greed, and her 'wicked charmes' or witchcraft (V.ii.5). It is unclear whether Munera's golden hands and silver feet are spontaneous manifestations of her corruption or whether she has removed her own hands and feet (disabling herself as deceitful beggars

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[89] Pauline Croft, 'Cecil, Robert, First Earl of Salisbury (1563-1612)', *ODNB* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

[90] Lamb, 'Trauma and (Adapt)ability', p.42.

[91] Helen Davies, 'From Throne to Tramme: The Disabled Seat of Henry VIII' (presented at the *Northern Renaissance Seminar: Disability and the Renaissance*, Leeds Trinity University College, 2012).

were thought to do) in order to replace them with ostentatious shows of wealth.[92] In either case the replacement of her hands and feet with silver and gold casts doubt on her humanity, making her partially artificial or possibly even representative of an idol, and placing her in a liminal space between the humans and the automated or invented figures that people Spenser's world, notably Talus (who is instrumental in her execution) and false Florimell (V.ii.10).

Such metal hands and feet would have been an impairment in themselves, especially given the softness of gold compared to Talus' iron construction. Joan Fitzpatrick's claim that Shakespeare's Lavinia is a source for Munera is persuasive and strengthens the case for Munera as a disabled character.[93] Spenser, however, seems less concerned with impairment and more concerned with the contrast between the ideal and the monstrous body. He is also anxious about falsehood, deceit, and obscene demonstrations of earthly wealth. Whether the hands and feet are read as prosthetics or deformities has a marked impact on the perceived violence of their removal and display. When Munera is captured her hands and feet receive a death ritual reminiscent of traitors in the Tower, emphasising shame and providing a warning to others, 'Chopt off, and nayld on high, that all might them behold' (V.ii.26). The human part of her body is thrown unceremoniously into the 'durty mud' (V.ii.27).[94] This more private and seemingly haphazard end looks anonymous and humiliating, akin to Cleopatra's

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[92] Elizabeth Heale's entry on Munera and Pollente in A. C Hamilton, ed., *The Spenser Encyclopedia* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.281 takes as the source for Munera's golden hands Psalm 26.10, 'in whose hands is wickednesse, and their right hand is full of bribes', thereby connecting Munera with Lady Mede in Piers Plowman (who represents greed and monetary reward), about whom Langland uses the same verse.

[93] Joan Fitzpatrick, 'Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and Bandello's *Novelle* as Sources for the Munera Episode in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* Book 5 Canto 2', *Notes and Queries*, 52 (2005), 196-198.

[94] A alternative reading is that the hands and feet indicate the restraints of the stocks or pillory while the rest of her body receives a more feminine punishment like that of the ducking stool.

image of a naked and fly-infested grave on 'Nilus' mud' (*Antony and Cleopatra* 5.2.56-59). However, it also has ritualistic purifying properties of washing away 'her guilty blood' that are not afforded to her hands and feet (V.ii.27).

Distrust of the artifice of prosthetics can also be found in other genres of Renaissance writing. Adams seems to suggest that prostheses, especially those that seek to mask deformity, will be ineffective where the cause of that deformity is evil. In *England's Sicknes* he writes that Satan's 'lame foote cannot bee hidden' and that 'all his pollicy cannot deuise a boot to keepe him from his halting'.[95] In situations where poor people did manage to acquire or improvise prosthetics there is evidence that these, as with so much pertaining to people who might beg, were seen as evidence of deceit. In 'The Ballad of the Stout Cripple of Cornwall' a beggar 'crept on his hands and his knees' in order to beg for alms, which he then spent on drinking and good living as his lack of lower limbs meant he had 'no cause to complaine of the gout'. At night he uses 'stilts' to stand upright and work as a highwayman and 'no man thought him such a person to be'.[96] Prosthetic limbs, especially articulated hands, could be made by armourers (see fig.3), further linking martial masculinity with the necessity of disguising disability or dismemberment.

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[95] Adams, *Englands Sicknes*, p.16.

[96] Anon, 'The Stout Criple of Cornwall', 1629. Prosthetics are potentially problematic for quite different reasons when considering modern-day disability theory. As Davis describes it, the rehabilitation model, which is arguably part of the medical model of disability, sees disability as 'in need of repair, concealment, remediation, and supervision'. The results of this are implants, corrective cosmetic surgery, and prosthetics to force people to walk 'normally'. Davis contrasts this with the constructive mode, which makes the distinction between impairment and disability and suggests that an impairment only becomes a disability when 'the ambient society creates environments with barriers - affective, sensory, cognitive, or architectural'. The constructive model is another term for the social model. (*Crips Strike Back*, pp.506-507).
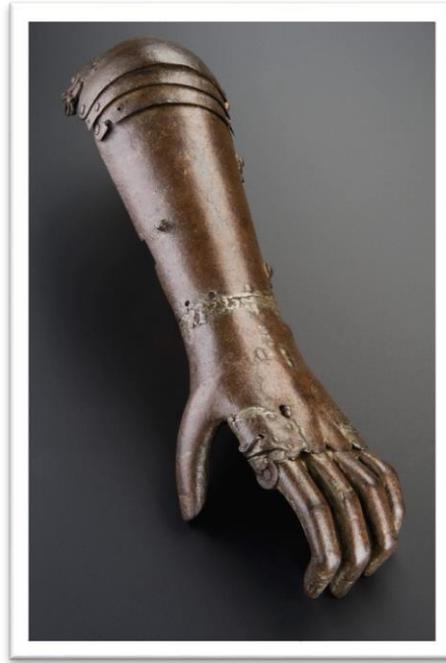
Fig. 3: A prosthetic arm and hand made by a German armourer between 1560 and 1600. Science Museum, London, Wellcome Images.[97]

The complex cultural feelings surrounding prosthetics are further demonstrated by pictures of prosthetic limbs set in backgrounds of clouds very similar to those in heraldry pictures (see fig.4). This positions the prosthetic limb not only in the heraldic world of the rich but also the realm of the spiritual and the unearthly. Renaissance anatomy pictures placed the dead cadaver in the living landscape. Here the lived reality of disability is placed in the heavens. This has overtones of miraculous healing or godly provision for the sick, but it also serves to place disability outside of normal everyday life.

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[97] The craftsmanship in this type of prosthetic is also reminiscent of medieval hand reliquaries.
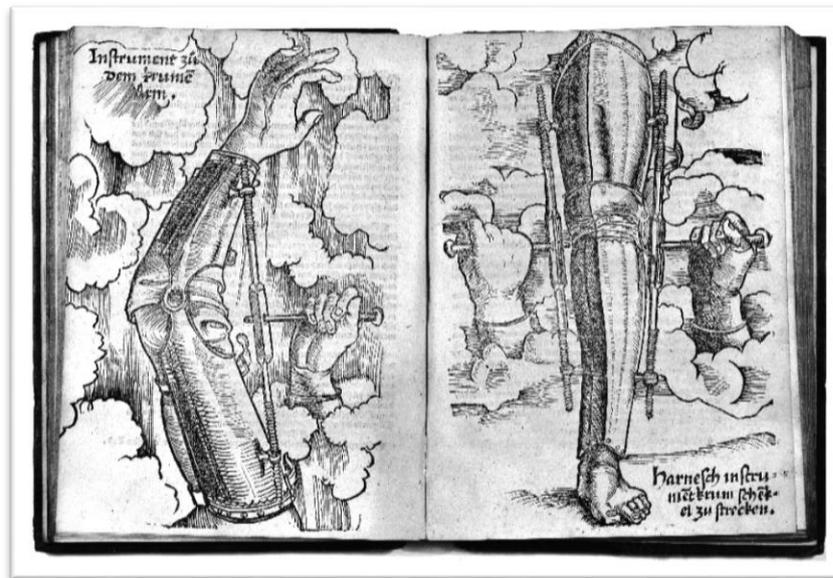
Fig. 4: Prosthetic limbs surrounded by clouds. Hans Von Gersdorf, *Feldbuch der Wundartzney* (Strasbourg, 1530), Wellcome Images.

Shakespeare's approach to disfigurement and impairment differs markedly from Spenser's. He does not demonstrate the vehement distrust of prosthetics, although his relationship to them is complex. *Titus Andronicus* does show what Nicola M. Imbracsio terms the 'prosthetic impulse', to replace Lavinia's missing limbs and organs, not least through Marcus' language, which relentlessly reaffirms her 'pretty fingers', 'lily hands', and 'sweet tongue' (2.4.41-50).[98] As Imbracsio points out, trying to 'fill the void created by mutilation' either by physical or linguistic prosthesis, focuses constantly on a lack, on what the body is missing, on how it used to be and is no longer.[99] Imbracsio sees Taymor's film as following through on Marcus' prosthetic impulse to provide actual prosthetic hands for Lavinia and thus 'dismiss the physical viability of the disabled body and its ability to critique normative

[98] Imbracsio, 'Stage Hands', p.302.
[99] Imbracsio, 'Stage Hands', p.300.

expectations of bodily wholeness'.[100] Prosthetics, especially those designed to look like the missing part (the wooden hand rather than the wooden stick) put the focus on what the body should look like rather than on what that body it is capable of. Lavinia's stick *is* a prosthetic device but one that is temporarily brought into service to fill an immediate functional need; it is not constantly present as what Lamb describes as 'a supplement that suggests she is deficient without it'.[101] Titus and Lavinia's ability to engage in the violence required for revenge tragedy shows that their injuries do not exclude them from fulfilling their roles. Yet the role of 'disabled avenger' was not the one that Lavinia was originally destined for.[102] There was a series of roles that could have each have become her fate, each with its own accompanying narrative.

The Disabled Narrative

The personal narrative is significant in disability theory. Snyder and Mitchell claim disability discourse has been 'largely defined by the genre of autobiography'. There is an assumption that people with disabilities need to write their own stories so that they can 'counteract the dehumanizing effects of societal representations and attitudes'.[103] Stories, especially personal stories of violence, are important. The cultural desire for narrative is also used as an excuse to intrude into people's lives, position them as 'other', and demand that they account for themselves. 'What happened to you?' is a common question, and an impertinent one, focusing on physical or visual difference, and demanding an explanation. Society repeatedly places the disabled person at the threshold of a

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[100] Imbracsio, 'Stage Hands', p.302.
[101] Lamb, 'Trauma and (Adapt)ability', p.53.
[102] Imbracsio, 'Stage Hands', p.304.
[103] David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder (eds), *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), p.9.

narrative, with the request for a story. Often the story, as discussed, is one of a birth that went wrong, or a death that didn't quite happen. This demand for a narrative is nothing new. In *Herod and Antipater*, discussed above, Herod's first question concerning the injured Adda is 'by what meanes comes she thus disabled?'[104] The question is necessary for the audience to hear what has happened offstage, but the wording is significant: it is specifically a justification for disability that is requested, rather than merely an account of events.

Initially the role that Lavinia seems destined for is that which Packard calls the 'narrative of personal and Roman purity'.[105] Lavinia herself points to the narrative of death (and being cast into 'some loathsome pit') which she feels should await her if this narrative cannot be followed (2.3.175-177). Packard acknowledges various alternative narratives are tried for Lavinia after the rape removes her from the purity narrative, but does not link this to the demand for her to account for her injuries, the demand for a disability narrative. After the rape the narratives available to Lavinia, according to classical tradition, are that she should be transformed into something non-human, like Io transformed into a cow after being ravished by Jove, or that she should kill herself, like Lucrece.[106] Marcus mentions Lucrece's rape in Act 4 scene 1 in order to justify taking revenge on the perpetrators, but by using that particular story he implies that suicide would be an honourable option for Lavinia (4.1.88-93).[107] However, despite the sacrificial narrative of suicide that is favoured by those around her she 'involves the Andronici in a narrative that requires neither a concluding

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[104] Markham and Sampson, *Herod and Anitpater,* sig.I2ᵛ.
[105] Packard, 'Lavinia as Co-Author', p.282.
[106] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, p.19.
[107] The play predates Shakespeare's 1594 poem on the subject.

metamorphosis nor a sacrifice'.[108]

Marcus's mention of Lucrece comes so soon after Lavinia overcomes her barriers to communication (4.1.75-79) that it is difficult to ignore the implication that if she can communicate (albeit in a non-standard way that visibly overcomes significant impairment) she could kill herself. By communicating the way in which she became disabled (excluded) from the purity narrative, and providing her origin story as a disabled person, she ironically proves herself more able, raising the question of her failure to participate in the suicide narrative. She seemingly rejects her own assertion that death is preferable to rape. To her father and the other Romans, she is telling the wrong story.

Disability and the Liminal Normate

The violence done to Lavinia traps her in liminal space in a variety of ways. Narratively she is trapped between stories. Within the plot of the play and the tropes of revenge tragedy she is trapped − as disabled person, rape victim, and revenger − between her life and her inevitable death. Once the rape happens she becomes a walking reminder of that violence and of the death that is failing to happen. This state continues until her father closes the narrative and shuts down the liminal space with more violence.

As Rowe suggests, the messenger who brings back Titus' amputated hand in Act 3 scene 1 sees the hand as a memento mori that causes him 'to think upon thy woes/More than remembrance of my father's death' (3.1.238-239).[109] She also suggests that the hand functions like a ghost does in other revenge tragedies,

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[108] Packard, 'Lavinia as Coauthor', p.287.
[109] Rowe, 'Dismembering and Forgetting', p.290.

that is, it is dead but still animated: 'it circulates on stage'.[110] Just as removed body parts can become memento mori, so can whole disabled bodies. As discussed above, disabled people are considered to occupy a space between life and death and they are also, as with Lavinia and her father's severed hand, interchangeable with the body parts that serve as reminders of mortality. For Rowe, Lavinia, like Titus' returned dead hand, becomes 'an icon that justifies and excuses vengeance' but she is also an icon for the death that, according to revenge tragedy rules, must surely follow that vengeance.[111] Lavinia is the subject of multiple interrupted or broken rituals: her marriage, her taking her adult place in the Roman court, even her death are rites of passage that have been denied a successful conclusion; thus she is trapped in liminal space by the violence of her attackers, and her father takes it upon himself to use violence, an execution ritual of sorts, to free her.

The early modern conceptualisation of disabled people as reminders of death is unsurprising; similar terms are used to discuss disability today. Disability theorist Tobin Siebers advocates disabled pride, but nevertheless acknowledges that 'for better or worse, disability often comes to stand for the precariousness of the human condition, for the fact that individual human beings are susceptible to change, decline over time, and die'.[112] These associations serve to position disabled people as liminal because they are 'cast as objects of mourning' and the grief that they provoke in others exposes 'the idea that they

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[110] Rowe, 'Dismembering and Forgetting', p.291. Severed and circulating body parts (serving the purpose of ghosts) are common in drama of this period. See the dead man's hand given by Ferdinand in *The Duchess of Malfi* (John Webster, ed. Brian Gibbons (London: A.&C. Black, 2001), 4.1.44) or the severed finger given to Beatrice in Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling* (3.3.27-28).

[111] Rowe, 'Dismembering and Forgetting', p.296.

[112] Siebers, *Disability Theory*, p.5.

have somehow disappeared - that they have become nothing, that they are dead - even though they may insist that they are not dead yet'.[113]

The status of the disabled body as not fully alive and not fully human offers, as Rosemarie Garland-Thomson says, examples of 'deviant others' whose 'marked bodies' the normate uses to shore himself up. The idea of the marked body is given particular resonance in connection with Renaissance images like the disfigured, 'earmarked' pledges in *Ironside*, or 'elf-marked' Richard. Marcus's lines in *Titus* about knitting 'these broken limbs again into one body' can be seen as an attempt to return the play to a normative conclusion (5.3.69-71). However, it is generally Spenser rather than Shakespeare who seems bound to the normate. Shakespeare seems to embrace diverse figures and afford them agency and nuance. In *The Body Emblazoned,* Jonathan Sawday describes Spenser's fondness for blazoning ideal women, and goes on to write about Shakespeare's Sonnet 20, a poem to a man with a woman's face and the 'wrong' anatomy, and Olivia's mundane self-blazoning of indifferent lips, grey eyes with lids and so forth in *Twelfth Night* (1.5.247-253).[114] Shakespeare's anatomising is always about the missing, the hidden, the non-standard, and the variety inherent in commonplace human bodies. Spenser's vision is of the perfect specimen who, like his idealised androgynous figures, does not stray outside of the boundaries of what he sees as natural or that which he feels should be aspired to. When he turns his anatomical blazoning on the evil Duessa or the false Florimell there is no acceptance or sympathy (I.viii.47-48; III.viii.7-8). As Rachel E. Hile says, Spenser calls his readers to have both intellectual reactions and emotional

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[113] Siebers, *Disability Theory*, p.161.
[114] Sawday, *Body Emblazoned*, pp.197-202.

reactions of 'disgust and rejection' towards impaired characters, in order to put across a moral point based on pre-existing cultural meanings attached to those impairments.[115] Interestingly, a liminal existence is not escaped by these paragons of normalcy, not even Adonis.

Early modern advances in anatomy and dissection were resulting in new cultural concepts of what it meant to have a 'natural', or ideal body. The word 'normal', however, only appears in English approximately 150 years ago, says Lennard Davis.[116] Prior to that, he claims, there was a concept of an 'ideal body' that no-one could attain. The broader category of 'normal' (inspired by the advent of statistics, graphs, and bell curves) put more pressure on people to embrace and aspire to normalcy. However, sixteenth and seventeenth-century changes in the view of the body and its workings also had a profound effect on attitudes towards, and literary depictions of, people who did not measure up. Davis himself says that 'normates thus enforce their supposed normality by upholding some impossible standard to which all bodies must adhere'.[117] I suggest this impossible standard is strongly portrayed in the figure of the eternally preserved figure of the procreative Adonis, as well as in the anatomically perfect dissection drawing, influenced by classical statuary as rediscovered in the Renaissance.

Like the 'average' or 'normal' specimens of Renaissance dissection,

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[115] Rachel E. Hile, 'Disabling Allegories in Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*', in *Recovering Disability in Early Modern England*, ed. Allison P. Hobgood and David Houston Wood (Columbus: Ohio State University, 2013), p.89.

[116] Davis, *Crips Strike Back,* p.504. The OED cites an isolated 1500 use of 'normal' in a strictly grammatical sense (of verbs), the earliest citation of 'conforming to a type or standard' is 1777 and the earliest citation pertaining to a person being 'physically and mentally sound' is 1886. 'normal, adj. and n.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2013, (accessed 7 March 2014).

[117] Davis, *Crips Strike Back,* p.504.

Spenser's narrative of Adonis's perfection is only possible because the narrative of death and death rites has been truncated. Adonis has been retained in the liminal space more usually inhabited by the disabled and the disfigured. It is even unclear from the text whether a wound remains from his being 'deadly cloyd' by the boar and, if not, whether this is as a result of the restorative powers of the garden or a sign that he has been made whole in the afterlife (III.vi.48). This indeterminacy contrasts starkly with Shakespeare's description of Adonis's wound 'that the boar had trenched/ In his soft flank; whose wonted lily white/ With purple tears, that his wound wept, was drenched'.[118] Even though he is physically a perfect specimen Adonis is still, like the grotesque characters that Bakhtin describes in Rabelais, trapped liminally at a 'point of transition in a life eternally renewed, the inexhaustible vessel of death and conception'.[119]

Lennard T. Davis states 'disability studies demands a shift from the ideology of normalcy, from the rule and hegemony of normates, to a vision of the body as changeable, unperfectable, unruly, and untidy'.[120] Adonis, like the anatomists' cadavers, is neutralised and controlled, rather than hegemonic and controlling. The dissection that they are subjected to is the ultimate violent ritual, trapping them between life and death at the mercy of those who wish to perfect the un-perfectable. However, the paradigm that their normalcy creates does not allow for the 'changeable, unperfectable, unruly, and untidy', at least not in Spenser's created world.

After the Reformation society lost its infrastructure for caring for the sick and disabled, especially those who were poor. Anxiety over this loss combined

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[118] 'Venus and Adonis' lines 1052-1054 (*Shakespeare's Poems*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones and H.R. Woudhuysen, Arden Third Series (London: Thomson Learning, 2007), p.219).
[119] Bakhtin, *Rabelais,* p.318.
[120] Davis, *Crips Strike Back,* p.505.

with complex attitudes towards the disabled body, its gender, meaning, appearance, desirability, and capabilities, not to mention its prostheses and the other ways in which its boundaries and edges were comprised. Early modern literature, from ballads to sermons, poetry, and plays responded to these concepts of lameness and deformity in a huge variety of ways, informed by ideas about monstrosity, moral punishment, and the emerging understanding of anatomy. These texts seek to provide a narrative account of the non-standard body or, in the case of Spenser's Adonis, to contain and display the idealised one and contrast it as strikingly as possible with the grotesque figures that for him represent sin and deceit. In doing so however, he, like the anatomist with his corpse, has confined the ideal body to the same liminal existence that is usually reserved for the disabled. Just as the normate cannot escape the crowd of disabled bodies with which it shores itself up, so the standard Renaissance body, trapped and displayed in the living landscape, is caught up in the supposed grotesqueness and diversity of human reality.

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