

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: PURGATIVE TEXTS: RELIGION,  
REVULSION, AND THE RHETORIC OF  
INSURGENCY IN EARLY MODERN  
ENGLAND

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In this dissertation I explore the ways that writers of early modern religious and social polemic used humoral language in order that their texts were not only rhetorically powerful, but also served as efficacious humoral remedies in the form of “physic” or medicinal “cures.” Specifically, I consider several examples of religio-political tracts that label themselves as “purgatives.” Each of the treatises I examine claims to diagnosis and treat either the diseased individual and/or the distempered body politic. Both Stephen Gosson (*School of Abuse* 1579) and Martin Marprelate (*Marprelate tracts* 1588-9) label themselves as physicians or surgeons. Gosson offers his tract as curative medicine for an effeminate, phlegmatic body politic. Marprelate himself is a “mirror” of the deformity in the body politic and his text/body a “cure.” The three defenses of women—Jane Anger’s *Her Protection for Women* (1589), Esther Sowernam’s *Esther hath Hanged Haman* (1617), and Constantia Munda’s *Worming of a madde dogg* (1617)—represent written words as purges for the male writers they are

answering. And, finally, The Lady's words have a potentially transformative effect on Comus in Milton's *A Masque*.

Central to this project is the notion that words have humoral valences as do all substances that "issue" from the body. Through speech and writing people conveyed the very substance of their souls according to early modern physicians and religious leaders, whose treatise addresses the connection between the state of a person's body, soul, and words. Words, like the people who spoke them, could be "hot," bilious, choleric. The solution offered by the purgative text is the power to flush the body of corruption. Because textual arguments can carry humoral valences, they are not merely rhetorically persuasive, but potentially transformative on every level.

Analyzing the humoral language in early modern polemic changes the way we are compelled to read similar language in other literary and non-literary texts, deepening our understanding of what it means to "change" a person's mind.

PURGATIVE TEXTS: RELIGION, REVULSION, AND THE RHETORIC OF  
INSURGENCY IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

By

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In memory of Emily Hammond Bellows, 1903 - 1993

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## Introduction

### **“Some things help nature evacuate by their sweetness or fair language”: The Purgative Force of Religious Polemic**

The connection between words and the physical body seemed more real to the early modern person than it does to the twenty-first century reader. Within the Christian epistemology shared by Catholics and Protestants of all persuasions, bodies were created by words: “In the beginning was the Worde, and the Worde was with God and that Worde was God . . . All things were made by it & without it was made nothing that was made” (*Geneva Bible*, John 1.1-3). Here, God and the Word are one and the same, with the universe and all within it created through the Word.<sup>1</sup> Thus, all things are inscribed with the story or words of their first beginning.

### **Defining the Humoral Body**

Early modern understandings of the humoral body display the connection between words and the physical world.<sup>2</sup> According to Thomas Elyot, the “elements” are the substances out of which all other things are comprised: “The Elementes be

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<sup>1</sup> See Leonard Barkan, *Nature's Work of Art: The Human Body as Image of the World*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 25-27 for a discussion of the ways Genesis 1.25 has been interpreted historically to authorize analogic connections between humans and God.

<sup>2</sup> For a study of the history of medicine and its impact particularly on the sexual lives of men and woman, see Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). For a clear account of humoral theory, see Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). See also David Hoeniger, *Medicine and Shakespeare in the English Renaissance* for an investigation of early modern medicine as figured in early modern drama.

those originall thynges unmyxt and uncompounded, of whose temperance and mixture all other thynges hauynge corporalle substance be compacte: Of them be foure, that is to saye, Earthe, Water, Ayre and Fyre” (A<sup>v</sup>).<sup>3</sup> According to Elyot, it is out of these four elements, mixing in various ways, that all things are made. The four humors were counterparts of the four elements, each humor having the qualities of its corresponding elements. The humors in combination with qualities of the elements determine a person’s dominant “complexion” and “temperament.” Elyot describes complexions as “combination of two dyuers qualities of the foure elements in one bodye, as hotte and drye of the Fyre. . .” (A2<sup>r</sup>).

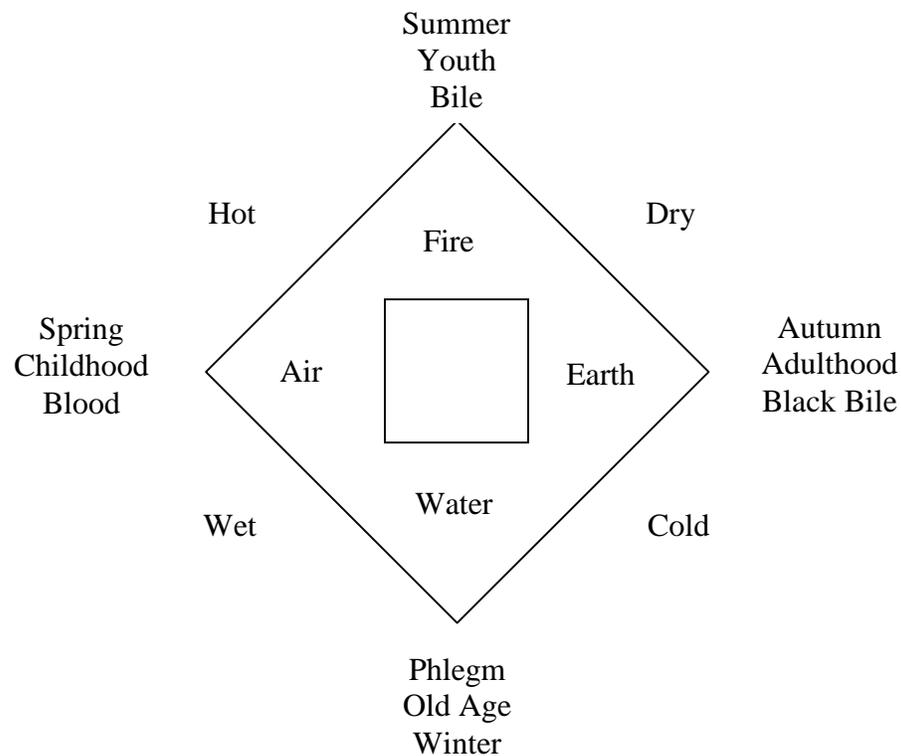


Fig. 1 The four elements and humors as they appear in relation to the cardinal points, qualities, seasons and stages of life.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Elyot, *The Castel of Helthe*, (London, 1539).

As the figure above suggests, the subtle mixture of humors and qualities, in combination with one's gender, class, birth date, age, the time of day, the movements of the stars, the year, the weather, and other factors interacted to determine an individual's distinctive features and personality. Much was beyond a person's control—one's birth date, for example, and the movements of the stars on any given day. People did have control, however, over their behavior and appetites through the exercise of reason and will. As Robert Shenk has shown, a person could change or at least control a "natural" physiognomic predisposition through the indulgence of virtues or vices, that is one's "habits": ". . . if a man might be held to account for the state of the body itself, much more might he be considered responsible for tempering or controlling inclinations arising from it. And so the ability of a man by his acts to conquer the tendencies arising from his physiological state or 'temperature' was often commented on by Renaissance scholars" (119).<sup>4</sup>

One of the ways that early modern physicians and philosophers accounted for the interaction of one's birthright complexion and one's actual manner of being was through the notion that human beings, made as they are in the image of God, are necessarily a representation of the cosmology writ small.<sup>5</sup> Nicholas Culpeper, an early modern physician and student of Galen, follows his description of the interrelationship of elements, complexions, and humors with the observation that the human being was

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Shenk, "The Habits and Ben Jonson's Humours." *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 8.2 (Spring 1978): 115-136.

<sup>5</sup> See Barkin, esp. 2-4 and chapter one, who offers an historical survey of ancient, medieval, and early modern articulations of the relationship between the person and God through the micro/macrocosm analogy. He notes that the person does not contain the whole cosmos because "he is infinite; rather, he is able to contain the whole cosmos because he is a miracle of symmetry and proportion" (2).

seen as a microcosm precisely because inside the person was all that existed in the cosmos (C3<sup>v</sup>).<sup>6</sup> The person, like God and the Angels, was reasonable; like the cosmology, the earth, and all that walked upon it, the person contained the four elements in the form of the four humours; like beasts, people had intense appetites and desires that resided in the flesh, and people also had the growth and fertility of plants.<sup>7</sup>

In its ideal state, according to Elyot, the humoral “body is free from all syckeness” (B4<sup>r</sup>). Similarly, Culpeper describes a “healthful bodie” as “when it is in good natural temper, when the seven Natural things, viz. Spirits, Elements, Complexions, Humors, Members, Vertues, Operations keep a good decorum” (C3<sup>f</sup>). Because health was maintained through temperate balance, where the person neither indulged in appetites nor consumed anything in excess, an unhealthy body was seen as a sign not just of poor physical health, but also of moral illness.<sup>8</sup>

Because what a person ate or drank was concocted of the same four basic substances that elemented the humors themselves, every consumable substance—indeed every thing material and immaterial, animal, mineral, plant—had humoral

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<sup>6</sup> Nicholas Culpeper, *Galen's Art of Physick* (London 1655).

<sup>7</sup> E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1943) 67. Tillyard offers a clear synopsis of the person as microcosm, explaining that the post lapsarian person, pulled as he or she is in different directions by the continuous tension between reason (the will and understanding) and the influence of the lower faculties (desire and appetite) experiences writ small the chaos that is evident in this same post lapsarian world. The cosmological manifestation of such inner chaos are storms, earthquakes, tempests. See also Barkan 2.

<sup>8</sup> See Shenk 115, 119-124 for a discussion of the intersection of “habits” and the distribution of humors as involved in determining a person’s humoral complexion and thus moral status.

valences and was some combination of hot, dry, cold, and moist.<sup>9</sup> What one ate, drank, saw, said, touched, felt—almost any activity engaged in as a human being—thus had an impact on the delicate balance of one’s body and mind: while meat that is too “sower cooleth nature, and hasteneth age,” in contrast, ingesting “colde water, colde herbes, and cold fruites moderately . . . be holsom to cholerike bodies, by puttynge away the heate, excedyng the naturall temperature” (F1<sup>v</sup>). What one ate was, literally, intrinsically part of what one became. Thus, a healthy body was not only a balanced, temperate body, but a body connected to and purified by God.<sup>10</sup>

In its less than ideal state, the body, and the humors inside it, were thought to replicate to a greater or lesser degree the chaos characteristic of a post-lapsarian world.<sup>11</sup> The humors, like the elements from which they were made, were fungible, could change one into the other, could be disrupted, one humor threatening to overwhelm the others. And the chaos of unhealthy, sinning bodies was seen as a

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<sup>9</sup> See Elyot, *Castel of Helthe* esp. “The Seconde Boke” for an encyclopedic listing of foods and their humoral qualities.

<sup>10</sup> Jonathan Gil Harris in *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare’s England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004 notes that the humoral body was inseparable “from the external elements on which it depends—air, food, drink, even astrological influences. Crucial to its understanding of physiology are notions of input and output” (14). See also Ian Frederick Moulton, “Bawdy Politic: Renaissance Republicanism and the Discourse of Pricks,” *Opening the Borders: Inclusivity in Early Modern Studies Essays in Honor of James V. Mirollo*, ed., Peter C. Herman (Newark, Delaware: Delaware University Press, 1999): 225-242, who notes that the healthy body, like the “healthy city” was conceived of as a harmonious system, every “part” working together at hierarchically assigned tasks (227). Tillyard, esp. 88-95 also notes that all systems, including the organs of the body, were thought to be hierarchically arranged.

<sup>11</sup> See Tillyard esp., 61-79 for a basic description of the four “elements” followed by an outline of the humoral body and the ways that in humoral imbalances could be seen meteorological and other uncertainties. See also Barkan 20.

replication of and perhaps even determined by, the chaos of storms, earthquakes, and other natural phenomena.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, such disruptive meteorological events were believed to engender monstrosities in children as evidence of the spiritual disease of their parents.

Just as the elements constantly mixed with one another, so, too, the humors were believed able at any moment to do so, as well. A person's humoral complexion might easily change through a process of "mixing" one substance with another.<sup>13</sup> If a

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<sup>12</sup> There are a great many treatises, broadsides, ballads, and other texts that document monstrous births that followed a meteorologic cataclysm. The following are just a few examples: Anon, *Gods Handy-worke in Wonders Miraculously shewen upon two women, lately deliuered of two Monsters with a most strange and terrible Earthquake* (London: I.W., 1615), Thomas Churchyard, *A Warning for the wise, a feare to the fond, a bridle to the lewde, and a glasse to the good: Written of the late Earthquake chanced in London* (London: John Alde and Nicholas Lyng, 1580), Arthur Golding, *A discourse upon the Earthquake that happened throughe this Realme of Englande, and other places of Christendome* (London: Thomas Streate, 1580), and T.T., *A shorte and pithic Discourse, conserning the engendering, tokens, and effects of all Earthquakes in Generall: Particularly applied and conferred with that most strange and terrible worke of the Lord in shaking the earth, not only within the Citie of London, but also in most parts of all Englande* (Richarde Iohnes: London, 1580). See also Tillyard 16 and 93 who argues that early modern people were terrified lest the "natural order" be disrupted.

<sup>13</sup> See Brown 10 who argues that within a Galenic humoral paradigm, where vital heat figured as one of the most salient differences between men and women, gender difference was inherently unstable because "[t]his heat unless mobilized, might cool, leading even a man to approach the state of a woman" (10). See Erica Fudge, Ruth Gilbert and Susan Wiseman, eds., "Introduction," *At the Borders of the Human: Beasts, Bodies and Natural Philosophy in the Early Modern Period* (Great Britain: Macmillan Press, 1999): 1-25 who discuss the role of the "passions" in articulating the difference between humans and animals. See Carol Falvo Heffernan, *The Melancholy Muse: Chaucer, Shakespeare and Early Medicine*. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 1995. esp., 7 who notes that one or another of the humors would tend to dominate depending on the season. Phlegm, for example, prevailed in winter. See also Reid 472-73 for a discussion of the fungibility of both humors and passions. Reid describes in detail the "ever changing cycle" a person undergoes: "[e]ach person, though of one basic temper, routinely enacts the others according to time of day, of year, of life. . ." (472).

London Lady were to “go abroad,” contrary to Stephen Gosson’s admonition that she “stay within,” then she made herself vulnerable to the penetrating glances, words, and gestures of the men that she met. In this way, she could be exposed to a lascivious look that, like a poison, might work to “turn” or change her whole system. Similarly, because a person was inscribed with his or her “nature” or complexion, speaking or writing was believed to reveal the state of the soul and the body.

The language and terms of humoral physiology could be applied to describe not only the physical human body but all other systems that took the human body form as its organizing logic, a list that included not just the earth and macrocosm, but the family unit, the body politic, the commonweal, and the visible body of the church.

Critical studies of humoral physiology and medicine have taken several directions: E.M.W. Tillyard’s *Elizabethan World Picture* alerted us to the implications that a worldview governed by the paradigm of the microcosm and macrocosm has for understanding early modern literature and poetics. Specifically, this and other similar studies emphasized the ways that humoral theory helps us to see how early modern people understood themselves to be connected to God and the cosmos through the substances comprising their bodies.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For a concise outline of the micro/macrocosm paradigm, see E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (1948 Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967) esp. 311-326. For a compilation of early modern cosmological images, see S.K. Heninger, Jr., *Cosmographical Glass: Renaissance Diagrams of the Universe* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1977). Also see Heninger for an examination of Pythagorean cosmology as a lens through which to interpret early modern poetics in *Touche of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1974). See also Tillyard, esp. chapters five and seven.

Critics who investigated the humoral rhetoric in the “humours plays” offered analyses of the dramatic possibilities afforded by humoral theory, interpreting the roles of specific “humoral” characters in Renaissance literary works, particularly the plays of Shakespeare and Jonson. These studies make clear that humoral physiology and psychology afforded the early modern writer a broad range of rhetorical and comedic tropes with which to entertain audiences, associating particular humoral complexions with particular dramatic characters, for example.<sup>15</sup>

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For a study of the ways that the relationship between bodies and the land was explored through cartography as a type of anatomy, see Caterina Albano, “Visible Bodies: Cartography and Anatomy,” *Literature, Mapping, and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain*, eds., Andrew Gordon and Bernhard Klein (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For a related discussion of the ways that “nationalist” and “erotic” identity are “consistently intertwined,” see Valerie Traub, *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (New York: Routledge, 1992) 72.

<sup>15</sup> See Alberto Cacicedo, “‘A formal man again’: Physiological Humours in *The Comedy of Errors*.” *The Upstart Crow* 11 (1991): 24-38 who argues that psychoanalytic theory and humoral psychology “coincide” as methods for reading *The Comedy of Errors*. Cacicedo sees humoralism as a way to locate the “basis for character” (25); See also Lilly B. Campbell, *Shakespeare's tragic heroes : slaves of passion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930) and John W. Draper, *The Humors and Shakespeare's Characters* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1945) for an analysis of the ways that humoral physiology figures in Shakespeare's plays. See also Louise C. Turner Forest, “A Caveat for Critics against Invoking Elizabethan Psychology,” *PMLA* 61 (1946) 652 who argues that there were competing notions of humoral physiology and psychology; William Green, “Humours Characters and Attributive Names in Shakespeare's Plays,” *Names: Journal of the American Name Society* 20.3 (September 1972): 157-165 looks at Shakespeare's use of “attributive names,” arguing that Shakespeare uses largely humoral names to indicate the personality traits of some characters; Barry M. Kroll in “The Relationship of the Supernatural Machinery to Humoral Doctrine in *The Rape of the Lock* (1714),” *Thoth* 14.1 (1973-74): 45-50, argues that reading the humoral language in *Rape of the Lock* helps us to see humoral psychology as a unifying theme in the poem; James D. Redwine, Jr. “Beyond Psychology: The Moral Basis of Jonson's Theory of Humour Characterization,” *ELH* 28.4 (December 1961): 316-334; Reid offers a corrective to the work of Campbell (1930) and Draper (1945) in his study of humoralism, arguing that it is largely psychological, and “interactive” (471), contrary to Campbell's and

More recently, Gail Kern Paster has read early modern dramatic literature “through the lens of humoralism,” reminding us that humoral physiology was not only utilized as an easy way of broadcasting character, but was for the early modern subject a pervasive, intensely corporeal, “lived-in-the-body” reality. Following the work of Paster, Michael Shoenfeldt argues that, “[i]n early modern England, the individual consumer was pressured by Galenic physiology, classical ethics, and Protestant theology to conceive all acts of ingestion and excretion as very literal acts of self-fashioning.”<sup>16</sup> In other words, what one ate, said, drank, and excreted in any manner could be seen as indicators of the state of a person’s mind and body.

I extend the work initiated by these critics, offering a rhetorical analysis of the ways that six early modern writers of social and religious polemic offer their texts as some form of humoral remedy for those they write against. Both Gosson and Marprelate label themselves physicians. Gosson’s tract is curative medicine for an effeminate, phlegmatic body politic. Marprelate is a “mirror” of the deformity in the body politic and his text a “cure.” The three defenses of women—by Jane Anger, Esther Sowernam, and Constantia Munda—represent written words as purges for the male writers they are answering. And, finally, the Lady’s words have a potentially transformative effect on Comus in Milton’s *A Masque*.

**“colde peares,” “capers,” and “sower meate,” or The Humoral Life of Words**

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Draper’s characterizations which favor a more physically determined and static notion of humoralism; See Shenk 115, who argues that Jonson’s use of humoral characterization was primarily moral rather than “psychological or aesthetic.”

<sup>16</sup> Michael Shoenfeldt, “Fables of the Belly in Early Modern England,” *The Body in Parts*, eds., David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997) 244.

Central to this project is the notion that words have humoral valences as do all substances that “issue” from the body. Because both spoken and written words “issue” in “streames” from the heart, and “idle talking overflow[s] in all places,” excess words, like excess humors, were regarded as evidence of a person’s intemperance.<sup>17</sup> Through speech and writing people conveyed the very substance of their souls, according to William Perkins, whose treatise addresses the connection between the state of a person’s body, soul, and words.<sup>18</sup> Words, like the people who spoke them, could be “hot,” bilious, choleric. Thus, a written text, like speech, is a record of the humoral complexion of the writer and functions as the writer’s other agent in the world. Furthermore, the text can be made to have humoral qualities that render it efficacious. In other words, the text, like substances, glances, gestures, and spoken words, when “ingested” and “digested” through reading, could transform a person’s body and mind.

As studies of early modern conceptions of language and rhetoric have documented, it was not uncommon for tracts and treatises to be described as substances to be ingested, where religious rhetoric, for example, functioned as “food” or “physic,” or a spiritual “cure.”<sup>19</sup> Indeed, there was a proliferation of texts that label themselves

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<sup>17</sup> William Perkins, *A Direction for the Government of the Tongue According to Gods Word* (A3<sup>v</sup>, A2<sup>r</sup>). Perkins connects the movements of the tongue and pen, arguing that each is governed by the same rules: “All this which is set down concerning speech, must as wel bee practised in writing, as in speaking” (D12<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>18</sup> As scholars have noted, there was a good deal of debate about just what a person’s words did indicate—early modern people acknowledged that complexions and “habits” could be counterfeited or disguised in myriad ways. See Jane Donawerth, esp. 7, 17-21, whose study of early modern language surveys the available positions people took in the debate about whether or not one’s words were a true representation of the heart.

<sup>19</sup> See Wayne Rebhorn, *The Emperor of Men’s Minds* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1995) 124 for a discussion of rhetoric specifically as food. Rebhorn

as “physic” or “cures,” situating their writers as physicians and surgeons. There are innumerable “purges for melancholy,” their pages filled with pleasing stories, “newes,” and “Wonders worth the hearing. Which being read or heard in a winters evening, by a good fire, or a summers morning, in the greene fields, may serve both to purge melancholy from the minde, & grosse humours from the body.”<sup>20</sup>

John Mico introduces his treatise explicitly as “Spiritual Food and Physic,” stating that the humoral qualities of his text depend on the age of the reader and the particular catechism the reader takes in. Whether the text functions as equivalent to “Milke for the Younger. Meat for the Stronger,” it is, Mico claims, “The Substance of Diuinitie,” “[a] Pill to purge out Poperie.”<sup>21</sup> Like many other writers at this time, Mico presents his work as the spiritual concoction that will cleanse and nourish the reader with both a true understanding of God’s Word and ingestion of divine matter, where the words of the text convey the Word of God into the body.

Thomas Hubbert also labels his treatise a “Pill” that is composed of religious teachings and biblical passages, a “purge” that will distinguish between those who are

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also identifies a number of different ways that rhetoric is characterized as a substance that can be ingested or taken into the body in some way, such as through the eye, ear, or other orifice and with differing levels of force. In each case, Rebhorn argues, rhetoric as a substance becomes incorporate through one person mixing with another. 149-156. See also Donawerth 58-60.

<sup>20</sup> Anon, *Wonders worth the hearing. Which being read or heard in a winters evening, by a good fire, or a summers morning, in the greene fields, may serve both to purge melancholy from the minde, & grosse humours from the body* (London, 1602).

<sup>21</sup> John Mico, *Spiritvall Food, and Physick Viz. Milke for the Younger. Meat for the Stronger. The Substance of Diuinitie. A Pill to purge out Poperie* (London, 1623).

godly and those who only think, or act as if, they are: “Pilula ad expurgandam Hypocrisin. A Pill to Purge FORMALITY.”<sup>22</sup>

Henry Barrowe likewise offers his religious dialogue as a text to be ingested, naming it a “preparative to purge away Prelatisme: with some other parts of Poperie.”<sup>23</sup> Similarly, William Prynne seeks in his religious treatise to convert readers through the digestion of the text as “spiritual food.” As the text becomes incorporate with the reader, Prynne suggests, the reader will be changed on an intellectual and physical level: his “Pleasant Pvrge for a Roman Catholike” has the express purpose to “evacuate his EVILL HUMOVRS Consisting of a Century of Polemical Epigrams; wherein divers grosse Errors, and Corruptions of the Church of Rome are discovered, censured, refuted. . .”

What we see in each of the above treatises, as indicated by their titles alone, is that each has several purposes: to anatomize the “body” to be purged, locate the distempered “member” within the body, and then remedy the distemper through a process of purgation or elimination.

In every case, the writer of textual physic is figured as the physician or surgeon who has identified a sick body in need of humoral remedy. The “body to be purged,” in the cases of these medicinal texts, is both the individual reader and the corporate

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas Hubbert, Esq., *Pilula ad expurgandam Hypocrisin. A Pill to Purge FORMALITY*. “Wherein is discovered the sad and woful condition of all formal professors in Religion; Also the glory and excellency of those that walk in the power of godliness, with severall notes of tryall, whereby men may know, whether they have onely a Form of godliness, or the power thereof (London, 1650).

<sup>23</sup> Henry Barrowe, *Mr. Henry Barrowes PLATFORM. Which may serve, as a Preparative to purge away Prelatisme: with some other parts of Poperie* (London, 1593).

body of the polity—one by one, individual bodies are purged of poperie, or prelatism, or some other malady, in order that the body politic is cleansed of the same. The women pamphlet writers, for example, speak to specific men—the “late surfeiting lover,” and Joseph Swetnam—but each also addresses a larger corporate body. Anger, Sowernam, and Munda each address men who are similar to the particular men they write against in order to administer their textual remedies to as many as possible.

In many cases, the substance or material to be purged has both physical and intellectual properties, precisely because of the connection between one’s spiritual and physical being. A state of spiritual purity or degradation indicated a respective control or indulgence of the fleshly appetites. For Mico, Barrowe, and Prynne above, to practice “poperie” and “prelatism” necessarily indicates humoral imbalance. Similarly, for Marprelate, the bishops’ status as “extra members” reveals humoral superfluity in both the body politic—where the bishops themselves are the “evil” humor in overabundance—but also in the individual bodies of the bishops, who Marprelate reveals are engaged in all manner of intemperate activities unbecoming to ministers.

As both Culpeper and Elyot articulate, there were numerous ways to address what Elyot calls “replecion,” the remedying of “excrements,” or “a superfluous abundaunce of humours in the body”: “abstinence, vomyte, purgation by siege, lettying of bloude, scarifieng called cupping, sweating, prouocation of urine, spitting, bledyng at the nose, or by hemoroides” (D1<sup>v</sup>-D2<sup>v</sup>). Where “lettying of blood” rids the body of superfluous or tainted blood, it does not transform blood into something more gross. Sweat, urine, spit and vomit, while more gross than the substances from which they originate, they are nevertheless not so gross as “stool.”

When compared with other early modern methods of “evacuation,” purgation is revealed as one of the most violent and most effective at reducing the “grossest humours” to even more “gross” substances in order to, according to Culpeper, “draw and cast [them] out from the remote parts of the body” (82). When Munda, for example, wants to emphasize the repugnance of Swetnam and the words that have issued from him, she describes him as a dog that lies in his own filth, that needs to be wormed, that ingests its own words in the form of vomit and then “squirts” them out again. This image ends up calling Swetnam, then, both a do and an asshole.

The solution offered by the purgative text is the power to flush the body of corruption, and because textual arguments carry humoral valences, they are not merely rhetorically persuasive, but potentially transformative on every level: they defile, they purge, they purify, they convert.

In the first chapter, I position Stephen Gosson's *School of Abuse*, and his appended treatise “To the Gentlewomen, Citizens of London . . .” within the furor surrounding the Queen’s marriage negotiations with the Duke of Alençon in order to show that the text has significance as a highly political argument against Queen Elizabeth's religious and governmental policies, particularly her entertainment of the Catholic suit and her failure to engage English troops in defense of the Low Countries. Through a close examination of the humoral valence of Gosson’s text, I show that he draws attention to the feminization of England’s body politic by establishing a humoral relationship and similarity between the bodies of women, the “bodies” of cities-in-danger, and the body politic of Elizabeth as a female body. I show that, according to Gosson, the humoral imbalance in Queen Elizabeth’s body politic leads to undesirable behaviors against which he argues. Gosson’s *School* thus functions as a humoral

remedy to “wake up” a “sleeping” England. In this way, Gosson offers his text as “physic” or the stimulant that remedy can the “Fleumattick” female body politic, preparing her to protect herself against the Catholic threat at her borders.

Next, I consider the Martin Marprelate tracts as texts that are meant to work as “cures” for a “botched” English church and nation. I show that Marprelate uses the “bodilessness” afforded by his pseudonym to parody both the corrupt body of the church establishment and the Queen’s “out of joint” body politic. Because Marprelate’s parodic body is a humoral one, his mirror of the abuses of the Bishops, and by extension the Queen, as self-made members stuck haphazardly on the perfect body of Christ, shows us how the Queen and her church hierarchy function as an imbalanced, diseased body politic, as well as a “botch” in, or a humoral putrification of, the beautiful, spiritual body of Christ. Marprelate’s tracts, in addition to supplying the “mirror” that reflects the distemper of the English church and nation, offer themselves as the “purge” that will cleanse the Queen and her bishops from the English bodies politic and ecclesiastical.

In the final chapter, I explore the ways that English defenses of women and Milton’s Lady in her debates with Comus all use “holy speech” as “protection” for themselves and as potentially transformative medicine for their angry male attackers. Their texts or speeches thus have the qualities of powerful herbal remedies, purging men’s bad behavior not only from their individual bodies, but also from the corporate body of the polity. Specifically, I examine how Jane Anger, Esther Sowernam, and Constantia Munda each return to the moment of Genesis, revising the relationship of women’s bodies to men’s in order to challenge the linkage between female chastity and silence. Through the deployment of commonplace notions of “holy speech,” the

women pamphlet writers and the Lady all demonstrate that a woman's chastity resides in her spiritual rather than physical body.

This project's attention to early modern perceptions of the efficacy of words changes the way we are compelled to read early modern subjects and texts, alerting us to new interpretive possibilities and deepening our understanding of what it meant to "change" a person's mind. If texts can be curative, then we begin to appreciate both their political power to construct reality, and also the potential threats posed by texts that seek to alter the shape of an existing social, religious, or political order.

## Chapter 1

### **“You neede not goe abroade to be tempted”: Stephen Gosson’s *School of Abuse* as an Anti-Marriage Tract**

Queen Elizabeth entertained a number of marriage proposals, but arguably the most serious negotiations took place in the year 1579, when the Queen was considering marriage with Catholic François, the Duke of Alençon (or Anjou as he was later titled).<sup>1</sup> English people had been eager to see their queen married when she was younger, hopeful she would secure the royal succession by bearing a male heir, but as she aged, they became less and less comfortable with the notion of her marrying, worried that she was not able still to bear children, or, worse, that she would die in childbirth.<sup>2</sup> While the Queen’s virginity had previously been a symbol of her stubborn

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<sup>1</sup> See Lloyd E. Berry, ed., “Introduction: The Alençon Affair,” *John Stubbs’s Gaping Gulf with Letters and Other Relevant Documents* (Charlottesville, Virginia: The University Press of Virginia for the Folger Shakespeare Library, 1968) 1x-xix; Susan Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (New York: Routledge, 1996) 164, 186-7; Carole Levin, *Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania 1994) 60-1 and *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (New York: Palgrave, 2002) 18-19; Wallace T. MacCaffrey *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, 1572-1588*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), Alison Plowden, *Marriage with my Kingdom: The Courtships of Queen Elizabeth I* (1977; Great Britain: Sutton Publishing, 1999) esp. chapter eleven; Blair Worden *The Sound of Virtue: Philip Sidney’s Arcadia and Elizabethan Politics*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> During the time marriage negotiations were periodically renewed with Alençon, and particularly in 1579, there was considerable discussion at all levels of English society about whether or not Elizabeth was still capable of bearing children. See Christopher Hibbert, *The Virgin Queen: Elizabeth I, Genius of the Golden Age* (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1991) 193. See Levin, *Heart and Stomach* esp. chapter four for a discussion of the interest that Queen Elizabeth’s sexuality occasioned during her reign. There was constant speculation about whether she “were a maid or no” (66). Rumors asserting that she had had several children by Leicester were so ubiquitous that it was declared treason in 1559 to spread such rumors (68). Plowden

refusal to marry, it became increasingly associated with England's strength and safety and an argument against a marriage to Alençon.<sup>3</sup> The Protestant majority objected especially to the Duke of Alençon because he was unassimilable in religion and a man half her age who was also rumored to be politically mercurial, militarily ambitious, physically deformed, and diseased.<sup>4</sup> As Susan Doran has shown, it was during the Spring and Summer of 1579 that the English people become most concerned that the marriage negotiations would result in an actual marriage. From August onwards "pamphlets, popular ballads and Latin verses vehemently opposed to the marriage poured forth" (164).

It was at the height of anxiety about the possible marriage, early in the Summer of 1579 that Stephen Gosson stopped working on his treatise *Ephemerides of Phialo* and hastily wrote an "anti-theatrical" tract called *The School of Abuse*, dedicating it to Sir Philip Sidney. The tract was not well received, either by Sidney or the others against whom he wrote, including "players" and "poets." Later that year, Sidney wrote

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178-9, 183.

<sup>3</sup> See Levin, *Heart and Stomach* 63-65, and esp. chapter four, for a discussion of different facets of Elizabeth's choice to remain unmarried.

<sup>4</sup> There were rumors that Alençon may have suffered from a sexually transmitted disease. See Doran 166-68, MacCaffery 264, and Plowden 176, who mentions that even the Queen's council objected to Alençon's "gross defects." See also Stubbs A2<sup>r</sup> who explicitly refers to venereal disease when he argues that the French brought "that other horrible disease of the body" from "those Easteern partes of the world," and now they also seek to infect English minds with the "sicknes" of Catholicism. He also referred to Alençon as a serpent in the shape of a man who would infect Elizabeth, or the Eve of the "English Paradise."

his famous letter to Elizabeth, urging her to abandon the marriage negotiations.<sup>5</sup> In September, coincident with discussions by the Queen's council about the marriage, John Stubbs's *Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf* was published. It was a lengthy treatise against the whole marriage program and echoed many of the council's objections to the match.<sup>6</sup> As many critics have shown, both Sidney and Stubbs paid a price for their candor and devotion to the Queen.<sup>7</sup>

Gosson's *School of Abuse* and later anti-theatrical writings attracted a great deal of attention in his own day, and it is his *School* that has most attracted the attention of recent scholars, largely for its status as an "anti-theatrical" tract—some argue the first of its kind—and the impetus for Sidney's famous *Defense of Poesy*. Critics have

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<sup>5</sup> There is considerable debate over the exact date that Sidney's letter was written and circulated. See Levin, *Heart and Stomach* 62 who dates the writing and circulation of Sidney's letter as in November or December of 1679. See Blair Worden, *The Sound of Virtue: Philip Sidney's Arcadia and Elizabethan Politics* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1996) 42 who dates the letter much earlier, arguing that Sidney would not likely have written his letter after seeing the furor over Stubbs's treatise.

<sup>6</sup> MacCaffery notes that the timing of Stubbs's treatise, coinciding as it did with council meetings and intense public outcry, caused many to suspect a "collaboration between the pamphleteer and some member of the Anti-Anjou faction in [the Queen's] council" (262).

<sup>7</sup> See Berry ix-xix, esp. xv-xvi who details the political events surrounding the marriage negotiations, paying particular attention to the intersection of Alençon's military failure in the Low Countries and his visit to Elizabeth in August of 1579; See Doran 165, 168-169 who notes that even after the Queen's unambiguous response to Stubbs's *Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf* in late September, 1579 arguments against the match continued to be published, albeit in much more veiled forms; Levin in *Heart and Stomach* 62-3 argues that Sidney's letter was written in November or December of 1579 and that he had read Stubbs. MacCaffery 261-2. See Worden 42 who offers a detailed analysis of the timing of Sidney's letter to Elizabeth, noting that the letter likely ruined his career. Both Berry and Worden posit that Walsingham, Leicester, and other forward Protestants at court were instrumental in the writing and circulation of both Sidney's and Stubbs's arguments against the match.

focused on Gosson's critique of the ways that theater was implicated in the decay of society and the practice of religion.<sup>8</sup>

This chapter extends these critical analyses by positioning Gosson's *School* within the religio-political furor surrounding the Queen's governmental policies regarding Protestants on the continent and in the Low Countries and her associated marriage negotiations with Catholic Duke of Alençon. Given the publication of the *School* on July 22, 1579, the Queen's marriage negotiations provide important insights

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<sup>8</sup> Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981) regarded Gosson's tracts as significant insofar as they galvanized anti-theatrical sentiment; Barish saw the *School*, unlike Gosson's later anti-theatrical works, as "meandering," and engaging in "free associative ramblings" (88). See Stephen S. Hilliard, "Stephen Gosson and the Elizabethan Distrust of the Effects of Drama," *English Literary Renaissance* 9 (1979): 225-39, esp. 236 for a discussion of Gosson as fearful that drama "competes with religion" as the place the common people look for teaching and truth. Hilliard focused most of his attention on *Plays Confuted* but generalized his conclusions to all three of Gosson's anti-theatrical tracts, implying that the tracts were more or less transparent in their critique. See also Colin MacCabe, "Abusing self and other: puritan accounts of the Shakespearian stage," *Critical Quarterly* 30.3 (Autumn 1988): 3-17 for a discussion of Gosson's tracts as largely driven by Gosson's "fear of the sexuality authorized by the plays, the social disorder surrounding playgoing, and its larger implications for the decay of society" (7). See William Ringler, *Stephen Gosson: A Biographical and Critical Study* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1942) 53, who argues that Gosson's *School* initiated public attention to the "social evils" brought about by the theater and popularized attacks on the stage.

William Ringler is one of the very few critics who explicitly discusses Gosson's position on international affairs, devoting two paragraphs to Gosson's political views on the specific international climate that existed at the time Gosson wrote *The School of Abuse*. Ringler contextualized his brief comment within an analysis of the other "abuses" Gosson identifies as primarily "invective against the social evils of his time," invective that "typified the attitude of a member of the Elizabethan middle class, who considered the three cardinal virtues to be honesty, industry, and thrift" (29). Ringler saw Gosson's interest in industry and thrift as leading to a "digression in praise of Old England, when men had not been made effeminate by easy living and pleasant pastimes" (30). In this way, Ringler saw Gosson's discussion of other abuses as largely born out of Gosson's "social and economic, rather than religious or moral" objections to idleness and its consequences (30).

into the politics and rhetorical exigencies of Gosson's *School*, his letter *To the Gentlewomen of London*, and his decision to dedicate his epistle to Sidney.

I show that an examination of the thematic and rhetorical similarities between Gosson's *School* and other anti-marriage arguments, particularly those initiated by the Leicester-Walsingham faction, reveals a political affinity between them. An analysis of the ways anti-marriage writing articulated the dangers of "shows" and "acting" as particularly Catholic supports the notion that Gosson's arguments against the "abuses" of theaters, players, and seemers do double-duty as anti-Catholic arguments. Next, an exploration of Gosson's attention to the theater and other entertainments as undermining the right configuration of the body politic implicitly suggests that Elizabeth has not only moved out of the position of "head" of the body politic, but by doing this, has given other members permission to abandon their birthright positions in the hierarchy, rendering the body politic a disordered, intemperate, and thus unhealthy, body.

By also situating Gosson's arguments within the framework of a humoral worldview, I show that Gosson takes his critique of Elizabeth and her politics even further, drawing attention to the feminization of England's body politic by establishing a relationship between the bodies of women, the "bodies" of cities-in-danger, and the body politic of Elizabeth as a female body in order to show the humoral similarities between them: all of them are characterized by torpor, superfluous sleep, and material excesses leading to vanity and idleness, qualities associated with women in general. These same terms are used by Gosson and like-minded members of Elizabeth's court—

specifically, Sidney and the Leicester-Walsingham faction—to describe England as “sleeping,” given to the excesses and complacency that arise from a protracted peace.

In Gosson’s view, the humoral imbalance he identifies in Queen Elizabeth’s body politic produces and reproduces the behaviors against which he argues: playing, dancing, dicing, fencing, idleness, promiscuity, and the flouting of sumptuary laws. Read within this context, Gosson’s arguments against “entertainments” and social transgressions can be seen as interdependent appeals that members of the body politic maintain, or return to, their right places. Gosson’s *School* thus functions as a humoral remedy intended to restore the body’s balance and harmony by “waking up” England. Gosson himself functions as the physician who, through his text, can administer the “physic” or stimulating medicine that purges the “Fleumatick” body politic of sloth, idleness, and superfluous sleep that she may be ready to protect herself against the Catholic threat at her borders.

**“A discourse . . . pleasaunt for Gentlemen that fauour learning”:  
Sidney as a Reader of Gosson’s *School***

Gosson's *School of Abuse* has been largely accepted as the impetus for an angry response from Sir Philip Sidney in the form of his *Defense of Poesy*.<sup>9</sup> Blair Worden

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<sup>9</sup>See Rebecca Bushnell, *Tragedies of Tyrants: Political Thought and Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990) 5-6 who argues that anti-theatrical arguments often were concerned with the way that imperial or royal power was “exercised theatrically” (6); Margaret Ferguson, *Trials of Desire: Renaissance Defenses of Poetry* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1983) 139; Roger Howell, *Sir Philip Sidney: The Shepherd Knight* (Little, Brown & Co.: Boston 168) 172; Kinney 15-16; Ringler 36-37 and 117-122; Lewis Soens, ed., *Sir*

has recently argued that both Sidney's *Defense* and his *Arcadia* are comments on the proposed marriage between Queen Elizabeth and Alençon. In light of the widely accepted belief that Sidney's *Defense* was a response to Gosson's *School*, it is worth considering that Gosson chose Sir Philip Sidney as his desired patron as much for a believed political sympathy as a desire for financial security.<sup>10</sup>

In this section, I examine Gosson's *School* within the context of the religious and political views of Sidney, the Leicester-Walsingham faction, and John Stubbs, whose anti-marriage treatise, *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf*, contains many of the same arguments as Sidney's anti-marriage letter to Queen Elizabeth.<sup>11</sup> Such an examination reveals that Gosson, Sidney, and Stubbs shared similar politics, using similar language and images to talk about the state of the English body politic and the threat that lay in an English marriage with France. Stubbs in particular specifically identifies the duplicity and "acting" of France, and the changeability of Alençon, as manifestations of Catholic falseness and idolatry. Similarly, Gosson's arguments against the "shows" of the theater are simultaneously arguments against the "shows" of

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*Philip Sidney's Defense of Poetry* (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, Nebraska, 1970) xi.

<sup>10</sup> The reasons Gosson may have chosen to dedicate his *School* to Philip Sidney (without permission) has been discussed by other critics, most notably Ringler 35-37 and Kinney 15. Both attribute his choice to the fact that Sidney's reputation as a learned man who had already extended patronage to a number of rising talents in the literary arts.

<sup>11</sup> See Berry xv-xvi, xxv for a discussion of Stubbs's forward Presbyterian politics and his close associations with Francis Walsingham. It is believed that Stubbs may have translated Beza and Calvin, and he certainly had very close associations with noted Puritan leaders, such as William Davison, Walter Travers, and Thomas Cartwright (xxv).

idolatry and the “acting” or falseness and duplicity of the French, especially given Gosson’s insistence that the “abuses” he identifies will sicken the English body politic. Gosson’s pleas for England to “wake up” and discontinue “idle” pastimes and entertainments are not unlike the desires of Sidney and the Leicester-Walsingham faction that a sleeping England wake from a torpid dream to see the danger across the channel.<sup>12</sup> In this way, Gosson implicitly links the sloth, idleness, and “sleeping” of individual citizens with the body politic of which they are a part: because the individual has been lulled into a state of accepting contentment and self-indulgence, so has the body politic and vice versa.

There is also historical evidence that suggests Gosson and Sidney shared similar views, according to Blair Worden: “For Sidney. . . the doctrinal codes of Protestantism mattered less than the thwarting of Catholicism. The superstition and external observances of Catholicism, he believed, crush and chain the spirit. They make men servile and rob them of . . . ethical and political independence” (60). As William Ringler has shown, it is also certainly the case that Gosson was a staunch anti-Catholic and an iconoclast, to the point even of wanting to fight in the Protestant cause on the Continent and especially against the Spanish Armada.<sup>13</sup> While Sidney seems to have wanted to have little to do with Gosson—Gosson was by Sidney “for his labour

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<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of “sleeping” specifically as a metaphor used extensively by Sidney, Walsingham, and others with similar politics to talk about England’s political, religious and military vulnerability in the face of a growing Catholic threat, see Worden 62-3.

<sup>13</sup> Ringler 45.

scorned”<sup>14</sup>—Walsingham later became quite involved with Gosson, and his patronage has been regarded as largely instrumental in Gosson’s later career and remarkable rise as a minister in the church of England.<sup>15</sup> As Worden has shown, Walsingham was also Philip Sidney’s friend and patron and Walsingham’s belief that “[t]he aim of learning . . . was ‘to serve [one’s] country; ‘to serve the commonwealth; ‘to serve all public service” (26) is in concert with the beliefs espoused by Sidney, and by Gosson in his *School*. It is certainly tempting to suggest that the religio-political linkage between Walsingham and Gosson began long before the early 1580s when Gosson dedicated his *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* to Walsingham and a year later was appointed as a lecturer at St. Martin’s Church.

Historical evidence that Gosson and Sidney shared similar political views, specifically with regard to the marriage negotiations and England’s political and military policies, invites us to take another look at Gosson’s dedicatory epistle and his *School* for evidence signaling his desire that Sidney should read his tract politically. As Susan Doran has shown, that Gosson might cloak his anti-Catholic and anti-Alençon arguments in an anti-theatrical pamphlet is not surprising. Given the political climate at the time, “Fear of punishment led the opponents of the match to express their sentiments ever more cryptically” (168).<sup>16</sup> We can see the response an overt critique of

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<sup>14</sup> Kinney 44.

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of Gosson’s career within the church, see Kinney 21-24, and Ringler 43-44, 46-49. Ringler even suggests that Gosson was one of Walsingham’s “spies” (41-2).

<sup>16</sup> See also Doran 11, 169, 171-2, for a discussion of the ubiquity of arguments against

the Queen garnered in the Queen's swift and unambiguous reaction to John Stubb's—his *Gaping Gulf* resulted in his own and his printer's right hands being cut off. Philip Sidney's clear objection to the match may account for the way he was marginalized for his anti-marriage letter to the Queen. Gosson's decision to write obliquely proved a wise choice. He did not suffer the same censure as Stubbs and Sidney.

An example of Gosson's carefully veiled argument is evident in the opening lines of his dedication: Gosson explicitly signals to Sidney that there is more to his "slender volume" than might first appear. He begins with an allusion to Caligula "lying in Fraunce with a greate armie of fighting menne, [who] brought all his force, on a sudden to the Sea side, as though hee intended to cutte ouer, and inuade Englande."<sup>17</sup>

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the match between Alençon and Elizabeth—most of these arguments were anonymous or carefully veiled, such as Spenser's critique in *The Mother Hubbard's Tale*, in which beasts were used to signal political meanings. Gower's paintings were also veiled anti-marriage arguments that not only depict a virgin Queen but valorize her virginity. See also Plowden 182, and esp. MacCaffery 255-7, 264 who notes there were numerous sermons preached against the match, as well as many popular ballads and other more veiled arguments, including, Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*. See Worden who argues that Sidney's *Arcadia* is an extended argument against the Queen's policies with regard to Protestants abroad, and specifically the marriage negotiations. See Glynne Wickham, "Love's Labor's Lost and The Four Foster Children of Desire, 1581," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 36.1 (Spring 1985): 49-55 for a discussion of the possible relationships between Gosson's *School*, Sidney's *Defense* and *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, and Shakespeare's *Love's Labor's Lost*. While Wickham is interested in *Four Foster Children* as a source for Shakespeare's play, and does not suggest that it is an anti-marriage pastoral, the drama's unhappy ending and its interest in mixing people of high status with low suggests that it may indeed be an anti-Alençon text. Certainly the difference in degree between Elizabeth and Alençon was one of the points that English citizens used against the match—see Stubbs F2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen Gosson, *Markets of Bawdrie: The Dramatic Criticism of Stephen Gosson*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Salzburg, Austria: Institut Für Englische Sprache Und Literatur, 1974) 3<sup>v</sup>-4. Subsequent references will be to this edition unless otherwise noted. See also Stephen Gosson *The School of Abuse, containing a Pleasant Invective against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters, &c.*, (1841; New York: American Shakespeare Society

Because Gosson's *School of Abuse* was published at a moment of greatest intensity during the marriage negotiations between Elizabeth and Alençon, his description of Caligula's army lying in France reads as a concealed reference to Alençon lying in France with an army waiting to invade—like Caligula, Alençon was characterized as power-hungry, mercurial, capricious, and ambitious.<sup>18</sup>

Gosson further narrates how Caligula, with his army arrayed on the shores of France, gets in a small boat, pulls up his anchor and sets out, only to “play” a short while in the sea, “wafting too and fro at his pleasure.” It is not long before he returns to the shore, gives alarm to his soldiers “in token of battaile, and immediately charges every man to gather cockles” (3<sup>v</sup>). Here, “cockles” likely refers to the small shells strewn on the shore, shells that would generally have been gathered by women, so much so that there was a particular name for such women—“cocklewives.”<sup>19</sup> In this way, Caligula “playing” for his pleasure defines him as a rather effeminate military leader, and “charging” his soldiers with gathering “cockles” further depicts him and them as engaged in effeminate and feminizing activities. In a moment, Gosson has undone the threat that lay arrayed on the shores of France, revealing it to be too self-indulgent to do any harm.

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Press, Inc., 1970) 3.

<sup>18</sup> See Doran 168-9 for a discussion of the way that toads and frogs became associated with Alençon after Elizabeth began calling him her frog. See also Berry xi. See also Guy 409 who mentions “frog” as the Queen’s name for Alençon. Guy notes that Elizabeth had animal nicknames for her courtiers. See Stubbs who argues that Alençon’s body was ambitious (E4<sup>f</sup>) and his body deformed (E3<sup>v</sup>). See E8<sup>v</sup>-F1<sup>f</sup> for a characterization of Alençon and the French as deceitful and as actors.

<sup>19</sup> See “cockle”1, 3a meaning a “shallow vessel,” and 6 “cocklewife,” *OED* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

Gosson's description of Caligula as leading his army about "for his pleasure" would likely have evoked for most English readers of the day Alençon's own political and military history. As MacCaffery and other historians have shown, Alençon's desire for land, military prowess, power, and money meant that by 1579 he had more or less the reputation of a mercenary, fighting on behalf of whomever offered him a better incentive:<sup>20</sup> in 1576 he pursued the interests of the Spanish through a marriage with the Infanta Isabel, but was refused; he considered an alliance with Orange in exchange for land and leadership, but this came to nothing; he fought for the Protestant cause in the Low Countries against Spain and fought on the side of his brother against the Huguenots in the "massacre" of Bartholomew; he sought money repeatedly from England, fought with his brother early in 1578 and was therefore arrested, but then escaped from his prison and promptly wrote to Elizabeth to renew his interest in marriage; he had begun negotiations with the English to fight on their behalf in the Low Countries, returned to France by the end of 1578, and, early in 1579, sent his agent Simier to woo Elizabeth on his behalf.

These were "frantic" behaviors, and against the backdrop of the Pope's call to "reconvert" England, the Duke's attentions looked in no way trustworthy. Both Sidney and Stubbs enumerate in their anti-marriage writings Alençon's military, political, and religious turnings. In his letter to Elizabeth, Sidney explicitly refers to Alençon's changeability as typically French and likely a Catholic plot to destroy Protestant

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<sup>20</sup> For accounts of this particular period in English foreign policy and history, see Hibbert esp. chapter fourteen; MacCaffery chapters 10 & 11; Plowden, *Marriage with My Kingdom* chapters 10 & 11; and Levin, *Heart and Stomach* 60-65 and *The Reign of Elizabeth I* 53-56, and esp. chapter five.

England: “His will is to be full of light ambition as is possible, besides the frenche disposition. . . With these fancies & suche favorites is it to be hoped for that he will be contained in the limites of your condicions?” (53-4).<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Stubbs warns that Elizabeth and all England should “gauge the verye bellye of this great horse of hidden mischiefes & falshoode meant to us” (A2<sup>v</sup>-A3<sup>r</sup>).

When Gosson worries that he will be thought by Sidney to be as “frantick” as Caligula, he is expressing concern that his own history with theater and poetry looks as untrustworthy and self-indulgent, that in his current work all his power has been brought “to a vayne skirmish” (4<sup>r</sup>). In order not to be misunderstood by Sidney, Gosson again emphasizes the importance of his tract with a series of analogies that emphasize the magnitude of his argument in relation to the small size of his book. In this way, Gosson suggests that his argument has broad implications: “small cloudes cary water. . . the whole world is drawn in a mappe . . . the kinges picture in a penny” (4<sup>r</sup>).<sup>22</sup> Not only is there more to Caligula’s “vayne skirmish” than can at first be seen, but there is also more to Gosson’s argument than may be evident on the surface: “The shortest Pamphlette maye shrowde matter; the hardest heade may giue light; and the harshest penne maye sette downe somewhat worth the reading” (4<sup>r</sup>). The argument

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<sup>21</sup> All references to Sidney’s “A Discourse of Syr Ph. S. to The Queenes Majesty Touching Hir Marriage with Monsieur” are from *The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Albert Feuillerat, 3 vols. (1912; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962) 51-60, and will be noted parenthetically.

<sup>22</sup> Stubbs uses almost the same language to talk about the Catholic threat itself, specifically Alençon, who may appear humble and amenable but is nevertheless very dangerous: “great troubles ryse of small beginnings” (C7<sup>r</sup>). He uses a similar rhetorical strategy when he argues that only one altar in England “set vp in the vttermost corner of the land . . . hath none vse but to serue the deuil. . .” (B1<sup>v</sup>).

worth reading here is an anatomy of the degeneracy of England, its consequent vulnerability to a Catholic threat, and the antidote to such a predicament: real military action rather than “play” at such action.

As Worden has shown, Sidney also believed that “honorable action” was superior to “contemplation, which can be a ‘glorious title to idleness’” (25). Stubbs similarly advocated action rather than “these delays”: “. . . in deede if it lease hyr maiestye to ayde those low countries: as it wyll be most for our honor in the enterprise, and for our gayne in atchieuing, to doe it of ourselues” (E7<sup>v</sup>). In each of these cases, a central argument against the proposed marriage between England and France is that England should not rely on the (dubious) action of another, especially not when, as the Leicester-Walsingham faction believed, England should fight on behalf of the fledgling churches in the Low Countries.

It is at this point that Gosson introduces his pamphlet again within the conceit that it functions as a “school.” He constructs himself, not surprisingly, as the schoolmaster and teacher, a role for which he argues he is particularly well-suited because of his previous experiences with the debauchery of the playhouse during his brief and unsuccessful stint as a playwright:

He that hath ben shooke with fierce ague giueth good counsell to his friends when he is wel. . . I persuade my selfe, that seeing the abuses which I reueale, trying the[m] thorowly to my hurt, and bearing the stench of the[m] yet in my owne nose; I may best make the frame, found the schoole, and read the first lecture of all my selfe, too warne euery man to auoyde the peril (4<sup>v</sup>).

Gosson writes in the language of one converted, the lewd liver who has turned his life toward right action and now seeks to instruct others to make the same conversion. To this end, his *School* is “instruction,” or a level of remedy that is best suited to, as he points out, reach individual people and so help them to avoid the very things he did not. In this way, Gosson presents himself as one who has awakened from the dazzle of playhouse shows and the idleness they engender, has seen the error of his ways, and now seeks through education to convert others—this is an approach that Sidney would have agreed with morally. As Worden has argued, Sidney’s correspondence and prose indicate that he regarded education as the force that could cultivate and foster virtue, which could “change the world” (23).

Just as Sidney understands that education does not make virtuous people, but rather feeds the virtue God bequeathed to them by directing them to moral action, Gosson also recognizes that his method of individual “instruction” is not likely to solve the problem. It is a limited and piecemeal approach, when, as he reminds us, the larger problem is with the body politic itself—it is, he argues, diseased, filled with corruption. Like the man who cannot see the beam in his own eye or the cancer in his own body, the body politic, too, is not able to function as its own “physition.” This office Gosson takes on as his own. He, like the physician, has diagnosed the body under his care and knows how it is to be cured, though he cannot cut out the botch in the body politic of England, but only expose its presence and prescribe a remedy:

A good Phisition when the disease cannot bee cured within, thrusteth the corruption out in the face, and deliuereth his Patient to the Chirurgion: Though my skill in Phisicke bee small, I haue some experience in these maladyes,

which I thrust out with my penne too euery mans viewe, yeelding the ranke fleshe to the Chirurgions knife, and so ridde my handes of the cure, for it passeth my cunning too heale them privily (5<sup>r</sup>).

Central to Gosson's argument is the common early modern understanding of how people were arranged in a hierarchy in which each individual according to rank and degree was believed to occupy a divinely ordained position in the body politic. In its most basic form, according to Thomas Elyot and others who reiterate Plutarch's model of the body politic, the monarch occupies the position of head and rules over the rest of the body. Knights, nobles, and other governing persons occupy the positions of arms and hands, functioning to protect the body from harm. The belly, legs, and feet are occupied by lesser sorts: workers, laborers, and other people.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the health of the corporate and political bodies was believed to be maintained in much the same way as the health of an individual person—the body politic, just like human “natural” bodies, were governed by a humoral model and were considered healthy when in a state of balance. Consequently, a manual for optimum health, such as Elyot's *Castel of Helthe*, had political and civic applications and ramifications—the person who maintained a body in balance was not given to indulging appetites, but to self-government using knowledge, wisdom, and reason to make good decisions about all things, including the persons with whom one consorted and took counsel.

It is easy to see that, within this model, if people desired to rise in position or engaged in any sort of extreme behavior or desires they were considered to be guilty of

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<sup>23</sup>Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named the Governour*, ed. Henry Herbert Stephen Croft (1883; New York: Burt Franklin, 1967) 26.

intemperance, an offense with both a physical and moral valence. Alençon's changeability was, thus, cause for grave concern. Gosson worries that his own turn will render him without authority to speak. And Sidney worries that Elizabeth's sudden change of heart and mind has implications for her body politic as well: "For as in bodies naturall any soudain change is not without peril, so in this body politick wherof you are the onely head, it is so much the more as there are more humours to receave a hurtfull impression" (52). Sidney draws attention in this passage to the fear that if something happened to Elizabeth, the body politic would be left without a head. But of even greater concern for Sidney, Gosson, and the Leicester-Walsingham faction, was the fact that Elizabeth's body politic was already in a precarious state, containing within it opposing forces that could at any moment war upon each other, rending the body in pieces: Your inward force (for as for your treasure indeed the sinews of your Crowne your Majesty doth best & onely know) doth consist in your subjects generally unexpert in warlike defence, and as they are divided into two mighty factions & factions bound upon the never ending knott of religion (52).<sup>24</sup> In this context, as Sidney articulates, any "soudain change" in Elizabeth, toward Catholicism in the form of marriage, would not only be "not without perill" (52), but would destroy the peace that such a marriage was calculated to secure.

What is clear in both Sidney's letter and Gosson's tract is that intemperate or self-indulgent actions on behalf of any member of the body politic put the whole body at risk—both ruler and ruled risked "spreading" immorality through example in much

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<sup>24</sup> See also Stubbs C6<sup>v</sup> who uses almost identical language when he objects to England footing the bill for maintaining Alençon and his army: "Sith treasure is a principall sinew of any state; and therefore not to be wasted, much less therewyth to buye our own harme."

the same way disease spreads through contact.<sup>25</sup> This is especially serious within the early modern Christian understanding of the world and cosmos in which the person was made in the image of God as Word, and, as such, was a mirror of and mirrored the corporate and political bodies. Because all of these bodies are humoral ones, it is easy to see how the ungoverned appetites of one individual—expressed through hot words and intemperate behaviors—worked to taint others. Gosson means by his “penne” to expose this corruption, offering a formula for its removal. In this way, he suggests the potential his words have to purify the body politic by eliminating the corruption it contains.

Similarly, the method by which the person was believed to become corrupt—by the incorporation of corrupt “food” or “matter”—was the same method by which the body politic was corrupted. This model exerted pressure on individual action, certainly on the actions of any person anywhere in the body politic, but particularly on the monarch, as we can see in Sidney’s letter. It is, thus, as Gosson warns his readers, incumbent on individuals to cloister themselves from the temptations that lead quickly to sloth and idleness, wherein reason is consumed and in its place is left appetite, desire, and bestiality—characteristics, incidentally, of the humoral body imbalanced by the phlegmatic humor—the same humor believed to be dominant in the bodies of

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<sup>25</sup> See Jonathan Gil Harris, *Foreign bodies and the body politic: Discourses of social pathology in early modern England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) for an analysis of how emerging disease models were used to talk about the ailing body politic. See also Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 7, who articulates the connection between temperance and moral thought and action, emphasizing the early modern interest in finding the mean between two extremes: “As temperance became a central ethical virtue for the Renaissance, health assumed the role of a moral imperative . . .”

women, making them all “cold and moist,” given to idleness, vanity, cowardice, and sleep.

We are perhaps not surprised, then, to find that Gosson begins the first “lecture” in his *School* with a reminder to his reader that the *wise* person “feedes most upon that that doth nourishe best” and is careful to avoid what is not nourishing (5<sup>r</sup>). Where “hony and gall are mixed, it will be hard to seuer the one from the other” he writes, bringing home the idea that to “feed” on something that is both sweet and sour is to ingest both (5<sup>r</sup>). Thus, to partake of anything that is not wholly good is to be affected by that which is not good. While this statement can certainly apply to the notion that to engage in activities or to consort with people who are not wholly good is not a good idea, such language was also used to talk about the effect of allowing Alençon to practice his religion, even in private. Therefore, here Gosson speaks explicitly about poets and players and implicitly about all other “seemers” or “counterfeiters.” In this way, Gosson employs terms also used to talk about Catholics and other “seemers” who feign goodness but are not good.

According to Gosson, like Syrens, Harpies, and Hyenas, “seemers,” take on some of the characteristics of what is good—beautiful songs, the lovely faces of virgins, the voices of friends—in order to lead the unsuspecting and the unwise to their doom. Similarly, Sidney and Stubbs both draw attention to the ways that Alençon acts or “plays,” seeming one way when he is, by evidence, another way. Sidney warns Elizabeth that her subjects will “be galed, if not aliened, when they shall see you take to husband a frenchman & a papist, in whome howsoever fine wittes may finde either further daunger or painted excuses, yet very common people will know this that he is

the sonne of that Jezabel of our age” (52). Stubbs, also warns repeatedly not only of Alençon’s specific changeableness, but also the ease with which both French and Catholics have been seen to change in the past. He says of Alençon that, “[a]n ill disposed body he hath, a suspitious and fearefull mynde euen of hys friends” (B3<sup>v</sup>), but the Queen Mother is worse insofar as she is “before vs but a body or tronk wherein the Pope moueth, as hyr soule (B4<sup>r-v</sup>). She is, in his vision, a “player”: “the mother as setter forth of thys earnest game, stode holding the booke (as it were) vppon the stage and told her children and euery other player what he should say” (B4<sup>v</sup>-B5<sup>r</sup>). In all of these cases, Elizabeth, as head of the body politic, is being warned not to take the play or player for what is real or true.

At issue in all of the examples each of these writers uses to recount the dangers of seemers—be they poets, players, French or Catholic—are figures that counterfeit the good, honest, or truly beautiful in a show that bypasses reason and wisdom, appealing exclusively to the senses. Gosson’s list of seemers is meant to remind us that the siren’s song overwhelms with its beauty, and even the otherwise reasonable Odysseus had to be bound fast to the mast of his boat in order not to dash himself to bits in a fit of intemperate desire that overwhelmed all reason. Harpies, too, captivate with the beauty of their faces, promising the equally lovely bodies of virgins only to expose their hideous forms, but not before making men mad with desire. And the hyena speaks with the sweet words of a friend but then “deuours like a Foe” (5<sup>r</sup>). The shape-changers Gosson identifies function effectively to consume a person’s reason, appealing solely to the senses. Similarly, believing the acts or shows of Alençon and

the Queen Mother is equally to disregard wisdom and allow oneself to be deceived by craft.<sup>26</sup> For a person to succumb to the seduction of seemers only has one end: destruction. Once a person has been beguiled through the dazzling of sense, reason is lost, causing that which is divine in a person also to be lost, and a man or woman becomes little better than a beast.

Gosson further makes explicit the process by which people are imbruted, subtly linking players with idolaters and Catholics. According to Gosson, the seductive shows of players and poets are akin to the “Cuppes of *Circes*, that turne reasonable Creatures into brute Beastes” (5<sup>r</sup>).<sup>27</sup> In this figure, Gosson presents the seductress/ruler who enchants and, thus, enchains her subjects and followers, transforming them into beasts who follow her without a will of their own. As Michael O’Connell has shown in his recent analysis of iconoclasm, the danger of the “shows” of the theater, like the spectacle and materialism of Catholicism, was regarded as causing a person to mistake the image for the truth, absorbing the spectacle through the eye in a way that the person is unable to assess that spectacle using reason.<sup>28</sup> In

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<sup>26</sup> See Worden 28-29 for a discussion of the importance Sidney and the Leicester-Walsingham faction placed on virtue in combination with wisdom: “truth of feeling and expression, though evidence of virtue, is not a sufficient condition of its effectiveness. Virtue needs an ally: wisdom” (28).

<sup>27</sup> See Wayne Rebhorn 137-8 who offers a discussion of Circe as a rhetorical trope used to evoke the notion of the human spirit enchanted by sensual desire and, as such, rendered bestial.

<sup>28</sup> O’Connell 19-20. For a discussion of the associations between bestiality and tyranny, see Bushnell 50-55. For a discussion of Circe as a representation of the particular dangers of bad rhetoric and the tyrannical ruler that renders subjects herd-like followers, see Rebhorn 137.

Gosson's vision, the person who drinks Circe's potion from a cup and the person who imbibes the blood of Christ in a cup are both in the thrall of an image or theatrical show, and, as such, rendered unable to determine right from wrong, truth from spectacle, wine from blood.

According to Gosson, like beasts, playgoers were vulnerable to intemperate appetites of every sort, and, thus, "chained" to the dictates of Fortune and desire, rather than directed by God, and reason to right action. In much the same way, as Worden has shown, Protestants such as Sidney believed the "superstition and external observances of Catholicism crush and chain the spirit. . . make men servile and rob them of ethical and political independence" (60). Gosson's example of "players," like Sidney's example of Catholics, suggests that a failure to engage in the right sort of behavior, caused by an over-reliance on sensual information, necessarily rendered a person unable to understand the immaterial—namely, the divine. In the person of a monarch, this means, as it does for all individuals, a disconnection from God, but this disconnect is much more serious. Indeed, as Stubbs repeatedly argues, for Elizabeth to entertain Alençon's suit is to hazard England for one man and his Catholic altar:

Syn prouoketh the wrath of God, and that greate sinnes call down great plages, and mighty sinners are mightily punished. This argument, The world sinneth, such a citie sinneth, such a land sinneth, such a trybe, such a kindred, such a family, such a soule sinneth, Ergo, the world, such a city, land, trybe, kindred, family, soule, shall feele the vengeance of that high lawgiver against whom they sinne: is a most necessary consequence (A3<sup>v</sup>).

Thomas Elyot, writing in his *Of the Knowledge Which Maketh A Wise Man*, offers a paradigm that helps explain that a person who indulges the senses, and in Stubbs's example above, practices idolatry, and a person who engages in the "wrong action" or activities that engage the appetites and sensual desire, has turned away from what is divine in the self, and, along with it, shut the self off from God's Word. Elyot articulates the difference between the intelligible, or "stedfast and permanent," and sensible, "euer moueable & vncertein" worlds, arguing that a person is connected to God through reason and understanding, that which is "intelligible." Thus, a person who follows sense becomes bestial from the inside out: "Intelligible there is the fyrst & the seconde. In the fyrste is the portin of diuinitie, which is in man, wherby he is made to the image and similitude of god. In the other be nombres and figures. Of this, beastes haue no parte, neyther of the fyrste nor yet of the seconde."<sup>29</sup>

Within this commonly accepted paradigm, Gosson's and Stubbs's worries that England will bring upon herself the wrath of God was not idiosyncratic. Indeed, many English, and certainly the Leicester-Walsingham faction felt similarly. Sidney felt that Elizabeth's entertainment of Alençon was the worst sort of gamble, regardless of whether motivated by personal will and desire or a religio-political reliance on his military forces to further English interests in the Low Countries: "To temporize with the enemies of our faith [is] false-headedness to God and man, [which] would in the end find itself forsaken of both" (qutd. in Worden 60).

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<sup>29</sup> Thomas Elyot, *Of the Knowledge Which Maketh A Wise Man*, ed. Edwin Johnson Howard (Oxford, Ohio: The Anchor Press, 1946) 79-80.

Within the context of Stubbs's and Sidney's doomsday language, Gosson's depiction of the dangers of feeding "sense" sound familiar, where any purely sensual activity ultimately leads away from God to the doorstep of the devil: "from pyping to playing, from play to pleasure, from pleasure to slouth, from slouth too sleepe, from sleepe too sinne, from sinne to death, from death to the Deuill" (5<sup>f</sup>). As Gosson pictures it, the result of sensual music and theatrical shows is a person given to torpor, excess sleep, and sin. Here we see again the same imagery used by the Sidney faction to describe a sleeping England in danger: the sleepwalking England cannot even assess her enemies, for she is, at this point, divested of the reason and understanding necessary to the task. According to Worden, Sidney felt that the "superstitious princes of Europe were lost in 'enchanted dreams,' and that the papists, by 'filling people's minds with apparitions of holiness, specious rites, saints, miracles,' had 'lulled inferior powers asleep.' Sidney's friends thought the same way. . . and . . . contested the spiritual sleep of Catholicism with the 'wakefulness' of Protestantism" (61).<sup>30</sup>

By using the imagery of dreaming and sleep to describe the current state of England, both Gosson and Sidney implicitly describe the body politic as one that is distempered by an excess of the phlegmatic humor, on the level of the individual "member" or citizen, as well as the greater body politic into which all those members are incorporate.<sup>31</sup> In both cases, as Gosson's list of consequent relations shows, the

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<sup>30</sup> See Worden 61 and 63 for a discussion of the long literary history of talking about the "sleep" of princes who were regarded as ignoring their right duties to the commonwealth.

<sup>31</sup> See Thomas Elyot, "The Fyrste Boke" *Castel*, A3<sup>r</sup> who notes that, "Besydes the

distemper is caused by indulgence of desire and sin. Nicholas Culpeper, an early modern Galenist physican, describes the “flegmatic” person in his *Galen’s Art of Physick*: “As for Conditions, they are very dull, heavy and slothful . . . They are drowsie, sleepy, cowardly forgetful Creatures” (57). Similarly, Elyot lists the traits of the “fleumatik person” in *The Castel of Helthe*: “sleape superfluous,” “[s]lownesse, dullnesse in lernynge” and “[c]owardyse” (A2<sup>v</sup>). When these same humoral qualities of “exceeding in cold” and “moyste in excesse” pertain particularly to the brain, or head, according to Elyot, they cause the body to “slepe moche and depe” and cause “moche superfluities” (A4<sup>r</sup>). We can see that the terms used by physicians to diagnose the humoral state of a patient are the same terms used by Gosson, Sidney, and Stubbs to describe England. She is sleeping, given to the excesses of sensual pleasures—as seen in Elizabeth’s entertainment of Simier and Alençon as well as citizens’ attendance at theaters and engagement in other “entertainments” that speak to the senses. And England is cowardly, relying on the fighting arms of others instead of the marshal activities of her own armies. She delays. She waits.<sup>32</sup>

The solution to the excess and dissolution Gosson witnesses in individuals and by extension the entire commonwealth, is, he articulates repeatedly, a multi-part process: he recommends “purging” the commonwealth of “abuses,” and, rather than the abolition of playing, poetry, dancing, or singing, Gosson desires the reformation of

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sayd complexions of all the hole bodye, there be in the particular members, complexions, wherein if there be any distemperaunce, it bryngeth syckenesse or grieffe into the member.”

<sup>32</sup> See Stubbs E7<sup>v</sup> who worries that soon the situation in the low countries will have grown so bad that it is beyond help: “who by these delayes shal be soone past helpe.”

such “entertainments.”<sup>33</sup> In Gosson’s vision, people ought to play and listen to the “right” sort of music, engage in the right sort of versifying, and so on, which, in every case, inspires not passive reception, idleness, and effeminacy, but action:

As in every perfect common wealth, there ought to be good laws established, right maintained, wrong repressed, vertue rewarded, vice punished, and all manner of abuses thouroughly purged, so ought there such schooles for the furtherance of the same to be advaunced, that young men may be taught that in greene yeeres, that becomes them to practise in gray hayres” (A4<sup>v</sup>).

Implicit in Gosson’s model for the perfect commonwealth is a virtuous and politically active community that produces and reproduces itself through education and example, where right-living men raise sons to do the same. His own *School* is surely the sort that ought, according to him, to “be advaunced” in the efforts to “purge” the commonwealth of abuses and educate youth that they may grow to be good citizens.

John Stubbs similarly sees well-ordered music and the well-ordered commonwealth as linked to each other, but he also makes explicit the connection between a healthy commonwealth and proper marriage, in which “like to like” is joined. Stubbs makes the point that people too different in any matter—especially a matter so important as religion—will not make a peaceful and loving family. In this

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<sup>33</sup> Gosson’s position hardened into a stance of abolition by the time he wrote *Playes Confuted in Five Actions*. Within his *School*, however, he does not advocate such abolition, more interested, as he is, in reform and “right action.” See Kinney 44-51 for a discussion of ways that Sidney “misconstrued” Gosson’s argument, replying as though Gosson had called for abolition, rather than reform. See Hilliard, esp. part two, for a discussion of Gosson’s “case against drama,” in which he argues that Gosson scorns the common people and urges the abolition of plays and poetry and a return to traditional religion. Hilliard’s support for this argument relies heavily on *Playes Confuted* yet his conclusions are more generalized.

way, Stubbs makes explicit the connection between the family as “a little commonwealth” and the larger commonwealth, “for the norishing of peace and loue between man and wife, and for the well bringing vp of the children in euery family. . . considering that families are the seedes of the Realmes and petie partes of the common weales” (A4<sup>v</sup>). Here, Stubbs’s vision for a healthy body politic, like Gosson’s, relies on education that starts with the little family unit. If each family unit functions as it should, the body politic will be well ordered. Conversely, if a man and a woman different in temperament, degree, or religion marry, then the family as a little commonwealth is nullified because “like to like” has not been joined.

For the man and wife to be the Protestant Queen of England and the Catholic Duke of Alençon—a couple dissimilar in age, religion, temperament, and other matters—would certainly not, Stubbs argues, lead to a peaceful and loving family: “a greate disparagement for health to be ioyned in marriage with any foule disease, for beuty with deformity, youth with decrepitate age. . .” (A4<sup>v</sup>). Indeed, such a union would lead to a terrible fall, because the Prince, who should labor to keep her people “upright” would be brought down by marriage with a Catholic, and her inferior at that. The solution, according to both Stubbs and Gosson is to seek the “mean,” the balanced life, and to educate others to seek the same.

A good education program in the early modern era was a combination of the right sort of “exercise” and learning. According to Thomas Elyot in his well-known program for creating a wise man, good exercise—fencing to protect the realm rather than fencing for entertainment, for example—enriched the body in much the same way that good food could, functioning to make a man healthy and “awake” for right action

and thinking. In this way, what one took into the body and mind resulted in not only a state of temperate balance but also necessarily a life of appropriate civil and political action:

. . . wyse fathers the better that they loue theyr sonnes/the more diligent be they,  
And as I mowghte saye the more importune in kepyng them in continual  
exercise, thynkyng that therby the strength and delyuerness of the bodye  
increacith/and if hit be in study of mynd/wyt is augmented: lyke as contrary  
wyse by sluggardy and idelness the said actiuite is appalled and the wyttes  
consumed: wherby men be made vnapte for the life which is actife or  
politike.<sup>34</sup>

Elyot's program, like the programs envisioned by Stubbs, the Leicester-Walsingham faction, and Gosson, work on the smallest level—the individual—but have implications for both the health of the family and ultimately the body politic.

Moreover, as Robert Shenk has shown, where a person's humoral complexion was determined by nature, the "second nature" within humoral theory was one's "qualities" which were articulated as one's moral disposition, or "habits." Thus, a person born of a sanguine, balanced temperament and complexion might, through living a life of sloth and vanity become, as Elyot describes above, rather more phlegmatic, "sluggardy. . . the wyttes consumed," and wholly unready to take any sort of action should it be necessary—to protect England from a Catholic invasion, for example.

Gosson's education program for the right-living person, and thus the healthy commonwealth, shares with Sidney and the Leicester-Walsingham faction a common

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<sup>34</sup> Elyot, *Of the Knowledge* . . . 162-163.

definition of virtue which dictated that a person behave in the right way as both an extension of God and a model for others to do the same. As Worden has shown, “Virtue” for Elizabethans “meant not only conformity to moral principles but the possession of divinely endowed gifts and powers. Those properties if cultivated by education, would carry the authority of example, and could change the world” (23). In this model the example of the idle-liver is not simply a danger unto the self, but to all within the body politic, because the idle person contaminates by presence and example, leading others to the same “lewd living.” The implications of a queen and body politic that looked drawn toward such idle and lewd living were alarming indeed.

That Elizabeth continued to entertain the marriage negotiations in the face of growing discomfort, if not outright discontent, amongst her subjects was perceived by some as a demonstration an intemperate personal desire that was affecting her ability to make decisions for the good of her subjects and England. Stubbs worried in his *Gaping Gulf* that Elizabeth, like Eve, would be persuaded by the sweet-talking rhetoric of a devil to leave England much as Eve was persuaded to leave Eden. The process by which Eve was banished from Eden could not have been lost on any reader: Stubbs, like Gosson, sees the destruction of England as potentially occurring through the fleshly desires of a woman. Moreover, for a queen to fall to the sensuality caused by intemperate desire would result, as did Eve’s transgression, in putting personal desire above the common good. In this way, for Elizabeth to marry as a result of her own will would have been seen as an effeminate expression of emotion and desire unbecoming the good monarch. Only a tyrannical queen would risk the opinions of her people to follow her personal inclinations.

Because tyrants, like players, were associated with shows, pageantry, shape-changing, mercurial cruelty, and effeminacy, for Elizabeth to pursue the marriage negotiations against the wishes of a populace ready to go to war on the continent was to risk the support of the citizenry and accusations of tyranny.<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth was certainly aware of the dangerous territory she would have entered had she agreed to marry Alençon against the wishes of the people. Several times she slowed or virtually stopped movement in the negotiations by citing her inability to marry should her people be against the match.<sup>36</sup>

In language that echoes Stubbs's analogy between Elizabeth and Eve, Gosson warns against the serpent or devil that can appear in the habit of a man. In general, as we have seen, Gosson is worried about the deception of outward appearance: he strings a number of analogies together that all have in common the sly seemer taking down the strong and genuine innocent:

There is more in them than we perceive; the Divell standes at our elbowe when we see not, speaks when we heare him not, strikes when we feele not, and woundeth sore when he raseth no skinne nor rentes the fleshe. In those thinges that we lest mistrust the greatest daunger doeth often lurke. . . There is more peril in close fistuloes then outward sores, in secret ambush then mayne bateles, in undermining then playne assaulting, in friends then foes, in civill discorde then forrayne warres (C4<sup>r</sup>).

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<sup>35</sup> Bushnell 9.

<sup>36</sup> Doran 164, 179-181.

In the last sentence of this passage, Gosson moves from the dangers faced by the individual body to those faced by the body politic, but the threat is ultimately the same—the worst dangers come from close quarters, and the worst of all come from inside the body itself. Particularly threatening for Elizabeth and England are the danger posed by “friends” and the dangers posed by a citizenry at war with themselves or with their government. In the first instance, Gosson alludes to the danger posed by “friends who are Catholics, and, in the second instance, Gosson evokes the threat of a body out of joint, where citizens revolt against the head. The fear that danger was close at hand and lay in the form of false friends was not uncommon at this moment. Stubbs articulates both fears, warning Elizabeth that by “marrying Fraunce” she risked the love of current friends, hazarding England for false ones:

Of all sinnes ingrattyud ys odious with God and Man: no vnthankfulnes lyke to ours, who hauyng bene thus long maynteyned in peace: and in the begynnyng hauyng all nations our enemyes, hauee now many faythfull bordering freendes, and are ryche at home through our peace and by the blessing of God: will now swarue from the Lord, and trust to our own deuises, and make leage with them, and suffer theyr Idolatry in our land, that neuer less loued us then now, when they looke fairest (A8<sup>v</sup>).

Stubbs, like Gosson, is concerned that Elizabeth and her governors will not recognize the “shows” of friendship put forth by the French. And the consequences Stubbs envisions, like those imagined by Gosson, will be grave and terrible. Entertaining Alençon’s suit is, according to Gosson, Sidney, the Leicester-Walsingham faction, and Stubbs, for England to turn its back on God and suffer the consequences.

**Assailable Cities:  
The Female Body and the Politics of an English Marriage with France**

As we have seen, Gosson, like others who wrote against the Queen's possible marriage with the Duke of Alençon, characterized England—and thus the body politic—as in a state of idleness and sleep, dazzled by the “shows” of players and, thus, unable to assess the danger that lay outside England's borders. In this way, Gosson, like Sidney and the court faction favoring intervention to support the Protestant cause in the Low Countries, portrays England as cowardly and effeminate.

In this section, I explore the ways that Gosson draws attention to the feminization of England's body politic by establishing a relationship between the bodies of “London Ladies,” the “bodies” of cities-in-danger, and the body politic of Elizabeth as a female body in order to suggest that all have the humoral qualities associated with a superfluity of phlegm. In so doing, Gosson links the “colde and moiste,” complexion of women with the torpor, superfluous sleep, and material excesses that lead to vanity and idleness he sees afflicting the body politic. In this way, Gosson and like-minded members of Elizabeth's court use the same terminology to describe England: she is “sleeping,” given to the excesses and complacency that arise from a protracted peace. An examination of the humoral imbalance Gosson identifies in Queen Elizabeth's body politic clarifies how the particular distemper suffered by the body politic leads to the behaviors against which he argues: playing, dancing, dicing, fencing, idleness, promiscuity, and the flouting of sumptuary laws.

Once Gosson has outlined the problem plaguing the commonwealth, his next task is to paint a picture of the real abuses and intemperate exercises of the people,

providing his readers with the ocular proof that both renders indispensable Gosson's prescription for purging the corruption in the body politic and unambiguous the terrible chaos should his "pysick" be ignored.

We can see this chaos writ small in the very music Gosson critiques when he creates a lengthy list of recent additions to musical instruments—such as frets, stringes, stops, keys, cliffs, flats, sharpes—and the associated additions to the music played on such instruments, all of which Gosson regards as superfluous, necessarily immoderate, and, as a result, dangerous and deformed. Both individual hearers, who will not benefit from the calming and even medicinal effects of right music, but the body politic itself is also in danger of disintegrating into discordant, distempered parts. We can see this explicitly when Gosson excoriates the "chopping . . . changing . . . tossing . . . turning . . . wresting and wringing that is among our musitions . . . [who] despise the good rules of their ancient masters, and run to the shop of their owne devices, defacing olde stamperes, forging newe printes, and coining strange precepts. . ."<sup>37</sup> Gosson then follows this description of bad behavior with its consequence: by these new strains, Queen Music herself has been ravaged—her clothes and flesh torn, her face "deformed," her body wounded, dismembered, disfigured and, ultimately, not only unable to "rule" those within her dominion, but "present in place the least part of her selfe" (18). She has, in the end, been so "hacked and hewed" that her body is not recognizable, she now wears several "fantasticall heades" and, not surprisingly, her death is immanent.

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<sup>37</sup> Stephen Gosson, *The School of Abuse, containing a Pleasant Invective against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters, &c* (1841; New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1970) 18.

When Gosson parades poor Music in front of his readers, he simultaneously draws a clear relationship between her status as female and “head” of the corporate body of all musicians in order to show that the actions of individual musicians and Music’s inability to control them has led to her current defilement—in all ways possible—to the degree that she is “in place the least part of her self” (18). In other words, the corporate body of which Music was governor, that is, of musicians and the music they create, has been utterly undone, unable to control herself or anything within her jurisdiction. Presenting Queen Music as a defiled woman at this particular moment in 1579 suggests that the corruption which has utterly defiled the “natural” female body and by extension the corporate body of poor Music will happen to Queen Elizabeth’s bodies natural and political if Gosson’s purgative is not followed.

We see in the example of Music a graphic picture of the possible consequences for Queen Elizabeth should she continue to entertain the suit of a Catholic as the means by which to secure her own and her country’s religio-political and military future. Especially as we proceed through the later portion of Gosson’s *School*, his examples of debauchery and its consequences for the nation are increasingly linked to the defilement of female bodies.

We see these terms play out in Gosson’s *School* and in his appended admonition to “London Gentlewomen” wherein going “abroad” to the theaters is, as has been argued above, to associate oneself with Catholicism, idolatry, and thus debauchery, through “shows” that appeal to the senses, and to inversions of right order. Gosson adds to this in his discussion of “what I see, and informe you what I reade of such affaires,” the idea (from Ovid) that “Romulus builte his theater as a horsfaire for

hoores, made triumphes and set out playes to gather the faire women together, that every one of his souldiers might take where hee liked a snatch for his share” (B3<sup>v</sup>, B3<sup>v</sup>–B4<sup>r</sup>).<sup>38</sup> Here, Gosson explicitly links theaters and the trafficking of women, where for women to attend the theater is akin to prostitution. And, in particular, it is soldiers who take these women sexually. Because of the ways that Elizabeth sought an association with Alençon because of his status as a military leader for the Protestant cause on the continent, Gosson’s allusions are more pointed, making the argument that the woman who consorts with the soldier is little better than a “hoore.”

If this is the consequence for women attending the theater, and even a good woman who attends the theater can be defiled simply by association, conversation, or “gazing,” then any intercourse at all with the theater is liable to prove, as Gosson further outlines, “sufficient cause to speak ill of them and thinke worse. The shadow of a knave hurts an honest man; the sent of the stewes a sober matron; and the shew of Theaters a simple gaser” (B4<sup>r</sup>).<sup>39</sup>

As Gosson’s vivid examples suggest, his arguments against women’s attendance at the theater operate on several levels, the theater standing in as a sort of code for Catholicism and Alençon, and the woman theater-goer as unsuspecting Protestant English woman and also Queen Elizabeth. With this allegorical construction, Gosson demonstrates the means by which all women and the Queen herself can be

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<sup>38</sup> Stephen Gosson, “School of Abuse,” *Markets of Bawdrie: The Dramatic Criticism of Stephen Gosson*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Salzburg, Austria: Institut Für Englische Sprache Und Literatur, 1974).

<sup>39</sup> For a discussion of how Elizabeth’s entertainment of Alençon and his suit caused rumors about her honor that were not to her credit, see Levin, *Heart and Stomach*. . . 64.

brought to the same low place. The allegory is all the more powerful because of the relationship Gosson has established between women's natural bodies and cities in danger of being "sacked." In his *School* and the appended treatise entitled *To the Gentlewomen, Citizens of London, flourishing dayes, with regarde of credite*, Gosson implies that the danger to body politic, the city at risk, and by association Queen Elizabeth is greater because the "lady" to whom he writes can be seen as complicit, as "yielding" herself and her body-as-territory to hostile attacks. In his letter to London Gentlewomen, as we saw above, Gosson argues that the woman who goes "abroad" to the theatre and does "but listen to the voyse of the fouler, or joyne lookkes with an amorous gazer" has made herself "assaultable, and yelded [her] cit[y] to be sacked" (F2<sup>v</sup>). Here the "citie" as a territory that could be plundered by a man's "assaults" explicitly refers to a woman's body and by extension her chastity if not virginity. Since "city" was also used to refer specifically to the city of London, and Gosson speaks here specifically to the Gentlewomen of London, he aligns the "assaultable" woman's body with the vulnerable city of London and the body politic/territory of England.

As early as the 1560s, Queen Elizabeth herself adopted language that associated her "fruitful" body with England's populace, calling herself spouse to England, mother of all her subjects, thus making herself figuratively responsible for the population of England.<sup>40</sup> The degree to which the Queen and her body were seen as analogous to the

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<sup>40</sup> See Louis Adrian Montrose, "The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text" *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*, eds., Patricia Parker and David Quint (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986) 309-310; and Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society,

territory of England is also evidenced in several maps that depict Elizabeth's body as the island of England.<sup>41</sup> Gosson extends the language of territory and political and individual bodies to associate England, Queen Elizabeth, her political body, and her natural female body as vulnerable to a military danger.

The graphic examples of the debasement of women and thus the debasement of England presented in Gosson's *School* are implicitly linked to Queen Elizabeth in terms already established in the culture: as we saw previously, the virginity, and thus sexual purity, of Queen Elizabeth was increasingly linked by Elizabeth's subjects to the strength of England as a nation. As Lesley Cormack has shown, the importance of atlas frontispieces in constructing England's position in relation to other nations contributed powerfully to England's self-fashioning as "self-sufficient" and then subsequently as an empire.<sup>42</sup> Several of the atlas frontispieces specifically align the impervious body of Elizabeth with the territory of England. Cormack makes the point that England's "self-image" or "self-conception" as a country that could "control other countries and regions of the world, had to precede the acquisition of an empire and so the English needed an imperial ideology before they could begin to construct an empire

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1977) 39.

<sup>41</sup> See Montrose 314-316 for a discussion of the ways that (post-Alençon) Queen Elizabeth increasingly utilized her purity and virginity as the source of her potency.

<sup>42</sup> For a discussion of the ways that Elizabeth's status of virgin queen was explicitly linked with an expanding English empire, see Doran 171-2. See also Lesley B. Cormack, "Britannia rules the waves?: images of empire in Elizabethan England," *Literature, Mapping, and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 45-68, esp. 57; and Richard Helgerson, "The Land Speaks: Cartography, Chorography, and Subversion in Renaissance England," *Representations* 16 (Autumn, 1986): 50-85.

in deed” (63). That the English nation was specifically aligned with Elizabeth’s virgin body establishes the foundation for Gosson’s and others’ critiques of the marriage negotiations: marriage—at all, and specifically to a Catholic—would utterly undermine the notions of empire that are established on the foundation of Elizabeth as an isle unto her self. Any critique of the negotiations, in more or less subtle terms, must link England’s undoing with the ravaging or defilement of Elizabeth’s natural and political bodies.<sup>43</sup>

By setting up subtle links between bodies on the level of the person, city, nation, and cosmology, Gosson can be said to create what Caterina Albano terms a “mental map” of the connection between the shows of the theater, other abuses, and the Catholic threat to Elizabeth and all England. In her exploration of the ways that late sixteenth and early seventeenth century European cultures were shaped by and shaped perceptions of both bodies and space, Albano argues that “to render space legible is, in fact, a political act of appropriation.”<sup>44</sup> While Gosson is not making a careful outline of the territory of England in order to “appropriate” it, his *School* does have some of the characteristics of both anatomy and cartography insofar as he anatomizes or renders “legible” a physical threat posed to the person of Elizabeth, through the government of England and the actual territory of England, by the Catholic forces in France and Spain. What Gosson fears is the “act of appropriation” that a marriage with Alençon

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<sup>43</sup> For a discussion of the ways that the ideology of the “kings two bodies” was used with regard to Queen Elizabeth and explicitly linked her natural body insofar as the political body was “contained in” her natural body, see Axton 12.

<sup>44</sup> Caterina Albano, “Visible Bodies: Cartography and Anatomy” *Literature, Mapping, and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain* eds., Andrew Gordon and Bernhard Klein (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 90.

would bring about. For Gosson, this Catholic act of appropriation figures as an act of consumption and religio-military take-over of the several related bodies that comprise England. He makes this association explicit when he warns that England's "enemies" have already consumed the flesh and blood of England as the first step in their plans of conquest:<sup>45</sup>

Scipio before he levied his force to the walles of Carthage gave his souldiers the print of the cittie in a cake to be devoured: our enemies, with Scipio, have already eaten us with bread, and licked up our blood in a cup of wine. They do but tarry the tyde, watch opportunitie, and wayt for the reckoning, that with the shot of our lives shoulde paye for all (C1<sup>f</sup>).

Here, Gosson uses eucharistic imagery in order to connect a Catholic threat with a transformation of the "body" of England. Just as Scipio's enemies were made more vulnerable when his soldiers devoured "the city" in a cake, and the Catholic devotee is made a part of the mystical body of Christ through transubstantiation, so the body of England is in danger of being made "incorporate" with its enemies by being devoured with bread and wine.

There is only one person who fits the description outlined by Gosson as most threatening to the future of England: the Catholic lying in wait to attack England with his troops, the amorous gazer, the foul talker, the man whose physical assault on the London gentlewoman's body as national territory could endanger England and right

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<sup>45</sup> See also Stubbs C4<sup>f</sup> who offers a similar image: ". . . these men, that haue eaten the people of God as bread, haue bene fleshed in murdering of multitudes, & drunk the blod of noble men, why should any good manner stay a good louing subiecte from fearing the same daungers and cruelties from the same men to our Queen?"

order. The man who fits all of these categories is the Duke of Alençon, whose sexual overtures in his own person and by his agent Simier had consequences that could potentially affect the physical “natural” body of Queen Elizabeth—through a pregnancy—and in so doing affect the political body of the monarchy in several possible ways. In each of these cases, Alençon’s “body” had the potential to change forever on physical, political, and religious levels, both Elizabeth and all England.

The possible outcome of a sexual coupling with Alençon was the question on everyone’s mind. Elizabeth’s fertility was common conversation, and, as Stubbs’s *Gaping Gulf* articulates, one of the important issues under discussion was how the designations of Protestant, Queen, and woman intersected with the role of wife—to a man of lesser status. Who, in this instance was the “head”? Stubbs was not alone in worrying that an English marriage with France would mean that England was “mastered and which is worse mistresed to” (D3<sup>v</sup>).<sup>46</sup>

In order to avoid the terrible consequences of a body out of joint and, by extension, the cosmological chaos such a distempered body could bring about, Gosson’s program for restoring all to right order, from the smallest thing to the largest thing that also has the body politic as a female body at its center:

It were not good for us too flatter oure selues with these golden dayes; highe  
floodes have lowe Ebbes; hotte Fevers could Crampes; Long dayes shorte  
nights, Drie Summers moyste Winters. There was neuer fort so strong, but it

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<sup>46</sup> For a discussion of similar issues that had surrounded the marriage of Mary Tudor to Philip II, see Constance Jordan, “Woman’s Rule in Sixteenth-Century British Political Thought,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 40.3 (Autumn 1987): 421-451.

might be battered, neuer ground so fruitful, but it might be barren; neuer  
countrie so populous, but it might be wast; neuer Monarch so mighty, but he  
might be weakened: neuer Realme so large, but it might be lessened: neuer  
kingdom so flourishing, but it might be decayed (C1<sup>r</sup>).

Most readers of Gosson's *School* would have understood the phrase "golden dayes" as a reference to the unprecedented time of peace that England enjoyed under Elizabeth's guidance, but a peacetime that should not lull English citizens into a feeling of complacency or invincibility. In order to emphasize the possible fragility of protracted peace, Gosson again evokes England as a body. He paints the long peace as an extreme, one that warrants an equally extreme contrary; hiding in an extended peace is the threat of an extended war. Just as a body can grow used to its health and, therefore, be unprepared for illness and disease, so England, used to health and thus peace, is vulnerable to illness in the form of war.<sup>47</sup>

Gosson follows this construction of the English nation as vulnerable body politic with a list of qualities currently associated with England the nation: sturdy fortification, fruitfulness, strong population numbers, might, large size, and flourishing health. These qualities, according to Gosson, will nevertheless fail to protect England if she falls under attack. Here he builds on his construction of the city and body politic as female bodies by warning that even fruitful ground may prove barren, furthering the

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<sup>47</sup> See Jonathan Gil Harris, *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), who explores the ways that models of disease and illness were used to talk about the threat of "invasion" or "contagion" in the form of antagonistic political or religious groups.

picture of England as simultaneously reproductive body and productive territory. Because he constructs England as a woman's reproductive body that is vulnerable to attack, his depiction of England as a fort whose walls are in danger of being "battered" evokes images of the vulnerable woman whose chastity is in danger if the bounds of her body should be breached.<sup>48</sup> In 1579 Queen Elizabeth's body was the fruitful body that might prove barren should its sanctity be undone.

Like Sidney's worry that the Queen relies on delay and diplomatic marriage negotiations as a means to protect England and Protestant interests on the continent, Gosson also warns against this line of action, calling it a "temptation." In this way, his warnings to London Gentlewomen about the tempting devils who will try anything to lead them astray does double duty as warning to Queen Elizabeth against the duplicitous pursuits of Alençon. In either case, the pursuing man, like any temptation, is an agent of sin and the only way to avoid such temptations is to disallow them any opportunity. Stay in doors, Gosson warns: "Keepe at home and shun all occasion of ill speech" (F4<sup>r</sup>). We are, perhaps, not surprised that Gosson follows this, his "best counsel," with a reminder that the Vestal Virgins are good examples of women who maintained their virginity, and thus their purity, even if it meant being confined to a stone wall. Guarding Elizabeth's virginity, as we have seen, was regarded by many of her contemporaries as one of the clearest safeguards for England's national borders, too.

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<sup>48</sup> See Valerie Traub, *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (New York: Routledge, 1992), esp. chapter three, for a discussion of the ways that the body figures "metonymically" as the nation (72).

Gosson ends his letter to London Gentlewomen with a more concrete program for avoiding the temptations of the amorous gazer and foul talker, one that applies equally well to the individual London woman and Queen Elizabeth herself. In his view, if a woman should,

perceiue [herself] in any danger at [her] owne doores, either allured by curtesie in the day, or assaulted with Musike in the night; Close up your eyes, stoppe your eares, tye up our tongues: when they speake, answeare not; when they hallowe, stoope not; when they sigh, laugh at them; when they sue, scorne them. Shunne their company: never be seene where they resort; so shall you neither set them proppes when they seeke to climbe, nor holde them the stirrope when they proffer to mount (F4<sup>r-v</sup>).

Gosson's language is bald, moving from directives to stop all communication and association, to the consequences should these directives not be followed; simply to be seen in the same place with one of these seemers is portrayed here as assistance to the social climber and the sexual conqueror. Like many of Elizabeth's citizens, Gosson saw Alençon as Elizabeth's inferior, both in age and rank. Gosson suggests here that by simply countenancing the marriage negotiations, Elizabeth raises his status to that of equal—this was a rank that Gosson and others clearly regarded as far above his position.<sup>49</sup>

**Music that can cure the sick:  
Gosson's Prescription for Distempered Bodies**

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<sup>49</sup> Stubbs makes several references to Alençon's multifarious inferiority. See for example, A4<sup>v</sup>, D4<sup>r</sup>, F2<sup>v</sup>-F3<sup>r</sup>.

As we have seen, all of the abuses Gosson identifies are believed to lead to a level of lewd living that will work continually to re-beget itself, undoing God's perfectly structured system of inter-related hierarchies. Not only will people be moving from their divinely ordained places, but also the byproduct of lewd living—idleness—will make them unready for precisely the political and military action Gosson and the Leicester-Walsingham faction fears will be necessary should the Queen marry Alençon.

Read within this context, Gosson's arguments against "entertainments" and social transgressions can be seen as interdependent appeals that members of the body politic maintain, or return to, their right places. Gosson's *School* thus functions as a humoral remedy or stimulant intended to restore the body's balance and harmony by "waking up" England. Gosson himself functions as the physician who, through his text, can administer the "physic" or medicine that purges the "Fleumatick" body politic of sloth, idleness, and superfluous sleep that she may be ready to protect herself against the Catholic threat at her borders.

As an examination of Gosson's program for purging individual bodies, and thus the body politic, reveals, the solution or cure for the botch he has so meticulously identified is to return to a more ancient music, poetry, and theatre, where the purpose and effect was to inspire people—soldiers mostly—to right action in defense of the nation. Gosson mentions in particular the importance of "ancient poetry" that was "set down in numbers and sung to the instrument at solemne feastes, that the sound of the one might draw the hearers from kissing the cup too often, the sense of the other to put them in minde of things past, and chaulke out the way to do the like" (A7<sup>v</sup>). In this

passage, Gosson sees “ancient poetry” as explicitly responsible for keeping people from the lure of drunkenness at the same time helping them to recall their history and to know what to do in the future. Moreover, Gosson’s characterization of ancient music as poetry “set down in numbers” is an explicit reference to a music based on golden proportion, or perfect intervals, intervals that were widely believed, especially in esoteric circles, to affect not just the ear of a person, but actually affect the soul, since these perfect intervals, thought to be akin to the godly music of the heavens, spoke directly to the conscience or the Word of God in the individual person, and by extension to the entire political body. Here in “numbers” are the noble and worthy examples Elyot identifies as so important to the education of a noble person.

In concert with Elyot’s program for a healthy body and commonwealth, Gosson’s depiction of the formula for a perfect commonwealth utilizes the Pythagorean notion of a union between parts such that many autonomous parts are reconciled into a “stable” and “harmoniously” functioning whole: “so shoulde the whole body of the common wealth consist of fellow laborers, all generally seruing one head . . .” (E1<sup>v</sup>). As S. K. Heninger has shown, this union of many parts was “regard[ed] as a musical or an astronomical operation, where the quantities (stationary or mobile) are seen primarily in relation to one another”(147). Within this view, it is easy to see that a body politic that is not thought to be stable is necessarily composed of autonomous parts that fail to function harmoniously. Because the “head” and “body,” or the “multeity of members” that make up the body, are not reconciled, it is not clear what the body should do, or the body does the wrong thing because it is not properly governed.

Reading Gosson's *School* within the Pythagorean theory upon which much of the text relies helps us to see the purpose for his focus on interrelated abuses. These abuses are revealed to cause, and be caused by, rulers and subjects who fail to remain in their right places, and, thus, destroy the perfection of the body politic. Like any distempered body, then, the distempered body politic is one either vulnerable to sin or already consumed by sin. For Gosson, the cross-dressing promoted by players and the fashionable cross-dressing practiced by patrons of plays, not to mention the growing number of people dressing above their stations, dancing and fencing as "exercises" for pleasure instead of in anticipation of martial engagement, and the throwing of dice and the drawing of "lottes," all involve an arbitrary attribution of power or wealth, rather than power and wealth circulated according to the hierarchy established by God.

As puritan divine Dudley Fenner argues of "Dicing," in his *Treatise of Lawfull and Unlawfull Recreations* (1590) about the right and wrong sorts of "recreations," the use of a dice or other form of "lot" should be, as in times past, used to determine the outcomes of disputes that were deemed only able to be settled by God, because God, through the "lotte" made known his will:

. . . the use of a Lotte for recreation, is unlawfull, because a Lotte is an especiall meanes whereby God hath ordained by himselfe from heaven, to end such controversies, as otherwise can not convenientlie be ended . . . The Lotte is the oracle of God! . . . Nowe such oracles of God, must not be used for recreation: seeing they are his name, and must not be vainly used (A6<sup>v</sup>, A7<sup>r-v</sup>).

Playing at dice and dealing cards, like the wrong use of the "Lotte," depends on the whiles of Fortune and the steady or unsteady hand of man. Similarly, any form of

gambling, such as dicing and drawing lots for potential profit, also relies on the whims of Fortune, or, as Lisa Jardine argues, the “random allocation of wealth and thereby power. For a society pledged to the equivalence of value and social rank, the acquiring of large sums of money by pure chance at the gaming tables is the ultimate subversion of order.”<sup>50</sup>

In the case of every abuse Gosson identifies, neither mercurial Fortune herself, nor fortune-seeking people are reliable arbiters of their own or the common good. When relying on Fortune reaches the level of statecraft and foreign policy, it is dangerous on a much larger scale. Sidney also despised hazarding the fate of England and laying it in what he thought of as the hands of Fortune, the whiles of Catholics, and, in particular, the whims of Alençon. According to Worden, Sidney and other like-minded forward Protestants felt that the future of England should be entrusted only to God:

Dependence on God is dependence on “truth,” the quality “whereon,” explains the *New Arcadia*, “all the other goods” are “builded” and have their “ground.” Its opposite is dependence on man. Forward Protestants time and again explained the failures of the queen’s diplomacy by her readiness to “depend” upon “worldly policies.” Such “policy will not stand, but God will overthrow it.” She must learn to “depend altogether” upon the advancement of God’s glory: seeking her “ground” and “foundation” in “so precious a work” and

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<sup>50</sup> Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books, 1983) 163.

“shaking of all other policy that is not grounded upon God,” upon whom “all our buildings and actions” must rest (119).

Relying on Catholic enemies for the safety of England was to “build on a false base,”<sup>51</sup> risking England in the hands of one man who had already shown those hands to be unsteady with regard to Protestant interests in the St. Bartholmew’s Day massacre.<sup>52</sup>

As part of Gosson’s program to return to England responsibility for her own protection and the right investment of her safety in God, he advocates in his *School* not the abolition of fencing, but the reformation of it such that it is returned to its “proper” use: the protection of a vulnerable England. In Gosson’s view, fencing for the sake of sport, like gambling and drawing lots to improve one’s Fortune, or relying on marriage with a Catholic to protect England, is to engage in an activity for the wrong reasons—for personal gain or personal pleasure. In both cases the resulting “lewd-living” person fails appropriately to enact the will of God, engaging in “abuses” that appeal to and dazzle the senses, stimulate intemperate appetites, and render a person unable to do the right thing when it is demanded: “Notwithstanding it behooveth us in the meane season, not to stick in the myre, and gape for succour, without using some ordinary way ourselves; or to lye wallowing like Lubbers in the Ship of the commonwealth, crying Lord, Lord when we see our vessel toyle” (E1<sup>v</sup>). Here a “lubber” is a person who “lives in idleness,” only able to cry out in despair instead of act.<sup>53</sup> In this way,

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<sup>51</sup> Worden 120.

<sup>52</sup> For a discussion of Alençon’s involvement in the massacre of the Huguenots, and the consequent cooling of all French and English relations, see Berry x.

<sup>53</sup> “lubber” 1a *OED* 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. It is interesting to note that “lubber” was also often used to

Gosson disparages English citizens who are idle even in the face of grave danger—they call for divine assistance but do nothing to assist themselves or their monarch.

By contrast, good citizens and good princes engage in activities such as fencing and marriage for the right reasons—in each case, those reasons would necessitate that each contributed to the good of the nation. The right living person, according to Gosson, should know how to fence in order to take up arms:

One worde of Fencing . . . The knowledge in weapons may bee gathered to be necessary in a common wealth . . . that teaching the people howe to warde, and how to locke, howe to thrust, and how to strike, they might the more safely coape with their enemies (D4<sup>v</sup>).

A political body that does not know how to use a sword for protection is, for Gosson, evidence of a sleeping citizenry, vulnerable to the designs of Catholic enemies who will handily out-fight the English who can fence only for fun.

Just as fencing for fun appeals mainly to the senses, making it little better than “idleness” and leading to a person’s degeneracy, so, too, listening to music for its pretty sound involves the same sort of sensual voluptuousness and descent to idleness.

Not surprisingly, then, Gosson argues against the “new strains” of poetry, plays, and

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refer to monks—there may be some residual associations to this effect here, where the idle person is associated with Catholicism through this alternate definition. The *OED* actually quotes this passage from Gosson for its second definition: “A sailor’s term for a clumsy seaman; an unseamanlike fellow (cf Land-Lubber),” where a “land-lubber” is “a sailor’s term of contempt for a landsman.” This second definition, however, takes Gosson’s reference to the “ship” of the commonwealth too transparently and literally, rendering the passage almost non-sensical. It is much more likely that Gosson uses the “ship” to refer to the English body politic, and thus Queen Elizabeth’s body as commonwealth. This referencing of Elizabeth as the “ship” that would carry the English body politic through rough seas is also evoked by Stubbs who refers to the Queen as “our Elizabeth IONAH and ship of good speede, the royall ship of our ayde, the highest tower, the strongest hold, and castle in the land” (C2<sup>r</sup>).

music, maintaining that one should not judge music, and by extension poetry and plays, by the sound or appearance alone.

Gosson argues that the person who is lulled to sleep by the sensual appeal of contemporary music is also likely to overindulge in drink—the one leads to the other. In this way, he evokes a common early modern association between drunkenness and physical and spiritual “sleep.” In both cases, the person who is “sleeping” is not “watchful,” rendering both body and soul open to corruption, a process outlined in many early modern treatises and books of manners, including Dudley Fenner’s *Treatise of Lawfull and Unlawfull Recreations*:

To be drunk is to be ouercome with the delight or the motions which they procure. . . . To sleep in them is to be ouertaken with the delight of them, it occupieth our mindes and bodies, in such sorte as it maketh us unwatchful against the motions of sinne, as it breaketh our reastes, and weaneth us from some dueties of our calling, and the Service of God . . . . So the Apostle expoundeth himselfe, saying: Let us not sleepe as doe others, but let us watch and be sober (A3<sup>v</sup>).<sup>54</sup>

Andrew Gordon and Bernhard Klein’s argument that the realms of the material and metaphorical “mutually determine each other” helps us to see how viewing the body politic as either healthy or diseased can potentially have a real effect on the way people live.<sup>55</sup> Because the way people conceptualize the world around them, both

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<sup>54</sup> See also Thomas Elyot, *The Boke. . .*, Chapter XXXVI for a description of the dangers of “idleness, wherein the body or minde cesseneth from labour” (270).

<sup>55</sup> Andrew Gordon and Bernhard Klein, eds., “Introduction,” *Literature, Mapping, and*

material and non-material aspects, directly impacts what they can do, think, and believe: “[By] providing a conceptual paradigm for the mental organization of human experience, the cartographic image is revealed as more than a mere functional tool, or neutral scientific record, emerging instead as a crucial representational site of cultural and historical change.”<sup>56</sup> Thus, the effects of conceptualizing the “shape” of one “body” necessarily revises the relationship between each body and other bodies or spaces governed by the forms of the human body, in particular the body politic and the “body” of the cosmos, and even the relationship between the person and God.

Gosson makes particular use of these correspondent relationships when he outlines the consequences for England (and the entire world and cosmology) should the body politic not be maintained in its right configuration through an English marriage with France necessitating that the Queen no longer occupy the position of head of the body politic:

For as to the body ther are many members serving to severall uses, the eye to see, the eare to heare, the nose to smell, the tongue to tast, the hand to touch, the feet to beare the whole burden of the rest, and every one dischargeth his duety without grudging, so shoulde the whole body of the common wealth consist of fellow laborers, all generally serving one head, and particularly following their trade without repining. From the head to the foote, from top to the toe, there shoulde nothing be vaine, no body idle (E1<sup>V</sup>).

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*the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 3.

<sup>56</sup> Gordon and Klein 3.

Here Gosson reiterates the perfect configuration of the body politic in order to emphasize the dangers of all of the abuses he has first outlined and then for which he has provided ocular proof. Idleness or inaction prevents just what Gosson has said is necessary, that all generally serve one head, each member of the political body maintaining its rightful place, and each diligently contributing to the health of the body. By outlining the rightful places of all persons in the body politic and the need for action on the part of all members in that body, Gosson emphasizes the necessity of right action and the consequences, both local and cosmological, should people refuse to engage in those right actions. At this point in his argument, all of the wrong deeds he has outlined as daily taking place at the playhouses and in other parts of London, work through accumulation to bring about the same result—what is currently known of the world will be undone and all will turn topsy-turvey:

Jupiter himself shall stand for example, who is ever in worke, still moving and turning about the heavens: if he should pull his hand from the frame, it were impossible for the world to endure. All would be day, or al night; al Spring or al Autume; all Sommer or all Winter; Al heate or al cold; al moisture or al drowght; no time to til, no time to sow; no time to plant, no time to reape; the earth barren, the rivers stopt, the seas stayed, the seasons changed, and the whole course of nature overthrowne. The meane must labor to serve the mighty; the mighty must study to defend the meane. The subjects must sweat in obedience to their Prince; the Prince must have care over his poore vassals (E2<sup>r</sup>).

As we have seen repeatedly in Gosson's *School*, the small argument always supports but also *is* the larger argument: for one member of the political body, particularly the head, to move from its rightful place is both to destroy that body and give permission for all other members of the body to move from their rightful places.

It is, according to Gosson, right music, or "perfect harmony" (A8<sup>v</sup>) that will prove the savior of England, her citizenry, and Prince, for in addition to awaking the citizens from their "slumber" and aligning their souls more closely with God, this perfect harmony can also educate a Prince about the right action to take. Gosson makes this point by reminding his reader of Chiron, the wise surgeon of old who was "a learned poet, a skillfull musition, so was he also a teacher of justice by shewing what Princes ought to doe" (B1<sup>r</sup>).

It is in association with the education of Princes that Gosson explicitly mentions the perfect intervals upon which Pythagorean music and cosmology depend: Pythagoras' *diapason*. As Heninger outlines, right music such as Pythagoras' diapason was widely believed to calm the raging soul, cure the sick, and reconcile opposites in a harmonious whole:

The far-reaching effects of music were generally acknowledged and frequently acclaimed. . . . So great is its power and so pervasive its force that it performs the impossible and reconciles opposites in a single coordinated system. . . . opposites are joined together in stable concord. . . . Not without cause is it said that all things, which consist of contraries, are conjoined and composed by a

certain harmony. For harmony is the joining together of several things and the consent of contraries.<sup>57</sup>

This was believed to work because the structure of the body adhered to golden proportion. According to this logic, perfect music was formed by perfect intervals that are the golden proportion made into sound. These sounds, it was believed, spoke to what was godly in the body, calling it forth, reminding the soul of her previous connection with divinity, and, as it were, reconnecting the soul directly with God.

There were many stories about ancients—some of which Gosson recalls for his readers—that detail the power of right music to restore right order. Specifically, Gosson articulates the notion that right music can cure the sick because it recalls the body's perfect configuration, its replication of the Cosmos and God writ small in the bodies of human beings: "Homer with his Musicke cured the sick Souldiers in the Grecians campe, and purged every mans Tent of the Plague. Think you that those miracles could bee wrought with playing of Daunces, Dumpes, Pavins, Galiardes, Measures, Fancies, or new Streynes. They neuer came wher this grewe, nor knew what it mentß" (A8<sup>r</sup>).

The power of a music based on the motions of the heavenly bodies is again referred explicitly by Gossoon when he exhorts musicians to "be good scholars and profit well in the arte of musike" (A8<sup>r</sup>), a task that requires the musician to pay attention to the music of the spheres, a music that was believed to be present, like God, everywhere and to order all things:

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<sup>57</sup> Heninger, *Touches of Sweet Harmony* 103-4.

shut your fidels in their cases and looke uppe to Heaven: the order of the spheres, the unfallible motion of the planets, the just course of the yeere, the varietie of the seasons, the concorde of the elements and their qualities, fyre, water, ayre, earth, heate, colde, moisture and drought concurring together to the constitution of earthly bodies, and sustenance of every creature (A8<sup>r-v</sup>).

In this passage, Gosson asks his readers to observe the ordering of the heavens, recalling that the balance of elements that circulate in the world also circulate in, and sustain, “earthly bodies.” He is doing two things here: he wants musicians and others to see the “heavenly music” in the perfect motions of the heavenly bodies—this is the music that will inspire all bodies into accord. He also positions the person within the regular motions of each of these different “bodies”: the elements, arranged as they are on the cardinal points, the seasons progressing as they do through time, which is determined by the motions of the sun and moon. In this way, he uses the picture of the well-ordered cosmos to recall that a well-balanced physiognomy is a replication of this order.

If England follows Gosson’s prescription, she and her citizens will return to balance, which for him means the vigor of former days. Gosson describes in detail the way the English used to be, and what he describes is not a body overcome by a superfluity of phlegm, and thus sleep and sloth, but one in which courage and strength, and discipline abounds. What he describes is a humoral body with a more sanguine and choleric complexion—a complexion we are perhaps not surprised to learn, was believed to be more characteristic of men than women (though this is not exclusively the case): “Consider with thy selfe. . . the olde discipline of Englande, mark what we

were before, and what we are now: Leave Rome a while, and cast thine eye backe to thy Predecessors, and tell mee howe wonderfully wee have beene changed, since wee were schooled with these abuses” (B8<sup>f</sup>). The English he describes could labor without sustenance for long periods of time, could endure storms without seeking shelter even though they were naked. They ate roots. The men and women both were exceedingly brave, their “exercise” consisting of martial games, such as foot races, shooting, and fighting. Indeed, he describes a powerful army. It is the “prick” of his text that he hopes will rouse the slumbering, idle body politic, waking her to be “good soldiers” and so not only not countenance the suit of a mercenary fighter such as Alençon, but able to pour into the low countries, defending them and England from the “wallowing” “cowardice” and “ryot,” “gluttonie,” the “wantonnesse” of Italy, the pride of Spain, and the “deceite” of France.

## Chapter 2

### Exposing the Body ‘Out of Joynt’: The Martin Marprelate Controversy

The seven tracts printed and widely circulated between October of 1588 and August of 1589 under the pseudonym of Martin Marprelate emerged in a climate of intense religious dissension between forward Protestants and the Anglican establishment. The tracts contain what is more or less a commonplace Presbyterian argument for further church reform: because the monarch and bishops were not named as members of the church in the Bible, “the gouernment of the church by Lord Archbishops and bishops, is a gouernment of deformed and unshapen members, seruing for no good vse in the church of God.”<sup>1</sup> What set the tracts apart was their uncommon rhetoric: they were rowdy, railing, satiric attacks on the bishops and their “abuses.” This caused the tracts to become immediately popular, widely read both in the market place and at court.

Printed on secret presses that were moved from place to place, the Marprelate tracts quickly became the object of a two-year but unsuccessful government search for the tracts’ author. At the same time that Archbishop John Whitgift and his men were searching for those responsible for Marprelate, hired pens and some of the most talented wits of the day did rhetorical battle with him in print and on stage. Rumors abounded about the identity of Marprelate, and some of the anti martinist tracts even depicted his death. In spite of the eventual silencing of Marprelate and the execution of

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Marprelate, *pseud.*, “Oh Read over D. John Bridges for it is a worthy worke or an Epitome . . .” *The Marprelate tracts, 1588-1589* (1589; Menston, England: The Scolar Press Limited, 1970) C3<sup>v</sup>. All references to the Marprelate tracts are taken from this facsimile edition and will subsequently be cited in the text.

some of the persons associated with the production of the tracts, the identity of their author was never definitively known.

The interests of contemporary critics have largely followed the interests of the Elizabethan establishment: critics have either been interested in locating the identity of Marprelate's author or in responding to his radical rhetorical style.<sup>2</sup> Of the scholars interested in Marprelate's rhetoric, most have focused on the satiric elements of the

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<sup>2</sup> For discussions of the identity of Marprelate's author, see Edward Arber, ed., *An Introductory Sketch to the Marprelate Controversy 1588-1590* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1895) 187-196, who offers a survey of published works by people with similar ideological positions around the time the Marprelate tracts appear. He settles on Penry and Throckmorton as most likely the collaborative author of Marprelate. The most recent and convincing argument for the authorship of Marprelate has been made by Leland H. Carlson in *Martin Marprelate, Gentleman: Mawster Job Throckmorton laid open in his colors*, (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1981) who argues that textual comparisons point to Job Throckmorton as responsible for Marprelate. In "Martin Marprelate: His Identity and His Satire" Carlson reiterates the evidence linking Throckmorton to the authorship of Marprelate, offering an exhaustive list of the scholars who have studied the Marprelate Controversy and the persons they have suggested were responsible for the writing of the tracts (5-12).

For other arguments about the authorship of the Tracts, see William Maskell, *A History of the Martin Marprelate controversy in the reign of Queen Elizabeth*, (London: W. Pickering, 1845). Donald J. McGinn in *John Penry and the Marprelate Controversy* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1966) offers a much expanded version of "The Real Martin Marprelate," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 58:1 (March 1958): 84-107, in which he argues strenuously that John Penry is the author of the tracts. Carlson roundly rejects McGinn's thesis, detailing the ways in which McGinn's argument is what Carlson calls "tendentious, illogical, biased, poorly researched, and unfair" (10). See William Pierce, *An Historical Introduction to the Marprelate tracts* (1908; New York: Burt Franklin, 1964) who, like Arber and others, settles on Penry and/or Throckmorton as responsible for the Marprelate tracts. John Dover Wilson in *Martin Marprelate and Shakespeare's Fluellen: A New Theory of the Authorship of the Marprelate tracts* (1912; Folcroft Library Editions, 1971) puts forth Sir Roger Williams as the likely author of Marprelate, arguing that "there are strong grounds for refusing to identify either Penry or Throckmorton with Martin himself" (4).

tracts, proposing various ways of reading and interpreting them.<sup>3</sup> This chapter extends the work of such analyses by situating the tracts within the humoral worldview of the time and by including an examination of the Marprelate tracts as texts that are meant to function as “cures” for the “botch” Marprelate “mirrors” in the English church and nation.

Specifically, I situate the seven pseudonymous Marprelate tracts within the political and religious events that spawned them as well as within the discourses of humoral physiology and medicine in order to show how Marprelate constructs and repeatedly evokes himself as a “man” with a body created by the “heat” of the bishops. Thus, Marprelate’s “hot” body is a reflection or embodiment of the bishops’ “abuses”

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<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of Marprelate’s “rhetorical tricks,” see Raymond Anselment, *‘Betwixt Jest and Earnest’ Marprelate, Milton, Marvell, Swift & The Decorum of Religious Ridicule* (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1979) and “Rhetoric and the Dramatic Satire of Martin Marprelate” *Studies in English Literature*. 10 (1970): 103-119; Eckhard Auberlen, *The Commonwealth of Wit: The Writers’ Image and His Strategies of Self Representation in Elizabethan Literature*, Studies and Texts in English ser. (Tubingen: Narr, 1984); and Neil Rhodes “Nashe, Rhetoric and Satire,” *Jacobean Poetry and Prose, Rhetoric, Representation and the Popular Imagination*, eds. Clive Bloom and Mary Shakeshaft (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988): 25-43.

For an exploration of notions of decorum as they were questioned, subverted, and played out on the stage, see John S. Coolidge, “Martin Marprelate, Marvell and *Decorum Personae* As A Satirical Theme,” *PMLA* 74 (1959): 526-533, and Kristen Poole, in “Facing Puritanism: Falstaff, Martin Marprelate and the Grotesque Puritan,” *Shakespeare and Carnival After Bakhtin*, ed. Ronald Knowles (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998): 97-122; and “Saints Alive! Falstaff, Martin Marprelate, and the Staging of Puritanism,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46.1 (1980): 47-75.

For investigations of Marprelate’s rhetorical and/or satirical influence on a variety of writers, including Dryden, Marvell, Milton, Nashe, Overton, Shakespeare, and Ward, see Raymond Anselment, “Martin Marprelate: A New Source for Dryden’s Fable of the Martin and The Swallows,” *R.E.S New Series* 17.67 (1966): 256-267; James Egan, “Milton and the Marprelate Tradition” *Milton Studies* 8 (1975): 103-121; Christopher Hill, “Radical Prose in Seventeenth Century England: From Marprelate to the Levellers,” *Essays in Criticism* 32 (April, 1982): 95-118; Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England 1640-1660*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994); Poole, “Facing Puritanism. . .” 105-122, and “Saints Alive! . . .” 63-75; See also Egan, “Milton. . .,” and “Nathaniel Ward. . .”

that itself becomes an argument for further church reform. Moreover, reading the Marprelate tracts within a humoral worldview reveals the ways Marprelate insistently evokes both the fleshliness of a “natural” body and the “bodilessness” afforded by his pseudonym in order to parody the Queen’s natural and political bodies as distempered, chaotic, and “out-of-joynt.”

An examination of selected spontaneous and hired anti-martinist responses supports the notion that Marprelate’s religious and political arguments employ and are inseparable from a rhetoric of the body that is even more radical than his explicit reformist arguments. The success of Marprelate’s corporeal and textual rhetoric is demonstrated and underscored by his critics, whose responses to Marprelate reduce him to a grotesque sensible body in order to dismiss the seriousness of his religio-political arguments.

As we move chronologically through the tracts, Marprelate becomes increasingly frustrated with his isolation from “mainstream” forward Protestants and Presbyterian radicals as well as with the power of the entrenched church establishment. As a focus on the changes in Marprelate’s humoral rhetoric reveals, Marprelate alters the terms of his reformist agenda from peaceful remedy to violent purgative as he turns to talk of religious war and national takeover.

### **The Events that Made Marprelate a Man, 1563 – 1588**

The Marprelate tracts are interesting documents for a number of reasons, not least that their author has never been definitely proved, though Leland H. Carlson’s persuasive argument for the highly learned Presbyterian divine named Job

Throkmorton has been widely accepted. At the time of the tracts' publication in 1588-9, however, their "author" was offered as Martin Marprelate, who proclaims in the first tract, "Epistle to the Terrible Priests," that he is "a man" in such a way as to draw attention to what might otherwise be regarded as a simple fact: "And have not I quited myselfe like a man?" (B1<sup>f</sup>). In this way, Marprelate calls into question not only whether or not he has acted in a manly way—"valiantly" proving a point in his argument—but also whether or not he actually is a man. What is Marprelate doing when he makes such an announcement? And if he is not a man, then what, exactly, is he?

In the second tract, referred to as the "Epitome," Marprelate—at this point certainly aware of the stir he's caused and official efforts to find his author—answers the question that most assuredly was on many people's mind: who is Martin Marprelate? Instead, however, of dropping hints about his writer(s), Martin argues that the church created him: "Let them say that the hottest of you hath made Martin and that the rest of you were consenting there unto" (A2<sup>f</sup>). In this way, Marprelate introduces himself as a construction brought into being by a particular string of historical events that stretch back more than twenty years.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967) 27, who makes clear that the Puritan movement gave tremendous power to the English lay person, more power to determine matters religious than the queen, because "[t]he Bible . . . was the only authority which the puritan acknowledged in matters of religion" (27). See also Stuart Barton Babbage, *Puritans and Richard Bancroft*, (London: SPCK, 1962) 20; Donna B. Hamilton, *Shakespeare and the Politics of Protestant England* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1992) 6-9, 50; and Pierce 15 and 43 for a discussion of the Puritan reaction to Queen Elizabeth's Act of Uniformity and her movements to prescribe matters outward, to determine how church representatives dressed, which prayer books were used, etc., and how attempts to force conformity erupted in non-

A number of historians have provided us with a history of the English church and those who sought its further reform during the reign of Elizabeth I. It is beyond the scope of this project to go into a lengthy retelling of this history. Nevertheless, of particular importance for this chapter are the ways that the official monarchical/state church response to dissent through repression of non-conformity resulted in escalating Presbyterian resistance to monarchical control over the church and the forward Presbyterian movement that increasingly functioned as an alternative, and clandestine, religio-political system.

The Marprelate tracts are an extension of that clandestine system, but result in blowing the cover off of the growing alternative “church hierarchy” of Presbyterians who were part of the “classis movement.” The series of religious “conferences” were exposed, compelling Presbyterians and Puritans to face, at the very least, more intense pressures to conform, and, at the more extreme end, exile, arrest, and execution. The Marprelate tracts amplified the perception by Elizabeth and her ministers that there was a large and secret movement that threatened the structure of the English church and state, the queen’s position as monarch, and perhaps her very life.

In *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, Patrick Collinson suggests that the Presbyterian movement was the logical intellectual and theological conclusion to the reconfiguration of the English church. The theology of the reformed church, coupled with the printing press and the new Protestant versions of the Bible meant that those

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conformity. See Michael Mendle, *Dangerous Positions: Mixed Government, the Estates of the Realm, and the ‘Answer to the six propositions’* (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1985) 86, for a discussion of the degree to which the arguments of the Marprelate tracts threatened not only the hierarchy of the Church of England but also necessarily re-envisioned the three estates of the realm insofar as Marprelate attacked both church and state and heaped ridicule upon the bishops.

who so desired—not likely the bulk of the population but a fervent minority—could seek their religion from the many religious (and seditious) texts in circulation as well as from charismatic preachers, rather than from high church practices led by “corrupt” church officials.<sup>5</sup>

Catholicism left in its wake a church that still carried the vestiges of the hierarchical, materialistic system it sought to replace and displace. As a result, Puritans and other forward Protestants sought to continue the reformation that was initiated by the English break from Rome. Presbyterians and Puritans, in particular, regarded God’s Word as the primary authority to which their wills ought to be subjected, and the text that would direct them to the right structure of the church. As Donna Hamilton argues in *Shakespeare and the Politics of Protestant England*, the Presbyterian “platform seemed to offer an untenable threat. A platform that gave no place to the queen and eliminated the episcopacy, the Presbyterian system offered a model for church governance that bypassed royal authority” (6).<sup>6</sup> Simply, Puritans and other forward Presbyterians disagreed with the notion that the Queen had even temporal authority over matters religious. Because Presbyterians believed that the individual devotee was positioned directly under God, with God’s Word as the supreme authority, this meant that there were instances when it might be necessary to

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<sup>5</sup> Collinson 22-23. For a discussion of the relationship between Puritan reformers and the church courts, see Martin Ingram, “Puritans and the Church Courts, 1560 – 1640.” *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560 – 1700*, eds. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996): 58-91. Ingram’s particular focus is corrective: he reviews reformer’s complaints of the church courts (such as Anthony Cope’s in his *Admonition*) in order to evaluate how justifiable they were.

<sup>6</sup> See also Collinson 27-32.

engage in varying levels of non-conformity, depending on the situation. To put this another way, they deemed it might be necessary to disobey the Queen in order to obey God.

Beginning in the early 1560s and continuing beyond the publication of the Marprelate tracts in 1588-89, Elizabeth responded to growing reports of non-conformity by demanding that preachers wear the surplice and the square, “corner cap.” Historians agree that the intensity and persistence with which Elizabeth and her ministers pushed subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles was in large part responsible for the way vestments became a flashpoint for disagreements over whether or not obedience to Elizabeth in matters of conscience and the church also extended to matters of the state.<sup>7</sup>

The tensions surrounding the vestments controversy were further increased with the publication of *The brief discourse against the outward apparel* (1566). This document argued that making what should be a matter indifferent to belief—one’s “outward apparel”—a matter of religion was to engage in idolatry, signaling that clothes were more important than belief. The particular attention focused on vestments, as evidenced in official efforts to legislate wearing the surplice and square cap, was seen by Puritans as an example of human meddling with the Word of God. Forward Protestants believed such priestly shows were not necessary, because if one applied

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the vestments controversy, see Carlson, *Martin Marprelate: His Identity and His Satire*, 12-13, and also Collinson 61-62. For a discussion of the origins of Elizabeth’s desire to squelch fanaticism, see Babbage 2. See Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1982) for a discussion of the religious and political debates surrounding whether the Queen was to be obeyed in all matters. Lake argues that some moderate Presbyterians—who may largely have agreed in matters of religion and questioned the queen’s jurisdiction over the church—never questioned her authority over the state.

oneself to a true application of right living as outlined in the Bible and the Word preached by devoted pastors, then what need was there for particular clothes, let alone bishops, or monarchs?

Because forward Protestants and Puritans questioned the very legitimacy of bishops, and by extension a monarch, to occupy positions in the church hierarchy, lavish vestments, in addition to the elaborate ritual surrounding the promotion of a bishop only underscored the degree to which the trappings of the Anglican church reminded Presbyterians of the glitter of Catholic “idols” and ceremony.<sup>8</sup>

In response to growing pressure from the English church hierarchy to conform, Presbyterians turned their attention to a more or less parallel, alternative church structure that rejected church hierarchy. Their alternative took as its organizing principle the “parity of members,” within a “classis” or group of devotees: “the distinguishing markers of Presbyterianism are the classis and the rotation of the presiding office of moderator within its membership. These institutions preserve the principle of parity and so distinguish the system from any kind of Episcopal or quasi-Episcopal polity” (Collinson 106).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of the forms that Puritan iconoclasm took, see Margaret Aston, “Puritans and Iconoclasm, 1560 – 1660,” *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560 – 1700*, eds., Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996): 92-121.

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of the ideal of “parity of members” that offered religious power and knowledge to the laity as in conflict with a ministry that also sought to preserve an elevated level of authority see Stephen Brachlow, *The Communion of Saints: Radical Puritan and Separatist Ecclesiology 1570 – 1625*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) esp. chapter 5.

During the early 1580s, meetings of religious reformers that had previously been sanctioned by certain of the bishops, including Edward Grindal, were recognized as potentially dangerous.<sup>10</sup> Grindal's death in 1583 led to the ascension of John Whitgift as Archbishop and signaled the end of any sort of leniency toward the activities of the Presbyterian movement.<sup>11</sup> Whitgift was given an Ecclesiastical Commission to impose "discipline" through enforced subscription with the help of Richard Bancroft in the form of the Three Articles on October 19, 1583. The intensifying efforts to legislate conformity resulted in a new purpose and direction for the religious radicals who resisted subscription.

Forward Protestants counter-efforts during the early and mid 1580s to legitimate their religious movement and press the issue of English church reform led to the introduction of a series of measures in the Parliaments of 1584-85 and 1586-87. In May 1584, the Thirty-nine Articles were again reissued and enforcement efforts renewed in reaction to forward Presbyterian reform measures submitted to Parliament. In response to the introduction of a petition that was accompanied by the Geneva Prayer Book, the Queen stated her church policy to the parliamentary members, making clear that she was not at all receptive to Presbyterian and Puritan measures that pressed for further reform. The Queen stated that she would "neither 'animate Romanists' nor 'tolerate new-fangledness. And of the latter, I must pronounce them

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<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of Grindal's fall from favor as a result of his refusal to eliminate prophesying and his letter to the queen stating his objections to her policies, see Carlson "Martin Marprelate: His Identity and His Satire," 13-14.

<sup>11</sup> See Arber 26, who calls Whitgift's ecclesiastical policy a "'Government of Combat.' The plague of Puritanism was to be stamped out by physical force."

dangerous to a kingly rule,” (quod. in Collinson 286). In this statement, Elizabeth constructs the Presbyterian movement as even more dangerous than the Catholic threat.

Adding to tensions of the day, Thomas Cartwright, a very important and influential leader in the forward Protestant movement, returned to England in April 1585 from his exile on the continent in order to assist with the reform movement after the 1584 parliamentary defeat. Three months after his return, Presbyters gathered together in Cambridge for a conference where leaders began work on setting “up the godly discipline outside the law, without the assistance of the magistrate . . .” (293). To this end, the movement leaders introduced what they called a “Book of Discipline,” or “a formal constitution to which the ministers could subscribe their names and by which they would indeed become ‘classes’ and synods, and the exercise of the discipline would become as effective as it could ever be without the recognition of the state” (293).

Over the next few months, Presbyterians continued to gather together to listen to the Word preached, to collect information about the abuses of the ministers and bishops, and to work on formal reform measures to present in Parliament. During the October 1586 Parliament, parliamentary members sympathetic to the Presbyterian platform presented a bill even more radical than that of 1584, along with a revised edition of the Geneva Prayer Book (303). Simultaneously, the survey of unsavory, illicit, or simply irresponsible practices of the Anglican ministers and bishops was put forward as an argument for church reform. Even the caveat that the survey was incomplete—as comprehensive as it was—was used as an argument for reform. Also at that time, “copies of the *Discipline* went out to the country, with a form of

approbation and instruction for putting it into immediate practice” (303-4). In spite of another parliamentary defeat in November 1586, forward Protestants submitted yet another attempt at reform.

In February 1586-87, “Cope’s bill and book” was introduced in Parliament.<sup>12</sup> According to A.F. Scott Pearson in *Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism, 1535-1603*, this bill, which “contained a petition ‘that all laws now in force touching Ecclesiastical Gov. should be void’” was not well received. (255). The Queen herself looked over the documents and her response to the petition and the other Puritan treatises was decisive: on February, 1587, the Queen issued A Decree of Censorship that gave the royal “Company of Stationers” power to “seize illicit presses, and presented severe punishment for breach of the law” (277).<sup>13</sup> The decree of censorship was clearly meant to divest the Presbyterians and Puritans of their public voice. Of course, it did not succeed.

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<sup>12</sup> As Leland Carlson has shown, in February of 1587 Job Throkmorton, then a member of parliament, gave “two fiery, hard-hitting, and reckless speeches” to Parliament in support of Anthony Cope’s bill and book, an argument against the ignorance of church ministers and the failure of the government to aid the Low Countries in their battle against Catholic forces (“Martin Marprelate: His Identity. . .” 15). Throkmorton, Penry, and Waldegrave had all suffered at the hands of the Queen’s church hierarchy and government just prior to the publication of the first Marprelate Tract (15-16). See also Jacqueline Eales, “A Road to Revolution: The Continuity of Puritanism, 1559-1642,” *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560 – 1700*, eds. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996) 185-6, for a discussion of Cope’s Bill and Book, as well as the leadership of Penry and others in order to show a relationship between the ideology and reform methodologies between the two militant moments in the English Puritan push for reform—the 1590s and the 1640s.

<sup>13</sup> See also Arber 50.

The failure of reform measures introduced in the 1586-7 Parliament resulted, according to Collinson, in a movement that felt “it was merely realistic to assume that there would be no legal establishment of the godly discipline in England so long as the queen remained arbiter of the Church's destiny” (293). At this point, the efforts of forward Protestants and Puritans to form an alternative religious nation were well under way through the formation of their own formal gathering of leaders called “conferences” and “synods,” gatherings of devotees who discussed not only biblical interpretation but also matters relating to their continuing reform efforts. By 1588 many leaders and laity alike had come to the conclusion that not only were further attempts at legislated reform likely futile, but impossible as long as the bishops remained in positions of authority.

It was at this historical moment, when many in the forward Presbyterian and Puritan movements had become disillusioned with agitating for reform through the polite avenues of petitions and Parliament, that Marprelate appeared on October 15, 1588. Of great import, then, is Marprelate's accusation that the bishops and archbishops were responsible for his existence: “Let them say that the hottest of you hath made Martin and that the rest of you were consenting there unto” (Epitome A2<sup>r</sup>). In this statement, Marprelate suggests the exigency for his writing and therefore his existence: he was created by the abuses and corruption of the bishops, as evidenced by their very “hotness,” and their consequent abomination of the visible body of the church. When Marprelate writes that it is the “hottest” bishop who is responsible for his genesis, he implies that all of the bishops are in some way too “hot,” meaning that they suffer from humoral imbalances in the flesh that both cause, and are caused by,

appetites. Within an early modern view of the body, as discussed in the previous chapter, sins of the flesh were believed to be caused by the appetites, the seats of intemperate desires of any sort. The hottest bishop, then, would likely have been guilty of most if not all of the seven deadly sins. As is the case with all sins, those guilty of them are more interested in satisfying their own desires than they are in a greater good, temporal or spiritual.

Marprelate presents himself as having been formed both by, and in order to address, or “mirror,” the abuses of the bishops and the corruption of the visible body of the church. In this way, Marprelate himself is, like the encyclopedic record of the abuses of the bishops and ministers collected by Puritans and other forward Protestants, an argument for further church reform, a mutable body as grotesque as the bishops’ transgressions.

### **Words Made Flesh: Marprelate’s Body as Argument**

Implicit in Marprelate’s description of his formation by the heat of the bishops’ appetites and transgressions is the notion that he, like they, has a humoral body. “Martin Marprelate” is, however, clearly a pseudonym, one that effaces any natural body of his author at the same time that Marprelate consistently and insistently evokes for himself a natural, physical, humoral body. He taunts the bishops with his presence even as he also insistently taunts them with his absence. In this way, the Marprelate tracts are different from anonymous texts in which the body of the writer is both effaced and also not presented as an integral part of the argument.

The project of this section is to explore the ways that Marprelate's pseudonymity, or his self-conscious bodilessness, allows him to construct his argument as a parodic body, an ephemeral body that mirrors and records the abuses rampant in the church hierarchy in order to expose the disease and corruption at the core of the English church and state. Marprelate's tracts themselves had a remarkable corporeality. They were spoken of as bodies, as "Martins" proliferating with the publication of each subsequent tract. In addition to the corporeality of Martin's texts, then, are also the ephemeral aspects of Marprelate. Like the body politic, Marprelate has two bodies, one natural and the other political.<sup>14</sup> Like the Queen, Marprelate is without the fallibilities of the natural body, able to see, hear, and speak beyond the abilities of mere men, and able to survive Elizabeth's ministers' efforts to kill him.

Let us begin then with a brief rehearsal of the foundation early modern people, protestant or catholic, would have assumed in their understanding of the human body, and the person's relation to the church, God, and Cosmos. All things were created by the Word of God: "In the beginning was the Worde, and the Worde was with God and that Worde was God . . . All things were made by it & without it was made nothing that was made" (*Geneva Bible*, John 1.1-3). Here, God implicitly functions as the reference point for the human body as well as all other structures or "bodies," such as the body politic and the visible body of the church—each of which is made by the Word in the image of God. For humans to meddle with these structures defiles them. We can see

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<sup>14</sup> See Poole, "Falstaff, Marprelate. . ." who characterizes Marprelate as having "two bodies" that function as a synthesis between the opposed bodies (grotesque v. classical) that we see in Bakhtin. Within her argument, however, those two bodies are not the natural and political bodies but a body that vacillates between "fertility and decay," the "irrepressible voice" of religious reformer and at the same time, the fading voice of a "defeated organized Presbyterian movement" (116).

this explicitly in the complaint Marprelate makes in each of his “bookes,” namely that the maintenance of bishops within the church hierarchy is to place “extra” or “wooden” members on the sacred body of Christ: “Do you thinke that the maiestrate may displace the true members of the body of Christ and place wooden in their steed. Why this is to hold it lawful for the magistrate to massacre the body” (C<sup>v</sup>). In this way, Marprelate assumes the synecdochic relationship between the person, God, and cosmology in order to allude to the far-reaching effects of the bishops’ transgressions.

Contemporary scholars have noted the relationship early modern people saw between the movements of the heavens, cosmos, and their own bodies.<sup>15</sup> As Phyllis Rackin has shown, differences in gender and class were regarded as “natural,” where a person’s position within the hierarchy—and therefore the body politic—was established at birth: “the distinctions that separated men from women, like those that separated aristocrats from commoners, were grounded not in the relatively marginal discourse of the new biological sciences but in the older and traditionally privileged discourses of theology and history.”<sup>16</sup> In other words, the body, its formation as higher or lower in a social hierarchy, through gender and/or class, had as its ultimate origin

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<sup>15</sup> See Barkin 2-4; Curtius, esp. 311-326; Marshall Grossman, *The Story of All Things: Writing the Self in English Renaissance Narrative Poetry* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1998) esp. chapter five; and Tillyard, esp. chapter seven.

<sup>16</sup> Phyllis Rackin 69 in “Foreign Country: The Place of Women and Sexuality in Shakespeare’s Historical World,” *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property, and Culture in Early Modern England*, eds. Richard Burt and John Michael Archer (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994) 68- 95. For a discussion of the early modern “one-sex body,” where heat was the salient factor in determining sexual difference, see Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: The Body and Gender From the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990) 8.

the creation of the cosmos by God, where humans were lower than God, but Adam was higher than Eve, and Adam and Eve were higher than brute creatures.

As both Anthony Fletcher and Gail Paster point out, the humoral body was also seen as cosmological. According to Fletcher, “. . .[the humoral system] dovetailed with astrology, was compatible with Christian teaching and related mankind to the macrocosm.”<sup>17</sup> Paster indicates that humoral and ethical discourses employ the same language and, thus, “establishe[d] an internal hierarchy of fluids and functions within the body which [were] fully assimilable to external hierarchies of class and gender.”<sup>18</sup> As we have seen, early modern summations of Galenic physiology such as Thomas Elyot’s in *The Castle of Health* and Nicholas Culpeper’s *Galen’s Art of Physick*, articulate the notion that the state of the fleshly body, governed by a humoral composition as the body politic and cosmology also were believed to be, reveals a good deal about a person’s emotional temperament, physical size and strength, hair color (and the presence or lack of hair), skin, eye, bowel and urine color, profession, and the dreams one was likely to have.<sup>19</sup> In Culpeper’s description of different complexions, for example, women and persons of the ruling class can be seen to fit into certain categories. Because complexions were determined by the distribution of humors, and

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<sup>17</sup> Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1995) 44. See also Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993) 9, for an outline of the ways that the humoral body was composed of the same elements that comprise the cosmos and the earth.

<sup>18</sup> Paster 19.

<sup>19</sup> See Nicholas Culpeper, *Galen’s Art of Physick* (London: J. Streater, 1671).

humors also were believed to govern the bodily states of all things, then one's environment, in concert with one's behavior and beliefs, had pervasive and constant ramifications for one's physical and moral health.

All of these theories conceive of a physical body that has greater implications for, and mirrors and comments on, the prevailing structures that governed almost every social, political, theological—in short hierarchical—structure.<sup>20</sup> Further, each of these theories shows us bodies as mutable systems. That changing systems such as the movements of the cosmos could be seen within the movements of the body or a part of the body suggests this mutability writ small.

If Marprelate's body can be seen to mirror and represent the cosmos, as does Elizabeth's, then to change his body suggests a change in the structure of the cosmos, just as adding appendages to the body of Christ alters the value of the church. For Marprelate, the bishops' presence within the church hierarchy, where the hierarchy forms the visible body of the church, is an abomination because their corrupt bodies serve to defile Christ himself—they defile his very body, according to Marprelate in the *Epitome*: “And [the bishops] as was declared maime & deforme the body of the church which keep out the lawful offices appointed by the Lord to be members thereof & in their steed place other wooden members of the inventeon of man” (C4<sup>v</sup>). As a mirror of the bishops' abuses, Marprelate's body takes on the defiled form created by theirs. Because we are talking about humoral bodies here, the contagion present in one body was believed quickly to contaminate another, just as adding appendages to the

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<sup>20</sup> See also S.K. Heninger, *Cosmographical Glass: Renaissance Diagrams of the Universe* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1977) for a compilation of early modern maps of the cosmology that detail the relationship between the person, the earth, and the cosmos.

body of Christ reduced the sanctity of the church. Hale supports the notion that, in general, “[t]he analogy between society and the human body . . . is employed to defend and attack the established church, to promote order and obedience to secular rulers, and to criticize political and economic abuses.”<sup>21</sup> Thus, a critique of one system implies a critique of another. A marring or deforming of one engenders the marring of the other.

Mary Douglas, in her work *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, an investigation of the circulation of purity and pollution through larger socio-cultural systems, offers a similar model for making sense of the ways both Marprelate and Queen Elizabeth utilize the rhetoric of larger systems to talk about the body and vice versa. Douglas’s concept that the body can “stand for any bounded system,” has at its core the notion that the body is a cultural construction and thus subject to human intervention and manipulation:

[t]he body is a model which can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious. The body is a complex structure. The function of its different parts and their relation afford a source of symbols for other complex structures. We cannot possibly interpret rituals . . . unless we are prepared to see in the body a symbol of society, and to see the powers and dangers credited to social structure reproduced [writ] small on the human body (138).

That the body can be made analogous to other bounded systems, such as a country’s territorial boundaries and both the Church’s conceptual and literal limits is evident in

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<sup>21</sup> D.G. Hale, “Preface,” *The Body Politic: A Political Metaphor in Renaissance English Literature* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971). 1.

Marprelate's catalogue of the bishops' and other ministers' moral and physical transgressions. That members of the church are guilty of indulging their appetites in bowling, thieving, drinking, and other unseemly activities is clear evidence, according to Marprelate, either that the bishops maim the current church, or they are members of a church that is determined not by God but by "human lawes." The church, in either case, suffers on both local and cosmological levels: ". . . the gouvernement of lord archbishops and bishops is vnlawefull, notwithstanding it bee maintained, and in force by humane lawes and ordinances" (Theses B<sup>v</sup>). Within this passage, there are two different figurations of the church in conflict with one another. Marprelate evokes the body of Christ both as the church and in contrast to the body of the church that is formed by the bishops. Within the configuration of the church as formed by the bishops, then, the moral and physical states of church hierarchy have a profound impact on the true church, on Christ, and on God.

We can see another example of the body standing for another "bounded system" in the way that Queen Elizabeth's body becomes analogous to all England. In what has come to be known as the "Armada Speech" Elizabeth herself draws attention to the ways that the boundaries of her body are not indistinct from the boundaries of England:

. . . I am come among you at this time but for my recreation and pleasure, being resolved in the midst and heat of the battle to live or die amongst you all, to lay down for my God and for my kingdom and for my people mine honor and my blood, even in the dust. I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England, too; and

think foul scorn that Parma or any prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my realm. To the which rather than any dishonor shall grow by me, I myself will venture my royal blood. I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of your virtue in the field. . . .<sup>22</sup>

In this passage, Elizabeth makes the connection between her own vulnerable female (natural) body and the vulnerable body politic, her realm, in order to accentuate the enormity posed by a Catholic invading force.<sup>23</sup>

We can see a visual representation of this same conflation of the Queen's body with the land over which she reigns in the Armada Portrait. In this picture, Queen Elizabeth is depicted as standing on the map of the realm, emphasizing the relationship between Elizabeth and England. The painting exposes both the vulnerability and power implicit in the figure of Elizabeth as England insofar as the Armada being dashed to bits in the background suggests that had the Armada succeeded, it might have been the bodies of Elizabeth and England suffering the violence that wrecked the Spanish ships.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose, eds., *Elizabeth I Collected Works* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) 325-6.

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of ways that that Queen's virgin body was made emblematic of England's security, see Susan Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>24</sup> See Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977) esp. chapter five, for a discussion of the ways that Elizabeth's chastity was portrayed for political and governmental gain. For a discussion of the way Queen Elizabeth controlled her self presentation, see Carole Levin, "The Heart and Stomach of a King," *Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1994) esp. chapter six. For analyses of the portraiture of Elizabeth, see Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth:*

Because the body can stand for other bounded systems that vary or change in form and size, the body's boundaries must be able to grow and contract. We can see this in the way that Queen Elizabeth can be limited to her natural body and also expand to the point that she is all England. Similarly, Marprelate is a single voice and multiple voices, is a man and then so many men that he, too, seems to contain all of England: he grows and contracts as he changes his rhetorical strategies of critique. Peter Stallybrass's consideration of the grotesque body in "Patriarchal Territories: the Body Enclosed" is helpful for interpreting the corporeal rhetoric of both Marprelate and Queen Elizabeth. Stallybrass argues that Bakhtin's categories of grotesque and classical bodies can be applied to read gender as well as class and rhetorical style, where the grotesque body "outgrows itself, [and] transgresses its own limits" (Bakhtin *quod.* in Stallybrass 124). The classical body, on the other hand, is enclosed and complete. As Stallybrass points out, these categories "were not fixed and immutable. They were indeed diacritical, each in turn formed by the redrawing of the boundaries of the other" (124). Stallybrass's revision of Bakhtin's grotesque body is useful in evaluating the Marprelate controversy,<sup>25</sup> because Queen Elizabeth can be seen to have used notions of expanding the limits of her political body, by, as Louise Montrose has

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*Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (Great Britain: Thames and Hudson, 1977).

<sup>25</sup> Poole, "Falstaff, Marprelate. . ." 102 speaks of Marprelate as the grotesque body "par excellence" as he is portrayed in the anti-Marprelate tracts, but does not comment on the ways that Marprelate himself engages the rhetoric of corporeal expansion and contraction in order to critique the Queen's body politic. Indeed, her reading focuses primarily on the comic instances in the first three tracts, when Marprelate is laughing or calling the bishops informal names that invert the hierarchical relationship between them and Marprelate (100-101). She does note that Marprelate's "explosion" of "sanctioned hierarchies and pieties . . . [gives him the] leveling tendency that makes him so threatening—and so appealing" (110).

shown, “investing her maternity” in her body politic. This elision of the body natural and body politic allowed her to proliferate herself through the redefinition of her subjects as her “progeny,” a move that implicitly supported her legitimacy to rule England: “Elizabeth . . . transfers her wifely duties from the household to the state, and invests her maternity in her political rather than in her natural body.”<sup>26</sup> In this way, Queen Elizabeth took political and social advantage of the power afforded by the mutability of a body politic that could vacillate rhetorically between a controlled, refined, legitimate, virginal body and a mutable, prolific, maternal body that could expand to contain both the citizens and physical boundaries of England’s empire. As we saw in the previous chapter on Stephen Gosson, both Queen Elizabeth, and those arguing against the marriage negotiations in which she was engaged with the Duke of Alençon, utilized the analogy between the boundaries of her body and the borders of England. This analogy was evident not just in the rhetoric that people used to keep the “borders” of England, and thus the queen’s virgin body, “intact” and undefiled by Catholics, but also, as we saw previously, in images constructed to relate the sanctity of Elizabeth’s body to that of England.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Louise Adrian Montrose, “The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text,” *Literary Theory Renaissance Texts*, eds. Patricia Parker and David Quint (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1986) 309-310. See also Leah S. Marcus, “Shakespeare’s Comic Heroines, Elizabeth I, and the Political Uses of Androgyny,” *Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Literary and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Mary Beth Rose (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1986) 137, 142, esp. 145-7 for a discussion of the ways Queen Elizabeth employed corporeal rhetoric to her political advantage.

<sup>27</sup> See Roy Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth*, rev. ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1987) and *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (Great Britain: Thames and Hudson, 1977). See also Arthur F. Kinney, “Imaging England: The Chorographical Glass.” *Soundings of Things Done: Essays in*

Utilizing the body as an extension of or analogous to other bounded systems, as both Marprelate and Elizabeth do, is, according to Douglas, to create a particular “image of society” which, as we see above, could be used to react against and to support a cultural status quo: “This image has form; it has external boundaries, margins, internal structure. Its outlines contain power to reward conformity and repulse attack. There is energy in its margins and unstructured areas” (137). Douglas points out that in reacting to or against a cultural norm, one places oneself in opposition to that norm, and thus can be said to marginalize oneself. It is from his position outside the accepted notions of textual speech, pious behavior, and obedient citizen bodies that Marprelate launches his unruly attack on the church hierarchy.<sup>28</sup> As Evelyn Tribble argues in “Beyond the Bounds: Martin Marprelate, Thomas Nashe, and the Margins of Humanism,” Marprelate uses his marginal, seditious position to his advantage rhetorically through, among other tactics, use of the margins of the printed page whereby he multiplies the voices by which he challenges the Church of England and “the power of the press to proliferate rather than contain [controversy].”<sup>29</sup> In a similar way, it is his ecclesiastical marginality that allows Marprelate to make structure

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*Early Modern Literature in Honor of S.K. Heninger, Jr.* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997) 182 for a discussion of the proliferation of maps during the reign of Elizabeth I., and, in particular, the link between map-making and the representation of England.

<sup>28</sup> See Poole “Falstaff, Marprelate” 110-111 for a discussion of the ways in which Marprelate occupies a “liminal position” that allows him to “toy with the boundaries of orthodoxy and subversion” (111).

<sup>29</sup> Evelyn B. Tribble, “Beyond the Bounds: Martin Marprelate, Thomas Nashe, and the Margins of Humanism,” *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern Europe* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1993) 102.

out of what Douglas identifies as “unstructured territory.” In creating his parodic body as a “mirror” of the Bishop-deformed church, Marprelate challenges the prevailing “image of society” in which the Church of England’s hierarchy is sanctioned by God.

By constructing himself as a “mirror,” Marprelate utilizes an early modern conception of the analogy between body and mind. To say this another way, one’s outward appearance, actions, and words could be seen either as revealing or counterfeiting one’s inner most being. If the raiment of class and gender could theoretically be donned at will, how much of a leap was it to see the monarch’s office as similarly vulnerable to be put on or taken off? We can see this emergent anxiety in the proliferation of books of manners or “courtesy books,” which were manuals not only of how to make a comely argument, but how to behave and dress appropriately for a particular class and mission.<sup>30</sup> At the same time these books of manners argued against counterfeiting rank above one’s birth, they provided a virtual map for the same.<sup>31</sup> Employing the raiment of a different gender or class was seen as “unnatural” and a marring of the body, not unlike the way in which adding appendages, or bishops, to the body of Christ was seen by Martin Marprelate and other reformist Puritans as marring the sanctity of Christ’s body.

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<sup>30</sup> See George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London: Richard Field, 1589) especially book three for examples of the relationship between dress and argument. For another example of a book of manners, see Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named the Governour*, ed. Henry Herbert Stephen Croft (1883; New York: Burt Franklin, 1967).

<sup>31</sup> For a discussion of the prevalence and import of women’s cross-dressing and other manifestations of cross-gender anxiety and the implications such activities had for the arguments one could engage in, both verbally and in print, see Fletcher 23; Jean E. Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England*, (New York: Routledge, 1994) 94-8, 101; Marcus 137, 142-3 and Rackin 71.

As a reformist “church leader,” Marprelate uses conceptions of the bodies natural and politic to demonstrate simultaneously his own power and the fragility of the systems he criticizes. In Marprelate’s construction of his own body, two articulations of the body politic converge. In one model, the body politic functions much like a mantle of authority which rendered the monarch above the frailties of regular people, and in the second model, the body politic is the corporate body of the commonwealth and takes the shape of a human body, with the monarch occupying the head. Citizens and subjects were hierarchically arranged in order that each category of person was accorded a particular position in that body.

Marprelate conflates these two models, using properties of both in order to create an alternative religious hierarchy and nation that is governed not by a temporal monarch, but by God. In the first configuration, the body politic, as distinct from the body natural, was regarded as without the temporal and spatial limitations and “infirmities” of the natural body. The body politic transcended the frailties of the natural body in part because it was not at all limited by the flesh. Rather, the body politic was a truly ephemeral, intelligible body only apprehendable by the intellect.

It was the body politic that was passed from one person to the next much like a garment or crown in order that the monarchy endure as a continuous, immortal system. Within this immortal system, the body politic as an intelligible body was aligned with God, because intelligible bodies, unlike sensible bodies, move freely between the fallen world of earth and the rarified world of the heavens.<sup>32</sup> As S.K. Heninger has shown, the human being was considered a “crucial link in the chain” between the physical and

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<sup>32</sup> S. K. Heninger, Jr., *Touces of Sweet Harmony Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (The Huntington Library: San Marino, California, 1974) 10.

conceptual worlds: “Man was the nexus between them. . . . His superiority—what makes him lord of creation—is directly due to his ability to have experiences at both the physical and the conceptual levels.”<sup>33</sup>

The movement between the worlds of flesh and reason could be undone, however, if a person was given to sin. Indulging the appetites of the flesh made a person more like a beast than a human, closer to the earth than to God. By focusing on the appetites of the bishops and the multiple ways that they privilege the flesh over reason, Marprelate challenges the divine origin of the monarch, and thus the Queen’s body politic. By calling attention to the constructed and human—indeed debased— aspects of the body politic through the persons of the bishops, Marprelate extends the analogy of the body politic as mantle—like the crown worn by the monarch, if it can be put on, it can be taken off.

Marprelate implicitly calls attention to the temporal aspects of offices that should only be divine by repeatedly questioning the legitimacy of the bishops’ positions in the church hierarchy, saying that because they are not named in the Bible, they are more akin to “pettie popes” and “antichrists” than to the God they are supposed to represent and mediate:

They are pettie popes, and pettie Antichrists, whosoever usurpe the authority of pastors over them, who by the ordinance of God, are to bee under no pastors. For none but Antichristian popes and popelings euer claimed this authoritie unto themselves. . . . But our L. bishops usurpe authoritie over those, who by the ordinance of God, are to be under no pastors . . . (Epistle A3<sup>v</sup>).

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<sup>33</sup> Heninger 10.

In this passage, Marprelate focuses on the manner in which the bishops unlawfully take positions within the church that legitimately belong to others who are explicitly named by God. Nowhere, Marprelate argues, are there bishops named as officers in God's church. Bishops are, instead, false officers, leftovers from the Catholic Church. The position of monarch as head of the church also cannot be a divinely ordained or an inherent position because it is not named in the bible, either. Elizabeth, too, occupies an office that remains from the days of the Catholic Church: where there was a pope there is now a queen.

Marprelate further indicates the distempered, unbalanced state of the current church body by using the same humoral terms early modern physicians employed to talk about an unbalanced or diseased individual body. Because the individual bodies of the bishops can be seen to make up the larger body of the church, their actions and words have a direct impact on the church, indicating either its relative health or disease, or that it is altogether not the "real" church, but a false church masquerading as the real one. A healthy person, on the other hand, is temperate, is neither too hot, nor too cold; neither speaks too little, nor too much, is reasonable rather than bestial, controls appetites instead of indulging them, and experiences shame rather than appearing shameless.

The bishops, however, tend in Marprelate's rendering to the intemperate: they are too hot, as we have seen: "Fire, and fagot, bands, and blowes, railing, and reuiling, are, and have bene hitherto their common weapons, as for slandering & lying, it is the greatest piece of their holy profession" ("Theses Martinianae" A2<sup>v</sup>). Marprelate describes men who are filled with choler, or the humor that is associated with fire, heat,

dryness. Astrologically, cholera is the humor ruled by Mars or the god of War and we see belligerence in Marprelate's characterization. The bishops are angry fighters, "railing and reviling" instead of preaching. In Marprelate's vision, the bishops engage in the worst sort of deception: the degraded priest calls his transgressions and foul words "holy professions."

Not only are these bishops and their ministers given to fighting, but they also cannot or will not control their tongues, another indication that they are not in control of themselves, exposing their own degraded souls instead of converting others.

Marprelate portrays the bishops, represented in the person of Bishop John Bridges (and later Thomas Cooper), as guilty of a superfluity of words, yet another symptom of their "hotness."<sup>34</sup> Marprelate complains that Bridges cannot come to a full stop and seems to argue without a clear direction, what an early modern person might call "arguing out all one's mind": "A man might almost run himself out of breath before he could come to a full point in many places of your booke" (Epistle B3<sup>v</sup>). Marprelate offers an example, reprinting one of Bridges' breathless and almost senseless sentences that takes up the better part of a page printed in small black letter type, commenting from the margins on the length of the sentence in such a way as to underscore its ridiculousness: "Who who/Dean take thy breath and then to it again" ("Epistle" B3<sup>v</sup>). Even if a reader had tried to make sense of Bridges' sentences, Marprelate's interruption from the

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<sup>34</sup> Critics have noted the early modern association between increased speech and increased "heat." This association was applied to women in order to authorize the injunction against feminine speech as is explored in the next chapter. The connection between superfluity of words and excessive heat was nevertheless operative for both genders. See Carla Mazzio, "Sins of the Tongue," 56 for a discussion of the tongue as a "fiery little member" that could "defile the whole body."

margin prevents us from taking Bridges seriously. Instead, we are reminded of Marprelate's presence, and absence. It is as though he is standing beside Bridges himself, poking fun as Bridges reads aloud his admonition to the people.

While Marprelate clearly relishes the opportunity to "make men laugh" at the bishops' misbehaviors, he repeatedly argues, as Anselment, Poole and others have noted, that the subject demands it.<sup>35</sup> When arguing about fools, Marprelate reasons, one must in some ways be rendered foolish oneself. What others may regard as name-calling, even character assassination or slander, Marprelate regards as "truth-telling." When he rattles off a string of ribald descriptors for ignorant ministers and corrupt bishops, he is merely naming the corruption inherent in the ministerial ranks:

Is it any marvaile that we have so many swine/dumbe dogs/non-residents with  
their iourneimen the hedge priests/so many lewd liuers/as theeues/ murtherers/  
adulterers/ drunkards/ cormorants/ raschals/ so many ignorant & atheistical  
dolts/so many couetous popish Bb. in our ministry: & so many and so

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<sup>35</sup> Anselment, *Betwixt Jest*. . . esp. chapter two, and "Martin Marprelate: A New Source. . ." 259. See also Joseph Black. "The Rhetoric of Reaction: The Martin Marprelate tracts (1588-89), Anti-Martinism, and the Uses of Print in Early Modern England," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26:3 (1997): 707-725, esp. 709 who argues that anti-Martinist texts implicitly focus on the "destabilizing potential of a 'popular' polemic in a hierarchical society," demonstrating the danger of liberties taken in speech to generate a political liberty unwanted by both church and state governments. For a discussion of the ways that Marprelate's refusal to recognize accepted rules of decorum function to intermingle the worlds of religion and theater, see Coolidge esp. 526-7. See Egan, "Milton and the Marprelate Tradition" 106-107, for a discussion of Marprelate's persona as working to engender a particular reader response toward the church hierarchy, namely laughter, "disgust," and empathy with Puritan ideals and goals. In "Ward and Marprelate" 61-63, Egan focuses on the implications for his satiric strategy of Marprelate's "jester persona." See also Poole, "Saints Alive!. . ." 55, and Rhodes 10. Anti-martinist writers also noted (and objected) to Marprelate's breaches of decorum of personae and use of laughter as a rhetorical strategy. See, for example, the anonymously written *Martins Months minde* (London, 1589) F1<sup>v</sup>-F3<sup>v</sup> for a treatment of Marprelate's offensive rhetoric, namely his "foolerie," ribaldrie," and "blasphemie."

monstrous corruptions in our Church and yet likely to have no redresse: Seing our impudent/shameless/and wainscote faced bishops/like beasts/contrary to the knowledge of all men/and against their own consciences/dare in the eares of her Maiestie/affirme all to be well/where there is nothing but sores and blisters/yea where the grief is even deadly at the heart (E2<sup>r</sup>).

The bishops' distemper indicates that they are stuck in their sensible bodies, unable to apprehend God because they are defiled and darkened by sin. In this way, they, unlike the sacred body of Christ and body politic, are characterized almost exclusively as subject to the infirmities of the natural body, indicating, in this case, their disconnection from God. As the differences between the body politic and the body natural are described (most fundamentally) in Kantorowicz's *The King's Two Bodies*, the body politic is not subject to the same "infirmities" that inherently plague the natural body because it is connected to the divine:

His Body natural (if it be considered in itself) is a Body mortal, subject to all Infirmities that come by Nature or Accident, to the Imbecility of Infancy or old Age, and to the like Defects that happen to the natural Bodies of other People. But his Body Politic is a Body that cannot be seen or handled, consisting of Policy and Government, and constituted for the Direction of the People, and the Management of the public weal, and this Body is utterly void of Infancy, and old Age and other natural Defects and Imbecilites, which the Body natural is subject to, and for this Cause, what the King does in the Body politic, cannot be invalidated or frustrated by any Disability in the natural Body (7).

Because Marprelate also does not have a body that can be “seen or handled,” he, like the “Body Politic,” seems to be without the “infirmities” of the natural body. He certainly cannot be killed. His purpose is largely one of policy and government, the realm of the body politic. He states explicitly in “Hay any worke” that he acts on behalf of the public weal: “My purpose was and is to do good. I know I have don no harme howsoever some may iudg Martin to mar al” (C4<sup>v</sup>). Here, he argues that he is constituted for the direction of the people and the management of the public good, just as Queen Elizabeth repeatedly presents herself as being authorized by the needs and desires of her subjects: “. . . I would not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear: I have so behaved myself that under God I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good will of my subjects.”<sup>36</sup> We can see another example of the Queen’s rhetorical deployment of the relationship between the people’s desires and “love” of the people and her commission or purpose as Queen in “the Golden Speech”:

I do assure you there is no prince that loveth his subjects better, or whose love can countervail our love. There is no jewel, be it of never so rich a price, which I set before this jewel—I mean your loves. . . . and though God hath raised me high, yet this I count the glory of my crown: that I have reigned with your loves. This makes me that I do not so much rejoyce that God hath made me to be a queen, as to be a queen over so thankful a people. Therefore I have cause to wish nothing more than to content the subjects, and that is a duty which I owe. . . . Of myself I must say this: I never was any greedy, scraping grasper,

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<sup>36</sup> Marcus et al., *Elizabeth I Collected Works* 325-6.

nor a straight, fast-holding prince, nor yet a waster. My heart was never set on worldly goods, but only for my subjects' good. . . . For myself, I was never so much enticed with the glorious name of a king or royal authority of a queen as delighted that God hath made me His instrument to maintain His truth and glory, and to defend his kingdom (as I said) from peril, dishonour, tyranny, and oppression. There will never queen sit in my seat with more zeal to my country, care to my subjects, and that will sooner with willingness venture her life for your good and safety, than myself. For it is not my desire to live nor reign longer than my life and reign shall be for your good.<sup>37</sup>

In this speech to Parliament, the Queen makes a move very similar to Marprelate's announcement that he was created by the bishops and his later remark that he meant only to do good. In this way, both Marprelate and the Queen deploy "two body" rhetoric in order to associate themselves with the frailty of humanity and thus the body natural, at the same time that they project themselves as constituted by their purpose and their "subjects"—a capacity that is characteristic of the body politic.<sup>38</sup> Elizabeth

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<sup>37</sup> Marcus et al., *Elizabeth I Collected Works* 337-340.

<sup>38</sup> As David Norbrook has emphasized in "The Emperor's New Body?: Richard II, Ernst Kantorowicz, and the politics of Shakespeare criticism," *Textual Practice* 10(2): 344 the two bodies of the monarch were not the only way to conceptualize the divided nature of a monarch's power: "The distinction between the king's person and his office could be formulated in ways that were quite independent of 'mystical body' theory." Nevertheless, the two-body theory emerged "in debates of the succession to Queen Elizabeth" (343). Norbrook also argues that the body natural and body politic are not so easily codified as Kantorowicz's work would have us believe. For further discussion of the corporeal and gendered rhetoric Elizabeth I employed in speeches and conduct, see Fletcher 80-1; Marcus 137, 143; and Montrose 309-10, 315-6. For a discussion of the symbology of the portraiture of Elizabeth I, including that of the King's two bodies, see Strong, *Gloriana* esp. 158-9. For other discussions about the

herself used the trope of the monarch's two bodies both in her speeches and the visual images that are made of her person.

Marprelate has faculties that are not limited by the scope and abilities of a natural, sensible body. Thus, Marprelate's body more closely resembles the mystical body politic than the natural body of a common man, or even the body natural of the monarch insofar as Marprelate constructs himself as all seeing and all hearing, possessing the sort of super human abilities presumed to be possessed by the Queen. The Rainbow Portrait represents the notion that the body politic allows Queen Elizabeth to watch her ministers and subjects, in effect to see and hear everything. Roy Strong reads the eyes and ears on her golden cloak in this portrait as representing the eyes and ears of her ministers. However, her golden mantle can also be seen as representative of the mantle of the body politic itself, for it is this mantle that allows for the ministers that make Elizabeth omniscient.<sup>39</sup>

Marprelate repeatedly suggests his own political bodies by depicting his own omniscience and referring to his ability to see into the bishops' houses and private affairs. He offers several reports of bishops and other minister's transgressive behaviors and threatens to continue to keep track of their doings and to expose yet more of their abuses. His threats most certainly allude to a Puritan document with the same purpose. Only a few years earlier, in 1586, Puritans organized a massive

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ways that two body theory was utilized by Queen Elizabeth, see Axton x, 12-15 and 27; See Levin esp. 125-127 for ways that Elizabeth used notions of gender coincident with two body theory in order to utilize the power that both genders afforded her.

<sup>39</sup> Strong, *Gloriana* 159.

campaign to record the unseemly doings of the ministry.<sup>40</sup> Marprelate reports in his first tract, “Epistle to the Terrible Priests,” that when the Lord Bishop of London apprehended some “theeves” who had stolen some green cloth, he then claimed the cloth to be his own, even though the dyars “came to challenge their cloth” (B2<sup>r</sup>). The bishop “said it was his owne and refused to give up the cloth even when the theeves confessed at the points of their deaths, that the cloth belonged to the dyars: but the dyars coulde not get their cloth, nor cannot unto this day” (B2<sup>r</sup>). Marprelate alludes to having other such stories of the bishops’ doings and undoings at his proverbial fingertips. In this way, he lends credence to his claim that he really does have a Martin(ist) in every diocese taking notes for him. Marprelate’s mention of a record of ministerial abuses that he claims knowledge of is likely a reference to John Field’s collection of such transgressions.<sup>41</sup> As Collinson has shown, this record, in conjunction with the *Book of Discipline*, which outlined the demand for reform and conduct in a form to which ministers could subscribe, presented a tremendous threat: “[it served] the needs of a wholly autonomous kingdom of Christ and has no mention

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<sup>40</sup> See Babbage 20.

<sup>41</sup> See Leland Carlson, “Martin Marprelate: His Identity and His Satire,” *English Satire: Papers Read at a Clark Library Seminar, January 15, 1972*, eds. Leland Carlson and Ronald Paulson (Los Angeles, California: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1972) who notes that John Field was suspected of being involved in the authorship of the Marprelate tracts. According to Carlson, “[m]ore than any other man, Field had been successful in collecting information to be used against the hierarchy” (6). While some of the material collected by Field may have been used in the Epistle and Epitome, Carlson argues that it may well also have been “London gossip” (6). See also A.F. Scott Pearson, *Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism, 1535 – 1603*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925) esp. 265, whose account of Field’s collection of ministerial transgressions suggests that those responsible for Marprelate most certainly had seen these records.

of Queen Elizabeth or any other earthly sovereign” (302). In his first tract, Marprelate threatens to do what was already being done. Forward Protestants were collecting and describing what Marprelate calls “memorable pranks”:

I mean to make a survey into all the diocese in this land, that I may keepe a visitation among my cleargie men. I would wish them to keepe good rule/and to amend there manners against I come. For I shall paint them in their coulours/if I find any thing amisse. In this book I will note all their memorable pranckes . . . and I thinke I had need to have many Scribes and many reames of paper for this purpose (“Epistle” F2<sup>f</sup>).

As if to show that he is not telling tales, Marprelate relates a series of incidents depicting Sir Gefferie Jones’s overindulgence in alcohol, concluding his story finally with the remark that he “labor[s] that all evil ministers may be turned out of the church” (F2<sup>f</sup>). Here, Marprelate again evokes his multiplicity—he has eyes in many places and many hands employed in the process of taking down the particulars of the bishops’ bad behavior, behavior that makes them, at the very least, unfit to preach the word of God.

Marprelate also consistently employs the second conventional paradigm of the body politic in order to argue that the bishops do not figure as part of the body in its natural state, but are rather superfluous appendages that make the body a monstrosity. This second paradigm for the body politic assumed the structure of the physical human form. The monarch occupied the position of head, governing what was supposed to be an obedient body. Within this body, as it was most commonly outlined by Plutarch and others in later books of proper education and government, knights and nobles occupied

the position of the arms and hands, and commoners and workers the positions of belly, legs and feet.<sup>42</sup>

This corporeal model of institutions is one Marprelate repeatedly deploys against the bishops by calling attention to their superfluous status as “extra” members. Marprelate makes the case that they, and by extension the queen, usurp the office of God: “And this is the onely and sole office of Christ onely to place and displace the members of his bodie to wit the officers of his Church/he may lawfully do it/so cannot man” (“Hay any worke” C2<sup>f</sup>). In this passage, Marprelate argues that only God has the power legitimately to determine that his own body should have a particular “member,” or not. And if this is true of God’s body, it is doubly true of the institutions that are made in the image of God’s body. The church, like the body of God and even the human body, was formed in a particular way by God and that way it should stay. For human beings to presume to change the configuration of the church, like changing the configuration of the human body, is to do terrible violence, violence that is specifically related to and a result of the postlapsarian state of human beings.

We can see examples of God’s divine power to add “members” to the body writ small in instances where human beings are literally born with extra appendages. In such instances of monstrosity, often publicized far and wide in notices of “Strange Newes,” the nature of the “monstrous birth” was believed to be (or at least presented as) a message from God that the parents who gave birth to the monstrosity should mend their lives, for the parents’ sins are made visible in the deformed body of the

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<sup>42</sup> Elyot, *Boke Named the Governour* 26. Christine de Pizan, *Book of the Body Politic* trans. and ed. Kate Langdon Forham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 4.

monstrous child. In one such example of “Strange Newes from Scotland,” there is a long description of the body of the “child, or rather Monster,” (2) that likens each aspect of the body to a mythical creature or other non-human form. The child has more than one head, multiple small arms, genitals both male and female, long cloven legs, and the appearance in general of a “Gorgon.” And if this were not enough, there was a great thunderclap at the moment of the child’s birth and then only moments after the very earth has complained of this birth, the child says, “I am thus deformed for the sinnes of my Parents” (3). This monstrous child was born to a woman who revealed, moments before she died of shame, that she had long worried that something like this would befall her because she was “Seduced by Hereticall Factionous fellows, who goe in sheepes cloathing, but are naught but ravening Wolves” who have brought the Church and State to “utter ruin” (4). This particular instance shows God’s wrath at those who are tempted by a false church. The figure of the deformed human body thus comes to represent the deformity of the man-made church body.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> While this particular “Newes” was published long after the publication of the Marprelate tracts, it is not unusual within the genre. There were a proliferation of such accounts of monstrous births and other strange outcomes following the April 1580 earthquake. The same is true following other “cataclysmic” events. See for example Anon, *Gods Handy-worke in Wonders Miraculously shewen upon two women, lately deliuered of two Monsters with a most strange and terrible Earthquake* (London: I.W., 1615); Thomas Churchyard, *A Warning for the wise, a feare to the fond, a bridle to the lewde, and a glasse to the good: Written of the late Earthquake chanced in London* (London: John Allde and Nicholas Lyng, 1580); Arthur Golding, *A discourse upon the Earthquake that happened throughe this Realme of Englande, and other places of Christendome* (London: Thomas Streate, 1580); and T.T., *A shorte and pithic Discourse, conserning the engendering, tokens, and effects of all Earthquakes in Generall: Particularly applied and conferred with that most strange and terrible worke of the Lord in shaking the earth, not nly within the Citie of London, but also in most parts of all Englande* (Richarde Iohnes: London, 1580).

For bishops to put extra members on the body of Christ, then, is monstrous indeed. Marprelate highlights the human qualities of the church hierarchy, implicitly calling for the disarticulation of the church and state—because bishops function as part of the Queen’s government, they are part of her body politic. As such, for them also to be part of the church is an abomination. Marprelate’s rendering of a healthy body politic requires that the visible body of the church be separated from the bishops and the body politic in order that Pastors, Doctors, Elders and Deacons occupy their right positions in the visible body of the church—the positions of arms and hands.

Reports of “strange newes” that describe instances of people born with two heads depict that a deformity, like the existence of extra members, is evidence of the devil’s work or the wrath of God. In order to expose the monstrosity Elizabeth and her ministers have made of the body of Christ and the visible body of the church, Marprelate mirrors the structure of the ecclesiastical hierarchy so as to show the sickness at its core. He does this by replicating in several related ways a corporate body that is out of control, or to use Marprelate’s own words, “out of joynt.” If we imagine the body politic as a literal body, the bones, and thus “members,” are out of alignment, out of their very sockets, the body as broken as its bones.<sup>44</sup> While the bishops usurp the positions rightly occupied by Pastors, Doctors, Elders, and Deacons, Queen Elizabeth is guilty of a more egregious usurpation within Marprelate’s rendering of the body politic: Queen Elizabeth, as head of the Church of England, occupies a place that Christ alone may claim. Within Marprelate’s vision of the body politic, Elizabeth has either erected a false church and made herself its head or she has put a

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<sup>44</sup> Marjorie Garber, “Out of Joint,” *The Body in Parts*, eds. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997) 23-52, esp. 31-32.

second head—her own in addition to Christ’s—on the visible body of the church. In either case, Marprelate’s vision of the political body with Elizabeth as head is clearly grotesque.

In addition to his recollection of the bishops’ transgressions, there are several other related ways that Marprelate suggests the disease in the visible body of the church and the body politic: he rants and rails, name calls, speaks in different voices from different parts of the printed page. He uses each of these methods to replicate himself and amplify his voice(s), thus simulating the very monstrosity and disorder inherent in a body that has, as he repeatedly announces, “extra members” stuck on it “haphazardly.” In this way, the body has, literally, too many joints, a proliferation of joints and appendages located where no joints and appendages ought to be.

With the structuring of his text and argument, Marprelate mirrors the disunity of voice and purpose he sees in the English church. In the passage below, there is a Martin speaking, only to be interrupted by another Martin giving him advice. Simultaneously, a third Martin comments from the margin on the exchange between the two Martins speaking in the body. It is as if there are several Martins extant in one

text, any one of them ready to speak at any time, or all ready to speake  
Therefore no lord B. (nowe I pray thee good Martin speake  
out, if ever thou diddest speak out, that hir Maiestie and the  
counsel may heare thee) is to be tolerated in any christian  
common welth: and therefore neither Iohn of Cant. Iohn of  
London, &c. are to be tolerated in any christian commonwelth  
 (“Epistle” A3<sup>v</sup>).

What malepert  
knaves are these  
that cannot be  
content to stand by  
and here, but they  
must teach a  
gentleman how to  
speake.

For so many voices to exist simultaneously in one body—whether that body be textual, literal, or parodic, is to suggest a body so out of joint that voices can come from parts other than the mouth that is in the head. Certainly Marprelate does not depict a single voice located where it ought to be in a body that is healthy, balanced, all of its parts set in their right places. In place of Christ as the church and also head of the church is Queen Elizabeth and a throng of degenerate bishops and lesser ministers, all of them speaking, not the Word, but their own desires.

Raymond Anselment and others have argued that the different “voices” in Marprelate’s text are different “personae” that Marprelate evokes as the circumstances suit him.<sup>45</sup> Anselment’s reading of Marprelate supports the notion that Marprelate proliferates himself in order to challenge various aspects of the religio-political status quo, including notions of “polite” rhetoric—the sort his Puritan predecessors used in their own appeals for reform. Anselment focuses on Marprelate’s personae as a sort of “theatrical” mask that seems to cover up a more essentialized self—Marprelate’s author perhaps?

In contrast to Anselment, I suggest that within a worldview that believed a person could “speak forth his mind,” or divulge the contents of his soul through speech, a representation of the degraded state of the church hierarchy required (and also revealed) that the speaker embodied that degradation. In this way, Marprelate’s parodic or “false” body suggests the falseness of a church body composed of

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<sup>45</sup> For a discussion of the reactions of Marprelate’s contemporaries to his other voices, particularly the notion that he was insane, see Anselment, “‘Martin Marprelate:’ A New Source. . .” esp. 259. See also Poole “Falstaff, Marprelate. . .” 102.

degenerate bishops. When Marprelate speaks in different voices, he means to represent, from the inside out, the foul nature of the church hierarchy.

### **The Cuffing of Martin Marprelate**

As we saw in the previous section, Marprelate repeatedly argues in his tracts that the bishops “mar” the sacred body of Christ, in effect, doing violence to Christ with their transgressions. Just as vigorously, satirists hired to respond to Marprelate in print “hit” back, “cuffing” Marprelate. In this section, I examine the ways that hired and spontaneous responses to the Marprelate tracts support the notion that Marprelate utilizes the conventions of sensible and intelligible bodies to create a body that is a religious and political argument. Evidence of the rhetorical power of Marprelate’s argument as a parodic body lies in how the writers who respond to him in tracts or on stage almost without exception either reduce him to the level of a paper body that can be torn to pieces as easily as one of his tracts, or reduce him to a fleshly, corrupt, and grotesque body that should be purged from the body politic.<sup>46</sup> In each case, in an effort to reject the validity of his religio-political arguments. Marprelate is confined to little more than the sensible aspects of his “body.”

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<sup>46</sup> For a critical discussion of Marprelate as employing “grotesque” rhetoric which was then “imitated” by those who responded to him, see Kristin Poole, “Falstaff, Marprelate. . .” 101-103, 112-113. Poole notes that the anti-Martinist responses “amplified the grotesque undertones of the Martinist tracts” (102). Poole addresses the ways in which the anti-Marprelate tracts threaten to fall victim to the very disorder they critique. Poole acknowledges the community or camaraderie that is perhaps unwittingly developed between Marprelate and his attackers, but does not comment on ways that Marprelate and his tracts as “mirrors” of the bishops’ abuses, thus anticipating, and even inviting, just such excesses as proof of the corrupt church. For a definition and discussion of “Elizabethan grotesque” as originating in the Marprelate controversy, see Rhodes, esp. 4-5 and chapter 3.

A body full of “Martins,” and therefore possessing “extra members” just like the church hierarchy Marprelate critiques, is, by any early modern standard, a humoral body in need of a purge. The anti-Martinist move to elaborate Marprelate’s corrupt body to the “grotesque” proportions only hinted at in the tracts, can be seen as an elaboration of the very sort of Church corruption the anti Martin wits were hired to defend. Many of the tracts that respond to Marprelate represent him in precisely this way. Indeed, Thomas Cooper, in his *Admonition to the People of England*, a purchased answer to the first two tracts, repeatedly accuses Marprelate of an unbridled, slanderous tongue, where, “such as the speeche is, such is the minde” (27). Within the early modern paradigm Cooper evokes here, it is clear that speech can be said to reveal not only the mind but also the body, for Cooper characterizes Marprelate as “ a botch in the body, whereunto all bad humors comonly resort” (41). Cooper’s characterization of Marprelate, as full of excess, foul humors, indicates that Marprelate is in need of a purge.<sup>47</sup>

Marprelate is not only dangerous because he is an infected “botch,” a wound, full of foul humors that sicken body, mind, and speech. Within a humoral body model, like draws like, so an angry reformer such as Marprelate will attract other angry reformers. Also suggested in the image of Marprelate as a “botch” in the body politic, or a “bad humor” that will attract others like himself, is the notion that Marprelate is himself both a wound on the corporate body of the realm and also functions to wound Christ. In this way, Cooper maligns Marprelate and any who share his view, such as the non-believers who crucified Christ. Cooper uses these related ideas to imply that

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<sup>47</sup> Others of the anti-Marprelate tracts also depict a Martin in need of a purge. See for example *Martin’s Months minde* E3<sup>v</sup>–E4<sup>v</sup>.

Marprelate's "botched" attack on the bishops' only human, but not malignant, characters is an attack on the Church, and by extension the body of Christ. Thus, he inverts Marprelate's argument in order to posit an opposite conclusion. In this way, Cooper unwittingly supports Marprelate's unwritten syllogism: if Marprelate mirrors the pestilence of the Church and his body is in need of a purge, then the church is in need of a purge. Within Marprelate's paradigm, elaborated in response to Cooper's treatise in Marprelate's "Hay any worke for Cooper," ridding the visible church body of the bishops, and Monarch as head, restores the Church to its right form: "I would I could make this year 1588 to be the wonderful year by removing you [bishops] all out of England" (A1<sup>v</sup>).

*Martin's Months minde* (1589), like Cooper's *Admonition*, focuses on the sensible aspects of Marprelate in order to delegitimize his arguments. Indeed, in this tract, the arguments lodged against Marprelate's theological platform are almost always in service of the writer's main object: to make light of Marprelate's pointed arguments through a representation of his corporeal fallibilities. In this way, like Cooper, the writer simultaneously (if unwittingly) supports Marprelate's announcement that he is himself a mirror of the bishops' abuses, and also suggests that Marprelate, unlike the body politic, *can* be sick, hurt, battered, and finally killed—as both a tract and a man.

*Martin's Months minde*—a tract that purports to tell the true story of Marprelate's illness, death, burial, and includes the reading of epitaphs in order to celebrate his death one month after his demise—begins as a response to A

*Countercuff*.<sup>48</sup> The writer of *Martin's Months minde* congratulates Pasquine on his excellent job of “cuffing” Martin, and then relates how he means with his own tract to give Martin yet another cuffing, this one so sound as to “make them stagger” (A2<sup>r</sup>). I suggest that there are two possible readings of the “cuffing” evoked here. In the most basic sense, the word means what we would expect: *Martin's Months minde* intends to hit Marprelate (and his Martins) about the ears so violently that they can scarcely stand upright. In this way, the writer addresses Marprelate and his Martins as men. I suggest that the writer is also referring to Marprelate as a text, where Marprelate's body is a tract. *Martin's Months minde's* writer will hit Marprelate about the ears with his fists, and his text will attack Marprelate as text, where a refutation of Marprelate registers as a “blow.” This reading is supported later in the tract, when the tracts' speaker recounts the manner of Marprelate's death. The writer reports that he has spoken with Martin's sons and so will relate to the reader the story he has gleaned from them of Martin's recent death and the circumstances surrounding his demise.

Before he relates the story of Martin's death, however, he responds to Marprelate's textual argument, summarizing and simultaneously refuting it in an almost breathless way. In his view, Marprelate is a villain “not content to plucke of the clothes, [but] pricks at the bodies” of the bishops, pulling them out of their houses “by the ears,” and exposing their business and stealing their possessions in order to make himself a “Gentleman.” (B2<sup>v</sup>, B3<sup>r</sup>). The writer reports the consequences of such behavior as terrible and far reaching:

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<sup>48</sup> It is interesting to note that the phrase “months mind” was most often used in reference to the saying of masses in honor of the deceased. In this way, the writer associates Marprelate with Catholics and Catholic ceremonies.

Hee will sweepe away all both the fish, and the frie at one draught, with his netts; and as it were drie up our verie rivers with the breath of his mouth, and carie whole Contries before him; and snatch up houses and woods, and dales, and hills, and people, and all, into his budget: so as none shall dwell with him upon the earth. Naie he goeth farther, and setting his face against the heavens, he makes a mock of the Saints of God, yea the mother of Christ, (with his single fold Sirs) & the Scriptures themselves be beastlie abuset to his hick scorners iests (B3<sup>r</sup>).

Here, the writer constructs Marprelate as a force or entity that is insatiable, all consuming, where “budget” seems to take on the meaning of both pouch or wallet, and also “mind,” such that Marprelate will ruin the order of Nature both with his deeds and his thoughts, destroying everything in his path.<sup>49</sup> This is clearly a rather extreme description of the havoc that Marprelate could wreck—Martin will “mar all” with his arguments, an eventuality of which Marprelate is often accused by his detractors. Whether or not the writer actually believes that this havoc lies in the future is less relevant to this study than the threat of cosmological havoc used to describe Marprelate’s influence.

Just as Marprelate does, this writer pulls out all the rhetorical stops, likening Marprelate to Cerberus, the three-headed dog that was often evoked by Protestants when talking disparagingly of Catholics, and by women when talking of beastly, dissembling, voracious men. *Martin’s Months minde’s* writer further describes Marprelate and his Martins as “verie Locustes,” likening them to scourges and devils.

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<sup>49</sup> “Budget” 1a, b. *OED*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

In the case of both dogs and locusts, they are creatures that are characterized by what and how much they eat. Dogs clean up people's (often foul) leavings, wasted, perhaps rotten food or, in some cases, human waste. To be called a dog, then, was not only to be beastly, but a beast of the lowest sort, a dirty, opportunistic scavenger. Locusts are also opportunistic scavengers but of a different kind insofar as they devour what could become food, greedily overwhelming ripe grain crops and stripping trees and other plants of their leaves. More than this, however, locusts are scourges that indicate an imbalance in the world. If Marprelate is a locust, the writer of *Martins Months minde* means for his reader to see how Marprelate's very existence creates an imbalance, a surfeit that threatens to devour all.

Within only the first few pages, Marprelate is the end of the world as we know it, a raging tempest, a mad dog biting all without discrimination, the very scourges of the devil, the devil himself, an hermaphrodite. In this way, the writer of *Martin's Months minde* adopts the same characterization Marprelate makes of himself as simultaneously one man and many men. The writer further paints Marprelate as a "monster," and a devilish lineage born to be an abuser of the three estates of the realm—the Queen, the church and the state:<sup>50</sup> “. . . if these men have their swaie, (but we hope first they shall have their swing) we shall have left us, I will not saie, No cap, no coats, no monie, no house, no liuing, but (better no life) no learning, no Magistrats, no Prince, no Church, no Sacrament, no praier, no nor God, for us to worship, or feare at all” (C3<sup>r</sup>). In this passage, Marprelate as devourer is again evoked—he is the scourge that leaves nothing living in its path. And so the “Epistle to the Reader,” the

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<sup>50</sup> *Martins Months minde* B3<sup>r</sup>-D3<sup>v</sup>.

preface to the story of Martin's sickness and death, goes on, refuting Marprelate's arguments in a way that indicates the writer either does not take those arguments seriously, or is merely presenting them in order to characterize Marprelate in extreme and multifarious terms.

It is not long, however, before the writer directly addresses the reader's desire to hear the "true report of the death and burial of *Martin Mar-prelate*," recounting in detail all of the rumors—some real and some invented—then circulating about Marprelate's "death." He remarks that some readers may think Marprelate's death was violent, because he was "so monstrous and immoderate in all his proceedings" (E1<sup>r</sup>), or perhaps he met with some "great accident" and was taken by Spaniards or hanged in Lisbon by his own Puritans (E1<sup>v</sup>). Or perhaps he died of drunkenness, drowned "both within and without" (E1<sup>v</sup>). Or he broke his neck riding, or he was "trussed up" like a rogue. After refuting each of these, and other possibilities offered in the tracts "written" by Martin Junior and Senior (E2<sup>r</sup>–E3<sup>v</sup>), the writer of *Martin's Months minde* finally recounts Marprelate's death just as it happened, offering the reader a detailed account of the sordid particulars.

We learn that Marprelate died after a long illness that was brought about by his activities "troubling of the State, and ouerthrowe of the Church," and the resultant actions against him by the established government, the church hierarchy, and others:

. . . and being therefore (and well worthie) sundrie waies verie curstlie handled; as first *drie beaten*, & therby his bones broken, then whipt that made him winse, then wormd and launced, that he tooke verie grieuouslie, to be made a *Maygame* vpon the Stage, and so bangd, both with prose and rime on euerie

side, as he knewe not which way to turne himselfe, and at length cleane *Marde*:  
the grieffe whereof vext him out of all crie . . . (E1<sup>v</sup> original emphasis).

In this passage, Marprelate continues to be referred to in terms that reveal he is both man and text, badly damaged by the “beatings” that other tracts and theatrical performances have given him. The physicality of this and other respondents’ tracts is reflected in this passage, where the pokings, rackings, whipping, purgings, and banging described in other tracts and depicted on the stage have destroyed Marprelate, at least on the level of the grotesque natural body.

At this point, the writer informs us, Marprelate’s “radicall moisture began to faile him, and his vitall powers in such sort to decaie” (E1<sup>v</sup>). He is overcome with sorrow and shame, falls into a “mellanchollie” and develops a fever “whereby hee grewe so costive, *as nothing came from him in three or foure months space*” (E2<sup>f</sup> original emphasis). Here, Marprelate’s “radicall moisture” has clearly been responsible for his radical prose. What lies inside Marprelate is depicted as manifesting itself on the page. His disorderly prose is the result of a “disorderly pulse” (E2<sup>f</sup>). While early modern medicine would not have a detailed understanding of the relationship between the beating of the heart, the circulation of the blood, and its relationship to pulse for some time to come, medical practitioners nevertheless followed Galen in the belief that the pulse was connected to the beating of the heart, or the organ that produced the vital spirit.<sup>51</sup> If we combine this understanding of the heart with the early modern notion articulated in William Perkins’s *Government of the Tongue According to God’s Word*

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<sup>51</sup> Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter and Andrew Wear, *The Western Medical Tradition 800 BC to AD 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 67-70, 403.

that one's words—pure or tainted—issued from the heart, we see that a disorderly pulse was yet another indicator of Marprelate's disordered mind. Moreover, as blood was the humor associated with both one's vital spirit and had the qualities of heat and wetness,<sup>52</sup> as Marprelate is “cooled” by his textual and physical punishment through the cudgeling of refutation, his “radical moisture” is also diminished and he experiences a state of “mellancolly” which is characterized by an abundance of black bile, a substance that “was regarded as mainly harmful—it was visible in vomit and excreta.”<sup>53</sup> Not only is Marprelate being reduced to the baseness of earth with its characteristic qualities of cold and dry, but here we also see an example of a humour going “bad,” putrifying Marprelate's individual body, and potentially putrifying the larger body of which he is a component part. Because an early modern readership was knowledgeable about and, as Gail Paster has shown, continuously aware of the humoral aspects of the body, readers would have been able to decode the anti-Martinist references to the state of imbalance in Marprelate's body.

It is at this moment, when Marprelate's vital powers are failing him, that he is ultimately purged with medicine so strong that “it purged away all the conscience, wit, and honestie he had” (E4<sup>v</sup>). While this is a satiric rendering of the process of purging, it nevertheless relies on the early modern assumption that the contents of the body and

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<sup>52</sup> For accounts of the humors and their relationship to the substances of which all things are made, as earth, air, fire and water, see Nicholas Culpeper, *Galen's Arte of Physick*, Jonathan Miller, *The Body in Question* (New York: Random House, 1978) 225-226,

<sup>53</sup> Nutton, *The Western Medical Tradition 800 BC to AD 1800* 25.

mind determined one's temperament.<sup>54</sup> Thus, to purge the body of an excess humor was believed to return the body to a state of balance, or at least address the bodily imbalance. In Marprelate's case, because he is his disorderly prose, the purge administered to him seems to empty his entire body of substance, words, life. As Jane Donawerth has argued, a wounded person who speaks passionately while purging the heart of excess humours (as Marprelate does on his deathbed—confessing, as he does, all his evil doings) nevertheless does not, indeed can not, regain health. Rather, “speech may drain away the heat and spirits essential to life.”<sup>55</sup> In this way, *Martin's Months minde* not only associates Marprelate's failing words with his wounded, wracked body, but also reduces his arguments to foul internal bodily substances that can be, literally, voided from the body politic with the exhalation of Marprelate's last breath and silence in death.

Marprelate may have been pleased to see these responses to his writings, for they confirm, in many ways, his intention to mirror the abuses of the bishops. When writers such as that of *Martins Months minde* depict Marprelate as possessing a mutable body that expands to encompass everything, and then contracts to the form of

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<sup>54</sup> Insanity was regarded as a physical disease; thus, treating the body with “physical treatments like blood-lettings, emetics, and violent purges to discharge gastric toxins” was commonly believed to address, if not cure, mental illness.

<sup>55</sup> Jane Donawerth, *Shakespeare and the Sixteenth-Century Study of Language* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1984) 68. Donawerth examines commonplaces surrounding death and speech, noting that when a man spends his last breath to advise his family, “[h]is words have additional power because they are a sacrifice” (69). Here, the writer of *Martins Months minde* seeks in yet another way to undermine the seriousness of Marprelate's critique of the church—to spend his dying breath repenting of his tracts and all his actions suggests that his repentance is more real, more true, than his polemic.

a “madde dogge” or “a verie divel,” these detractors, with their focus on the sensible aspects of Martin, implicitly support Marprelate’s contention that he is this “mirror.” But when they go to such extremes, they also reduce his arguments to a series of jokes. Even some of Marprelate’s detractors objected to the extremes pamphleteers and stage players went with their depictions of Marprelate as all things terrible and grotesque, because such depictions undermined the very project they were hired to execute.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, the theaters were eventually closed for a while and theatrical depictions of Marprelate banned because of their outrageousness.<sup>57</sup>

If we see Marprelate’s body as an anatomy or documentation of the bishops’ abuses, then the autopsy shown us in *Martins Months minde*, in which his dissected body is found to contain little more than dust for a heart, his head almost empty, and all of the other parts of his body responsible for his ill humor, becomes a powerful argument, even in his detractors’ pamphlets, for church reform. Just as John Field hoped that the sheer existence and length of his record of ministerial ignorance and

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<sup>56</sup> See Poole, “Falstaff, Marprelate . . .” 101-2 for a brief discussion of the controversy surrounding the sensationalizing of the grotesque in the anti-Marprelate tracts and plays. Tribble 122 and Poole 102 note that Gabriel Harvey, Richard Harvey, and Francis Bacon came to the defense of Marprelate against the anti-Martinists.

<sup>57</sup> Poole, “Falstaff, Marprelate . . .” 104. For a recounting of the vicious exchange between Nashe, the Harvey brothers, and Robert Greene, see Tribble 122. Tribble recounts Gabriel Harvey’s argument against writers such as Greene and Nashe writing in the Martinist style because he felt it did damage to church and state: “Euery priuate excesse is daungerous: but such publike enormities, incredibly pernicious, & unsuportable: and who can tell, what huge outrages might amount of such quarrellous, and tumultuous causes? Honour is precious: worship of value: Fame inualuable: They perilously threaten the Commonwealth, that goe about to violate the inuiolable partes thereof (Harvey, *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets* qutd. in Tribble 122-3).

other failings of the church hierarchy would make a compelling argument for reform, so, too, does Marprelate's botched body.

### **Marprelate's Holy War**

Marprelate has no illusions that the bishops will actually step down from their "thousands and content [them] with [their] hundreds," because they have been persuaded by either Marprelate's arguments or the decayed state of his parodic body. At this point, I suggest that Marprelate does what most religious leaders even today do when negotiation and persuasion fail to bring about the desired religious, social, or political outcome: he wages war.

In this section, I argue that Marprelate presents himself alone as able to restore the body of Christ to its right configuration through a holy war. Because the bishops and archbishops will not remove themselves from the church hierarchy, and because the Queen will not thrust them out, Marprelate argues that he will cut out this "botch in the body" through physical force. Marprelate therefore constructs and reconstructs himself through a proliferation of titles, presenting himself as the physician who can administer a purge to a diseased body politic and a defiled church, as the schoolmaster who can teach the current political and religious hierarchy once further reformation takes place, and as the magistrate and military leader who will wage and lead a religious war against the bishops and archbishops. With this renaming, or titling process, Marprelate extends his own power in both religious and political contexts. Through this complex of roles, Marprelate grants himself the authority to make an

excision of the “botch” and thus the extant body politic, for the good of the people, the church, the realm, and the very world and cosmology.

Marprelate’s proliferating self not only mirrors the corrupt materialism of the church hierarchy, as we saw in the previous section, but also functions to provide Marprelate with an alternative nation of subjects, religious followers, and soldiers who are crusaders for Christ and saviors of the religious state. While Elizabeth presents herself rhetorically as Queen, Prince, and King, Marprelate presents himself in the first tract as simply a man: “And have not I quited myself like a man” (Epistle B1<sup>r</sup>). This statement can be interpreted in several different but related ways. As I argued in the beginning of this chapter, Marprelate establishes here the idea that he is an actual man, and, thus, he has a flesh and blood body somewhere, though it is not the body of his author. There is another possible reading, however, that depends on the previous interpretation. As much as Martin evokes with this statement what he *is*, he also evokes what he *is not*. This reading is supported by an exploration of the “contradictories” or opposed statements in the preface to Dudley Fenner’s *The Artes of Logike and Rethorik*, an “impolite rhetoric” with a decidedly forward Presbyterian slant.<sup>58</sup> When speaking of these contradictories, Fenner mentions that they are “when one affirmeth and the other denieth, as a man, not a man” (A3<sup>v</sup>). Fenner further explains that “one is not opposed to one kinde but one to many kindes, and that equally, as a man opposed to not a man, is equally opposed to spirits, to fowles, fishes, beasts, unsensible creatures, &c. in the same not a man” (A3<sup>v</sup>). In the most basic sense, then, Marprelate is not his flesh and blood author. And, more importantly, he is

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<sup>58</sup>Dudley Fenner, *The Artes of Logike and Rethorike* (London, 1584).

not a God, and he is not a woman—both categories occupied by Queen Elizabeth as a woman monarch claiming to be ordained by, and ruling by the appointment of, God.

Marprelate extends his temporal power and his infallibility as he increases himself in number, quickly containing many important Martins. He names himself Metropolitan, a clergyman of high rank and learning, and primate, also a high-ranking church official, an archbishop or bishop. In each of these instances, these are titles that elevate Marprelate's status and align him with the bishops at the same time that his name, "Mar-prelate," undermines or points out the problems with these categories.

Marprelate then exploits the association he has just simultaneously made and undermined by calling the bishops "Paltripolitans," where the Bishops are "paltry" or low and contemptible, in contrast to Marprelate's own title of "Metropolitan," a clergyman of high rank and vast learning. Marprelate continues with his self-proliferation, extending himself to include Martin The Great, a military/political leader, Martin the primate, gentleman, worthy gentleman, reverend, brother Martin, and Martin Mar-Priest. He is at once Martin Marprelate and all of these other Martins.

We can see the conflation of gender with particular categories of rank and role mentioned above as central to virtually everything Marprelate does: he has a surname which he passes on to his sons, and he endows himself with a list of titles that no woman, not even the queen, could have had in the sixteenth century. Through his name alone Marprelate creates a family hierarchy that replicates the corporate body of the polity. He positions himself as head of the early modern family and manufactures "sons" who are followers, both in blood and belief. This family/church hierarchy functions to criticize the monarchy in two important ways: first, Marprelate is the

legitimate father and head of a “ruling” family, or a family that governs the Church; second, he also constructs himself as the head of a church hierarchy.<sup>59</sup> In the first of the Marprelate tracts, the “Epistle,” Marprelate presents himself as “the Great” prolific father. Thus, the language Marprelate uses to speak about his “Martins” conflates the categories of sons, followers, and soldiers at the same time suggesting they are different, proliferating to make his threats more potent. In this way, Marprelate invests generative power in his politics in much the same way Queen Elizabeth, according to Montrose, “. . . invests her maternity in her political rather than in her natural body,” allowing her to generate, or give rise to, people who are both her own “progeny” and “subjects” and also those of the state and Church of England.<sup>60</sup> Marprelate also generates countless “progeny” or Martins: he threatens to “put a Martin in every diocese” (Epistle F1<sup>v</sup>). This statement can be read several ways: one possible reading is that Marprelate is able either to locate or to plant “Martins,” religio-political sympathizers, in dioceses all over England. Marprelate also refers here to his tracts as entities that are “martins,” extensions of both his voice and his “body.”

There is a long history of the book being conceptualized as a body in the early modern era, but more to the point for this chapter is the notion that the book, like the tongue, makes an argument at a distance. Marprelate’s tracts were very popular,<sup>61</sup> read

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<sup>59</sup> See Jeffrey Masten, *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) esp. chapter three for a discussion of the ways that the discourse of authorship is inseparable from the discourse of paternity and political authority.

<sup>60</sup> Montrose 310.

<sup>61</sup> See Kristin Poole, “Fallstaff, Marprelate . . .” 100-101, and Christopher Hill,

by people who might not normally read political or religious treatises, or be sympathetic to the forward Presbyterian religious platform.<sup>62</sup> In this way, Marprelate's books and the arguments they contain do the work of the proselytizer, insinuating themselves into peoples homes, thoughts, and opinions. Like Marprelate himself, the tracts are without the fallibilities of the natural body; though they might be burned just as heretics were also burned, books and tracts could not be killed. As Walter Ong argues, books can only inadequately be argued with, because the text is unchanging: "the author might be challenged if only he or she could be reached, but the author cannot be reached in any book. There is no way directly to refute a text. After absolutely total and devastating refutation, the tract says exactly the same thing as before."<sup>63</sup>

Let us return now to the reading that figures Marprelate's "Martins" as religious sympathizers. In this reading, Marprelate represents himself as producing his many Martins at first with an ephemeral wife, and then with no wife at all, suggesting that he is capable of generating progeny at will and through his will. Two of these Martins, his sons, who are at the same time also his subjects and soldiers, "write" two of the Tracts. Thus Marprelate creates and undoes his children in much the same way

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*Collected Essays of Christopher Hill, Volume One: Writing and Revolution in Seventeenth Century England* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1985) 76 who suggest that Marprelate's inversions of hierarchies were one of the reasons his tracts were so popular.

<sup>62</sup> As Hill has shown, Marprelate "deliberately brought the Puritan cause into the market place" (77).

<sup>63</sup> Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: the technologizing of the word* (New York: Methuen, 1982) 79.

Elizabeth was said to “adopt” children when it suited her political goals: “Instead of marrying and producing children, she did so verbally, declaring (when it suited her) that either Mary Stuart or Catherine Grey was her child. Depending on the occasion, Elizabeth might adopt all her subjects or only the rival claimants as her children.”<sup>64</sup>

Marprelate’s children, like Elizabeth’s, are ideological beings but nonetheless real and dangerous. Marprelate’s Martins threaten to take over the realm peopled by Queen Elizabeth’s “subjects,” subjects she has framed in rhetorical terms as her children because she is “Mother” of all England.<sup>65</sup> In this way, Elizabeth, not unlike the Virgin Mary, can “give birth,” or give rise to progeny without compromising her status as the virgin queen. Her progeny are both subjects of the state and devotees of the Church of England.

In all of the previously described instances, Marprelate consistently engages in rhetoric that highlights how unseemly language and an unseemly (constructed) body can be seen to “mar” all he critiques because it mirrors those he criticizes. Marprelate threatens to wage battle when he says to the bishops, “I wil place a yong Martin in euerie diocesse, which may take notice of your practizes. . . I will place a Martin in euerie parish. In part of Suffolk and Essex, I thinke I were best to have 2. in a parishe. I hope in time they shal be as worthie Martins as their father is, euery one of them able to mar a prelate” (Epistle F1<sup>v</sup>). Here Marprelate speaks of both a figurative marring, in which the bishops are exposed as being as foul as their “practizes,” and a literal

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<sup>64</sup> Marie Axton, *The Queen’s Two bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977) 39.

<sup>65</sup> Montrose 310.

marring in which the bishops are physically damaged and removed from their positions. His language is at once jocular and belligerent. Behind his jesting tone is the threat of war. If the Bishops will not step down from their seats as “extra members” on the body of Christ, then Marprelate and his Martins will cut them out in battle.

Marprelate continues this double talk about war in “Hay any worke for Cooper,” when he says, “. . . the day that you hange Martin, assure your selues, there wil 20. Martins spring in my place” (“Hay any worke. . .” D3<sup>v</sup>). Here, however, these Martins seem not only to be somewhat interchangeable as sons, religious followers, or soldiers, but they can be said to replace Marprelate himself. His progeny become, then, not only practitioners of his more perfect religion, but they also carry on his office without missing a beat should anything happen to him. Martin, like the body politic, never dies.

In his last tract, the “Protestatyon,” Marprelate closes the tract as the leader of a mass movement that will take over the church. It is at this point that he talks of “Martinism” and the Martins who are members or practitioners of this new religion: “. . . I still heartely reioyce to think that all the honestest, and best affected subjects her Maiestie hath, will one day become Martinists” (“Protestatyon” 25). In this passage, Marprelate provides a social structure that competes directly with the social structure of which Elizabeth is leader. Her subjects will become his subjects, converted either through choice, by a conversion of belief, or through war and conquest.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> See Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press) 7-8 who argues that executions became sites of evangelization.

### **Marprelate's Conclusion: Only Christ Shall Rule**

Marprelate's alternative nation, comprised wholly of Martins, and Martinists, is a homogeneous nation unified in purpose. In Marprelate's construction of the reformed church, individuals are truly subsumed into one body. Rather than the deformed and deforming body politic he has so vividly "mirrored" with its disjointed voices, overwhelming appetites, and fascination with material shows, Marprelate's version of the nation is one formed of people with different sensible bodies but joined into one intelligible body with a unified purpose and with a unified voice.

Marprelate's rhetoric of nation-building by which he can manufacture for himself a body politic reveals Elizabeth's body politic—and by extension church—as a gross human construction in violation of a perfect divine order. His parodic body, then, goes farther than his textual rhetoric and suggests not only that monarchs are not, and cannot be, divinely ordained, but that in order for Christ's body and thus the visible body of the church to be restored to its former perfection, the bishops must be thrust out of the church, and the Queen necessarily along with them. Moreover, because Marprelate himself was formed by the abuses of the bishops and has thus been fashioned to mirror their abuses, wage war against them, and ultimately to excise them from the visible body of the Church and by extension the sacred body of Christ, once his work is done, he ceases to exist. He leaves Christ alone to rule not just the church but the state as well.

### Chapter 3

#### **Stretching the Veins of Their Brains and the Lists of Their Modesty: Chastity, Conscience, and New “Social Practices” in Women’s Defenses of Women and Milton’s *Comus***

In the *School of Abuse*, Stephen Gosson warns women against corporeal and, thus, spiritual penetration and corruption. Gosson specifically admonishes London Ladies to stay “within”: “close up your eyes, stopp your eares, tye up your tonge, when they speake, answeare not, when they hallowe” for “If you do but listen to the voyce of the Foulter, or ioyne lookes with an amourous Gazer, you have already made your selues assaultable, and yeilded your Cities to be Sacked.”<sup>1</sup> While *The School of Abuse* and Gosson’s other tracts were only peripherally a part of the “debate about women,” he, nevertheless, expresses a commonplace idea of the debate: a woman shut up in the house of either her husband or her father was a good woman. Because the flesh was the means by which the soul was defiled, a woman who “opened” her ears, eyes, and mouth to a single seducer or a company of others, was believed to invite defilement.<sup>2</sup>

In 1589 and then again in 1615 two more men joined the “debate about women” and were answered by women. The first text is now lost, the writer known to us through Jane Anger’s tract as either the “late Venerian” or “the late surfeiting

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Gosson, *The School of Abuse, containing a Pleasant Invective against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters, &c.* (1841; New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1970) 59.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of ‘lingual dilation’ see Patricia Parker, “Dilation and Inflation: All’s Well That Ends Well, Troilus and Cressida, and Shakespearean Increase,” *Shakespeare from the margins: Language, Culture, Context* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996) 214.

lover.” The second tract, entitled *An Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Women*, was written by Joseph Swetnam, who, like Gosson, (and likely also the late surfeiting lover) maligns women as overly vain, covetous, promiscuous, talkative, conniving and lacking in intellectual ability.

What differs about the historical circumstances within which the Surfeiter’s and Swetnam’s tracts were published is not their arguments—they are standard entries in the debate about women—but that several women “talked back” publicly, countering the men’s charges in pamphlets of their own. Jane Anger responded to the “Late Venerian” with *Her Protection for Women* (1589), a text that immediately states its intention to shield women from the attacks of “surfeiting” men. Nearly thirty years later, several women respond to Swetnam’s *Arraignment of Idle, Lewd, Froward and Inconstant Women* (1615). Rachel Speght, with her *Mouzell for Melastomas* (1617), was the first to reply to Swetnam and the only woman to use her own name. A short time later, with the conceit to “finish” what Speght had started, Esther Sowernam’s *Esther Hath Hang’d Haman* (1617), and Constantia Munda’s *The Worming of a Mad Dogge* (1617), appear, each echoing a number of Speght’s arguments and also extending their critiques of Swetnam and others like him.<sup>3</sup> The spicy exchange

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<sup>3</sup> I do not include in this study an analysis of Rachel Speght’s *Movzell for Melastomvs* the first tract to be written against Joseph Swetnam, because she uses her own name. I am more interested in the ways that pseudonyms function to complicate the status of the author—physically and intellectually. Furthermore, Speght’s pamphlet seems as much concerned with her self-presentation as chaste and more or less obedient, as it does with refuting the arguments of Swetnam within the framework of a Puritan religious epistemology. Speght seems all too aware, through her careful self-construction and her appeals to solidarity among women across class lines, that speaking in her own voice on behalf of women puts her at risk of precisely the sort of accusations of incontinence and promiscuity that Swetnam hurls at all women in general—a danger that the other pamphlet writers are not subject to, at least personally,

between Swetnam and the women writers was popular—Swetnam’s pamphlet went through ten editions by 1634.<sup>4</sup> The debate even extended to the stage in an anonymous drama called *Swetnam the Woman Hater*, which depicts the arraignment of Swetnam by a group of angry women.

In spite of containing what many critics regard as statements that either would not or could not be written by early modern men, many critical studies of the pamphlets have focused on the genders of the writers, taking sides on the question of whether Jane Anger, Esther Sowernam, and Constantia Munda were women or men.<sup>5</sup>

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because of their use of pseudonyms. See Theodora A. Jankowski, *Women in Power in Early Modern Drama* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1992) 30-36, who surveys the bleak situation for unmarried women: “They essentially had no life if they did not marry” (34). Jankowski’s portrayal of the plight of unmarried women helps to elucidate both the radical and conservative aspects of Speght’s pamphlet. See Lisa J. Schnell, “Muzzling the Competition: Rachel Speght and the Economics of Print,” *Debating Gender in Early Modern England, 1500 – 1700*, eds. Christina Malcolmson and Mihoko Suzuki (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) 57-78, for a discussion of the economics of the pamphlet debate and the ways that Speght’s ingenuousness and class status engendered somewhat derisive responses from the pamphlet writers who follow her. Schnell theorizes that the dismissive reception Speght’s pamphlet garnered for her “ignorance” was because Speght was not aware of the economics of the debate as entertainment, and because upper class women refused to put their gender status over their higher class status in order to align themselves with socially inferior Speght (66-8). See Phillippy, esp. 144-5, for a detailed discussion of Speght’s construction of Eve as the progenitor not only of death, but also of life and, thus, the possibility of salvation.

<sup>4</sup> Barbara Lewalski 138 in “Female Text, Male Reader Response: Contemporary Marginalia in Rachel Speght’s *A Mouzell for Melastomus*.” *Representing Women in Renaissance England*, eds. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997) 136-162.

<sup>5</sup> For arguments that question the assignment of female gender to the tracts of Anger, Sowernam, Munda and later pamphlets that were written under pseudonyms, see Barbara Kiefer Lewalski in *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993), who seems unsure about Anger’s gender status in particular (156, 327n21); Diane Purkiss, “Material Girls: The Seventeenth-Century

Critics question whether or not female pseudonyms correlate to female-gendered authors.<sup>6</sup> While there is evidence of both a Jane and Joan Anger in or near London in

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Woman Debate,” *Women, Texts and Histories 1575-1760*, eds. Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss (London: Routledge, 1992) 69-101, questions the gender of the pamphlet writers, arguing instead for a reading strategy that takes into account the function of the pseudonym in the reading of a particular text. Her objective is not to trace the pseudonym to an “originary author” so much as to investigate the ways that women are inscribed in both Swetnam’s pamphlet and the responses to his pamphlet that bear women’s names.

See Danielle Clarke, *The Politics of Early Modern Women’s Writing* (Essex, England: Longman, 2001), and Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540-1620*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), for discussions of the pamphlets within the historically male-dominated “debate about women.” Both critics argue that the pamphlets may be motivated by material gain or the desire to be recognized for rhetorical prowess. Thus, both suggest that the pamphlets were authored by men who sought to inject “something new” into the debate.

<sup>6</sup> The following writers appear in the anthology *Debating Gender in Early Modern England, 1500 – 1700*, eds. Christina Malcolmson and Mihoko Suzuki (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), and all either question or negate the possibility that the pseudonymous pamphlets bearing women’s signatures were written by women: Naomi J. Miller, “‘Hens should be served first’: Prioritizing Maternal Production in the Early Modern Pamphlet Debate 161-184; Lisa Schnell, “Muzzling the Competition: Rachel Speght and the Economics of Print,” 57-78; Mihoko Suzuki, “Elizabeth, Gender, and the Political Imaginary of Seventeenth-Century England,” 231-253; Rachel Trubowitz, “Cross-Dressed Women and Natural Mothers: ‘Boundary Panic’ in *Hic Mulier*,” 185-207; and Sandra Clark, “The Broadside Ballad and the Woman’s Voice,” 103-120.

Susan Gushee O’Mally, “‘Weele have a Wench shall be our Poet’: Samuel Rowlands’ Gossip Pamphlets,” 121-139; Patricia Phillippy, “The Mat(t)er of Death: The Defense of Eve and the Female *Ars Moriendi*,” 141-160; and Mihoko Suzuki in “Elizabeth, Gender, and Political Imagery. . .” all assert that defenses of women, regardless of the genders of their authors, nevertheless furthered the position of women. In the “Introduction” to the edited volume dedicated to the study of early modern debates about gender, *Debating Gender in Early Modern England, 1500-1700*, the editors refuse to adopt the binary of male / female in a discussion of authorship and influence. They prefer, instead, to situate the pamphlets and other related texts within a larger complex of relations that acknowledges the influences of male authored texts, and ideological and class differences among women.

1589, there is no definitive evidence linking either of these women to *Her Protection*.<sup>7</sup>

There is also, however, no definitive evidence precluding female authorship of these pamphlets. As a result, I take these writers at their word and will refer to them by the women's names they append to their tracts.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See also Simon Shepherd, ed., *The Women's Sharp Revenge: Five Women's Pamphlets from the Renaissance* (London: Fourth Estate, 1985), who specifically addresses the notion that Jane Anger may not be a pseudonym, arguing that "it is not one of the Christian names commonly associated with aggressive female types. . . . A pseudonym would. . . . be more elaborate and, at this period, perhaps Italian or Latin-sounding" (30), as were the pseudonyms women wrote under later and about which Shepard is less certain. He cites further evidence that there were a "handful of women" near London who were named Joan or Jane Anger and who were an appropriate age to have written *Her Protection for Women*. See also Betty Travitsky's influential anthology, *The Paradise of Women: Writings By English Women of the Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), which unquestioningly assigns female authorship to the pamphlets.

For three articles that focus exclusively on Jane Anger and assume female authorship, see Lynne A. Magnusson, "Jane Anger *Her Protection*, *Boke His Surfeit*, and the *French Academie*," *Notes and Queries* (September 1989): 311-314. Magnusson looks at instances in which Jane Anger has borrowed, though with a difference, from the Surfeiter's text (and he, it appears, may have borrowed heavily from the *French Academie*, another "male" text). See also Magnusson in "'His Pen With My Hande': Jane Anger's Revisionary Rhetoric," *English Studies in Canada* 17.3 (September, 1991): 269-81, and "Nicholas Breton reads Jane Anger," *Renaissance Studies* 7.3 (1993): 291-300, in which she argues that Nicholas Breton may have borrowed heavily from Anger when he wrote *The Praise of Vertuous Ladies*. But, as Magnusson points out, Breton inverts Anger's already inverted text in order to advocate a more conservative position for women where "[he] assimilates Anger's 'anger' and her alternative version of womanhood into an acceptable, thoroughly familiar and unthreatening 'Praise of vertuous Ladies.'" It is tempting to suggest that if Jane Anger were a man, his text would look a good deal more like Breton's text than Anger's text.

<sup>8</sup> Critics who refuse to assign female-authorship to the pamphlets have offered alternative ways of referencing authorship: Melinda J. Gough, "Women's Popular Culture? Teaching the Swetnam Controversy," *Debating Gender in Early Modern England, 1500 – 1700*, eds. Christina Malcolmson and Mihoko Suzuki (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) offers the term "female voiced" (90), over Elizabeth Harvey's notion that the pamphlets were men "ventriloquizing" women's voices. Gough further explores how the "anonymous play, refusing to announce its author's

Critics who support female authorship of the pamphlets tend to see them as proto-feminist challenges to prevailing ideologies that link female chastity with female silence. Several critics focus on the ways that the pamphlet writers employ the Genesis story in order to authorize a new subject position for women.<sup>9</sup> I extend these arguments by situating the pamphlets within the context of early modern conventions of “holy speech.” In this way, I show that each of these women’s “holy” defenses relocates chastity from the physical body to the conscience such that a woman’s words reveal her purity. Consequently, the women writers’ words/texts function as “protection” for themselves and other women, and as powerful purgative medicine intended to purify the words and bodies of their male attackers.

The three pamphlets attended to in this chapter also offer a perspective from which to read John Milton’s *A Masque* and specifically The Lady’s interaction and verbal engagement with Comus. *A Masque* represents not only women’s social

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gender, dramatizes in particularly vivid form how focus on women’s writing per se may prove a limited strategy for assessing a given text’s contribution to early modern women’s cultural agency” (90).

<sup>9</sup> For arguments that either explicitly argue for women as authors of the three pamphlets or assume female authorship of the pamphlets, see Elaine V. Beilin, *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987); Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara McManus, *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540-1640* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Barbara McManus, “Eve’s Dowry: Genesis and the Pamphlet Controversy about Women,” *Women, Writing, and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor and Stuart Britain*, eds. Mary E. Burke, Jane Donawerth, Linda L. Dove, and Karen Nelson (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000) 193-206; and Katherine Romack “Monstrous Births and the Body Politic: Women’s Political Writing and the Strange and Wonderful Travails of Mistris Parliament and Mrs. Rump,” *Debating Gender in Early Modern England, 1500 – 1700*, eds. Christina Malcolmson and Mihoko Suzuki (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) 209-230, whose investigation of why women’s voices fell silent in the *querelle des femmes* in the 1640s and 1650s assumes female authorship of the earlier pamphlets.

engagement with men, but women's efforts to protect the integrity of their reputations and bodies by negotiating the boundaries of acceptable speech in a culture where words, both spoken and written, were seen to have the potential to penetrate the body, and, thus, to change the soul. Moreover, *The Lady's* negotiation of the difficult physical and spiritual situation in which she finds herself helps to clarify ideas that are central to the pamphlet debate: the women pamphlet writers and *The Lady* relocate chastity in the conscience, the realm of the spiritual body. This move represents chastity, like personal thoughts, as one's own private property, available to oneself and God only. Moreover, with this move, the pamphlet writers create an anatomy not simply of physical and spiritual bodies, but also of the relationship between man and woman, a relationship predicated on physical difference.

I begin this chapter with a brief review of the socio-cultural context in which gender was seen to determine socially allowable speech, both written and verbal, so that women's silence was seen as a cultural ideal. A study of the consequences some women faced as a result of speaking publicly helps us to see how a speaking woman's body was regarded as a shameless body that threatened the status quo. Threats of beating, bridling, dunking, and slander were thus several cultural expressions of social revulsion and disgust used to put women back in their place in the extant body politic.

By examining the ways that the women pamphlet writers and *The Lady* employ "holy speech" in response to threats to their chastity, and in many cases their very lives, I show how they redefine speech not as "intercourse" or a precursor to sexual activity, but as "discourse" or reasoned debate motivated by God. The women writers accomplish this transformation through a revision of Genesis. Each of them

reviews the circumstances of Eve's creation, disproving the arguments of their male attackers by reminding us that, like Adam, Eve was also created in the image of God as the Word.

As an analysis of the pamphlets and *Comus* within the context of humoral physiology and psychology reveals, holy speech can only spring from an unsullied body and mind. Thus, I argue that the women writers represent themselves, and Milton represents The Lady, as being further purified by the "trials" erected by their attackers. Moreover, women pamphlet writers' defenses of themselves and other women simultaneously function medicinally to cleanse or purge their individual attackers—and, by extension, the corporate body of the polity—of the venomous, defiling rhetoric some men used to slander and ruin woman's chastity.

### **Talking Promiscuously: the Relationship Between an Open Mouth and an Open Body**

The women pamphlet writers and The Lady argue against the equation of silence and chastity, both with their speech acts and the contents of their defenses. Understanding the socio-cultural history of early modern beliefs about the interconnectivity of the movements of the tongue, gender identity, and the expression of desire—licentious or pious—helps to make real the risks women took in talking back, talking "promiscuously." Several ideas comprised the foundation of secular and religious beliefs and practices that functioned to associate a woman's silence with her chastity: words were regarded as special entities that had the power to move between the realms of sensible and intelligible, to make and unmake worlds, and, on a much smaller level, to penetrate the already porous and vulnerable humoral body and

potentially to change the soul. As a result, women were supposed to protect themselves by closing their mouths and ears. Taken together with common beliefs that men were humorally hotter than women, and that activities of all sorts, particularly verbal activity, was thought to increase a woman's heat, silence was believed to be not only a way to keep women "cool" but also to ensure that they were chaste.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, because the category of "woman" was constructed and defined against the category of "man," "woman" had to be a silent category in order for men to have control over its boundaries and definition. We can see an example of this in the ways that a "bad" woman was a woman who talked, who nagged, who beat her husband. This bad woman who asserted herself, threatened masculinity by moving into territory and behaviors socially regarded as male. The good, silent woman, subject as she was to definition by men, was nevertheless as vulnerable as the bad woman to being socially labeled whore as easily as virgin.

The expectation that a good woman demonstrate her goodness through mildness and a still tongue is central to and explicit in Joseph Swetnam's *Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Women*. Simply for a woman to be angry at Swetnam's debasement of women and to say so, too, was regarded as evidence of objectionable behavior or a lack of chastity. Swetnam anticipates a great number of

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<sup>10</sup> See Karen Newman, "Body Politics," *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) 3-12, esp. 9-10, for a discussion of the ways that advice books almost uniformly advised women to control their glances, the inclination of their heads, their tongues in speaking or some other noise, the flare of their nostrils, their hands, feet and the way they held their shoulders should in no way indicate contrariness, lest they provoke a man, most likely a husband or father, to beat them for their transgression. See also Patricia Parker, "Dilation and Inflation" 214 and *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (New York: Methuen, 1987) esp. chapter two.

women's objections when he remarks "I know I shall bee bitten by many, because I touch many," setting up a cause and consequence argument wherein any objection signals a fault:

what soever you thinke privately, I wish you to conceal it with silence, lest in starting up to find fault, you prove your selves guilty of these monstrous accusations, which are here following against some women. . . for this book toucheth no sort of women, but she as when they heare it, will goe about to reprove it . . . (A2<sup>v</sup>).

Here, to speak against being "touched" is seen as evidence of having been physically touched or known sexually, where touching, tasting, eating, and no doubt biting also, served euphemistically for the act of copulation. As Swetnam describes it, a woman's silence conceals, and speech confirms, her engagement in activities that warrant "monstrous accusations." He explicitly links chastity and silence, even though, as Sowernam points out, the relationship he establishes doesn't hold true, because even a silent woman can be labeled unchaste.

The early modern association between female chastity and verbal silence is well documented by contemporary critics.<sup>11</sup> In order to see how "silence" applied equally to

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<sup>11</sup> See Beilin, *Redeeming Eve*, who argues that women writers, aware of men's views of them as unchaste because they take up the pen, counter with writings that praise "chastity, piety, humility, constancy and obedience" (xv), a traditional, religious view of women. Margaret W. Ferguson, "A Room Not Their Own: Renaissance Women as Readers and Writers," *The Comparative Perspective on Literature*, eds. Clayton Koelb and Susan Noakes (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1988) 93-116, explores the intersection of various Renaissance ideologies that prohibited feminine speech and agency in multiple ways. She notes that "the issue of chastity was intricately bound up with the problem posed by the (ideological) logic that made silence an equivalent of bodily purity" (97).

spoken and written arguments, we must first understand the relationship between the early modern gendered physical body and the cosmology. Teasing out the connections between spoken and written words, and God's Word(s) is essential to our understanding of prohibitions against women's speeches, writing, and social mobility.

We must begin our exploration of the relationship between spoken and written speeches by looking at early modern notions of the physical body that establish a correlation between increased activity in one part of the body and that of another. A woman's brain, throat, and fingers employed with a pen and argument, for example, were associated with, and believed to lead to, increased humoral heat and, therefore, increased sexual activity.<sup>12</sup> It is not difficult, once we understand the relationship

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For an analysis for early modern ideologies about the body, see Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1995). Fletcher is particularly interested in providing a complex context in which to understand gender, sex, and the political intersection these socio-cultural forces posed for Renaissance persons.

See Travitsky, *The Paradise of Women*, who argues that Anger and the other women pamphlet controversy writers are fighting against the norms of their culture, protesting against "the writing and behavior of particular men" (12), but that their attacks are largely conventional. For a similar argument, see Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), who argues that women were "constrained by norms of acceptable feminine behavior" and used particular genres, not to challenge those norms, per se, but to authorize their own speech. Wall acknowledges that "female bodily and spiritual integrity" (280) were linked by chastity. To upset or challenge this link was to challenge the Renaissance cosmic and social order, and demonstrated a woman's refusal to accept that order. She does not explain, however, why and how this challenge to the cosmic and social order was inscribed in the body, as I argue it is.

<sup>12</sup> One of the places we see anxieties about women turning into men in a particularly acute form is in responses to the cross-dressing that some women engaged in. For a discussion of women's cross-dressing at the theaters and in the cities, see Jean Howard, "Crossdressing, The Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39.4 (Winter 1988): 418-440, esp. 420, in which she argues that cross-dressing was one site that registered the anxiety about women's sexuality and power: women who dressed in men's clothes, who "spoke" as men, were viewed

between heat and speech, to see why a woman's increased speech was thought to have a negative impact on her status as chaste.<sup>13</sup> The logic was simple: a closed mouth was seen as akin to an inviolate body. Sexual and verbal activity, promiscuous talking and promiscuous behavior were also linked philosophically in the way that words could be metaphorized as swords or as phalluses, and, like swords and phalluses, they had the power to penetrate the body.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, Wayne Rebhorn in his study of the discourses of early modern rhetoric, cites examples of words as liquid that can fill up the body, thus transforming it through a process that looks very much like a masculine sex act. The image of liquid filling the body is all the more striking when the body is a

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as whores. For a lengthier discussion by Howard of this same subject, see *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 1994). See also Phyllis Rackin, "Foreign Country: The Place of Women and Sexuality in Shakespeare's Historical World," *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property, and Culture in Early Modern England*, eds. Richard Burt and John Michael Archer (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994) 68-95, for a discussion of the anxieties about the relationship between speech and chastity as it played itself out in the streets and on stage through women's cross dressing (68-69, 72-75).

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender From the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990) 36. Gail Kern Paster, in *The Body Embarrassed*, objects to genital difference as anatomized by Galen as the most important factor in determining gender. She argues that we must add to genital difference the experience of the body as it was lived through humoralism and had pervasive implications for the enculturation process: "In enculturation the hierarchical differences effaced by Laqueur's one-sex, one-flesh paradigm become the key bodily signifiers of social and subjective experience, centrally organized by the continuously formative processes of engenderment" (17). See also Rackin, "Foreign Country. . ." who seeks to move the discussion of early modern notions of gender and sex away from a discussion of the physical body, repositioning it within early modern discourses of theology and history.

<sup>14</sup> See also Stephen Greenblatt, "Fiction and Friction," *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, eds. Morton Sosna, David E. Wellbery, Arnold Davidson, Ann Swidler, and Ian Watt (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986) 30-52.

humoral one that needs to maintain a level of balance, and therefore temperance, that is undone when the body is suddenly filled with words that carry with them humoral valences. As Gail Paster has documented, the “solubility” of the early modern humoral body meant that people were aware of being continuously and unrelenting bombarded by invisible and visible forces, such as words.<sup>15</sup>

What this meant for both men and women, in the most basic sense, is that increased interaction verbally was seen as evidence of a level of increased sexual activity, past or potential. We can see in Constantia Munda’s pamphlet an example of the tongue as analogous to pen and sword insofar as she depicts speech, writing, and male desire as having potentially the same consequences—they wound innocent women. Munda distinguishes between kinds of speech, however, rather than accepting the dichotomous relationship established by cultural norms. The tongue, pen, and male genitals are not inherently dangerous within her model, only when they wound “without partiality”:

the tongue being a very little member should neuer goe out of that same iuory gate, in which, (not without a great mysterie) diuine wisdom and nature together hath enclosed, it . . . and let not tongue and pen runne vp and downe like a weaponed madde-man, to strike and wound any without partiality, every

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<sup>15</sup> Paster 13. See also Carla Mazzio, “Sins of the Tongue,” *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, eds. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997) 59. Mazzio also documents the linkage between words and the penetrating qualities of tongue, phallus, or sword, and, thus, the relationship believed to be present between verbal “narration” and sexual activity. See also Peter Stallybrass, “Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed,” *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Margaret Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) 123-142, who outlines the explicit ways that a “closed mouth” is the signifier for a chaste woman properly confined at home.

one without exception, to make such an universall massacre for so I may terme it, seeing words make worse wounds then swords. . .<sup>16</sup>

The tongue is dangerous, then, when its owner lacks reason and restraint, stabbing at anyone. In her depiction, the “madde man” is more beast than man, and in this way the division between man and animal, characterized as it is by the presence or absence of reason, becomes blurred. Her characterization makes explicit how an elision of man and beast is what leads to social unruliness.

It is not just “bad words” that penetrate the hearer—all words have this capability, which is why a person can be “converted” by listening to a moving preacher or reading a stirring religious text. In Milton’s *A Masque*, a conversation between The Lady’s two brothers offers us a model of the power of both good and bad words to penetrate the body and thus the soul of the hearer. Their conversation arises because the two brothers, one “Elder” and one “Younger,” have become separated from their sister, and worry that their sister, now unprotected by male relatives, will be vulnerable to a male attacker.<sup>17</sup>

The brothers take initially opposed positions, Younger Brother offering the overly dramatic picture of their sister as a victim to a “savage hunger” or a “savage heat,” that will lead The Lady to her own destruction. In Younger Brother’s paradigm,

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<sup>16</sup> Constantia Munda, *The Worming of a mad Dogge: or, Asoppe for Cerberuus the Laylor of Hell* (London: Lawrence Hayes, 1617) B3<sup>v</sup>-B4<sup>r</sup>. All subsequent references to Munda are from this edition and will be noted parenthetically.

<sup>17</sup> See Ross Leasure, “Milton’s Queer Choice: Comus at Castlehaven,” *Milton Quarterly* 36.2 (May 2002): 63-86, for an investigation of ways that the Egerton boys, and, thus, the Lady’s two brothers, may also be in danger, as Comus seems to be sexually interested in men as well as women.

chastity is equal to and the same as virginity. But Elder Brother's notion that The Lady's "hidden strength," or chastity as virginity, "clads her in compleat steal" is as problematic as Younger Brother's simple formula; nevertheless, we see in Elder Brother's arguments something akin to the arguments articulated by the women pamphlet writers and The Lady—a pure heart and conscience constitute a chaste woman.<sup>18</sup>

Elder Brother explains, in vivid, almost salacious, detail, that a dark soul and foul thoughts demonstrate the degraded state of a person's soul and have the potential to degrade others: "when lust / By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk, / But most by leud and lavish act of sin, / Lets in defilement to the inward parts, / The soul grows clotted by contagion, / Imbodies and imbrutes, till she quite loose / The divine property of her first being " (465-69).

A careful definition of "loose," the verb that Elder Brother uses to refer to the moment when the soul becomes disconnected from the divinity that first engendered it, similarly reveals differing levels of agency involved in the "loosing" of that divinity. Milton has put several definitions of "loose" in play here. Its most conventional meaning is clear: it means to admit, allow, or give entrance to,<sup>19</sup> where the sinner admits sin by engaging in sins, such as foul talk, lewd and lavish acts. To "loose" can also mean "to let go of" in the sense of losing one's hold, a less knowledgeable and

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<sup>18</sup> John Milton, "Comus," *The Riverside Milton*, ed. Roy Flannagan (New York: Houghton Mifflin Compnay, 1998) 109-171, line 468. All subsequent references to *Comus* are from this edition and will be noted parenthetically.

<sup>19</sup> "Loose" v 1.1 & 11, *OED* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

intentional “loosing.”<sup>20</sup> Here, Milton’s use of “loose” metonymically, syntactically, and definitionally suggests the word “lose,” insofar as to “loose” one’s divinity can simply mean to “lose” it. Because the sense of “losing” is ever present in Elder Brother’s choice of “loose,” meanings associated with “lose” are evoked alongside meanings more directly associated with “loose.” To lose, in its most basic sense, is to be without, where the integrity of the whole is “lost,” meaning “destroyed, ruined,” laid waste. Here, the soul is brought to destruction, especially spiritually—it is “damned”—suggesting a sense of inevitability if the fall is self-motivated, and a sense of despair and tragedy if it is not, if one “is brought to destruction” or “laid waste” by the polluting lewd glances, words, and actions of another.<sup>21</sup> It is the case with each of these definitions that the soul is complicit in her own degradation, however it occurs.

In this passage, Elder Brother not only outlines the process by which lust first gains entry into a person’s soul, but also provides us with a hierarchy of spiritual offenses. His hierarchy begins with the least offensive: “yielding” to fleshly desires and appetites. He proceeds to what is worse: engaging in uncontrolled or intemperate movements and glances, and ends with what is worst of all: taking part in “foul talk,” and most foul of all, vulgar, sinful actions. A more passive transgression is less egregious than an actively sought one, but only by the smallest degree. Because the “soul” Elder Brother speaks of is gendered feminine, his description of the person who becomes through sin little better than a beast registers as female also. While it is not his intention to do so, Elder Brother reveals through his anatomization of the

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<sup>20</sup> “Loose” v 1.1b, *OED* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

<sup>21</sup> “Lose” v 1, 2a & 2c, *OED* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

transformative power of sin, an ideology of guilt not unlike Younger Brother's. In both cases, a woman who was forced to "yield" to a man's intemperate desire is nevertheless regarded as guilty of the sin.

The two brothers' assumption of a woman's implication in her own undoing was not unusual. As we saw in the first chapter, Stephen Gosson argues that the woman who goes "abroad" and does "but listen to the voyse of the fouler, or joyne lookkes with an amorous gazer" has made herself "assaultable, and yeilded [her] cit[y] to be sacked" (F2<sup>v</sup>). Gosson's admonition that women ought not speak or even "join looks" with a man in order to avoid the male desire that threatens her purity, is echoed in similar injunctions for silence and obedience offered in the many early modern books of manners, mother's advice books, and conduct books written specifically for women.

While a lengthy analysis of the ways popular texts enjoined women to be seen and not heard is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is important to note that such texts were in wide circulation in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-centuries, and each represents the underlying belief with which we began this chapter: there was an explicit relationship between lingual and sexual activity. While the women pamphlet writers and Milton may not have read the specific texts I cite below, they may have read similar texts, and they were certainly aware of the arguments they contained.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of the ways that advice books almost uniformly advised women to keep silent and control their bodies—even movements we would consider involuntary—as well as their tongues, lest they bring harm upon themselves (in the form of a husband's beating for example), see Newman 9. See Jean E. Graham, "Virgin Ears: Silence, Deafness, and Chastity in Milton's Maske," *Milton Studies* 36 (1998): 1-17 for a reading of the Lady within the cultural and historical reality of the injunction that women be silent in order to be chaste. Graham specifically explores

*A Wife* (1614) by Thomas Overbury contains a lengthy poem that is, in a sense, a “How-to-Marry-A-Rich-Widow” guide. One doesn’t have to read far before it is clear that Overbury regards women as a largely undifferentiated category, where “Each woman is a *brief* of Woman-kind, / And doth in little even as much containe” (B<sup>r</sup>). In other words, one woman is like all the rest.<sup>23</sup> We can see this elision of differences among women even more explicitly in a later section of Overbury’s text called “Characters,” in which he describes different types of men: the Flatterer, the Amorisist, A Noble Spirit, and so on.<sup>24</sup> The majority of these descriptions are so detailed that they

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ways that the Lady must deny her speech in order to speak. See also Nancy Miller, “Chastity, Rape, and Ideology in the Castlehaven Testimonies and Milton’s Ludlow Mask,” *Milton Studies* 57.5 (November 1996): 153-168, esp. 158, for a discussion of seventeenth-century attitudes toward sexual abuse. Miller shows that an early modern woman’s lack of consent was less important than the prevailing ideology that sexual violation of a woman sooner or later inevitably led to her moral degradation: “The victims’ desecrated bodies begin to reflect unclean souls, and the issue of whether they had indeed consented to the acts becomes unclear—indeed, immaterial.” For a survey of primary materials that document the silent, chaste, and obedient injunction, see Victoria Silver, “Thoughts on Misbecoming Plight: Allegory in *Comus*” *Critical Essays on John Milton*, ed. Christopher Kendrick (New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1995) 47-73, esp. 71-3.

<sup>23</sup> See Jankowski 34-36 for a discussion of the social threat posed by financially independent widows who chose not to remarry.

<sup>24</sup> For another example of an early modern encyclopedia of character types organized according to humors or “complexions,” see Nick Culpeper, *Galen’s Art of Physick*. (London, 1671), esp. 52-66. See also Barnabe Rych, *The Excellency of good women. The honour and estimation that belongeth unto them. The infallible markes whereby to know them*. Third ed. (London: Thomas Dawson, 1613) who also constructs women as binary. Like Overbury, however, Rych spends more time describing the foul, adulterous woman, than he does the good—both because it makes for more exciting reading, and because the bad woman is, again, more threatening. She is contained and controlled in the text if she is not in experience.

See Graham 7 for a survey of what it means to be a “good woman.” Graham reads the Lady within the context of pervasive notions of “goodness” for women, arguing that Milton constructs the Lady as having both the characteristics of a good

take more than a page to relate. There are, however, only three women characters: “A Good Wife,” “A Good Woman,” and “A Very Woman.”<sup>25</sup> The descriptions of a good woman and a good wife are quite short, and it is quickly apparent that a good woman should turn into the good wife. Thus, there are really only two kinds of woman: good ones and bad ones.<sup>26</sup> Of a good woman/wife Overbury remarks that “Dishonestie never comes nearer than her / eares, and then wonder stops / it out, and saves vertue the labor. . . her chiefest vertue is a good husband. / For shee is hee” (C5<sup>r</sup>). In this passage, the good woman neither speaks nor even hears what is impure. This is the case, no

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women—her “unattending ears”—but also listens to her attacker that she may judge “what is worthy of her hearing” (14). Graham’s interpretation supports my analysis of the women pamphlet writers’ as similarly challenging the prevailing paradigm that speech necessarily indicates a lack of chastity. See also N.H. Keeble, ed., *The Cultural Identity of Seventeenth-Century Woman: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 1994) for numerous examples of primary documents that contain sentiments similar to those found in Overbury and Rych.

<sup>25</sup> Overbury clearly means to say that this sort of woman is a bad woman, a changeable, opportunistic woman at the least. Perhaps he also means to suggest that she is extreme, insofar as “very” indicates that the noun it modifies is a most true or exact example: “Really or truly entitled to the name or designation; possessing the true character of the person or thing named; properly so called or designated” (I.1 *OED* 2<sup>nd</sup>. ed.) In this way, Overbury suggests that the changeable, painted, lewd woman was the more ubiquitous and thus familiar type of woman, while the “good woman” was regarded as a marked category, a rarity. Certainly the proliferation of treatises detailing how to find and recognize a good woman or a good wife suggest this—not surprising in a culture that saw wearing powder as a woman’s attempt to cover a blot on her soul. See Jankowski, esp. 36 for a discussion of the ways in which widows who maintained their own property were stereotyped as promiscuous.

<sup>26</sup> Henderson and McManus note that when men have been the subjects of “scrutiny or attack” they are treated as individuals while women are “generalized into Woman” (3). I am indebted to Marshall Grossman for making me aware of the example in *Paradise Lost* when Adam, frustrated by Eve’s disobedience, drops prelapsarian forms such as “Fair Consort” (4.610), “my fairest, my espous’d, my latest found, Heav’ns last best gift” (5.18-19), and “best image of myself and dearer half” (5.95) in favor of the reductive “noveltie” (10.891) and “fair defect of Nature” (10.891-2), and, in a final reduction, “crooked rib” (10.891).

doubt, because she stays “much within.” Here is the silent woman who does just what her husband wants. Here is an example of what Diane Purkiss calls a “rhetoric of citation,” where the qualities of a “good woman/wife” are repeated in stories and descriptions circulated by men and for men. This circulation of stories and images does not reflect the notion that the good woman is already ubiquitous in the culture, so much as argue that the enclosure of the “good wife” to the degree that she is indistinguishable from her “good husband” reflects the husband’s successful control over and possession of his wife. To be anything other than “shee is hee,” is to be a threat to the representation of “hee.” She is good, and this makes her husband “good” and no doubt also strong, because she is blank, unlike the “very woman” who is infinitely more threatening and more interesting, more particular, and, not surprisingly, described in language generally reserved for loose women, wantons, and whores. It is easy to see how a man’s ability to imagine the “performance” of a woman’s body, and his response to her alluring eyes could easily result in an accusation of lack of chastity. As Jean E. Graham notes in “Virgin Ears: Silence, Deafness, and Chastity in Milton’s *Maske*,” “a silent person is still an unreadable person” (14). Anger, Sowernam, Munda, and The Lady object to the intemperate male desire and the negative portrayal such men make of women they desire.

At this point, I would like to return to Elder Brother’s anatomy of how it is that souls are defiled. While Gosson’s and Overbury’s depictions of how women are defiled rely on silence to indicate chastity, Elder Brother’s description, as we saw above, reveals the contradictory double bind for women in the prevailing early modern paradigm that equated these two states. In spite of himself, perhaps, Elder Brother

creates a space in which a woman's attitude toward her defiler matters. In order to explore this aspect of Elder Brother's spiritual philosophy, I return again to Milton's choice of the word "loose" to describe what will happen to the divinity of the soul. In addition to the allusions to several word meanings previously discussed, "loose" may also allude to Matthew 16:19 as it appears in the *Geneva Bible*, providing us and the two brothers with a third possibility for their threatened sister and by extension all women in similar circumstances: the contents of one's soul, particularly one's conscience, ultimately determine one's chastity. Matthew 16:19 focuses on God as the arbiter of the content of one's spirit, not men: "whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The associated note is relevant here as well: "They are bound whose sins are retained; heaven is shut against them, because they do not receive Christ by faith: on the other hand, how happy are they to whom heaven is open, who embrace Christ and are delivered by him, and become fellow heirs with him!"<sup>27</sup> We can see previewed here in Elder Brother's words not just the position that he and Younger Brother ultimately take, but also the position the Lady takes in relation to Comus: those who choose the sort of dissolution Comus advocates choose an eternal death, where death is, at the very least, to be no longer human. And those who, like the Lady, resist temptation and all her baits, relying on faith—the connection of the spirit to Christ—prove their chastity with their actions and words in life and death.<sup>28</sup> It is

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<sup>27</sup> *Geneva Bible* Mt.16.19 n.o.

<sup>28</sup> Nancy Miller's analysis, in "Chastity, Rape, and Ideology in the Castlehaven Testimonies and Milton's Ludlow Mask," of *Comus* within the context of the textual documentation of the Castlehaven scandal and seventeenth-century notions of what constituted and who was responsible for rape, supports this reading. Her conclusion is

through discursive interaction with Comus that the Lady ultimately demonstrates her purity, not by maintaining the physical stainlessness of virginity. It is through this same process, the pamphlet writers argue, that all women demonstrate their “spiritual status.”

While the dominant paradigm condemns women as naturally inferior and given to sexual promiscuity, a depiction of women that validates the division of women into two types—good ones and bad ones—the women pamphlet writers published defenses of women, challenge the validity of this basic paradigm. In this way, their arguments create a space for a new set of social practices and stories which replace “shee is hee” or “she is bad” with the words of women themselves.

### **Wagging Tongues, Cucking and Dunking: Slander and Other Physical Punishments**

As we saw in the previous section, a woman’s transgressive “social practices” or speech acts necessarily challenged prevailing gender roles. Attending to how speech acts were addressed by punishing the body is one place we can see the ways early modern people linked female speech to a promiscuous, sexualized body. The disorderly woman’s body was punished in order to “shut her up.” Moreover, because of the cultural focus on the connection between a woman’s speech and sexuality, a women who spoke “too much,” or in an “unseemly” manner, might be labeled a whore

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that Milton is less interested in the social aspects of rape than what the content of the spirit reveals: “the social remains subordinate to the spiritual; human *interaction* provides . . . evidence of spiritual status” (159).

as easily as a scold.<sup>29</sup> As Lynda Boose has shown, “. . . any woman who verbally resisted or flouted authority publicly and stubbornly enough to challenge the underlying dictum of male rule,” was labeled a “disorderly” woman. What was considered a challenge to authority could be a defense of one’s private property—one’s own house wall, or one’s very body.<sup>30</sup> Just as a woman could be figuratively defiled if a man “talked abroad” about her, ruining her reputation as effectively as if he had actually raped her, a woman’s reputation could also be ruined, both literally and figuratively if she were labeled a scold.<sup>31</sup>

Women accused of transgressive speech risked being “muzzled,” with a “branks” or “bridle” that, not unlike a dog’s muzzle or a horse’s halter and bridle, fit over her head, covering most of the lower portion of her face, with a 1 to 3 inch metal

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<sup>29</sup> See Belsey 181 who argues that what was considered “too much “speech” was quite arbitrary as can be seen in the case of a woman who “railed” at a man for urinating against the wall of her house and was subsequently labeled and punished as a scold.

<sup>30</sup> Lynda Boose, “Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman’s Unruly Member,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42.2 (Summer 1991) 189.

<sup>31</sup> Belsey 181-2, Boose 189, Shepherd 11, and Valerie Wayne, “Refashioning the Shrew,” *Shakespeare Studies*, XVII (1985): 159-188, 161. Recent studies of defamation suits in both pre- and early-modern England have emphasized that both men and women were involved in regulating female sexuality through accusations that linked promiscuity and speech through the label of “scold” or “scandalizer.” See also L. R. Poos, “Sex, Lies, and the Church Courts of Pre-Reformation England,” *Journal of Inter-disciplinary History*, 25:4 (Spring, 1995): 585-607, who notes that both men and women were involved in defamation cases, as both accuser and accused. Women, however, were more often accused of sexual promiscuity in conjunction with another crime because they were assigned a “morally marginal” social status (598). See also M. Lindsay Kaplan, *The Culture of Slander in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997), who notes the relationship between reputation and perceived criminality: “Bad fame was considered evidence enough to suspect someone of a crime” (26). See Henderson and McManus 52 for a discussion of the ways that both the stereotype of the scold and accusations of shrewishness were communicated socially and also through conduct books as a way to regulate behavior.

piece, or “gag,” sticking into her mouth, immobilizing her tongue.<sup>32</sup> A woman could also be punished into silence by being placed in a “cucking stool” and then dunked repeatedly in water over her head.<sup>33</sup> Each of these punishments was meant to silence women and thereby to “cool” them. In this way, the punishments worked to return women to their proper “places,” both within their own bodies and within the hierarchical relation between men and women ordained by God and sanctioned by the monarchy and state.<sup>34</sup> Women’s speech threatened to upset this order as it indicated a

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<sup>32</sup> See Boose 189-90 who argues that the longest gags—some with raised bits of metal or even spikes—caused the wearer to gag repeatedly, or even to vomit. See Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1983) 121 for a discussion of how the tongue was seen as a female weapon and sexual instrument; thus, a woman’s excessive use of her tongue worked to increase her bodily heat. See also Laqueur who argues that because heat was the salient factor in determining that “[w]omen. . . [were] inverted, and hence less perfect, men”(26); thus, an increase in heat, whatever the cause, could cause the “female” sex organs to drop outside the body, rendering her male. See also Henderson and McManus 51 for a discussion of the pervasiveness of the “shrew” or “scold” stereotype. See Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (New York: Methuen, 1985) 180-181, who makes the connection between speech and chastity by looking at the way complaining speech was responded to with bodily punishments.

<sup>33</sup> According to the *OED* “to cuckold” means “to defecate” and in its noun form is used as a synonym for cuckold. The two terms, cucking and ducking, were later conflated, but the original use of cucking stool, as a stationary stool on a cart, sometimes also called a tumbrell, was more often used for upper class women than a ducking stool. For more information about the physical punishments meted out to early modern women of all classes and for myriad crimes, see E.J. Burford and Sandra Shulman, *Of Bridles and Burnings: The Punishment of Women* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992).

<sup>34</sup> See Jankowski 38-39 for a discussion of community punishments meted out to “unruly” woman, as well as the charivaris and skimmington ceremony meted out to men or a couple when the husband was regarded as not having exercised enough control over his wife. While it is clear that such “ceremonies” were carried out, there is little information about, or discussion of, the actual prevalence of bridling or the skimmington ceremonies—research into this area would be a fruitful avenue for further investigation.

real possibility, given the early modern understanding of the gendered body and its potential humoral mutability, that women could turn into men and, equally, men into women. At the very least, a woman would occupy the position that a man was to occupy, placing him below her in the hierarchy. We can see here two related ways that the two genders and the distinction between their associated social positions could become elided. Such an inversion of what was regarded as the natural configuration and order of things was cause for disgust.

Gosson and Marprelate deployed similar abominable inversions of order in their depictions of the English body politic. In Gosson's depiction, the Queen's unsullied body politic was in danger, just as her natural, virgin body was, of being defiled by a marriage to the Duke of Alençon. Their marriage would have placed a Catholic head on a Protestant body or left the Protestant body politic without a head. Marprelate offers a similarly abominable and "disgusting" image of the visible body of the church, and thus the sacred body of Christ, as utterly deformed by the presence of the Bishops and Queen as "extra members." In each case, a violation of an existing hierarchy leads to ambiguous social categories: the distinction between men and women, animals and people, monarchs and non-monarchs, Catholics and Protestants becomes less certain. The hybrid categories, or inversions that hierarchy violations beget would be disgusting to early modern people invested in maintaining the hierarchy. It is this disgust that motivates efforts to reinstate the "right" order of things. If a woman's speech can change the heat of her body to the degree that she can become hot like a man, then what, truly, is the difference between them? Where are men in the hierarchy and the body politic itself, if women move from their positions

below men? In this way, women's speech could be seen to threaten the proper configuration of the very cosmos. While bridling and dunking were physical and social ways to control female speech and sexuality, slander was also a powerful force in regulating women's behavior. The punishments, from bridling, to repeated dunking in a cucking stool, to slander, thus seem comprehensible when we understand just how serious the crime was thought to be.

As a focus on the politics of slander, in particular, can demonstrate, the women pamphlet writers argued that rather than revealing a woman's faults, a man's slanderous accusations against "innocent women" expose the degraded state of his character and was perpetrated for two main reasons: desire and revenge.<sup>35</sup> In both cases, slander addressed a man's lack of control over women, and thus the upsetting of gender/power categories, where men were supposed to be "naturally" situated above women.

In their descriptions of, and objections to, slander, the pamphlet writers articulate a classic double bind found in popular descriptions of sexual relations between men and women.<sup>36</sup> Simply, they articulate a social climate in which a woman's speech or silence was more important than the content of her words: if a woman was silent then she was thought to be giving men permission to assay her and

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<sup>35</sup> See also Kenneth Gross, *Shakespeare's Noise* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001) esp. chapter on *Measure for Measure*.

<sup>36</sup> Henderson and McManus note the "double standard" that the women pamphlet writers identify, arguing that in their arguments against the common stereotype of promiscuous, insatiable women, some of the pamphlet writers erect a counter-stereotype that figures women as fundamentally more perfect and pure than men. These characterizations of women as naturally better gained currency in later centuries 29-30.

was therefore guilty, and if she was not silent then she was regarded as already guilty because she was “opening her mouth.” Thus, according to the pamphlet writers, slander could ruin the reputation of innocent women at the whims of men.

Each pamphlet writer implicitly acknowledges the risks a woman-who-talked faced with regard to her reputation insofar as each argues that the problem is not women, but that women are not socially permitted to defend themselves and their virtues against men’s physical advances, or their slanders.<sup>37</sup> In this way, each woman writer makes the implicit argument that men’s slanders and lies are lust-driven “rhetorical inventions,” though the consequences of their importunate actions, speeches, and writings are real.<sup>38</sup> In *The Culture of Slander in Early Modern England*, M. Lindsay Kaplan’s analysis of the politics and power dynamics articulated through the accusations of slander poets made against state censors is also helpful for reading the accusations of slander the women pamphlet writers wage against men. Kaplan

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<sup>37</sup> See Susan Dwyer Amussen, “Elizabeth I and Alice Balstone: Gender, Class, and the Exceptional Woman in Early Modern England,” *Attending to Early Modern England*, eds. Betty S. Travitsky and Adele F. Seeff (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994) 219-240, for a discussion of the life experiences of Elizabeth I and Alice Balstone as case studies to track the effect gender and class had on women. Her study shows just how vulnerable women were, especially lower-class women, if they did not have family connections or other means to protect themselves from the ways that men’s desires and slanders, could result in their social destruction: “Alice Balstone’s (a poor, lower-class woman) life demonstrates the importance of reputation in early modern society; once lost, it could not be regained” (225). See also Jankowski 37 for details about the terrible financial situation that existed for unmarried or “masterless” women of marriageable age.

<sup>38</sup> See Woodbridge 37 who identifies the “Susanna story” as a typical rhetorical example of how men slander women to cover up their attempts to seduce them. See Henderson and McManus 48-9, for a discussion of the ways the pamphlet writers counter the stereotype of insatiable “seductresses” by arguing that men are lying seducers.

argues that poets who objected to state censors' changes to their work challenged these changes by accusing the censors of slander: "[s]lander shifts the structure of the paradigm to offer a *response* to censorship which challenges the authority of censors by redefining their criticisms as misunderstandings, or more aggressively, defamations—they make a libel where the poet made a play. Hence, it provides a model of power that is *reversible* rather than hierarchical" (9 original emphasis). While it is not appropriate to say that men occupied exactly the same role in relation to women and their chastity that state censors occupied in relation to male poets and their texts, it is useful to look at the similarities between the projects of state censors and men insofar as both are invested in regulating speech and behavior under the auspices of maintaining social order and thus the right configuration of the state.

As Kaplan has shown, accusations of slander have as their central concern a disagreement over what sort of speech (or behavior) is socially "acceptable."<sup>39</sup> The pervasiveness of slander points to "the incredible instability of the categories of legitimate and illegitimate speech" (9). Anger explicitly defines the Late Venerian's and his contemporaries' speech as illegitimate when she begins the main portion of her text, *Her Protection for Women*, by immediately pointing out that men's desires and thus rhetoric are self-indulgent:

The desire every man hath to shewe his true vaine in writing is unspeakable,  
and their mindes are so carried away with the manner, as no care at all is had of  
the matter: they run so into Rethorick, as often times they overrun the boundes  
of their own wits, and goe they knowe not whether. If they have stretched their

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<sup>39</sup> Kaplan notes that a distinction between "slander" and "libel" did not exist until the end of the seventeenth-century. "Slander" referred to speech and actions (12).

invention so hard on a last, as it is at a stand, there remains but one help, which is, to write of us women: If they may once encroach so far into our presence, as they may but see the linyng of our outermost garment, they straight think that Apollo honours them, in yielding so good a supply to refresh their sore overburdened heads, through studying for matters to indite off. And therefore God may see how thankfully they receive his liberality, (their wits whetted, and their braines almost broken with botching his bountie) they fall straight to dispraising and slaundering our silly sex (B<sup>r</sup>).<sup>40</sup>

A man's "true vaine" according to Anger is lustful, intemperate, ruled by carnal desire, so much so that he is unable to function rhetorically. She uses a bawdy cobbler's reference to talk both about men's bodies and rhetorical "inventions" as ruled by their sexual appetites. Anger argues that men have little to say, and when they "have stretched their invention," or run out of other things to say, they write of women. She suggests, too, with her punning references to stretching shoe leather until it won't stretch any more (and won't go back to its former shape), that when men get sexually

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<sup>40</sup> See Clarke 55 and Woodbridge 63. Both Linda Woodbridge and more recently Danielle Clarke read Jane Anger's pamphlet and the other pamphlets written with feminine pseudonyms as more or less generic entries in the "debate about women." They identify portions of this passage as evidence that Anger is more concerned with the rhetorical "inventions" and conventions of the debate than about the physical and social reality of men's debasing rhetoric and its implications for women. In their analyses of the passage, both of these critics focus on the notion that men write about women when they cannot make good arguments about other topics—that is, they are rhetorically inadequate. Woodbridge in particular cites a portion of the passage but doesn't read the meaning of its contents except to say "Anger views the formal controversy as a literary exercise; male authors, she believes, use it as a vehicle for showing off literary style. But she views the genre as being so overworked as to be a last refuge" (63). Clarke similarly only focuses on the rhetorical aspects of this portion of Anger's text, excising any implicit or explicit reference to men or women as embodied persons.

aroused, when they are “hard at a stand,” that is also the occasion to write about women. Simply, when men are both rhetorically and physically hard up, they write about women—for what else could they think of? For these men, writing against women is a rhetorical, lust-driven game without consequences. Further suggested in this passage is the idea that when men debase themselves, they must work to re-place women below themselves in order to maintain their social position “on top of” women. When men write of women, in their naughty vein, they reveal their true natures, their natural characters or dispositions, which are without moderation or sense. These men about which Anger writes are true surfeiters: everything they do is overdone, so much so that they themselves don’t know what they do, or where it leads them.

As is evident in Jane Anger’s depiction of women as bodies to be defined through description and defamation, women were regarded as texts that could be “read” and thus interpreted by men. Indeed, as Jocelyn Catty notes in *Writing Rape, Writing Women in Early Modern England: unbridled speech*, “. . . writers of this period pervasively trope the text as a female body and publication as an exposure and invasion of the body akin to rape” (1). The same language that was used to talk about a woman whose physical or social integrity was violated was used to talk about texts that were altered or “violated,” by state censors: “rape” and “ravish,” both referred to violation and theft.<sup>41</sup>

Censors, like Swetnam and writers of various types of conduct books aimed specifically at defining women’s behavior, seek to contain behaviors and speeches that they regard as “illegitimate.” The state censor defines a poet’s words as deviant by

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<sup>41</sup> Catty 1-3.

striking them from the page, obliterating them. Similarly, describing and thereby defining the legitimate and illegitimate behaviors of women as bodies creates a field within which any single woman's actions and words can be judged and action taken to strike those words and behaviors from her through social sanction. As Wayne Rebhorn has shown, rhetoric such as Swetnam's and Comus's that has as its goal the control and deception of the reader or listener was regarded as "bad rhetoric": "if the orator's performance constitutes a violent, irresistible sexual penetration of the auditor, then that performance looks uncomfortably like rape. . . . That rhetoric should evoke rape should not be surprising, since rape is a crime of violence, an assault on a victim who is penetrated and possessed sexually by the attacker" (158). Instead of words and arguments reflecting a temperate body and spirit, bad rhetoric, like the pen of the censor, becomes an extension of power that is used to regulate or repress unwanted behavior. Slandering rhetoric then becomes a violating force, and, when used by men, was regarded explicitly as an extension of their masculine sexuality.

It is here that we can see clearly the difference between speech as "discourse" or "conversation" in which the goal of speaking with one another is "away" from "one set course,"<sup>42</sup> or, with regard to conversation, from the Latin "converso" meaning to "turn around frequently" or simply "to live amongst" or have a place in. In this way, conversation also suggests that there is no "set course" and the people participating will "turn frequently" because they respond to what the other person says. We are perhaps not surprised to learn that all of these words can refer to physical intimacy, but

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<sup>42</sup> Here I rely on the Latin origins of the word, where "dis" means "away" or "apart from" a "course" of action. Course is from Latin *currere*, to run, and *cursus*, meaning simply "course."

discourse and conversation imply a greater agency on the part of the participants. Certainly the primary goal is not manipulative as the origins of “intercourse” suggest, where the “course” or way is singular and is intended to find a way between or inside. We can easily see how speech as “intercourse” is a precursor to intercourse itself—if he can get inside her verbally, he may do so physically as well. In this way, men’s defiling words could be said to pollute women insofar as they, and they alone, were enough to undo a woman’s chastity socially. Whereas the prevailing ideology of rape, as we saw Elder Brother initially articulate, regards women as inevitably tainted, their chastity of body and mind ruined, the women pamphlet writers articulate a paradigm in which men’s defiling words reveal their own degradation and defile women through defamation. Only a woman’s words can reveal her own purity or debasement. Within this alternative paradigm, or, to use Purkiss’s label, “citation,” it is easy to see how damaging to herself a woman’s silence could be—there are no alternative stories that counter those of men.

We see articulated in Anger’s complaints the notion that men rely on women’s silence to perpetrate their abuses and women’s spoken objections to abuse as a way to accuse women of bringing abuse upon themselves:

. . .they suppose that there is not one amongst us who can, or dare reprove their slanders and false reproches; their slaunderous tongues are so short, and the time wherein they haue lavished out their wordes freely, hath bene so long, that they know we cannot catch hold of them to pull them out, and they think we will not write to reprove their lying lips” (B<sup>r</sup>).

In this passage, Anger alludes to the long tradition of male dominance continually produced and reproduced by the silence and subjection of women.<sup>43</sup> This lengthy history, she argues, makes it almost impossible to change the current paradigm: women cannot “catch hold” of men’s violating tongues to stop the damage they do rhetorically, physically, and economically.

Anger thus makes a link between physical and rhetorical “false reproaches,” articulating the interconnection between rhetoric and rape. As Catty has shown, [t]he rapist ‘tests’ the woman for th[e] virtue [chastity] by defining rape as a failure of her eloquence. Yet at the same time, rape alters the sexual status of its victim, who loses her honour. The rape situation. . . both necessitates and circumscribes female utterance, legitimizes and silences it . . .” (3). Anger and the other women pamphlet writers identify the consequences of such a cultural epistemology: “[men] will straight make matter of nothing, blazing abroad that they have surfeited with love, and then their wits must be shown in telling the maner how” (B<sup>v</sup>). The reason for this violent reaction—of either physical or rhetorical rape—is the anger engendered by the social disgust a man must have experienced when a woman’s words or very presence (and rejection) challenged the difference between them and his power in relation to her. The physical act of rape, in similar fashion to debates against women and men’s “slandorous lies,” produces and reproduces the sexual and thus social difference between men and women. Anger’s text exposes the social determination of these assumptions—women are silent or submissive not by nature, but because men have

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<sup>43</sup> See Clarke 55 and Woodbridge 63-4, who both see this passage as referring to the debate about women as it was historically a debate carried out only by men arguing for or against the defects in the female sex. Clarke reads Anger as calling on women to counter men’s stereotypes and fantasies in order to “keep them in check.”

appropriated the right to say what is natural. In other words, she shows that the social norms are ideological and thus mutable.

The solution, offered early in Anger's tract, and repeated in her own pamphlet and in the other pamphlet writers' arguments, is for women to enter the largely male domain of rhetoric that has given men the power to render women either chaste or unchaste by words alone. As Anger argues, that men turn women's virtues into morsels to be devoured is no fault of women. It is, rather, evidence of the unbalanced, surfeiting nature of the devourer. In this way, Anger deploys what Kaplan calls the "reversible" nature of an accusation of slander. Where a man as censor deems a woman to be unchaste, a woman counters that his revision of her is incorrect: "an accusation of slander enables [the accuser] to delegitimize an opposing epistemological paradigm. [The accuser] might not succeed in making [a] charge stick, but nevertheless possess[es] grounds to challenge [the] repressor. Slander offers a model of contestation, rather than repression and regulation, which demonstrates the material consequences linguistic instability has for the social order" (9). In the insurgent vision shared by Anger, the other women writers, and the Lady, a woman's discourse reveals what lies inside her.

Rather than accuse men of slander without just cause, the women pamphlet writers analyze the reasons undergirding men's repressive depictions of women. They each identify two distinct reasons why men invent lies about women: desire and revenge. Thus, while men may experience disgust when the positions of women threaten male dominance, the pamphlet writers' arguments articulate their own reactions of disgust by anatomizing how a man who succumbs to his flesh necessarily

exposes his own degradation even as he tries to topple women with lies and flatteries. Constantia Munda complains, for example, that lust-driven men “goe groaping, and sometimes on all foure, to traffique with other folks credits by their owne divulged and dispersed ignominie” (C<sup>r</sup>). Within Munda’s description, men who essentially “give away” a woman’s virtue do so because they have none of their own and have already become, through choice, creatures less than human.<sup>44</sup> When she remarks that some go about on four legs, she refers to the way they express their appetites and desires, as animals do—indiscriminately.

Men seek the destruction of women, according to Munda, because they are compelled to do so in order to maintain their position “on top” in the hierarchy of sin, with women (and animals) below them: “They impudently seeke by others dishonour to set a shamelesse face on the matter, and thus to put out their immodest hornes to butt at, and gore the name and reputation of the innocent, being so besotted with a base and miserable condition, and blinde in themselues . . .” (C<sup>r</sup>). The men she describes are unaware of their own baseness, “blind” to the contagion in their own souls, because they take so much pleasure in sin and the condition it engenders. We can see an

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<sup>44</sup> While Kaplan discusses other types of slander than the sort the women pamphlet writers identify, a woman’s ruined reputation, like anyone’s ruined reputation, could potentially have serious financial consequences insofar as her chances for a profitable marriage could very well be dashed. See Leah Marcus’s discussion of Elizabeth Balstone in *The Milieu of Milton’s Comus* for an example of an early modern woman whose slim means made it almost impossible to defend her honor. She had to rely on the largess of Lord Bridgewater to get satisfaction. See Herrup 110-111 for a discussion of how Lord Audley’s sexual crimes against his wife and her daughter, his subsequent indictment, and ultimately his beheading meant that the Dowager Countess was made dependant on the kindnesses of relatives. Her daughter, her honor defamed and estranged from her husband, “lived by her wits” in the company of another “disorderly woman” who was also estranged from her own husband (110).

example of such debasement in the sin-transformed people comprising Comus's bestial rout—they writhe in sensual sexuality, it would seem, all the time.

The verbal sparring between Comus and The Lady presents us with a dramatic presentation not only of the ways that intemperate lust is seen as inseparable from a level of beastliness, but also of the different types of speech the pamphlet writers implicitly identify: discourse and conversation, that is, speech that edifies or seeks to raise both speaker and listener above the level of the flesh, and verbal “intercourse,” or speech that works on the level of the flesh and is intended to penetrate the listener as a precursor to physical intercourse.<sup>45</sup> In Milton's masque, The Lady refuses to engage in verbal intercourse. Rather, her speech is discourse or conversation, intended to “turn” or “convert” her hearer to God's Word. Comus, however, engages always in speech as “intercourse” insofar as he clearly seeks to find a way or “course” between the Lady's verbal defenses as a way of eventually breaching her physical ones.

As we saw previously, The Lady was left alone in a darkening wood as her brothers looked for something to eat. Contrary to her brothers' admonitions to stay put, however, The Lady goes after them. Instead of running into them or calling them to her with her singing, The Lady attracts the attentions of Comus, described as the half-man, half-monster progeny of Circe. Like Circe, Comus has about him a “route of monsters,” men and women who have the bodies of humans and the heads of various animals, evidence of their rejection of all reason and humanity when they succumbed

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<sup>45</sup> See David Gay, “‘Rapt Spirits’: 2 Corinthians 12.2-5 and the Language of Milton's *Comus*,” *Milton Quarterly* 29.3 (1995): 76-86 who reads *A Masque* within the context of 2 Corinthians in order to show Comus's similarity to false Apostles insofar as Comus employs “consider rhetorical power and eloquence” which were regarded “as leading characteristics of false apostles at Corinth” (81).

to intemperate desire and carnal sensuality. Comus, like an animal, senses The Lady's presence and virginity at a distance and desires immediately to make The Lady a member of his "herd" or "rout of Monsters."

His intemperance looks a lot like that of the intemperate surfeiter and flatterer we have encountered in the defenses of women. Because Comus is a Monster, he must use magic to alter his appearance. To this end, he sends into the air "dazzling Spells" that have the power to, "cheat the eye with blear illusion, / And give it false presentments, lest the place / And my quaint habits breed astonishment, / And put the Damsel to suspicious flight, / Which must not be, for that's against my course" (155\59). Comus's use of the word "course" refers to his customary "course of action," evidenced by his plans to bait The Lady with flattery or "well plac't words of glozing courtesie" and pretty "reasons not unplaussible" (161,162). He plans both to change his shape into one she can trust—"som harmles Villager/ Whom thrift keeps up about his Country gear" (166-67)—and make attractive speeches that sound reasonable, but are examples of speech as intercourse. To this end, Comus employs language as the "course" or path that will take him between her verbal defenses, opening her first to his will and next physically to his sexual desires. He avoids "discourse," or speech that would take him "apart from" the sort of "set course," characteristic of speech as intercourse.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> See Gay who argues that the Lady's speech utilizes "plain style" (77). Gay sees this plain style, or the lack of rhetorical show, as evidence that she "uses language" rather than divulge her "vision" to Comus. He sees Paul as a precedent for the Lady insofar as Paul, like the Lady, refused to utter his "vision" or the Word of God to an audience not fit to hear what would be for them incomprehensible. In contrast, see Jean Graham esp. 4-5 who argues that the Lady uses the same rhetorical structures as Comus. The difference between the Lady's manner of speech and Comus's is not so much that the

While both speech as intercourse and speech as discourse can be monologic, discourse as a learned and reasoned dissertation has as its goal the edification of the hearers. Verbal intercourse as it is enacted by Comus, on the other hand, is self-regarding. Paul Stevens in "Magic Structures: Comus and the Illusions of Fancy," argues that Comus's "deliberateness suggests not the absence of reason, but its subversion by desire. Subverted reason, which manifests itself as rhetoric, has the effect of transforming the creations of unrestrained fancy into something deeply perverse" (86). Comus is driven by an intemperate desire that has the power to transform not only his own body but other bodies as well from the inside out. And as we have seen so often, an unbalanced, intemperate body was evidence of an unbalanced, intemperate mind.

As the women pamphlet writers argue repeatedly, the problem is not women or women's speeches, but that women are not permitted to defend themselves with their reasoned discourse against men's unwanted advances and attackers. In addition to protecting themselves, these speeches and writings, the women argue, reveal a woman's character, and, thus, her chastity (or lack thereof). The antidote to the double bind in which the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century woman finds herself, according to Anger, Sovernam, Munda, and *The Lady*, is not silence, but speech, not physical but spiritual purity, not the purity only of women, but also of men.

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Lady's speech is plain (or not) and Comus's filled with (deceptive) rhetoric (Gay 81), so much as Comus has the clear intention of dilation, penetration and ultimately not just verbal intercourse, but physical intercourse, while the Lady is interested in discourse, preaching.

## **“A Direction for the Government of the Tongue According to God’s Word”: The Sanctioning of Women’s Speech and Writing**

While the pamphlets by Anger, Sowernam, and Munda have received regular critical attention for their proto-feminist rhetoric within a misogynist culture, most critics have focused on how these pamphlets emerged during a period of changing gender roles for men and women and may have worked to reform men’s behaviors or create a new subject position for women.<sup>47</sup> Critics have looked at how the women pamphlet writers used Genesis to change or expand the subject positions available to women.<sup>48</sup> In this section, I extend these investigations by asking how the women’s defenses challenge the existing gender hierarchy by reconfiguring the body. I am particularly interested in how each of the three pamphlet writers returns to God’s Word inscribed in the bodies of men and women, rereading the Genesis story such that women’s bodies are rewritten. This revision of the female body is significant because it is the physical body that was seen to determine the relationship between men and

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<sup>47</sup> See Henderson and McManus, *Half Humankind* for a discussion of the pamphlets as a collection of proto-feminist arguments. They place the controversy within historical contexts that demonstrate the specific and powerful Renaissance attitudes toward women and their written and spoken words. Shepherd similarly sees the pamphlets as proto-feminist, and regards the pamphlet writers as interested in improving men’s behaviors by working to “dismantle the sort of writing that oppresses them” through dismantling male-dominated language (14); For an exploration of the pamphlets as literary diversion, see Linda Woodbridge, who views the pamphlets as “exercises” (63), or “largely a literary game, with very tenuous roots in real contemporary attitudes” (6).

<sup>48</sup> See Barbara McManus, “Eve’s Dowry” who sees the Tudor-Stuart pamphlets as drawing attention to the ways that women are involved in cultural production, where they create for themselves a new subject position through revision of the Genesis story. In contrast, Clarke and Woodbridge argue that recourse to Genesis by the women pamphlet writers is more or less customary of the male-dominated genre. Both critics argue that the addition of a female signature may change the way we receive the Genesis arguments, but it does not mean the arguments are serious social critiques.

women and the person's relationship to God. Thus, a shift in the subject position of women begins with a change in the perceived relationship between men and women as embodied persons.

As we have seen in the sections above, the women pamphlet writers are burdened with the task of trying to prove their chastity through what many regarded as intemperate speeches simply because they were writing publicly. William Perkins's *A Direction for the Government of the Tongue According to God's Word* provides a context for reading the women pamphlet writers' efforts both to authorize the writing and publication of their tracts, and to present themselves as speaking from a holy place rather than the sort of degraded place they claim for the men whose writings they counter. While it is not certain the women pamphlet writers actually read Perkins's treatise on the government of the tongue, the text is, nevertheless, important as a record of ideas in circulation at the time that all of these texts were written.

My project in this section is to use Perkins's *Government of the Tongue* as a roadmap for further reading the ways that the four women subjects of this chapter challenge on a basic level the early modern injunction that women be silent in order to ensure or maintain their chastity. Moreover, reading the pamphlets and *The Lady's* actions and speeches through the lens of Perkins's spiritual conduct book allows us to see the myriad ways that the pamphlet writers explicitly highlight their spiritual purity by adhering to widely known conventions of holy speech. Thus, they demonstrate that not only are their hearts pure, but their bodies as well. It is not my intention to suggest that the women pamphlet writers and *The Lady* are or are not chaste, but because, as Perkins so adamantly articulates, the person will speak according to his heart, looking

at the way these women articulate their experiences as embodied persons reveals to us the degree to which the state of their bodies is integral to their arguments. Extending existing scholarship that focuses on the way the women pamphlet writers define a new subject position for women via a rhetoric of embodiedness exposes another of the ways that these texts threatened the male hierarchical system.

As Perkins helps us see, the women writers are engaged in what I call the “spiritual dissection” of their male attackers. They investigate and interpret their attacker’s texts as a way of anatomizing the states of their attackers’ physical and spiritual bodies. Moreover, I show that these women writers construct their texts as evidence of the purity of their own bodies and souls, working to articulate in both the manner and matter of their arguments an anatomy of a corporate body of women that authorizes a chaste woman’s speeches as originating in God’s Word from the point of Genesis onward. Because their bodies are humoral bodies, attention to the “humoral valences” of their words helps us to read a subtext of bodily purity or pollution that would have been readily apparent to the early modern reader.

The women pamphlet writers work to create clear distinctions between themselves and the men they view as debased and between women and the beasts to which they are often likened, by presenting themselves as speaking the words of God. Reading their pamphlets within the context of William Perkins’s *Direction for the Government of the Tongue* (1593) helps us to see the ways that the pamphlet writers rely on the conventions Perkins articulates as distinguishing the foul-talking and the pious. He presents his treatise as a guide to those who would like to be able to recognize in others (and make judgments about) the difference between truth and lies,

speech that springs from a pure heart, versus the “Cursed speaking, Railing, Slandering, Chiding, Quarrelling, Contending, Jesting, Mocking, Flattering, lying, dissembling, Vaine and idle talking [that] overflow[s] in all places”—and springs from a degraded heart (A2<sup>r</sup>). His treatise is a guide about how to “coole [the] tongue” (A2<sup>v</sup>). As is the case with most guides, it is not simply an advice book about how to live, but a method of social control and behavior regulation. That the women pamphlet writers would follow the conventions presented in Perkins’s treatise when framing their defenses is not surprising, given the sorts of accusations of unchastity and impurity that they were likely to face for their speech acts.

The importance of governing the tongue is underscored by the emphasis in humoral theory on the very relationship between what was taken into the body, the body’s contents, and what was evacuated from the body, including one’s words. As we can see in the passage above, words are talked about in much the same humoral language as the fungible fluids circulating through the body. Words “issue” from the body in “streames” from the heart, and “idle talking overflow[s] in all places” (A3<sup>v</sup>, A2<sup>r</sup>). Idle or extraneous words, like superfluous humors, were seen as evidence of intemperance.<sup>49</sup> By way of the tongue and its speech, as by the pen and the words written with it, was conveyed the very substance of a person’s soul, according to Perkins, whose treatise addresses the connection between the state of a person’s body, soul, and words. He emphasizes the particular power and danger posed by the tongue in that it can help or hurt far beyond its physical scope:

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<sup>49</sup> Perkins explicitly addresses the connection between the movements of the tongue and pen when he writes that the same rules apply to both activities: “All this which is set down concerning speech, must as wel bee practised in writing, as in speaking” (D12<sup>r</sup>).

The man of an evill tongue, is a beast in the forme of a man: for his Tongue is the Tongue of a Serpent, under which lyeth nothing but venime and poison: nay, hee is worse then a Serpent: for it cannot hurt, unlesse it bee present to see a man, or to bite him, or to strike him with his taile: but hee which hath not the rule of his Tongue, hurteth men as well absent, as present; neither Sea nor Land nor any thing can hinder him. And againe, his throat is like a Grave that hath a vent in some part, and therefore sendeth foorth nothing but stinke and corruption (E6<sup>r</sup>).

In Perkins's depiction, the unruly tongue not only damages at a distance, but does so with a foulness and corruption that is both akin to, and originates from, death. If we see, as Perkins and his contemporaries did, a person's degradation as evidence of a clotted, poisoned soul severed from the divinity and eternity in God, then an unruly tongue could be linked to the voluble, the damned, the bestial. In this way, Perkins works to demarcate the distinction between good and bad people, between people and beasts, precisely because such distinctions were not always easy to locate, or maintain.

Perkins carefully outlines how one might be able to know the difference between the intemperate person who "speaks forth all his mind" and the person who is motivated to speak by the fire of God's love rather than the heat of the devil:

As the holy men of GOD when they preached, had their Tongues, as it were touched with a coale from the Alter of GOD; and as godly men, when they speake graciously, have their tongues inflamed with the fire of Gods Spirit: so contrariwise, when thou speakest Evill, thy tongue is kindled by the *fire of Hell*:

and Satan comes from thence with a coale to touch thy lippes, and to set them on fire to all manner of mischiefe (E6<sup>r-v</sup>).

Perkins's description of the "ungoverned tongue" inflamed by the fire of the Devil suggests that it is easy to differentiate ill speech from pure. The very existence of his treatise, however, belies this. While the causal relationship between what came out of the body and what went in was well established within a humoural paradigm, far more vexed was just what was being revealed by the "streames that issue" from the mouth.

In the very first chapter of his *Direction for the Government of the Tongue*, Perkins considers how a "pure heart" is important in making sure that what comes out of the mouth is also pure: "The pure heart. . . is the fountaine of speech, and if the fountain be defiled, the streames that issue thence cannot bee cleane" (A3<sup>v</sup>). As Perkins explains, the heart in its "natural" state is "a bottomless gulfe of iniquitie," full of appetites, the goads to sin. (A3<sup>v</sup>). The heart can be made pure, however, through trials that motivate a self-examination of the conscience and a process of purging oneself of "sinnes past" through confession, self-condemnation, and appeals to God for pardon (A3<sup>v</sup>-A5<sup>r</sup>). If all of these steps are completed in sincerity, Perkins explains, the holy Spirit enters into a person's conscience. At the same time, God remakes the person with his own hand: "Now at the same instant in which pardon shall be granted, GOD likewise will once again stretch forth that mightie hand of his, whereby he made thee when thou wast not, to make thee a new creature, to create a new heart in thee, to renew a right spirit in thee, and to stablish thee by his free Spirit" (A3<sup>v</sup>-A4<sup>r</sup>). Here, as in other early modern renderings of the creative process by which all things were formed, the hand of God seems to be used interchangeably with Word. When Perkins

states that God “made thee when thou was not,” he appears to be speaking about the moment of creation when, “with the word was made everything that was made.” Indeed, all that was made, from the smallest to the largest thing, is brought into being in this way.

Evoked here is the early modern belief that all people are not only akin to texts that can be read, but are also documents of their own beginning.<sup>50</sup> That human beings’ spirits or intelligible aspects were confined in the flesh means that people, like texts, have both sensible and intelligible aspects. In this model, the newly formed “creature” will only speak when moved by God to do so: “The mouth is as it were locked up from speaking any good thing, until the Lord open it. . . because God ruleth the tongue” (A6<sup>v</sup>). Here, Perkins’s characterization of spiritual rebirth appears to be gender neutral, and the “creature” is the product of God’s creative action.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> There is a lengthy tradition that figures people as texts: the physical aspect of the text was seen as female and the content seen as male. See Rita Copeland, “Why Women Can’t Read: Medieval Hermeneutics, Statutory Law, and the Lollard Heresy Trials,” *Representing Women: Law Literature, and Feminism*, eds., Susan Sage Heinzelman and Zipporah Batshaw Wiseman (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1994): 253-286, especially 256-60. See also E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (1948; Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967) esp. 311-326. See Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies* 13 who notes that “stripping [a woman] bare” was akin to “reading her pages.”

<sup>51</sup> “Creature” 1a. *OED*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. I suggest that Perkins also makes reference to another common definition for “creature” current at the time he was writing: “the created universe.” These two definitions articulate the connection commonly believed to be present between the holy person and the cosmology, with each created through God’s Word. Here we see an example of the person as a “little world,” insofar as God’s creative action re-creates the human being once more in His own image, and, thus, in the image of the cosmology. In this way, the renewed person is intimately and, it would seem, constantly, connected to God through God’s Word and words.

In order to access God's words inside, the devotee looks into the conscience in order to know when called upon either to speak or be silent. I suggest the women pamphlet writers rely on this paradigm not only to authorize their own particular speeches, and to demonstrate the purity of their own hearts as the "fountains" of their speech—who could say women should be silent if they were motivated to speak by God?—but also to prove that the "streames that issue" from the Late Venerian, Swetnam, and Comus "cannot be cleane" (A3<sup>v</sup>).

Anger, Sowernam, Munda, and The Lady all follow the three basic rules Perkins outlines regarding the matters that occasion speech, simultaneously demonstrating that their male attackers do not. Perkins's account of the three rules for holy speech provide his readers with a method useful for distinguishing between evil, superfluous speech, and the sort of heated speech we find in these women's arguments. The women pamphlet writers present themselves explicitly, and The Lady implicitly, as "called to speak" in order to glorify God and simultaneously argue that to degrade the creatures of God—in this case to degrade women—is also to degrade God. Moreover, the zeal with which all four women speak easily falls within the definition of speech that is motivated by the fire of God's love, or a "coale" taken from the altar of God and touched to the speaker's tongue. Each of the moments in which even heated speeches may be authorized take as their foundation Perkins's earlier revelation that because "speech is the very image of the heart," a tongue ordered according to God's Word is a pure tongue that reveals a pure heart.

Because the Late Surfeiting Lover, Swetnam, and Comus all resort to Biblical dictates to support their exposés of women's failings, or their arraignments of women,

or, in the case of Comus, his attempts to brook The Lady's resistance to his advances, Anger, Sowernam, Munda, and The Lady each, in turn, expose their male attackers' arguments as inversions of scripture or outright defamations of God. In their counterarguments, we see all three of Perkins's "matters" married in the women pamphlet writers' re-readings of Genesis as a way to glorify God through a rehearsal of the way that men and women were created. Simultaneously, they show in yet another way the debased and unreasonable nature of their attackers by exposing them and other similar men as liars, slanderers, blasphemers, all of which, Perkins argues, are regarded as "abominations against God."

In Anger's re-reading of Genesis, for example, women are purer and, thus, more perfect than men because they were made from the purified flesh of Adam:

The creation of man and women at the first, hee being formed *in principio* of drosse and filthy clay, did so remaine until by the transformation of the dust which was loathsome unto flesh, it became purified. Then lacking a help for him, GOD making woman of mans fleshe, that she might bee purer then he, doth evidently showe, how far we women are more excellent then men (C1<sup>r</sup>).

In this passage, Anger glorifies God through His creations first by acknowledging that "filthy dross and clay," the loathsome material used by God to create Adam, is purified by God's creative process. Her use of the word "dross," and mention of its previous filth, nevertheless places the origin of man below the origin of woman. Anger's text echoes throughout with associations she sets up between the filthy dross out of which men were first formed, the "filth" in which she says later they lie in contentment, and the filthy lies they tell about women. She implies with these associations that men are

drawn ever back to the filth out of which they were first formed, through no fault of their creator. In this way, she manages to laud God's creative process because He can purify such materials to the point that they are the stuff out of which Eve is formed, last and best. Anger simultaneously shows how free will allows many men to choose to be evil and to seek the destruction of others. In Anger's text, God's creations are never debased, but only debase themselves as a result of engaging in sinful activity.

By offering this reading of Genesis, Anger rearticulates the relationship between men and women, changing, as she does so, the basic anatomy of social and religious systems that use men's bodies as the "more perfect" model for their configuration. In Anger's characterization, women's bodies are implicitly the more appropriate paradigm for the body politic. One reason for this is the humoral balance and temperance Anger implicitly ascribes to women. This is an especially interesting shift, given that Anger is writing while Queen Elizabeth is on the throne. Elizabeth was frequently, as we saw in the previous chapter, pictured as the body politic, the very land of England, fruitful virgin mother of all her subjects.<sup>52</sup> Because the person is made in the image of God, and Anger here implicitly presents woman as the image in which all other systems should be made, from the cosmos to the household, she challenges a social hierarchy in which women are at the bottom. She makes, then, in the most basic sense, a social anatomy in which women occupy a new subject position, one that affords them a great deal more power and mobility.

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<sup>52</sup> Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977) esp. 39; Jankowski 70; Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994) esp. 64-65.

Both Sovernam and Munda also reinterpret Genesis as the way to authorize greater autonomy and social mobility for women while they simultaneously glorify God, stating that His glory is the principle reason they write their defenses.

Sovernam's title, *Ester Hath Hanged Haman*, is the first indication that her project has as its purpose the glorification of God and the protection and delivery of a people—women—in danger of being destroyed by “Haman” a “lewd, idle, froward, and inconstant” man:

Woman the second edition of the Epitome of the whole world, the second Tome of that goodly volume compiled by the great God of heaven and earth is most shamefully blurd, and derogatively rased by scribbling penms of sauage & uncouth monsters. To what an irregular straine is the daring impudence of blind-fold bayards aspired unto? That they will presume to call in question even the most absolute worke composed by the worlds great Architect? . . . To call that imperfect, forward, crooked and peruerse to make an arraignment and Beare-baiting of that which the Pantocrator would in his omnificent wisdome haue to be the consummation of his blessed weekes worke, the end, crowne, and perfection of the neuer-sufficiently glorified creation. What is it but an exorbitant phrensie, and wofull taxation of the Supreme dietie (B2<sup>v</sup>–B3<sup>r</sup>).

In this passage, Sovernam explicitly refers to people as texts, in this case, as condensed versions of the “whole world,” that is, as “little worlds” or the cosmos writ small. Woman, Sovernam makes plain, is the second volume of a great text consisting of two volumes created by God. Within Sovernam's depiction, the last act of God, the creation of the second volume, “woman,” is being defaced by evil “monsters” who

write in God's book with the intention of destroying the beauty and sanctity of what He wrote. When Sovernam describes these men-monsters as "scribbling," she suggests that they don't even write words, which might provide evidence of their yet possessing reason, but only move their pens across the pages in order to "rase" the Words on those pages. Sovernam evokes two different definitions of the word "raise": to tear or cut, and to erase. The scribblings of savage men-monsters are the violent penetrations of the book/body of Woman with pens that are at once writing implements, penises, and swords. The sole purpose of these monsters is to destroy the sacred text written by God. Within a world view that, as we saw previously, regarded putting "extra members" on the sacred body of Christ as a disfiguring act not to be tolerated, for men to write in God's book is equally terrible and disgusting to imagine—only a monster who had no divinity inside would be bold enough to scratch at the pages of God's text.

There is more going on here, however: Sovernam challenges the normative picture of men as interpreters of words and texts and women as texts to be interpreted, and thereby violated. As Rita Copeland has shown in "Why Women Can't Read," the process of "reading" functioned at both literal and spiritual levels. Reading at the spiritual or intelligible level, the level of interpretation, was a masculine domain. Reading on the sensible, or "literal level [was] identified with carnality, with the flesh that must give way to the spirit" and was regarded as feminine" (256). Thus, reading as a woman was to "read with a gross carnality, resistant to the spiritual sense" (257). Sovernam alters the socio-religious terms that figure men as interpreters of women's passive bodies/texts by defining the woman/text as God's Word. Thus, the men who

scribble over the pages of woman are “reading” her on the most base and literal level, violating her in a way that does horrific violence not just to her, but to God.

By focusing on the unreasonable and ungodly violence men wreck on women-as-texts, Sovernam erects the foundation upon which she can claim that these men-monsters write and speak the most vile slanders against God. To scribble in God’s sacred text can in no way be confused with telling the truth about women. In each of the ways that men are figured as not just defiling women but also God, the early modern reader is likely meant to experience a violent feeling of revulsion:

Sovernam’s arguments have tremendous power precisely because she depicts not just the elision of men and animals, but of men and God, such that even the categories of animal and God begin to be blurred by the excesses of slandering men. We can begin to see the power that these pamphlets by women potentially could have, as “citations” or “seeds” in a growing body of stories by women about women’s experiences in the world.

Given the “savagery” with which the men Sovernam writes against stab at women, it is appropriate that women counter with “defenses” or a “true version” of woman as God intended. In this way, womens’ words and texts function as armor and battlements against the defiling “pens” of men, highlighting the notion that women are purified by the violence they endure at the hands of men, even as mens’ souls are increasingly sullied by that same violence.

Anger explicitly labels her text a “protection” for innocent women, locating her project firmly within the boundaries of Perkins’s second and third occasions: she means for her text not only to “protect” women from the slanders, lies, and other

wickedness of evil men (Perkins's third matter), but also to be a "protection" for good men that they might avoid becoming wicked (Perkins's second matters).

Because slander is characterized in Perkins's text as "tending to the ruine of the whole commonwealth," rightfully to accuse someone of slander was to expose the worst sort of liar and had the potential to save the commonwealth from ruin (A9<sup>f</sup>). Because God is "truth itself," as Perkins points out in his discussion of the distinction between truth and lies, the truth-teller speaks with the voice of God while the liar, slanderer, and tale-bearer speak in a way that is wholly self-regarding and tends to the hurt of others and by extension to the whole commonwealth and ultimately to God:

Truth of speech is a vertue whereby a man speaketh as he thinketh: and so consequently, he speaketh as every thing is, so far forth as possibly he can. . . this is always required in all our doctrines, accusations, defences, testimonies, promises, bargaines, consels: but especially in Iudges and Magistrates fitting of the judgement seate, because they stand in Gods stead, who is truth itselfe. . . .

Contrary to this, is lying, cogging, glozing, smoothing . . . (B3<sup>v</sup>-B4<sup>f</sup>).

Sowernam's explicit rendering of women as little worlds/texts helps us to see the connection between the ruin of a woman and the ruin of a commonwealth, insofar as razing God's creation can only do harm to the larger body of which it is a part—thus, to ruin woman is to lay waste the commonwealth by extension. It is easy to see, then, how serious a crime is slander, and Perkins's text plainly says that lying is forbidden as an abomination to the Lord (B5<sup>f</sup>). Sowernam accuses Swetnam of slander and lying when she accuses him of "scribbling" on the body/text of woman, but then she takes

this accusation even further, accusing Swetnam of blasphemy for the statements he has made about the “crookedness” of women from the moment of their creation onward:

He runneth on, and saith, *They were made of a Rib, and that their forward and crooked nature doth declare, for a Rib is a crooked thing, &c.*

Woman was made of a crooked rib, so she is crooked of conditions.

*Joseph Swetnam* was made as from *Adam* of clay and dust, so he is of a dirty and muddy disposition: The inferences are both alike in either; woman is no more crooked, in respect of the one; but he is blasphemous in respect of the other. Did Woman receive her soule and disposition from the rib? Or as it is said in *Genesis*, *God did breath in them the spirit of life?* (B2<sup>r</sup>).

Sowernam like Anger before her, focuses on the manner in which God created life in Adam and Eve rather than the substances out of which they were created. In both cases, the women pamphlet writers emphasize the moment when divinity enters into the human body, transforming dross, clay, flesh and bones into “epitomes” of all. Sowernam’s reading of Genesis, even more clearly than Anger’s, however, reveals the base tautology that the male attacker stoops to when he uses his perversion of scripture to support his perversion of women. Perkins also articulates the necessity of showing due respect to God, His creations, and His Words: “As truth is required in speech, so also reverence to God and man. . .Heere take heede of all manner of blaspheming, which is, when men use such speeches of GOD, as doe either detract anything from his Majestie, or ascribe any thing to him, not beseeing him: a sinne of all other to be detested (B6<sup>r-v</sup>). Using the scriptures to support a base picture of women is a different and equally detestable way of scribbling in God’s book.

Munda also exposes the ways that Swetnam uses the Bible to support his ungodly arguments: “You might Mr. Swetnam, with some shew of honestie have sayd, some women are bad, both by custome and company, but you cannot avoide the brand, both of blasphemie and dishonestie, to say of women generally they are all naught, both in their creation and by nature, and to ground your inferences upon Scriptures” (F<sup>r</sup>). While Anger and Sowernam expose the tendency of the Late Surfeiting Lover, and Swetnam to harness the power that Scriptures bring to an argument, Munda not only exposes this shameless and “blasphemous” rhetoric, but offers Swetnam some rhetorical advice that also indicates her awareness of the entertainment value of Swetnam’s (and her own) argument:

. . . you ought to have considered that in the vituperation of the misdemeanors and disorders in others liues; this cautelous *Proviso* should direct you that in seeking to reforme others, you deforme not your selfe; especially by mouing a suspition that your minde is troubled and festered with the impostume of inbred malice, and corrupt hatred: for tis alwaies the badge and cognisance of a degenerous and illiberall disposition to bee ambitious of that base and ignoble applause, proceeding from the giddy-headed Plebians, that is acquired by the miserable oppressing and pilling of vertue (D3<sup>v</sup>).

Only base, miserable people find humor in watching virtue and the virtuous reduced to their own miserable condition. The rhetorical strategy of repetition that the women pamphlet writers employ suggests the social power that a “lewd” and “forward” man like Swetnam has to determine the status of at least certain women.

Each of the pamphlet writers makes a distinction between true and false depictions of people, presenting themselves as opting for what is “true” rather than what might entertain. Sowernam, for example, explains that it is never wrong to tell things as-they-are, even if they are not particularly nice things one relates. She implies that to call a bad woman a bad woman, for example, is no crime. But to call a woman bad who is not is a slander that can do a great deal of damage, to the individual woman and to the larger community. In her view, such name-calling should only do damage to the speaker:

. . . it is not my desire to speake so much, it is your desert to provoke me upon iust cause so farre; it is no railing to call a Crow blacke, or a Wolfe a rauenour, or a drunkard a beast; the report of the truth is neuer to be blamed, the deseruer of such a report, deserueth the shame (G4<sup>r</sup>).

Here Sowernam contrasts in several ways her own truth telling with Swetnam’s railing and lies, working to show her readers she is not simply engaging in the same sort of mud-slinging and character assassination that Swetnam is. Where Swetnam is guilty of what Perkins characterizes as a failure of reverence (at the very least) or as speaking evil (at the very worst), Sowernam is careful to present her defense as “everything is, so far forth as possibly [s]he can” (B4<sup>r</sup>). While Swetnam seems to be guilty of speaking out “all his mind” and speaking without “cause or prooffe,” Sowernam “bringeth direct proof for what she alleageth” (B4<sup>r</sup>). Certainly to claim that women are crooked because Adam’s rib was not straight would be read by most early modern Christian readers as a ludicrous statement too impossible to be taken seriously—in this

way, what might otherwise be a statement that elicited disgust, becomes an hilarious joke.

To be unable to govern the tongue, as Perkins outlines, is not simply a matter of doing damage to other people undeservedly, but to fail to follow the “Law of God.” In this context, for the women pamphlet writers *not* to argue against their attackers would be wrong on many levels: first, the debasement of God contained in the pamphlets of the Late Venerian, Swetnam, and also in the speeches of Comus, would go unchallenged—this itself is a failure to follow the law of God; second, the faults of these bad men would go unchallenged, and, thus, their potential amendment would never be an option; and, finally, innocent women would be more likely not only to fall victim to the slanders and lies of bad men, but also to remain silent about it, never revealing the contents of their consciences, and, potentially, the depths of their chastity.

### **“That Which Purifies Us is Trial”: The Relocation of Chastity in the Conscience**

In this section I argue that the women pamphlet writers and *The Lady* all relocate chastity in the conscience, establishing its place in the soul rather than the flesh. In this way, the women pamphlet writers show that their chastity lies inside their consciences as demonstrated through their defenses, because, as they repeatedly emphasize, the contents of one’s soul are revealed not through silence but through speech. The women pamphlet writers advocate that women are as capable as men when it comes to the ability to ascertain what is good and right through God’s Word inside—in this way they establish a relationship between chastity, or purity of thought (and deed), and conscience.

As we have seen, the women pamphlet writers and *The Lady* speak with several goals in mind: to protect themselves and other women by revealing their chaste characters, to expose the lust-ridden ones of their attackers, to glorify God, and to cleanse, if they can, the tainted souls of their attackers. In detailing the destruction men wreck on women, Anger, Sowernam, and Munda each point to the destruction that intemperate men wreck on themselves.

The antidote, according to the women pamphlet writers, as we have seen above, is for women to speak in defense of themselves and other women from a place of virtue and truth that demonstrates their ability to discern the difference between foul speeches and fair ones. It is conscience that gives women the insight to see beyond the “flattering speeches” and “glozing courtesie” that serve to disguise the bad man’s ill intentions.

Elder Brother warns against his sister opening her eyes, ears, and mouth to a necessarily malevolent male force, but the women pamphlet writers indicate—and *The Lady* ultimately proves in her debates with Comus—that while talking to evil people may be the manner in which people are turned evil, talking may also be the trial that purifies the soul of the devotee, proving the chastity of a woman through her speech. Moreover, just as the orifices are the conduits by which evil taints the soul, so, too, the orifices, or talk, glances, and listening to others’ words, also provide the path for God’s Word to enter into the person and so purify a tainted soul or function as a trial of the devotee, distinguishing, to use Milton’s words in *Areopagitica*, between the true “warfaring Christian” and an “unexercis’d & unbreath’d” or “blank vertue.”<sup>53</sup> Indeed,

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<sup>53</sup> John Milton, “*Areopagitica*,” *John Milton: Selected Prose*, ed. C.A. Patrides, New

Milton's argument against the censorship of books in *Areopagitica* clarifies how talking to or talking back to evil people does not make one evil, just as the knowledge contained in books does not. Reading the evil in books, like talking to evil people has, according to Milton, a purifying effect for the truly pure person:

To the pure all things are pure, not only meats and drinks, but all kinds of knowledge whether of good or evil; the knowledge cannot defile, nor consequently the books, if the will and conscience be not defil'd. For books are as meats and viands are; some of good, some of evil substance. . . and best books to a naughty mind are not unapplicable to occasions of evil. Bad meats will scarce breed good nourishment in the healthiest concoction; but herein the difference is of bad books, that they to a discreet and judicious Reader serve in many respects to discover, to confute, to forewarn, and to illustrate (211).

In Milton's rendering, what already lies inside a person is what determines how knowledge will be used. Evil people will find ways to think and do evil even when reading the most benign text, while the truly good will not be tainted by reading terrible things. In this way, Milton implicitly challenges the notion that chastity and silence are linked, or that force has the potential to undo a woman's essential chastity because it may undo her virginity. As Susanne Wood argues in "How Free Are Milton's Women?" Milton has a "profound respect for human liberty" and this leads to, "the curious result . . . that the dignity and intelligence he gives his female characters strain against the inferior social position in which they find themselves"

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and Revised ed. (1985; Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991) 213. All citations are from this edition and will be noted parenthetically in the text unless otherwise noted.

(19). As Milton's masque suggests, censoring women, like censoring books, forecloses opportunities for communion with God by securing people from the "heat" of the very trials that could purify their souls: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloister'd vertue, unexercis'd & unbreath'd, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortall garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat" (213). To be voluntarily or forcibly sequestered by social convention is ultimately to deny women (or anyone for that matter) the opportunity to move from the "blank vertue" of silence to the "pure vertue" that can only be demonstrated through discourse.

Before proceeding, it is important to define conscience as it was understood within an early modern epistemology: conscience, in the most basic sense, was the ability to "know with," or that which allows a person to know something. According to Keith Thomas in "Cases of Conscience in Seventeenth-Century England," conscience was commonly believed to be "knowledge of right and wrong . . . knowledge . . . made up of two ingredients: the natural law of reason, or law of nature, which was universal to all human beings, and knowledge of the word of God, which required appropriate religious education" (30). Often, the knowledge of the Word of God is referred to as the light of God, that which illuminates the soul, indicating what is right and what is wrong.

We can see an example of conscience as "knowledge" of the Word of God and as an "inner light" when The Lady's prayers are answered by "a sable cloud / Turn forth her silver lining on the night, / And casts a gleam over this tufted Grove"(223-225). Conscience functions as a "lantern unto [The Lady's] fete, and a light unto [her]

path,”<sup>54</sup> both physically and spiritually, guiding her through the literal and spiritual darkness of the wood, allowing her to judge the actions, deeds, and words of others, and supporting her through the trial of her virtue.

This inner light, connected as it is to a knowledge of right action as determined by God, necessitated self-knowledge. William Perkins describes the inseparability of self-knowledge and conscience in *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience* (1606): “First, because when a man knowes or thinks anything, by meanes of Conscience, he knows what he knows & thinks. Secondly, because by it, man knowes that thing of himselfe, which God also knowes of him . . . Therefor [Conscience] is nothing els but a part of the understanding, whereby a man knowes what he thinks, what he wills and desires, as also in what manner he knoweth, thinketh, or willeth, either good or evill” (44). In other words, one has to know oneself and know what one knows in order not to mistake lying for honesty, or inversions of scripture for scriptural truths.

In a sixteenth-century tract entitled *The Doctor and Student, or Dialogues between a Doctor of Divinity and a Student in the Laws of England*, common lawyer Christopher St. German also emphasizes the application of “science or knowledge” in order to “judge of the particular acts of man” (D<sup>r</sup>). We can see an example of knowledge and wisdom used to judge particular circumstances at the close of Anger’s pamphlet when she presents us with the “Laberinth” that lies at the end of men’s “faire promises,” where nothing is what it seems. Like the dark wood in which wander the route of Comus’s monsters in Milton’s masque, Anger’s labyrinth must be negotiated

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<sup>54</sup> *Geneva Bible* Ps. 119.105.

with the guiding light of conscience, as only conscience allows her to “judge the particular acts of man” and thus tell the difference between Follie, Vice, Mischiefe, Lust, Deceite, and Pride, when they are dressed as Fancie, Vertue, Modestie, Love, Truemeaning, and Handsomnes (C4<sup>v</sup>). The women pamphlet writers and Milton’s Lady all suggest that to adhere to a social ideal may be to fail to act in accordance with God, to fail adequately to know the self, and, thus, to fail to judge properly particular circumstances such as the labyrinth Anger describes, or another’s particular acts.

When Milton places *The Lady* outside of, or in contention with, the paradigm of passive, silent, and therefore chaste, woman, he explores how simply adopting the silent ideal—to recall the language of the *Areopagitica*—is to be an “unexercised,” “blank vertue” (213). Without the exercise of one’s virtue, individual women would remain untried, and there would also be no opportunity for the degraded attackers of such women as these pamphlet writers to open themselves to God’s Word and thus the purifying effects of their own trials.

Because there is a “trial” enclosed in the defense genre, as Margaret Ferguson has shown, the writer of the defense can establish a ground within which she can challenge her opponent “face to face” as each party seeks to produce and reproduce cultural norms and practices. Each of the writers, *The Lady*, and the men they argue against seek to define the humoral valence of speech; that is, whose speech is considered “hot” and what sort of heat characterizes that speech. As was considered previously, the women pamphlet writers follow the dictates of holy speech. In so doing, they use the defense genre itself as an example of the trials they undergo, and in each case they reveal that their tongues are, as Perkins describes, “touched with a coale

from the Alter of GOD; and . . . inflamed with the fire of Gods Spirit” (E6<sup>r-v</sup>), while the tongues of their male attackers have been “kindled by the *fire of Hell*. . . and set them on fire to all manner of mischief” (E6<sup>r-v</sup>). Thus, each of the women’s trials discloses the degraded state of the attacker, simultaneously presenting him with an occasion that allows for his possible salvation and conversion through conversation, discourse. These moments of possible conversion are the moments that ultimately demonstrate that each woman’s chastity resides in her conscience.

In this section, I first look at Anger’s “anger,” Sowernam’s “arraignment,” and Munda’s “purge” as salient instances of trial for both participants in the debate about women. And second, I explore in detail the debates between The Lady and Comus as a site of trial for both parties, wherein The Lady’s conscience or the Word of God inside serves as a light that guides her through her difficult negotiations and also has the potential to transform Comus into something more human.

Jane Anger begins her *Protection for Women* by explaining that it is the emotion of choler or anger that has motivated her to write. It is this anger that proves both a trial to herself and to her attacker. Indeed, Anger specifically uses forensic language in the first dedication of her pamphlet in order to request the patience of her audience of gentlewomen: she knows she risks a good deal in writing out of a “collerick vaine,” because of the associations that early modern people had with an excess of choler. Early modern Galenist Nicholas Culpeper characterizes the person with a choleric complexion as “naturally quick-witted, bold, no way shame-fac’d, furious, hasty, quarrelsome, fraudulent, eloquent, courageous, stout-hearted . . .” (F3<sup>v</sup>). Anger appeals to the generosity of her audience, asking that they “shew [them]selves

defenders of the defender's title" rather than "complainantes of the plaintifes wrong" (A4<sup>r</sup>). She asks, in effect, that her readers function as both judge and jury in the trial that she erects, both for herself and the "Late Venerian" against whom she writes.

She opens her second dedication to "All Women in general, and the gentle Reader whatsoever" as though beginning opening arguments in a courtroom by immediately announcing the problem: "Fie on the falshoode of men" (A4<sup>r</sup>), whose falsehoods lead to the destruction of innocent women. She names the punishment she would have such men suffer: to be bridled for their lies and slanders, and then banished from London and the very soil and "sanctuary" of England by a confluence of natural forces—the "streames of the channels," icy stones upon which they slide, the "waies steep like AEtina, & every blast a Whyrl-wind puffed out of Boreas his long throat that these may hasten their passage to the Devils haven" (A4<sup>r-v</sup>). What she describes is lying, false men purged from the body politic, swimming, sliding, falling and blowing all the way to hell: she calls, in effect, for their destruction by the very earth itself, at which point they would make a swift journey to the Devil.

Anger evokes, with this description of the body politic as a "sanctuary" opposed by the "devils haven," an image of England as an edenic place where only chosen people should dwell. Such surfeiters as the "late Venerian" defile the purity of the body of England, sickening it from the inside out. Anger's solution is a purgative. In this way, she reminds her reader of the dangers that slanders and other ungodly behavior and words pose for the entire commonwealth, simultaneously offering her hot anger as the purgative force that will rid the English body politic of its pestilence and return the commonwealth to a temperate balance.

Jane Anger first apologizes for the ways that her readers may rely on a conventional understanding of “choler” when reading her text, but quickly alters the nature of her “choler,” constructing its heat not as a force that demonstrates the imbalances in her own body, but as the force that will rid the larger body of England of its disease. In her depiction, the emotion of anger functions to “stretch the vaines of her braines, the stringes of her fingers, and the listes of her modestie, to answer [men’s] Surfeitings: Yes truly” (A4<sup>r</sup>). The heat of anger that animates Anger’s text as purgative functions to expand the reach of her text and its cleansing effect far beyond the boundaries assigned by feminine modesty, boundaries that would serve to limit the movements of a woman’s thoughts, fingers, and voice. Jane Anger thus uses the heat of anger to expand her capability, her capacity, and her influence. Whether her name is ultimately a pseudonym or not, her “anger” nevertheless affords her expansive power in order that she not be limited by the flesh and blood body of a single “weak and feeble” woman. In much the same way, Marprelate’s parodic body is not confined to a fallible writer’s body. In the cases of both the women pamphlet writers and Marprelate, the body evoked by the pseudonym or a name such as “Anger” offers both protection and power. Indeed Anger seems almost to be conflated with her text: “It is Anger that did write it.”<sup>55</sup> Anger is her text and her text is anger itself.

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<sup>55</sup> Linda Woodbridge regards Anger’s rhetorical control as indicating a lack of passion, suggesting rhetorical facility and genuine feeling are mutually exclusive. I propose, however, that to write in an impassioned manner that might indicate, to use Woodbridge’s words, “hot tears” at the time of writing would have likely been regarded by readers as indicating a humoral imbalance of the worst sort. Anger knows that part of the power of her “angry” argument is that it is controlled, thus challenging the stereotype of the inherently voluble and therefore disorderly, promiscuous woman. The women pamphlet writers carefully utilize the conventions of the debate about woman in order to challenge the stereotyping they argue against.

Nicholas Culpeper in *Composita: or, A Synopsis of The chiefest Compositions in use now with Galenists* offers a description of the nature and workings of purgatives that is helpful in reading Anger's hot opening arguments and her choleric pamphlet. He explains that purges work to draw the surfeit of a particular humor from the "remote parts of the body"; because purges are almost always "hot" and "have a certain gravity in them. . . it makes nature hasten expulsion" (F2<sup>f</sup>). A purgative thus addresses the humoral imbalance in the body by "bringing forth" an excess of humors "some by clensing, some by sweating" (F<sup>v</sup>). In each of these cases, the purgative medicine must have the same qualities as the humor that it is meant to draw off: "every like drawes its like. . . [Purges] are all of the same natures with those humours they purge" (F2<sup>f</sup>). Anger's purgative text is necessarily hot and angry so as to attract to it the excess choler residing in slandering men, and thus, the excess choler in the body politic. Because Anger's hot speeches are holy ones, she is purified by the purgative nature of her text while the men she argues against are violently purged.

We can see an example of the sort of men Anger speaks to and about in the figure of a man reacting to female speech and argument in the margins of Rachel Speght's *A Mouzell for Melastomas*.<sup>56</sup> As Clarke and Woodbridge have shown, all of the pamphlets with female signatures more or less recycle the arguments waged by Speght, precisely because they all argue within the well-defined conventions of the

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<sup>56</sup> Lewalski, "Female Text, Male Reader Response."

debate about women. As Lewalski argues in “Female Text, Male Reader Response,” the marginalia writer’s misogynist response was “not untypical” (137).<sup>57</sup>

The man who writes in the margins of Speght’s tract reacts to her as he reacts to her text: with disgust, anger, and the threat of violence. His comments reveal that he is deeply offended not just by what she writes, but that she writes at all. Many of his comments suggest sexual violence: “What? Throwing stones? Give mee her arse” (151). In response to her remark that it is the actions of an audacious “usurper” when a man judges of a woman’s thoughts, he answers: “Her thoughts manie times looke out at her Eyes, & come fourth in her wordes. Besides you may if you please, enter into her minde by her bodyes gate: and have them all, sutch as they are” (158). In this passage, the marginalia writer voices the very commonplace against which each of these women writers argues: an open mouth indicates an open body.

Because speech was a male domain, for a woman to enter that domain and speak with authority caused a blurring of the distinctions between the categories of man and woman. For Speght and the other pamphlet writers, this is necessary in order to gain greater social mobility and enter into territory reserved for men. Each woman who speaks against unquestioned male subjection establishes herself as an individual voice, as both part of, but also different from, the larger categories of good or bad women. For women to speak, then, not only begins to develop a body of “citations” or stories that depict women differently than men’s stories about women, but also

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<sup>57</sup> See also Edward Shorter, *A History of Women’s Bodies* (New York: Basic Books, 1982) for a description of the ways in which men’s “limitless sexual access” of women was often brutal, without feeling, and “out of [a woman’s] control” (xii, 3). He also explores evidence that suggests that wife beating was ubiquitous and discussed casually or joked about in songs and proverbs (4-5).

demonstrates the woman speaker's move toward self-possession. Her thoughts and her body are her own personal property. As we see in the marginalia writer's remarks, however, his response is to put Speght as a writer and woman right back into the role of a woman as possession, through the act of actual or figurative rape. Through slander and physical force, the offended man reestablishes gender and thus power difference between himself and "woman" by silencing the speaking woman, repositioning her firmly in the place woman was supposed to occupy in relation to man: beneath him.

It may come as no surprise, perhaps, in light of men's angry responses to women who articulate a citation of female self-possession and power, that each of the trials erected by the women pamphlet writers ends with the figurative purging of men: through anger, through arraignment and hanging, or through violent physical purification in the form of textual and herbal purgatives.

Sowernam's pamphlet, like Anger's, presents us with a scene of trial in which the reader functions as both jury and judge. Where Anger's anger is the forensic medium by which good men are threshed from bad, Sowernam erects an actual courtroom, bringing Swetnam into it to be indicted in the presence of Sowernam, the female figure of "Conscience," "the judgesses, the jurie, the Accuser, and all others, most of them of the foemine gender" (D4<sup>r</sup>).<sup>58</sup> Sowernam takes it upon herself to read

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<sup>58</sup> The arraignment of Swetnam was dramatized in comedy called *Swetnam the Woman Hater, Arraigned by Women*. For a critical edition of the play, see Coryl Crandall, ed., *Swetnam the Woman-hater: The Controversy and the Play A Critical Edition With Introduction and Notes* (Purdue University Studies, 1969). For analyses of connections between the play and Sowernam's pamphlet, see Ann Rosalind Jones, "Counterattacks on the 'Bayter of Women': Three Pamphleteers of the Early Seventeenth Century," eds. Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty S. Travitsky (Amherst, Massachusetts: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1990): 45-62. For a discussion of pseudonymity and anonymity in the debate about women, and *Swetnam the Woman Hater* in

the charges against Swetnam, chiefly among them all of the “objections which are most materiall, which our adversarie hath vomited out against women” (E4<sup>v</sup>). She then rehearses again, but this time in Swetnam’s presence, all that she has gone over before, enumerating for him his faults and errors. He, meanwhile, remains silent.

Sowernam closes her pamphlet by offering Swetnam an “antidote” for his “venomous infection,” beginning with “time” and if that doesn’t work then he should try “hunger,” and if that too fails, then “a halter” (F4<sup>r</sup>). What she suggests is the remedy for shrewishness, or various methods for “cooling” the unruly tongue.<sup>59</sup> She further offers other remedies that also focus on the need for him to use his reason in order to control his own appetites, reminding him that the trials he may endure at the hands of “such bad women as there are” should, rather than inciting his rage, “exercise his patience. . . for all crosses are inflicted either for punishment of sinnes, or for exercise of vertues” (G2<sup>r</sup>). Thus, Sowernam, like Anger, ultimately sees the trial, or the cross that Swetnam has to bear, as both a punishment for his moral and physical transgressions against women, and also as the way he may be cleansed of his past abuses.

Constantia Munda also offers her text as a purge that has the power to cleanse a foul man of his foulness. Munda is, however, rather more explicit in presenting her text as purgative than Anger or Sowernam, and indicates her project immediately by

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particular, see Valerie Wayne, “Dearth of an Author: *Anonymities’ Allies* and Swetnam the Woman Hater,” *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens: Women’s Alliances in Early Modern England*, eds. Susan Frye and Karen Robertson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) 221-240.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew* in which Petruccio uses each of these punishments to cool his wife and “tame” her.

entitling her defense *The Worming of a mad Dogge: or Aesoppe for Cerberus, ialor of Hell*. Munda, like Gosson, Marprelate, and to a lesser degree Anger, presents herself as a physician who can identify the botch in the body and offer a prescription for returning the body to health. In her title and subsequently through the bulk of her pamphlet, Munda attacks Swetnam's body as a way to attack his argument. She describes him as a dog whose argument is akin to vomit, to which he returns repeatedly in order to re-ingest his own filth (D<sup>r-v</sup>). He is not just any dog, however, but the three-headed "hell hound, Cerberus." What he needs, she diagnoses, is powerful medicine, a purgative of tremendous force:

You therefore hauing snapt off that same head, were by the secret operation of that infernal substance, conuerted into the same essence: And that may serue as one reason that I tearme you *Cerberus* the Iaylor of hell. . . that which is spoke of the whole, is spoken of euery part; and euery limbe of the deuill is an homogeneall part (E2<sup>v</sup>).

Munda uses the commonplace early modern notion that you are what you eat, or you become that which you ingest, to show how taking into the body, in any way, that which is "infernal" serves to convert (as we saw in *The Lady's brothers'* description of the same process) an ill-disposed person into something equally infernal. Hidden in her description, however, is the idea that ingesting the purge or the moral words of Aesop she offers may also have a direct effect on the body and mind. Her purge has the potential of transforming Swetnam from foul to something less foul, even clean.

Because Swetnam is a beast, a dog that eats itself and so is constantly reifying its infernal qualities, Munda's purge is meant to ensure that his "digested poison" does

not contaminate others. The way to administer her remedy is to block up his orifices, using the notion that you must treat an imbalance with itself so that balance will be restored:

dammed up your mouth, and sealed up your iawes lest your venomed teeth like madde dogges should damage the credit of many, nay all innocent damosels; so no doubt, if your scurrilous and depraving tongue breake prison, and falls to licking up your vomited poison, to the end you may squirt out the same with more pernicious hurt, assure your selfe there shall not be wanting store of Helebore to scoure the sinke of, your tumultuous gorge, at least we will cram you with Antidotes and Catapotions, that if you swell not till you burst, yet your digested poison shall not be contagious (D<sup>r-v</sup>).

Munda concludes that in spite of the powerful moral remedy she offers, Swetnam seems beyond help: while his disease may destroy him, her textual and herbal purgative is meant to have a neutralizing effect on the poison he spews at women, and prevent it from infecting other men.

It is ultimately The Lady who offers another solution to the defiled and defiling man: religious conversion. While the women pamphlet writers' arguments against their male attackers are never quite so overt as The Lady in their announcement that chastity resides in the soul, in the "freedom of the mind," they nevertheless each articulate chastity as residing in the conscience. Each writer in similar ways argues that women's words, like men's, reveal their characters, their particular selves, and thus their chastity

We can see an example of the necessity for feminine speech both as self-defense and as revelatory of a woman's chastity (or lack thereof) in *The Lady's* debates with Comus and her attempts to protect herself from succumbing to his magical illusions, his deceitful rhetoric, and his sexual advances. Moreover, we see the importance of disarticulating chastity from the physical body in order that the unwanted attacks by men may undo physical purity but not spiritual purity.

At the beginning of Milton's masque, *The Lady* conflates chastity with virginity. Here is the common early modern ideal we saw above: an inviolate body and a closed mouth are indicative of a chaste woman. By the close of the masque, however, *The Lady* (and her brothers), like the women pamphlet writers in their treatises, disarticulate virginity and chastity. *The Lady* makes explicit this disconnection when she proclaims that Comus "can't not touch the freedom of my mind/though my corporeal rinde thou has immanacled/while Heaven sees good" (663-5).

*The Lady* rejects the reality of the "fantasies" and "calling shapes" brought forth by Comus's magic dust, and her rejection recalls the biblical declaration that "whosoever wil imbrace Gods worde aright, must abhorre all fantasies & imaginacions both of himself & others."<sup>60</sup> Paul Stevens argues that Comus's "magic structures" are only as strong as the victim's "flesh is weak" and, moreover, "the real ability to transform substance lies not with the magician, but with his victims. The orient liquor,

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<sup>60</sup> *Geneva Bible* Ps 119.113. note a.

unlike the magic dust, cannot have its effect imposed—it must be chosen.”<sup>61</sup> That The Lady seems aware that there are images which “throng into her memory” from without, however, seems to contradict Stevens’ notion that The Lady is necessarily a passive victim of the effects of the magic dust. Whether The Lady sees these calling shapes as her own “imagination” or outside illusions, she must choose to reject their calls and beckonings as false. Evidence for this lies in her reliance on four types of Godly aid: Faith, Hope, Chastity, and “strong siding champion Conscience” to help her negotiate the “beckning shadowes” Comus creates with his magic dust when he first attempts to make The Lady vulnerable and receptive to his desires (212, 207).

There has been critical attention to and agreement about the notion that “pure-ey’d Faith, white-handed Hope, / And thou unblemish’t form of Chastity” (213-215) have as their precursor Spenser’s *Speranza*, *Fidela*, and *Charissa*.<sup>62</sup> What is disputed is the reason for the “startling” substitution of chastity for charity.<sup>63</sup> Some critics suggest

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<sup>61</sup> Paul Stevens, “Magic Structures: Comus and the Illusions of Fancy,” *Milton Quarterly* 17.3 (October, 1983): 84-89, 84.

<sup>62</sup> Fletcher 212-13; Hollis 161-2; See Kilgour 319 for a discussion of ways Milton alludes to Spenser in *Comus* and *Areopagitica*; McGuire 138-40; Ross 195-6.

<sup>63</sup> See Julie Kim in “The Lady’s Unladylike Struggle. . .” who reads Milton as allowing The Lady to put up a good fight, but she argues that Milton doesn’t let The Lady win the debate—at least physically: “despite The Lady’s vigorous protests—usually in debates with Comus—she cannot eradicate the notion that female sexuality is a commodity to be hoarded, borrowed, exchanged or spent by men” (1) Kim’s arguments about The Lady’s bodily entrapment often ignores the degree to which women’s bodies and words were linked. Kim disarticulates The Lady from her physical circumstances, consequently regarding the debate between the Lady and Comus as largely theoretical. See Leonard 134, who argues that The Lady, in rejecting Comus even if he should present her with “Juno’s draught,” does not reject “all future offers.” Maryann McGuire in *Milton’s Puritan Masque* also divorces The Lady’s choice to invoke chastity rather than charity from her vulnerable circumstances in

that the Lady's refusal to treat Comus with a Christian sense of "charity indicates a rejection of sexuality resulting from a myopic concentration on her chastity as virginity."<sup>64</sup> The Lady's rejection of charity in her dealings with Comus is less self-involvement than self-preservation. She can ill afford to be so generous to any man she meets in a dark wood, much less an ill-meaning dissembler such as Comus.

The Lady's rejection of Comus is specific, and not only can't be separated from her status as of noble birth, but also cannot be separated from her status as chaste, young virgin alone in the woods and very much in danger. Comus is not a man, but a monster who threatens physical, sexual, and clearly moral, violence should he succeed in his efforts to penetrate her reason and so persuade her to consent to his lascivious

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Comus's wood. McGuire sees chastity in *Comus* as a conflation of chastity and charity, which "tone[s] down the allegorized sexuality of Spenser's charity/chastity," within a Puritan religious ideology that saw charity "as an unyielding love of God that looks to a complete union with him and to personal salvation" (138, 139-40). Within McGuire's framework, charity becomes linked to, and almost interchangeable with, chastity, because any movement away from the beloved Christ constituted sin as fornication, but Charity is nevertheless "divorced . . . from sexuality" (141-42). Malcolm Ross argues in *Poetry & Dogma: The Transfiguration of Eucharistic Symbols in Seventeenth Century English Poetry* that the poem is "completely lacking in the Christian sense of charity, in that love of God which contains the love of one's neighbor. The Lady is wholly self-regarding" (196).

<sup>64</sup> For a discussion of Comus as representative of the Lady's rejected corporeality see Oram, esp. 130. He regards her immobility at the end of the Masque as self-imposed, as a trance-like state attained as a result of her vehement rejection of corporeality and defense of virginity similar to that of Milton's vision of Daphne as a virgin who protects at all costs her chastity by choosing to be a tree. Indeed, he sees the Lady as in a state just prior to a complete rejection of the body, a leaving of or ascent from the body, that is contrary to what is required of someone who attains true immortality—a chaste life lived *in-the-world*. See Shullenberg 209 who proposes that Milton's "cult of virginity" is a "reformed theology of the body" in which ". . .the body provides the foundation for a social theology. . . in that chastity is an exercise in relationship, with both God and others."

desires. What Comus offers is not exploration, liberation, and movement, but death.

The Lady knows this.

While The Lady has not encountered Comus when she makes her invocation, and does not “know” him for what he is until she sees the artistry of his decadent castle, her substitution of chastity for charity forecloses the very sort of lustful coupling Comus desires—even before he sees her. Comus can be seen to represent the contaminating force of one who counterfeits an acceptable social category in an effort both to “increase” his own lineage and to be inducted into The Lady’s. Patricia Parker’s exploration of “dilation and hybridization” is helpful in reading how such an “engraftment of . . . newer types onto the older stock and traditions of an aristocratic England produced [a] hybridization,” which ultimately fails to raise the counterfeiter and lowers the position of the aristocracy.<sup>65</sup> Parker outlines, moreover, the degree to which verbal engagement between a man and a woman, what she calls “verbal sparring,” was seen as “establish[ing] an association between . . . words, and the dilation that is simultaneously the generational, monetary, and verbal fulfillment of the command to increase and multiply” (191).<sup>66</sup> The success of Comus’s disguise, insofar as it allows him a level of access to The Lady, provides him with a certain social territory in which to talk to The Lady, and, as Parker argues, “the extension of [words], as of life, is linked with the creation of an intervening space” (188). The dilation of the Lady through Comus’s seductive rhetoric is made even more concrete when we read their verbal sparring through the lens of humoralism—he means for his words literally

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<sup>65</sup> Parker, “Dilation and Inflation. . .” 214.

<sup>66</sup> On verbal sparring, see also Greenblatt, “Fiction and Friction.”

to open her. As long as The Lady is within Comus's power, the viewer is faced with imagining the "hybrid" issue that would result were she to fall victim to his verbal and physical ensnarement, or were he to force her to become his "queen." In this way, Comus embodies the disgust and horror with which such "hybridization" was likely viewed. The potential he has to contaminate The Lady and her lineage is clear not only in his "person," but also through the "imbruting" transformation process a tainted Lady would undergo.

As a result, through most of the masque, a liberating conscience is specifically linked with chastity *as* virginity. This serves two functions: first, initially The Lady's investment in her chastity is necessarily an investment in her virginity, for she is an unmarried virgin. At this point, her virginity *must* be safeguarded in order for her to remain chaste. Second, as John Rogers points out in "The Enclosure of Virginity: The Poetics of Sexual Abstinence in the English Revolution," protecting her virginity also serves as a deepening of the rhetoric of self-possession and free will to act in accord with the Word of God inside, where she controls what happens to her mind and her body: "The language of virginal self-enclosure, a discourse that seems at first blush to be firmly cloistered away from the struggles of partisan politics, can be seen to drift almost imperceptibly into a discursive association with the emergent liberal rhetoric of individual self-ownership" (139).<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> It is precisely around this language of conscience, and self-possession through virginity, that we can see the point at which anti-Laudian, other political discourses, and the language of male/female interaction and relations, converge. For a discussion of the ways in which "[e]ven the language of conscience was often a language of dissociation, so the language of obedience was that of association," see Donna B. Hamilton, *Shakespeare and the Politics of Protestant England*, (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1992) 184. On virginity/chastity see also Edward

It is The Lady's self-contained enclosure that Comus hopes to breach, "dilate," and open to his will. Within this paradigm, The Lady's initial conflation of chastity with virginity is not necessarily the "death" such a conflation was commonly argued to be for a marriageable young person, or a refusal to engage in appropriate means of production.<sup>68</sup> Rather, her rejection of Comus is specific. To consent to Comus's offers would be a death far worse than to die without issue: he offers her the death of her reason and her relationship with, and knowledge of, God, the demise of her pure and virtuous soul. A life without God would be seen by The Lady as far worse than to die without producing more monsters with Comus.<sup>69</sup> The Lady realizes that chastity of the mind—a purity of the Conscience that is filled with the Word of God—is a much more true measure of purity than virginity.

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Taylor, *Milton's Poetry: Its Development in Time* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1979).

<sup>68</sup> Comus makes a commonplace argument here. See William Shakespeare, Sonnets 1-13 particularly. Comus's lustful self-interest, however, underlies his argument that the Lady should not hoard herself for herself; whereas Shakespeare's injunction to multiply thyself requests the subject of the sonnets to transcend his own self-interest. See Kim for a discussion of the economic aspects of Comus's injunction that the lady "enjoy herself and exercise her power to circulate her wealth [in beauty] and sexuality." Kim argues that Comus's arguments that the Lady choose to circulate herself undermine the patriarchal hierarchy that gives male relatives control over the circulation of a female relatives "wealth/sexuality" (13). See also John Leonard, "Saying 'No' to Freud. . ." 135 for a discussion of how Comus's use of "current" to discuss the circulation of The Lady's beauty and body suggests that he means for her not only to "circulate" herself by means of progeny, but also to circulate promiscuously amongst the members of his rout. See Nancy Weitz Miller for a discussion of the relationship between the Lady's beautiful body and Comus's desire, a desire that will consume her beauty, because such loveliness "demands" that it be used by others (60-61).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. *Geneva Bible* Ps 119.137note d: "So that the life of man without knowledge of God is death."

Instead of keeping her mouth shut to ensure that nothing sinful enters, The Lady, like the women pamphlet writers, rejects silence as a measure of her purity. She refuses to be silenced, even when Comus with a wave of his wand, threatens to fix her to a chair and to “chain up” all her nerves in alabaster. His threat is enough to immobilize her, and, he no doubt hopes, her resistance with it. Both because and in spite of her physical vulnerability, The Lady insists that, “Thou canst not touch the freedom of my minde / With all thy charms, although this corporal rinde / Thou haste immanacl’d, while Heav’n sees good” (663-65). Implicit in her comment is that she will remain pure, her mind free while she is connected to God no matter what Comus does to her “immanacl’d” body. In this way, she again evokes notions of conscience, through which she knows herself and is in possession of her thoughts. She will not be bent to Comus’s will.

Comus, following what the women pamphlet writers repeatedly characterize as men’s lust-driven desire to conquer and ruin women through flattery, deceit, false declarations, and promises of love, attempts to gain The Lady’s consent to become part of his “herd.” His “course,” as we saw previously, is to try repeatedly to penetrate her arguments, to engage her in verbal intercourse. To this end, he argues in diverse ways that he is offering her something that will not only bring her pleasure, and allow her to explore the laws of nature, but will also make her generous. To do this, he uses his own knowledge of conscience to try to persuade The Lady, but as with his other dissemblings, he inverts right action to suit his own purposes, and all of his reasonings

are ultimately based on a perversion of the seven errors of conscience as they are described by St. German.<sup>70</sup>

Comus begins his attempts to “dilate” The Lady, or argue her into consent, by defining her position as contrary to the laws of nature. Because a right employment of conscience, as William Perkins asserts, rests on an understanding of natural law, Comus must pervert these laws in order successfully to trick a judgment illuminated by conscience. Comus begins with the first “Error of Conscience,” described by St. German as “ignorance: & that is when a man knoweth not what he ought to do” (D2<sup>r</sup>). Thus, Comus tries to convince The Lady that she is ignorant of what he offers or what she should do in response to his offers: “Why are you vext Lady? why do you frown? / Here dwel no frowns, nor anger, from these gates / Sorrow flies farr: See here be all the pleasures / That fancy can beget on youthfull thoughts. . .” (666-69). He tells her that she has not acted properly, that his offer will free her not only from his chair but also from her own ignorance about the blissful experiences he promises. What he assumes is that The Lady lacks self-knowledge and therefore cannot correctly “know what she knows” in order to determine “fancy” from God’s truth. But The Lady has already recognized successfully the illusions of “fantasy” in Comus’s magic dust, and her refusal to concede his point suggests that the Word of God inside her gives her all the “conversation in the worlde”<sup>71</sup> she requires in order to know right from wrong.

Perhaps because his argument has no effect, Comus tries to convince The Lady that he knows her better than she knows herself, and, therefore, she knows what is best

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<sup>70</sup> St. German D2<sup>r</sup>–D3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>71</sup> *Geneva Bible* 2Cor 1.12.

for her, implying he will set her right with regard to the dictates of Nature, relying on the error of conscience called “Negligence, or a failure to “search [her] own conscience, or enquire the truth of [an]other” (D2<sup>f</sup>): “Why should you be so cruel to your self, / And to those dainty limms which nature lent / For gentle usage, and soft delicacy?” (179-181). Here, the truth is clearly Comus’s version of the truth in which The Lady is open enough to allow him to enter her, rhetorically and, ultimately, physically. She knows, however, that refusing him is not self-cruelty, but self-protection.

Comus continues frantically to heap argument upon argument, as though the speed with which he moves from one argument to another might resemble Godly zeal. We know, however, from Perkins and the women pamphlet writers, that a frenzied argument is evidence not of zeal but of “forwardness” and a lack of both reason and judgment, and thus evidence of intemperance. We have already seen that speech was believed to be the very picture of a person’s conscience or soul. Therefore, a rhetorical strategy of copia, as engaged in by Anger’s Surfeiter, Swetnam, and Comus, reveals each of them to be at the very least, according to Perkins, a “foole” who “powreth out all his mind” and at the worst, “wicked” because each “speaketh forward things” (Perkins, *Direction* 20, 25).

Comus next accuses her of putting herself above any other consideration *and*, “invert[ing] the cov’nants of [Nature’s] trust / And harshly deal[ing] like an ill borrower / With that [she] receive’d on other terms” (679-680).<sup>72</sup> Certainly his

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<sup>72</sup> See Hubell 196 who argues that the purpose of the mask was not the “glorification” of “society” but its “restructuring.” He sees this moment in the mask as representing Comus and his rout as engaging in the sort of conspicuous consumption exhibited by

accusation, if she wasn't able to see and enact the Word inside her, is meant to suggest that she is guilty of a failure to follow God's command to go forth and multiply, or the fourth error of conscience that St. German describes as, "singularity," or "when a man followeth his own will" at the expense of the common good (D2<sup>f</sup>). When The Lady is unconvinced by Comus's allegations, he tries a less esoteric tack. Perhaps she requires nourishment, or drink: he argues that she is subject to the human desires and needs, ". . . by which all mortal frailty must subsist, / Refreshment after toil, ease after pain, / That have been tir'd all day without repast, / And timely rest have wanted, but fair Virgin / This will restore all soon" (683-89).<sup>73</sup> The Lady knows that what Comus offers is not restoration of what she has gone without, but rather he means to use her for his own selfish pleasures. He accuses her of what he is guilty of himself: "Singularity"—he puts his own "good" above any other good.

The Lady's response to Comus's dissembling offers is argument. Every time he attempts to find and penetrate her frailties, she counters with an alternative position, demonstrating that she *does* know her own mind, and can distinguish his ill usage of conscience from her right understanding of the same: "I would not taste thy treasonous offer; none / But such as are good men can give good things, / And that which is not good, is not delicious / To a wel-govern'd and wise appetite" (701-5). We know from the Jacobean court.

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<sup>73</sup> The temptation of food and drink was also undergone by Jesus in the desert. See *Paradise Regained*, 4.171-2. For a discussion of the parallels between these temptation scenes, see John Shawcross, *John Milton: The Self and the World* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993) 50-51 and William Shullenberger, "Milton's Lady and Lady Milton: Chastity, Prophecy, and Gender in A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle," *Fault Lines and Controversies in the Study of Seventeenth-Century English Literature*, eds. Ted-Larry Pebworth and Claude J. Summers, (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2002) especially 216-7.

Perkins's *Government of the Tongue* that a governed and wise appetite is motivated by holiness, moved not by intemperance but by God.

The picture Comus paints of The Lady so disgusts and offends her that she has to argue against it, to replace his drawing with her own. Comus works to unlock the Lady's appetites with his seductive rhetoric, so that she might give in to desire and taste his licorish bait. She refuses, however, to relinquish control of her appetites, proving her difference from him, even as he seeks to elide that difference.

Where magic and disguise bought him time, his argument allows him some measure of access and The Lady begins to talk when she "had not thought to have unloc't [her] lips / In this unallow'd air, but that this Jugler / Would think to charm my judgement, as mine eyes / Obtruding false rules pranckt in reasons garb" (756-59).

Instead of drawing a picture of him the way she would like him to be—his tactic with her—she mirrors his character for him: either he has discarded his disguise or she sees through his "charm" and "juggling" magic tricks, the illusions of his "deer Wit and gay Rhetorick" (790). His words, instead of charming and thus transforming her, are shown by The Lady rather to reveal Comus as foul. His ideas and words are as vile as his thoughts, his thoughts as debauched and beastly as his body. While he may have first deceived her eyes with his disguise, he cannot deceive her judgment, the intelligible aspect of her being that is ever connected to God.

In response to Comus's offer to drink, The Lady argues against him more vehemently than she has previously done. In response, perhaps, to her own state of arousal about her "pure cause," she makes clear that only *it*, and not Comus's advances, will "kindle [her] rap't spirits" (794). Because heat registers as the salient

difference between their positions, where he is hot and intemperate and she is cool and refined, the closer they get to a point of conversion for one of them, the closer they become in temperature: he starts to shiver and even though “she had not thought to have unloc’t her lips,” her “rap’t spirits” are “kindled,” “To such a flame of sacred vehemence, / That dumb things would be mov’d to sympathize, / And the brute Earth would lend her nerves and shake, / Till all thy magick structures rear’d so high, / Were shatter’d into heaps o’re thy false head” (794-99). The Lady may be hot and fiery, but it is a “sacred” flame that rouses her, the fire of God’s love about which Perkins and other divines speak.<sup>74</sup> The Lady is not excited by Comus or his offers. Rather than being “dilated” to receive Comus’s arguments either intellectually or corporeally, The Lady’s conscience is only open to good things, to the “zeale to imbrace [and preach] God’s word.”<sup>75</sup> Comus realizes that “She fables not. . .” (800), demonstrating not only surprise, but that for the first time, perhaps, he has heard her. As a result, he experiences a “cold shuddring dew” which “Dips [him] all o’re” (802-3).

While the power of Comus’s “loose words” and “foul talk” potentially have the power to “imbrute” The Lady, “loose” divinity from her soul, and transform her visage, and thus her body, into one with which he can consort, The Lady’s chaste influence also has the potential to transform Comus from beastly to humane. Indeed, he becomes so cold that moisture from the air condenses on his skin! The Lady’s revelation of him

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<sup>74</sup> See Shullenberger 314-15 for a discussion of the Lady’s “flame of sacred vehemence” as articulating her identification with Christ within a “Reformation piety” that moved *Imitatio Christi* from the private realm into the public realm.

<sup>75</sup> *Geneva Bible* Ps 119.105.b.

as profane gives him the opportunity to move from profane to pure. Indeed, Elyot and Culpeper would likely diagnose his sudden chill and accompanying sweat as a spontaneous purging process wherein the Lady's words function as a hot purgative used to draw Comus's hotness out of his body—through his very pores and words—he cannot speak again “hotly” until he collects himself. While his sheep herder costume was but an external show, this point in the debate is the moment when he might be changed from the inside; he withdraws, however, into his “course” because the changes suggested would entail the destruction of Comus' life, his world, his self. Just as the Lady would be transformed by sin, so Comus would be transformed by allowing divinity to shine a light into his soul—he would be, as Perkins describes, born a new creature. He is unable to imagine a world outside of the dark one he inhabits, cannot “see” the light The Lady offers.<sup>76</sup> In an attempt to stop purging his intemperance and raise his temperature back to its comfortable level of excessive heat, Comus seeks to raise the tenor of his arguments, and “dissemble / And try [The Lady] yet more strongly” (805-6) just as she stops talking.<sup>77</sup> When she refuses to speak, he tries to

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<sup>76</sup> This moment recalls Ps 119.105.a: “Of our selves we are but darkenes, but can not see, except we be lightened with Gods worde.”

<sup>77</sup> Kilgour suggests that images of consumption, where people become what they take into their bodies is one of the central interests of the mask. She reads Comus's temptation and “seduction” of the Lady as “less overtly sexual than oral, and also aural” where the Lady, should she take in what he offers—both his rhetoric and his elixir, would become a “vessel for forces she may not be able to control” (323). See Robert White in “The Cup and the Wand as Archetypes in *Comus*” who looks at Comus's cup and wand within the context of literary history, concluding that both are representative of the two different types of sexuality at issue in the mask—God approved fertility or a sexuality characterized by selfish appetites and “destructive obsession” (24).

force his goblet between her lips in order to penetrate her body with his potion because he made no entry with his words.

At this point, the Attendant Spirit and The Lady's brothers arrive to save her, and Comus escapes without his cup but with his "charming rod" intact. We might expect The Lady to explain to the Attendant Spirit and her brothers what has happened to her, but she speaks not another word until Sabrina sprinkles her cool, purifying waters three times upon the "Lady's breast, fingers tip, rubied lip," and upon the "marble venom'd seat / Smear'd with gummies of glutenous heat" (914-917). Critical studies of *A Masque* have focused implicitly or explicitly on the connection between The Lady's professed chastity and virginity in light of her responses to Comus's overtures, especially as her responses may be used to interpret the meaning of the "glutinous heated gums" which keep her immobile in the chair.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> There are many critics who argue that the Lady is either complicit in or responsible for her status as immanacled in the chair, held fast by the "glutinous gums" even after Comus has fled: Jean-François Came in "More about Milton's Use of the Word 'Gums'" *Milton Quarterly* 9 (1975): 51-52, argues that Milton's clear distaste for glutinous gums (both in *A Masque* and *Paradise Lost*) and his presentation of the antidote as "cool and moist" drops of water from Sabrina's palms, indicate that Milton "feared stickiness which aroused dangerous yet too fascinating sensations" (52); J. W. Flosdort in "'Gums of Glutinous Heat': A Query" *Milton Quarterly* 7 (1973): 4-5, questions the nature and source of the glutinous gums in a way that seems to imply that they may result from The Lady's arousal; See Julie Kim, "The Lady's Unladylike Struggle: Redefining Patriarchal Boundaries in Milton's Comus," *Milton Studies* 35 (1997): 1-20, who suggests that Milton reifies The Lady's status as coinage by ensuring that she is safely returned to her father "intact." While Kim sees silence and chastity as linked, her main concern is the degree to which The Lady's lack of silence still does not mitigate her eventual status as trafficked woman. By focusing on the economic valence of The Lady, however, Kim seems to miss the larger socio-religious context in which The Lady's arguments register a level of value that is not necessarily economic, that is, linked to her sensible body rather than her intelligible body, even if it has economic implications.

See also Leonard in "Saying 'No' to Freud" for a response to Kerrigan's argument in the *Sacred Complex*, in which Leonard takes issue with the idea that The

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Lady is complicit in her own silence and paralysis and that she has, in effect, paralyzed herself; William Oram in “The Invocation of Sabrina,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 24.1 (1984): 131, sees The Lady as facing in Comus an unacknowledged, “irrational, appetitive part of herself” where she is, ultimately, “responsible for her own immobilization” (133); Hope A Parisi, in “From Woman Warrior to Warrior Reasoner: Lady Alice and Intellectual Freedom in *A Mask*,” also focuses on the disjunction between the Lady’s intellectual and physical circumstances. She too reads the Lady, to whom she refers as “Alice,” as complicit in her own immobilization at the close of the mask. In her reading, “Alice” chooses a rejection of her body:

Immobilized in her chair, Alice embodies physical stasis, virtue forever frozen in time. What has her enchantment by Comus effected? It has brought about the arrest of her body from movement, desire, and change. Like the saints of icons and statues, she is preserved from the flux of time. Simultaneously, patriarchal society, having fixed her as image, rests safe from the danger of her sexuality” (103).

What Parisi suggests here is that ‘Alice’ has been forced by her culture to choose the rejection of her body over an exploration or expression of her “dangerous” sexuality. Parisi is right in saying that ‘Alice’ has had, already, to make a choice, but Parisi’s Alice is nevertheless located within particular circumstances of time and place. Parisi suggests that in rejecting Comus, the Lady indicates her rejection of a suitable match, or all men, or all desire; see also Debora Shuger, “‘Gums of Glutinous Heat’ and the Stream of Consciousness: The Theology of Milton’s Masque” *Representations*. 60 (Fall 1997): 9, who argues that the gums are “birdlime” a term used to refer to seminal emissions of an involuntary nature (2): “The temptation scene grapples with the threat of an involuntary sexuality that mocks rational control, with the fearful power of diabolic insemination, with the shame of being caught in the birdlime of fallen nature” (9). For a discussion of the mask as a celebration of the Lady’s, and thus Lady Alice’s, coming of age insofar as the performance took place when she reached the age of 15, the age of “menarch,” see B.J. Sokol, “‘Tilted Lees’, Dragons, Haemony, Menarch, Spirit, and Matter in Comus,” *The Review of English Studies*, new ser. 41.163 (August 1990): 309-324. Sokol argues that the Lady’s silence and immobilization in the chair are due to the “inconveniences of menstruation” (323) and further theorizes that she is stuck in the chair not because of Comus’s semen, birdlime, or her own desire, but because of “sticky menses” (323 n.48), a theory that relies on a reduction of the Lady to a fifteen year old Lady Anne’s possible physical circumstances at the time of the mask’s performance. This reading, however, disallows the complexity of allusions that Milton surely intended.

In contrast, Nancy Weitz Miller sees the gums as of a sexual nature or the “sticky heat of [Comus’s] lust” (162), and Victoria Silver refuses to reduce the cause of the Lady’s immobilization either to the Lady’s rejection of or ascendance from her body—her “moral status”—or to the flesh itself, where she is responsible for being stuck—the “plight of her body.” Silver is more interested in reconciling the states of body and mind as a way that helps us articulate an interpretation of the masque that does not implicitly deny either the sensible or intelligible aspects of the Lady’s predicament.

Those critics who see *The Lady* as complicit in her immobilization in the chair, or completely responsible for her “immanacled” state, either as a projection of her own desires onto Comus, or through the “glutinous gums” as various and sundry substances from semen, to bird lime, to “the inconveniences of menstruation” fail to question the problem speaking women faced: to speak out or to remain silent were both seen as indicative of a woman’s implicit consent. Just as the Lady’s speech did not equal consent, so her immanacled state also does not indicate consent, or even involuntary arousal. An examination of *The Lady*’s status as representative of a seventeenth-century woman within the larger socio-religious discourse about the real or imagined inseparability of silence and chastity helps us to see how *The Lady* employs chastity and conscience as rhetorical and physical strategies of enclosure. In this way, she maintains control and possession of her appetites, and, thus, her connection with God.

Sabrina’s cold, moist cure recalls the cold dew that affected Comus and made him, if only momentarily, hear *The Lady*’s argument. In this way, Sabrina’s cold, chaste cure offers a humoral balance to *The Lady*’s sacred vehemence, dissolving the power of the “venom’d seat” that Comus had “smear’d” with “heated gums” or glue in order to hold *The Lady* fast. In this way, Sabrina’s cooling remedy counterbalances the various “hot” ways Comus attempted to hold *The Lady* within the grasp of his marble seat, and thus his own grasp. Her cure undoes the venom of the gums, and the “gum” of his rhetoric,<sup>79</sup> restoring, in the process, a larger balance which Comus and his heated rout will no doubt continue constantly to upset.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> “Gum” as at this time also used to refer to a person’s idle or unbelievable talk or rhetoric. *OED* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

In the end, *The Lady* and the women pamphlet writers all indicate that an evil, surfeiting man who has been imbruted by sin serves as a trial to a woman's chastity. The degree to which a particular woman survives such a trial is revealed not by the slanderous lies men such as the Late Venerian, Swetnam, and Comus tell in order to penetrate women with their dissembling rhetoric, but by women's defenses, both verbal and written. It is these defenses that both reveal and protect a woman's own character. The truly good woman, as she is articulated by the women pamphlet writers and by Milton, cannot be defiled, because, like *The Lady*, she is filled with the light of God and, therefore, has no space to let in the defiling words of dissemblers.

### **Changing Everything: Hot Women and their Cosmological Consequences**

Certainly, the defenses of women are, as speech acts, far more than the arguments to which they can be reduced. They are, to use Rebecca Bushnell's terms, "political and social acts" (xiii). Wayne Rebhorn supports the idea that rhetorical acts are inherently political: "As the Renaissance conceives it, then, rhetoric is not a language game; it is a serious business that aims to affect people's basic beliefs and produce real action in the world" (4). And when we accept the notion that words themselves have humoral qualities that may work inside a person's body and mind, we can see how persuasive arguments were physical and intellectual forces. While these writers may not have intended it, their pamphlets nevertheless lay the groundwork for a

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<sup>80</sup> See Kale for a discussion of Sabrina as a manifestation of "divine grace" (90). Oram sees Sabrina as the counterpoint to Coyotto—both are representative of fertility, but Sabrina is refined, civilized. He argues that Sabrina leaves behind not a "changed scene but a changed mind" 134, 136.

worldview in which women are no longer either the good woman/wife or “very”/bad woman. If a woman’s character and chastity is located in her conscience and demonstrable through speech, then there need to be as many women “characters” in Overbury’s *A Wife* as there are men “characters.”

The use of female pseudonyms only further expands this possibility insofar as the defenses analyzed here refuse to be identified with a single woman author, but rather appropriate the elision of all women into one—their arguments can be those of any woman, all women. The pseudonym functions similarly for these women writers as it does for Marprelate insofar as the “proxy body” of corporate woman that the invented names create protects individual women from the assaults of particular men, and also creates a much stronger mouthpiece for their arguments.

Like Marprelate, these women pamphlet writers used pseudonyms or names that appear to be pseudonyms, and in so doing create a corporate body—in this case for women. Just as bodilessness is important for Marprelate so that he seems to be everywhere at once, untraceable to a flesh and blood body, so the women pamphlet writers’ projection of themselves through pseudonyms multiplies their voices.

Ultimately, the pamphlet writers use their names in much the same way that they use their pamphlets, to question the inherent privileges of gender, what men and women are in relation to one another, and who is permitted to speak and in what sort of language. To redefine the body, then, is, at the very least, to render obsolete such punishments as a scold’s bridle or “dunking,” because women are much more in control of the way they are defined—the category of woman, then, is not solely defined by how woman is not man. And on the grandest level, for women to redefine women’s

bodies is to redefine the social position of women within a hierarchy that sees gender as a salient indicator of superiority or inferiority.

As with both Gosson and Marprelate, reconfigurations of the body can be an attempt either to reproduce a previously accepted “anatomy” of the social and cosmological map, or to produce the anatomy anew such that it allows for a new set of paradigms. As Andrew Barnaby and Lisa Schnell argue in *Literate Experience: The Work of Knowing in Seventeenth-Century English Writing*, an anatomy “becomes a process of discovering and enacting the condition of a new social practice. In that practice, the right order is an effect of the ordering of knowledge as a collective effort.”<sup>81</sup> Gosson’s characterization of women as falling into the facile categories of either circulating, promiscuous whore, or cloistered good woman/good wife, like Swetnam’s similar characterization, is not new, but, rather functions as an entry in and addition to the debate about women, an ordering of knowledge in a certain way. As Diane Purkiss has shown, “[f]rom the beginning, misogyny does not purport to be originary or creative; instead, its characteristic move is to reiterate or re-cite stories or figures always already known. In this sense, misogyny is less a single unified voice than a collocation of stories and speeches that can be voiced at any time” (72).

Misogynist stories and speeches that claim to represent clear distinctions between women and men function both to erect and determine the anatomy or figure of collective knowledge and social practices through constant repetition. The repetition of the misogynist argument that a good woman was silent and chaste does not necessarily indicate that most women were silent so that they would be considered chaste. Rather,

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<sup>81</sup> Andrew Barnaby and Lisa J. Schnell, *Literate Experience: The Work of Knowing in Seventeenth-Century English Writing* (New York: Palgrave, 2002) 49.

such repetition records anxieties around the ways that gender and power differences were constantly disrupted by people's experiences in the world, regardless of how "natural" such differences were argued to be. As Purkiss has shown, the representation of dominant masculinity alongside images of public humiliation and punishment for men who could not control their disorderly wives or daughters, through a process of repetition functions as a way of "constituting a male group by the self-conscious voiding of femininity" (78). The very process of writing pamphlets such as Swetnam's, however, renders less solid the power and gender boundaries such as he seek to make discrete. If men's bodies and thus superior status were so clearly distinct from women's, the distinctions those pamphlets repeatedly asserted in the debate about women would not need to be voiced. They would simply be true.

While the women pamphlet writers may not, in the end, have effected much or any social change through "new social practices" at the time they were writing, their theses about the status of women in relation to men were nevertheless a part of the collective effort to re-order knowledge by producing an alternative, albeit nascent, portrait of women that competed directly with the ubiquitous representations of women as falling into one of two categories: good or bad.

## Conclusion

### **“wherein divers gross Errors and Corruptions. . . are discovered, censured, and refuted. . .”: Talking Cures and Textual Physic**

The causes of a body’s distemper could be various: the heat of summer, a particularly cold and damp morning, a lascivious glance given or taken, a whispered epithet, the worship of idols, the heat of anger. If a woman, such as Petruccio’s Kate, yelled at the man who stole her almost ready cabbages from the kitchen garden, a tall glass of cool water might serve to right her system. Nicholas Culpeper’s and Thomas Elyot’s medical treatises are full of remedies that address an immediate and localized ailment. If, for example, a person’s spleen is “afflicted with cold,” (a condition that had social as well as medical ramifications, as the spleen was the seat of choler and gall) the remedy was heat: “rub your left side every morning when you rise with your hand, then anoint it with oyntment of Tobacco. . .” (Culpeper, *Composista* 127). The remedy for any imbalance was its opposite.

If a humoral imbalance was not addressed, it could become a more permanent state, a habit. A man who takes pleasure in vain entertainments and the chasing of sin, for example, won’t be much helped by a drink of cold water. It is easy to see here how a man’s indulgence in lust, and “error,” could lead to what the early modern physician would recognize as the inevitable results of his bad behavior, salacious words, and lustful thoughts: dissolution, or “errors” and “corruptions” in his body and mind. The process by which to remedy the early modern person’s distemper was, in this way, what we now think of as holistic medicine: the entire person was treated. The more

intractable a person's humoral imbalance or illness, the more radical and forceful the remedy.

The way early modern people understood words to enter the body, such that a text could be "*nourishment*" or "food," meant that a program of education or reformation always involved digesting particular sorts of texts as much as it did certain foods, drinks, and behaviors. Because a social or religious reformer was always talking not just about, and desiring the transformation of, the beliefs and behaviors of individual men and women, but those of the body politic, the polemicist, like the doctor, must first study the workings of the body's "members" in order to understand a larger "distemper" or illness. Each of the writers attended to in this dissertation were "talking to" what they define, and thereby diagnose, as the cause of social or religious disease, in much the same way that Culpeper describes prunes as using their "sweetness or fair language" to talk to a superfluous or corrupt humor in order to evacuate it from the body.

We can see, then, how the role of physician, surgeon, schoolteacher, and preacher are related roles. Each is occupied with finding out what ails the body, and the remedy will always be some sort of "reform," a change of behavior, a change of mind, the purging of popery, prelatism, sin, the application of God. What these writers seek to secure with their textual remedies is the mental and physical transformation of their readers. They seek conversion.

Stephen Gosson's remedy for the phlegmatic body politic is first education or the outline of what is wrong, then a "prick" to wake her from her sloth and slumber in the form of perfect martial music that will rouse the choler and gall necessary to

balance a superfluity of phlegm, transforming the body politic from self-indulgent idler to stoic fighter. Marprelate's hot remedy for the bishops is purgative from the beginning. As Culpeper explains, purgatives work because "like finds its like," Marprelate's hotness seeks the hotness of the bishops. His text/body is like the herbal concoction that has found out the corruption and evil doings of the bishops in the remotest parts of the body/England in order to expose them through publication, cutting them out, in a process that resembles both the letting of blood and surgery. His text, like Gosson's, addresses both the small body of the reader, and through those readers, the larger body politic of which they are a part. The women pamphlet writers' different purgative methodologies also work by heat: Anger deploys the heat of anger, Esther harnesses the heat of forensic trial and execution to purge Swetnam from the body politic, and Munda focuses on the natural body of Swetnam and others like him, applying the heat of catapotions and black hellebore in the form of words.

At the same time these polemicists are diagnosing the bodies under their scrutiny, describing in detail the errors and corruptions they have found in their anatomizing process, they are also necessarily, and purposefully, providing the reader with a virtual map of their own humoral status. They each present themselves as balanced, reformed, stainless, governed in order that their words will register as pure, even if they are hot, as reasoned, even if they contain laughter. The governed person is reasoned, applying knowledge and wisdom to specific circumstances in order to choose what is better, not just for themselves, but for the bodies they seek to cure.

But what counts as "governed" shifts. We can see this in the ways that people received the texts examined here. All of these writers were described as unbalanced by

those against whom they wrote. Gosson was maligned by Thomas Lodge and others for his former life in the theater, Marprelate was labeled mad for his laughing and railing, the women pamphlet writers were regarded as intemperate for their speeches, and the Lady was critiqued and threatened for her refusal to give in to her own appetites and those of Comus. It is easy to see that the right to define the nature of a particular “body,” and have that definition stick, is a product of power—this is the case with any site of “conversion” or contestation.

The centrality of humoral physiology and psychology to an early modern understanding of the world and all it contains suggests that we must scrutinize such references in polemic and other literary and non-literary texts. Attending to the humoral valences of individual words and whole texts uncovers another way that early modernists sought to create arguments that had the greatest potential of changing their world.

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